

PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, COUNTY OF ELKO,  
SEPTEMBER 4, 1996

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I do have comments I would like to present at this time.

A month ago I came before this commission with a formal petition request for an evidentiary hearing regarding elk expansion policy as it is being implemented here in Elko County. Today I come before you with a formal petition request for an evidentiary hearing relating to wildfire prevention, grazing practices and fire sight rehabilitation.

Current policy now being put forth by various resource management agencies is causing great amounts of flash fuel to accumulate on public lands. Everything my family and I own is now in jeopardy, our home, our outbuildings, the feed in our fields, our stored or stacked hay. Even our equipment and livestock are in jeopardy during summer months.

It is our understanding that when property interests are effected by adverse governmental policy or planning processes that those effected must be afforded due process. In addition, we understand that it is the determination of Congress and the legislature of this State that the primary responsibility for planning and policy development, as it relates to public lands management, lays with county governments.

It is our request that documented evidence from both agency personnel and effected individuals be presented at one hearing; that a timely decision concerning these matters be rendered based on the evidence presented, that a complete record be maintained of the proceedings, including all documents submitted; that a decision be rendered in accordance to the doctrine of reasonableness; and that all parties be encouraged to testify under oath.

We ask also that in preparation for, and prior to, holding a hearing addressing wildfire prevention, that a letter be sent to representatives of the Nevada Division of Wildlife, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management requesting that a representative from their agency appear before this commission on such and such day bearing all known documented evidence relating to the following.

a. documented evidence indicating that two years rest following wildfire benefits grass and other forage plants more than one year of rest, (under short duration grazing practices).

b. documented evidence indicating that bitterbrush does not reestablish itself sooner in stands of crested wheat grass than in other grass stands.

c. documented evidence indicating there is not a decrease in loss of native plants in areas that are grazed versus areas not grazed in relation to given fires.

d. documented evidence indicating that removing livestock early for "the protection of bitterbrush" (as has now occurred twice in Ruby Valley), does not result in great losses of native habitat, including vast stands of healthy bitterbrush in critical deer wintering areas.

e. documented evidence indicating that there was not an increase in plant species diversity, (including bitter brush), throughout the rangelands of the West after white man began suppressing wildfires in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

f. documented evidence indicating that the removal of flash fuels, (grasses), from rangelands by grazing does not reduce fire extent and intensity.

g. documented evidence indicating total acres of range lands burned in Elko County in years 1945 through 1996.

h. documented evidence indicating that wildfire does not burn cooler and with less intensity over areas that have been seeded to crested wheat grass than over lands containing native plant communities; thus resulting in a decrease in the loss of native plant species when wildfire does occur .

i. documented evidence indicating that crested wheat grass does not supply mule deer with great amounts of nutritious feed necessary for early reproductive process during April and May.

j. documented evidence indicating that sage grouse and antelope do not use areas seeded to crested wheat grass as readily, or possibly even more readily, than they use native rangelands.

k. documented evidence indicating that the removal of livestock from grazing allotments once 40 to 45 percent of vegetation is utilized on riparian areas does not lead to the deterioration of nearly all values known relative to the same.

We assume that because of the need for scientific support for past and present planning and management policy, that the above named agencies will have no problem producing such evidence upon short notice, say within thirty days or so.

As to my request for an evidentiary hearing addressing the issue of elk expansion policy as it relates to the Wells Resource Area, we ask that a letter be sent to representatives of the Nevada Division of Wildlife, the U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management requesting that someone from their agency appear before this commission on such and such day bearing all known documented evidence relating to the following.