



## Cherry Creek Herd Management Area White Pine County

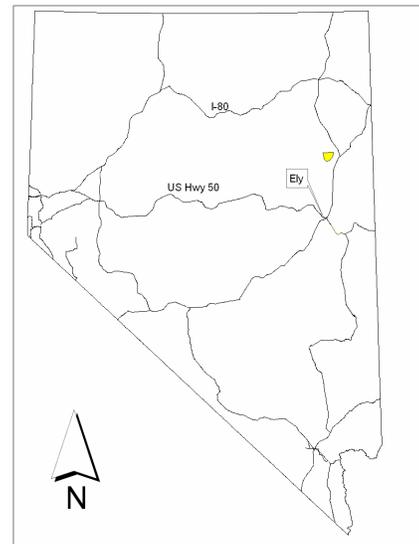
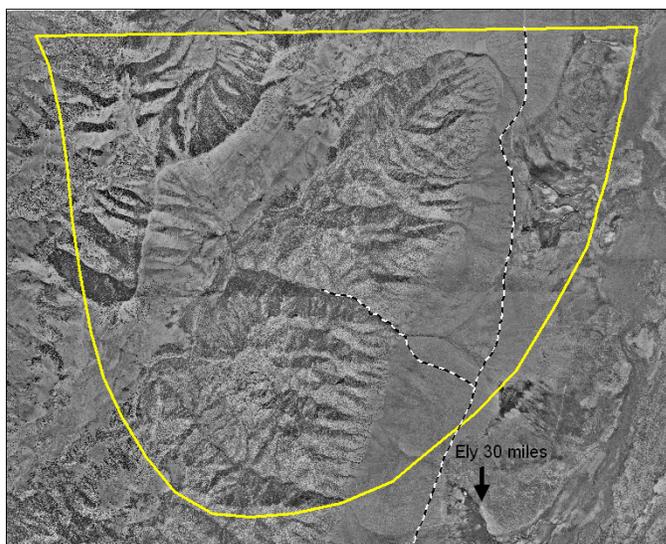


### Location/Habitat

The southern boundary of the Cherry Creek Herd Management Area (HMA) is located seven miles north of the town of Cherry Creek, Nevada. Cherry Creek was once a significant mining area. The HMA lies in northern White Pine County and borders the Elko County line. The Cherry Creek HMA comprises approximately 37,493 acres, 97 percent of which is public land managed by the Ely BLM District. A majority of the HMA is in the Cherry Creek Mountain Range. The west side of the HMA extends down to the foothills of Butte Valley, and the east side goes down to near the bottom of Steptoe Valley. Access to the HMA is limited, with one road going into Goshute Basin. All other roads go up the numerous canyons and creeks from the valleys, but soon dead-end. There are several small ranches in the area, and Cherry Creek was once a significant mining area.

There are numerous springs in the higher elevations of the Cherry Creek Range, along with many springs in Steptoe Valley. There are also several creeks that flow through the HMA, including Indian Creek and Goshute Creek. Other creeks typically dry up during the summer, except for near the spring sources. Elevation within the HMA ranges from 5,370 feet in Steptoe Valley to 9,396 feet in the Cherry Creek Range.

The climate in the Cherry Creek HMA is typical of the Great Basin. Summertime temperatures can sometimes exceed 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and winter lows can fall to 20 degrees below zero. Normal temperatures generally range from the low teens in winter up to the mid-eighties in summer. Precipitation in eastern Nevada occurs through winter snowfall and spring rain. Limited summer precipitation occurs. Yearly precipitation is 20 inches or more in the mountains, with less than 8 inches in the valleys.



Wildlife in the area include mule deer, elk, pronghorn antelope, mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats, kit foxes, and jackrabbits. There are also blue grouse, sage grouse, and chukar partridge. Bald eagles, Ferruginous hawks, and Peregrine falcons have occasionally been spotted.

This area has traditionally been grazed by domestic livestock since the ranches were established in the late 1800s. Historic use included more sheep than currently graze, but cattle and sheep use is still permitted in the area.

### **Vegetation**

Vegetation within the HMA varies with elevation. Along the valley bottoms, black sage, saltbush and other “salt desert shrub” plants dominate. At higher elevations, white sage can occur, and then sagebrush/bunchgrass communities. Sagebrush is the most common shrub before moving into pinyon-juniper woodlands. At the highest elevations mountain mahogany, mountain sagebrush, aspen, and fir trees cover a majority of the area. Small riparian areas and their associated plant species occur throughout the HMA near seeps, springs, and creeks.

### **Herd Description**

In 1985, a census flight confirmed there were 103 wild horses in the Cherry Creek HMA. At this time the horses from the Cherry Creek HMA frequently moved across county lines and highways to mix with horses from the Antelope HMA, Antelope Valley HMA, Maverick/Medicine HMA and Butte HMA. To alleviate over-population and achieve appropriate management levels, a gather of several of these HMAs occurred in 1987. Forty-eight wild horses were removed from the Cherry Creek HMA, and it was estimated that 40 to 50 wild horses moved into the adjacent HMAs. After the gather, 16 wild horses were censused in the HMA. The remaining wild horses continued to leave the area and only three wild horses were counted in 1989.

Movement from the Cherry Creek HMA into the Antelope HMA was restricted through a highway right-of-way fence during the 1990s. The county line was also partially fenced where the HMA borders the Antelope Valley HMA. By 1991, no wild horses were counted, and there has not been any censused since then. In 2001, appropriate management level (AML) for the Cherry Creek HMA was established at zero wild horses. Although wild horses from the Butte HMA may still enter the Cherry Creek HMA, they rarely do so. If any herds enter the area, they usually quickly return to their home ranges.