

YAKAMA NATION HORSES



WILD HORSE POPULATIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY

- Horse numbers have steadily increased over the last several years.
- In 1957 there were approximately 500 wild horses on the Reservation.
- In the early 1990's there were 2500 horses and today (2013) there are between **12,000** and **15,000**.

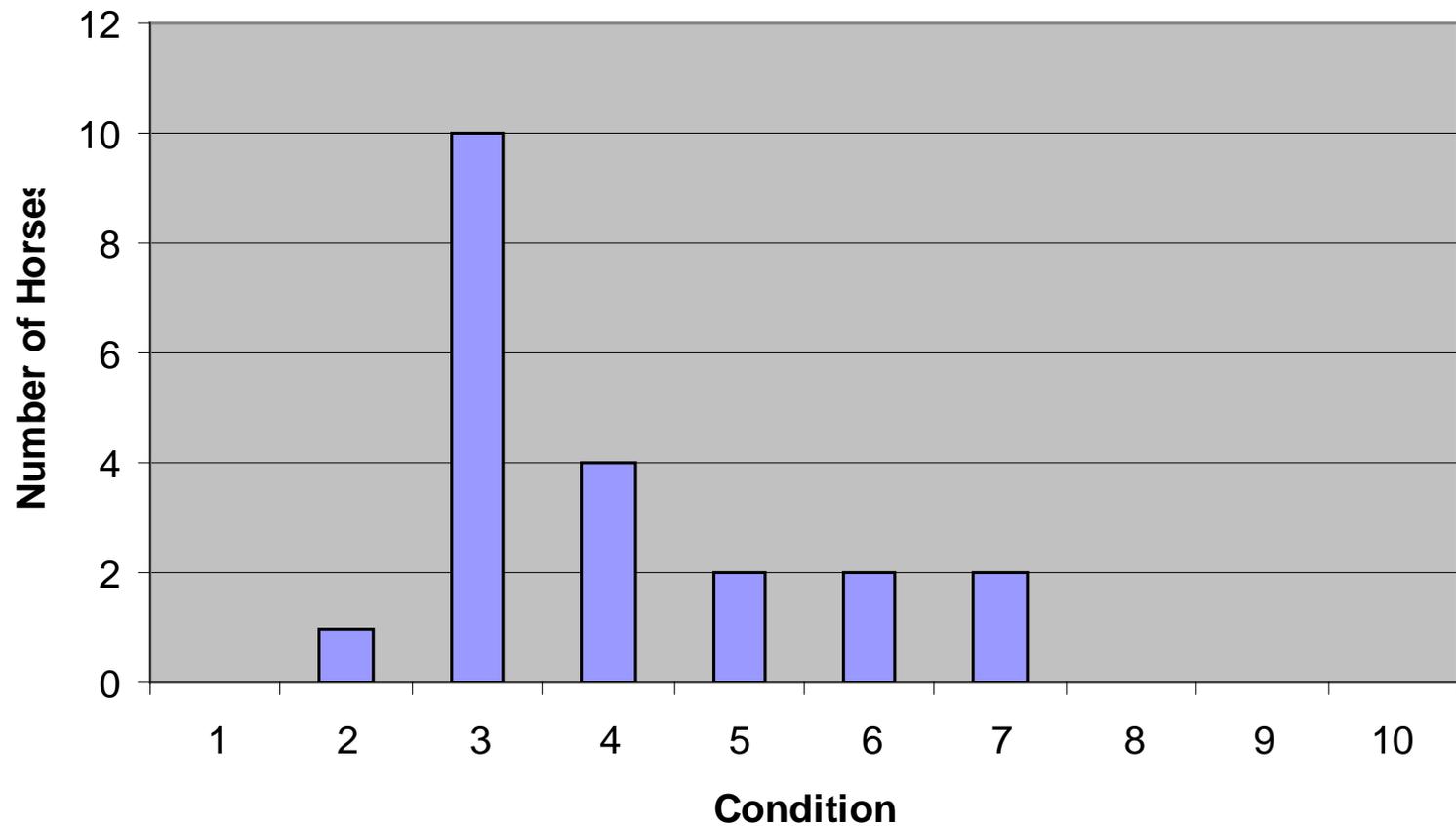


HORSE HERD CHARACTERISTICS

- Average size is small with a 700 lb average weight. Much of this is due to lack of forage.
- On a condition scale of 1-10 most horses are well below average. In October of 2004 they averaged a number 3.

WILD HORSE CONDITION

CONDITION INDEX FOR 21 HORSES CAPTURED IN
OCT 04



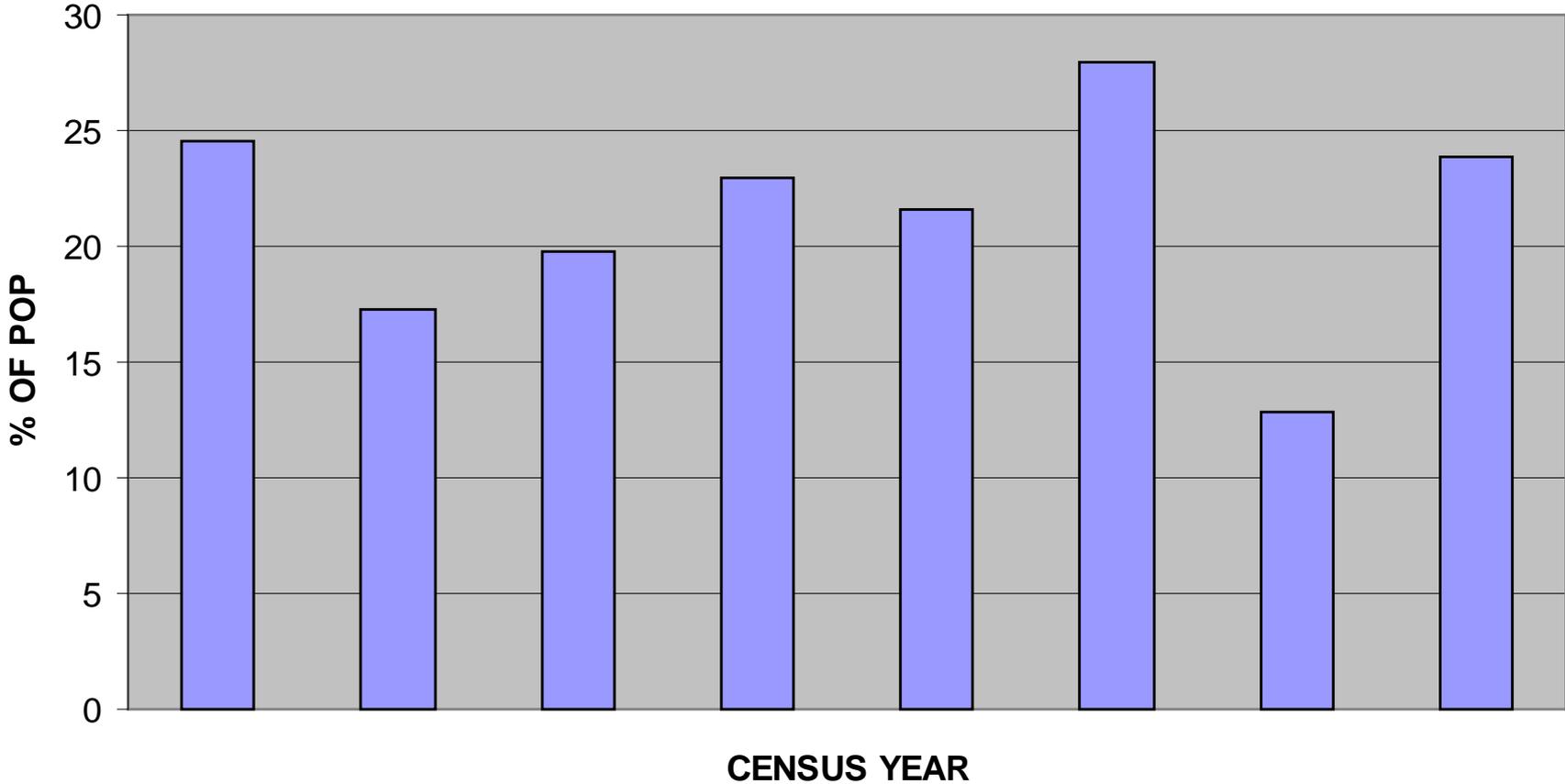
WILD HORSE PRODUCTIVITY

- Horses are a long lived animal and herds reproduce at a fairly rapid rate.
- Natural predation is very limited.
- Herd increases at a rate of 20-30% per year.
- Herd can double in size in 4-5 years.



PRODUCTIVITY

% OF POPULATION COMPRISED OF COLTS

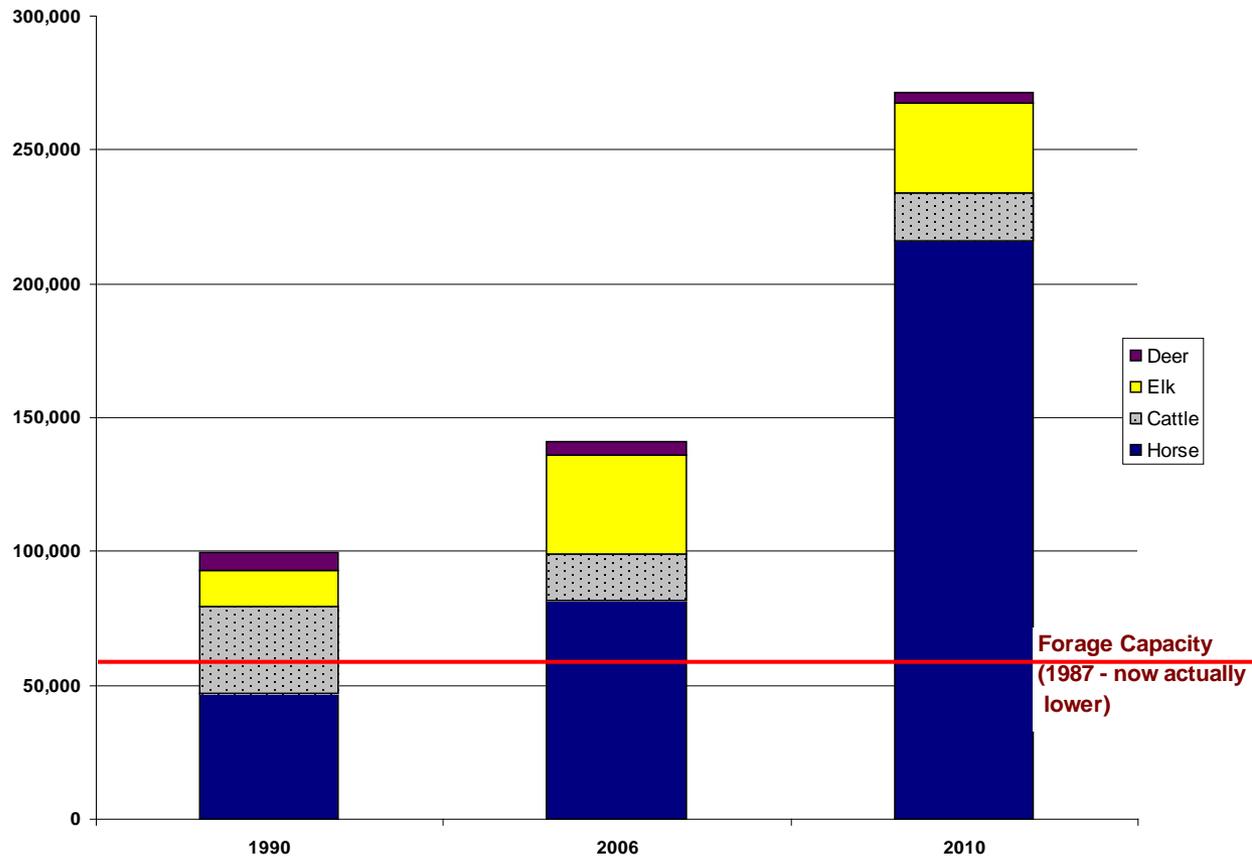


FORAGE USE

- In 1990 horses used 47,000 AUM's (Animal Unit Months) of forage.
- In 2010 horses used 216,000 AUM's of forage.
- Total grazing use by all species was 99,000 in 1990 and nearly **270,000** in 2010.
- Proper forage utilization on the Reservation is **60,000** AUM's per year.



AUMs on Reservation Rangelands



IMPACTS TO OTHER RESOURCES

Over-abundant horse populations directly impact:

1. Vegetation
2. Soils
3. Water quality

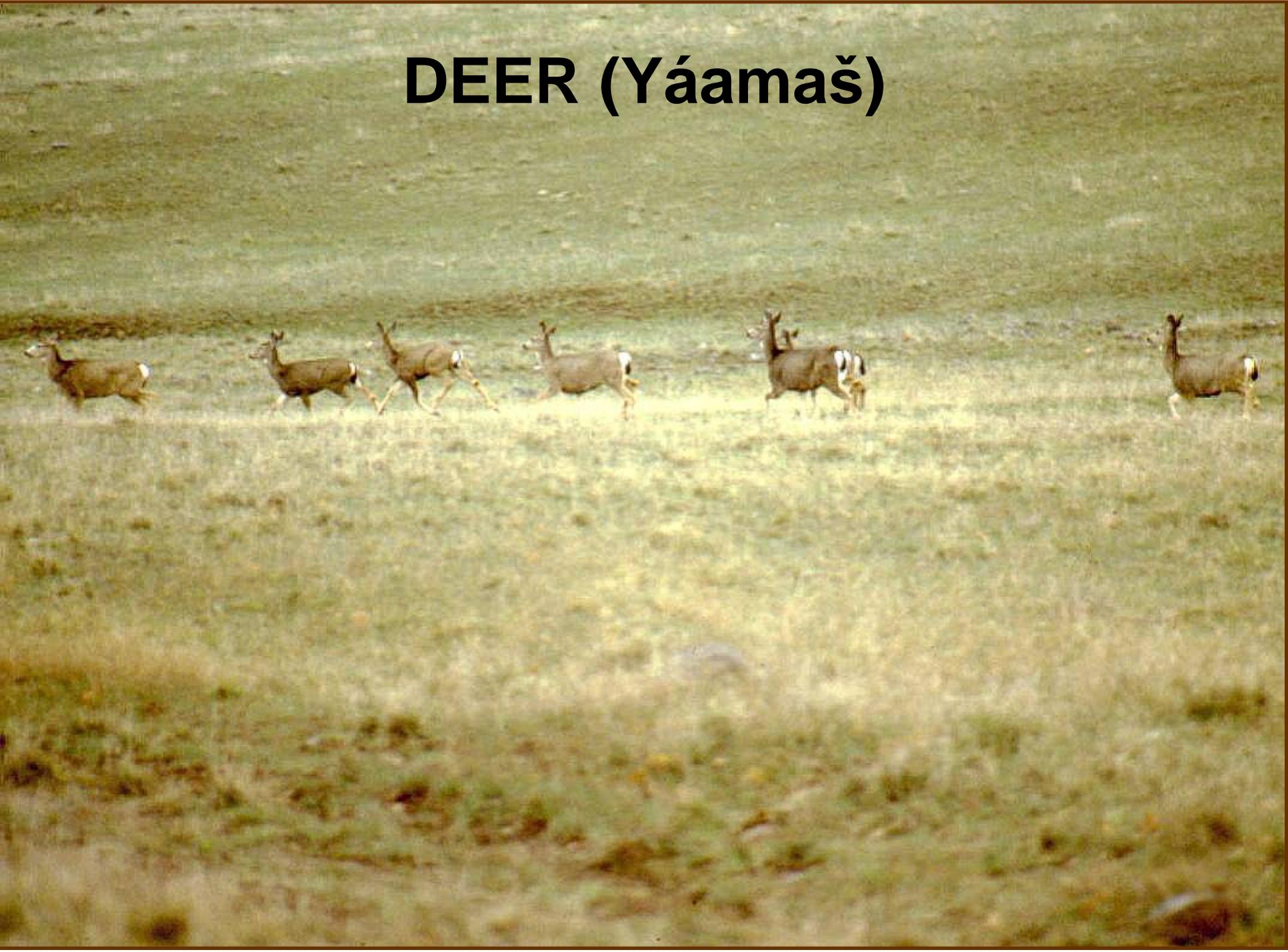


**THIS LEADS TO
IMPACTS TO
MANY SPECIES
INCLUDING:**

CULTURAL PLANTS (Foods and medicines)



DEER (Yáamaš)



ELK (Wawúkya)



BIGHORNS (Tnuun)



SAGE GROUSE (Payúmš) (Recently re-introduced)



SALMON, STEELHEAD, AND OTHER AQUATIC SPECIES



LOSS OF ECOSYSTEM FUNCTION

- *Degraded habitat has lead to serious declines in ecosystem function including impacts to:*
 - Microorganisms
 - Invertebrates
 - Fish and other aquatic organisms
 - Reptiles and amphibians
 - Song birds, game birds and raptors
 - Small mammals and carnivores
 - Big game species

SUMMARY

- The horse population is not currently managed, as it once was.
- Existing forage cannot support a growing horse population along with deer, elk and cattle.
- Current horse population size is not sustainable for many culturally important plants and animals.

Devastated rangeland on the Yakama Reservation

















Fenced enclosure in the valley bottom



Grass inside the exclosure, none outside



Seattle Springs Exclosure



Seattle Springs Watering Trough



Near Mule Dry Creek



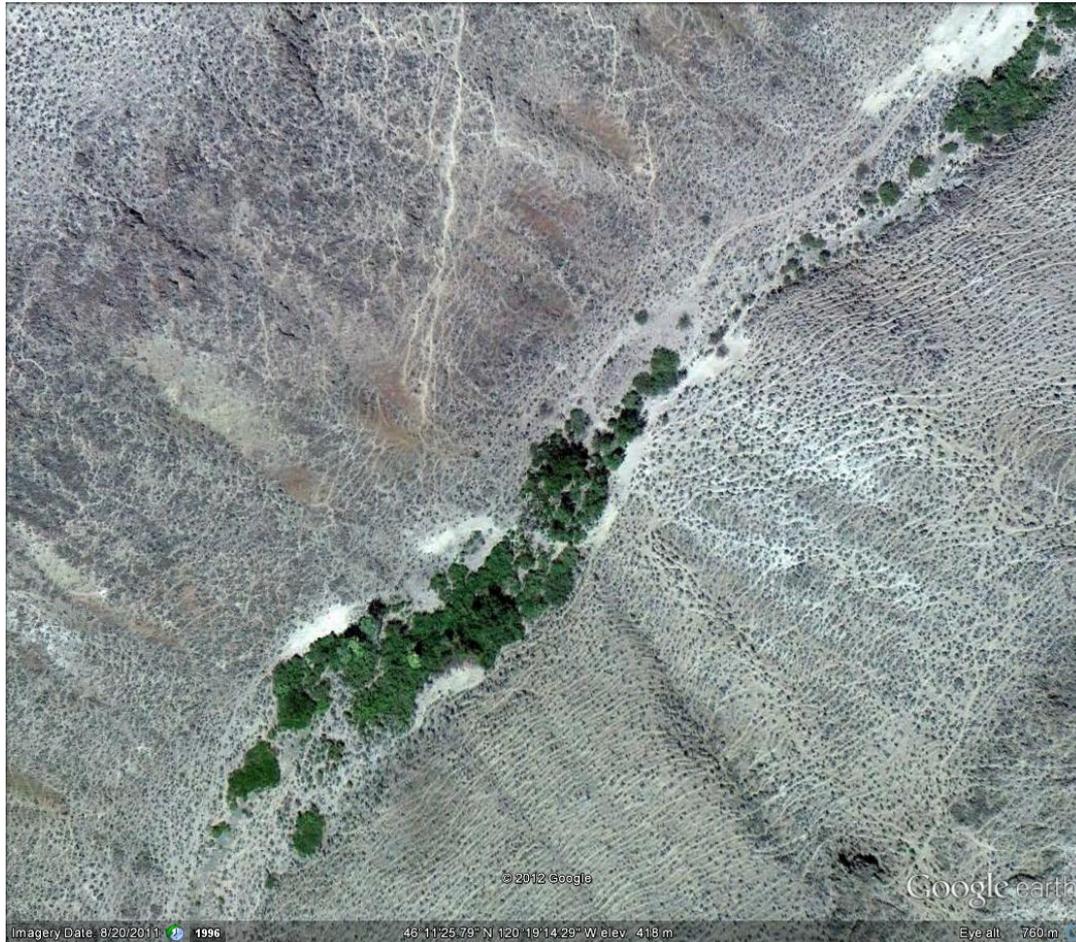
Tributary of Mule Dry



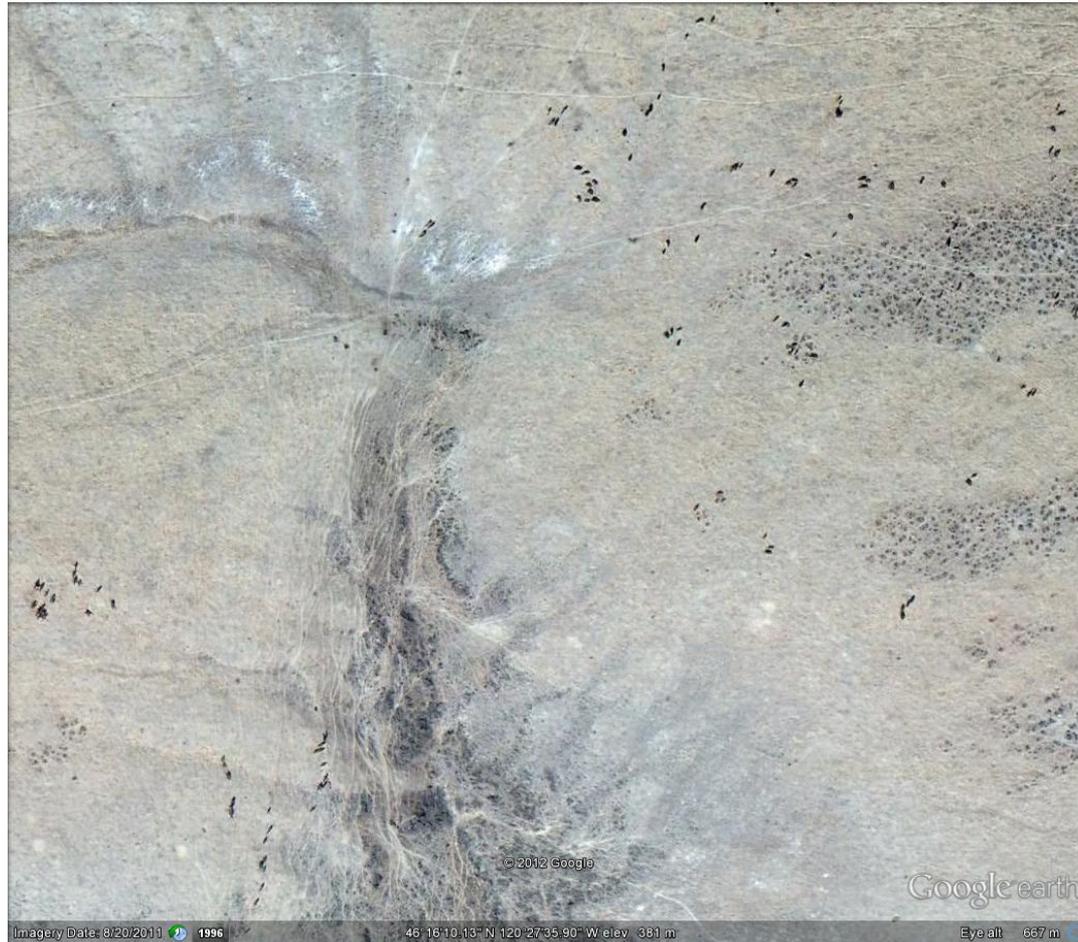
Waterhole



HORSE TRAILS ON GOOGLE EARTH



HORSES FROM GOOGLE EARTH



Potential to recover if grasses and forbs are not eliminated



May 2007 during enclosure construction,
Dry Creek elbow enclosure



April 2009, 2 yrs later,
Showing grass and forb regrowth,
Dry Creek elbow enclosure



5.11.2004



5.11.2004

NATIONAL TRIBAL HORSE COALITION

- Formed in 2009 as the Northwest Tribal Horse Coalition.
- Made up of five NW tribes (Yakama, Colville, Warm Springs, Umatilla and Shoshone/Bannock).
- Now composed of the original five tribes plus the Navajo, with several Montana and Wyoming tribes that are considering joining.