



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901-3447

In Reply Refer To:
4700 (040)

JUL 18 2007

Dear Interested Party:

The Wyoming Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Rock Springs and Rawlins Field Offices are proposing to gather excess wild horses from the Divide Basin Herd Management Area (HMA) and outside of the Adobe Town and Salt Wells Creek HMAs during the summer of 2007.

The Divide Basin HMA was gathered in part in September 2006 to remove excess wild horses. A Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Divide Basin gather was issued on August 24, 2006. The decision and finding was based on BLM analysis of an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared for the Divide Basin Herd Management Area (EA WY-040-EA06-107).

The Adobe Town and Salt Wells Creek HMAs were gathered in part in January 2007 to remove excess wild horses. A Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact for the Adobe Town and Salt Wells Creek gather was issued on January 4, 2007. The decision and finding was based on BLM analysis of an EA prepared for the Adobe Town and Salt Wells Creek Herd Management Areas EA WY-040-07-EA-37. The two EAs and associated decision documents may be viewed on the public website for the Rock Springs BLM at:

http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/rsfodocs/atwsw_complex.html and
http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/rsfodocs/divide_basin.html

Additional population inventories of the Adobe Town, Salt Wells Creek and Divide Basin HMAs were completed in March and April 2007. Based on these inventories, the current estimated population for the Adobe Town and Salt Wells Creek HMAs combined is 904 plus the current year's foals. The inventory also revealed that there are approximately 60-70 horses residing outside of the Adobe Town and Salt Wells Creek HMAs on private lands and non-HMA Public lands within Wyoming and Colorado. Based on the current inventory, the estimated population for the Divide Basin HMA is 752 plus this year's foals. The appropriate management level (AML) range for the Divide Basin HMA is 415 to 600 which is 337 mature horses plus current year's colts above the low range AML. This data identifies that excess wild horses are still present within the Divide Basin HMA and a need to remove the excess wild horses as soon as practical in order to prevent potential deterioration of the range, in accordance with Section 3 (b) (2) of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act.

Public Involvement

Public notification and scoping of the following EAs was sent to interested persons, groups, and agencies as well as posted on the BLM internet site with a review and comment period:

WY-040-EA06-107 Posted July 14, 2006

WY-040-07-EA-37 posted November 30, 2006

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to continue the removal of wild horses which was analyzed and authorized in 2007 under the Adobe Town and Salt Wells Creek EA and under the 2006 Divide Basin EA but which was not fully completed due to weather and the amount of Wild Horses to be gathered. BLM has determined that there are excess wild horses present and the proposed action is needed to remove excess wild horses. The removals would restore wild horse herd numbers to levels consistent with the AML for each HMA as well as protect the public rangelands from undue degradation. The proposed action is to gather all horses found outside of the HMAs (60-70 adult horses plus foals) and approximately 337 mature horses and 67 foals from the Divide Basin HMA. The post gather population of approximately 415 adult wild horses and some ungathered foals would be within the AML for the Divide Basin HMA. The post gather population of approximately 1,010 wild horses would be within the combined AML for the Adobe Town and Salt Wells Creek HMAs.

Multiple capture sites (traps) will be used during the operation. Whenever possible, capture sites will be located at previously used sites. The Rock Springs and Rawlins Field Office Wild Horse Specialists would record and sort captured horses by sex, age and color as well as collect herd health factors such as pregnancy and physical condition. A small number of captured animals could be returned to the HMAs based on selective age criteria.

NEPA Compliance

BLM has reviewed the 2006 and 2007 EAs and determined that both EAs fully cover the proposal to gather excess horses this summer.

The current proposal is essentially the same as Alternative I described in the 2006 and 2007 EAs the only difference is that the population of the herds were underestimated, thus more horses will be gathered.

2. There are no unresolved conflicts involving alternative uses of available resources.
3. The circumstances upon which the environmental analysis was based are still valid and germane to the new action.

4. The methodology of analytical approach used in the document is appropriate.
5. The direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the new proposed action are the same as those identified in the 2006 and 2007 EA's.

Opportunity to Provide Information

If you have any information, data, or analysis to provide please do so prior to August 15, 2007 BLM expects to issue a new decision regarding implementation of the gather in late August 2007. The Adobe Town HMA is within both the Rawlins Field Office and the Rock Springs Field Office. Please send your input to both Field Offices at:

BLM Rock Springs Field Office
Attn: Jay D'Ewart, Wild Horse & Burro Specialist
280 Highway 191 North, Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901.

Input may also be submitted by facsimile (307-352-0329) or e-mail to: jay_d'ewart@blm.gov

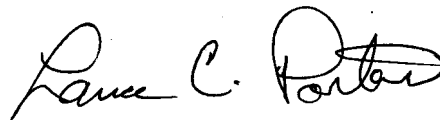
And to:

BLM Rawlins Field Office
Attn: Cheryl Newberry, Rangeland Management Specialist
P.O. Box 2407, 1300 North Third Street, Rawlins, Wyoming 82301.

Input may also be submitted by facsimile (307-328-4224).

Thank you for your interest in wild horses and public land management. If you have any questions, or wish to obtain a copy of the EAs for review, please contact Jay D'Ewart, Wild Horse Specialist, Rock Springs Field Office at (307) 352-0331.

Sincerely,



Lance C. Porter
Acting Field Manager