

Wild Horse & Burro Program Overview and Update

A report to the wild horse and burro advisory board

Hope Woodward, Wild Horse and Burro Program Manager
USDA Forest Service, Washington, DC
Salt Lake City, Utah, 10 October 2018



USFS Wild Horse and Burro Program Overview



Quick facts

- ~8700 wild horses, ~600 wild burros (USFS only)
- 19 national forests, 8 western states
- 34 active territories on 2.1 million acres
 - 27 wild horse
 - 4 wild burro territories
 - 3 wild horse & burro territories
 - 24 managed with BLM (JMAs)

U.S. Forest Service Wild Horse and Burro Program

Staffing & Budget

- WO: Program manager
- R3: Wild horse & burro coordinator
 - Carson NF:
 - Wild horse specialist
 - Wild horse facility manager
 - Wild horse technician, seasonal
 - 4 wild horse interns (2018)
- FY2018 funded at \$824,000
 - \$550,000 est. FY2018 costs for BLM care of ~ 700 horses & burros gathered prior to FY2015

Management Capacity & Planning

Wild Horse and Burro Territories

- 7 with NEPA decisions (3 JMAs)
- 4 working on management plans (2 JMAs)



U.S. Forest Service Wild Horse and Burro Program



On- and Off-range management

Territories with:

- On-range fertility control (2)
- Short-term off-range facilities (3)
- Conduct gathers (3)
- Gentling / training contracts (3)
- Adoptions / Sales (4)

Population and Appropriate Management Level (AML)

AML population of all territories set at ~ 2000 for horses and 296 for burros

- AML review needed for 25 territories (management planning)
- Average over AML (wild horses and burros) at almost 400%

USFS territories with highest AML (206/402, 138/230)

Devils Garden almost 10x AML (gather planned 10/2018)

Montgomery Pass ~3x AML (JMA with BLM)



Program Updates

- NEPA
- Population Surveys
- Training
- Fertility Control
- Gathers
- Adoptions, Sales
- Grants & Agreements
- Litigation Update



Management Planning

34 active territories

7 with NEPA decisions (3 JMAs)

Carson NF (2)

Humboldt-Toiyabe NF (2)

Modoc NF

Custer-Gallatin NF

San Bernardino NF

Territories completing plans

Heber WH EIS (A-S NF, AZ)

North Hills WH JMA EA (Dixie NF, UT)

Spring Mountains WHB JMA EA (HTNF, NV)

Big Summit WH EIS (Ochoco NF, OR)

Murderers Creek WH JMA EIS (Malheur NF, OR)

Population Surveys

Territories as JMAs (24)

- Aerial Surveys every 2-3 years
USGS double observer analysis

USFS-only territories

- Aerial and infrared
- Formal annual horseback surveys
- Formal and informal ground counts
- Permittee observations



Fertility Control, Gathers, Gentling, Adoptions & Sales

PZP Fertility Control

Jicarilla (32)
Pryor Mountain

Horse gentling program

Devil's Garden (several partners)
Jicarilla (JMHA, Carson)

Gathers

- **Aerial** (planned removal for Oct 2018)
Devil's Garden (1000)
- **Bait-trap**
Big Summit (1)
Spring Mountain (148 horses)
Jicarilla (43)

Adoptions

Jicarilla (16)
Big Summit (1)

Sales

Jicarilla (37)



Agreements

Cost-Share Agreements

- Jicarilla Mustang Heritage Alliance
- Sky Mountain Wild Horse Sanctuary

Resource Assistant Program and Internships

- Salish Kootenai College - TREES (6)
- MobilizeGreen (2)
- Modoc NF-Modoc Farm Bureau (1)

Interagency Agreements

- BLM-USFS local agreements for managing herds across agency boundaries (3)
- U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict and Resolution (Udall Foundation)
 - Salt River Horse Collaborative
 - Forest-level convening

Informal Agreements

- Central Oregon Wild Horse Coalition
- Modoc Placement Committee

Litigation – Devil’s Garden Plateau WHT, Modoc NF

California

Devils’ Garden Preservation Group, et al. v. McAdams and U.S. Forest Service.
Case 2:17-cv-02185-MCE-KJN (E.D. Cal). Plaintiffs filed suit on October 19, 2017 against the Forest Supervisor, Modoc National Forest and the U.S. Forest Service alleging defendants violated the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), National Forest Management Act (NFMA), Modoc National Forest Land Resources Management Plan, Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (WFRHBA), and the implementing regulations for those Acts by failing to remove excess wild horses and for eliminating grazing from the Pine Springs and Emigrant Springs Allotments and reallocating forage to wild horses. The case was stayed by U.S. District Judge England on May 2, 2018, pending completion of administrative appeals. Those administrative procedures are still ongoing. The District Court has not yet ruled on this case.

Questions?

