



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

NATIONAL WILD
HORSE & BURRO
ADVISORY BOARD

Hilton Garden Inn
Downtown Boise
348 S. 13th St., Boise, ID
83702

July 10-11, 2019

Volume 1

Day 1 Meeting Minutes

U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

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Wednesday, July 10, 2019

Welcome

Mr. Fred T. Woehl, Jr., Chair, Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board

Mr. Woehl called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and asked any Veterans to first stand and then asked all to stand and join in the Pledge of Allegiance. [Pledge of Allegiance]. Mr. Woehl turned the time over to Bryant Kuechle.

Rules of the Room

Bryant Kuechle, Facilitator, The Langdon Group

Mr. Kuechle, serving as the meeting's facilitator, introduced himself and reviewed the rules of the room. He mentioned that it is our hope and intent that by everyone listening and following these rules, we'll have a good meeting. Mr. Kuechle also reviewed the emergency exit procedure in the case of an emergency and the location of restrooms. The rules of the room were as follows:

1. Seating is available for attendees. Anyone needing or wishing to stand will stand in the designated area behind the seats. All attendees are to stay in the seating or standing area at all times, unless addressing the Board during the public comment period.
2. Speakers and other attendees will not approach the dais at any time without prior consent from the Chair of the meeting.
3. Media will check in at the door and will be guided to the space designated for cameras.
4. No attendees will be allowed to place microphones, cameras or other equipment in the space set aside for the Board meeting.
5. All attendees will show mutual respect for each other and for speakers and Board members. This includes refraining from using cell phones or talking while the meeting is in session.
6. If anyone disrupts the meeting they will be asked to leave or be escorted out.
7. Those wishing to address the Board will sign in at the door. Speakers will address their comments to the Board, while seated at the designated speaker table. Generally, speakers have about 3 minutes each and are asked to finish in the designated time to allow for the maximum number of individuals to express their viewpoints.
8. Attendees wishing to provide handouts to the Board will leave handouts with the BLM representative at the door. Handouts will not be brought to the speaker's table and no one will be allowed to approach the Board with handouts.
9. Within the meeting room, attendees may not display signs, placards, or other items that are likely to obscure the view of participants or disrupt the meeting.
10. The Board will not respond to comments made during the public participation period. This should not be interpreted to mean the members of the board agree or disagree with anything said.
11. The Chair reserves the right to comment on any factual inaccuracies that may be shared during the public comment period.
12. The BLM commits to maintaining these rules for the benefit of all involved and appreciates everyone's cooperation with these rules.

Introductions

Mr. Woehl asked the board members to introduce themselves (see Table 1).

Table 1 - National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Members

NATIONAL WILD HORSE & BURRO ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS	
Board Member	Representing
Mr. Fred T. Woehl, Jr.	Public Interest (Equine Behavior)
Dr. Tom Lenz	Veterinary Medicine
Ms. Celeste Carlisle	Wild Horse & Burro Advocacy
Dr. Barry Perryman	Public Interest (NRM/Special Knowledge)
Mr. James French	Natural Resource Management
Dr. Sue M. McDonnell	Wild Horse & Burro Research

Mr. Woehl introduced Mr. John Ruhs and turned the time over to him.

Opening Remarks

John Ruhs, Idaho State Director, BLM



Welcome to everyone in the room and those that are following along online. We certainly appreciate you being here. Again, my name is John Ruhs, and I'm the BLM's Idaho state director. Today, also, I am the designated federal official for this meeting, and I look forward to working with and hearing from all of you today. Leah Baker, who is our acting assistant director for resources and planning, will be with you tomorrow and working as the designated federal official then. First thing I'd like to do is start off by thanking the chair, Fred Woehl, and Vice Chair, Sue McDonnell, as well as the members who serve on this advisory board. We really appreciate their involvement and the recommendations that they provide for us. Though three vacancies remain unfilled, in time, for this meeting, I'm very happy that we are meeting today to discuss some of the urgent issues that are facing the wild horse and burro program. Also, I want to thank our, BLM staff from the Washington office, BLM Idaho, and the audio-visual team from the National Training Center for all their good work in organizing and planning this meeting, and, of course, with that, a special thanks for leading the charge and putting on this meeting. Also, thank you to Bryant Kuechle for facilitating and keeping us on track, and Derek Moss for taking notes, so we really appreciate that. Then I'd also like to thank the officers from the Boise Police Department that are here today. We appreciate their support as well. It takes a lot to pull off a meeting like this, and I hope you all know how appreciative we are of the work that you do.

I want to talk about the importance of this meeting and how critical it is as we move forward on a sustainable path for the wild horse and burro program. Last May, the BLM released its most recent estimates of the wild horse and burro populations on public lands and found that there are now more three times the number of animals on the range than what we can sustainably support with food and water. In addition, we have nearly 50,000 unadopted horses in off range pastures and corrals. This overpopulation presents a variety of risks and barriers to achieving BLM's goal of having healthy herds on healthy public range lands, and there are no easy solutions to solving this challenge. Yesterday, on the tour, those that were able to make it saw firsthand BLM Idaho's efforts to manage and protect herd and land wealth in the wake of the fire, which burned so much horse habitat in this area that we had to temporarily remove many of the horses from the range to ensure that they had enough resources to survive and to allow the range to recover. Though not every herd is faced with natural disasters, many wild horse and burro herds routinely struggle to find enough food and water when overpopulation is allowed to persist.

As you will hear from several presentations throughout this meeting, reducing this overpopulation and keeping our land and herds healthy is a top priority for the BLM, as we work to carry out our mission of managing public lands, to sustain their health, diversity, and productivity for present and future generations. I know we've got a full agenda focused on the overpopulation challenge, as well as other pressing issues facing wild horse and burro management on public lands, and I'm very interested to hear the board's input and advice. Finally, before we get started with the meeting, I'd like to just quickly go over the roles and responsibilities of the advisory board for our new members and for the public in the room

who may be watching online. The wild horse and burro advisory board was established by the 1971 Wild Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act and has been providing advice and recommendations for decades. Your advice and recommendations should be informed after analyzing the information from the BLM and others and considering public comment. Finally, as I'm sure you all know, formal board recommendations are made through a vote and approved, if a majority support it. Though board members should try to reach a consensus, we realize that due to the nature of the challenges facing us, this may not always occur, and that is okay. With that said, again, I would like to thank everyone for attending this meeting, and we are hoping it is congenial and productive.

BLM Idaho Overview

John Ruhs, Idaho State Director, BLM

I began serving as the state director in this job about four months ago in March, so I've got lots and lots of experience in BLM Idaho. It's a joke. You can laugh. So, it's good to be here, and, again, I appreciate seeing folks like Fred and Sue and others that are on this advisory board. Some of you were around when I spoke to the board in 2016 in Nevada, when I was the Nevada state director, so, again, appreciate you being here and sticking with us. I have been involved with the wild horse and burro program in a variety of different capacities throughout my career. I actually started working in the program when I started with the BLM as a range rider in Vail, Oregon. I worked on some herd management issues in that job, and throughout my career. I've been a wild horse and burro specialist in the eastern states, and, I've been involved with the horse program, both as the district manager in Wyoming and in Nevada, and then again as the eastern states state director and the Nevada state director. I spent a little time engaged with the program when I was the deputy director for BLM operations, so I have a little bit of experience with the horse program from several different perspectives. So, again, we're happy to have you here in Idaho. I'm glad you got to see a little bit of our state yesterday on the tour, but before I tell you a little bit more about the public lands that BLM Idaho manages, I wanted to show you a quick video. Enjoy this.

[A video for BLM Idaho was shown]

BLM manages a variety of natural and cultural resources on nearly 12 million acres of public lands in Idaho. About 22 percent of the state. We also manage about 37 million acres of subsurface minerals in the state. Uses and activities on public land that BLM manages in Idaho support somewhere around 11,000 private jobs with an economic impact of \$1.1 billion. BLM Idaho has about a thousand employees that work in four district offices located in Boise, Twin Falls, Idaho Falls and Coeur d'Alene. We have 12 field offices located within those districts, and then we have the Idaho state office here in Boise. I'm going to talk to you a little bit about a few of BLM Idaho's key programs, and I'll start with one that is the reason why you're here, and you're going to hear about the wild horse and burro program in depth during the next presentation, I'm just going to give you a brief overview.

In Idaho, BLM manages six herd management areas, or HMAs, that encompass a combined total of about 380,000 acres. Four HMAs are in southwest Idaho, one is in south central Idaho, and one is in north central Idaho. The most recent population inventory conducted in 2018 estimated the total wild horse and burro population for all six HMAs combined at about 760 wild horses. Our AML for all HMAs combined ranges from about 390 wild horses at the low end to somewhere around 615 at the high end, so we're a little bit over, and you'll hear more about that in the next presentation, and we have no wild burros here in Idaho's HMAs. So, livestock grazing is a major use of the public lands that BLM manages here in Idaho. BLM Idaho administers nearly 1900 grazing permits and leases for grazing. In 2018, grazing on BLM managed public lands in Idaho generated 458 million dollars in economic output, more than any other BLM state. There are some exciting things happening right now with livestock grazing in Idaho. As an example, we have the Deep Creek Ranch, which is located within the field office in the Twin Falls district, and it's one of BLM's 11 demonstration projects with outcome-based grazing authorizations initiative that was launched in 2017. These authorizations emphasize ecological outcomes, in response to changing conditions, such as drought or wildfire. The demonstration projects are intended to develop and determine the effectiveness of these permits to manage livestock grazing on public lands in order to meet both natural resource and operational objectives. In the Boise district, BLM is working closely with seven livestock operators to experiment with the use of targeted grazing to establish 32 miles of fuel breaks in the area burned in the 2015 fire. You heard about some of this during the tour yesterday. The fuel breaks are being constructed alongside existing roads in an area dominated by invasive annual grasses in a wildland urban interface. We have just completed year two of the targeted grazing implementation.

Another program that we manage here in Idaho is the phosphate mining program. We administer a large program in southeast Idaho. In fact, it's the largest and most complex non-energy leasable minerals program that the Bureau of Land Management manages. Southeast Idaho's open pit phosphate mines provide 22 percent of the United States' phosphate needs and roughly 2 percent of the world's phosphate. Phosphate is used for a variety of purposes, such as making nutritional supplements for animals, chemicals for industrial use, and fertilizers for agriculture. It is a major economic driver in southeast Idaho. Since last September, we've released three draft environmental impact statements for public comment. One of these proposes expansion of an existing mine, and two propose new mines. If approved, these three projects combined would sustain approximately 3,000 mining processing plants and indirect jobs for up to 30 years and would contribute an estimated 250 million dollars annually for the regional economy. Another program that we have here in Idaho, and it's something that people think about in other states, not necessarily here in BLM Idaho, because we're normally associated with rangelands, but we manage around 200,000 acres of forest lands, mostly in northern Idaho, and we offer between 13 and 15 million board feet of timber for public sale each year. Forest on the BLM managed land in Idaho generate over 14 million dollars in benefits and contributions in terms of jobs and output annually.

Outdoor recreation is one of the six key industries in Idaho, and it's a major use of public lands that BLM manages in this state. About 80 percent of our Idaho residents participate in outdoor recreation each year, and much of that is on BLM public lands. Outdoor recreation provides 78,000 jobs in Idaho and generates 2 billion dollars in wages, 8 billion dollars in consumer spending, and 450 million dollars in state and local tax revenue annually. In 2018, approximately 5.8 million individuals visited the public lands on BLM Idaho lands, and they hit those lands to hunt, fish, ride dirt bikes, off highway vehicles, mountain bikes, boat, camp, climb, hike, bird watch, ski, and more. If you want to experience recreation yourself while you're here in town, all you have to do is go right up 8th Street, just a few blocks away, and head into the Boise foothills. BLM is a key member of the Ridge to Rivers partnership with the city of Boise, the Boise National Forest, and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. The Ridge to Rivers trail system has roughly 200 miles of multiple use trails, crossing and connecting about 85,000 acres of the Boise foothills. BLM manages more than 120 recreation sites in Idaho, including some of the most unique and special places in the state, including the birds of prey national conservation area, which is home to the greatest concentration of nesting birds of prey in North America, perhaps the world. The St. Anthony sand dunes consist of over 10,000 acres of clear shifting white quartz sand. We have over 300 miles of designated wild and scenic rivers, six designated wilderness areas, four national and historic trails, and two backcountry byways.

BLM Idaho fire and aviation program is one of the largest in the nation. We protect approximately 11 million acres of BLM, state, and private land. On average, BLM Idaho takes action on 450 fires that burn over 370,000 acres per year. The BLM Idaho fire program employs about 450 people, and we typically staff 50 engines, 11 dozers, 8 water tenders, one interagency hotshot crew, three heretic platforms, a type two helicopter and a type one helicopter. As part of that, we have partnerships, and in working with our neighbors, it's very important when it comes to being successful, fighting wildfire. The BLM partners with the local ranchers in the state of Idaho to increase fire protection resources through nine range land fire protection associations, or RFPAs. Through this program, over 300 Idaho ranchers, farmers, and range land permittees have been trained and equipped to fight wildfire on public land through agreements with the BLM. BLM Idaho transfers access vehicles, equipment, and supplies to local fire departments and RFPAs through the new rural fire readiness program that went into effect last year. Transfers made so far include surplus wildland fire engines to the Clark County Fire Department and in Jordan Valley, Oregon. We've also transferred a large amount of excess equipment to RFPAs and rural fire departments across the state, including 27,000 feet of hose, 85 radios, 30 drip torches, a hundred shovels and 50 Mcleods. Partnerships are very, very important to us.

Our fire program also includes fuels management. BLM Idaho treats about 100,000 acres annually through mechanical training, prescribed fire chemical treatments, seeding and restoration and creation of fuel breaks to aid suppression efforts. BLM Idaho provides prevention, mitigation, and community assistance, traditional and social media information, fire cause investigations, cost recovery and support for cooperators with training and equipment. BLM's work on wildfires doesn't end after they're put out. After large range land fires, BLM invests time and resources in restoring burned areas through emergency stabilization and rehabilitation programs. We do that through partnerships, collaboration with the state of Idaho and other federal agencies and the counties, we get a lot of work done on the ground, so treatments prevent erosion and invasion from nonnative plants and help restore native plants to ensure adequate forage for wildlife, wild horses and livestock. Over the past 16 months in Idaho, the BLM has completed emergency stabilization work on more than 417,000 acres and performed more long-term restoration work on nearly 423,000 acres, investing around \$9.6

million. For those on the tour yesterday, you saw the impacts on the wild horses in the two HMAs and the importance of this program and the work that's been done to ensure that the four HMAs are there for the horses.

These are just some of the highlights of BLM Idaho's programs, and as I mentioned earlier, you're going to hear more about the wild horse and burro program in just a few minutes. At this time, I'd be happy to answer any questions or entertain comments that the board might have. We really appreciate the opportunity to speak today, and I hope you have a successful and productive meeting here and enjoy your time in Boise.

Mr. French asked if they have identified any herd areas (HAs) or other horses that are not part of the HMAs. Mr. Ruhs responded that they don't have any HAs and are working on Management Plans that are going to help in the HMAs.

Ms. Carlisle asked about the Deep Creek Ranch, whether it is encompassed within BLM land or alongside it, whether it is a private ranch or not, and how the partnership works.

Mr. Ruhs responded that it has some private land and a lot of public BLM permits. It is done in cooperation through a planning process that includes the BLM and the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and others to develop it as a pilot project.

Mr. Woehl asked about intensive grazing of cheat grass.

Mr. Ruhs responded that they can provide more details on this and emphasized that targeted grazing is to create fuel breaks by allowing permittees within a confined area. It is approximately 200 feet on each side of the road for quite a few miles to graze and to reduce the opportunities for fire starts to come off the road. It has been successful so far, we're still in the early stages, there are some logistical issues with making it happen.

BLM Idaho Wild Horse & Burro Program

Heather Tiel-Nelson, Wild Horse and Burro Public Affairs Specialist, BLM Idaho

Idaho is home to six Herd Management Areas – primarily located in the southern and central portions of the state; three are located in the Owyhees, two along the Owyhee Front and the other near the Oregon border, Four Mile is north of Emmett, and Challis is south of town, Saylor Creek is south of Glenns Ferry.

In comparison to other states, Idaho's six herd management areas are small, with the exception of the Challis HMA. While three of our HMAs are within the AML, three are not. The three HMAs that are within the AML were gathered following the 2015 Soda Fire which I'll cover later in the presentation.

We conduct population inventories using a simultaneous double count method on an every other year schedule. On the off years where we may have a gather planned, we will conduct a census flight prior to gathering so we ensure we capture the appropriate number of animals. The one exception to the population inventory method that we use takes place in the Saylor Creek HMA. As the horses tend to roam in a large group and are accessible, this HMA is easily counted using a ground count method.

The Black Mountain HMA is one of three found on the Owyhee Front, it is closest to the town of Murphy. Situated on about 47,434 BLM acres it's AML is 30 to 60 horses. It was last gathered in 2015, and our most recent population inventory counted about 52 horses on the HMA, not counting the 2019 foal crop.

The Challis HMA is home to Idaho's largest wild horse herd; it's AML is 185 – 253 horses on about 156,545 BLM acres. This AML is largely based on winter range and available forage. We currently estimate there to be 349 horses in the Challis herd, not including the 2019 foal crop. The last time Challis was gathered was in 2012 where we removed approximately 150 horses.

We also conducted a small bait trap gather where we gathered 20 horses in Feb. of 2017; we removed 10 adoptable horses and returned the others to the range. We attempted to do the same in 2018 however we were challenged in court and we withdrew the decision.

Following the 2012 Challis gather, a partnership between the BLM and Wild Love Preserve was formed. It's founder Andrea Maki identified adopters for 84 wild horses. After successfully caring for these animals for a year, she now has title and continues to care for them.

This is a unique partnership between BLM and a private entity dedicated to preserving the Challis herd in their home range on private land. Additionally, Andrea Maki has received the certification to apply PZP and works alongside the Challis FO to field dart a small group of wild horses annually.

The Four Mile HMA, north of the town of Emmett, is situated on 15,441 BLM acres; it's AML is 37 to 60. We currently estimate there to be 150 horses, not considering the 2019 foal crop. The last time we gathered the Four Mile HMA was in 2009.

This HMA tends to be a little more challenging to manage as there are very few two-tracks into the heart of the HMA. While the east and west boundaries are bordered by roads, there is a large ridgeline in the middle of the HMA which also limits access, particularly when considering bait and water trap gathers.

The Hardtrigger HMA, adjacent to Black Mountain is about 60,090 acres, with an AML of 66 to 130. We last gathered this HMA in 2015 following the Soda Fire. We just released the final group of horses to the Hardtrigger HMA the end of May, so we are at the low end of the AML in this HMA.

The Sands Basin HMA is the one we toured yesterday, so you are familiar with its location along the Oregon border. It is 9,392 acres and the AML is 33 to 64; we released horses to the low end of the AML the spring of 2018.

The Saylor Creek HMA south of Glens Ferry is 94,992 BLM acres and the AML is 50; our current estimated population is 112 horses.

The interesting thing about the Saylor Creek Wild Horse herd is that it has no natural water sources, so the horses receive water solely through pipelines and water trough systems that are largely supported and maintained by livestock grazing permittees and BLM staff.

Management of the Saylor Creek HMA falls under the Jarbidge Resource Management Plan which was revised in 2015. This ROD selected an alternative to implement the Saylor Creek HMA as a non-reproducing herd. When wild horse herds have no natural water sources, policy guiding BLM wild horse herd management allows for zeroing out the area's horse population.

At the time, we believed the better option was to introduce and manage a non-reproducing herd comprised of Idaho's wild horses that had been passed over for adoption. This option would have maintained wild horses in a free-roaming status on public land while also reducing the number of horses in off-range corrals or pastures. This would have been analyzed at a later date in a herd management area plan, however the judge believed BLM should have analyzed it in the revised RMP, therefore the decision was remanded and BLM is still following the 1987 Jarbidge RMP for wild horse herd management.

Bruneau Off Range Corral (ORC)—privately owned and contracted—is not open to the public, however we do host an annual tour each spring. It is the newest facility in Idaho and opened in fall of 2015 with a 2,800-animal capacity and 1,014 mares currently in holding, including over 360 foals.

Boise ORC: 150 animal capacity, 78 wild horses and burros currently in holding. This corral hosts a lot of walk up adoptions, they are open seven days a week, it is best to call ahead and make an appointment. So far this year, the Boise ORC has placed over 200 animals into private care. Of these, 55 adopters were approved for the Adoption Incentive Program. This facility was never intended to hold horses year-round but as the need for holding space has increased nationally, we have been caring for horses year-round here since 2009.

Challis ORC: primarily hold horses there when we gather the Challis HMA. It is a BLM facility open to the public. We have limited staff and coupled with the harsh winter conditions, it is cost prohibitive to hold horses year-round. The ORC has a 200-animal capacity. No wild horses and burros currently in holding at this location.

Idaho was host to the Mustang Heritage Foundation's Extreme Mustang Makeover from 2013 to 2015. When they shifted the event to a different location, Idaho's Mustang Heritage Foundation TIP storefront trainers Matt & Stacie Zimmerman created the Mustang Mania TIP Challenge which is an in-hand training challenge. This year there were 67 trainers who adopted a wild horse or burro, and 51 of them competed this past weekend. This competition has seen a remarkable increase in participation each year since its inception. These trainers were able to show off their 90-day progress in a series of classes, including Conditioning and Handling, In-Hand Trail and Freestyle.

The Zimmermans also hosted an open mustang show over the weekend which attracted 55 mustangs for over 400 entries in a full slate of 71 classes! Additionally, six saddle-trained mustangs from the Beaty Butte training facility were all adopted, for a total of 73 animals placed into private care through this event.

Our Idaho Wild Horse & Burro program is also very fortunate to have the help of the Idaho Mustangs Club which was formed ten years ago to promote mustangs wherever possible –parades, trail rides that take place each year in one of Idaho's HMAs, and educational demonstrations during the Idaho Horse Expo, Western Idaho Fair and Murphy Outpost Days. This group does so much to bring mustang fans together and helps to promote our adoptable horses at the Boise Wild Horse Corrals.

With regards to the Soda Fire, we began gathering nearly all of the animals from the three HMAs the day the fire was called controlled. As the Black Mountain HMA was only 1/3 burned, we immediately released horses to the low AML following the gather. These horses were cared for at both the Boise and Bruneau Off Range Corral facilities until the rehabilitation objectives were met. Once that occurred, we returned horses to low AML in Sands Basin in June of 2018 and we returned wild horses to the Hardtrigger HMA just this past May to low AML. Both of the releases were wildly popular with members of the public who caravanned with us to the release location.

[A video of the return of wild horses to the Hardtrigger HMA was shown]

So this year we requested helicopter gathers for Challis and Four Mile and a bait/water trap for Saylor Creek HMA. However, due to other higher priority considerations, Idaho's gather requests were not approved at this time. We will likely request to gather these HMAs in 2020:

- Challis HMA (last gather was 2012)
 - Approximately 161% over high AML with 2019 foals.
- Four Mile HMA (last gather was 2010)
 - Approximately 293% over high AML with 2019 foals.
- Saylor Creek HMA (last gather was 2010)
 - Approximately 258% over high AML with 2019 foals.

Ten years ago, Boise District BLM Wild Horse Specialist Steve Leonard (now the Canon City, CO Wild Horse and Burro Facility Manager) took a wild idea to the management team to pair 4-H members with young wild horses to train for adoption. The vision soon grabbed hold and gained support with both BLM leadership and the University of Idaho 4-H Extension program. Each year since, between five to eight 4-H Clubs carefully select a young wild horse to train for six to eight weeks prior to offering the horse for adoption at the Idaho Horse Expo and the Western Idaho Fair. In 2014, the program expanded to eastern Idaho where several more 4-H Clubs prepare young wilds for an adoption during the Eastern Idaho Fair.

During the journey leading up to the adoption, 4-H members are teaching their young charges to lead, pick up their feet and load into a horse trailer. BLM then hosts a trail challenge where 4-H members can showcase their horse's training progress, and hopefully spark an interest in a potential adopter.

Ms. Tiel-Nelson quoted others saying the following: "For ten years now, this partnership has generated solid excitement

around our wild horse and burro program,” said Boise Wild Horse and Burro Specialist Raul Trevino. “It’s very gratifying to see the 4-H members grow and develop their skills while also helping us place horses into new homes.” “There is nothing more amazing than watching a youth touch a mustang for the first time, or more empowering than watching the same youth teach that horse to trust them as they begin the training process,” said 4-H leader Tina Reay.

[A video of the Idaho BLM Wild Horse & Burro 4-H Partnership was shown]

I would like to go back to your question about herd areas. There is one that I mentioned, a historic one that is near our four-mile herd north of Emmett. It did not become an HMA largely because of the amount of private land and available water that's in that area.

Dr. Lenz asked if they have criteria for what is considered an adoptable animal? Ms. Tiel-Nelson and Mr. Raul Trevino responded that it has more to do with available holding. For example, in Challis, there was an agreement that it would be only to those that we considered to be easily adoptable, including horses that tend to be younger. In our experience, we have an easier time adopting animals that are in that yearling to three, four year old range.

Ms. Carlisle commented that she is really impressed with what was presented about partnerships with the Idaho wild horse and burro program and asked how Idaho, despite having lost one or two key people, i.e. Steve Leonard, was able to continue successfully. How do we make sure that happens elsewhere? Ms. Tiel-Nelson and Mr. Trevino responded that local specialists have become just as passionate as those who built the relationships and are able to carry on once the others are gone. There is a great connection with the program, with the kids in the program, and with the horses in the program, we are all very passionate about this. We are blessed in Idaho to have some key wonderful volunteers who are passionate. Mr. Trevino elaborated on the program and how he interacted with Steve and the University and the kids.

Mr. French asked about population inventories and whether these were done with a helicopter, on foot, or on horseback. Ms. Tiel-Nelson clarified that it was aerial, from a helicopter. Mr. French asked about hard trigger for gathers, and whether that is based on a percentage of AML. Ms. Tiel-Nelson responded that they request to gather when we are over AML, but because of budget constraints and limited holding, we can only get what is available. We have requested that for 2019, where we are over AML, and we're hoping that our requests for 2020 will be granted. Mr. French commented that Nevada placed HMA on a back burner in terms of active management until we hit an exponential growth rate, and then we had ourselves an actual crisis. He asked, do you have other gather criteria? Ms. Tiel-Nelson responded that their goal is to reach AML and they will request gathers to get there, in order to make maintaining AML much easier, not to mention small gathers and small groups of horses for adoptions much easier to manage in the future.

Mr. French asked whether it was the 4-H Extension that came to the BLM or was it the BLM that came to 4-H. Ms. Tiel-Nelson responded that Steve Leonard's daughter was in 4H, so he had a relationship with the extension program at that time. They worked together reviewing the guidance and the guidelines and the insurance that the extension program could bring to the table. It is just as much about having the horse specialists that are passionate about it that can guide those 4-H members.

Dr. Perryman asked why the Challis request was withdrawn. Ms. Tiel-Nelson responded that it was challenged because we had an inadequate public comment period, so we withdrew the decision based on that. It was tied to work on a long-term plan that would allow us to reduce large-scale helicopter gathers and complete either darting or bait water trapping gathers, all covered under one plan or programmatic agreement. She went on to clarify that for the Boise district, Four-Mile HMA, the final decision should be in August.

Ms. Carlisle asked if there is a strategy for requesting helicopter gathers and bait water trapping and whether one is prioritized over another or whether it's all thrown into the pot and considered equally. Ms. Tiel-Nelson responded that it depends on the HMA. In some cases, it is about accessibility.

Mr. Woehl asked about water from private landowners at Sailor Creek. Ms. Tiel-Nelson responded that there are BLM and private landowner pipelines and they are maintained primarily by grazing permittees. Mr. Woehl asked whether those horses turned back to Hardtrigger were PZP treated. Ms. Tiel-Nelson responded that yes, they were PZP treated.

Mr. French referenced the Sheldon refuge in Nevada and that in the 1980s they could not use helicopters for gathering horses, so they had a number of contractors, wrangler horseback gatherers, who were very successful. It was an ongoing project to try to hold the numbers down below levels that were harmful to the range. He asked why the BLM seems to not use those types of gather methods in lieu of helicopter gathers in those areas that are not inaccessible. Ms. Tiel-Nelson responded, I think we've moved away from that because of the pressure that it does put on a saddle horse, and it's just simply not as efficient. Our helicopter gathers are able to more safely and more humanely move those horses over that tough country. The helicopters seem like a border collie in the sky and are able to guide the horses and let them pick their own way, at their own pace, to a trap. When I speak to ranchers or people who ran horses back in the day, I hate hearing the stories of the broken legged saddle horses, especially when the terrain is rough, and I think that's largely why BLM has moved away from that.

Dr. McDonnell asked, similar to the earlier question, when you do a gather, or in the case of the fire, how do you select what horses to go back out? What are the guidelines for age or similar? Other than non-adoptable? Ms. Tiel-Nelson and Mr. Trevino responded, it's largely based on age, we look at confirmation, we look at color, and we do look at the future progeny, recognizing that under the auspices of how we manage our program these days, we've got to look at the adoptability of that progeny. The age is a range from 5 to 18. This is mostly due to the fact that these horses are used to that terrain. If we were to turn out a yearling a year later, two years later after being in holding, he would probably be lost, he wouldn't recognize the area. We also look at confirmation, the demeanor of the horse. If we have a horse that could possibly be a threat, like you saw in Sands Basin yesterday, it's very open terrain, and it's very heavily populated, so we want to make sure the public is safe as well. One of the other things, here in Idaho, we work very closely with some veterinarians, like the Idaho Equine Hospital and a couple of doctors like Dr. Liz Scott, who is very passionate about working with us and helping us throughout this journey, and they give us advice. Dr. McDonnell asked if there is any data on horses returning on how quickly they reestablished a natural social organization. Ms. Tiel-Nelson and Mr. Trevino responded that there have been a few lessons learned in the case of the Soda fire. The Hardtrigger horses had been in captivity for almost four years. The horses are used to seeing a pickup with hay in the back and used to seeing Ruby and Colton and myself. We feed them, fix their water troughs, so, naturally, when we first turned them out, the dominant studs picked their mares and took off, but unfortunately, there was some stud horses that didn't quite mix in the bunch, so we saw some displacement with some of the stud horses. It has been about a year now since then and we've seen them mixing in and being able to find their homes, but the majority figured out their pecking order and just took off. You can see them now hanging out on the high ridge, where the public can't get to them. If they see you coming, they leave.

Dr. McDonnell asked about 90 percent effectiveness for the PZP treatment. Do you have any foals this year from those that were turned out last year? And how many? Mr. Trevino responded that we did not see any foals in Sans Basin. 15 mares, and no foals. I've been out in Sans Basin frequently this Spring and we do have a couple young foals out there, but those foals were from mares that we did not gather or treat. So far, no foals from those treated. They may foal here in the next month or two, but so far, I'm not seeing any wet mares or anything like that of those we turned out last year.

Dr. Perryman commented, I camped out last summer in the Owyhee desert for a couple of nights, and I had a stud horse come up on me about midnight, 1:00 o'clock in the morning, and I thought I was going to have to take some serious action. When we have more and more animals out there and we have more and more opportunity for human-animal interactions, other agencies have some kind of policy at least for grizzly bear-human interactions; they have a policy for dealing with those kinds of things. Does the BLM have any kind of a policy together to deal with those kinds of situations, officially? Mr. Trevino responded, one of the challenges in Sans Basin, due to it being a heavily recreated area, was the interaction with humans. We have had some instances where it turned a bit dangerous for that individual. So what happens after that, we get the complaints, we get the calls. Myself, other BLM staff, we mitigate the problem by setting up a bait water trap or something to catch that horse and bring them back to the corrals and remove them away from that HMA so we can eliminate the problem. If we are unsuccessful in capturing the horse, we will euthanize the horse in the field. Dr. Perryman asked, is it up to the discretion of whoever's in charge? Mr. Woehl clarified that there may instances where people are approaching the horses when they are not supposed to, stallions will protect mares, stallions will mount mares that may be in estrus, etc. Mr. Woehl asked if there is any signage to not approach the herds on horseback or be aware. Mr. Trevino responded that we do have some signage going into our HMAs, identifying that you're entering a horse management area, safety at your discretion. We do not have any specific signs that may say, for example, that it's breeding season, the studs may not be very friendly at this time of year. A lot of the problems that we see, at least in my experience, it is in the spring, during the breeding season, when the mares are in heat and the studs are trying to mix in

with the herd but the dominant stud is not letting them in, so when they see a rider, it doesn't even have to be a mare, they're in breeding season and they attempt to mount a horse with a rider. A lot of people like going up there and riding, and a lot of people really enjoy going up there and seeing the horses and interacting with the horses and you're probably right, we probably should have something saying that during this time of year, please leave the horses alone, please stay away from them, take pictures at a distance. We're also at the mercy of educating the public and, hopefully, them understanding, there could be problems.

Ms. Carlisle commented, in the case of a study in California, we are having a lot of unintended consequences when we don't put a lot of forethought into how allowing recreation and camping affects these herds, in terms of breaking them up and spreading them out. I'm happy to share that study with you all. It gave me great pause for thought, for sure.

9:45AM BREAK

BLM National Wild Horse & Burro Program

Bruce Rittenhouse, Acting Division Chief, Wild Horse & Burro Program

Mr. Rittenhouse thanked the Board members for their time. He wanted to recognize that this the wild horse *and burro* program, we do have burros. Mr. Rittenhouse thanked Bryant Kuechle and Derek Moss for facilitating and for taking notes at these meetings. He went on to say, I'd like to thank BLM Idaho for an awesome field trip yesterday. That was incredible. I think it was a good success story of what happened and what they did with that fire and making a bad situation have a positive outcome. I want to thank John Ruhs and all of his staff for their preparation, ramp up, and setup for this meeting. We want to show the board that BLM is implementing some of the past recommendations. We are happy to have Jonathan Friedlander here from New York State to give a presentation about a veterans program that he is working on with us. We also want to recognize the great partnerships that BLM Idaho has entered into. BLM cannot implement its mission without a dedicated group of volunteers, dedicated group of partnerships, that all work with us on whatever the issue may be, from wildlife and other natural resource issues, to ensure that these public lands are healthy and can be maintained for future generations.

Mr. Rittenhouse introduced his topics for the day, including the program goals from a broad, 30,000-foot level, review of some facts and figures, discuss the challenges, show our current organization from a labor perspective and staffing levels at the Washington office, and then ultimately our infrastructure of corrals.

Our first goal is to maintain healthy herds on healthy range lands. The second, including activities on public lands and off range, is to ensure the health and welfare of these animals in our care, that they are cared for in the highest manner. The third goal, from an off range perspective, is placing excess animals into good homes and trying to increase placement, whether through adoptions or sales or transfers or other programs that BLM would be interested in. We'd be interested in hearing from the Board on how we can expand this information as well to place more animals.

Goals of the Wild Horse and Burro Program:

- Maintain healthy herds on healthy rangelands
- Ensure the health and welfare of animals in our care
- Place excess animals into good homes

Facts and Figures:

- 10 Western states
- 177 Herd Management Areas (HMAs)
- 26.9 million acres of public rangelands
- 26,690 animals is the AML
- 88,000 animals on the range (March 2019)
- 48,000 animals in holding (May 2019)

- 12,000 in corrals
- 36,000 in pastures
- 4,609 adopted/sold in FY2018
- 11,472 removed from the range in FY2018

Based on our estimates of 88,000 animals on the range, I should mention this is probably a minimum. I've heard between 5 and 20 percent more than 88,000 is likely. Of note, last year we removed 11,472 animals, which was one of the highest numbers that we have removed from the range. As a result, instead of a 15 to 20 percent increase in the population from 2018 to 2019, we saw a 7 percent increase. This year we are hoping to remove about 9,000 animals and we are in the process right now.

The Washington office is a dispersed group with staff in three different locations. There are several vacant positions or in a positions on a detail. Dorothea and I are in the detail as the program coordinator and acting division chief, respectively. We have a new position that will focus on ensuring we follow CAWP principles of animal health and welfare. Overall, there are about 30 to 35 members in this program at the Washington level. Then you get down to the states, which vary. Each state within the ten states has a state program lead, and then below that, there are wild horse and burro specialists at field and district offices, but we also rely on a lot of people that have collateral duties who wear multiple hats. I think that is typical of BLM offices anymore.

Mr. Rittenhouse showed the locations of the off range pastures, with 36,000 animals on about 300,000 acres of private land. We work with these contractors to ensure that the animals are well cared for, we do inspections on those corrals, or I mean on those pastures, excuse me, and as you can see, we have one in Missouri, and, um, a few scattered elsewhere across the western states.

We are in the process right now of evaluating a new pasture solicitation that will increase our pasture holding space by about 5,000 animals. We also have public off range pastures, previously known as ecosanctuaries. We now have four of them. They are not open to the public, but we do give tours of them. There are two in Wyoming, one near Laramie, Wyoming and one near Lander, Wyoming, and then we have one in Kansas, and one in Oklahoma.

The last part of this is our off range corrals. We have 26 corrals encompassed by two types of corrals, one is what we call our prep facility, facilities like Palomino Valley, Rock Springs and a few others where the horses come in off the range, and they are prepped, and they are dewormed, they're freeze marked, the stallions are gelded, all in preparation for adoption and/or sale or to try to streamline them and move them to pastures as quickly as we can. The second type are what we call our maintenance facilities, like at Bruno, Challis, and Boise. We currently have 19,000 spaces with our corrals. We try to transition those animals as quickly as we can to the pastures and for adoptions and sales.

Mr. Rittenhouse pointed out that adoptions have been going on since 1978. A horse under the adoption program stays in federal ownership for the year until the animal is titled, and then it loses its protections under the Act. He recognized the Online Corral, started last summer as another means for people to adopt or purchase without having to go to a site first.

The second part of our focus to place animals is through our sales authority under the 2005 appropriations act, known as the Burns amendment. We do sell animals, and when a bill of sale is completed, that animal, again, loses its protections under the Wild Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Purchasers certify that they will take humane care of that animal. We've revised our sales policy to require that the purchase of more than four animals needs approval of the Assistant Director.

There was a decline in adoptions from 2010 to 2014 and an increase from 2015 to 2019. Why the increase? BLM has done better marketing of our animals. We've expanded more into the east. We've offered more animals. And we will continue to work to offer more animals. My philosophy is the more animals we can offer, the more animals we will place, but there is a capacity point that we have to deal with within our facilities. There is also a cost component with adopting animals. It costs between \$1,500 and \$1,800 to adopt an animal

The adoption incentive program, a recommendation from the Board in 2015, is meant to bring in new adopters and to reinvigorate past adopters. From that standpoint, it has been a big success. We have seen better turnout at our adoption events. The adoption incentive applies only to untrained animals. An adopter gets \$500 within 60 days from the time of the adoption, and \$500 at the time of titling a year later, for a total of \$1,000. We think it's a success from the standpoint of getting people to come out, but the program is still in its infancy. We are optimistic about it. There are people that would still rather purchase an animal instead of getting the \$1,000. The advantages are they get the horse immediately, it becomes their property, versus waiting the year. We've seen an increase in adoptions yes, but there are a lot of variables contributing to that success. For example, we offered more horses, we have had more events, so, there are multiple factors to consider. I think BLM is just getting better at trying to market our product and brand.

As for partnerships, BLM is willing to partner and collaborate with anybody who wants to work with us. The Mustang Heritage Foundation (MHF) is one of our key partners. You'll more from them later. We also have six inmate training programs where inmates train these animals. Those animals are typically all placed and many of them go at competitive auction and go for a pretty good price.

Mr. Rittenhouse talked about research: we focus our research on fertility control, vaccine formulation and delivery. We're looking at Gonacon, which is showing some promise for longer term fertility control, with a booster up to four to five years, versus PZP and PZP22. We're also looking at IUDs and spay and neuter as an active proposal. We've done small gelding studies to look at gelding stallions holding mares after they've been released. Dr. Paul Griffin has provided the Board with information on these studies. He would be a better one to present those results. We are also looking at a lot of published research on range impacts and the ecology of wild horse and burros, including movements, behavior, and safety. And then, lastly, we are researching how to improve our survey methods, which came out of the National Academy of Science report from 2013. We've looked at using drones, we've looked at using remote sensing, we've looked at using infrared, we've looked at using satellites, but we still can't count these animals perfectly.

The challenge right now with this program is that we are three times over AML and costs about \$50 million a year, which is 60 to 70 percent of our budget that goes directly to holding and caring for these animals. So, as you know, BLM released a report in 2018 to Congress, which outlined four options to address these challenges. Congress requested the report. They asked us to look at success and cost of removals, fertility control, cost of holding, etc. They asked us to provide the regulatory framework and technical protocols to start an active sterilization program.

Mr. Woehl asked what BLM is doing to improve adoptions and have more adoption events in the east. Mr. Rittenhouse responded that events in the east are more expensive. We have offices in Milwaukee, Washington, DC, and Jackson, Mississippi, so any event we do anywhere back east requires a lot of travel. Some options that we could try are more holding space, and storefronts in TIP locations. I don't know if we're capitalizing on those as well. Another challenge is the quality of horses. When we pull horses here in Idaho, they're going to probably be adopted here or in that respective state.

Dr. Lenz asked about inspections after the first \$500 payment in the incentive program. Mr. Rittenhouse responded that it requires a mandatory inspection before getting their title. In those cases, if there is any indication the animal has not been treated well, we can still relinquish and take that animal back.

Dr. Perryman asked about efforts to engage 4H in the east, simply because the density of 4H programs in the east is much higher than it is in the west. It would be a good idea to throw some bait out there and try and get on the program of the next national 4H meeting. Mr. Rittenhouse agreed and stated that the only problem is finding 4H leaders capable enough to partner and take this on, like in the case of the partnership in Idaho. The Board and Mr. Rittenhouse agreed that there may be additional opportunities with 4H moving forward. Mr. Rittenhouse brought up FFA as another organized program capable of partnering.

The Board and Mr. Rittenhouse discussed whether the incentive received by participants is taxable. It is considered income but the BLM does not issue a 1099 for payment of the adoption incentive. They also discussed the sale contract language. Mr. Rittenhouse responded that the sale contract of BLM horses does include language that the purchaser will not mistreat the animal, that she/he will treat the animal humanely, and that she/he will not resell for commercial products. The only follow-up once the sell is complete and the animal is titled is in egregious cases, we will investigate and

ultimately turn it over to law enforcement. We ask, did they misrepresent themselves in their application? If so, they could be voided for any future adoptions or sales.

Dr. McDonnell commented that, it seems from information I have received, that adoptions don't really work out for the good of the horse or the successful outcome of the owners. Is the BLM in a position to do any follow up studies on the success of adoptions? Do the horses and the adoptions meet the expectations of the participants? That information would be helpful. Do you want to comment on that? Mr. Rittenhouse responded that success is kind of a relative term. Success for the adopter may be different than our success, but, a successful adoption would be is if that animal is adopted, is cared for in that first year and titled. To me, that would be our success. So, if we adopt 2,000 animals and 1950 of those are titled and 50 are returned back to BLM for various reasons, it might be the adopter saying "I'm in over my head with this animal." That's the beauty of the adoption program, they can return it back to BLM, or BLM has, through compliance checks, determined to take an animal back and get it back in our corrals and take care of it. Looking at how many animals that we take back or the adopter returns to us, I think it's relatively low.

Dr. McDonnell commented that if BLM could gather information that indicated that most people, no matter what their expectations, that we can dispel, or confirm, that most wild horses end up not having veterinary care or not being able to be handled, etc. Mr. Rittenhouse responded that BLM could look into that.

Ms. Carlisle asked if the RFI that the BLM sent out was not just for surgical sterilization, but for sterilization techniques in general. Is that correct? Mr. Rittenhouse responded that it was specifically for surgical sterilization.

Mr. French asked of the 11,472 that were removed from the public lands or HMAs in 2018, how many of those gathers were triggered by emergency circumstances to the environment? Mr. Rittenhouse responded that it was about 5,800 through emergency gathers.

Mr. French asked if there are any contractual stipulations in the off range contracts that ensure that there is not going to be any resource damage on those off range pastures. It doesn't make much sense to me to take a problem and move it 1,500 miles to the east and transplant it to another site. I know the public off range lands could also be impacted, including for property value, resource damage, etc. Is there any kind of contractual stipulations that preclude that from happening, that you don't get too dense on those pastures? Mr. Rittenhouse responded that the evaluation process for off range pastures includes a site visit and tour, a carrying capacity analysis, and we adjust the proposed number of animals per site to ensure that the health of that land is maintained.

Dr. McDonnell made the correction that the RFI was written in general terms for wild horse and burro mare sterilization methods, and they give examples of surgical techniques and less invasive oviductal blocking with glue.

BLM Responses to the 2018 Advisory Board Recommendations ***Bruce Rittenhouse, Acting Division Chief, Wild Horse & Burro Program***

BLM responded to the recommendations made by the Board at the October 10-11, 2018 Advisory Board Meeting held in Salt Lake City, Utah:

1. Encourage BLM to gather horses in HMAs that are over AML that are reliant upon supplemental water. Once HMA is at AML, stop hauling supplemental water except under extreme circumstances. (Approved, unanimously)
 - BLM Response: Gathering and removing excess wild horses and burros from herd management areas that are over AML is one of the top priorities for the BLM. The BLM monitors range conditions in HMA's and when water becomes scarce and threatens the welfare of animals, the BLM will initiate emergency gathers to protect animal and land health. If an HMA is at AML and is achieving a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship with other uses and resources then water hauling should not be required.
2. Continue to support and increase funding and the use of programs like the Mustang Heritage Foundation Trainer Incentive Program to place horses and burros in good homes. (Approved, unanimously)

BLM Response: The BLM continues to support and fund partners, such as the Mustang Heritage Foundation, to assist in placing more animals into good homes. The ability to increase funding levels for these partnerships is

contingent on the amount of funds appropriated by Congress and the need to fund other program priorities.

3. Encourage volunteer and partnership opportunities for fertility control and adoptions including inmate training programs or 4-H and youth programs, local fertility control advocacy groups, public off-range pastures, and organizations like The Mustang Heritage Foundation. (Approved, unanimously)

BLM Response: We agree. The BLM is willing to work with interested partners who are willing to apply fertility control treatments on the range and assist with adoption and sale events. The BLM has expanded its adoption and sale events to public off-range pastures as well as the correctional facilities. We continue to proceed in developing a national volunteer network to assist the BLM to increase the use of fertility control and place animals into good homes. The Board will see examples of these partnerships later today.

4. Support the existing Great Lakes Marketing Research Report submitted to BLM. Support and implement the list of feasible recommendations from the marketing report. (Approved, unanimously)

BLM Response: The BLM has developed an action plan that addresses many of the recommendations put forward by Great Lakes Marketing (GLM) to increase placement of animals into private care through improved marketing, branding, communications, training, partnerships, etc. Among the products developed to help meet these objectives is a program Style Guide to bring consistency to advertising, signage, apparel and other brand platforms. The program also continues to work with our partner, MHF, to realize the full potential of the Trainer Incentive Program (TIP) and storefront outlets to maximize placement opportunities. The GLM recommendations continue to inform the program's actions and initiatives, and help to improve performance and outcomes.

5. Reach out to military and veteran organizations for help with adoption and volunteer fertility control application. (Approved, unanimously)

BLM Response: We agree. The BLM currently works with partners who are involved with veterans groups. You will see one example at this Board meeting of a relationship we have with a veterans group.

6. Board accepts Option 1 and the required changes to the regulation and the Act from the report to Congress as the preferred path forward to reach AML. (Approved. Split vote of five in favor and two opposed, Ms. Carlisle and Ms. Kathrens)

BLM Response: Option 1 of the 2018 report proposed that the BLM use all of the legal authorities contained in the Act, including the use of sale without limitation and euthanasia of unadopted or unsold animals. Since 2010, Congress has prohibited the BLM from using these two methods to achieve a sustainable program. The BLM strives to provide for the humane, non-lethal treatment of animals, both on the range and in BLM holding facilities.

7. The advisory board recognizes the value of and supports ongoing research and funding of humane permanent sterilization as one of many viable tools in our quest to achieve a thriving ecological balance by achieving and maintaining AML. (Approved. Split vote with five in favor and two opposed, Ms. Carlisle and Ms. Kathrens)

BLM Response: As part of its Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations, Congress asked the BLM to immediately begin designing the regulatory framework and technical protocols for an active sterilization program (House Report 115-765). In response to this language, the BLM recently released a Request For Information (RFI) asking veterinarians and equine practitioners what types of surgical methods could be used to sterilize mares, and the costs and capacity of veterinarians to conduct these procedures. The BLM will analyze the responses to this RFI as it is considering a path forward. BLM intends to continue funding ongoing research that addresses both reversible and permanent population growth suppression methods.

8. The board encourages the BLM to collaborate with interested equine advocacy groups to decrease current unadoptable horse and burro inventories. (Approved, unanimously)

BLM Response: We agree. The BLM is willing to work with interested equine advocacy groups to achieve a sustainable program, including finding effective ways to increase the number of animals placed into good homes through adoptions, sales and transfers.

9. We recommend that the BLM first focus resources on reaching AML in 3-5 years by utilizing removals as can be accomplished and accommodated by off-range holding. (Approved. Split vote of four in favor, two opposed, Ms. Carlisle and Ms. Kathrens, and one abstain, Mr. Masters)

BLM Response: Achieving AML in this timeframe is currently unattainable as it would require gathering and removing at least 30,000 animals annually over the 3-5 year period (90,000 – 150,000 in total). Currently, the BLM doesn't have the capacity and enough contractors to gather and remove this number of animals, nor does it have the preparation and holding facilities to handle this volume of removals in this time frame.

10. On the HMAs and HAs that exceed AML, initiate emergency gathers where these boundaries overlap primary habitat of sensitive, threatened and endangered species and initiate the evaluations to establish carrying capacity. (Approved, unanimously)

BLM Response: We agree. One of the priorities that the BLM has identified is to conduct gathers and removals of wild horses and burros in areas where resource conflicts occur, including areas with listed species and critical habitats. Past emergency gathers have focused on wild horse or burro health concerns, degradation of natural resources including key wildlife habitat, or to resolve an immediate threat to public safety or private property.

11. Implement safe, reversible fertility control vaccines as part of the management control to mares captured and returned to the range. (Approved, unanimously)

BLM Response: Under current direction, until populations in HMAs reach AML all excess horses and burros will be removed from the range and transferred into BLM holding facilities for adoptions or sales. Once AML is reached, the BLM can apply reversible fertility control on a larger scale, but only if and when longer term fertility control vaccines (3-4 years) are available. To treat a high percentage of mares using ZonaStat (liquid PZP) in most HMAs would require annual gathers, which is not practicable. The BLM continues to conduct research on developing longer term reversible fertility control, such as Gonacon, as a method to slow population growth rates.

[Responses continued after the presentation by the Mustang Heritage Foundation]

12:00PM BREAK

Wild Horse & Burro Program: Public Off-Range Pastures *Holle' Waddell, Off Range Branch Chief*

We're going to be talking about public off range pastures. The information you have in your binders includes statistics for the Online Corral as well as fliers regarding the adoption incentive program. We have noticed that there are certain members of the public that aren't aware of our program and its challenges. Public off range pastures, or PORPs, offer opportunities to educate and market. We have modified the agreements to contracts to include additional provisions, such as the placement of animals into private care. We started talking about housing animals, having events that included animals that were going to be available, so not the animals that were housed there at the ecosanctuary, but bringing additional animals on site and hosting an adoption or sale event. They hold general demonstrations, open house events, and we saw the visitor number go from very little to over 3,500 in 2017.

Purpose of PORPs:

- To increase public access to WHB in off-range settings
- To expand outreach and educational opportunities about WHB
- To provide additional outlets for private placement of WHB
- To support BLM's on-range management efforts with needed off-range holding capacity

Four Public Off-Range Pastures: Kansas (1), Oklahoma (1) Wyoming (2). We finalized the transition from assistance agreements to contracts in 2018, and did a solicitation and acquired an additional one, so we went from three to now four public off range pastures. As I said, the purpose of these public off range pastures is to increase public access for wild horses in an off range setting. We don't have any burros at these pastures, so it does focus on wild horses in a free roaming environment. We hope that they expand outreach and educational opportunities regarding the wild horse and burro program, and also provide additional outlets for private care placement.

The four PORPs are very accessible, they each have websites and we've been working with them to find ways to allow people to schedule adoptions and then adopt the animals on site, outside of the BLM hosted events. This would be

additional opportunities to place animals into private care, all while educating the public.

Mowdy Ranch – Coalgate, OK

- Acreage: 3,500
- Capacity: 350
- Amenities/Events: Tours, Lodging, Private Care Placement, Annual Marathon

Deerwood Ranch – Laramie, WY

- Acreage: 4,700
- Capacity: 350
- Amenities/Events: Tours, Lodging, Private Care Placement

Wind River Ranch – Lander, WY

- Acreage: 940
- Capacity: 225
- Amenities/Events: Tours, Interpretive Center, Private Care Placement

Svaty Ranch – Ellsworth, KS

- Acreage: 1,700
- Capacity: 225
- Amenities/Events: Tours, Private Care Placement

Wild Horses in Public Off-Range Pastures (as of 06/24/19): 950

The Board expressed how well the PORPs are operated and the great people that put forth a good face for BLM and the wild horse and burro program. Of note, all horses in PORPs are non-reproducing.

Dr. Lenz asked about what percent of horses end up being adopted. Ms. Waddell clarified that the animals adopted at these facilities are brought in and are not the animals at the PORPs.

Ms. Waddell talked about the effort put into the junior ranger booklet for different programs within the Department of Interior. We are revising what used to be our junior explorer book to make the messaging in the program consistent. We've hired a marketing firm to rebrand the program, and that, along with the interpretive education division, we are finding ways to communicate from an educational standpoint. We'd like to be able to use it in schools and provide it to school age children so they can learn some information about the program.

Ms. Carlisle asked about recent off range pasture solicitations and crowd solicitations and whether there are going to be further solicitations for more public off range pastures? Ms. Waddell responded that no, not at this time. The off range pasture solicitation closed, and we're in the process of reviewing the proposals and the technical team is doing their work. The off range corral solicitation is still open and has been extended to August 22nd. There will be no further solicitations for PORPs because there is a lot that goes into managing them. We have built up a good program now and we want to be able to pick up some steam, have some continuity regarding what the expectations are for the public off range pastures, get a really good schedule in line and a really good practice on exactly what we're going to do before we add additional ones.

Mustang Heritage Foundation

Randi Blasienz, Director of Operations, Acting Executing Director

Matt Monroe, Director of Marketing

The Mustang Heritage Foundation was created to support the Bureau of Land Management and finding homes for the horses and burros that are in off range holding corrals. We do that through training efforts. There was a study done that shows that the public is more apt to get a wild horse if it's not completely wild and has some level of training. So, all of our programs do have a level of training in them. The other part of our mission is to increase overall awareness of the mustang. This week, we hit 2,000 placements of mustangs and burros since October 1st, so that's three quarters of the way through our fiscal year, we still have three months left, and the highest number that we reached before now was the 1,886 two years ago. This is largely due to our trainer incentive program, which we'll talk about in a minute, but the potential for the program, the way that these trainers are working with these horses and potential adopters is just outstanding.

In 2017-18, the trainer incentive program was growing so rapidly that we had to shut down pickups for the trainer incentive program due to funding. The 1,742 horses that we moved out of holding saved the BLM \$87 million. We have involved 600 plus youth and adult trainers. We pay them for their efforts, so whether that's prize money in the events or through their participation in the trainer incentive program, we do compensate the people that we work with across the United States. We've had over a million Facebook views through our live videos at the Extreme Mustang Makeovers, over 132,000 Facebook followers, so we are reaching our mission as far as spreading awareness.

[A video of the Mustang Heritage Foundation was shown]

The extreme mustang makeover is our most known event and is highly popular. We just finished our 13th season. I still have arena dust on my boots from the arena at the Kentucky Horse Park. We had a great event. The original platform was you have a hundred days, maybe 120 days, to take a wild horse, gentle it, train it, and compete for prize and money, and then we auction the horses off. The success has been over 4,000 mustangs adopted or sold at events. We've been in 25 states, over 70 events, \$2,100 was our average auction price last year, and at the moment, we have 135,000 Facebook fans.

Our next event, we just moved our September Fort Worth event to January 23rd to 25th as of last week, and we did extend our deadline for adult applications. We have 114 adult applications, we have 49 youth applications. Something that we're also very excited about is the stock show is going to give us incredible exposure to an audience that we might not attract at a normal event. 1.2 million guests is the type of data that the stock show puts out as the number of people that attend, so as they build a new arena, we get to own the coliseum for the weekend, so we're very excited about the opportunity that we have that weekend. Mustang Magic was our traditional event at the stock show, and we had changed it into a celebrity freestyle event. We have invited, and they have accepted, eight of our top trainers and entertainers to compete for top prize of \$25,000. As I said, it was invitation only, and the stipulation is that you must have a mustang horse in your performance. You can have multiple horses, you can have people, you can have animals, props, music, costuming, so it'll be really, really interesting to see what they come up with for this first ever competition that we're introducing.

The trainer incentive program (TIP) also started in 2007. It started the fall of 2007, right as we were hosting our first extreme mustang makeover event. In the past three years, it really started to grow exponentially, and as Fred mentioned earlier, the 2018 numbers were a little bit lower due to the fact that it was growing so fast, we ran out of funding that year. We are looking at a potential of 2,500 through TIP alone for this year, and this just goes back to our partnership with BLM and your recommendation to them. They have fully supported us this year. We got into a scenario where we were also looking at having to suspend the TIP program, they did give us additional support, so we are moving forward. We're super excited. We have 413 TIP trainers approved, and that number grows each week. Olivia, at our office, is consistently going through applications from people that are waiting to get involved in the program. They are all across the United States and more and more growing in the east, which is just great, so we can get more horses out there and into adopters. The TIP challenge started several years ago where an approved TIP trainer, who wants to host a challenge in his region, is paid \$1,000 per horse that he gets involved, the adopters adopt their horse at pickup, and then the TIP trainer uses that funding to provide an event about a hundred days after the adopter's pickup. Essentially, it is a mini extreme mustang makeover. We had 18 approved TIP challenge events this year, 674 of our numbers were due to the TIP challenge, so as the extreme mustang makeover events have gotten smaller over the years, the TIP challenges are starting to step up.

We'd like to talk a little bit about the American mustangs program. It was very much an outreach program to just build

some general awareness in the American population about mustangs. It was created in 2015 to try to build awareness and start that connection to the mustang story. The campaign was under the theme of your land, your horse. It included trade show materials and advertising campaigns. We also developed the America's mustang experience trailer, it's a 40 foot trailer, custom trailer, it has multiple video screens that talk about your land, your horse on range, your horse off range, and it culminates with a VR headset experience, where you can literally stand with wild horses. This has not only been associated with a trailer, but we now go to events and just create a kiosk and allow people to put on the headset, and it's incredible, the impact it makes. Recently, there was an elderly lady in a wheelchair, she has always wanted to go see wild horses, we put that headset on her, turned her wheelchair around and watched her cry. It was like a dream come true for her. When there's a break, we do have headsets here, and if you have not put on the headsets, please do yourself a favor. It was filmed at Onaqui. The VR is a 360 environment. It allows them to literally stand in the environment, and we can then put up educational information that kind of talks to that particular situation, what's going on, the population, etc.

One of the programs that the Mustang Heritage Foundation has that currently does not receive BLM funding, but it is a program that we are proud of is our veterans and mustang program. The foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) and we do receive grants from BLM, but we also receive private support, and this is one of the programs that only receives support from private contributions to facilitate it. It was created in 2013. We have a facility outside of Austin, Texas that allows us to have horses on site, it has a covered pavilion area where we can do training, and we developed a six week program where we partner a veteran with a wild horse. We put them into the round pen under the supervision of a trainer, and the veteran was the first person to touch this wild horse. Another aspect of the program is equine education, so we spent half the time in the classroom, teaching the veteran about horse ownership, horse care, they spent the second half of the day training the wild horse, and it also created a mentoring relationship between the veteran and the trainer and the classroom facilitator. This is the last session. I watched this program. We've done it every year since 2013. We only do one or two sessions a year, our sessions are very small, usually only about six veterans and horses per session. But, the impact that these veterans get, you'll see, they went all the way from the gentling to, at the end, we do a little highlight where they go over trail obstacles and they're allowed to share their story with the group that's there on site. It's the way that we're able to give back. So, not only are we giving back to the mustang, we're giving back to the veterans, and the video that we're going to show just explains it way better than I ever could.

[A video was shown]

We are looking to grow the Mustang Heritage Foundation through additional private support. We are also looking to partner with other organizations across the U.S. that are either already working with mustangs or have an interest in starting to work with mustangs. We've always tried to incorporate youth into our existing programs, whether it be extreme mustang makeover, the TIP challenges. More and more we are realizing that the veteran population is also a population that we can really tap into and not only benefit the horse, but also benefit them.

Dr. Lenz said he was blown away by what they can do, and demonstrate at an event like the extreme makeover, with wild horses in such a short amount of time.

Mr. Woehl asked about how to grow the program. Ms. Blasiencz responded that as long as the TIP program can continue to be funded, that's just going to continue our growth. The Extreme Mustang Makeover, while it doesn't adopt out as many horses, it is the face of the mustang to the people that don't know the talents and the abilities of the horse. So, as long as we continue to be supported, we will definitely continue to do what we can to help in the off range efforts. Mr. Monroe responded that, as a marketer, the demand is there. If we can just fulfill the horses, people want them.

Dr. Perryman asked about market saturation. Do you have any idea what the goal is for this program, what is the number you are trying to achieve, or that is achievable? Ms. Blasiencz responded that we feel very confident that we could adopt out 5,000 to 7,000 horses annually in the next two years, and then we think it could grow beyond that to 10,000 annually.

Ms. Carlisle commented that the advocacy community has faced hurdles, including the best way to have healthy, functioning, long-term, sustainable relationships with our public lands partners. We tend to be a feisty group, an angry group at times. The Mustang Heritage Foundation is a model and inspiration to a lot of programs that are struggling with how to attain a healthy and functioning relationship with BLM. I would love to see information publicly available, presented next time, about how you got there, the beginning steps and the missteps. We have a lot to learn from you all.

My hat's off, for sure. Ms. Blasienz responded that it was in 2010 and 2011 that the BLM came to them and asked what they could do with specific horses they didn't want to move to long-term holding, so we created an event just for those horses. Our model is to be willing to meet their needs and be the best partners that we can be for them.

BLM Responses to the 2018 Advisory Board Recommendations (cont.)

Bruce Rittenhouse, Acting Division Chief, Wild Horse & Burro Program

12. Update and make available to all BLM field offices the existing national database to track all treated mares.
(Approved. Six in favor and one opposed, Mr. Yardley)

BLM Response: At this time there is no national database that tracks all treated animals. The Wild Horse and Burro Program System is currently not programmed for this capacity. The system can track the total number of animals treated during an individual event within an HMA, but it cannot track treatments for specific animals. Eventually it may be possible to track individual horses as the BLM begins microchipping treated animals, especially in instances where animals have been gathered, treated and released.

13. We as the board, prefer non-lethal management options for population control purposes when possible.
(Approved. Split vote of four in favor and three opposed, Mr Yardley, Dr. Lenz, Ms Kathrens).

BLM Response: The BLM agrees that non-lethal management options are preferred whenever possible.

The Board discussed how BLM knows if an animal has been treated, with regard to system tracking. Mr. Rittenhouse responded that this is why treating takes a lot of time and effort from staff and volunteers to accurately track which horses have been treated. One of the efforts BLM is undertaking is to ensure that all tracking is consistent across programming and within BLM. Part of that is understanding deeply the differences in the databases between BLM and forest service and some of these bigger players, that each field office has a different database than at the national level, and forest service has a different database than BLM, so, we've got a long way to go, for sure. Anything that we have microchipped has been entered into the national database WHBPS, but that's a relatively small number of animals.

Equicenter: Mission Mustang

Jonathan Friedlander, President and CEO

Debbie Collins

Mr. Friedlander introduced himself. We would like to thank everyone here, the board, the people who put this organizational trip together, and for inviting us. Veterans are something very special to the groups that we serve at the Equicenter. Obviously, our foundation is on horses, and when we've been able to put the two together, it's been a very special journey that we're on, and we're very thankful for this opportunity to share this with all of you here. The Equicenter is in its 15th year. We're on a very special 200-acre facility in Menden, New York, which is outside of Rochester, New York in upstate New York. We're a 501(c)(3) and we've been working primarily with our therapeutic riding and horsemanship programs. Our core programming is with horses. We have expanded into some other programs that I'll mention in a moment, but we serve approximately 115 riders a week, another 45 or 50 through some of our horsemanship programs, and we have at risk youth programs with schools. We have about 30 horses living on property. That changes week to week. We're very much a volunteer driven organization, anywhere from 150 to 200 volunteers functioning at any time. Most are in our therapeutic riding lessons and our horsemanship programming, but we have people who assist with our farming and some of the other programs.

Veterans come to the Equicenter and it is a very serene, peaceful place. They say that they can finally breathe when they get up there and let down their guard. We have waiting lists of about 40 riders at any given time. Many wanted to help with taking care of fences and equipment. We started programs involving hay production, we became self-sufficient in our hay production, we started a therapeutic horticulture and farming program, which now is contracted with the VA as a national model, and we've been told by the VA it's the leading program of its kind in the country and being looked at by other VA hospitals around the country. We've combined that with a farm-to-table cooking program, taught by veterans who are professional chefs. A veteran has the experience of being able to plant something, care for it, be outside, do something physical, but then also learn how to produce it, care for it, market it, sell it with a business plan, but more

importantly, learn how to prepare it and how to live a healthy lifestyle and eat in a healthy way.

We've expanded to include adaptive yoga and a canine assistive therapy program. We are providing a holistic approach to people who come up to the Equicenter and want to experience many different things, and some come in for one, they might come in for farming and find out we have horses or vice versa, but what that has led to is a natural development of our programming. Veterans are about 20 percent of who we serve now. Kids are still primary, that's how we started, children as young as 2 years old and adults up to 85 years old have ridden. The majority are still children, are young adults, but the adults are a large percentage now, and veterans are about 20 percent of who we serve through our programming, and that has led to a natural progression into Mission Mustang.

Ms. Collins introduced herself. I just retired after 28 years, which 24 of those years, I dedicated to the wild horse and burro program. I had the opportunity of learning the full spectrum of the program. It never failed, from day one, when I started going out to places, whether I was at an event or we were trying to place animals, I was at a horse expo trying to talk about our animals, there was always someone that came up to me and had a story about how one of their friends or themselves or a neighbor was in a therapeutic program, that they had noticed the freeze mark, and they figured out that was a wild horse. I had people that told me life impacting changes that had happened in their lives because of their involvement with wild horses and burros.

In 2005 Jonathan gave me a call. I had just left working out of our Washington office and moved back to Oklahoma. It turned out a mutual friend of ours from BLM had connected us and we were just talking about how we could integrate their interest and desire to help BLM and wild horses into their business and program. I had all of these stories but didn't know how to make some of them happen, but Jonathan and his program did. In 2013, we worked with several organizations to form a partnership that would benefit us all. That started a pilot program and we started working together. After some time, and a memorandum of understanding we worked out the best way to supply and transport horses for their programs with the help of MHF. That is just a little bit of the background about how we started working together.

[A video was shown]

Mr. Friedlander continued. The video speaks for itself as to why we're doing what we're doing. So, how did we get started? We needed to get some funding. I had a Board of Directors that said we can't do this unless we have a way to pay for it, and we were very successful and fortunate to have WW livestock systems support us, they were very generous with helping us setup our enclosure that we needed. We were working closely with BLM to find out what the requirements would be. Again, WW was instrumental and, in fact, has offered discounts to anyone who mentions Mission Mustang and wants to pursue a project like this, they're willing to extend that generosity. We have received funding from Home Depot Foundation. One of their national initiatives is working with veterans. The VA gives us money for some of our programming. Wounded Warrior Project gives us some money, so we had the funding. We also had to put together the team of trainers, Jack and Emma Muntier. Emma is a two-time champion, and it really enabled us to be able to start a program like this, because we were very fortunate to have them live in the area and are committed to working with us. They come and work with us four days a week, and then some of the other staff there helping in the project.

Mark is an Army veteran, he didn't grow up around horses, his first experience with a horse actually was riding in Afghanistan with the locals into the hills. This is Nathan, who is an Air Force veteran, and he was one of the first in the program, actually the first veteran to touch one of the horses. He's working with Hero, and if I may, just reading this quickly:

“It's only been six days I've been in the ring with him (Hero), but the changes I'm picking up are already pulling me up and changing me. He's a hero to me, and I want to be that for him, too.” Nate Bush, US Air Force Veteran

This is Brett, who is a U.S. marine, retired. He came to us, he was doing a fundraising event for a hike he started called End 22, which was referencing the 22 suicides a day of U.S. veterans. He came back from his last tour of duty, and three of his Marine buddies committed suicide. Brett came out wanting to donate funds to the Equicenter, and I said, well, I need to show you around and tell you what you're supporting. He came out, I introduced him to the mustangs, Hero came over, touched his hand, and he turned to me and said, “Can I do this, can I be part of this?” He's now active in the program, a regular, and has become a spokesperson for us and is extremely grateful for the experience. Debbie briefly

mentioned that we're trying to document the progress of both the veterans and the horses, so these are just some samples that you'll find in your packets that I distributed of a handbook we created, as well as some of the quality of life surveys that the VA uses, and we're trying to follow that to show progress.

Mr. Friedlander continued and shared several additional examples of veteran success. He went on to talk about PATH International, which is the Professional Association for Therapeutic Horsemanship (PATH) International: we are one of their premier accredited centers. Part of the goal from the beginning was to use their network of 800 or 900 centers that are members. The possibilities are endless. We also have a relationship with the British military and Prince Harry's regiment. We do an exchange every year with the British military and the idea is we try to share ideas with the British Army on what we're doing with our veterans and what they're doing with theirs. As a result of that relationship with the British Army, we were introduced Invictus Games, an olympic style event for veterans around the world. We were asked to come to Sydney, Australia last October to share what we do with horses and veterans for the 19 allied nations participating. Our goal is to build awareness and establish relationships. We want to create a scalable model, share our expertise, and collaborate and cooperate with MHF, BLM, and anyone else who wants to work on this.

Mr. Woehl asked whether the same veteran works with the same horse all the time? Mr. Friedlander explained that veterans will come for a ten-week session. We find that the key period is in the real raw stage, when the mustang first arrives is when the veteran can relate most to the hypervigilance and the stress and the desire to fit back into the herd that the veteran is also experiencing. It is one-on-one, the trainer with the mustang and the veteran, and that veteran will work with that same mustang, but there will be more than one veteran also working with that mustang. Only one at a time, and then what we're trying to do with this pilot program is to gentle the horses to a point where they can be re-homed and create space for more mustangs to come in and have the same veterans and new veterans. They become very attached to the mustangs, as you can imagine, they don't want to see them go, but as we talk about it with them, they understand their sense of purpose is to help that horse, and that there are many more horses behind that horse that need their help, and, so, that is the process that we're trying to develop, is that we can keep horses moving through the program, graduating, if you will, veterans doing the same, and the Equicenter's never going to really make a dent in the 50,000 horses that need to be re-homed, but the idea is if it's then replicated in different places across the country, as more and more centers do this, it doesn't have to be therapeutic riding centers, it can be anybody who wants to take on a project like this, as more and more get involved, that will then start to multiply the numbers of horses and veterans saved.

Mr. Woehl asked if the horses have a hard time adjusting to new people every time during their time in the program. Ms. Collins explained that they learned a lesson from having horses bonding with inmates, that having only one inmate with a horse caused problems later when the horse was adopted. So, they learned from that experience, and the point of the pilot is not to necessarily match one horse to one veteran. The model can also be used for all types of programs, including for at risk, therapeutic, etc. Mr. Friedlander added that the consistency for the horse is provided by the training, not necessarily the individual, and Jack and Emma have helped establish the consistency in technique to avoid the problems you're talking about. There are benefits to having multiple veterans work with the horse, and then the horse does not become a one person horse, and giving that horse a better chance to make it into a wider variety of different environments.

The Board discussed the MOU that is in place with Equicenter. The MOU basically says BLM will provide the animals, provide the transportation, and Equicenter is going to provide the documentation, and then BLM and Equicenter will work together to market and take advantage of any other marketing opportunities and develop a "handbook." There are a couple of other national corporate sponsorships that are in the works to help promote this program, which would lend themselves to be very significant awareness building ventures for both what veterans are facing, as well as what mustangs are.

Work Session **Advisory Board**

The Board asked BLM to provide a list all recommendations that the Board has made since 2011, and continued to discuss them, including the following:

- The board encourages BLM to continue to develop an agency wide standardized policy in written guidelines for the use of volunteers. We understand eastern states is starting a program October 1 along these lines, and we want that to continue. The BLM is developing guidelines for volunteer positions and responsibilities to help

standardize everything, including for those that do compliance checks and so forth.

- Prioritize the use of available tools in the field to reduce population growth right now and to implement promising new tools as quickly as they become available. The Board agrees that this is happening for the most part and that BLM has acted in accordance with this recommendation. The Board requested a list of gather categories or priorities to better understand the protocols for gathers as they make recommendations moving forward.
- Develop partnerships with economic agencies and/or departments to conduct an analysis of socioeconomic and environmental effects on communities with reduced AUMs on HMAs due to rain, degradation, resulting from overpopulation of wild horses and burros. Further analysis should be conducted regarding the effects of potential movement of livestock from all HMAs. The BLM recognizes that other uses of public land, such as recreation, public viewing of the horses and burros, energy development, livestock grazing, wild horses and burro herds all contribute to the economic viability of western communities and the national economy. BLM also recognizes that a decline in the health and productivity of range lands negatively affect the resources that the economies of many rural western communities depend on. Dr. Perryman referenced a study that was just completed last year on much of the substance of this recommendation, that could be used to see exactly how that compares up with the substance of this recommendation. It has everything to do with AUM reductions and the value of an AUM and the value of those reductions as they filter through rural communities. It is beyond BLM's mission and scope to complete this kind of economic analysis (to show the effect of the loss of AUMs due to horses), but I think that effort could be fostered by BLM taking a look at what is out there and how can we incorporate that into our management activities. Mr. French mentioned the comprehensive socioeconomic analysis that Dr. Harris from the University of Nevada is completing for the State of Nevada that will evaluate BLM actions and the impact in each county.
- BLM should encourage BLM Resource Advisory Council (RAC) to develop and submit for consideration their ideas for herd management and rehabilitation strategies tailored to their specific areas in HMAs based on local knowledge and experience. BLM agrees that this would allow for direct, local consideration and take, essentially, what the Board does at a national level and bring it to the local level. However, BLM is in a holding pattern after direction to reduce advisory councils by one third, which may or may not affect BLM RACs across the states.
- BLM should advertise and conduct more frequent adoption events at off range corrals to enable more horses and burros to reach sale-eligible status. BLM is actively increasing adoptions and animals available for adoption.
- Have Board members attend spay trials when they might occur, if allowed by protocols governing the trial. BLM has not spayed any mares and we are in the process of dealing with the Warm Springs issue in Burns, Oregon. Otherwise, Board members would be welcome to attend.
- The Board requests to have their next meeting in Washington, DC. BLM has already scheduled and put in the federal register the next Advisory Board meeting for October 29-31 in Washington, DC. BLM and the Board discussed inviting members of Congress to attend or to hold a social event and invite them to attend. BLM is also looking at having two meetings in 2020, one in the West and one in the East. They discussed possibly associating one of these with an adoption event.
- Phase out long term holding over the next three years and apply that budget to on range management and adoption. BLM will not implement this recommendation because we have 38,000 horses in long term holding as it is. The Board asked about older horses in holding. Mr. Rittenhouse responded that when a horse exhibits the type of symptoms typical in much older horses, such as teeth falling out and body condition declining, BLM humanely euthanizes the animal. Mr. French pointed out that the recommendation was part of a budget discussion. They were asked to balance the budget, and one of the larger expenses at the time, and continuing today, is long term holding. It was a response to meet that budget requirement. BLM also maintains records of the ages of horses in long term holding, they are aged when they are moved off the range. BLM will break down the age of horses in long term holding. The Board and BLM agree that a more detailed discussion about euthanizing practices for long term holding should happen and Washington, DC, the next Advisory Board meeting, may be a good venue for that.
- Funding mechanisms to maximize adoption and/or sales including internationally. BLM still maintains that for adoptions, the animals have to be made available for compliance inspections. Congress has given us authority to transfer animals from BLM to another federal agency, but there have been some hurdles regarding that. All of

these things are also in the context that we train horses to be saddle trained, but we cannot train them for all types of environments faced by specific agencies, such as comfortable with a helicopter flying over their head, or gun fire, like with the Border Patrol for example. We have had some success with NYPD, Arlington Cemetery, and others. There are some hurdles that we're trying to work on. Regarding international adoptions, we sell animals. We have a very successful program with the German mustang makeover, and what we do is we sell those animals to an individual, so it's not a government to government thing. The horses are trained to get acclimated to airline noise and plane noise, and then they're shipped to Germany for the mustang makeover there.

- Maintain AML by using fertility control to slow population growth. Fertility control by itself will not get us to AML in any of our lifetimes. We've got to have a toolbox full of tools to do this, because every HMA is different, every herd of horses is a little bit different. There are a few herds where that's the only tool we are using, because we are at AML, they're a small HMA, the animals are accessible to the public, or to the darter.
- Adjust AML where appropriate. BLM would follow a land use planning process to do this. It requires a lot of information and a lot of effort. It is determined through monitoring data, looking at the use of the land, actions that occur there, range land monitoring and then population data inventory. Ultimately, it is very difficult to assess AML right now, when you're so far over AML. There are instances, for example, with livestock operations, where they are not changing the AUMs but are taking a short-term action based upon drought conditions, water conditions, forage conditions. With AML, you still have to have the data to support the change. In all likelihood, AML does need adjusting, either up or down, but the data currently represents conditions nowhere near AML, a hundred times over AML. BLM provided the process for updating or preparing a Resource Management Plan. The Board and BLM discussed the use of a programmatic EIS or similar for use by the Wild Horse & Burro Program and the process for that. Mr. Alan Shepard, BLM Wild Horse & Burro Program Lead responded that AML can be changed through a site specific plan using all resource monitoring data that was collected over a period of time, population data, distribution data, removals, and habitat trends to determine the horse carrying capacity and then comparing that data with livestock use data to establish AML. Then in your next RMP amendment or renewal, you would affirm AML. In other words, a herd management plan could be used to evaluate and adjust AML, it doesn't have to be the broad scope, EIS level.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45PM.