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Three Fingers Emergency Wild Horse Gather Concludes Successfully

VALE, Ore. – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Vale District has concluded an emergency gather of wild horses in the Three Fingers Herd Management Area (HMA). Between August 29 and September 1, 2016, a total of 155 horses – 33 foals, 55 mares and 67 studs – were gathered.

All gathered horses were transported to the Oregon Adoption facility near Burns/Hines Ore., and will be offered for adoption later in the year. For viewing, the public may visit the Corral Facility anytime between regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

“This gather was safe and successful for the horses,” said BLM Vale District Manager Don Gonzales. “Our overall goal is to maintain a thriving ecological balance of the Three Fingers HMA and surrounding rangelands, and to preserve the health and well-being of the Three Fingers herd.”

The Cherry Road Fire, which started August 21, 2016, burned approximately 90 percent of the Wildhorse Basin pasture in the Three Fingers HMA, where more than half of the estimated 279 horses in the herd reside. Most critically, the fire damaged the mature seed heads needed to sustain the horses through the coming fall and winter months. The remaining 10 percent of the Wildhorse Basin pasture has limited water resources or forage. The Vale District BLM initiated this emergency gather due to the fire’s impact on forage and water resources.

Each horse gathered underwent a veterinary assessment upon arrival at the temporary holding corrals. Pre-existing conditions and burn injuries were noted on three animals and one foal with a severe hernia was euthanized.

Located 25 miles south of Vale, the Three Fingers Herd Management Area (HMA) is bordered on the east by the Owyhee Reservoir, on the south by the Leslie Gulch Road, and on the north by the Owyhee Dam. The herd population is currently estimated at 279 — the Appropriate Management Level for the area is 75-150 wild horses.

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America’s public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. In Fiscal Year 2015, the BLM generated \$4.1 billion in receipts from activities occurring on public lands.