



# BLM NEWS RELEASE

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## **Statement of BLM Director Bob Abbey on "Summit of the Horse"**

As Director of the Bureau of Land Management, which manages America's public lands for multiple uses, I am committed to meeting with diverse stakeholders who have an interest in public land management issues. I have therefore tentatively accepted an invitation to speak at an event called "Summit of the Horse," sponsored by the United Horsemen organization, which will be held Jan. 3-6, 2011, in Las Vegas. A description of the event has been posted by the organization at <http://www.horsewelfare.ca/events/202-united-horsemens-first-summit-of-the-horse-event>

The Department of Interior and the BLM have already removed from the discussion table any consideration of the euthanasia of healthy wild horses and the unlimited sale of older horses, even though these legal authorities exist under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, as amended. Having taken the position that slaughter is not a viable or acceptable management option, I will focus my remarks on the present and future course of the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program, which the BLM is committed to putting on a sustainable track, as called for by the Government Accountability Office in a report issued in October 2008. I am also open to discussing new management approaches, and have already had talks with Madeleine Pickens regarding a possible wild horse ecosanctuary.

I recently met with wild horse advocates in Sacramento, California, including representatives of the Humane Society of the United States and the Cloud Foundation. I have demonstrated a willingness to discuss the BLM's management of wild horses and burros with any organization interested in ensuring the health and welfare of wild horses and burros, both on and off the range. Some of these organizations take conflicting positions on what is the best way to manage wild horses and burros, but that is to be expected and welcomed in a nation known for free and open dialogue on controversial issues.