

Sand Springs Herd Management Area

Vale District



LOCATION: The herd area is located north of Burns Junction, Oregon. It is bordered on the east by the Owyhee River and Crooked Creek, on the south by Oregon State Highway 78, and on the north by the Saddle Butte grazing allotment boundary fence.

ACREAGE: 192,524 acres that cover 26 miles north to south and 19 miles east to west at its longest and widest points.

ELEVATION/LANDMARKS: Elevation varies from 3,000 feet in the Owyhee River Canyon to 4,500 feet.

TOPOGRAPHY/VEGETATION: The topography is gently sloping to rolling lava plateau. The lava flow is a broken surface composed of ridges, hillocks, depressions, and collapsed lava tubes, creating abrupt elevation changes of 15 feet or less. Grass species in the area include bottlebrush squirrel tail, bluebunch wheatgrass, Sandberg's bluegrass, and Idaho fescue. Common shrub species include big sagebrush, low sagebrush, spiny hopsage, and shadscale.

WILDLIFE: Bobcat, pronghorn antelope, mule deer, cougar, big horn sheep, chukar partridge, and sage grouse. The kit fox, a sensitive species in Oregon, inhabits localized areas within the HMA.

HERD SIZE: 100-200 head

HORSE COLORS: Pinto, buckskin, sorrel, bay, brown

SIZE OF HORSES: 1050 to 1250 pounds, 14.2 - 15.2 hands

GENERAL INFORMATION/HISTORY: Historically, the Sand Springs wild horse herd has consisted of a high percentage of pinto and buckskin saddle type horses, and the herd has been managed to maintain this conformation and color. The Sand Springs horses can and sometimes do, migrate into the adjoining Sheepshead HMA on the south side of highway 78, but generally prefer to stay on their home range for most of the year.