



United States Department of the Interior



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Observation Protocol and Information for the Three Fingers Herd Management Areas Wild Horse Gather

This protocol was created to ensure the safety of both the horses and the personnel at the gather site(s), and to ensure the least distraction to the gather operation.

You and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are responsible for your safety. The BLM will see that you get the best opportunity to experience the gather afforded by the terrain, conditions, and the discretion of the contractor and Contracting Officer's Representative. Access to and distance from the capture site location will be determined jointly by the Contractor and the BLM's Contracting Officer's Representative prior to gather operations. Safety of the horses, crew and public, is our top priority.

Observation will be held periodically during the Three Fingers Herd Management Area (HMA) gather, with a maximum number of 15 people attending each day. If you are interested in observing the gather, you must contact Larry Moore at the BLM's Vale District Office (l2moore@blm.gov 541-473-6218) to have your name put on the viewing list. Observation will be offered to those on the viewing list in order, based on the date in which interest was expressed in attending the gather. Viewing is not guaranteed, nor can individuals expect to view for more than one day, unless all persons on the list have been given the opportunity to view. On observation days, you must check in, in person, individually, with the BLM official at the meeting site (Gem Stop Gas Station, 5644 Buntrock Road, Marsing, ID) to be considered.

The estimated gather start date is July 26 and is expected to last no longer than four days. Dates are subject to change depending upon weather and gather operations. Some days of the gather may not provide a viewing opportunity at the capture site, due to variable circumstances such as moving the trap location (not gathering), no safe area to view activity or disguise vehicles, etc. Notice on the days where no viewing opportunity exists will likely be given on short notice -- perhaps the day before or the morning of the gather operation.

Observers will meet for a short briefing and then be led to and from the gather site by BLM employees. Personal, high clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicles are **REQUIRED**. If you do not have adequate transportation to the observation area, you may attempt to carpool with other observers (at their discretion), but this option is not guaranteed. Make sure the gas tank is topped off and that tires, including spares, are properly inflated. Travel time from the BLM to the observation areas varies between 1-2 hours. Road conditions will range from paved highway to rough and rocky primitive roads.

Dependent upon the final gather location, following the drive, there may be a hike from the parking site to the gather observation location of up to several miles.

Dress appropriately for field conditions and to reduce your visibility to the horses. Wear sturdy, broken-in field boots/shoes – count on rocky, rugged terrain, with sagebrush and rocks. Do not wear brightly colored clothing – especially hats; earth tones or dark colors are best. There may be a

need to walk a distance to the viewing area; the distance could range from a few hundred yards to more than a mile. Please bring a lunch and water for the day. Binoculars, camera, lenses, a chair to sit in, etc. and all other personal items should be brought at your necessity and portable enough to carry to the observation site in a single trip. Anything that is packed in must be packed out. There are no amenities – including no restrooms – and little shade at the observation areas. Please plan accordingly with plenty of water, a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, etc. Temperatures will likely be very high.

The observation area will be marked or designated. Observers are not permitted to leave the observation area unknowingly to or unaccompanied by a BLM representative—with the exception of restroom breaks. Trips to personal vehicles will be limited according to how far away the viewing area is from the parking area. At all other times, observers must stay within/behind the designated area – walking around the gather operation/site is not permitted.

Visitors arriving at an observation site without attending the briefing and subsequent caravan shall not participate in the observation day. Visitors not associated with the observation day will be escorted away from the operational area to ensure their safety as well as the safety of gather personnel and the horses.

Observers are prohibited from riding in government and contractor vehicles and equipment.

Observers are also prohibited from climbing/trespassing onto or in the trucks, equipment or corrals used in the gather operation. These items are property of the private contractor.

Observers should direct their questions/comments to one of the designated BLM representatives on site. As an organization, the BLM prefers to share information with the entire group and limit one-on-one conversation in order to limit miscommunications or misunderstandings. Observers shall not engage with other BLM or contractor staff.

Observers will be polite, professional and respectful to BLM managers as well as staff, contractors and employees.

The BLM will caravan with observers from the observation area or temporary holding facilities to the meeting site no later than 3 p.m., or as soon as gather operations have stopped for the day.

Uncooperative observers will be escorted away from the gather site by BLM Law Enforcement personnel, and will be prohibited in participating in any subsequent observation days if they are available.

I have read, understand and agree to comply with the above protocols.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____