

National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting  
Phoenix, AZ

February 9-10, 2004

Board members present: Robin Lohnes, Hilleary Bogley, Dr. Jay Merriam, Dr. Wayne Burkhardt, Larry Johnson, Dr. Vernon Dooley, Renee Taylor, and Gary Zakotnik. Board member not present: Bill Higham. Washington Office and BLM staff: Ed Shepard, Tom Dyer, Jeff Rawson, Don Glenn, Sally Spencer, EK James, Dean Bolstad, Lili Thomas, Glade Anderson, Shane Banks, Ramona DeLorme, Elaine Zielinski, AZ State Director, Kelly Grissom, AZ, Bob Abbey, Nevada State Director. USDA, Forest Service representatives: Ralph Giffen, WO liaison, and Toni Strauss, USDA, FS, WH&B Specialist, Reno, NV.

Robin Lohnes, Co-Chair opened the meeting at 8:00 a.m., February 9, 2004. She introduced Ed Shepard, Assistant Director, WO-200, the Advisory Board members, along with the two newly appointed members, Dr. Vernon Dooley and Renee Taylor.

Elaine Zielinski, Arizona State Director, welcomed the Board to Arizona. She explained that Arizona has more burros than horses. The Buddy System pilot program, in Arizona, has had a lot of success. Adoption numbers have increased about 20% along with the compliance rate. Arizona is upgrading the facility in Kingman, AZ, with existing construction funds, to help prep horses. There are 240 animals in the facility now. When the facility is completed next fiscal year it will have a capacity of 500.

Kelly Grissom, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, stated that Arizona was one year away from getting to AML. They are using bait trapping to capture the burros. Arizona has 10 herd management areas. They have zeroed out the population at the Tassi Gold Butte HMA. The Black Mountain Nuisance herd management area has the largest population of 474.

### **November 2003 Minutes**

The minutes were approved by the Board, with corrections to the first Advisory Board Recommendation.

### **November Recommendations/Response**

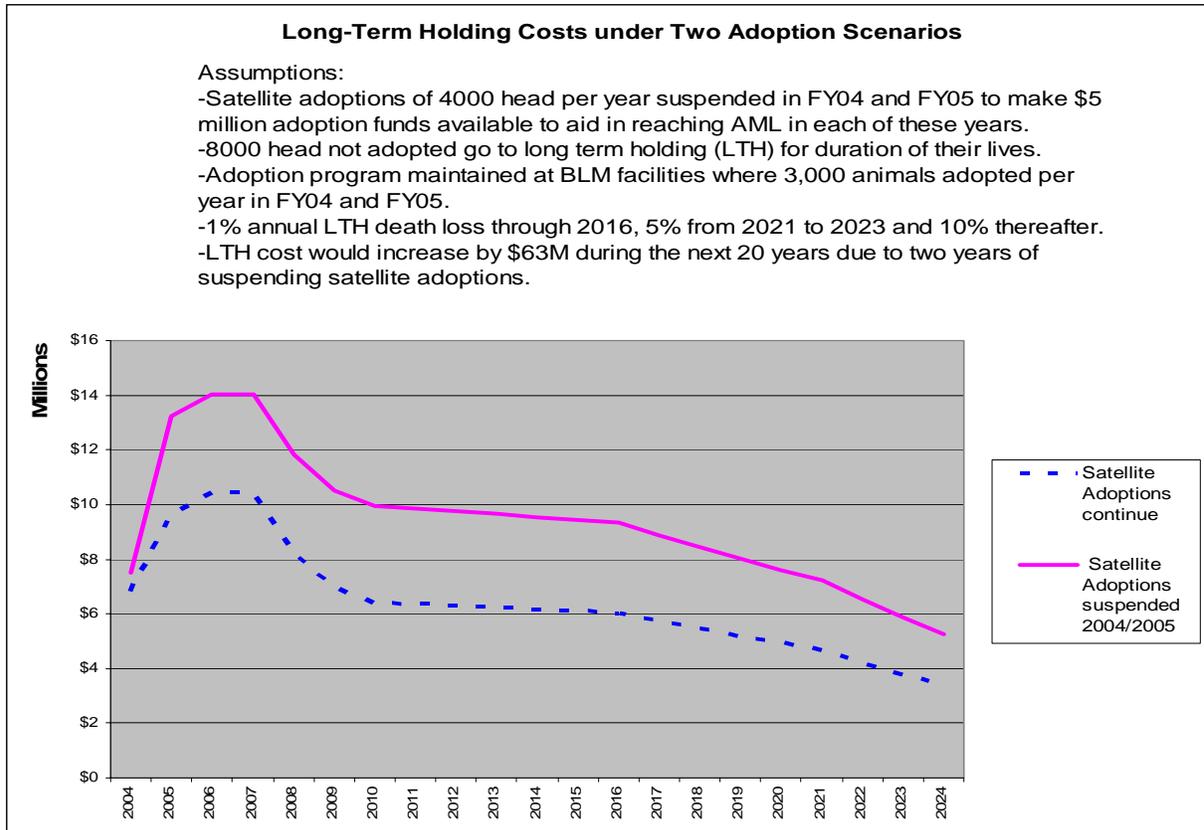
Ed Shepard reviewed the November 2003 Recommendations:

1. The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends BLM analyze prioritization of the long-term holding as a primary method of obtaining AML by corresponding reducing the budget for adoptions, costs of all associated program elements, such as short-time holding, opening facilities for periodic adoption, and inoculations should be included in this budget analysis.

Approved May 10, 2004

## Reducing the Budget for Adoptions

The costs for long-term holding were estimated and compared for two adoption scenarios: 1) continuation of the existing program of adoptions at both BLM facilities and satellite events and 2) continuation of adoptions at BLM facilities with suspension of all satellite adoption events during 2004 and 2005. Base assumptions for this comparison and estimated long-term holding costs for each of these alternatives are displayed in the following graph.



This information indicates that suspending satellite adoptions for two years would result in significantly greater long-term holding costs over the next 20 years to maintain animals that would not be adopted. In the short-term, as much as \$10.0 million may be able to be diverted from the Satellite Adoption Program to support animal removals, but the consequence is that an additional cumulative long-term holding cost commitment of \$63.0 million would be incurred over the next 20 years.

2. The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends that BLM survey facility managers and veterinarians to consider reducing the time in short-term facilities. Results of the survey should be coordinated with the requested cost benefit analysis. Dr. Jay Merriam will be the Board's liaison.

BLM has reviewed vaccination protocols, worming, castration, coggins testing, timing of transportation to long term holding, and disease transmission risk. Changing practices to accommodate shipping directly from a trap site to long-term holding facilities would essentially involve transferring preparation of animals from short-term facilities to gather sites and to long-term holding facilities. This may create greater cost and risk to animal health. Analysis indicates newly captured animals need time to adjust to captivity. Shipping sooner than 45 to 60 days after capture and initial preparation may not be prudent.

BLM looks forward to further discussion with the Board before final resolution of this issue.

3. The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends that BLM do a cost benefit analysis to include the impact on both budget and staff on the following: Keeping PVC and Elm Creek open on Saturdays, either every Saturday or one Saturday per month, seasonally, for potential adopters to view animals and/or adopt animals.

A cost benefit analysis of Saturday adoptions at the National Wild Horse and Burro Facility at Palomino Valley, Nevada and the Mid-Continent Wild Horse and Burro Facility at Elm Creek was completed for the Advisory Board's Review. The analysis identified the impacts on both budget and staff considering overtime costs, use of alternative work schedules, use of part-time employees, use of volunteers, increasing staff, additional contractor costs, and the adoption demand that has occurred since 1993 at the two centers.

BLM looks forward to further discussion with the Board before final resolution of this issue.

### **Steering Committee Update**

The Steering Committee will meet on February 26, 2004, in Sacramento, CA. The agenda will include Bureau priorities, budget, new way of doing business, gathers, looking at bureau-wide rather than state-by-state.

### **BLM FY04 Program Update – Gathers, Fertility Control, Facilities, Adoptions**

A general discussion was held on the planned removals of animals in FY04, and if there were facilities available to handle the horses from the proposed gathers. Dean Bolstad noted that there are 21,500 animals in captivity, 8,400 are in BLM facilities and 13,100 in sanctuaries and long-term holding. The Board asked that BLM include two other columns within the 2004 Gather Schedule chart. The two columns will include an AML column and a column for the number of animals remaining in the HMA after the gather is completed. The Board would like to receive the flow charts on a monthly basis. BLM has solicited bids for one or more long-term holding contracts. If funding is available, these contracts

could be in place by fall, 2004. It was noted that there has been disagreement about the reproduction rates in wild horses. It was suggested that a graduate student be employed to analyze the volumes of population data that the Bureau has accumulated. Jeff suggested that this needs to be considered by the Research Committee.

**Fertility Control Update:** BLM's current research involves PZP field applications in individual based and population based trials. Research activities are funded by Biological Resources Division (BRD). The vaccine and monitoring costs are funded by BLM. The Board reminded BLM that during their meeting at Denver, CO, August 26, 2002, they had recommended monies stay within the Wild Horse and Burro program and not be spent on obtaining vaccine or monitoring. The Board also inquired on what percentage of the wild horse and burro funds have been used for research. They asked BLM to check with BRD to see if they have monies available.

**Aerial Census Estimation:** BRD is funding this research plan. A study plan was reviewed by BLM, the WH&B Research Advisory Team, as well as the Game and Fish within the State of Wyoming. Larry Johnson stated that there is research going on with wildlife census, with the use of thermal census via satellite. The Board would like to have this as an agenda item for the May 2004 meeting.

**Adoptions:** Sally Spencer updated the Board on the adoption program. There has been an average of 110 animals adopted per adoption in Eastern States this year, up from 105 in FY 2003. The increase in adoptions is due primarily to the assistance of the Public Affairs person. Also, BLM is trying new ways to promote adoptions. One way is with Internet advertisement.

### **USDA, Forest Service Update**

Ralph Giffen reported that Toni Strauss has been hired to be the USDA, FS, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, in Reno, Nevada, although he will still be the national liaison for Forest Service. An Interagency Agreement with the Forest Service and BLM has been proposed and is now being reviewed at the BLM's Solicitor's and the Forest Service attorney's office. Ralph reported the Forest Service has \$1.2 million for their gathers. The money is available in FY 2004 which can be rolled over into the next Fiscal Year. The agreement will aid in moving the money between BLM and the Forest Service. In northern New Mexico, Carson National Forest, they have gathered 30 horses and plan on gathering another 30 to get down to AML. The Farmington area is planning to gather at the end of the summer, with the assistance from BLM branding the horses. The BLM budget will determine the Forest Service gathers at Murders Creek (two law suits that are resource-based). The horses are impacting the riparian areas. Murders Creek is on the BLM schedule for gather in September. Adoption procedures are similar to the BLM's. Long-term holding cost is a new concept for the Forest Service and it will need assistance from the BLM. BLM may commit to the Agreement by the end of the Fiscal Year 2004. Toni Strauss will be working with Bea Wade. Developing needs include: (1) Murders Creek, and (2) Modoc the Devils Garden Plateau, with 600 head over AML. Their population has increased 100% within the last three years. The Forest Service's major

concern is the adequacy of information, acreage, territories, getting the information on GIS data base. The Board was supportive of the Agreement and would like to have it completed by September 30, 2004.

### **2004-2006 Advisory Board Charter**

The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Charter is a 2-year charter. The time span for the last charter renewal was January of 1998 to December 31, 1999. It took 6 months longer to approve the last charter. The only change in the current charter is the deletion of the 120 day selection of the Board members, in order to provide continuity and consistency. The Board stressed that it is imperative to get this charter signed so that it does not take another six months. Sharon Kipping has reviewed the guidance procedures and will get the process working timely on the scheduling of the charter and the nominations.

### **Long-Term Holding and Adoptions Costs**

Jeff Rawson discussed reducing the budget for adoptions. The Board had recommended that BLM analyze de-emphasizing adoptions and moving horses to the long-term holding facilities in order to make more funding available to achieve AML. It was noted that the cost would be higher to put animals into a long-term holding facility. Reduction in the BLM budget has limited removal of excess animals. At the August 2002 Advisory Board meeting, a cost-savings report was done. The Board delayed the discussion so that Jeff could look over a copy of the report.

The Wild Horse and Burro program has identified the need for \$12.8 million in addition to its current base funding of \$29.4 million. The Appropriations Committees of both the House and the Senate need to approve additional funding for the program. The discussion of the implementation of a contingency plan in case of the failure to successfully achieve the reprogramming funds for the Wild Horse and Burro Program followed. While BLM acknowledged the benefit to advance planning, it noted that it was difficult to plan gathers due to the current budget situation. Dr. Burkhardt asked how much of a delay there would be in reaching AML if the program does not get the requested monies. According to Jeff, BLM will not be able to do any removals until October 1, 2004 (beginning of FY 2005). By then, there would be an additional 8,000 animals added to the population, counting both the 2003 and 2004 foal crops.

### **Facility Manager/Veterinarian Questionnaire**

Dr. Jay Merriam summarized the results of the veterinarian questionnaire circulated to facility managers, and commented that it had received a good response from the field. The premise was to shorten the time animals targeted for long-term holding spend in short-term holding and to re-examine the health strategy on the horses in order to ensure it would be cost-effective. It was recommended that a team look into a Targeted Health Care Program. The team will be led by Glade Anderson and should be comprised of facility managers and

veterinarians. An update will be provided at the next Board meeting. It was also recommended to consider discontinuing the West Nile vaccinations if deemed appropriate.

### **Facility Weekend Adoptions**

Glade Anderson, facility manager at the Palomino Valley Center, Reno, Nevada, presented a full cost benefit analysis of increased weekend hours for adoptions at Palomino Valley and Elm Creek. The health and welfare of the animals and customer satisfaction were taken into consideration. The analysis identified the impacts on both budget and staff considering overtime costs, use of alternative work schedules, use of part-time employees, use of volunteers, increasing staff, additional contractor costs, and the adoption demand that has occurred since 1993 at the two centers. (See attached: The Benefit/Cost Analysis of Saturday Adoptions at the National Wild Horse and Burro Facility at Palomino Valley, Nevada and the Mid-Continent Wild Horse and Burro Facility at Elm Creek, Nebraska, February 9, 2004.

### **National Marketing – Adoption Action Plan**

Sally Spencer updated the Board on the marketing plan. A core group of BLM employees comprised of Marketing, Public Affairs, and Wild Horse and Burro State Leads will develop an Adoption Plan that includes providing national program direction to increase efficiency and make the best use of expertise, personnel, and financial resources. The group is considering a national wild horse and burro adoption strategy with the following components: identification of available markets for animals; mustang image rebranding to increase marketability of the animals; centralization of the adoption process to provide national oversight for scheduling and conducting adoptions; and expansion of the use of volunteers.

Public comments began at 3:58 pm.

### **Tuesday, February 10, 2004**

Robin Lohnes opened the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting at 8:00 AM.

Dean Bolstad clarified the source of funding for current research projects. Biological Resources Division (BRD) is paying for all aspects of the Individual Animal Based PZP trials. Pertaining to the Population Based Trials, the BRD has purchased 200 doses of two year PZP and BLM provided 800 doses. All costs for the Freund's Modified Adjuvant study are paid for by BRD and a grant to Zoo Montana, except that BLM pays holding costs for the 15 study mares. BRD funding supports the census research. Efforts will be made to cut PZP production costs in half by refining the cold extrude method.

The 1992 Strategic Plan was discussed and it was noted that a copy of the plan should be given to the two new Board members. The Board emphasized the need to have the BLM Director sign the updated Strategic Plan.

Per the previous day's discussion regarding cost savings, Larry Johnson reviewed the Advisory Board Budget Subcommittee recommendations from August 26-27, 2002. Robin noted that these recommendations need to be brought back on the table. After reviewing the recommendations, Larry acknowledged that, in fact, both Jeff and Dean were looking at these recommendations and many were already underway.

The Board inquired on the status of the proposals for long-term holding facilities from the Chickasaws and Langston University. Lili Thomas reported that the Chickasaws were no longer interested due to mixed opinion among their own group. Langston University has not made any follow up contact with her in reference to their proposal.

While BLM is currently facing budget challenges, Jeff Rawson reviewed the many accomplishments within the Wild Horse and Burro program. He spoke about the 4-year contraception research that is ongoing. BLM is currently utilizing the 2-year vaccine wherever appropriate. There is a National Gathering Contract which saves BLM monies. The selective removal criteria is being changed for the field offices to return 5 to 9 year olds back to the range. A team has been formed with Glade Anderson as lead to look at a Regional Contract for hay and trucking. BLM has gone to a national vaccine contract. With regard to the adoption and holding pipeline, BLM would like to move horses as quickly as possible into long-term holding. For example, mares that are in foal need to be shipped if possible to long-term holding facilities where they foal better. Currently, the mares stay for three months after foaling in the short-term holding facilities. Jeff also reported that the Eastern States Evaluation has been completed and a report is due in late spring. Overall, BLM is looking internally to become more efficient.

It was noted that the next Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for May 10-11, 2004, in Tulsa, OK with a possible field trip to the Foraker Long-Term Holding Facility on Sunday, May 9, 2004.

The Advisory Board's recommendations are on the following page.

Meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM, Tuesday, February 10, 2004.

National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Recommendations  
Phoenix, AZ

February 9-10, 2004

1. The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends that the Bureau of Land Management analyze a targeted health care approach for all removed animals.
2. The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends that BLM consider discontinuing West Nile vaccinations and target use of remaining vaccinations as appropriate.

# **Benefit Analysis of Saturday Adoptions at the National Wild Horse and Burro Facility at Palomino Valley, Nevada and the Mid - Continent Wild Horse and Burro Facility at Elm Creek, Nebraska**

February 9, 2004

## **Issue:**

During the November 3-4, 2003 National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting, the board members recommended that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) complete a cost benefit analysis on keeping the National Wild Horse and Burro Center at Palomino Valley (PVC) in Reno, Nevada and the Mid-Continent Wild Horse and Burro Facility (EC) in Elm Creek, Nebraska open and staffed for adoptions on Saturdays. The board asked that the analysis include keeping PVC and EC open on every Saturday or a varied schedule of one Saturday per month depending on the season, for potential adopters to view and/or adopt animals.

## **Current Situation:**

Presently, PVC has eleven positions on staff. This is a reduction from 14 positions when PVC was open for Saturday adoptions in 1996. PVC has experienced a significant change in their workload. This increase in workload has impacted the capability of staffing for Saturday adoptions. PVC is now gelding all male horses two years of age and older entering the corrals. This process has added an additional two weeks of work for every 1,000 animals prepared at the corrals. This workload will undoubtedly continue because of the need to place adoptable animals in Long-Term Holding facilities. PVC has provided assistance to other BLM offices for adoption, gathers, and implementation of fertility control research trials.

The Elm Creek Facility (EC) only has four employees consisting of a manager, staff assistant and two wranglers. With only four employees, Saturday adoptions at EC would require new hires. Elm Creek employees also frequently assist other BLM offices with their adoptions events.

Identified in this analysis are the impacts on both budget and staff considering the following alternatives for Saturday adoptions:

- Overtime costs
- Use of alternative work schedules
- Use of part-time employees
- Use of volunteers
- Increased staffing
- Additional contractor costs
- Adoption demand at the two centers

## Overtime of Existing Crew

By only utilizing existing staff, overtime will be required to do Saturday adoptions. Overtime of the existing crew at PVC and EC would result in WG-6 Wranglers working Saturday at \$22.50 per hour or \$180 a day. In addition, procurement rules mandate that a cashier needs to exchange money and most wranglers may not be familiar with the process of approving applications and processing the Private Maintenance and Care Agreements (PMACA's). This would require a staff person to take money requiring three people to be on site. Most staff positions are GS-7 and their overtime costs would be estimated at \$27 per hour or approximately \$216.

Position	Grade	Hourly Overtime Rate	Hours Worked	Overtime per Saturday
Wrangler	WG - 6	\$22. 50	8	\$180
Wrangler	WG - 6	\$22. 50	8	\$180
Staff Assistant	GS - 7	\$27.00	8	\$216
<b>Total Overtime Costs/day</b>				<b>\$576</b>

Overtime expenses for one year working every Saturday except those associated with holidays would be:

- ✓ 48 Saturdays X \$360/day = \$17,280 per year in OT for wranglers
- ✓ 48 Saturdays X \$216/day = \$10,368 per year in OT for a staffer

This option could be utilized on a short-term or periodic basis. The existing PVC staff is presently required to work at least one weekend per month. Additional overtime could not be sustained on a regular basis without impacting employee safety and morale.

## Alternate Work Schedule

The number of employees at PVC has fluctuated during the ten years from 14 positions to the present 11. During the 90's, the maintenance/animal caretakers and the wrangler staff did work alternate schedules. This was changed when three term positions ended, reducing the staff at PVC to its current level. This change made it no longer possible to maintain the level of work required Monday through Friday and continue to have a large enough staff for Saturday adoptions, as well as provide for employees days off. At PVC the adoption administrative workload could be covered by switching the adoption clerk position to an alternate schedule. PVC's adoption clerk position is the only position that could be changed to a Tuesday-Saturday work schedule at this time.

At EC there are an insufficient number of present employees to consider an alternate work schedule without hiring new individuals.

## Use of Part Time Employees at Facilities

Hiring part-time employees that only worked weekends would be problematic in working the animals and the cost of part-time workers might be equal to that of overtime employees. It also would require hiring additional personnel. Part-time employees would have difficulty staying aware of the status of animals throughout the facility and have difficulty keeping up with changes during the week in moving, sorting and receiving of animals.

## Use of Volunteers

Volunteers could be used on Saturdays to help assist with the public by being available to talk to visitors about the program, show the prospective adopter the animals available for adoption and assist the administrative person with adoption paper work. When using volunteers, BLM personnel still need to be present to approve application and sign PMACA's. Under present policy volunteers can not sort wild horses and burros due to safety issues.

## Increase staffing

Implementation of every Saturday adoptions would require, at the minimum, two new wranglers at each facility and one adoption clerk at EC. At least two wranglers are required to work horses safely for both the animals and the employees at any one time. One could show people the animals then both would be available to sort and load out the adopter. Also required would be an administrative person for each facility to work on Saturday. PVC has two administrative positions; however, EC only has one individual, and would need to hire an adoption clerk to cover Saturday adoptions.

### Increase in Personnel Costs

Positions	Grade	Yearly Salary
2 Wranglers @ PVC	WG - 6	\$100,000
2 Wranglers @ EC	WG - 6	\$100,000
1 Adoption Clerk@ EC	GS - 7	\$50,000
<b>Total Increase per year</b>		<b>\$250,000</b>

## Contractor Costs

Saturday adoptions would increase veterinarian costs at both PVC and EC. At PVC the additional adoption workload would also place demands on the Nevada State Brand Inspectors.

The cost of having both the Nevada State Brand Inspector and a Veterinarian available every Saturday at PVC would be \$300 per Saturday.

- Yearly cost: 48 Saturdays @\$300 per event = \$14,400

For EC the veterinarian costs would average approximately \$150 per Saturday.

- Yearly cost: 48 Saturdays @ \$150 per event = \$7,200

## Effects of Adoption Demand on Facility Adoptions

Permanent WH&B facilities that have been in place for a significant length of time may incur challenges in increasing their adoptions. PVC has been in place for 25 years and the amount of adoptions per year has stayed fairly consistent, averaging approximately 200 adoptions per year.

Elm Creek, when it opened in 1994, saw a very expansive adoption market with great adoption success over the first few years, but has been experiencing a steady decline. Considering Elm Creek adoptions as well as Wyoming BLM adoptions in Nebraska, there have been approximately 7-9 adoption events per year over the past nine years. This is a significant amount of events year after year and an increase in adoptions could be difficult. Numbers adopted at EC ranges between an averages of 400 head during FY95-FY97 to 250 head during FY98-FY03. Table 1. Lists the number of adoption by facility.

Table No.-1 Palomino Valley and Elm Creek Adoptions 1993 through 2003.

<b>ADOPTION NUMBERS FOR FACILITIES FISCAL YEAR 1993 THROUGH 2003</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>PVC Adoptions</b>	<b>EC Adoptions</b>
FY 1993	278	Not open
FY 1994*	514	Not open
FY 1995*	417	515
FY 1996	177**	743
FY 1997	170**	768
FY 1998	154**	293
FY 1999	172	310
FY 2000	151	279
FY 2001	149	246
FY 2002	117	244
FY 2003	127	167
<b>Total Adoptions</b>	<b>2,426</b>	<b>3,565</b>

\*Group Adoptions of up to twenty head per individual were common during these years.

\*\*PVC was open only on Friday and Saturday once a month.

From FY 1996 to FY May of 1998, PVC did adoptions one weekend a month being open only on the one Friday and Saturday of each month. Table – 2 shows the adoptions that took place during these Friday and Saturday adoptions. The policy was changed back to being open for adoptions Monday through Friday in 1998, responding to public request for weekly service. Since then, Saturday adoptions have only been held on special events.

The last weekend adoption held at PVC was on November 15, 2003. At that event, very high quality animals were available and a very good marketing approach was used to make potential adopters aware of the event. However, only 18 out of 114 animals offered were adopted. The cost for the day was \$8,463 or \$470 per animal.

Twenty two (22) adopters signed up and received bid sheets for the event. One half, 11 potential adopters were from Nevada and 11 from California. Successful adopters included 8 from California and 6 from Nevada.

The majority of the animals offered were held for this Saturday adoption event. It is believed that many of the Nevada adopters and some of the California adopters would have attended an event during a week day. The quality of the animals offered was the primary drawing point, not a potential adopter's access to animals on a weekend.

Table 2.shows that in during FY 96 through FY98, most adoptions took place on Friday, except during special events held on a Saturday.

Table 2. - Palomino Valley adoptions between FY 1996 through FY May of 1998

FY	DATES	ANIMALS ADOPTED		
		Friday	Saturday	Sunday
FISCAL YEAR 1996	12/8-9/1995	77	1	
	Jan-96	0	0	
	2/9-10/1996	15	0	
	3/8-9/1996	13	0	
	4/12-13/1996	12	0	
	5/10-11/1996	22	0	
	<b>6/15/1996*</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	
	7/12-13/1996	2	0	
	9/13-14/1996	27	0	
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>168</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>
FISCAL YEAR 1997	10/11-12/1996	19	0	
	11/8-9/1996	21	2	
	12/13-14/1996	26	0	
	1/10-11/1997	9	0	
	2/14-15/1997	18	0	
	3/14-15/1997	3	0	
	4/11-12/1997	28	1	
	May-97	0	0	
	<b>6/13-15/1997*</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>
	7/11-12/1997	6	0	
	Aug-97	0	0	
9/12-13/1997	8	0		
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>161</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>
FISCAL YEAR 1998	10/10-11/1997	6	0	
	11/7-8/1997	12	0	
	12/12-13/1997	20	0	
	1/9-10/1998	4	0	
	2/13-14/1998	14	0	
	3/13-14/1998	23	0	
	4/10-11/1998	17	0	
	May-98	0	0	
<b>6/13/1998*</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>		
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>96</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>425</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2</b>

\* Dates of National Wild Horse and Burro Show

Elm Creek does not have any specific adoption numbers for Saturday adoptions. EC has done off-site, satellite type adoptions around the state and the bulk of the adoptions would occur on the Friday portion of the adoption with a few on the Saturday portion. From FY 98-FY03, EC has had adoptions every other month on a Friday and some of those events were Friday-Saturday satellite events in other towns. From FY98-FY03, EC was open by appointment to adopt studs and geldings 2 years old or older by appointment. In FY- 04, we have been doing adoptions any day of the week by appointment of all classes of animals.

## **Summary/Conclusions**

Adoptions on every Saturday at the National Wild Horse and Burro Facility at Palomino Valley in Reno, Nevada and at the Mid-Continent Facility in Elm Creek, Nebraska would increase both facilities costs. In addition, current staffing at both facilities is inadequate to support more than occasional Saturday hours for special adoption events or walk-up appointments.

Adoption demand at PVC is more influenced by the color or quality of animals present than it is by the hours of service. The data in Table 1 shows that when PVC was open one weekend per month (Friday and Saturday), from 1996 through a portion of 1998 that 93 percent of the animals were adopted on Fridays with only seven percent on Saturdays. Adopters seemed to be motivated by a “get there first” mentality rather than the availability of Saturday service.

Observations and experience at PVC also indicates that there is higher adoption interest when there are colorful or high quality animals present, and very little interest when average or non-colorful animals are present. Since July, 2003 horses and burros from seven HMAs have been present at PVC. High interest by a few individuals was and is being shown for animals from three HMAs with almost no interest in animals from the other four.

The best approach and use of limited funding to serve adopters at PVC appears to be occasional Saturday service when high quality or colorful animals are present to motivate interest. However, when Saturday service is available, historical data and experience shows that adopters will go through great effort to “get there first” without regard to a facilities hours of service.

The number of animals adopted at the EC facility has declined steadily since 1999. It does not appear that Saturday service would support additional adoptions where the market is currently limited.