



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

# Fact Sheet

## Northern California District

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### **Wild horse and burro management in Twin Peaks Herd Management Area**

#### **Current Situation**

The Bureau of Land Management Eagle Lake Field Office will be gathering and removing excess wild horses and burros from the Twin Peaks Herd Management Area northeast of Susanville, Calif. during July, August and September of 2022.

This population management effort is required under the federal Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act because the population of wild horses and burros has exceeded the populations established in the BLM's land use plan for the area.

The goal of the Act is to preserve and protect wild horses and burros as integral parts of a thriving ecological system in balance with other public resource values, including wildlife, livestock grazing, resource development, and recreational access. This requires controlling populations.

The BLM's overall goal is managing healthy wild horse herds on healthy rangelands in balance with other authorized uses.

#### **Key facts about the upcoming gather**

- The plan is to gather 1,978 wild horses and permanently remove 1,868 from the range.
  - The plan proposes gathering and removing 339 wild burros.
  - 110 mares will be treated with fertility control and returned to the range to help maintain viable populations.
  - Direct counts and statistical analysis show that there are currently about 3,300 wild horses and about 400 wild burros in the Twin Peaks HMA.
  - The appropriate management level – the number of wild horses and burros the land can sustain in balance with other users – is a range of 448 to 758 wild horses and 72 to 116 wild burros.
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- The BLM analyzed the effects of the gather in an environmental assessment published in 2019. The document analyzed potential population management over a 10-year period. The EA is available online here:

[https://eplanning.blm.gov/public\\_projects/nepa/122967/20007646/250008780/Final\\_Environmental\\_Assessment\\_508.pdf](https://eplanning.blm.gov/public_projects/nepa/122967/20007646/250008780/Final_Environmental_Assessment_508.pdf)

- Captured horses and burros will be taken to the BLM Litchfield Wild Horse and Burro Corrals near Susanville, CA; the BLM Palomino Valley National Wild Horse and Burro Center near Reno; and the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Corrals at Bruneau, Idaho.
- The BLM will offer Horses and burros for private placement through the BLM's adoption and sales programs.
- The BLM will place horses for which no adoption demand exists into a system of off-range pastures where they retain their WHB Act protections.

### **Observing the Gather**

- Members of the public are welcome to observe the gather so long as safety and gather operations are not impaired.
- Members of the public will assemble at a given time and place and be escorted by BLM staff to an observation area. Meeting locations and times will be announced nightly on an information telephone number: 530-252-5332. Those wishing to observe must RSVP at this number.
- Observers must provide their own transportation in a high clearance four-wheel drive vehicle.
- There might be limits on numbers of observers, depending on space and topography.
- The last population management gather was in 2010 when 1,575 wild horses and 160 burros were removed, bringing the population to 793 wild horses and 160 wild burros, slightly above the upper end of the appropriate management level range.
- Details about traveling to the gather site will be provided in a "know before you go" document.

### **Private Placement**

- Placing animals removed from the range into private care is critical to ensuring the agency has the capacity to achieve AML on the range.
- Locally, adoption appointments are available at the Litchfield Wild Horse and Burro Corrals, 530-254-6575.
- Adopters of untrained animals can take advantage of the BLM's Adoption Incentive Program that intends to increase the number of adoptions of untrained wild horses and burros by offering \$1,000 to adopters to defray the costs of care, such as veterinary services, feed, and training.
- The BLM's goal is to place animals removed from overpopulated herds into good, private homes. In Fiscal Year 2021, the Adoption Incentive Program and other actions helped the BLM achieve more adoptions and sales of wild horses and burros than any other year since 1997.
- The BLM placed 8,637 animals into private care, surpassing performance levels over the past 24 years. Animals adopted through the Adoption Incentive Program accounted for more than half of all adoptions – 3,742 animals in fiscal year 2021.
- The Online Corral adoption and sale platform continues to grow in popularity as it facilitates successful adoptions and sales all over the United States. Over 900 wild horses and burros were adopted or sold via the Online Corral in FY21.
- The Wild Horse and Burro Program maintains a vibrant website and social media presence, as well as a fulltime Wild Horse and Burro website that offers adoption opportunities.

### **About the HMA**

- Twin Peaks is the largest HMA managed by the BLM in California.
- It covers nearly 800,000 acres of public and private lands primarily in Lassen County, California, with lands in Washoe County, Nevada as well.
- The HMA is 55 miles from north to south and 35 miles wide, bounded on the west by U. S. Highway 395, by Honey Lake on the south, the Smoke Creek Desert on the east, and the Coppersmith Mountains on the north.
- The area is high, cold desert, with elevations ranging from about 5,000 feet to more than 7,000 feet on the highest peaks. Precipitation is between six and 10 inches annually, coming mostly from snowfall.
- In addition to providing habitat for wild horses and burros, HMA lands support wildlife including the greater sage-grouse, mule deer, pronghorn, raptors and small mammals. The area supports nine livestock grazing allotments. The predominant land uses are livestock grazing, back country recreation, and hunting.

## **Background**

- The BLM manages and protects wild horses and burros under the authority of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971.
- The goal of the Act is to preserve and protect wild horses and burros as integral parts of a thriving ecological system in balance with other public resource values, including wildlife, livestock grazing, resource development, and recreational access.
- Nationally, the BLM manages wild horses and burros on 177 herd management areas comprising 26.9 million acres of public land in 10 Western states.
- The BLM is committed to managing healthy wild horse and burro herds in balance with other authorized public land users.

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