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News Release

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Bureau of Land Management to begin Montezuma Peak HMA Emergency Wild Horse gather

BATTLE MOUNTAIN, Nev. – The Bureau of Land Management Battle Mountain District will begin an emergency wild horse gather on the Montezuma Peak Herd Management Area (HMA) located about 26 miles south of Tonopah and west of Goldfield in Esmerelda County July 29.

The action is needed due to lack of water and declining health of the wild horses and burros associated with herd overpopulation.

The BLM plans to gather approximately 50 wild horses and 25 burros from within the Montezuma Peak HMA. The gather is expected to last up to 29 days. The BLM will conduct gather operations utilizing temporary water and/or bait traps consisting of a series of corral panels stocked with water and/or hay; no helicopters will be used.

“The Bureau of Land Management and our district staff are committed to conducting safe and humane emergency gather operations as we work to save animal lives by reducing overpopulation and bringing herd size more in line with what the resources of the area can support,” said Doug Furtado, Battle Mountain District Manager. “The situation there is dire and, with the dry conditions we’ve had this year, they’re only going to worsen as time goes on.”

The Montezuma Peak Herd Management Area (HMA) encompasses an area 9 miles wide and 21 miles long. The Appropriate Management Level (AML) for the Montezuma Peak HMA is 4 wild horses and 10 burros. As of March 1, 2020, the estimated population was 130 wild horses and 207 wild burros, which does not include additional foals born this year. The current population estimate, including the 2020 foal crop, puts the HMA at approximately 3250 percent of AML for horses and 2070 percent of AML for burros.

The gather is critical to ensuring the health of the HMA lands as well as the wild horses in the area, both of which are in jeopardy due to herd overpopulation and extremely limited water sources. The emergency gather will also help prevent further degradation of the public lands, associated with excess wild horses and help make progress toward restoring a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship on public lands, consistent with the provisions of Section 1333(b) of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act.

The BLM's priority is to conduct safe, efficient, and successful wild horse and burro gather operations while ensuring humane care and treatment of all animals gathered. The BLM and its contractors will use the best available science and handling practices for wild horses while meeting overall gather goals and objectives in accordance with the Comprehensive Animal Welfare Policy.

All wild horses identified for removal will be transported to the Ridgecrest Regional Wild Horse and Burro Corrals, located in Ridgecrest, California., where they will be checked by a veterinarian and readied for the BLM's wild horse and burro Adoption and Sale Program. For information on how to adopt or purchase a wild horse or burro, visit www.blm.gov/whb.

Due to the nature of the bait and water trap method, wild horses are reluctant to approach the trap site when there is too much activity; therefore, only essential gather operations personnel will be allowed at the trap site during gather operations.

Once the gather begins, gather reports and additional information for the "2020 Montezuma Peak HMA Emergency Wild Horse Gather" will be posted on the BLM website at <https://go.usa.gov/xfnC2>. For technical information, contact Jennifer Derley, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist at (775) 482-7800 or jderley@blm.gov.

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land located primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In fiscal year 2018, the diverse activities authorized on BLM-managed lands generated \$105 billion in economic output across the country. This economic activity supported 471,000 jobs and contributed substantial revenue to the U.S. Treasury and state governments, mostly through royalties on minerals.