Adobe Town Herd Management Area

What is a herd management area?

- In 1971, Congress passed the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act to protect, manage, and control these animals on public lands. It declared wild horses and burros to be "living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West." Congress further declared that "wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death…" and that they are "…an integral part of the natural system of the public lands."

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) maintains and manages wild horses or burros in herd management areas (HMAs). BLM regulations require that wild horses and burros be considered comparable with other resource values within an area. There are 270 BLM-managed HMAs in ten states. In Wyoming, about 3,725 horses are managed within 16 different HMAs scattered across the state; there are no wild burros in Wyoming.

Where is the HMA and what is special about these wild horses?

- Wild horses in Wyoming are found primarily in the southwestern part of the state near Rock Springs and Rawlins, but some can be seen near Lander, Worland and Cody. The BLM Rock Springs and Rawlins Field Offices cooperatively manage the Adobe Town HMA which is comprised of 417,916 federal acres and 30,000 private and state acres at an elevation of 6,600 – 7,800 ft. west of Baggs, Wyo. This HMA also provides forage and habitat for other wildlife such as the greater sage-grouse, pronghorn, and mule deer. Livestock grazing, recreation, and hunting also comprise the multiple uses of this area.

- The wild horses are considered a mix of Spanish mustangs, Indian ponies, local ranch horses and cavalry mounts which is reflected in the herd colors of roan and gray.

What needs to be done to maintain this herd?

- Information such as climate data, precipitation, vegetation, grazing utilization by horses, cattle, sheep and big game are all combined to determine an appropriate management level (AML) for an HMA. This population objective helps restore or maintain healthy rangelands and ensure a thriving ecological balance among biological, geological, scenic, recreational, and cultural resources.

- The BLM established an AML for the Adobe Town HMA of 610-800 horses in the 1994 Great Divide Resource Area Wild Horse Herd Management Area Evaluation and the 2008 Rawlins Resource Management Plan (RMP). However, the current overpopulation is estimated to be 1,463 horses, resulting in ongoing damage to the rangelands. When this occurs, the BLM is required to "remove excess animals" to "restore a thriving ecological balance to the range" under the 1971 Wild, Free-roaming Horse and Burro Act.

- In order to achieve this ecological balance, the BLM periodically gathers a portion of the total population and returns to the range AML.

Why is the gather necessary?

- Overpopulated wild horse herds overuse the rangeland, threatening their own health and the health of native wildlife and plants, damaging scarce water sources dependent on an annual precipitation range of 7 to 12 inches per year, and reducing water quality.

- Removing the excess wild horses will help to prevent further deterioration of the range and achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship as required under the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act and Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

Damaged rangeland.

How does BLM balance wild horses with livestock and wildlife?

- Removing excess animals is designed to ensure that rangeland resources, including food and water sources are sustained. Currently, both Adobe Town and Salt Wells HMA support over 1,200 elk, almost 27,000 deer, 14,200 antelope and about 42 sage-grouse leks.

- Antelope crucial winter range is approximately 53,000 acres of the Adobe Town HMA.

- Mule deer crucial winter range is approximately 130,000 acres of the Salt Wells Creek HMA.

- Mule deer crucial winter range is approximately 49,000 acres of the Adobe Town HMA.

Livestock
The total livestock usage for Adobe Town is 23,147 AUMs. Livestock grazing allotments expand outside of the HMA. Authorized AUMs may or may not be within the HMA.

For more information: 		http://www.blm.gov/wy 	BLM WSO September 2010