

North Lander Complex Q&As

General

Q. Why is BLM gathering in North Lander Complex?

A. The current wild horse population in the four herd management areas (HMAs) is above the appropriate management level (AML) and the BLM will gather excess horses to get the number back to the low end of the AML.

The BLM manages the nation's public lands for multiple uses (wild horses, wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, etc.), in accordance with the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Under the authority of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (as amended by Congress in 1976, 1978, 1996, and 2004), the BLM manages, protects, and controls wild horses and burros. This law authorizes the BLM to remove excess wild horses and burros from the range to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands. The gather and removal of excess wild horses is necessary to ensure that healthy herds thrive on healthy rangelands.

Q. How many horses are in the Complex?

A. The estimated population is approximately 907 horses, based on the July 2012 flights count of 825 horses with 10 percent of the population added as unobserved.

Q. What is the AML and how many horses will be gathered, removed and returned?

HMA	Population obs. 7/23-24	Est. Population	AML	Planned Gather	Planned Remove	Planned Return
Conant Creek	148		60-100			
Dishpan Butte	176		50-100			
Muskrat Basin	439		160-250			
Rock Creek	62		50-86			
TOTALS	825	907*	320-536	810	580	230

**est. population includes 10% unobserved*

Q. Why is BLM using fertility control?

A. BLM is looking for different ways to decrease the rate of reproduction. By increasing fertility control, it reduces the need to gather horses as often.



Q. How does PZP-22 affect the mares?

A. The PZP-22 application doesn't interfere with a mare's pregnancy if the vaccine is applied while she is pregnant. The foal will be born normal and healthy. The PZP-22 vaccine will start to take effect while the mare is pregnant, so after the foal is born, the mare will be less likely to become pregnant for up to 24 months. Indications from research conducted on Assateague Island National Seashore (managed by the National Park Service) suggest that PZP-22 does not affect the foaling seasonality. There is no indication that there are any negative effects on foal survival following treatment of a herd.

Other

Q. Where do the removed horses go?

A. Excess wild horses removed from the range will be initially shipped to short-term holding facilities located in Rock Springs, Wyo., where they will be aged, de-wormed, blood tested for Equine Infectious Anemia (known as EIA or Coggins Test) vaccinated, freeze marked and prepared for either the BLM's adoption program or long-term holding pastures in the Midwest.

Many horses will be shipped to Wyoming's training facilities where they will be gentled in order to have a better chance of being adopted.

Q. How will this gather affect wildlife?

A. The removal of wild horses from the public rangelands is carried out to maintain rangeland health. Wildlife benefit from the management of wild horses by balancing forage and water sources so all species that utilize the public rangelands will be healthier.

Q. Is the BLM removing horses to make room for more cattle grazing?

A. No. The removal of wild horses and burros from public rangelands is carried out to ensure rangeland health in accordance with land-use plans that are developed in an open, public process. These land-use plans are the means by which the BLM carries out its core mission, which is to manage the land for multiple uses while protecting the land's resources. Authorized livestock grazing on BLM-managed land has declined by nearly 50 percent since the 1940s. Actual grazing use (as distinguished from authorized) has declined an additional 30 percent since 1971.

Q. Why is the BLM removing horses when there are already more than 35,000 animals in holding?

A. The ecosystems of public rangelands are not able to withstand the impacts from overpopulated herds, which include soil erosion, sedimentation of streams and damage to wildlife habitat. As for the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, Section 1333 of that law mandates that once the Interior Secretary "determines...on the basis of all information currently available to him, that an overpopulation exists on a given area of the public lands and that action is necessary to remove excess animals, he shall immediately remove excess animals from the range so as to achieve appropriate management levels."

Currently, the western rangeland free-roaming population of more than 38,000 (as of February 2010) exceeds by nearly 12,000 the number the BLM has determined can exist in balance with other public rangeland resources and uses. Although the BLM tries to place as many removed

animals as possible into private care through adoption or sales, the public's demand for adoptable wild horses has declined sharply in recent years, primarily due to economic hard times. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar and BLM Director Bob Abbey (ret.) announced a set of proposals in October 2009 that are aimed at putting the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program on a sustainable track (see www.blm.gov for details).

Q. What happens to horses that are not adopted?

A. Unadopted horses are fed and cared for in either short-term corrals or long-term pastures. Wild horses over 10 years old and those passed over for adoption at least three times become eligible for sale, a transaction in which the title of ownership to the animals passes immediately from the Federal government to the buyer. (In the adoption process, the title of ownership passes from the Federal government to the adopter after the individual provides one year of humane care.) While a December 2004 law granting the BLM sale authority authorizes the agency to sell sale-eligible animals "without limitation," the Bureau has not been and is not selling any wild horses to slaughterhouses or to "killer buyers." All horses in holding retain their status as "wild" and remain under the BLM's protection.

Q. Will any of the horses be sent to slaughter?

A. No. As noted above, while a December 2004 amendment to the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act authorizes the BLM to sell sale-eligible animals "without limitation," the BLM has not been and is not selling any wild horses to slaughterhouses or to "killer buyers."

Q. What veterinary treatment will the removed horses receive?

A. The horses will be aged (based on the condition of their teeth), wormed, vaccinated, blood-tested and freeze-marked (marked with a cold brand) at a BLM facility, with veterinarian care if necessary.

Q. Will there be any designated public observers at the trap site?

A. The public is welcome to observe from designated observation sites which will be determined once the gather is underway. Information about viewing opportunities will be available on our website.

Q. How many wild horses are in Wyoming?

A. BLM Wyoming has 16 HMAs statewide and an AML range of 2,490 to 3,725 wild horses. The FY 2011 Wild Horse and Burro Public Lands Statistics for Wyoming shows the current population estimated at approximately 5,333 wild horses.

Q. Where may I learn more about the Wild Horse and Burro Program?

A. Please visit the BLM's Website at www.blm.gov.