

ROUGHLY EDITED TRANSCRIPT

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADVISORY BOARD
OCTOBER 18, 2017
8:00 A.M.

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>> KATHIE LIBBY: So let's all get settled.

Folks let's get settled.

Okay, folks.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Kathie?

>> KATHIE LIBBY: It was a long day yesterday and we have a really, really good day today.

Really a bunch of issues were really looking forward to, and I will go over that in a minute.

Let me just say very briefly about that very long rules of room thing.

This is the tape that says, the public is here and the board is here because this basically is a board meeting and the public comment section is over.

So typically the speakers are speaking to the board and the board is questioning and getting additional information from the speakers and we are all listening in, taking notes.

Again, the presentations will be posted so you don't have to take down every single word you hear.

Those will be available to you next week.

So this morning, everything over to Dr. Julie.

We are going to hear -- and this is something we talk about all the time, kind of no matter where we sit, is that we need to be more collaborative.

We will talk about some really important Colorado collaborative partnerships.

I try hard not to say TJ Maxx.

TJ Holmes will start us off and we'll have SWAT and GEMS presentations.

And I know ladies you had these seats available to you and they got usurped from you.

I have been asked not to have people standing here.

As soon as you get seated, it's hard for the technicians to manage things.

That may or may not include you.

So following -- and this is really a great set of presentations.

Following that, Dr. Terry Messmer will be briefing us on the Utah Summit presentation.

Then we'll take a break and then we're getting into something a bit more focused on action and what we can collectively and what BLM can do and where we should put our priorities.

So we'll be looking at Mary Jo Rugwell, the BLM Wyoming state director.

We are really pleased.

Where are you, Mary Jo?

Oh, there you are.

Hiding in the room.

Hiding in the doorway.

Come on over and sit.

And so she'll be going over some of the key elements of the sustainable wild horse and burro program, and then after lunch, the board will be -- in terms of looking at recommendations, will be kind of doing that around some of those elements and some key questions about how to move forward.

So I think that will be a really interesting productive session.

We will adjourn at 5:00.

We try to do things on time around here.

So help us with that.

Okay?

Dr. Julie?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Good morning, everybody.

Thank you for showing up again.

We really appreciate it.

I want to check, who do we have on the phone this morning.

Dr. McDonnell, are you here?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Hi, Julie, I'm here, but could you let the sound people know that the phone -- I'm not hearing you very well.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Okay, sound folks, you heard that.

Please try to fix it.

You magic people.

So for sometime, some of us on the board who don't think we can immunocontracept ourselves -- and by golly that is a verb -- out of the current dilemma with respect to the wild horse and burro program, show us the best example of where and how that can

work.

And so we have been trying to get Colorado for a while, and we finally got here and so we're really looking forward to that presentation and let's get on with it.

Thank you.

TJ.

Turn it over.

>> TJ HOLMES: In southwest Colorado.

Definitely want to thank you guys for specifically inviting us to talk along with SWAT and GEMS and having the -- having the tour out in Little Book Cliffs on Tuesday which is a great example and the first one I know of in Colorado, to get things kicked off.

My name is TJ Holmes, the darter and documenter of Spring Creek mustangs.

I'm going to kind of -- I'm nervous as hell.

I will kind of do a combination of reading and taking inspiration from my horses and I will probably do this a lot.

I want to acknowledge first of all that it takes a village to do everything that we do on the range, on America's public lands and that's no different in southwest Colorado.

We have very active village of committed advocacy groups in southwest Colorado for our herd.

We are only two people of that whole group, so thank you for acknowledging me, specifically, but I want to acknowledge all of them.

The Colorado chapter of the National Mustang Association has been advocating for this herd since the late 1990s.

I have been on the board of NMA Colorado since 2007.

In early 2008, I was a founding member of coalition group wildlife partners.

I don't know why that's making me cry.

Geez, man!

(Laughter)

It's a long time ago!

This includes representatives of NMA Colorado, four corners back country horsemen, Mesa Verde, and Mesa valley which is where we live and our horses live.

Our philosophy with these groups has always been that we want to help keep Spring Creek Basin mustangs wild on their home range and working together and with BLM we can do the work that has led to that reality.

I think I gave you guys or somebody provided these brochures for you guys.

This is also a collaborative effort between wild bunch and our herd management area or BLM, that gives some of the details about Spring Creek Basin.

We used Little Book Cliffs wonderful brochure as a template and now all the herd management areas have these.

So real quickly, Spring Creek Basin herd management area is in southwest Colorado.

It's the southern most of Colorado's herd management areas.

22,000 acres, it's the smallest herd management area in Colorado and has an AML of 35 to 65 adult horses.

We have a current population of 60.

60 mustangs.

And to move on from that, I want to talk about why Spring Creek and Spring Creek Basin are not the same thing and are not interchangeable things.

And I don't think Bruce Rittenhouse is here.

I'm going to drag him in, because he's an awesome guy.

I met last fall, Bruce Rittenhouse is Colorado's BLM branch chief for natural resources.

If I got that wrong, think it's pretty close.

Last week we rendezvoused and SWAT does this amazing rendezvous in Sandwash Basin every year.

It's a very community collaborative effort.

It brings in people from all over who come to the range, not only to see and photograph those horses and name foals but they come in to do work, removing wire, enhancing water, various other projects.

So I met Bruce there and in May, he came to visit Spring Creek Basin and all along he had been sending emails about how excited he was to visit Spring Creek.

We were excited to visit spring creek.

Cat Wild, here's Spring Creek, I said.

And he looks around and said, what?

And I said -- and we never even had to go into Spring Creek Basin.

They went to Spring Creek Basin to see the horses managed by BLM.

Spring Creek Basin is a big geographic basin.

Westerner understand this Spring Creek drains Spring Creek Basin.

All of these little Arroyos, cut -- it only runs when we have a big rain event in the basin and the horses are rarely in Spring Creek because it's usually dry.

We do have some seeps, but they are fenced into and thus are managed in Spring Creek Basin herd management area.

If anybody tells me about Spring Creek later, I'm not going to invite you.

(Laughter)

Which I will do at the end.

Okay.

So my background a little bit in 2002, as a journalist in Durango, Colorado, slowing down.

With the lifelong connection no horses I was given an assign.

To write a feature story about the mustangs of Spring Creek Basin and that's all it took.

I continued visiting for the next few years.

Mostly just photographing and enjoying the horses.

A month after observing and reporting on the 2007 roundup in Spring Creek Basin, I attended the roundup in Little Book Cliffs.

The volunteers here took an active part and their calm presence really impressed me.

They knew which horses had come into pens and they knew which ones to remove for adoption.

This literally -- this Grand Junction, this Little Book Cliffs is where I learned the importance of documentation and volunteer advocate partnerships with BLM.

And I want to say that we had had some challenging issues even though I had only been recently in things.

A couple of weeks after, that I traveled to Pryor Mountain, wild horse range where I learned about bait trapping and fertility control with PZP.

It occurred to me during that visit that BLM didn't have an over population problem.

They had a reproduction issue.

By the time I got home, I knew that PZP implementation and bait trapping would take time and BLM buy-in because.

My lifelong experience with horses documenting -- every time I sing Spring Creek Basin, can you just say, go, ahead and cry.

Documenting the Spring Creek Basin mustangs was the place to start.

By knowing what we were managing, we could manage to achieve our goals of healthy horses on healthy range and if those horses don't look healthy to you guys, you need to go to compliance training, where we can talk to you about healthy horses.

Partnerships.

Partnerships, I have three main things, the first is partnerships.

With the founding of the wild bunch in 2008, NMA Colorado has more partners drawn for projects that benefit the horses of Spring Creek Basin.

In 2010, wild bunch signed a memorandum of understanding with BLM.

At our quarterly meetings with the BLM herd manager.

Sorry, we plan range improvement projects such as fence maintenance and repair, installing a new water catchment system and installing a new one, and PZP darting.

Wild bunch members volunteer during the 2011 roundup and were instrumental in the success of the adoption event afterward.

We have also held educational events about wild horse management.

In addition to wild bunch volunteers, San Juan mountains association, the university of Missouri, forest service, the Serengeti foundation and private citizens have contributed, thank you to vital projects that benefit the horses.

Pardon me a moment.

Okay.

Thank you.

Moving into fertility control, from that, so partnerships were a big thing that we had to establish first NMA Colorado had been in Spring Creek Basin for like ten years at that time, because now it's been ten for me.

And we're doing a lot of on-the-ground projects with BLM.

In 2010, I met Dr. Jacob Kilpatrick, my hero!

At the science and conservation center and got certified to dart with PZP and the reason that makes me cry -- I'm taking all your time.

Is because I said I would never dart my horses.

Because they knew me.

I could get close to them to document them, and it became very clear to me that because I could do that, I was the one to dart them.

And with that, this isn't in my notes but in the six years -- in the six years that I have been documenting these horses they have gotten easier to dart.

It used to take me several hours of tracking a mare to get to them.

In the last couple of years, it takes me about an average of hour, hour and a half.

So certified to dart with PZP in 2010, and met Jay in partnership with BLM, wild bunch

and the science and conservation center we started our PZP program in Spring Creek Basin at the 2011 roundup.

We went from foal crops of 21 or so foals a year before PZP, to four foals this year being and four foals last year and three foals the year before that.

Does anybody need me to repeat that?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Excuse me, we have a handout here, right?

>> TJ HOLMES: Yes, you do.

>> That's from us.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: This is Spring Creek Basin.

All right.

I will thought maybe the data you were just sharing with us was in one of these slides.

I just wanted to clarify.

Okay.

Thanks.

>> TJ HOLMES: So I will repeat, we went from foal crops of 21 foals before PZP and 3 foals last year and 3 foals.

Since the implementation of the PZP of 2011, no horses have been removed from Spring Creek Basin.

And I want to finish with our range conditions.

And that picture, if you can't see your horse because he's grazing in eyeball deep grass, you are not having a problem.

Because of the collaborative efforts of all of the partners, all of our partners, we have healthy horses on healthy rangeland and have achieved thriving ecological balance.

These photos were all taken in the last couple of months and we haven't really had any rain.

In 2012, the Serengeti foundation, bought the ranch.

The ranch is adjacent to Spring Creek Basin.

The foundation took a couple of years of nonuse for resource protection due to drought.

That was the term given to us.

The resource management plan signed in 2015 by the Tres Rios field officer when they relinquished that permit, they would close the allotment to ease competition with cattle, with livestock.

As a result of the relinquishment enclosure, it's improved remarkably, again note burros.

Fertility control using PZP combined with ending the competition with the livestock has contributed directly to the recovery of the range as indicated by land health assessments and other vegetation monitoring, conducted in Spring Creek Basin in the last two years with myself and other volunteers and our BLM herd manager, other range specialists and range tech and our assistant field manager.

Conclusion.

Wrapping up, my goal is to enable the Spring Creek Basin mustangs to stay wild on their home range with the help of PZP.

We have proved that it works.

I think those pictures show it.

I think no roundups since 2007 -- since 2011 show it.

And I think me bawling about it maybe not proving it but hopefully it goes a ways.

What works in the small area, again, Spring Creek basin, 22,000 acres can be applied to small areas of large herd management areas.

We employ a philosophy of want to and can do, and with PZP more Spring Creek Basins get to stay wild on their home range.

I will always be grateful to Patty temple, Marty Felix and Matt Dillon and locally Jim Dollerschell, I know you are here.

And Mike Jenson, Mike Jenson, say that again Mike Jenson.

He's great.

Brings collaboration and professionalism with a dash of humor, thank you for that, to our partnerships.

Also very much want to thank friends of the mustangs, SWAT, and GEMS and hopefully our new -- a new group forming for the Peceance-Douglas advocate league, Dan Nichols so we can have all of Colorado's herd management areas in the same situation that Spring Creek Basin, rill book cliffs and Sandwash Basin are currently in.

Those horses and with, that oh, questions.

(Laughter)

Okay.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: So does anybody have questions?

>> GINGER KATHRENS: I do.

I do.

When you said the horses were easier to dart, being a darter and having darted in the Pryors, I think that those horses are the -- that act more elusive, but I only helped the BLM for one season, but I think it gets harder.

During that period of time, you know, you would see her and she would say, bye!

And she gone and typically not behaving like that.

Why is it easier for you?

>> TJ HOLMES: I don't know.

What I can tell you is that in the beginning, the hardest, longest mare I got took me six hours and ten miles of hiking and I finally got her with a 40-yard shot, which sorry, Marty, is very long for me.

I'm not sure if he's here yet.

I'm out there all the time.

I'm out there all the time.

I live there on the sanctuary and those horses are mostly from Spring Creek Basin.

At the risk of sounding woo-woo, I think that's -- that Traveler.

I go in.

Cry because, of course, I don't cry.

Nobody has seen me cry in the world.

I cry at the beginning of the season and I say I'm really sorry, this is going to hurt but it's for your best good and so you can stay there with gas that looks like that.

So that's why I do it.

>> Can we get a round of applause for TJ?

(Applause)

>> BEN MASTERS: And dean do we have in the budget to clone about 2,000 of her.

>> TJ HOLMES: PZP about \$27 a dose.

Me... free!

>> GINGER KATHRENS: I had another question, if I might.

With a herd that small, is genetic diversity an issue and how do you deal with it?

>> TJ HOLMES: We have -- since the late 1990s we have introduced horses on the recommendation of Dr. Gus Cauthrine, he was at my alma mater, Texas A & M.

He was my advisor.

Degree in natural resources by the way if that helps my credibility.

He in his reports from genetic testing that we had done, recommended that we introduce horses periodically and we did that with three stallions in the late '90s and then we realized that introducing stallions maybe not the best idea.

So then in 2001 and in 2008, we introduced three mares in each of those years.

All from Sandwash Basin.

So we have -- we're sister herds in more than one way.

But in fact, one of the -- she's in here but one of the Sandwash Basin mares has been

in this photo.

We introduce horses periodically, because of the relinquishment and closing of the livestock grazing allotment in Spring Creek Basin -- BLM -- well, it's not because of that, but BLM is working on EA.

That's her, Raven from Sandwash Basin.

To hopefully increase the AML.

We're not looking for a huge increase.

You know, because we want to keep that.

So we're looking to go from maybe the way it is now, 35 to 65 adult horses to maybe 50 to 80, and with three and four foal as a year, you know, that will be achievable for sure.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: And you tracked, obviously, you know every horse.

>> TJ HOLMES: Yes.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: So you have ones that are the product of -- in the Pryors, there are two young stallions that need to leave the range because they are the product of a brother/sister foal and they are dead gorgeous.

But, yeah.

When you know the horses and then you -- you can -- I understand.

>> TJ HOLMES: I have been documenting ten years, September 19th.

That's a stallion, by the way.

He's not due in April.

I think you had a question.

(Laughter)

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Sorry.

Hats off to you, that range looks exceptionally well.

>> TJ HOLMES: Thank you.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: As we move forward this is more of what we need to do in order to maintain that thriving ecological balance that we are talking about.

I think like you said, that's the goal, healthy horses on healthy rangelands and I think from everything I have seen here, it looks like that goal is being accomplished.

>> TJ HOLMES: Thank you.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: What's the AML for that --

>> TJ HOLMES: 35 to 65?

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: And where are they sitting at now?

>> TJ HOLMES: 60 in six years.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: And what -- have they -- was there any gathering done before that?

>> TJ HOLMES: 2005, 2001.

So 2011, 2007, 2005, 2001 and then in the 1990s.

>> And in 2011, 80 down to 40.

>> TJ HOLMES: In 2011, the population went from a high of about 82, down to 40.

That was how we started the PZP program, was at that -- at that level.

So we didn't go all the way down to the bottom of our AML.

And we did that with BLM, and with Jim -- wherever Jim is.

Because we were going to implement a PZP program and knew that we would have a slow growth, population growth and we could -- we didn't have to go all the way down to 35 horses.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: So just from looking at it, it looks like there's a real diversity of color and character in these horses.

And it's relatively smaller herd compared to a lot of the HMA, both in the size of the HMA and the size of the herd on it.

>> TJ HOLMES: Correct.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: How would you anticipate like in some of these herds that are a lot bigger, over a lost vaster, maybe rougher country, that don't have that distinction of color in them, where you've got, say, 100 bay mares that are pretty much identical.

How would you anticipate the PZP darting program being instituted in those types of.

>> TJ HOLMES: Just start.

Just start.

But I also want to bring up a book and I can't remember -- I think the -- "A Year in the Life of Pronghorn" I think it was called and a professor in Idaho.

Byers was maybe his last name.

He wrote this book.

He did a study, I think a 20-year study of pronghorns on the national bison range in Montana, and they identified each one of those pronghorns.

If they can identify each one of those pronghorns by type, shape, and body and confirmation, when you get to know those bay horses -- we have a lot of grays.

We have a lot of grays.

That's our bay.

Bay is the new gray.

Gray is the new bay?

(Laughter)

So that's -- that's -- but they are so different, right?

I mean, I can't identify you guys because you all look-a-like to me.

I mean you know what I mean?

When you get -- when you get that level of commitment to a herd, on a theoretical basis, it doesn't seem possible, but we have done it.

They have done it with 600 horses.

Those guys have done it with 3,000 horses on the Virginia range.

I think, again, want to, can do.

Want to, can do.

Git-er-Done!

This is the West!

I know this sounds theoretical but there are a lot of Spring Creek Basins in Sandwash Basin.

There are a lot of Spring Creek Basins in divide basin, Wyoming.

You know, the Virginia range, they have taken -- they have taken, you know, this -- they have taken this area, and they have put -- they have made these areas with teams of darters.

Can do, want to.

If you want to do it, it can happen.

We put men on the moon!

I mean, it's not that I don't understand the difficulties and the situations but walking 22,000 acres ain't easy either.

I drive into the basin but then I walk.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: So this was one permittee on there but they will sold their permit.

>> TJ HOLMES: There were two historically with quite a bit more AUMs in the mid1990s, NMA Colorado.

That permittee wanted to sell, wanted to retire, and so NMA Colorado bought his lease and worked with the BLM to retire that.

At the time, that was term.

I don't think it is now, but -- and so then BLM did a range analysis, a range assessment on the range at the time, and because of that reduced both the number of AUMs and the season of grazing.

So it had been warm season grazing, all productive season grazing which was direct competition with the horses and then they changed that to about 326 as many as AUMs and dormant season grazing from December 1st through February 28th and then when my boss, the Serengeti foundation purchased that ranch, we also purchased the allotment that went with it.

And so working with BLM, and BLM has said, you know -- and, again, it's the small herd management area, the cattle that were on it were not -- this wasn't, you know, with apologies to the ranchers, this was not a livelihood situation.

That's another reason it could be done here.

So when we bought the ranch and got the allotment then we have had not a whole lot of rain in southwest Colorado.

So we were able to take nonuse for resource projection due to drought.

That was the phrase.

And work with BLM so that when they were working on their resource management plan and then fined it, we said when the land owner relinquishes it, they did, we did, happy, happy.

Or, you know, for us.

For the horses.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: TJ, would you -- sorry, go ahead.

>> BEN MASTERS: I have a few quick questions.

It seems to me that there are some criteria that make for a successful program like this, one of those is at AML or close to AML.

One of those is approachable horses that are well documented.

One is a dedicated volunteer staff and then one is a BLM staff that's willing to work with those volunteers which I know I heard a lot of people say that the BLM is not that willing to do so.

I think everybody, in an ideal world would love to have this going on across the west, because if that was the case, we would have to do much less roundups and the amount of roundups that we would have to do would probably equal the adoption demand.

Then we wouldn't have to do long-term holding.

We wouldn't have to be talking about potentially killing tens of thousands of horses and it would be this wonderful situation.

So if we can get there, 10, 20 years down the road, I think that's what everybody here would want to do.

Two of the big hang-ups that I see on how to get this to scale is how do we get more TJs?

How do we get more volunteers?

And another thing is -- right.

But TJ, how many mares do you dart every year?

30?

>> TJ HOLMES: Close to.

>> BEN MASTERS: So if there's 40,000 mares out there, we would have to have 12,000TJs to do that amount.

>> TJ HOLMES: Not necessarily, though.

So I only dart 30.

They're darting 100 or more, Little Book Cliffs is darting however many.

Virginia range, they are at 3,000.

She already said yesterday that they dart more horses -- they are darted more horses in a year that BLM, I forget what the time frame was.

>> With five people darting.

>> TJ HOLMES: With just a few people on that team.

>> BEN MASTERS: You can agree that BLM is not that good at some things.

>> TJ HOLMES: I went through training in 2010.

Matt went in -- I think it was earlier in 2010 and I don't know when Jay started doing the training, but March through October, every month, now it's twice a month, because

the demand is so high.

There are a lot of people out there trained.

Somebody yesterday said where is the -- where is the -- I forget the -- where is the request for volunteers?

How do people find out where to go?

And now -- you know, that's theoretical.

In practicality, you know, I don't want people showing up, I'm darting.

I'm training and I got my rifle, go get Houdini.

Which one is she?

There has to be some of that training.

But they just got four people trained, four more people trained.

Little Book Cliffs people mentored me.

I think I have been an inspiration to them.

They totally surpassed what I did.

Can do, want to.

If you want to get it done, the numbers start to not disappear, just kind of not make as much of a thing because if you want to get out there and get it done, and you don't say, oh, my God, we've got to have 12,000 people, start.

Start.

Start in Spring Creek Basin, Sandwash Basin, Virginia range, et cetera.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Let me to interject that we have two more presentations before 9:15.

>> BEN MASTERS: So real quick, two things that come to mind right now that I think that we should discuss or maybe you want to have some feedback on is one of those is that, you know, with the adoption program we supplement -- the BLM supplements that financially, and I wonder if the possibility exists for the BLM to supplement some of the PZP efforts for volunteers financially, such as every mare that you dart is \$250

to that local organization or something like that to provide a financial incentive for this to grow and also to cover a lot of the expenses in herd management areas where it makes sense.

Would that be helpful to y'all?

>> Well, yeah.

>> BEN MASTERS: Who will say no to that?

Another thing that I think could be helpful, which Ginger and I discussed, how do you take this idea and scale it?

And it seems as if each herd management area has a different system of record keeping and identification, and I wonder in the possibility exists to create an app where somebody can go out into a herd management area, look at the app, where they have a catalog of the horses and then that app would say, okay.

Well, you know, these horses have been PZP darted so that, you know, could you have a more knowledgeable darting volunteers going out to dart and, you know, good record keeping.

Would that be helpful on some HMAs?

>> TJ HOLMES: I think you still need to have the people on the ground because, you know, like you mentioned, there are a lot of bays.

There are a lot of grays, especially people starting off don't necessarily know which horses are which.

I do want to say, though, as all HMAs are unique, all HMAs are going to have their own unique way of -- of keeping track of their horses, of keeping track of their darting, of their volunteers, of their -- you know, their darters.

The other thing I wanted to say -- I lost my -- oh.

I think -- oh, to get started, what if there was even, you know, one new herd in Wyoming that undertakes a PZP program a year?

One new herd in Utah that undertakes a PZP program.

That sounds a lot better than oh, my God, we need 12,000 people right now.

I mean, you are still not, you know, oh, my God, we have, you know, 70,000 horses but you are starting.

Ten years ago when I started this, I ranted to Matt, oh, my God, why didn't I start last year.

Why didn't I start ten years ago?

Why didn't I start when you did?

Well, it's been ten years.

(Off microphone comment)

>> JAMES FRENCH: First off, TJ, I appreciate what you are doing.

I being the newbie on this board, I think there are some benefits to, that you go to the 30,000-foot level and look at the problem holistically because you are not that close to it yet in terms of a national issue.

And -- and I could tell you, I put a lot of thought into this and whatnot and I really do believe -- you mentioned we put a man on the moon.

And I believe the last time I looked at that, there was 97,000 employees in that system to actually put that man on the moon.

>> TJ HOLMES: How many are in BLM.

>> JAMES FRENCH: Well, everybody in BLM doesn't do the wild horse program, and I -- and I'm not minimizing what the BLM can do, the magnitude of what they can do.

What I am saying, though, is it's absolutely crystal clear to me, that the solution to this thing is not -- is not in what we disagree on, the solution in this thing is linking our arms together right now and utilizing this immense amount of talent, this immense number of people who have a passion for this horse, for their habitats, for -- because I think we all share that.

>> TJ HOLMES: Want to, can do.

>> JAMES FRENCH: I think ultimately we have to get past this paradigm that the -- that the only options that we have are those that were listed in the Wild Horse and Burro Act.

You know, in other words, we had a protocol that was in place based on that direction that involved -- we all know what it involved.

And I believe the paradigm shift that we have to do, and I think that's what we are

trying to do here is we are hitting the left rudder on this ship, trying to turn that ship a little bit to try to see if we can't come up with a set of paradigm shifts that involve bringing it down to AML in these areas and actually getting a balance to this, so that these horses are -- you know that, we can enjoy these horses based on what you showed us here.

And I think I'm going to -- I'm -- just real briefly, I will say that I think we -- that the solutions in this thing come from our ability to communicate with each other along that line, and recognize that we all have a job to do or we all have a passion in this thing, and try to come up with those solutions.

I really do believe, though -- and I will leave it at that, I believe the solution to this thing is going to be utilizing this immense volunteer and the passion and the energy that you -- you bring to the table.

And I would just say to the Bureau of Land Management, we have a -- being a county commissioner also, we talk about balance sheets all the time and budgets.

You know, and I -- I think it's roughly \$50,000 from the time we capture a horse to the time this horse goes out of system for the federal government.

We've got \$50,000 on the left side of that balance sheet right now and the notion that we would have a problem with expending money on the front side of this thing, in order to -- to take away from what it is we know we are going to spend already is ludicrous to me and I think we ought to have that conversation in terms of that balance sheet.

Thank you for all do you.

>> Thank you.

(Applause)

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: In order for the rest of our presenters to have their time, let's please be efficient and I know we all really appreciate the comments.

I promised June that she could have -- I don't know if it's a question or an observation.

And then let's hold the rest of our questions and hopefully we'll have a little bit of time after the other presentations but I don't want to get in the way of the rest of the presentations.

They are all crammed in here pretty quickly.

>> JUNE SEWING: Excuse me.

Some you may know I'm associated with the National Mustang Association and this would not speak for TJ's time.

She may or may not be aware of it, but this whole thing would not have started without the National Mustang Association.

My husband fought long and hard with the BLM to get that first agreement that they had in the partnership.

I believe it was one of the first ones that had been accomplished.

And we have -- you know, we also provided the seed money for them to get started, and they had a group of people, as she had mentioned, Patty Temple and some of those had come to us for the expertise that my husband had in working with the BLM.

And so I just wanted people to know that there are things that nonprofit organizations can do to further the program to save the wild horses.

>> TJ HOLMES: Thank you.

Thank you are, June.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Why don't we move on to the other examples of this wonderful volunteer and collaborative efforts.

>> Okay.

So thank you for letting us be here today, and for -- I think it's here in Colorado, we have such wonderful examples of working together in collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management for the betterment of these wild horses on our ranges.

TJ Holmes, friends of mustangs, all very much mentors of what we are doing, and we wouldn't be necessarily up here doing what we are doing without having them come before us.

So we really appreciate everything that you guys have done.

I'm excited about being here for a few reasons.

For one, back in 2011, this was an idea that I had.

On off-range support model with one herd management area.

We -- this is kind of our motto: But collaborate for solutions, resources and save our mustangs.

It all plays to go.

The land is an important resource for every competing interest that's out there in public lands and it is important to maintain and make sure that there are healthy horses and healthy animals on these lands.

So back in -- so we are a nonprofit organization that was formed in 2011, with an idea to support the BLM in managing wild horses both on and off the range.

We fully rely on public donations, fund-raising events, our programs, and grants to make ends meet.

We also work together with other key organizations like the Mustang Heritage Foundation and we are working together for the healthy herds, lands and homes for mustangs and we believe this can be applied to other HMAs like what TJ was speaking to earlier.

It's starting in one spot and moving to another.

Off range, we provide training and adoptions of mustangs and burros.

We foster a connection between children and adults, overnight retreat programs, therapeutic programs, and horsemanship clinics in order to increase public awareness and education.

On the range we are responsible for herd documentation, fertility control, special range projects and promotion of proper wild horse management for the Sandwash Basin herd management area.

Our on range support is called the Sandwash add voluntary indicate team and Stella Trueblood is here, our field manager to talk about the work we do on the range.

Stella, take it away.

>> STELLA: I'm not going to spend a whole lot of time talking about our darting because TJ said it very eloquently, and I can't top her.

But I will tell you what we do as the Sandwash advocate team.

We were formed in 2012, before that we were just a loosely knit group of people that enjoyed going out to Sandwash and we did volunteer.

We worked several BLM work days out in the basin but we formed with Michele in 2012 because we recognized a need for the energy and the efforts of individuals and

groups to support Sandwash Basin land and wild horses.

We're 100% volunteer driven.

You talked about how we can get more volunteers to get out and dart, especially in such a large HMA of Sandwash.

There's almost 160,000 acres.

When I started darting, which was in 2014, I was primarily by myself.

It gets a little lonely out there, when you are by yourself darting.

We do provide herd documentation, database implementation for tracking herd genetics.

We have a large group of volunteers that provide information to us.

We track the bands' movement of mares from band to band, because obviously, we need to maintain an accurate sense of -- and documentation of the herd because we simply need to know how many horses are out there and we need to know who we are darting, obviously.

We also have quite a few gray horses.

So although a lot of them are stallions.

But we have a lot of diversity and color in Sandwash.

So maintaining an accurate sense of -- and herd documentation is very important.

We have a lot of really good volunteers that don't dart but do provide us with that information.

We did create and implement the PZP fertility control program, and as I mentioned, I started darting in 2014.

Prior it that, the Humane Society darted in 2008 at the gather.

They darted in 2010 and then 2013.

So we took over in 2014.

Initially it was primarily myself darting with a little bit of help from a BLM employee at that time.

And a couple of other people that were trained.

In 2013, or excuse me, 2015, I gained a volunteer and that's my darting partner Connie who is here today.

We do like to dart in teams because it is a large job and it's a tough job.

Not everyone can do it.

There's tough range conditions out there.

And you have to be tough to do it.

In 2016, we gained another couple of darters and now we're up to four and very happy to say that we have four very enthusiastic new trainees who just completed their training here in Grand Junction a couple of weeks ago.

So we are doubling our dart team for next year and I'm very happy about that.

The more boots you have on the ground, the more horses you can dart and equals less foals.

We did have a bait and trap gather this past year that started in November and ended in January.

I really want to thank Ben Smith, wild horse specialist in Colorado for partnering with SWAT.

We have a really good relationship with the little snake field office and Ben Smith and we really appreciate Colorado being -- BLM being forward thinking and work with us and have a bait and trap gather versus a large scale helicopter gather.

It was very important for us that that happened.

We had two successful adoption events, Michelle and Stephanie will probably talk a little bit more about that.

We do assist with special range projects, most recently BLM and SWAT collaborated on national public lands day and we fixed fencing.

Only about a mile of fencing got done.

[chuckles]

Before the weather kind of drove us out and it was a learning curve for some people because we hadn't actually fenced that much.

But only probably, what, a couple hundred more miles of fencing to go, I don't know.

And some of our volunteers placed 1,000 reflectors on the fencing for sage-grouse protection.

And, of course, we do promote the Sandwash Basin mustangs anywhere and everywhere we go.

I'm not going to go over these slides very much because of the interest of time, but this is slide just simply shows the number of foals that were born per month in 2017.

We did have, I believe we are up to 98 foals important this year.

We have a total population of 600 -- actually 579 horses in the basin this year.

That's not including the 99 foals born.

We have 89 live foals as of today.

We have about a 10% mortality rate.

This just shows the number of mares that have been darted by years starting in 2014 and the number of volunteer darters.

You can see as number of darters go up, therefore, the number of treated mares goes up.

This is just an analogy of the horses that were treated, number of foals that were born out of those treated mares the following years and the number of mares that were bread back, meaning they were already pregnant when they were darted and that is a challenge for us, is to get back into the basin in the early spring to dart the horses before they start breeding.

And here's a summary of treatments by year, broken down to primers and boosters and, again, you can see how much we have increased and that's attributed to the number of people that are darting.

Thank you.

>> Thank you, Stella.

Stella has spent countless hours out there, and like she -- like she spoke to, we have a

lot of volunteers out there, whether the photographers documenting the herd for us or on the ground doing the darting.

It's a big job and like Stella said, it's 100% volunteer and they do it because they love these horses and want them to stay out there.

When they do have to come off range, we've got the greatest escape mustang and training center and when we took the -- when the 43 horses came off, we hosted an adoption event at our sanctuary, all of those horses found homes.

The second adoption event was here in Fruita.

Six of those horses -- six and a half of horses, one was pregnant, they did not get adopted but it's our mission and goal that they will not go to holding.

We will put them in our training program, and I will now introduce Stephanie Lindsay who is our head trainer out there at the Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary and training center.

So Stephanie, do you want to talk about what we do out there?

>> STEPHANIE: Yeah, like Michele was saying, eventually the horses have to come off the range, unfortunately, and it's really important for us to provide support for them as they come off the range.

And one of the most important -- or the primary barriers of adoption for mustangs is that they are wily animals and they are not easy for inexperienced folks that love them and want to own them.

So it's important for us to be able to provide training for these horses to at least get them to the abilities to be handled by a vet and a farrier and exist in our domestic world.

So we offer training all the way from that gentling and halter training and saddling and discipline training.

We have a group of ambassador mustangs and burros.

They are trained horses that can be utilized in our programs and exposure to the public to show people what these horses are capable of, once they are trained and how exceptional they can be there.

We find that the training we offer increases the success of adoptions in that less horses are being returned after they have been adopted, once.

And we also offer international training internship programs.

We have had folks from Austria come over and learn how to interact with wild mustangs.

The -- one of the most important programs that we have run has been in partnership with the Mustang Heritage Foundation.

We were first TIP store front in Colorado, and the TIP program incentivizes training mustangs to trainers that might not have trained mustangs otherwise.

So the Mustang Heritage Foundation foots the bill for that training.

So folks can adopt horses for \$125 that are already gentled.

So we provide a store front because TIP trainers cannot pick up horses through canyon city.

They can only access TIP horses through our facility.

Since the store front started, we moved about 250 horses through our facility.

And that's not including this year, in which the store front was put on hold due to running out of their budget.

We could have moved 100 plus more horses this year, given the opportunity with the TIP funding.

There's about 50 trainers in Colorado and surrounding states that rely on us to access TIP horses and get them into homes.

We found out yesterday from the folks at MHF that so far, we are only promised 20 horses across the entire fiscal year.

So that's for us to train and adopt and for those 50 trainers to train and adopt, and I -- I think you can see that we would be through those 20 horses within the first month or two.

So that's scary.

So I think the biggest way we can help promote adoptions is by funding the Mustang Heritage Foundation and the TIP program to its fullest extent.

(Applause)

Compliment the training program and with the TIP program, we host adoption events.

Like I said, the unique situation with canyon city, it's a prison facility.

People can't access it very easily and TIP trainers can't access it at all.

It's important to increase it.

We plan to have open house/adoption events for people to come in and see what we are doing with the sanctuary and adopt horses.

For all of our adopters we have lessons and continued training to make sure that the horses aren't ending up at auctions or returned to BLM and then this year we also hosted the 2017 Colorado TIP program or the TIP challenge.

It's similar to the Mustang Makeover, but it's all in hand and we had 20 trainers participate.

18 adults and two youth and all of those horses found homes.

Are.

>> So training is a massive part of what we do on the back end when these horses come off the range.

Like Steph was talking about, it's challenging to find homes for wild horses and training is an important component in finding these horses, their long-term homes.

We do a lot at the great escape.

We also do outreach.

So there's Stephanie in the background with the little preschool group, on Dakota.

We travel to schools and do presentations for children, from preschool all the way through high school.

I just did a presentation at a career development center, who they have got equine science programs and I spoke to the issues of the wild horse and burro issues.

We utilize age-appropriate materials and presentations and such to talk about things.

But it engages the conversation and gets kid interested in what's happening.

We also accompany schools, we have done this, before that want to dive into the

issue even further and so we have accompanied the school up to Sandwash Basin, local field office came out.

We had a conversation about conflict and we talked about how we are working together in trying to come up with a solution for these horses both on and off the range.

We also hosted a BLM compliance check training day with budget cuts coming up.

We figured that this is a pretty important area of the wild horse and burro program, it's first year of adoption and making sure that adoptions are going well.

We turned out 22 volunteers with Steve and Leonard leading that training day all over the front range so that if they get a call, hey, there's a horse in need, we have a volunteer that can go out and check on the situation.

They are now trained to do like I said compliance checks and assist the adopter with maybe fencing issues or something.

We also set up booths that maintain a presence at expos and other communicate events.

We bring our trained ambassador mustangs to participate in events and outside clinics in order to showcase their versatility and abilities.

Steph brought -- well, we did -- we had a few mustangs at Colorado mustang.

This is our new outdoor arena.

We have host educational programs.

So this was actually part of a horsemanship clinic that we were -- that we were doing.

We also do ranch riding and cow work.

We did a cow working clinic a couple of weekends ago.

We offer day tours at the -- at the training center, as well as the sanctuary herd.

We offer photography workshops and host children's field trips and it's getting kids involved in what we are doing and the issues and bringing them out to the ranch.

4-H mustang weanling training program.

Thank you Steven Leonard.

(Applause)

So in collaboration with Steve, we started a new type of 4-H program.

A think a lot of children focus on the competition, and not the back horse, what is the relationship.

We call it spirits of west.

We concentrate on horsemanship training.

So we bring guest instructors down to give the kids mini clinics.

We did an obstacle course clinic with our horses.

We have mentors for the kids.

Older, younger, we had 24 children and seven weanlings this past year and it was hugely successful and the kids came out the other end and it was funny because they were interviewed by a local paper.

And the one thing that was a consistent, when they were interviewed is that children learn patience because -- because you condition walk up to your horse the first day and touch it.

Well, some could, but others it took a few weeks.

We have had the mustang showcase where the kids were able to show off the training they had done on the horses and then we had an adoption event for them and yes, we ended up adopting the one that my son worked with, just because she's also amazing.

So we try to do a lot of stuff, obviously with children.

So out at the ranch, we also have a sanctuary pasture.

Training is a big thing of what we to do, and moving the horses out of pasture.

Sometimes we bring from horses that are not adjusting to the world of domestic life.

They are meant to live wild.

In that case we do have a sanctuary pasture for them and this is the sanctuary herd out at the ranch.

We have 28 of them out there right now.

27.

Sorry 27 of them out there right now.

And they are happy as can be and they are living their life wild.

Some of them are halter broke.

Some of them we can catch and we monitor them all the time, and if something is amiss, we do address issues with them but they wear down their feet and do awesome out there.

Retreat.

We also offer retreat programs.

So our retreat center is called escape on the range retreat center and it's exposing these mustangs and what we are doing and the work that we are doing different groups.

We have folks that do yoga workshops.

So you can come in and rent out the retreat centers to women's retreat and mindfulness and meditation retreats and therapeutic programs focused on children.

It's exposing them not mustangs and getting them to know who these horses are, which we think is really important.

The folks that are in the horse world, not necessarily domestic horse world because I feel like some of those folks don't quite understand or grasp what's happening with the wild horses.

I feel that it's important to bring that knowledge to everybody and so everybody kind of has a different wind shift about what's happening with our horses.

So that's who we are.

We appreciate the time to come up here and talk to you guys about what we do.

I feel like our model of collaboration and what TJ is doing and what friends of mustangs is doing and McCollough Peaks and the Pryors are doing.

This is model and it can be replicated and like TJ said, it can be done and it takes a

little bit of time to break it down and develop a plan and a program.

And although we were mentored by these guys, our Sandwash Basin is totally different than Spring Creek Basin and we have different challenges and when the darters get trained, they come to Stella and get field training.

Our range is very different than the classroom and it's important to know the horses and database.

So anyways, I'm rambling now.

But I do think that the partnerships with the -- with the Bureau of Land Management has been wonderful and here in Colorado, I'm really, really impressed with what we are able to achieve.

So thank you.

(Applause)

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Let's open it up for questions to all of our presenters in the past.

However long that was, you guys since we started.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: The past hour.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Very good.

Questions?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Julie, I do have a question and also comments.

Thank you guys so much for being exemplary examples of what partnerships can do.

TJ, I love your pictures and what healthy rangelands look like.

It's obvious that you understand this concept.

Here's the question, the BLM should do everything it can financially to support.

You know we have multiple competing priorities for funds, on range, things to do, off range things to do.

My question is this, are you able to tap into private funding sources through other grants?

I know Mustang Heritage Foundation and the BLM supports them.

They support you.

But can we engage the private sector to financially contribute to these wonderful programs?

Have you been able to do that?

>> Yes, so because we are a nonprofit, that is -- that is a good portion also of our funding is through organizations like, the coalition of unwanted -- coalition of unwanted -- no.

Colorado unwanted horse alliance.

Anyways, it's organizations that we are able to go after for -- for training.

It takes a lot to train these horses and training is a really expensive program, and adopting them, you know, BLM \$125, we get nothing.

So training is -- it's a losing proposition for us, but we are able to kind of make up for some of that through training grants, through other organizations because we are not a nonprofit.

Yes, a lot of the work we do, it is supported by the public, by our fund-raising events, by things like that.

There is -- you know, the ecosanctuaries that are funded by the Bureau of Land Management for us, we don't have that partnership.

We don't have that relationship.

So it's us kind of trying to incent the wheel to see how we will make up the off range.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So I think we don't only need volunteers doing all of this work but we need volunteers to financial resources and enter into those types of partnerships.

Again, thank you so much.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Do we have more questions?

I have a question.

Would you explain to me what Serengeti foundation is?

And your relationship with them, because clearly, someone is supporting you because -- because you are pouring all of this effort one direction.

Can you explain that relationship and who that is?

And apparently they had -- they were one of the permittees on your HMA?

>> They were the permittee.

Yeah, they were the permittee until it was relinquished and closed.

So the Serengeti foundation is a nonprofit organization that bought the ranch adjacent to Spring Creek Basin for the purpose of making it a mustang sanctuary, because of my work, documenting the horses since the 2007 roundup, when the Serengeti foundation bought the ranch, after that roundup, my stars snatched into place and I was hired by the Serengeti foundation to run the sanctuary with the understanding that a good portion of the reason for my employment there was because of my volunteer work with BLM in Spring Creek Basin.

So the Serengeti foundation started as a way to fund elephants.

Somebody was talking about elephants and how they are very family oriented and similar to wild horse families, very intelligent and very family oriented.

So then in about 2010, the Serengeti foundation was looking in the United States for a way to help animals or, you know, an issue, a topic, a thing.

The elephants, the sanctuaries funded there are one in Thailand and Africa.

I know nothing about the elephants.

It was at protests at our 2011 roundup.

So a very good thing came out of that publicity.

So yes, the Serengeti foundation is my employer.

>> And I do want to add one more thing, if I could speaking to that.

So everything that we're able to accomplish through the GEMS and through SWAT.

We have two full-time employees and one part-time employee, and everyone else is volunteers.

I volunteer 100% of my time.

We accomplish what we can do, like TJ, she's one person.

In our organization, there's two and a half employees that are being paid.

So I'm proud of that.

I think that's amazing.

But I also feel like I would love to get to a point where we could pay them what they deserve as well.

So anyways, just wanted to tack that on.

>> You guys rock by the way!

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: I have just wanted to make a comment that I think there's a lot of good that you are doing with your organization.

I think there is a lot the kids can learn from working with horses.

I know as a kid, I worked with a lot of horses and you do learn a lot of patience, and you learn a lot of life lessons that carry over into your human relationships, and that help you down the road in life.

And so hands off to you on that.

And also on assisting and I think that I'm real encouraged by all of your willingness to be on ground, working with the range, working with the horses to get positive results done and not using all of your funding and resources tied up in litigations that keep the BLM funds tied up.

They make a dedicated effort to helping the horses and helping people with their horses.

So thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Okay.

Thank you ladies very, very much.

We appreciate what you do.

(Applause)

>> KATHIE LIBBY: And let me say, that as Dr. Messmer gets himself, the book that TJ was mentioned "Built for Speed, the Life of a Year of a Pronghorn" by John Byers.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Kathie?

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Yeah, give me just a sec.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I believe Sue is trying to talk to you online.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Kathie?

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Yes, Sue.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Could you have the sound people help me out, I'm unable to ask questions.

When I try to ask, you don't seem to hear me.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Yes, absolutely.

Art?

Guys?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: The volume is better but it could go up a little bit more.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you.

Apologize for that.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: Good morning.

I appreciate the opportunity -- oh, there we go.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Good morning.

I appreciate the opportunity to talk about the outcome of the national wild horse and burro summit.

What I will do is go through a series of questions and the responses to those questions

from individuals that participated in the summit.

But before I do that, I want to talk a little bit about some of the background of who I am, and why I'm here.

Yesterday Dr. Boyd talked about his background out of Texas.

I also come from a -- first of all, my name is Terry Messmer.

I'm a professor at Utah State University and also director of the Jack H Berryman Institute.

I come from a small farm background in North Dakota.

Seemingly like my father and his father before him, I was destined to become a farmer but my career choice was decided more by order of birth than it was by -- by the farm itself, or by my father's choice in career.

I was the second of two sons and in North Dakota, most of the situations, the farm transferred to the older boy.

And so I ended up being drafted for the Vietnam War.

Actually, let me clarify that.

I volunteered for the draft.

Subsequently after my two-year stint, I looked around for career choices for things that I could do to -- to still work with the land, still worked with animals and I looked at this career choice called wildlife management.

I thought what a great example.

What a great career.

I could get a steady pay check, no matter what I produced.

And I guess that's the definition of a bureaucrat, right?

So anyway, I got degrees in wildlife management, biology, community planning, animal range science, and so all of these focused on human dimension aspects.

It's kind of ironic because most people get into wildlife management because they don't like working with people and in reality wildlife management, range management, all of those things focus on working with people.

In addition, I stayed in the military.

Here 2014, I retired after 41 years.

I appreciate the lady yesterday, she talked about her service in the Vietnam War.

I thank her for her service and all veterans in the room, I thank you for your service.

My role in the military was specializing in preventative medicine, and particularly combat stress control.

I was a commander of several units that worked on combat deployments where we focused on reducing non-related combat deaths and injuries, focusing on disease, focusing on safety, accidents, things along that line.

My role as a combat commander for a combat stress unit was focused on reducing soldier suicides and so I appreciated the comments that were made just previously by the group that was here about the -- the therapy sessions and using horses in therapy because I do think that there's a very important aspect of using horse therapy in treating post traumatic stress syndrome in veterans.

I know 4-H has developed some programs and I would suspect the sanctuaries are working with other groups to do that.

Now getting no where we are at, the Berryman Institute Waston tacked to create a summit on wild horse and burro management.

The institute as you see, we are a think tank but we are different than most think tanks because what we focus on are the science of managing mitigating human wildlife conflicts.

In other words, applying science, management, education, to develop policies through teaching, education, that -- that mitigate -- that enhance human wildlife interactions by reducing those particular conflicts.

And so we do this through outreach.

We do this through engagement and national symposiums over the last 20 years we hosted 20, 20 plus international symposiums on various different topics and one of those was management of wild horse and burros.

Our unique niche was that we focus on the tough issues.

If you will, we focused on the good, the bad, and the ugly of wildlife management.

Now, horses are not considered wildlife.

They are their own category.

They are neither considered wildlife under the definition of wildlife from a state management agency and yield you heard Kevin Bonel talk about his perspective.

One the things we also do is publish a journal.

We publish a journal, open access journal and there are three examples of journal there and I would like to talk about each one of them because they are going to lead into my discussion about some of the responses that we have -- have got to the questions at the national summit and I will talk about the summit itself, and who participated and the demographics.

The first journal focuses on someone feeding a squirrel.

You have an urban population, 330 million people in the country and most of them live in urban environments.

And so most interactions of the urban public and the urban environments deal with situations such as this.

A most recent issue focuses on cosmopolitan coyotes and the idea of what coyotes are happening in urban areas and human beings are reacting to them.

Anyway, first photo the human wildlife interactions journal focuses on urban wildlife.

Several years ago we did a national survey and when I talk about the national survey, these are random surveys, they are stratified, and they are based on demographics designed to be very rigorous in terms of getting the kind of information we need to understand human behavior and understand the things that influence human behavior.

This particular survey, surveyed 1500 households in the United States and what we were astounded to find out, that 66% of those surveys -- the surveys that responded in the five years prior to, had experienced a negative interaction with wildlife.

So their relationship with wildlife in these urban areas were largely negative.

And a lot ever those situations you have a deer in the garden you have a deer that you happen to hit with your car or you have got some other interactions.

So that the thing to point out is that our experiences, our individual experiences and observations shape those values and shaped our perceptions about wildlife and the

management of wildlife.

Those are key things to know.

Now in the absence of those kind of experiences, we also ask individuals where they get their information from.

What helps shape their values?

What helps shape their actions and the key things that came out were family, friends, and more importantly today it's social media.

Research suggests that 87% of the -- of the public -- of the public in the United States receives their news through social media outlets.

That's pretty astounding.

I mean Walter Cronkite would be shocked if he heard that.

So anyway, the second one focused on something else.

That issue dealt with the concept of One Health, One Health.

We had a speaker in the summit that talked about the importance of One Health and One Health refers to the issue, the interactions of human beings, wildlife with the environment.

The health of each influences the other.

You cannot take those separately.

You cannot look at human health, wildlife health and environmental health separately, because they are all intertwined and they all have significant focus.

Dr. Kane is a veterinarian and has a significant role in the One Health concept and expanding that and exploring the options.

The third human wildlife interaction focused on large carnivores.

The large carnivore interactions, particularly predatory actions.

In the last 50 years, mostly in the last ten years, the numbers of predatory attacks of wildlife on human beings has increased.

Our most recent issue on cosmopolitan coyotes has documented an increase in

coyote attacks on human beings.

That article, that magazine, that journal focused on the peer-reviewed science about what are the attacks.

Why are they occurring and how can they mitigate the attacks by our behavior.

It's interesting to note, a lot of those attacks are caused by human ignorance, human not understanding the consequences of an animal in an environment and approaching the animal and doing things to attract the animal to an urban environment.

One of the things we also did when we looked at the predatory animals we did a national survey of public's response to predators and predation management.

In other words, what does the public think about predators?

But more so, what do they think about the role of managers and managing predation?

What we did in these national surveys, again, it was a random survey of households in North America and this included Canada.

We gave them situations or scenarios where we placed in the situation where there was a specific predatory animal preying on a specific species.

And we provided context where they could make choices.

They could make decisions based on the animal, based on the information, based on their knowledge about the situation, but also their perceptions of value of that particular predatory animal.

If you happen to be a snake, the jig is up because most folks felt that any time a snake did anything at all to any animal, it should be controlled.

So anyway -- but what we did see in the survey which is pretty significant is that the public is pretty sophisticated.

It provided the correct information, the correct sciences, they are clearly able to see shades of gray and they are clearly able to understand the role of management and particularly target management in addressing an issue.

And that's the critical component.

Information, education is part of that knowledge base that helps to make the decisions, but those are also related back to how those values, those values affect those outcomes and so anyway, what I'm going to do now is I'm going to talk a little bit about

the summit.

Let me see if I can advance this.

And what it was, the purposes of the summit, I've got some information here.

The summit was attended by, oh, 230 people over 100 different organizations, from 30 some different states.

And so I will get into some of the demographics of summit participants.

It was invited.

Those individuals that were invited were specifically invited and nominated by a steering committee of 20 organizations, and the individuals and organizations invited represented those individuals, organizations that were concerned about the issue, and concerned about implementation.

1971 Wild Horse and Burro Act.

As you can see by the logo, folks have looked at the logo and we got some criticism on the logo.

The logo reflects the concern.

The concern if you will, and the despair, the frustration.

As I sat here over the last day, I saw a lot of different values, a lot of different perceptions and nobody is wrong.

Nobody is wrong.

All the values and everything expressed over the last couple of days are true and right, and they reflect an individual perspective and they should be valued as such.

What we did do as part of the summit, is we taped the presentations and the presentations are available online.

You can go look at the presentations.

A couple of presenters were here over the last day and they presented some of the similar things presented at the summit, but idea here was establishing what is the base of science?

And I know we heard some comments about science and shadow science, and there

is shadow science.

There is shadow science there's no doubt.

Usually the metric to determining what science is appropriate and acceptable, it has to undergo some type of peer review by the scientific community.

In other words, it has to be reviewed.

It has to be evaluated based on its methodology, based on the techniques, based on standard, scientific process and then it ultimately, if it stands the merit of that, if has the rigor, it ends up being published in a recognized peer-reviewed journal and then it becomes the best available science.

Now, when we get into the survey, I need to caution you, the survey represents a sample of individuals that participated in the summit.

It represents a very good cross section of individuals, organizations interest that are concerned about the issue, but it was not random.

And so it doesn't have the kind of rigor that you would typically find in a survey.

And so also, I urge the board, when you see or hear comments made about a certain number of percentage of people support this, versus that, unless there's documentation about the survey being done and the questions being asked appropriately, following standard rigorous protocol, I urge you to take that with caution because anybody can say anything about any issue and I can go survey the funds in my backyard and they all have certain opinions.

And I can say, well, this is what the public believes.

In reality, those things can only be achieved through a standard rigorous process involving sociologists and folks experienced in survey techniques.

One of the things I would encourage the advisory board to do, is a good national survey about public perceptions with wild horse and burro management and policies.

Clearly there are a lot of emotions involved.

So any way, the final day of the summit, after we heard some of the presentations.

And so the idea with the presentations was to kind of create a level of understanding.

Not agreement, but understanding about the issues, what's happen historically?

What are the policies?

What does the science say?

What does the science say today?

Since 2013 and the national academy of science reports, there are things that happened.

One of the things that we need to understand and sometimes we forget is the science is never done.

It's never done.

There are new things developed and there are new ideas.

There's new concept.

There's new techniques and so as those science emerge, that's those data emerge, we have to continually ask us questions about the science and to understand it and so even some of the things Dr. Boyd talked with yesterday about they are going back ten years after, and looking to see how things have changed afterwards and so -- so you need to be cautious about that.

The science is really never done.

So anyway, what we tried to do is understand the framework and the understanding of what folks felt and what they might have agreed with at the final day of the summit and so we asked them a series of selected questions.

And so what we did is we used the clicker response method, where we formulated a question and when I say we, social scientists formulated a question and they asked respondents to respond digitally with a clicker and they were instantaneously.

Those responding to the survey, had immediate feedback at the time that the survey was conducted.

And so I will share with you a snapshot of what some of those responses were.

And, again, this is who they are.

This is who the individuals that were responding and so as you look at this cross section, they represent a good cross section.

Now, you look at the percentage and you say, well, wait a minute.

They don't add up to 100.

Well, because several people had different interests.

They were allowed to choose different things that they could respond to you know, for example, some individuals were agricultural representatives but maybe they also were part of an NGO.

And so as you see there, we had a fairly good dispersions of group or individuals who are interested in the wild horse and burro management.

We also did have some youth involved.

As you know the 1971 act was passed largely on the backs of letter campaign by youth of America who wrote Congress and the President and said we need to act now.

We have need to take responsible for this and so the 1971 act resulted from that.

Okay.

And so we asked some questions, what are you doing?

And here's some response, and I see these -- the word slides might be a little -- a little vague for those in the back.

So I will just kind of reiterate some of those.

Of those who represented the organizations there, they indicated that they -- 55% indicated that they actually had a policy on wild horse and burro issues.

We didn't ask them what that policy was, but we said, have you thought about this enough?

In addition, 69% of those responding said that, well, what we are going to do is we are going to reevaluate our current position and we are going to go back and maybe look at developing a policy.

Maybe putting something together.

We asked them also what are their actions or what actions after the summit might they take?

And public education outreach okay.

Lobbying advocacy, calls to action, devoting staff time to coordinating committees and essentially there was a sense of -- we need to get a little bit more involved.

Actually, we need to get a lot more involved in this issue.

One the other things that came out was about 75% of the respondents felt that additional summits like this might be of value in the future.

And so the nature of those summits would be determined, again, about the nature of the issues.

Just checking my time here.

Okay.

So here are the meat, the meat of what we are looking for.

And so we asked them a series -- and I think I have 20 some slides where I will summarize some of the key issues and, again, you saw the demographics but, again, the demographics of summit participant represented a pretty good cross section of individuals and organizations that are concerned about this issue.

And so the number one question we ask, why are you here?

And the question was: I care about making sure that wild horses are treated humanely.

And if you look at the response, 79% of those that responded to the survey said that's why we are here.

We want.

We want to understand.

We want to make sure that wild horses are treated humanely.

I suspect a survey of this with the US public might yield some of the same results.

Okay.

The other question I asked, I'm concerned about the current horse population numbers and the health of range lands.

You know, that was unanimous response almost, you know, 99% said we strongly agree with it, and 100% said we agree.

The folks that attended or responded to the survey share a lot of the same concerns of those in this room.

I'm concerned about the impact of current wild horse population numbers on wildlife.

You know, again, a strong response, you know.

80% roughly said that, yes, they strongly agree with that and another, you know, 21% said yes, we agree.

And so, again, we looked at some of the strength of those responses but generally overall, there was agreement with concern about the humaneness of how horses are being treated and concern about the current situation and a concerning about the impact that wild horse populations may be having on wildlife.

Next question dealt with the economic impact, the impact of horse population numbers on rural economies and again if you add those two figures to go, you know, you are getting up into the 90% range where folks agreed with that.

Participants were concerned not only about horses and wildlife but they were concerned about the local communities.

They were concerned about the livelihoods and I heard that from individuals today, concerned about the livelihoods of those who work the landscape and derive their income from.

Several years ago, we did a national survey on -- of ranchers, ranchers in North America -- or actually the United States and we were concerned about their attitudes and perceptions about endangered species act and we had a whole series of questions in there to select from and rate their highest concern and when we received the results back, we were kind of stunned with their number one concern.

Does anyone want to take a shot at what do you think ranchers, farmers, land owners in the United States, what was their number one concern about the Endangered Species Act?

Yes, Steven?

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: I would guess property rights and water rights being compromised.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: That's a good answer.

The number one response from landowners in the United States, when we talked

about the Endangered Species Act, was affordable healthcare.

The idea that the Endangered Species Act could impact the revenues that they generate from their revenues to pay for the healthcare of their families.

Okay.

I'm concerned about the current impact populations on individual horse health and, again, you know, still really high responses here.

You know, we are talking 90% responses.

You know, again, this group heard some of the information over the first day and a half and they are responding accordingly and so we did not do a pretest, in other words we didn't do the survey before the summit.

We did it afterwards and so to do that, you would probably need to do both a pre and post test if you want to measure learning.

I'm concerned about the cost to taxpayers for holding horses.

I think a lot of concern.

90% again, and, again, I think a lot of those concerns would be shared by this room.

I believe that achieving thriving natural ecological balance requires maintaining a diversity of plant and animal species on the range.

Again, high, high, high support.

Over 90% agreement.

I believe -- I believe achieving ecological balance requires achieving rangeland health standards on federal lands.

You know, again, fairly strong achievement, but a little bit more diversity.

A little bit more disagreement and a little bit more opinion, but, again, still really high in that 90 percentile range.

Any time you get this kind of response in a true rigorous survey, it suggests the values.

Now, there's no way with this particular survey, that we are able to break this down based on demographics and so we don't know if -- if a rancher or we don't know if a sportsman or woman, you know, how they responded and how they shape out but

given the level of this strength, it suggests that there was consensus among those groups.

I believe it is possible to increase adoption enough to meet current supply of excess horses.

A lot of disagreement here.

And, again, we are in that range where it's 90 percentile, and, again, that was based on the information that was presented that the production on range estimates of 13,000, 14,000 versus what's adopted is based on the facts that they made this decision.

I believe that no kill solutions alone can adequately address off range population current conditions.

And here's another deck, 90% that if we are looking at off range populations, what options are there?

I know there were some interesting options presented this more than, about looking at adopting horses that are off range, and so all of those things no doubt have merit.

Just it's an issue, again, of scale.

I believe that no kill solutions alone can adequately address on-range populations that -- which are over and above AML.

And this was clarified based on current conditions and current financial constraints.

And, again, you see basically there was strong agreement with that in the 95% range.

I believe the combination of temporary permanent fertility control can reduce current horse populations enough which in the foreseeable future to alleviate theism pack to rangeland health, and, again, the clarification was under the current law with the current riders and not in combination with euthanasia.

And you see strong agreement for that statement.

Excuse me, strong disagreement for that statement.

How supportive are you of current situation?

96% completely opposed and over the last day, I heard a lot of frustrations, a lot of concerns about the current situation that one thing we can agree on is that not everyone are happy.

The next question.

Strong support.

78% completely supportive and another 18% moderate supportive.

And how supportive are you of horses for protein for pet food.

86% completely supportive and moderate support.

Now we start to see, we get into this next series of questions and there's more divergence in terms of level of spot.

How supportive are you of developing additional opportunities for adoption within the United States?

Completely supportive.

67%, moderately supportive 18%, and so the support is still fairly high but there's some divergence.

I can't tell you what demographics diverge from that because we didn't have that information.

We didn't tie it back specifically to the demographic.

How supportive are you of developing additional opportunities outside the United States.

Again, looking at the numbers, fairly strong support in the 80 percentile range and these were things, for example, international adoptions and things along that line.

Assume we can't control anything after adoption.

In other words once the horse is adopted, and it's overseas, you know, the rights to that horse or the rights to tracking that horse or not available.

How supportive are you of permanent sterilization?

Again, strong support.

71% moderate support in the 18% percentile.

How supportive of the non-remaining producing herds in the HMAs, the clarifications

herds would not die off but they would be supplemented by other horses into the future and I think that's one of the things talked about by the sanctuary today that sustaining populations may be through minor reproduction changes.

But, again with this particular question, you saw not really a whole lot of support with this and not conclusive where it was in the 90 percentile.

And how supportive of are you of BLM managing horses within their boundaries.

Again, mixed emotions on this one.

Again we don't know what the demographics of respondents are.

This is a question that there was also some difference of opinion.

How supportive are you of gathering and removing excess horses to place on private leased pastures off federal lands?

A clarification regardless of cost, more capacity where off-range horses can be placed.

What you see here is a lot of -- a lot of dispersion in terms of responses.

And, again, we don't have the demographics to back these up and what group responded which way, which should be something that should be done if we are looking at a national survey, is tying these responses back to demographics.

Okay.

Let's see.

How supportive are you of reducing the age of sale without restrictions from 10 plus years to 5 plus years?

67% were completely supportive and another 26% were moderately supportive.

And so this is some change in the policy which would look at how we -- how we change and how we manage horses in off-road -- in off-range facilities.

How supportive are you of euthanizing for population control for unadoptable horses?

81% were supportive of that.

Okay?

But, again, there was some difference of opinion on it.

How supportive are you of adding mules, mules to horse herds to control growth, population growth?

And, again, opposition completely opposed, were in the neighborhood of 50 -- of 38%, but, again, there was a lot of dispersion of the respondents and we can't tie it back to demographics because we didn't ask individuals to identify that in their responses.

How supportive are you of maintaining non-reproducing herds in HMAs and, again, some mixed response.

32% completely supportive but then again it ranged down where there was a good overall support for some of these things.

How supportive are you of the BLM allowing individual states to managing horses within their boundaries?

55% supported that.

The idea that states would take over management authority and Utah a few years ago actually asked us to develop a draft of a state plan, in other words how would the state if they assumed management responsibility of these horses, how would the state go about managing them?

And a lot measures in that plan replicated what was identified in the BLM plan, however, the states would have jurisdiction.

How supportive are you of expanding the size of HMAs and I know that was mentioned today.

80% of respondents were completely opposed to expanding the HMAs.

Again, of this particular demographic.

I think there was discussion today about expanding areas when HMAs, one of the interesting things when we look at size, or scale, there are very few preserves, even Yellowstone is not large enough.

It's not large enough to contain all the ecological forces that are needed to manage it.

For example, wolves were introduced into Yellowstone but the wolves did not stay in Yellowstone.

Wild horse and burros don't recognize boundaries of HMA.

They have go where the groceries are green.

How supportive are you in increasing the number of HMAs and, again, fairly strong response that folks were opposed to that idea, that the idea is to manage within the existing HMAs without increasing those and enhance that management as opposed no go beyond.

How supporting are you of allowing horses to self-regulate on the range?

In other words, do nothing?

And pretty strong response across all the demographics.

98% were completing opposed to it.

How supportive are you of maintains horses from BLM facilities for remainder of their lives.

A lot of opposition to this with the demographics that were surveyed.

Again, getting in the range of over 90%.

So it suggests that there was some support, broad support across the range of demographics.

How supportive are you of gathering and removing excess horses to place them in private leased pastures off federal lands?

A lot of spread here.

A lot of dispersion of the results suggests that this is something that, oh, with maybe need to think about a little bit more if we are thinking about it as a management action.

How supportive are you creating a clearinghouse on management options and I think BLM actually has a fairly good information clearinghouse on their website, but this is talking about something that would be a little built more reactive and a little bit more responsive and so, again, there were some support for this and there was some that said, oh, I don't really know.

I don't have any opinion on it but it may be something that BLM might want to look at in materials of that information flow and how you manage that information flow, and how it's updated.

I know electric's a couple of comments made about volunteers and getting volunteers working on some of the darting programs.

Lastly, out of this, what we have asked the authors to do and we have reached out to international authors, we will have interaction on wild horse and burro management.

So we have a call for papers out.

We are looking at science.

We are also looking at commentaries.

In other words, there were some -- there's some novel ideas here.

The work that's going on in Colorado, I would encourage the sanctuary of TJ and others who were part of that, consider providing pay manuscript, documenting their results and documenting their experiences and sharing that.

This in human-wildlife actions journal is a compendium, of the science, management and policy actions that have occurred since the 2013 national academy national science report.

We hoped to be it a volume that's complete, that balanced, that's fair and it also represents all the view points and all the values and experiences that individuals share are about wild horse and burro management.

And subject to the board's questions, that's pretty much it.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Thanks. Thanks, Dr. Messmer, for being here with us today.

It would have been nice to have met you at the summit, but those of us that are actively involved in wild horse advocacy were not invited.

Can you tell me who contacted you to begin this process of doing the summit?

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: The initial contact of the summit came from a fairly broad steering committee, including environmental interests, sportsmen, state/federal agencies and so if you go to the summit website, there's a complete list of the organizations that were involved in -- in charting and planning the summit and so it's a pretty good cross-section of state wildlife agency, like I said the Audubon Society was part of it and it represents the groups that have been concerned about, it the wildlife society, the society for range management that have been concerned about it for several years and wanting to pull together a -- a forum to kind of talk about the issues to update the national academy of science report.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: So there was not an initial contact person or organization.

It was all of these that came together at one time and asked you to do it?

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: This was an offshoot of some initial work that we did three years ago in developing the Utah plan.

And so the initial conversation came from the Department of Natural Resources which was wanting to shed some new light and wanting to revisit the issue.

That's where my contact came from.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: In the state of Utah?

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: In the state of Utah, yes.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: And did you invite any of people that you heard present this morning?

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: Yes -- this morning, no.

In other words, Ginger, they were.

No natured by the steering committee.

It's the same type of thing that to be invited you had to be nominated, just like to be a member of this board this you have to be nominated.

There were individuals that represented horse advocacies.

I would suggest that a lot of the individuals that participated there, had a strong interest in support for horses and management of horses and were concerned about horse welfare.

And so there were groups and individuals that were represented specific advocacy organizations that were in attendance.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: We are not familiar with those organizations.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: Okay.

There's one sitting on the board right here.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: June's organization, but the other three or four --

>> BEN MASTERS: The Humane Society was invited.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: Yes, the Humane Society was invited.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Did the Humane Society attend?

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: They said they were unable to participate and also the defenders said they were not able to participate but they were interested in maintaining contact and receiving follow-up information.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: In my experience as a political media consultant doing a lot of quantitative and qualitative research, when you get results like the ones we are looking at here today, it's -- it speaks to not having a broad section of people invited to this event whether they were nominated or not.

It's quite an unusual in my experience in the political world and you would probably scratch your head and say, we didn't do the right sampling.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: Okay.

Ginger as I pointed out in my comments this was not representative of rigorous representative of America, of the US public.

I pointed that out.

I have a long experience with social sciences.

I don't know what your background or training is, but I have done a lot of these surveys.

I publish these surveys and I understand the public input process and so when I presented these results, I presented them reflecting that they represent the cross section of individuals that participated in the summit.

I identified the demographics but I by no means represented that it's representative of the US public.

At the same time, that the idea that someone can say that the public supports a specific view point or certain percentage support this issue or that issue, without having the proper demographics and without the rigorous survey, you cannot make that statement either.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Well, in future, it would be really great that you do invite people who share desperate views from those represented and so we would very much like to participate at some point in a further conference that you might have and I know there are people in this room that very much deserve to be at the table and so

that would be my recommendation to you.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: Thank you.

And, again, my recommendation to the board is that one of the things missing on the management of wild horse and burros is this natural perspective this national summit.

And I know the BLM has talked about possibly doing this with -- with someone, but I would suggest that if you are going to do this appropriately, that you probably want to issue an RFP and then have some of the recognized groups that are either affiliated with universities that usually do this type of research that they would then maybe compete for that and do it early on the on and up.

I'm not lobbying for Berryman Institute at Utah State University to do it, but I think what is needed some clear understanding of the public's knowledge about this issue, about the knowledge of the options and about the understanding of how these things are integrated together.

Without that, everything that we say about it is basically based on personal observation.

And as quantified or qualified the results that were presented here, there was strong support for issues but this represents the demographics of a select audience and it's not a random stratified sample of American public and that's one thing that's missing on the issue of wild horse and burro management.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Could I ask for Dean Bolstad to please step in at this point and tell us what happened to the national survey that BLM had solicited.

It was starting.

There were focus groups.

If you remember, my objection that the West was being focused around Las Vegas, because I wasn't really sure that they could represent the West.

At one time, BLM was actively engaged in exactly what you were suggesting is needed.

What the heck happened to that?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So it is still there.

It is still waiting to happen.

The questions that were to be surveyed need office of management and budget approval and Jason Lutterman can probably help to inform.

This can you provide more precise information?

I believe we have the questions, maybe approved at this point, but help me out here, thank you.

>> JASON LUTTERMAN: The wild horse and burro, the BLM front office has to review our response to over -- I think it was over 3,000 OR 6,000 comments we received in response to the public comment period and so, once BLM gets done reviewing that, it goes to the department and once the department is done, it goes to OMB.

And then once that's done, we'll be able to issue -- start our focus groups to develop the survey questions.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: AM. I erroneous in thinking this is kind of slow?

(Laughter)

>> JASON LUTTERMAN: Yes.

Typically we receive about four or five public comments for these types of notices, and this time we received thousands and so it took sometime to go through that and in the meantime, we did lose our staff person who was the lead on that project.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Jim?

>> JAMES FRENCH: Being the newbie on this board when did we initiate that process?

How long have we been in there?

>> JASON LUTTERMAN: Since 2015.

>> JAMES FRENCH: So we are two years in this thing.

Just from a deliverables point of thing, what do you anticipate to the completion when we can put this out on the ground?

Obviously, I think everybody is with baited breath is waiting for that type of activity.

So what can you tell me on that?

>> JASON LUTTERMAN: So we did extend the contract.

We have are working with contractors.

We extended their contract for another two years but I believe the study -- the focus groups will be done within a year and then we move on to issuing the national survey, the next year after that.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: You can put a national survey on a website and what you will do is you will get a biased result and so when you look at randomized sampling, statistically sampling, you know, households are selected, demographics within the house hold are looked for, and so more and more, that's becoming real problematic.

A lot of surveys we have done in the past have been mail surveys follow-up responses where we didn't get a response.

We contact the individual by phone.

And most folks have cell phones now.

The demographics and the complications with true surveying, you know, getting public values is very, very difficult.

And, again, there are -- there are several organizations, several groups, you know, again a lot of these tied to universities that specialize in that kind of rigor.

And I don't know what -- what the process is, if you are going to contract with the marking firm or what you are going to do.

But, again, be very, very cautious about when you look at polling results.

I mean, the last election shows that -- so the merits of polling.

You know, and what pollsters can get wrong and what they can get right, but the bottom line is that it is very difficult and to be done right it has to be done very thorough.

Internet surveys are very, very suspect in terms of the results because of how they can be influenced based on social media and based on things along that line.

And so there are standard techniques and, again, there are a lot of folks well versed in doing this type of thing and given the change in demographics and how people get their information, and things along that line, it's going to be a very difficult task and it's going to be something that's going to take definitely a couple of years from the time you initiate to complete it, to come out with some kind of validity in terms -- that you can support those results statistically.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thanks.

I have a question for you Dr. Messmer.

If you could return to your -- the next to the last slide and the one just before that, and please clarify the difference in those two questions, and the degree to which we're certain that the audience understood that difference.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: Which question?

This one?

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: The third slide about is how supportive are you in maintaining horses in long-term holding facilities, okay?

And then the next one is, how supportive of you -- are you about putting excess horses on private leased pastures off federal land?

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: This is a different facility.

This would be different.

It's not an existing holding facility.

It's actually another mechanism where you actually involve -- one of the things that was talked about is the idea of working more cooperatively with local ranchers.

There has been interest, for example, some ranchers that I worked with in Utah, that have been interested and wanting to be part of a partner in the process.

In other words, historically before the 1971 act, ranchers essentially in a lot of cases, they managed their local herds, if you will.

And so in some cases, they actually turned out sires or other things along that line to criteria.

These particular ranchers, want to preserve the traditional Spanish mustangs, such as the body type.

So they suggested the option that if we could work with BLM and we could take over more of a management role of these populations, we could be responsible for removing, for culling, for managing these animals, to achieve the status.

We could essentially create a primero breed of the Spanish mustang this they also

would be willing to pay the AUMs.

Pay BLM the AUMs for having those horses on their federal permit.

And so this is talking about a concept of doing something different than what we are doing right now, and creating pore freedom in terms of some of the way how the population is managed.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you.

Dean, would you address this?

I think there might be some confusion about long-term pastures, long-term holding, and something along the lines of the -- a partnership which allows a local group to -- what do I want to say, guide the genetics for cultural reasons.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So I think you just answered the question.

(Laughter)

Pastures that we contract for to keep excess horses on, that's been our program.

The other thing that's suggested here is involvement from the private sector and managing the herds, I think is what's being suggested.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: That's precisely why I wanted him to go back to the slide, gathering or removing excess horses on private leased pastures.

That's the definition of our long-term pastures.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: The --

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: And yet in the previous slide, the participants said no, we are not really in favor of long-term holding.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: The assumption of these holding facilities, one of the things with the tours that they did also visit the delta facility, the holding facility and so the concept of the holding facility is looking at that facility.

You know, the idea that you've got horses that are milling around and spending their lives in a facility, where they are going to end up, no one knows, versus getting the involvement of additional land owners and looking at a lease pasture option.

Again, the clarification for all of this was regardless of -- it's -- the idea of creating more capacity on native ranges regardless of cost.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thanks.

Go ahead, Dean.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So maybe it's a similar concept that Madeline Pickens had proposed to BLM?

Is that what's being suggested here?

I'm confused as well.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: I know the Madeline Pickens concept.

I know what is going on this.

This is looking at creating more capacity.

Creating more capacity.

Creating other options where you have more horses available to go on private lands, private lease ranches.

This is the demographics of it.

I'm not going to second guess what the respondents did and maybe what you are suggesting, Julie, is that that's reflective of some of the dispersion that we see in terms of the agreement and disagreement.

So it --

>> KATHIE LIBBY: If I may, I think your original question was how sure are you that people understood the distinction between those two questions.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: And I'm probably not because looking at the dispersion of this -- and if you look at the dispersion on some of these questions, some do reflect values but some probably reflects the confusion in terms of the question.

And so when you look at a national survey, all of these questions that you are going to be using in a national survey, you probably will test them for the focus group to make sure that people have an understanding and what the terminology and what the questions mean before they are released.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Okay.

Thanks.

Thanks.

I mean, we -- BLM does that.

They have long-term pastures.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: I know that.

I know that and the respondents know that.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Well, I think that's what they thought they were answering in the previous question, but that's why I think it's really unclear what the difference is between these two questions.

That's all.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: Are there any other questions?

>> GINGER KATHRENS: I just have one more question, and when you are coming up with conclusions and statistics and so forth, and you start out with a summit with the logo of starving-looking burro and a starving-looking horse, aren't you already biasing the conclusions?

I mean, the -- you are starting out with a supposition before you have even conducted, and on the summit, the attendee -- one person said to me, it was like having a health care conference and only inviting the insurance companies.

And so, I mean, how do you respond to this?

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: Well, I mean the logo was developed again by responses from the steering committee and it reflects the general concern about the urgency, the sense of urgency and the idea that this encompasses the entire United States and not just the western area is because it is a western land issue.

The steering committee discussed having a healthy, free roaming horse and we saw some great pictures here today about that, but that also reflects the image that everything is right with the world and it's really not right with the world.

You know, the consensus of the individuals and what I heard yesterday in terms of the comment period is that everybody is not happy.

You know, everybody thinks there could be improvement.

Everybody wants to see the right thing being done but we differ based on what that right thing is.

And so, you know, I understand your concerns.

I share those concerns.

But essentially when you are looking at putting these things together, the idea that was reflected and actually came out of the end result of the summit is that folks that participate in the summit feel that we can no longer kick the can down the road as one participant said, that the things that have been doing over the last 20 years have been essentially exacerbating a situation and it's becoming more intense and more volatile and it's becoming more emotional.

And so the question is given the constraints we have with budget and management and all of those things, we need to do something.

What I did find is working with the participants of the summit, they are all open to new idea.

S.

This they are all open to new partnerships and there a sense of an urgency that something needs to be done.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Yes, I agree.

Something needs to be done and it's nice to include the people not kicking the can down the road.

And not includes those non-can kickers would have been a very, very good thing to do and would have shown the honest with which this conference was created.

>> DR. TERRY MESSMER: And I appreciate that.

Like I said, I -- the comments made today, you know, the work that's going on, I was just marveling at the commitment and the dedication, and the idea is how do you replicate that across the landscape with sufficient scale that you address the situations that were also presented by the speakers the day before?

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Yes, I just had a comment with that -- on Ginger's comment of the starving horse and the -- or the thinner horse and the thinner burro.

Quite frankly, I think that's what we are up against right now with our wild horse and burro population as a whole.

I agree and I'm very proud of the people who presented today and the work they are doing and I don't feel like the work that they have put in should be overlooked, but as a nation, our wild horse and burro program is currently -- there are approximately 75,000 horses we are dealing with.

If that continues on, status quo, if there's not a natural disaster, which potentially could there be in a lot of these locations that are being overwhelmed with the amount of horses that are currently on them, when AML approaches six and seven times, when the appropriate management level has been exceeded by six or seven times, that is what we are up against.

And in the next four years that number will double to 150,000 and in the four years after that, potentially 300,000 wild horses within the HMAs.

Nobody wants to see these horses die of thirst or die of starvation, but unfortunately, that is what is going to happen if status quo begins to be followed and there are some very tough decisions that have to be made right now that should have been made many years ago but weren't for whatever political reason or agenda, and so there are a lot of things that we are faced with right now that have resulted from kicking the can down the road, and there are a lot of horses that are suffering unnecessarily because of it.

Thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: We need to bring this to an end.

We are scheduled for a break right now.

Thank, everybody, for participating.

Tough issues.

We all know it.

Thank you.

(off microphone comment)

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you.

Thank you and we'll see you back -- hold on.

So we are, as everyone wishes to, going to spend the rest of the meeting focused on what else do we do?

What do we enlarge?

Whatever, whatever, whatever.

What are we doing?

What are the actions?

That's what people are asking for.

That's what we will focus on.

Please come back at 10:15 and Mary Jo will get us started.

(Break)

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Ladies and gentlemen, can we get back to our seats, please.

We have an important presentation.

Let's get back to our seats, if he can, please.

Our next presenter is Mary Jo Rugwell, the project lead and Wyoming state director.

I would ask us all to pay very particular attention to this presentation.

I think it will inform our subsequent discussions greatly.

So let's take it way, Mary Jo.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Julie, would you please do a sound check with Dr. McDonnell if she's able to hear now.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Sue, how are the electronics working for you?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Much better.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: We hear you beautifully, but that's probably just because of the eloquence with which your voice comes across.

Thank you.

All right.

Great.

Thank you for being here.

By any chance, do we have Fred on line or Jen at this point?

Okay.

I would assure you both of the other board members have this presentation, and have been encouraged by multiple parties, be sure you review that before tomorrow.

So they are doing that and going to try to call in this afternoon.

Thank you.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: Thank you so much.

I am Mary Jo Rugwell.

I'm the state director for the Bureau of Land Management in Wyoming.

I was asked by the acting director of the BLM, Mike Nedd and deputy director John Ruse to act as a colead to put together some elements that will eventually become a report to Congress and report to Congress, the purpose is to try to outline a path to sustainability for the wild horse and burro program.

And so that's what my role is.

That's why I'm here today.

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

I would have loved to have been here yesterday, but I was at a leadership team meeting and I had to drive from Casper, Wyoming, to Grand Junction yesterday.

It was a beautiful drive, but it took a lot longer than I thought would.

Again thank you so much.

I was really impressed by the presentations that TJ Holmes and the great' scape mustang sanctuary and the Sandwash advocate team made.

It's compassion, combined with meaningful advocacy, and think it will be the way to get to sustainability in this program.

I was anxious to hear that hear.

Secretary Zinke has held some conversations with a variety of advocacy groups to get their input on the challenges we have.

Obviously, those were just initial conversations and I'm sure there will be additional conversations with advocacy groups.

Next slide.

This is the one.

I said next slide and it was already there.

That wouldn't be good.

So in the FY2017 appropriations act, the BLM was asked for a report that would outline a path to achieving long-term sustainable populations of wild horses on the range in a humane manner.

And so we have heard the phrase many times already today, healthy horses on healthy rangelands.

I was visiting with some folks in the hallway earlier, and that is absolutely what the Bureau of Land Management wants to see.

Gathers are very difficult for all of us.

It's not the thing that we want to have to continue to do.

We have need to figure out a way to have the appropriate number of horses so that the rangelands are healthy and they are healthy and that's what we are all trying to do here.

So because of this request from Congress, an interdisciplinary team has been working on trying to put together elements that will go into this report to Congress, and one of the reasons we are doing this presentation today is to outline those elements and to give the board an opportunity to weigh in on ways that we can meet the goals of those elements, put that in a report that we give to the Congress, that really outlines that path to sustainability, healthy horses and healthy rangelands.

So we'll go ahead and I will go through -- go ahead, next slide.

These are the elements that will be a part of that report to Congress.

Achieving appropriate management level or AML, I will probably use that for the rest of the time.

Maintaining AML, reducing our holding costs, placing excess animals into private care, ensuring humane treatment of the animals, using best available science, providing economic development and international aid, providing public information, and I think really one of the big keys is increasing our ability to work with partners.

So we look forward to hearing the board's thoughts on all ever these elements.

I'm going to go through them, through the components of these elements, and then at the end of the -- of the presentation, I will go ahead and summarize the questions that will be related to each of these.

And then the work for the rest of the day, I believe, is going to be getting feedback from the board on ways that we can achieve the goals.

These elements that are outlined here.

So element one is achieving AML and in the 1971 wild free roaming horses and burros act, it outlines if there is an excess of animals we need to immediately remove the excess animals to achieve appropriate management levels.

This is so important, not only for the health of the rangelands but absolutely for the health of wild horse and burros, and it's not just the right thing to do.

We are mandated by that law to do it and so that's one of the reasons that we really have to focus on this.

This slide shows, I think, in pretty -- pretty good way, where we were and where we are now.

When the act was passed in 1971, we had 25,000 wild horses and burros on the range.

When we were mandated to come one an appropriate management level, we arrived at a number around 27,000.

Currently, our estimates -- and we believe they are pretty darn accurate, we have 73,000 horses on the range.

This number does not include this year's foal crop.

And so we believe that because on many -- in many of the herd management areas we have, we do not have fertility control, and so we believe that the foal crop is

probably about 10,000 foals.

So that number is much higher than 73,000.

So this graph shows what has happened to the population of wild horses and burros.

As you can see, starting in the early 2000s, we were actually for a time at appropriate management level nationwide.

That doesn't mean that every single HMA of which there are 177, was at AML, but overall we were at AML for a time.

But because we didn't have effective long-term population growth suppression tools that we could use, and because we for a time were unable to do gathers because we did not have the capacity in either the corrals or long-term pastures, we had to greatly reduce the number of gathers we were doing.

You can see in 2017, we removed 4200 wild horses, burros, but because of the fact that we have not done a lot of removals in the last couple of years, the population has skyrocketed.

Because we couldn't do the removals, there were more horses the range and they were effective in growing the population pretty dramatically.

So in summary for element one which is achieve AML, we are mandated to maintain wild horses and burros at the established appropriate management level.

We believe that we currently have an excess of about 46,000 horses on the range.

And existing fertility control vaccines, while effective for a year or just over a year, it is difficult to just use PZP and be effective in being able to control the population in many of our HMAs.

Element number 2 is maintain AML.

Without population growth suppression, herds can double in four to five years.

If we don't employ those tools or other tools the growth is exponential.

There are no natural predators for wild horses and burros and so if we do not manage the herds, we end up having a devastating impact to both rangelands and to the horses themselves.

Today approximately 84% of the 177 herd management areas are above appropriate management level.

In addition, BLM is mandated by our organic act to manage the public lands for multiple use in sustained yield.

The wild horse program is only one of the many uses of those lands, and because we haven't done a good job of really controlling populations, it's really starting to adversely affect those other uses of public lands.

And so in maintaining AML, really, only two things we can do is gather, remove, and either adopt or sell the animals, and then the other tool we have is fertility control.

Again, because PZP is only effective for about a year, unless you have herds like the ones we heard about this morning, which is just a wonderful story, we have got a herd in Wyoming called the McCullough Peaks herd where we have a great partnership with the friends of a legacy that use darting to control the population there.

That has been incredibly successful, however, we have a lot of really large herd management areas where it would be very difficult to control the populations using darting.

Because of the fact that we have those large HMAs with large numbers of horses and very large acreages, in order to apply PZP, we would have to gather the horses, which is something that we don't really like to do.

It's very expensive.

In order to do PZP on those types of herd management areas, the cost per horse is \$2,600.

Again, it would be great if we could find a more effective longer lasting vaccine that wouldn't have to be applied as often.

I think we would have much better success in managing the numbers of wild horses.

So the summary for element two, maintain AML, again, the populations increase 15 to 20% a year.

If we do not do some sort of population growth control.

We have 177 HMAs and a large number of those are now over AML significantly.

Our existing fertility control vaccine is only effective for about a year.

We have a limited budget and resources to be able to do the application of PZP in a way that it would meaningfully reduce the population growth in many of these HMAs.

Element 3 is holding costs.

You can see from this graph that last year, it cost \$47.5 million to pay for the horses in holding.

That is almost two-thirds of entire budget for the wild horse and burro program.

One of the reasons that I think Congress asked us for a report is that the President's budget for FY '18 proposed reducing budget for the wild horse and burro program by \$10 million.

That's a lot of money when you -- you know, you have difficulty managing because of the high holding costs that we have.

Next slide.

So this slide talks about what those holding costs are.

For off-range pastures which we consider long-term holding, it's \$2 per animal per day to keep the horses there.

The off-range corrals which the Bureau of Land Management has in the west cost \$5 per animal per day.

If you take the number of horses that we have in holding currently, ironically almost exactly the same number of excess horses on the range, it would cost \$1 billion -- with a b -- over the lifetime of the horses that we have in holding right now to take care of them.

You can see that this cost is one of the reasons that we are really struggling.

It's a very high cost.

There's a lot of animals in holding.

And it's been very difficult for us to figure out how to manage based on these numbers.

Even though off-range corrals are more expensive, they are necessary because that's where the horses are taken when they have to be removed.

That's where they are freeze branded, vaccinated, aged, dewormed and their blood is drawn for analysis.

This is also where we are able to do adoptions or sales.

It would be very difficult to do that in the off-range pastures or on range.

So the corrals are needed for those purposes.

Having the large number of horses that we do in holding is really creating a situation that is not sustainable, and that's one of the reasons that Congress asked for a report from us.

So just in summary, the holding cost element, this says it was \$50 million, it was 47.5, but, you know, that's close to 50, in 2016.

We have to reduce those holding costs and it's important that we figure out a way to balance the numbers on the range so that we don't have to take a lot of them off.

It would be great if we could balance the number we take off with the number that we are able to adopt or put into private care.

But the corrals, even though they are more expensive, they are necessary in order to let the program function the way it does right now.

So this slide talks about private care.

You can see in the early 2000s, when we were at AML, we were able to adopt well over 7500 horses a year.

Over time, that number has gone down dramatically to a low in 2014 of just over 2200 horses.

We have been able to reverse that trend in the last three years, mainly with the help of a lot of great partners like the ones we heard this morning, the Mustang Heritage Foundation, they have helped us by training horses and making them adoptive to horses.

And we will almost double the number from the figure that we adopted in 2014.

Next slide.

So in summary for element four, private care, adoption and sale have restrictions on the age, use and facility requirements.

So we have seen that tremendous decline from a high of almost 8,000 in 2002, to actually less than -- it's 3100 in 2016, but in 2014, it was only 2200.

We are on track this year to place more than 4,000 animals in private care, but the

problem is, that's not the balance -- the balance isn't there.

We are removing more horses than we can adopt and so that means more horses go into holding, which doesn't help us to be able to reduce those holding costs.

Next slide.

Element five, humane treatment.

We do have a comprehensive animal welfare policy in place currently for gathers.

In addition we always have veterinarians available at the gather operations.

I want to, again, emphasize that we do want to get out of the gather business.

It's our goal to be able to have balance so that we do not have to do gathers.

We do have a policy for transportation, holding facilities and adoption events, currently in development.

Element six, best science.

In 2017, we supported 24 research studies.

We are spending just over \$13 million on those studies.

We're working with a large variety of partners in doing these studies.

12 of the studies are directly related to population control methods, including improving contraceptives.

We're working with seven different universities, the U.S. Geological Survey, and we have one project with the Humane Society of the United States.

The U.S. Geological Survey plays a key role with us in wild horse and burro program research.

They are working on projects aimed at improving -- sorry, there's a fly here, at improving contraception.

We have done some trapping and radio collar studies.

Those are helping us to learn more about movement, about how the horses react.

There was a study result in 2016 on an intrauterine device that was a pilot.

Results of that helped us to redesign that IUD and there will be further testing this year with that.

There are other studies that the USGS do for us, of doing a better job of estimating population, and we're working very hard with them on that.

And we have a population genetics research study ongoing with Texas A & M university.

So the summary for element 6, best science, in 2014, we implemented the National Academy of Sciences' recommended population survey methods so that our accuracy for estimates is better.

We launched a wild horse and burro research initiative in 2015 and there are ongoing research studies, including 12 projects for improving contraceptives and spay/neuter techniques.

Next slide.

Element seven, economic development and international aid.

We believe that there's a -- there's a -- probably a market for some of the horses that we have in long-term holding that could help with some partnerships with tribal governments, and also foreign countries that could put the horses to beneficial use that could really help these countries and tribes, and so that's something we are looking into.

We believe that is, you know, a market that we have not investigated very well up to this point.

>> BEN MASTERS: Would that be for consumption or usage?

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: No, I believe it's for usage.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Is BLM aware that there are about 100,000 excess feral horses on our American reservations?

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: Yeah, I think -- I think we are.

There's some reservations that would clearly not benefit from this because they already have their own issues.

Yeah.

Yeah.

But that -- obviously there's a lot of reservations so there's some that don't have that.

So -- element 8 is public information.

We have -- with the increase in social media platforms, we are engaged with Facebook and Twitter, trying to put out information about events, adoption events, viewing opportunities for gathers, things like that.

We're working at the state offices and with our field public affairs specialist to do a better job of this.

The website has some more detailed information.

BLM recently went to a different platform for our external website and, frankly, we've had some challenges with that.

We're still working to improve that, so that information is easier to access, but we are certainly not there yet.

And we also produced flyers and promotional items to use at events with the public.

And so this is just the summary for public information about the things we do with social media and the website.

So element nine is partnerships and as I said earlier, we believe that this is an area that we have to do better on, in order to have the success that was discussed earlier today.

Obviously the mustang heritage foundation is a fantastic partner because of all of their efforts in training horses, and efforts like we talked about this morning.

We have been able to do more adoptions because the horses are gentled and trained and easier for people that aren't as skilled to work with, and we need to have more partnerships with local groups to do training, adoption, but I think more importantly, more partnerships for on-range management, just as we talked -- we heard about this morning, with the PZP darting by volunteers.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: A quick question.

Does that include, like, partnerships with local and state governments and their agencies?

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: Absolutely.

That's part of this too.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: All right.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: We are willing to partner with anybody that wants to partner, we'll figure out a way to make it work.

And obviously, you can see from the presentation, if we weren't having to remove and hold horses for such a long time, there would be more dollars to do other things, which on-range management would be our preference.

So -- and so for element nine, partnerships, the summary, you know, we do partner with local citizen groups and national organizations in the management of wild horse and burros both on range and off range.

The Mustang Heritage Foundation has been really helpful to us in getting animals into private care.

And we do have great partnerships for on-range management, with groups like TJ talked about this morning, with our friends of the legacy and the McCullough Peaks her area in Wyoming but we need to find out a way to, I think, expand that really exponentially to try to really help us solve the problems that we have.

Next slide.

So this slide just summarizes the discussion questions that we have, which are directly related to the elements that I just reviewed.

These questions will form the basis for the rest of the work today.

I'm going to go ahead and summarize them right now, but what we will do after I answer any questions that the board might have, is chart our path for the rest of the day to see how the board can help us answer these questions and then we will use that information, along with the interdisciplinary information that our group has put to go.

The number one is how can we achieve AML within all herd management areas in five to ten years.

The second question is.

How can BLM sustainable maintain AMLs within all HMAs.

The third is how can the BLM reduce and control holding costs for excess animals?

The fourth is how can the BLM significantly increase annual adoptions and sales of wild horse and burros?

The fifth is how can the BLM continue to ensure humane treatment of wild horses and burros.

The sixth is how can the BLM use best available science to improve the management of wild horses and burros.

The seventh is what humanitarian assistance opportunities exist for wild horses and burros.

The eighth is how can the BLM better provide information to the public?

And the last one is how can the BLM increase public participation and financial support in the management of the wild horses and burros both on and off the range.

So those are the nine questions that will form the basis for the rest of today's work with the board.

Kristin is going to lead that effort, and I think that we're really interested to hear what the board has to say about these questions and ways that that information can help inform the elements that will make up that report to Congress.

So with that, last slide, thank you.

And so with that, I will answer any questions that the board might have.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I would ask that the board take this time, that's allotted to your presentation, to ask clarifying questions.

We are going to have plenty of opportunity to make statements in our discussion this afternoon.

And I would propose with your permission and this is the time speak up if you don't like this format, let's go through these questions one at a time, starting at 1:00, and brainstorm, throw out suggestions.

These are not official recommendations with respect -- they are aimed directly at the question.

Okay.

It's brainstorming to answer the question.

At the end, once we have done that, with all nine questions, there may be official recommendations brought forth in the usual way that this board provides recommendations.

But, first, let's have an informed discussion about ex-of the questions that BLM would like some input, and if you are comfortable with that, that's the format under which let's try to move forward.

And Sue, did that make any sense to you?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Yes.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Are we comfortable with that format?

Since you are going to run the show, I hope -- I hope you like it.

(Laughter)

All right, Kristin, thank you very much.

So information, inquiring questions of our speaker.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Yes, hi.

Nice to see you.

I have a lot of questions written down here, but, you know, maybe we can address those during our period at 1:00.

You mentioned that in 1971, you estimated the population of wild horses and burros to be 25,000.

The current appropriate management level is now 26,710.

In the creation of the Wild Horse and Burro Act, the people who were involved in writing that act came up with language like, they are fast disappearing from the American West.

There was the perception that there was a critical under population of wild horses and burros and we could lose the wild horses forever.

I would like to throw a shout out to Hope, who was our board member, who passioned away this year.

What is the opportunity to not try to get to an AML that would, again, put the level at a critical mass?

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: Well, Ginger, I think we are absolutely willing to reexamine AML.

You know, AML is set in the individual resource management plans that are done at the -- you know, the field office level.

And I believe that we -- you know, we talked a lot in just trying to figure out what the elements were about whether we would, you know, really entertain looking at AML again and I think we absolutely will do that.

I think our concern is more, you know, having so many animals in holding, and having the population growing in a way that's not managed, and, you know, what the speakers talked about this morning is just the -- you know, that's the shining poster example for me of what this program needs to look like.

And the problem is, that particular thing doesn't fit in a big HMA, but I really liked TJ's you've got to start somewhere.

You know, just do it.

That really inspired me to go back home and talk to a field manager and say, you know, what could we do?

What could we do here?

But I think that -- I don't think it's AML is set in stone.

You know, we -- our resource management plans are good for about 20 years.

And then we have to look at them again.

But during that 20-year period, they also aren't set in stone, because things change and we have to revisit some of the decisions that we made.

Sometimes we have to amend the plans.

Sometimes we have to maintain the plans.

And I think that -- I think that we are willing to look at those appropriate management levels.

I feel like right now we feel like it's just out of control and we just need to -- we need to

figure out what the number is that best works for both the horses and the rangelands, and that's -- that's, I think, where we want to go.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Well, you manage in Wyoming some of the most beautiful wild horse country in the west, particularly I'm talking about the red desert that I'm fairly familiar with now because we are going to do a pilot project?

Stewart Creek, hopefully to manage those horses on the range, but I'm dismayed at the AMLs that call for one horse every 6,000 acres in some of most beautiful western grazing area for horses.

So I'm glad to hear you say that there could be a reexamination of what I feel are unfair and unsustainable populations where you have AML 60.

It's hard to maintain a Spanish genetic component of a heard like lost creek when it's that small.

So just thanks for being here and I'm glad to hear from you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Jim, did you have a question for Mary Jo?

Please.

>> JAMES FRENCH: Thank you, madam chair, and thank you, for, you know, bringing us up to speed on what's going on, and I think from an international -- or a national perspective and whatnot, there's a handful of questions -- and I will go through them real quick and maybe some of these questions will jell together but on the front side and dove tailing off the Ginger's comments having to do with AML adjustments.

I will look at it from the other side of that.

Obviously, when AML was established and even the HMA boundaries were established back in the early 1970s, and by the way, I was a part of that.

There was determinations based on existing wildlife populations and existing AUMs as you are well aware of.

As you might gather, fire cycles, invasive weeds and type conversion of vegetation on public lands, HMA drift, herds that actually tried to follow the forage and moved off their HMA and are existing outside of that and are by structure alone, are actually exempt from the process because they don't have an AML.

And I think that being the case, that dynamic that hasn't been addressed in there, what is the -- what is Interior's intent with that?

Obviously we are coming back to the table, probably to talk about AML.

I think it's a great time for us to actually roll our sleeves up and actually talk about, you know, what's -- identifying what we have there and identifying what our goals are and how we get to that with a new AML and even possibly HMA changes to boundaries based on realities on the ground.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: Thank you for that, Jim.

I did forget to mention that one of the issues with over population, especially if the rangelands are starting to degrade is animals do -- you know, those boundaries are just -- are just on paper, right?

They don't stay within those herd management areas.

They go other places, and then they -- you know, they sometimes don't get counted because they do that.

You know, I think that we're -- we're open to looking at adjustments that make sense on the ground.

You know, for example, the checkerboard area in Wyoming, incredibly complex to try to manage herd management areas when every other section doesn't belong to the public.

It belongs to a private entity.

And, you know, they take great exception if a lot of horses are on their private, but because it's an every other section scenario, there's no way to effectively fence it.

There's really very little way of effectively managing it.

And we have been sued over the years for that.

When there is, you know, a consent decree or a court order, that really narrows our ability to have a lot of decision space, and we -- we have to just do things to -- to respond to that.

So I think -- I really think that we are open to looking at changes that make sense to herd management areas.

Again, that would be something that we would have to do via the Resource Management Plan and herd management plan scenario.

You know, we would have to do that in a planning effort, but I think there are times that

that is thing to do, because what we have been doing doesn't make sense.

It's just too complex.

>> JAMES FRENCH: Thank you.

Thank you for that and I just would offer to you, I'm sure you are well aware of exchange use agreements that occur for the Interior and Bureau of Land Management to actually incorporate sections of land which are privately held and I think in our case with the checkerboard in Nevada, it's Pacific union railroad, each side of the center line.

It's Nevada lands that now that owns that.

They are interested in coming to the table and talk about exchanging use.

That's a tool that I think Interior needs to look at.

I offer that for the record.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: That's a great point.

>> JAMES FRENCH: Also with regard to -- I will back up a little bit.

One of the things we mentioned that's on this list of discussion has had to do with how do we increase adoptions?

How do we -- how do we make it more -- how do we make more horses available for public.

I would say that it comes back to the balance sheet question I talked about.

There's a lot of money on table right now if we can control how many horses you have no hold in -- you know, in facilities right now.

\$5 a day, I think is what the number was for each one of them, but because we have that resource, because we have budgeted that resource and we have that money that's on the table right now, I think personally, I -- I'm bewildered by why we even have an adoption fee.

I'm bewildered by the -- many of the regulatory rules that we have placed on adoption in terms of age and classification of the animals that are available for adoption.

And I'm really bewildered by the brakes we have thrown on international adoption.

I'm sure you are well aware of that western Europe is well over the top interested in our mustangs.

They are not interested in eating them.

They are interested in -- the same way that folks in this room are interested in them.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: Mm-hmm.

>> JAMES FRENCH: And I think that is one of the -- personally, one of the solutions to this problem is international adoption and making sure that we vet those folks very thoroughly and make sure we humanely handle these animals when we transfer their title to them.

But I think I would -- it goes back to a proposal made by Director Kornze in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, with the western governors association and western state region of NACO and mentioned at that time this was a proposal on the table that would evaluate people after an adoption, a successful adoption, just as we do right now and at the moment that we -- at the moment that we offer title to that horse, that we write a check for \$10,000 to that person.

The idea behind that is that knowing that we have \$54,000 from the time we take animal into captivity to the time we no longer take care of that animal, we have \$54,000 sitting on the I believe that and if we use \$10,000 of that, we still have a \$44,000 net gain to the treasury on that balance sheet.

And I'm curious, I haven't heard anything about that since then.

I think everybody in that room, every governor in that room, every county commissioner in that room really perked up and thought, you know what, for the folks that are looking for a way that they can house and process more wild horses, having a stipend of \$10,000 per head initially to get them out of public ownership and into some sort of program that would make them available for further adoption down the road, I think would go very, very long way into, you know, trying to take these animals -- these huge groups of animals that we have?

Captivity.

I wonder what your comments were and what you heard about that.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: Yeah, Jim, those are both great points.

We do believe that this is a market for adoption overseas.

Obviously, there would be a lot of logistical challenges with that, although we still think

it's worth pursuing, because there is a high degree of interest in adoption.

We think that's a market that has not been even tapped yet.

So we are absolutely talking about that.

We also discussed incentivizing adoptions.

You know, the point that, you know, we could -- we could save the treasury \$45,000 if we wrote somebody a check, is a great one.

I think it's one of the options that we have discussed as an interdisciplinary team, and one of the things that we are thinking about including in the report.

I think that, you know, the sense that I get is that people really want to solve this problem, and they want to find those innovative ways of doing it.

And it's really, I think, a situation where we are just looking for those kinds of ideas.

So --

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Did you have more questions for Mary Jo?

>> JAMES FRENCH: I'm finished, thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Questions for Mary Jo.

I have one.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: Okay.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Are you aware of -- well, let me back up a little bit.

On your slide element two, maintain AML, your first bullet is gather, remove, adopt, sell, and your second bullet is fertility control, and every sub-bullet under that is about immunocontraceptives.

My question to you is, why is permanent sterilization not a bullet under fertility control?

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: It's certainly an option that we are considering.

Obviously, it's something that we have not found -- I don't think we have found really good ways of doing it well on range.

I know there's research ongoing about that, and I think it's absolutely an option.

Obviously it has to be done.

You know, you have to keep in mind the genetics and the ability to have sustainable populations on the range.

Dean, I don't know, do you have anything more to add on that one?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So I don't know, I think it needs to be on the list as well, contraception includes many different things.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: We didn't really call it out.

It was probably just an oversight, rather than an omission.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I think it's an important oversight.

Are you aware of a proposal from the southeast Oregon RAC in December of 2015, that represented every HMA in Oregon, and asked BLM to gather Oregon down to low AML and let us, based on genetic selections and opportunities for optimum amount of genetic diversity to be allowed to reproduce and permanently sterilize things that went back to the range outside those specific genetic selections with the goal of prolonging any need to gather for ten years.

Are you aware of that proposal?

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: I personally am not but I'm sure the program folks have.

I have learned more about wild horse and burro in the last few months than I ever did.

I'm not familiar with that RAC proposal.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Well, certainly Dean is and maybe he wants to address that, I don't know.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Yeah, I'm aware of it, Julie.

We received the proposal, of course, and our approach was going to be to do the research studies to determine the safety and efficiency of doing it and, of course, those studies were stood down from for the time being, that you are aware of in Burns and our research program.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: The techniques proposed in that proposal don't qualify as research proposals.

They are standard procedures in the equine industry today.

Anyway, that proposal exists.

Oregon said, use us as a model.

Let us -- let us try to have a sustainable population.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: I think it's an interesting idea, something worth considering.

So what you are saying is that if the genetics were not good in certain horses, those would be the ones that would be perm nextly sterilized.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: The idea is similar to the darting procedure, you allow a maximum amount of reproduction in terms of diversity, while slowing the total number of reproductions down.

That's the point of making selections about who gets to reproduce.

You know, certainly not the yearling and maybe not the mare who already has ten foals in the band.

I just wondered if you are aware of that.

>> BEN MASTERS: Julie, can you expand on that in terms of Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge and how that compares to castration of stallions?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I certainly can.

To say that -- that permanent sterilization is not a field operation, which is certainly some of the mythology that is out there.

That's not the case.

It has been done at Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge.

It's in a published, peer-reviewed paper that I have brought to the attention of this board.

The fact that BLM has not looked further into that is, actually, an amazing phenomenon.

If, indeed, we are serious about sustainability, somebody else showed us how to get that done.

And I would submit that permanent sterilization of males and females can be a field surgery.

In the hands of appropriate kinds of people who know how to get things done.

And it's just like darters.

We heard it over and over again.

Not everybody can be a darter.

And that's exactly the case with getting stuff done in the field with wild horses in any respect.

So I would submit this, because it will come up in this conversation, horse castration involves two basic fields of risk.

One is an aesthetic risk and the other is surgical risk and they are additive.

Spaying mares involves only surgical risk.

One might expect the risk to be less than it is for gelding horses, something with which a lot of people are familiar.

And, indeed, the Sheldon study bears that out.

It is a safer procedure.

And I would just urge that you read the whole paper.

It includes the regather rate on the spayed mares, the spays were done preferentially in older mares because it was linked to an adoption program and obviously the adopters wanted the younger mares.

So what Sheldon was left with to return to range was older mares.

And lo and behold, they survived better and all of that sort of thing that's not too surprising when you think about it.

The fact that BLM has not conducted a thorough vetting and examination of the Sheldon experience is in my opinion inexcusable.

And I actually have a graph here that I would be happy to share with the room, I'm sharing it with the only board member that I don't think has seen it.

It shows reproduction rate on the Sheldon during the spay -- because they only spayed four years, okay?

And reproduction went from 22%, right in there with our national average, down to 6% and we never interfered with fertility.

Would you look at the last blue on the graph.

I would share with you the red is the observed foaling rate, we're at 18% here in 2008, and down here it's 6% in 2013.

Now, during that time, 110 mares were spayed, and 250 stallions were vasectomized.

Half of whom were vasectomized chemically.

And what you see here represented in terms of vasectomies is 125 surgical vasectomies because the others didn't work.

Now how do we know that?

We regathered all of those studs and collected their testicles and went off to Oregon State.

The surgeries, they were 100% successful.

The blue bars, never did that exceed 28%.

And yet look what happened to the reproduction rate.

Now, I would also submit to you in the room, who are not familiar with Sheldon, we have been looking in here in Colorado at some wonderful HMAs in terms of habitat for horses and out West, we have some not so happy horse places.

But the Sheldon is a happy horse place.

It's a good place to be a wild horse.

And so that data comes from an HMA where there's plenty to eat and drink for the horses and as you heard before, no cattle on the Sheldon.

So there's no competition in that respect.

So I don't want to overstate that now, but questions about the Sheldon project, definitely should inform this discussion as we go forward this afternoon.

>> BEN MASTERS: What was the mortality of the mares at Sheldon?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Okay.

So of 110 mares spayed, two mares died.

That we know of, and I -- I know what the criticisms are about the methodology of -- this was never set up to be a spay trial.

It was set up to do whatever they could do to decrease the number of horses on that refuge.

And so no horse, except crazy ones, went back to the range sexually intact.

So two mares died out of 110.

One mare bled to death.

She definitely was a spay-related death.

The other mare got autopsied in a pretty superficial autopsy, field conditions, and we don't know why she died.

It was indeterminate.

Maybe in a more thorough lab setting there would have been additional information.

We don't know.

So when I give the statistics, I say 2% because I call her a spay death.

Other people don't.

They say, look, you don't know that's why she died.

I mean, horses die in the pen post gather for other reasons.

We know she didn't break her neck.

So that's -- that's one trial.

>> BEN MASTERS: How does that compare so stallion castration?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Well, as I mentioned, stallion castration involves an anesthetic --

>> BEN MASTERS: Mortality-wise.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: It's less in that particular -- now, remember, when you look at your long-term corrals or your short-term corrals where BLM is routinely providing castration of horses, they are doing horses of all ages and at the Sheldon we were preferentially doing old studs because we had adoptions, okay, for younger studs.

So the studs who got anesthetized and vasectomized, they would have higher risk because of their size, their power, the size of the blood vessels going to the testicles, all of those kind of things.

But in general, castration deaths in the field of wild horses.

Now don't extrapolate this to your backyard horses, because there are things that make it riskier, but it should be around 2%.

Yes, Jim.

>> JAMES FRENCH: I just wanted to clarify also, I'm just south of the project you were talking about there in southern Oregon, and well aware of the working group and a lot of those folks are a major part of that proposal that BLM has not weighed in.

I can tell you that the allotments that are affected by that proposal, are 100% -- there's 100% agreement on that -- working with the bureau on this program, so I see it as a win/win, I don't know how you can lose on that one.

I'm baffled by why this thing has not gotten any legs under it now.

I heard about it a year ago.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Okay.

Questions for Mary Jo.

We are trying to stay on task here.

We have about five minutes until we break for lunch, and we're going to start right back at 1:00.

Sue, do you have some questions?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: No, I'm okay for now, Julie.

Thanks for asking.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you once again for staying with us.

We really appreciate it.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: May I ask a question?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Go ahead.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: One question I had -- well, maybe a couple of questions, one is regarding the range situation and the rehabilitation it's that's going to need to take place to get that range back to why it needs to be to sustain the numbers of horses that were originally there.

Has there been any contemplation into putting more of that money into range rehabilitation projects?

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: I think the idea, Steven, is to not have to spend so much money on holding and to use some of those funds to do, you know, rangeland rehab.

You know, one of the challenges that we have, we never really know what our budget is going to be, right?

It's appropriated funding.

The President makes a proposal.

The House and Senate figure out what they are going to do and then we see what the budget looks like.

We are never guaranteed any amount; although, we have been fortunate to get enough money to maintain the horses in holding and to do some on range management, but when so much money goes to the long-term holding, it really makes your ability to do on range improvements pretty tough.

We are definitely, you know, engaged in a lot of rehab work for a lot of reasons.

You know, the efforts to improve habitat for the greater sage-grouse both, you know, in the Great Basin and the Rocky Mountain region have really focused on a lot of habitat improvement, but obviously if we have a heard management area that's way above appropriate management level, you are not going to want to invest money in improving the rangelands until you have got your population of horses sustainable.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: And I guess that would be a follow-up question I would have, is maybe as we move forward, would there be a consideration to first of all, in some

situations where the range has been degraded, reducing that AML in order to compensate for the range quality that's been lost and also considering the sagebrush, and the juniper, and the cheatgrass expansion, and the different things that have occurred as transitions have -- have transpired and thresholds have been crossed that would maybe adversely affect the HMA where those horses are?

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: I'm sure that the BLM would look at the range conditions and adjust down every use as appropriate, including AUMs for cattle grazing and appropriate management level for horses.

You know, there would probably be other things that we would think we would need to not do in that area until the range could hopefully, you know, be restored.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: And one consideration I would ask if you would think about is in some of those situations if we could possibly for a sort -- for two to three years, if we could move a herd that's in an HMA, in order to let that reseeded or the restoration project take hold and then put them back in because like you said, the population already exists, it's really hard to reestablish seedings in those arid locations.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: Yes.

I don't know if that's anything that we ever thought about, but, you know, we typically manage things differently when we are trying to restore an area.

For example, if there's a fire, or if -- even if we do a prescribed burn, we don't allow grazing for a period of two years until the -- you know, until the vegetation is able to take hold.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: I guess that's what I'm referring to, that does need to take place but you still have the grazers in this situation, it's wild horses.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: And you also have wildlife that would be using it as well.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Exactly.

Thanks.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Steven, I would like to make a comment about that.

We have some of those examples, and I'm thinking specifically about a fire during which we had to gather the Jackie Butte horses and put them in the corrals and the original -- the original EA specified that they had to go back.

So for those of us who said, we can't get horses gathered, we have our hands on them.

They were scheduled to go back but given the rehab proposals -- because you all know how at the end of a fire, they have to hop in and make a proposal about what they are going to do.

Because that proposal included some seeding, the horses stayed in the corrals for a longer period than was initially planned for precisely the reason you are requesting.

So there might be a chance for success with the rehab effort and there might be other examples of that.

I just know about that one.

I have a question for you, and you said you are learning a lot.

So maybe this is unfair.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: That's okay.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: And you want to call on some --

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: I will probably volley to Dean and he will get me back later.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Yeah, he will.

As I reread the Wild Horse and Burro Act in the wee hours this morning, I noticed again that it provides not at all about any kind of suggestion about long-term holding.

It talks about AML.

It talks about rangeland health.

It talks about adoption.

That talks about definition of excess.

It talks about a lot of things.

But long-term holding is not part of act.

And I would kind of like to know the history of how long-term holding came to be part of the wild horse and burro program, if anyone can tell me that.

>> MARY JO RUGWELL: That would have to be a Dean question.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Okay.

Lucky you.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So there may be even be more history here than I'm aware of and recall, but I generally know how we got into the long-term holding business.

I think one of the first horses pastured off federal lands was referred to in public comments and that was Dayton Hyde and the South Dakota sanctuary.

The concept there was we have horses for which there's no adoption demand.

Dayton pitched a proposal.

I wasn't there, but this is my understanding of what happened and BLM said sounds like a good idea.

The proposal is we will have wild horses up there and we think we can generate money from tourism and it will be a self-sustaining operation.

I think that was intent but it didn't occur and then I recall there was an effort nationally to remove some of those horses and adopt them, and I think a number of them were and I'm fuzzy and don't know exactly what transpired since then, but now you heard yesterday that it is a self-contained operation and they have horses up there, many of which were former wild horses.

So more about how did we get into this business of having 44,000 horses in holding, and 30 some contracts, approximately, and five or six states in the United States.

Principally, it happened when BLM Bud Cribley, he was a senior specialist in Washington, D.C.

So it was BLM's effort and initiative and strategy that was initiated in approximately 2000, 2001, and it was a plan that BLM took to Congress and they said, look, we have wild horse issues, and we need to get to AML and here's BLM's plan to do it.

We would like additional money to implement this and there was kind of three legs of the stool so to speak in which we were going to approach getting to AML, and one of them was this long-term holding concept.

First leg of the tool was a gather aggressively because it's the most cost effective, quick way to get to AML, gather aggressively, get the numbers down, and those that can be adopted at the time, about 8,000, we had thoughts we could increase that.

Let's do that.

But the others that are not adopted, then they would be put in long-term holding.

And it was a plan and Congress bought into it and they funded it, and the plan was executed beautifully.

And it is how we got into long-term holding, but I often have said this, the plan failed miserably because some of the underlying assumptions were faulty.

We assumed that we will adopt 8,000 a year.

You have seen the graphs, at least two times, May Jo presented one of them.

What happened to adoptions?

We continued to gather aggressively 10 to 12,000 a year, we tried to adopt, but they declined.

So those horses removed but not adopted went to holding.

Now we have 44,000 there.

We assumed we had 48,000 when we began this.

And they said, BLM, you haven't been counting for all the unseen animals.

We underestimated grossly the number of animals on the land.

For all of those removed this should not be one horse on range left, but there are many horses on the range and we have improved and implemented new survey methods that being for unseen animals.

So, Julie, that's how we got into the long-term holding business.

It was planned, and we executed the plan.

The plan didn't work, and here we are today recontemplating a new path forward.

Lessons learned.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Right.

I appreciate that.

And, you know, I can imagine back then, it maybe seemed like a pretty good idea, but

we are continuing to expand that right up to this fiscal year with our sort of celebration of another 4700 spots, even as we recognize that it wasn't a great idea.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So we haven't expanded the numbers in holding.

You notice that this has been discussion that we contain the numbers and the natural mortality.

In order to reduce cost, Holle' reported 4700 spaces.

We have minimized and decreased the numbers in corrals so we would have a couple more million dollars to do something else on the range with.

So it's kind of minuscule but we are trying to do with the means we have and the best we can.

And that's the reason for expanding the pastures.

But here we are asking you the question, how can we reduce holding costs?

What is the way to do that in the future?

Because we are spending \$47 million this year, 49 the year before.

It's obviously an impediment to moving forward.

(Off microphone comment)

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: All right.

Let's take a break.

Let's all come back at 1:00.

Thank you.

(Lunch break)

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CONSUMER: KIM MENNING

BLM

WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

OCTOBER 19, 2017

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>> Kathie: So welcome back everybody, there are moments when you behave that you're delightfully lovely we got a lot of work to do this afternoon so I'm going to turn it right over to Dr. Julie. Madam Chair.

>> Julie Weikel: I'll remind us quickly about our format going forward here. We got eight questions in front of us here. Okay. Fine, they're right here. We're going to just brainstorm about these, okay?

And I would kind of remind us what brain tomorrow storming means, it means getting our ideas out there. Kathie's going to capture them. This is not a proposal at this point this is just to make sure we get maximum optimum number and we don't miss a good idea. So we're going to brainstorm until the break and hopefully we will have made it through all eight, nine, and furthermore, let's stay on one topic until we're done with it and then move to the next. Don't be jumping around. And somewhere there at the end we'll say, if you have a bright idea about number two or whatever and I'm not saying we may never go back but let's try to stay focused on the question at the time. And then after -- that's up to the break, just brainstorming among us. We may have to ask for some additional information but other than that, that's where we are for the next two hours. And Sue, are you online?

I am oh boy. I specifically want you to weigh in on every question so if I forget to call on you interrupt me please. Okay so how about starting us off on number one.

>> How can the AML -- how can -- yeah, three capital letters translates. How can the BLM achieve AML within all HMA within five to ten years.

>> Sue: Were you asking me to start the comments

>> Julie Weikel: I was.

>> Sue: I don't think we can do it without humane destruction on the range I'll throw that right out there for your thoughts. Right now we're just garbage ideas. We're not going to comment on one another suggestions. We're just going to capture them. Okay. Thank you. Do you have another one on question one and before we leave one we'll come back to everyone. So --

>> Sue: I don't know what the budget considerations are but I also have thought a lot about our discussions that we had last year and I still feel as difficult as it is we need to reduce the cost of off range matters and basically holding costs so that we have enough budget to get going on the range.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay. Who else wants to throw in a suggestion for question one? how can we achieve AML in all HMAs? Ben.

>> Ben: Helicopter gathers.

>> Julie Weikel: Anybody else got some ideas? Ginger? I can't tell if your light's on.

>> Ginger: There isn't one solution that will do this. It has to be a real holistic look at all kinds of things that we could do but Ben, to your helicopter roundup suggestion I would say roundup and this goes along with a lot of other things roundup only adoption aged animals and combine those removals with a training component.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, the question, number one question is achieving AML. Okay? Go ahead.

>> I think we should also put in water trap and bait gathers in here as well.

>> Ginger: And then I would say dart on contraceptive one way or another. Ease PZP 22 or primer booster native PZP but I think 22 to start with because the primer and the booster are in one dose. And I would do it to all the adult mares that you capture. Adoption aged animals to me are five and under and combine that with a training component. Is that good enough? Okay.

>> Julie Weikel: I need you to expand, Ginger, how in the world do you do that you're out there in a helicopter and you gather horses do you announce over a loud speaker all the five-year-olds do --

>> You do what you want but we did ask this to be a brainstorming.

>> Ginger: Back in the olden days in the 1990s that is exactly what happened. Only five and under were removed and what you had was more infrastructure. You put the -- you know, you brought it in and it wasn't ban by ban which would be the idea but the stallions went over here and the mares went over here and they were put through a chute and they were aged and five and under were sent to --

>> Julie Weikel: After the whole group is helicopter gathered then the sorting occurs.

>> Ginger: At that trap site. In a reasonable distance.

>> Julie Weikel: Jim, you want to weigh in?

>> Jim: Sure, I can. This is a simple solution for a complex problem but I would say that the first thing I would recommend that the bureau do a complete evaluation of each HMA to determine what a decision matrix they're going to come into and a distribution matrix what I mean by that is they should initiate in some cases where we've had natural die off or we well below AML we need to know that before we go out and gather but under that decision matrix if we are well above AML as we are in many, many places in Nevada we need to get it into the holding facility. I would think that we definitely should preserve those individuals in that adoptable age animals that are certainly ones that are going to be to receptive training side of it. I completely agree with that. Where the rubber meets the road from my standpoint is once you've gotten the decision matrix and collected those animals that are below AML what do you do with the non adoptable variety? What do you do with those? I would say under current rules, you know, we've had contracts who have for long-term storage and whatnot.

And we've had offers to take animals along that line. And we've also had requests for sale and/or euthanasia I think ultimately from a sale side of it, once we've gotten down to that decision side of it to where we no longer have a location for the rest of those, rather than release them back onto a piece of real estate that we know is going to create additional problems, we're going to have to make that tough decision so we're going to have to have sale of some variety in order to process those animals.

>> Julie Weikel: June, would you like to weigh in on question number one?

>> June: No.

>> I think since it's inception the wild horse and burro act hasn't been followed in its entirety and the elephant in the room that hasn't been looked at is following it in its entirety the language is already in there to take care of these problems if we all believe in the wild horse and burro act and the people who came up with it let's follow it in its entirety.

What does it say? When it is determined he, but he it it means the secretary of interior, shall immediately remove excess animals on the range. Such action shall be taken in the following order and priority until all excess animals have been removed driving ecological balance in the range and protect the range from the key tier ration associated with overpopulation.

That's what we're working towards. The secretary shall order old, sick, or lame animals to be destroyed in the most humane manner possible. The secretary shall cause such number of additional excess wild horse and burros to be humanely captured and removed from private maintenance and care if there's an adoption that

exists for qualified animals and includes humane treatment and care including feeding and handling. Providing not more than four animals are adopted per year per individual including transportation of such animals by the adopting party. It goes on for the horses that can't be adopted. Any excess animal or the remains of any excess animal shall be sold if the excess animal is more than ten years old or the excess animal has been offered unsuccessfully for adoption at least three times. Method of sale, an excess animal that meets either the criterion paragraph one shall be made available for sale without limitation including auction to the highest bidder. Including facilities until such time as all excess animals offered for sale are sold or the Appropriate Management Level as determined by the secretary is obtained in all areas occupied by wild free roaming horses and burros

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, Kathy, it's right straight from the act and you can get it there. Okay. Ginger, did you have something to add?

>> Ginger Kathrens: Yeah, after that I can't remember what I was thinking of

>> Julie Weikel: How to achieve AML in all HMAs.

>> Ginger: There's lots of moving part to this Julie and I think we were talking about them at lunch, the whole marketing strategy, well, obviously only removing young animals but the whole BLM persona and the way they talk about wild horses has to change. It's hard to adopt out out a feral horse. The word feral should never be used

>> Julie Weikel: Ginger --

>> Ginger: It all goes together

>> Julie Weikel: But we have questions that specifically contain, for example, how can the BLM provide better information to the public.

>> Ginger: It all dove tails together.

>> Julie Weikel: Keep the big all -- and you're absolutely right. There will be comments that pertain to more than one of the questions but we do have questions specifically ant what you're addressing here. I guess I would just, I would say prioritize HMAs which have a plan in place for maintenance post gather. So and I would say post gather to low AML. So we give those maintenance plans the best possible chance of success. So you got 177 HMAs and you leave here with a mandate, go gather them all down the low AML you'll have to prioritized them so that's what that's about. Yes, Jim.

>> Jim: I would like to clay few on mine as well. When I initiated the evaluation for adoption and what not. I would hope that based on what we all know about the vast group of people out there that have an interest in placement on these horses and whatnot that part of that decision matrix would include taking full advantage of those groups of people. I hate to use the word advantage but to fully use the energy and that they have and to place animals that the bureau was unable to do on their own and I hope -- that I think has been a component that's been somewhat missing from the whole process up to this point is we jump through, check the boxes off on certain types of placement but I think we probably missed the boat on those groups of people that have an interest in large groups and placement of large groups of horses especially if we make them available to them.

>> Ginger: Do you have an example of that.

>> Jim: Maybe I'm being Pollyanna about this but I think ultimately some of the questions we had with the folks yesterday out of the Dakotas and first comment out of her mouth that I wrote down is we have X number of horses and room for more and know this is not as simple as what The Humane Society does when they walk into a standard animal shelter and they adopt all the animals in the shelter, take it to

their no kill shelter and then from that point out that agency actually places those animals in some cases to be honest with you in some cases the humane society has to put down animals that they can't adopt either but I think we should take every opportunity to place those animals that we can and certainly we need to use all the resources that are out there and give them the opportunity to be a part of this solution.

>> Julie Weikel: All right in the interest of time, because we've got nine of these that we have to move through before break time, let's move to number two. If you've got a thought about one just write it down and hang onto it and we'll hopefully have time to revisit these but we're brainstorming now. Number two, how can the BLM sustainably maintain AML within all HMAs.

>> Permanent sterilization, PZP, partnering with local organizations.

>> Julie Weikel: June?

>> Instead of PZP how about vaccine fertility control so it can be kind of all-encompassing.

>> June: I think you don't need to write this down but it seems like a lot of the same things that applied to number one also apply to number two.

>> June Sewing:

>> Julie Weikel: Very true. Anymore suggestions to maintaining AML once it's achieved

>> Ginger Kathrens: Creation of volunteer organizations to monitor and control population growth.

>> I would add to utilize local and state governments and state government agencies in controlling the animal. Utilize local and state government and government agency.

>> I think another one would be to provide incentive to volunteer organizations.

>> Jim: Thanks, Ben, that was one of the front of my list as we should involve our partners on it as well especially at that stage and I would also say that ask and -- or -- ask each district of the BLM that actually has HMAs, give them the requirement for ongoing evaluations using the best science for their surveys and their population estimates.

>> Julie Weikel: I would only add have a plan in place for maintenance of AML. And that encompasses partners, volunteers, all those things that you guys have mentioned but make that a formal plan before we even gather that HMA.

>> So this is just a clarification like a maintenance schedule more or less or --

>> Julie Weikel: It might be a schedule.

>> Or include the schedule within a broader plan of different things.

>> Julie Weikel: Well, for example, if you had in place something like the organ proposal. Most of the maintenance is in deciding which horses are subjected to permanent sterilization and which are being sent back to rebreeding and that's all done at the beginning. There's not maintenance on down the road until it's time for another gather which hopefully is another ten years down the road so it would vary on what the plan was. Make sense? Kind of? Any additional -- Sue, weigh in on number two, please.

>> Sue: I guess I weighed in on, I think I'll just pass right now. I don't think I have anything to add.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Are we looking at long range or just -- because long range I would say reevaluate AML.

>> Julie Weikel: Throw it in there. I'm guessing with the possibility it's open on both

ends. Number three how can the BLM reduce and control holding costs for excess animals?

>> I would refer them to recommendation one from last year's advisory board meeting.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Explore opportunities to place non reproducing animals in zeroed out BLM HMAs or available for service JMAs.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Zeroed -- in zeroed out HMAs and JMAs.

>> Julie Weikel: Ben?

>> I was going to say increase adoptions. If you were able to get more that's less.

>> Julie Weikel: And I would add implement phase out of all long-term holding.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Does the marketing component come into this one now or one of the other ones do you think?

>> Julie Weikel: This is just how can they reduce and control holding cost?

>> Well really it kind of bounces back too on a lot of the recommendations that Ben made for the last -- question at hand. Literally if you can do permanent sterilization, non breeding herds, fertility control, that in theory should carry over into reducing the holding costs because you'll have less to hold.

>> Julie Weikel: Sure, what do we want to say there, Steven, capture benefits from herd reduction decreases. I know BLM has better language than that. Shall we move to number, Sue, how about number three, do you have some specifics there?

>> Sue: Maybe because I can't see the list it's a little bit challenging but were you, that's okay, when you -- talked about phase -- did you say phasing out of the pastures?

>> Julie Weikel: I did.

>> Sue: Because I was thinking actually a little differently that maybe we could move them to pastures sooner in the process. But I guess if we're going to be aiming at adopting them out then it would be more challenging to set up way to adopt from pastures but pastures are cheaper by bar.

>> Julie Weikel: I think that belongs in there as a separate item.

>> Sue: I don't know if there are any pasture facilities that would be able to take, places to gather, you know, catch those horses up to do what you need to do with them to get them adopted.

>> Julie Weikel: Yeah, certainly the facility that we visited in Oklahoma wasn't really quipped to bring horses up for examination but anyway blah blah blah.

>> Sue: The cost might, you know, you might be able to do that at some places and there would be some savings that could support the development of, you know, simple facilities like they have at the short-term corral.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, thanks, let's move onto number four.

>> Madam Chair, I haven't had a chance to weigh in on yet. Just taking my time. I echo, I believe BLM should eliminate short-term holding within the five year period and I believe that they need to review all existing policies and procedures relative to adoption with the intent of increasing adoption potential both domestically and internationally

>> Julie Weikel: Hang on Kathie before you write all that because that directly is number four.

>> Jim: Okay.

>> Julie Weikel: It's a good comment to start number four.

>> Jim: Okay.

>> Julie Weikel: Anybody conditions for question number three. Number four, how

can the BLM significantly increase annual adoptions and sales of wild horses and burros? Fred, if you're on the line, we want to hear from you on this. Well, I know where he was until now.

>> Ben Masters: I think you should prioritize money allocated to programs that are working. For example the trainer incentive program because we heard from them earlier they could have adopted four thousand horses but they ran out of budget at 2500 dollars and I wonder if there's money -- at 2500 horses and I wonder if there's a way to prioritize money that is being spent on the adoption program towards the programs that we know are up and going

>> Julie Weikel: This is about increased options and sales.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Create signage for all wild horse herd areas along highways, roads and also create a brochure for that specific herd with a map of the area on how you view them.

>> Julie Weikel: I would add that we remove the impediments to sale. And we have several of those in terms of number of animals and various things and that's been brought up before. And it has to do with respect to adoptions too. We heard from some of our speakers about various impediments so look hard at anything that restricts adoptions. Anymore?

>> Sue McDonnell: This might be getting into the weeds a little too much but I think a huge impediment to adoption among people who are really good trainers and would find good homes is the the issue people call damaged goods and it relates to how much trauma those horses have to experience in the process before they actually are adopted and I think we could make some great improvements on reducing the stress and trauma to the horses that are headed in that direction. It's probably too much into the weeds for details on that but if we could just note that I'd be happy

>> Ben Masters: I think also to increase adoption opportunities in the eastern United States because there's a lot of people back east who are interested but find it difficult to get the opportunity.

>> I would suggest also they continue to pursue prison programs. I think they've been working really well on there.

>> I think it'd be worth while to recognize that most things are a compilation of different breeds to do some pilot tests where maybe some other breeds were introduced in small herds such as a core horse or workhorse and see how those half bloods work for quite frankly I heard some chuckles in the room maybe on the board. I think a lot of times people think of mustangs as this specific breed. It's not a specific breed. What a mustang is in Oregon versus what a mustang is in Colorado there might not be any relation and I think I know that even within the BLM there have been times when desirable sires and maybe that's another option. Desirable sires from one herd or maybe not sires but mares or sires have been taken to another herd in order to perpetuate those genetics.

>> Ben Masters: I think what you're getting is to select for riding desired genetics in the wild horse population.

>> Julie Weikel: Can we capture that with just say manage for adoptability.

>> Steve: That would be fair enough. That's a yes.

>> Julie Weikel: I'll give you a great example that addresses exactly what you just said in the baby proposal what those people want to do is be allowed to participate in the selection of who goes back into breeding based on temperament because that's what they're prepared to market because that's what they want to train so yeah, exactly, it's all captured in that.

>> Steve: I might also add if you don't mind me saying so you were telling me about

some of the herds Oregon that were specifically managed for by local people at one time to try and get horses that were desirable for use.

>> Julie Weikel: Yeah, Dean watched that up close and personal. Okay, let's move to number five. Sue, did you have anymore increase adoptions? I think you weighed in at one point.

>> Sue McDonnell: I know we talked about no age limitations. Would that include adopting young foals because I think the younger they are the more trainable they are and they go quickly apparently from places who have them available.

>> Julie Weikel: Yeah it's a specific limitation but an important one I'm glad it's parted out there. Thank you.

>> Sue McDonnell: And from a welfare standpoint it would be so much easier for those animals to go as youngsters the older they get I'm sure it's the greater risk of reduced welfare.

>> Julie Weikel: Yep. Do we need to give Kathie a minute to get caught up or are we good? Okay. All right.

>> I'm not sure this is covered under what gym said but someone talked before about incentives for adoption. Giving adopters ten thousand dollars or something. I think that's a little high myself but -- and just giving them some incentive to adopt.

>> Jim French: I had a conversation about the director about that. I agree with Ginger on that that it could bring out the worst in people on the corrupted side of things but I do believe that we ought to put a substantial chunk of money into the tip program and the training side of it. We should give the incentive to people who are actually turning these animals into marketable and adoptable critters and we ought to make it easier for them to be successful. Not harder.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay. We've certainly heard that over and over again from our audience too.

>> Jim: Yeah, I think so. Yeah.

>> Julie Weikel: Number five. How can the BLM continue to ensure humane treatment of wild horses and burros?

>> Sue McDonnell: Does this mean while they're in BLM care or after they're adopted or wherever they go after.

>> Julie Weikel: I would appreciate if you weigh in on all aspects of this question given your expertise.

>> Sue McDonnell: Did you hear my last question

>> Julie Weikel: Yes, if this was while they were under control of BLM or have documents that people sign as horses move into other situations. Did I get the question correctly?

>> Sue McDonnell: Yeah, I wasn't sure how broad this question was.

>> Julie Weikel: Let's keep it broad right now. Address it in all of its aspects.

>> Sue McDonnell: I know BLM feels they have a comprehensive care program and that they're doing the best that they can under the circumstances and I think there's room for improvement. It takes an open mind and to realize that there are people who could help them put together protocols to improve their handling of the animals through the entire system. So I won't go into details but I think there are ways and there are people who could help them and I think it would be a great PR move and it would certainly make the animals more adoptable.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, other ways on ensuring humane treatment?

>> Ginger Kathrens: Phase out helicopter roundups. In lieu of bait and water trapping. This goes back to the statement that someone made.

>> June Sewing: In follow-ups after adoption due to certain budgetary or whatever

restrictions I'm not sure that there is as much follow up as there should be. My suggestion might use --

Might be a place where volunteers could be used to do that, you know, to follow up with adoptions to check on the treatment.

>> Ben Masters: Prepare an emergency situation in case we have thousands of horses starving to death in the next few years.

>> Jim French: I think the BLM needs to partner with the stakeholders in the capture and processing of wild horses during the process of gathering into the under the HML and have a third set of eyes so to speak to ensure humane treatment.

Everyone is satisfied with how the animals are being treated during capture, processing and during the adoption process and also enter into MOU agreements with adoption brokers if we decide to increase international adoption which I think we should make sure that we have enforceable MOUs in place to protect the interest of the horses after they get there, so --

>> Julie Weikel: Do we have any additional suggestions with respect to ensuring humane treatment.

>> Steven Yardley: I would say to train any -- maybe even continue to train any local, state government agencies that are assisting as well as any other volunteer to make sure there's a really good training program in place for those people.

>> Ben Masters: While we're on humane treatment I said earlier today I said The Humane Society was invited to go to the national wild horse and burro summit and I was given that information and at that point in time I found out that information is correct so I wanted to retract that statement and apologize for any confusion that statement may have caused.

>> Steven: Backing up to the increased adoption. Something Jim said me me think of this. Increased international adoptions. Or have international adoptions. I don't they even have them now. Do they?

>> Julie Weikel: Didn't Jim have that? I thought Jim got that point. In number four, okay international adoptions are facilitated or looked at. If Jim didn't say it, put it in there. All right. Onto number six. How can the BLM use best available science to improve management of wild horses and burros? Best available science.

>> Ben Masters: We have surveys that don't take two years to do so we have science period.

>> Julie Weikel: Would you say expedite acquisition of scientific information? Yeah. Okay. I'll say that. Expedite acquisition of information. And I get pretty specific here. I would say review existing projects, i.e., Sheldon.

>> Sue McDonnell: I also think it would be worth reviewing maybe having an outside panel review the research, who BLM reaches out to for research and if they're reaching out and getting the word out to the larger research community. I know they've tried really hard but sitting on the research advisory team, it seems that not only the best -- for example I have worked for thirty years in reproduction and the area of not fertility control but for the most part enhancing fertility but also in behavior and so in those areas where I'm very familiar, it seems that the true experts are not always known to BLM and the two experts don't even though that these are problems that need to be addressed and so much of the work goes to USGS and they're a great group of scientists but any given project where my expertise, where I feel I have expertise I feel they don't have necessarily the best people and we didn't get to the moon by limiting ourselves to and don't take this the wrong way but certain land grant universities I'm sure that they reach out to MIT and east coast private schools where there's extraordinary expertise and problem solvers who may not

know much about wild horses but they know a lot about the details of these vaccines and those sorts of things so I just encourage some way to try to get better science.

>> Julie Weikel: Sue, I want to read back to you what we think you said.

>> Sue McDonnell: You tend to ramble when you're in an office by yourself

>> Julie Weikel: Establish outside panel to review research sources BLM uses and maybe advise regarding others available.

>> Sue McDonnell: And to get the word out, you know, to let people know and have requests for proposals that are well advertised beyond the land grant schools.

>> Julie Weikel: All right. We think we've captured that, thanks, Sue.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Remember I mentioned all that research. There were dozens of research done with the priors with CSU and other organizations in the 1990 and so would that go under, could we make sure that goes under your suggestion to review research or should it be a separate piece.

>> Julie Weikel: Make it accept root piece because that whole reinvent the wheel stuff we don't have time for that so when stuff is already been looked at if it pertains to what we're doing let's make sure we know about it. It actually fits with a couple other things we already said but it's worth reiterating.

>> Ben Masters: I think to create a location where research is available to look at like where past research that has dealt with wild horses and burros because I know personally I find it, I have probably -- I've probably read maybe 30 pubs on wild horses and burros and there's stuff that was done in the 90s and I'd love to look at it but don't know how to access it.

>> Ginger Kathrens: There's research on genetics. When Linda was the specialist she was the sign lead I believe for the BLM and so the priors became the guinea pig project for all kinds of research.

>> Jim French: I think they should, the bureau should adopt any and all survey methodologies and I say that that way because I know they are looking at one right now, an additional survey methodology but there are a number of them available depending on the type of population that you're trying to survey and so I would say that they -- they should duplicate the efforts of many of the wildlife agencies out there that actually use different survey methodologies based on the species and I think they should try to refine that in order to get the best possible most accurate accounts. Number two, I think they should survey non-HMA lands to ensure composition. I believe there's huge hole in the data right now. We're talking about HMA data right now and we're talking about whether or not we're over and above AML. I would submit there's whole bunch of horses right now that are unaccountable because they're not looked at whether they're based on one side of an HMA line or not and to that end I would say that the bureau needs to coordinate and utilize datasets offered by many of their stakeholder agencies that have been collecting data such as that for years. I think they don't have to reinvent that wheel.

>> Julie Weikel: Anymore suggestions about using science?

>> Steven Yardley: I would say to use sound science in the control and in the management of wild horses.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, moving on, number seven. What humanitarian assistance opportunities exist for wild horses and burros and do you guys want me to ask BLM to tell us what they mean by that exactly? Okay. Mary Jo do you want to take that question? Okay, Dean, tell us what humanitarian assistance means.

>> Dean: I think the primary thought was there are some conditions that could you equines for their cultures for a variety of purposes other than consumption.

Pack animals, border patrol animals all kinds of things. Humanitarian assistance. Anything other than human consumption as what's being thought of here primarily. International humanitarian assistance.

>> Julie Weikel: And does this maybe encompass veterans therapy or stuff like that?

>> Dean: Sure. Maybe veterans go to adoptions but if we're talking about rehabilitation of prisoners or helping veterans with post stress syndrome, use your imaginations

>> Steven Yardley: Why isn't human consumption being considered?

>> Dean: I guess you just put it on the table.

>> Steven Yardley: It seems to me there's a lot of people starving in the world and just because we don't eat horse we shouldn't limit what they eat.

>> Ben Masters: Therapy programs for veterans.

>> Jim French: I'm going to answer this question by asking another one. How many states actually use the prisoner program for breaking and training horses? I know of several that do it but do all fifty states actually do that?

>> Dean: Are you asking how many prison programs there are? Holle or Alan can answer this question. I think five or six. It's varied. There's six currently. Nationwide there are six prison training programs.

>> In how many states?

>> Jim French: Having answered that question at six I think it would be -- I think it would be a good idea for the bureau to mirror these like the six ones we have now. They have been a resounding success in Nevada I know that.

>> Does that the one in Sacramento.

>> Dean: It does. That's one of the six.

>> Ginger Julie Weikel: Does that include the new one that's coming online in Nevada?

>> Dean Bolstad: The six do not include the potential or the request for one in lee.

>> Steven Yardley: I think that was a good idea where they have 4H programs to train.

>> Julie Weikel: Just to add an FFA to that.

>> June Sewing: Dean, when you talk about exporting horses for packing and stuff like that to other countries, can you tell me exactly what happened to that program where they were going to send a hundred, I think it was burros or something to Argentina or some place in South America and it never did go through.

>> The proposal was about five years ago to send one hundred burro to Guatemala to assist with transporting medical supply to back country and things like that the end of the project when the Department of Defense withdrew their support to transport the animals from the United States to Guatemala. That's what happened to the project. They indicated that it did not meet they have a provision to use military resources for humanitarian assistance, initially there was a determination that transporting the burros did meet that but something happened where they changed their position and stood down from what we thought was going to be the vehicle for transportation. And it's very, very expensive to transport horses overseas. There's two means. Aircraft and boats and we're getting into the details away from the brainstorming session here, Julie.

>> Julie Weikel: It's interesting when you try to pursue what came of it that's going to come up a lot. I guess I'm wondering at this point why we didn't capture Steven's suggestion about provision of human sustenance. What humanitarian assistance opportunities exist for wild horses and burro and Steven asked, feed people.

>> Steven Yardley: There was also a gentleman yesterday about some farms in

Russia that would be interested in having those as work animals and I guess throughout the world there's probably opportunities for that in certain locations and situations but -- maybe that's too close.

>> Julie Weikel: You actually have an e-mail with the details from that project. It's from a guy named Lon Ball if I shall correctly and he testified a little bit yesterday but of course couldn't in two minutes couldn't cover what all you have in the e-mail but assist a sincere serious proposal.

But I think it's captured in the international thing you both have mentioned you maybe haven't seen his full proposal. It's pages and pages. Dean, have we had that proposal before us before? It seems familiar

>> Dean Bolstad: I don't remember seeing the full proposal but I do remember that and at the time the big obstacle is how you transport 30,000 animals overseas. Who is going to pay for it.

>> In this year's proposal he says that the program should pay for it because of the net savings.

>> Dean: Sure. I mean, I didn't mean to be Sr. castic but we're talking millions of dollars and we've -- we talked about the limitations of our budget. I'm staffing out things --

>> Steven Yardley: Sorry for the interruption, Dean, I received a file a while back and I probably need to follow through on it there was a guy who, I guess greater sage-grouse some people in China interested in burros but that being said it sounds like the burro adoption is pretty much keeping up with demand within our own borders is that correct?

>> Dean: To some degree but not entirely. I don't remember how many burros are in captivity but at least 1500. There's older animals that there's not too much demand for and if it did we wouldn't have any in holding now but it's not nearly the challenges of the horses and the number of horses to adopt.

>> Julie Weikel: All right. Anymore suggestions about humanitarian assistance opportunities?

>> Ginger Kathrens: I think BLM should put up signs on all the HMAs along thoroughfares whether they're dirt roads or major highways that indicate the horses you're seeing are wild horses. And that the BLM office that's affiliated with each of these herd areas should be able to provide a brochure that describes the area and contains a map

>> Julie Weikel: Additional information, Sue?

>> Sue McDonnell: I'm still thinking

>> Ben Masters: I think an app. Where you want to see where the HMAs are. It shows you the map, the AML, a little bit about that herd, where it came from, just little tidbits of information where someone can pull it up and right there they can acquire all sorts of data that is easy to find because people live on their phones these days. I would use it.

>> Ginger Kathrens: I would too. All of the above would be good. That's a good idea, Ben.

>> Julie Weikel: Additional communication suggestions.

>> Steven Yardley: There needs to be some contact info on there too so they could maybe touch base with someone in the local field office if they would more questions for instance. They might want to go and see the wild horses but they might be driving at -- a car and most of the access is going to be by four wheel drive and you don't want people out there getting stuck.

>> Ginger Kathrens: That's a good point Steven. In the priors and I know in some of

the other herds the sign does have phone numbers also if you run into some trouble, people to call or if you see people abusing or shooting horses or something like that there's a number to call and at least on the priors it does say high profile vehicles only, four wheel drive road. So, yeah, I think all that information is important. We don't want people to get in trouble.

>> Ben Masters: I don't know if this goes into this particular segment or back up into the adoption but if people see maps and they recognize it as their herd management area maybe they'll have some local ownership, some local pride so that when a gather is conducted people are like, oh, those are our horses let's see if we can find a home for them I think that could be a potential side effect.

>> Ginger Kathrens: I think that's the main reason to do it. People who drive from roll lens go past the Stewart creek area and if there are signs that say these are the Stewart creek wild horses BLM whatever this is what we're suggesting because we know that if people see them and watch them they're going to value them and then, oh, and by the way they're going to have a roundup.

They're going to remove some of those horses. Those are really cool horses so, yeah, I think it would increase adoptions.

>> Julie Weikel: I think that's a powerful point. I loved having the signs on the tour and -- I kind of know where they are in Oregon but most people don't so it was really great the day before yesterday we driving and seeing the signs and it makes me remember back before BLM put out those signs that said your public lands permittees thought they owned those lands and I remember as a college student driving down the road and seeing that first BLM sign that said your public lands. It was just part of a huge paradigm shift so I think ownership issues and I think that we could have the same affect with our HMAs ownership.

>> Steven Yardley: I think a good idea with the apps and the maps would be to have the appropriate level is and where it's at and -- as compared with where they're sitting, maybe when the next anticipated gather is and the reasons for it. Just as much information as you can give the public. About the different places. Even the size of the herd management area.

>> June Sewing: I think maybe they could provide brochures in areas where there are HMAs in close proximity.

>> That's part of my my comments were. We need to integrate this into our school system. You know, I know the bureau of land management is present in many of the schools relative to the mining program, relative to many of the other issues on other stuff but I've yet to see presentation on the wild horse and burro program. I think it would be much appropriate in our school system. We have -- we celebrate the environment in Humboldt County we call ecology days and we have the bureau and all these other folks there talking about everything aquatic education all the way up through mining and minerals and such.

But we don't have anybody talking about horses. I think that's a good opportunity and the other side of it too is I think we need to do a better job of coordinating with other stakeholder agencies.

I know in coordinating -- I know Colorado was one and I know Idaho was another. That had issues with when they set hunting seizures for large ungulates such as elk and whatnot in places that had horses present in those units as well.

I think it's important that we establish the fact to people that own a deer tag or an elk tag they're encounter something other than an elk on the side of that mountain and I know we had issues in northern Nevada where someone shot a horse thinking it was an elk. I think it's important. It's nothing more than a brochure.

You slip it in with the elk tag.

>> Julie Weikel: I have a question to this about this pertinent topic because you guys mentioned some brochures and we have some examples of some good ones, Dean, how does BLM decide which HMAs have a brochure at this point. Because we certainly don't have one for three fingers.

>> Dean Bolstad: So nationally we don't decide. It's all been a local initiative. Certainly we encourage information and education I think Oregon has one on theirs. It's a local grassroots thing and I think most, gosh, maybe there's a lot of information on the website so if you have an app like Ben suggested we're kind of beyond the day and age of printing brochures and sticking them in the boxes on the post, out in the public lands.

>> Julie Weikel: Well, and pertinent to some of the additional information that Steven mentioned that stuff would become dated very quickly and whereas with an app that wouldn't happen

>> Steven Yardley: You talk about going out and having brochures and boards on an HMA, well it's 30,000 -- 100,000 acres well where's the little brochure box, you know? It can be --

>> Ginger Kathrens: The brochure boxes are at the major entrances. Like in the McCullough peaks that herd area is very visible between Cody and Greybull and there's signage there's the opportunity to get materials there. And they're at a couple of places. The roads are marked the names are there and the map --

>> Steven Yardley: And I think there is in certain HMAs there's definitely that opportunity. In others they are such remote locations and there's not really a major --

>> Just may I say you're discussing the merits of the suggestions rather than brainstorming.

>> Steven Yardley: Sorry.

>> You get to do that next.

>> Julie Weikel: All right. Thank you. Kathie, keeping us in line. Did you used to be a schoolteacher?

>> Kathie: Oh, dear, no

>> Julie Weikel: Just wondering.

>> Steven Yardley: Military drill sergeant maybe?

>> Kathie: I'm sorry, Steven.

>> Julie Weikel: Look at that, she was flattered by that. That's awesome. Number nine how can the BLM increase public participation and financial support in the management of wild horses and burros on and off the range.

>> June Sewing: I've been waiting all day for this.

>> Julie Weikel: Lead us forward, June.

>> June Sewing: I had mentioned this as e at very many of these meetings. That we are not given the opportunity as nonprofit organizations to do this especially financial support. I have said over and over and over again my association has money they're willing to give to projects and we never get a response from it. That may be not brainstorming but anyone that's -- I suggest that they find way to do that. I asked about that and they don't know what they're going to do

>> Julie Weikel: I think it's appropriate at this point for you to explain to us what that proposal is, where it sits, do we agree? Okay? Christian's going to address this because it's pertinent to this question.

>> Christian: I will add to it a little bit. The BLM does have the ability to take donations and we're in fact working to finalize policy on that so it's very clear and

understandable and that we're tracking it so we do now have the ability to accept donations and it would be very interesting to understand, you know, the specifics at some other time of what barriers y'all were encountering. In terms of the BLM Foundation that was provided to us in the 17 appropriations. So they have to set up, you know, a board and get, you know, some of the rules of the road established.

And that board you know, will put together processes and procedures about how it wants to work, what types of things it wants to focus on and that will be probably, you know, be an ongoing conversation moving forward in terms of how best folks who are interested in doing things for wild horses and burros how they can best engage. In some ways a foundation can be a -- taking money from small individual donors and kind of bundle it together into making it into a bigger pot. It can be a facilitator. It can do lots of different things and that's the way the board decides it wants to roll but we can't accept donations now and then make sure the interests of the public are still being met.

>> Julie Weikel: Can those donations be restricted or specific for a given project?

>> Kristin: We had a donation for shade at Palomino Valley is that correct?

>> Ginger Kathrens: There was an offer of fencing that we made several years ago at the Springs Corrals.

>> Julie Weikel: Does this foundation already have a name? You said it came through in the appropriations in 2017. What's its official name?

>> Kristin: BLM Foundation.

>> Julie Weikel: So back to your notes in response to June, you said find a way to accept money from foundations. But as a separate bullet is BLM Foundation because it already exists. As an avenue to donate to BLM so it's kind of two things.

>> Jim French: If a mining company want to donate one hundred thousand dollars to the wild horse and burro program in the county can they donate that to the BLM Foundation or separately?

>> Kristin: There's two pathways right now. Like the shade at the valley that was for that purpose. I cannot speak to what the board will set up in terms of rules and how donations will be designated the board has not been formed until the board has formed they won't be able to talk about how donations can be collected and that whole process.

We're eagerly awaiting that but they do take time the forest service, park service, Fish and Wildlife Service they all have foundations and it did take a bit of time before they got up and running.

>> Jim French: Also if I could I would say that the public needs to be viewed as a valued partner and I think there's a misconception that certain groups will have an interest and I'll just say it's wild horses are not valued the same as others and I think we need to make a real concerted effort to make sure that everybody at the table's valued. Coordination of program activities with other interests on the land. I think, and that goes to the BLM Foundation and whatnot.

I just wrote down a few of them. REMF, Bighorns Unlimited. Friends of Nevada Wilderness. Even the livestock association. All of those -- the Nevada wildlife coalition. Those folks have all been at the table at different times.

Either with financial support or in kind support for projects all over and I think the only reason I think the wild horse and burro program hasn't received a whole lot of benefit is that they haven't asked.

>> Steven Yardley: I would say also to utilize permittees on those locations. I know what benefits livestock benefits the wild horses and the wildlife as well. Permittees on HMAs.

>> Julie Weikel: I think Steven makes a really valuable point there because BLM is kind of the intermediary there. I know that I'm aware of permittee efforts of value that benefit wild horses because BLM makes me aware of them. But I do think that they should be tracked because things like hauling water for wild horses which lots of permittees do that. They rebuild the exclosures around the guzzler sometimes.

Different things like that and these are significant contributions that really get acknowledged. So I think we need to encourage those groups or encourage BLM to make sure that those donations get recognized as such. Sue you have comments on number nine.

>> Sue McDonnell: I was thinking as you were saying that would it work to have, you know, a social media page that has -- that all that stuff gets posted to?

>> Julie Weikel: Good question. It's getting captured as you speak.

>> Sue McDonnell: Okey-doke. Thanks, Kathie.

>> Steven Yardley: I think also if you can keep as much of the red tape and bureaucracy out of this as possible. I know like there's a lot of, for instance, water lines that a lot of permittees would like to put in but because of the different hoops they have to jump through they either can't do it or it takes a lot of time to get it done.

>> Julie Weikel: Steven I missed the point of that, I'm sorry.

>> Steven Yardley: Okay, for instance, seedings -- there's a lot of reseedings or spike treatment or on the ground treatment that a lot of permittees would like to do.

>> Julie Weikel: That they do personally or ask BLM.

>> Steven Yardley: In conjunction with the BLM. A lot of the seedings and a lot that we have done have benefitted not only the livestock but also the wildlife and also the wild horses.

But a lot of times when we've done them it's been on state ground because it's so hard to get a well drilled on BLM and get all the permits and all the hoops to jump there. I think there's a lot of times that you can get a lot more done if you didn't have all the red tape and all the hoops to jump through.

>> Julie Weikel: All right you just introduced an another whole layer of complexity because as we all know water rights are state specific and not specific to BLM in general.

>> Steven Yardley: They are not but trying to get a well drilled on a piece of BLM property can be -- and I'm just using a well as a for instance. Receding -- and it does it goes back to me maybe that's outside of the power of -- this board.

>> Julie Weikel: I think so.

>> Ben Masters: It's as difficult as getting a survey probably. I think I see what you're saying because that's something I've heard with some of the wild horse organizations that I've been around is that they want to go out and they want to begin implementing a fertility control program, they want to get started but they encounter BLM staff who are hesitant or they don't want to or they're leery and I understand some of that but I think when appropriate just get out of the way and let them go for it.

>> June Sewing: There again is something I've talked about before in our association in the past and this has been quite a few years ago, the district offices or whatever would contact us about a project that needed to be done for what, you know, water development, troughs, whatever. We have a backhoe and I'd run out there and help him do it. We'd supply the material and everything and probably about maybe ten years ago wasn't able to do that anymore because it had to do an EA, had to do all these kinds of things and so it is really, you know, what do I want to say an obstruction to getting things done.

>> Steven Yardley: Maybe I can use a couple other examples. We've used -- we've done spike treatments on a lot of our state sections that -- spike treatments to control brush, pinning juniper treatments to control -- open up forage under the trees but unfortunately, we haven't been able to do that on a lot of our BLM ground because of the bureaucracy restrictions that are applied. And so I just think even range treatments, there's a lot of permittees, there's a lot of people like the wildlife foundations that would like to contribute to those and take part in those but because of all the red tape and hoops you have to jump through it makes really hard to do a lot of those projects that would benefit the wild horses also.

>> Julie Weikel: All right. Any additional discussion about number nine increasing public participation and financial support in the management of horses on and off the range. Remember, we want to include both of those areas. Have we done that adequately?

>> Steven Yardley: One other thing I would add is education again. I know we mentioned it before. I think a lot of people don't know what they can do and what's available for them to do. If we can inform the general public. I know Sue and I were involved in a Cedar City at the university with a bunch of potential college students.

Or, sorry, I said -- Sue, I meant June, I apologize. And one of the local BLM guys that deals with the horses was there and a lot of them had no understanding even that there were wild horses on the public ranges which I think everyone here probably agrees that that's unfortunate.

>> Julie Weikel: I have a quick question I want to give all of us an opportunity to revisit any one of the topics. One through nine if you thought of something else that you want to add. I'm going to give you a minute to just kind of look at the list of questions and see if there's anything that we forgot in the brainstorm department.

>> Sue McDonnell: Could you ask, oh, excellent, now can I see them.

>> Julie Weikel: Kathie's grinning from ear to ear so -- we're glad you can see them now.

>> Sue McDonnell: Okay, great.

>> Julie Weikel: Yes, Jim.

>> Jim French: I have one that I wanted to add to number two on how to -- does the BLM sustainably obtain AML with HMA. Many of the HMAs there has been some significant change relative to vegetated type or fire cycle or whatever which has -- which has changed carrying capacity for everything including the horses. And as I think everybody will agree that some HMAs you might have a one-half of an HMA is rich in natural resources which attracts the horses in one-half of it or one quarter of it where the other doesn't receive much use and just like with livestock industry and whatnot I think to undertake any programs such as water development through guzzlers or vegetative manipulations to increase vegetation which horses might have an interest in to increase the overall distribution on an HMA I think would go a long way to -- towards sustainability and staying within AML. I think we get into trouble because in many cases we only see a portion of the HMA is actually usable whereas we have a potential or at one time much more was usable than it is now. I think that's part of the valuation process.

>> Julie Weikel: Look at the words and see if it's captured. In that case I would add another point. Sustainability maintained. Evaluate spatial and temporal usage of an HMA with an eye to optimizing and you mentioned one way to mention that is in the desert, turn the water sources on and off does a whole lot but we talked about, for example, one of the things we do with life cycle is we let plants reproduce is we take the cattle off during the seeding stage and we can do that with time sometimes. If

we could move the horses off in certain areas because that is a problem with year-round usage so at any rate I just --

>> Steven Yardley: I might add at the bottom of the that evaluate spatial and temporal use HMA with an eye to optimized rangeland health with optimal use. Is that all right?

>> Julie Weikel: That's all right, Steven. Does anyone have any additional points that they really need to get in here on these topics?

>> Ginger Kathrens: I don't know where this would go, Julie but evaluate the creation of new wild horse ranges that are currently HAs, HMAs, I have no idea where that would go. Evaluate whether certain HMAs should be considered as a range. Right now we have just a couple of them and I can talk about specifically what we mean when we're not doing just listing.

>> Steven Yardley: Why don't you expand the audience the difference between a range and an HMA.

>> Ginger Kathrens: A range does not contain livestock grazing. It's managed principally for wild horses and I'm including wild horses of course as wildlife so it's more or less for the wildlife. And the priors for instance is a range, there aren't livestock there. It's managed beautiful big horn sheep herd in that area and so forth.

>> Ben Masters: I think it's valid to put in -- allow people to buy up AUMs for wild horse and burro use.

>> (Applause).

>> Kathie: For wild horse use?

>> Julie Weikel: All right, folks, it's break time. Thank you. Wait, wait, real quick before we do that. Dean and Kristin, did we do what you needed us to do here?

>> Kristin: I will say yes. These questions are important for us to look forward and we wanted to make sure that. Good ideas weren't being missed and so this has been very helpful and very appreciated.

>> Dean Bolstad: Agreed, thank you.

>> Steven Yardley: One other thing to add in conjunction with what was said by Ginger because of the detriment that's occurred on these ranges. I think if we evaluate that the current HMAs have all the necessary attributes for an HMA and if perhaps they should be zeroed out.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Conversely, there are, what, 150 herds that have been zeroed out? Perhaps evaluate whether there are any others that could, again, contain wild horses that kind of goes along with the other suggestion that the non reproducing herds would be zeroed out and JMAs.

>> Julie Weikel: All right. Let's take a break, folks. Those of you who brought forth new ground here recently think about those during the break. We'll revisit those because it may take the form of specific recommendation. I don't know. But -- and if not just capture them there at the end as footnotes. All right. Thank you.

>> Kathie: Everybody, we'll be back in fifteen minutes. Thank you.

>> (Break).

>> Julie Weikel: Okay.

>> Kathie: Okay, everybody, we are at the end of this particular road, huh? End of the road. End of the trail. And the sooner we all sit and become quiet the sooner we get to go home. Okay, we need all our board members.

>> Julie Weikel: So board members in front of you you now have a printed copy of the brainstorming that we just did moderately edited. Only moderately. It's just an opportunity for you to be able to look it over. Other than removing some redundancies, correcting a few spellings and whatever, this is standalone product.

That goes to the committee who is working on this congressional presentation. Okay? So look it over, make sure it captured that you want to -- capture the point you're trying to make to those folk to consider what's on here then we are going to kind of enter a new phase of this recommendation process. And I want to begin that with this comment the recommendations that came out of the 2016 wild horse and burro advisory board meeting in Alcone, Nevada stand we want BLM to address all of those and I will express the board's disappointment that we did not hear that at this meeting.

But those recommendations are on the ground alive and well so going forward now, out of our presentations here this week, out of concerns for the program, whatever, what specific recommendations above and beyond this brainstorming, because this exists and it's headed where it's supposed to go. What specific recommendations do we want to bring forward from this advisory meeting?

>> Kathie: Is that a one step two step where you want them to review these before we move on?

>> Julie Weikel: I think that's a good idea. Let's take a few minutes to review this product because that might stimulate the thinking about specifics.

>> Kathie: And each -- even though we're not going to make it perfect or anything like that, but if something is in two and belongs in four, or you don't want the board associated those are the things we'll kind of maybe pull out.

>> Jim French: I'm going to take this to the other side of the comment that you just made. I wasn't here in September 2016 for that meeting. And I heard about it. As I was just down the road from Meloc at the time and the phones were buzzing about the recommendations and --

I felt, you know, coming to this board, I felt that, you know, a year has gone by and that interior had an opportunity, got a brand new president, brand new interior secretary, a brand new BLM administration at the top. And I was, it was my hope that we would have a meaningful conversation about those items. I thought, I think the bureau had -- and I'm just speaking for myself here. The bureau had a year. I realize there was a transition involved in that year but it was still a year involved with that and I think those recommendations were pretty straightforward, very clear, I think the justification for those recommendations were there, it was very painful to do but a lot -- I know members were conflicted and were having a difficult time coming to that conclusion and from that standpoint I really, to get my arms around the whole thing I was hoping we'd have that opportunity to have that conversation. And I'm for one am disappointed that that didn't occur. I think the bureau missed an opportunity to do that. And I will just say, having said that, I made a comment last night at dinner with a couple of my colleagues here as we were talking about today and whatnot and I asked the question, do you feel the bureau has -- and the interior has the pallet and the will to follow through the recommendations coming through this board at this moment in time and the interesting part of that conversation was that immediately the members sitting at that table immediately said no. They don't.

And I thought that was what was -- I was going to hear this based on the fact that we didn't have the conversation that I thought we were going to have about -- I thought which was a very substantive meeting in September of 2016. So having said that, and echoing what I think was the board members were actually feeling at the time, I'm going to make a recommendation, as long as we're talking about recommendations here. I'm going to make a recommendation that this board, the next meeting of this board is conducted in Washington, D.C. and we have the

opportunity to not only bring forward this but to actually discuss it and actually discuss it with interior, with BLM staff and if the congressional delegation that's had interest in this process would like to chime in I would encourage them to be there as well but I think ultimately, I think in this, under this -- I think this is important enough and this is a turn in the road. I think we took -- we're taking a paradigm shift and I think we tapped the rudder and I think we're moving the ship a little bit different direction than it was in the past and I think the bureau senses that obviously we wouldn't have had this exercise right here if they didn't feel that way. And I think it's an opportunity for us to link arms as a team. And sell this proposal.

>> Steven Yardley: So is your

>> Ben Masters: So is your recommendation that we meet in Washington, D.C.?

>> Julie Weikel: Do you want to put a time in on what that is?

>> Jim French: I'm going to say right around the first of the year but I guess we meet in February? January? February?

>> Dean Bolstad: We traditionally have avoided the holidays of course but we can meet anytime we want. With a designated official and the BLM department and a desire to convene with any information that you can provide us.

>> Kristin Bail: We're supposed to have thirty days. We can go down to as few as fifteen but optimally for maximum public notification it's 30.

>> Julie Weikel: Would you punch your mic, please, Jim?

>> Jim French: Getting the thirty days you need it would be reasonable to expect that we could conceivably do this right on the first week of January for instance of 2018?

>> Kristin Bail: That would be possible and if it's a recommendation we would make sure that folks knew about that.

>> Jim French: I'd like to put it out further so the folks in Washington can actually get to a position where they, you know, at least know what question to ask if we get to that point where we discuss this in particular. .

>> Kristin Bail: And the timing of placement of the BLM director. We do not currently have a permanent director yet perhaps by then but the senate will let us know.

>> Kathie: If you can speak into your microphone as well make sure they're on, thank you

>> Julie Weikel: Kathie, can you increase that font because in order for me to read the wording of it to the board, thank you. All right. Thanks so much. The recommendation is that the wild horse and burro national advisory board have their next meeting in Washington, D.C. and review their most recent recommendations including those presented in September 2016. And then subsequently we kind of honed in on the time. Do you want to add that? Tentatively early next year.

>> June Sewing: Can I say something?

>> Julie Weikel: Absolutely. I'm going to ask every board member to comment on this recommendation.

>> June Sewing: I would like to suggest it would be done before the end of March. Julie and I are going off the board and since we have been intricately involved in this whole process and myself would be personally interested in being a part of this.

>> Julie Weikel: Thank you, brave lady. Okay, so that's basically the recommendation.

>> Kathie: I put review the most recent recommendations on the surface that sounds like you'll talk about it together but I think you mean something different than that. Would you like some more specific language in there?

>> Jim French: I think you can call it -- we can do some wordsmithing with it but I

think ultimately what we would like to do as group is present this eye to eye and have an adult conversation about what the justifications are, whether -- where they stand with it. And whether or not we're going to actually move forward with any kind of substantive changes following this exercise.

>> Julie Weikel: Sue, for your benefit we're just watching the wordsmithing here to make sure we capture Jim's intent. Once that happens I'll read it again and then I'd like every board member to address the recommendation and then we'll vote on it.

>> Sue McDonnell: Got it.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Jim, what did you mean by sell this proposal?

>> Jim French: I think I did use the word sell and I'm not sure what is the appropriate word to use. And basically I think at the BLM knows what I'm talking about because you could come up with a recommendation that you think has all the justification in the world and run into a brick wall when it gets two or three layers above us and I guess if you want to call it selling I think what I would like to say is that we have the opportunity to explain our position. Explain why we came up with these recommendations. Explain why -- what we saw here today and yesterday. And -- make our case for the changes that we would recommend.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, Kathie. Read our recommendation, right? That the advisory board have their meeting in DC and make recommendations to officials including those presented in 2016. I think maybe it needs the word -- okay. Tentatively to be scheduled early in the calendar year but before the end of March 2018. Okay, let's go on the right. Go for it, Ben.

>> Ben Masters: Looks good to me.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, Ben likes it the way it is. June.

>> June Sewing: I do too.

>> Julie Weikel: You were frowning so you were worrying me.

>> Steven Yardley: I was speechless.

>> Julie Weikel: And, Jim, do you still like your recommendation?

>> Jim French: So far.

>> Julie Weikel: Ginger?

>> Ginger Kathrens: I would suggest maybe we make our other recommendations this seems like the last step not the first. You know? Does that make sense? I don't have any problem meeting in January but I have no idea what the recommendations are that we're going to be discussing in DC right now other than the big elephant in the room that was voted on last time.

>> Jim French: If I could I think ultimately that my thought was that there was some significant recommendations made at the last meeting that we were going to be discussing in -- I think along the line of item -- the ten o'clock item yesterday that the bureau chose not to bring up. And I'd like to have that opportunity to make sure that we can debate that and we can actually talk about the merit and lack of merit if you so desire and actually have a conversation about that but at the same time I think this played off of that somewhat. And I think ultimately that segways into this series of recommendations that we did today. Because I -- I think basically my comment is is that we all -- it took some pretty significant effort to get here and I think the only thing worse than having to go through something like this is to not have it -- at least not have it listened to. And to have it round canned in Washington, D.C. so consequently I think this is important enough. I think we have crossed some new territory on I think on a lot of subjects here. Not just the elephant in the room as you were saying but there's a lot of subjects we talked about and a lot of things that are going to be significant changes in policy and I don't want somebody biting at our

heels that's going to kill this thing before it has a chance to actually have some light. Because I think ultimately this is the solution to a problem that we've had for a long time.

>> Ben Masters: And just so everybody knows about this elephant in the room which has been skirted for the past five minutes of this discussion is last advisory board meeting the recommendation was made to allow for the destruction and sale of healthy horses. That is the recommendation that everybody is referring to and not addressing. Just in case anybody wasn't aware of that.

>> Ginger Kathrens: And at that meeting I think some members of this board fully knew what they were going to recommend and there was not an opportunity then at least I didn't feel there was an adequate opportunity for discussion of that before it was voted on. I think I was still pretty numb.

>> Ben Masters: And I personally, you know, that was like one of the hardest things that I've ever had to do and excuse the -- but I feel very, like you guys, kind of offended and kind of like you don't really care about us to really make a recommendation like that on such a difficult topic and you all didn't address it in this meeting or make a response back from the BLM. I felt very blown off about that and I feel like that's part of the reason of why we want to go to Washington, D.C because if you guys aren't taking our time seriously and the time of everybody else here seriously maybe somebody a little bit higher up will.

>> Julie Weikel: Can I call on Sue and Jen and Fred on the phone. Are Jen and Fred on the phone right now? Okay. Sue, would you care to comment on recommendation number one 2017 which is a meeting in Washington, D.C.?

>> Sue McDonnell: Before I comment just a clarification, since I can't see it does it -- does it include time that we as a group discuss it or would that change to be that we would go there prepared to put forth with whoever wanted to listen to what we had to say?

>> Julie Weikel: It's a regular board meeting.

>> Sue McDonnell: Okay so we would have time before we met with people to discuss things as a group.

>> Julie Weikel: That's my understanding and BLM officials are nodding at me. Kathie's nodding at me the wording says that the advisory board have their next meeting in Washington, D.C and present.

So -- I think that answers your question. I presume some discussion going forward.

>> Sue McDonnell: And that sounds good to me. I tend to move it up sooner than later like maybe by March 15th. I'd hate for thing to get delayed and then you guys not -- June -- or anyone going off the board not to be a part of that.

>> Julie Weikel: Oh, gee, haven't recently been through that yourself and being stuck on this phone because you didn't know you were supposed to be here? How sensitive of you. Okay, we're adding before the middle of March 2018.

>> Sue McDonnell: Thank you.

>> Julie Weikel: Thank you for reminding us what a painful process that has been. Who is the board? Okay. Okay, Ginger, did you want to add something more?

>> Ginger Kathrens: Does that mean that we aren't going to discuss the recommendation about killing the horses or we wait until we go to D.C.? Or --

>> Julie Weikel: The recommendation is out there.

>> Ginger Kathrens: There's nothing to discuss although I didn't feel there was a discussion at the other meeting but --

>> Julie Weikel: I have a quick question we are a quorum here and a quorum plus

with Sue's help so I guess I'm prepared to call -- I want to explain, we have a blanket proxy vote from our two missing members. But BLM has advised me that proxy votes can only get used specific to a given recommendation after a specific phone call with respect to that recommendation but if this is going to pass without putting in those phone calls, we can go ahead and I would suggest we go ahead and see if it passes and if it doesn't then we call up Jen and Fred and get their vote. Okay? Are we good with that? All right. We're now voting on recommendation number one that the national -- the wild horse and burro national advisory board have their next meeting in Washington, D.C and present their most recent recommendations to agency officials. Tentatively to be scheduled early in the calendar year but before the middle of March 2018 all those in favor say aye. Thank you. All those opposed say no. Okay. Six ayes. Can you guys try to get us a meeting arranged by early next year, please? Thank you. All right. Whew. One down. All right. You're leaning in there, have you got a recommendation there, Steven?

>> Steven Yardley: Not yet. So are we going to go through these then and we say we are brainstorming but you want us to pick some of these off. What are you wanting right now?

>> Julie Weikel: This is a standalone document going to the committee that is going to be presenting to Congress with our brainstorming ideas.

>> Steven Yardley: And is this going to be presented as everyone on the board agrees with all of these ideas?

>> Julie Weikel: Well there's not possible because there's die ya metrically opposed things. She wants to expand and you want to limit them and they're both on here.

>> Ginger Kathrens: That is not correct.

>> Julie Weikel: The possibility is out there about both ends of that. But this is a document for a work -- a working document for BLM. If there's a piece of this or any other subject that you want to bring forth as a recommendation to go out of this board for 2017, that's what we're doing right now. Have I captured that?

>> Kathie: Let's back up to where I think Steven is. You did a very, I didn't capture it quite as excellently as you did it. So you have a bunch of suggestions that can be provided because it's a working group that it's going to. One of your options is not to try to wordsmith all of this and turn it into specific recommendations but to say here's our ideas. Before we do that and move onto other kinds of recommendations because those go to the wild horse and burros program not to Mary Jo's team so they're two different entities. Before we turn these over we want to maybe give even a -- everyone moment and say the third bullet on number four, I don't want that sent forward as something the board said.

You know, the fact that you don't all agree with everything might just be okay but if there's something that you really either I didn't capture the way you stated it, it was yours or you read and it you say, I don't want that going forward then we can do those kinds of minor adjustments.

>> Steven Yardley: There are two things that I don't want to see going forward. One I feel helicopters are a good way to perform roundups.

>> Kathie: Do me a favor what number you're under.

>> Steven Yardley: Okay, how the BLM continue humane treatment of wild horse and burros, one is phase out helicopters roundups in lieu of bait and water trapping. Essentially with what I've seen with the helicopter pilots that are utilized by the BLM in the roundups I think they are as humane as possible and I think it's kind of a slap in their face to kind of put that out there that it's inhumane what they're doing I don't think that ought to go forward. One other thing that I am definitely opposed to. The

act prohibits it on number how can the BLM reduce, no -- yes, how can the BLM reduce and control holding costs for excess animals I believe on the backside of that page. Kind of having a hard time following these on the back. This act doesn't allow you to buy these for horses. They're supposed to continue on livestock -- for livestock and then the last one. Those areas where there are any areas that could again contain wild horses we have a big enough problem working with areas where we have wild horses.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, Steven, you have three areas? I'm trying to clarify if there's three areas or if he's back off on the third one?

>> Steven Yardley: I do have three areas.

>> Julie Weikel: Three areas. Okay. Dean, you could inform us on number two. Steven says that the raising act prohibits the transfer of AUMs from cow to horses and I know that -- Madeline had a little trouble in that department so I'm aware that it's obviously not simple.

But can you address that?

>> Dean Bolstad: There's a lot to this answer here. First of all permit use and lessees have grazing preference because they have base property to which they're attached.

Private land or water. Mostly we are private land-based but there are water based permits as well, Steven, you're correct. So in order to have and hold grazing preference you either have to have water or the base property so to acquire those you need to control or own the base property. So that's the first step. So if someone want to change use, yes, you can change it to the domestic horses and you can propose to BLM a different use for wild horses but that's a land use planning decision so all those things are possible and they're discretionary on the part of BLM. Kristin, can you add to some of that? Perhaps Mary Jo or others in the audience that are local officers could add to what I just said as well. So there is no easy simple answer to this.

>> Kristin Bail: It could be potential policy-wise but when you look at all the different dependencies and hurdles you have the base property situation. Or, you know, an Act amended in order to facilitate that kind of transfer without having the other dependencies occur.

>> Dean Bolstad: And another thing that occurs if the area is one hundred thousand acres are more and we're proposing to change one of those principle six uses.

One of which is livestock grazing so change it from livestock to wild horses, we have to have congressional approval of that if we're doing it entirely and eliminating that principle use.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay. All three of these concerns of Steven's came from Ginger so I'm going to ask Ginger and Steven if there's some change of wording that might satisfy you both or one of you makes a recommendation and we vote it up or vote it down.

>> Ben Masters: So actually one of those recommendations was mine.

>> Julie Weikel: I'm sorry. I'm really sorry. I've been giving you a bad time since I got here. All right.

>> Ben Masters: And if you did want to start with mine what I meant was allow people to buy AUMs and transfer those for wild horse use. I think what I was getting at is I have a familiarity with one particular area in which there is a guy who bought the livestock permit in all of those AUMs and then took nonuse on it and then I don't know the proper terminology but like gave it up or zeroed it out or whatever.

And in that case I think that there is a compelling argument that in that particular HMA because those grazing allotments, because those AUMs are not being used that the AML for those horses in that particular HMA could be raised.

>> Julie Weikel: And that's exactly the situation that we heard about from --

>> Ben Masters: From TJ Holmes. That's what happened with TJ. If someone wanted to do that in somewhere else and like what Ginger was saying turn it into a wild horse range if there's no more grazing on that piece of property and there's no more permits for that, you know, something to consider. If we're throwing ideas out.

>> Steven Yardley: Do you think we should also allow horse AUMs to be able to be transferred over to livestock? Like not -- AUMs but AMOs can be transferred over to livestock?

>> Ben Masters: No.

>> June Sewing: And whether you do or not is how can they maintain AMOs and I'm not sure if that goes to that question or not.

>> Jim French: To clarify under one hundred thousand acres if some entity bought a base property and wanted to retire the AUMs and convert those to wild horse and burro or if it's RMEF and they want to convert it to elk use they can change the classification and over one hundred thousand would be commerce.

>> Dean Bolstad: I think you said a keyword, Jim, yes, what we saw in TJ's example, yes, it's been done, the person acquiring to give it up it's the bureau's decision subject to EPA and all those things and yes, it can be done and if it's under one hundred thousand acres my opinion is we have the discretion to do it.

>> Kristin Bail: The reporting requirement is the one hundred thousand level.

>> Jim French: In other words under an RMP amendment you can actually entertain a changing classification at that point.

>> Steven Yardley: So if the HMA is over one hundred thousand acres but the permit is under one hundred thousand acres then does it have to go before Congress or -- so like if it would become part of the HMA and the HMA is over a hundred thousand acres but the permit itself is let's say 20,000 acres then it would it have to go before Congress or not?

>> Dean Bolstad: If it's less they do not have to go before Congress and have approval of the livestock grazing.

If it's less than don't need to go to Congress if it's over we have to go to Congress.

>> Someone suggested a change in wording because I'm reading allowed people to do this and you have to go through hoops but it's --

>> Ben Masters: I think we may want to delete this one because it's already happened in the past and it seems like it's incredibly complex and one sentence is not going to address the complexity of that.

>> Jim French: It's a pathway to do what we want to do and the tool in the toolbox is to sit down at the table and get to that point and suggest that.

>> Kristin Bail: I just want for a moment I can give you the exact citation from the federal land management policy October on the one hundred thousand if you like because I think it'd be good to be clear on that since we were all trying to get it out of our brains instead of paper it says any management decision or action pursuant to a management decision so that would be like changing, making the change.

That excludes that is totally eliminates one or more of the principle or major uses so those are the ones that Dean talked about. Those six. For two or more years with respect to attractive land. One hundred thousand acres or more shall be reported by the secretary to the House of Representatives and the Senate

>> Jim French: So reporting is different than approving it I guess.

>> Steven Yardley: If it's all right with Ben I'd like to see that.

>> June Sewing: I just have a question. Our association actually has four permits in the eely district. One horse and three cattle. We are the permittee on all of them. We use the horse permit obviously but the other three is in nonuse. Now could we, since we are the permittee on there could we then just put horses on there?

>> Dean Bolstad: So if it's a cattle permit you need to apply to change to kind of livestock, cattle, to horses and we're talking domestic horses here. Not wild horses.

>> June Sewing: Because we've been wondering what we're going to do with those allotments. We don't obviously run cattle and our nonuse permit is going to -- it's like ten years I think and it's soon going to wear off. We've been trying to get somebody to buy them. They want to pay us two dollars per AUM.

>> Ben Masters: I know a place where you can get excess horses if you need some.

>> June Sewing: You main domestic ones?

>> Ben Masters: Sale authority. Dean can hook you up.

>> June Sewing: He said we couldn't do that. If we bought the horses?

>> Dean Bolstad: So if you bought the horses and you own them you could apply. If your intention is to graze your private horses you apply to your local BLM for a change in livestock and they'll renew and it change it from cattle to horses and then they'll issue a decision to either change or not change your permit. Or if they change it then the terms and conditions of grazing might change.

>> June Sewing: So it's not really changing the designation?

>> Dean Bolstad: You change the livestock from cattle to horses.

>> June Sewing: I guess I'm a little confused which is not hard to do but --

>> I heard a recommendation that we eliminate, allow people to buy, etc. Is that where we are or -- Jim, I'm not sure where you were.

>> Ben Masters: Yeah.

>> Julie Weikel: Before you agree to just pull it because it does capture an idea that's out there and functional. Maybe we can make the language fit it better and say something like remove impediments that result in a change of use from cattle to horses that fit with existing law. Because apparently the law exists to do this. Yeah.

>> (Speaking off mic).

>> Ben Masters: I think maybe we should take out the word wild horse use because if that individual owns that horse then it is an owned horse and not a congressionally designated wild horse if they purchased that horse from sale of authority.

>> Julie Weikel: This is not about facilitating June's specific thing. This is the thing about (inaudible) and it is wild horses. Remember, it's under the section of how can the BLM sustainably maintain AML within all HMAs?

>> Kristin Bail: I think the distinction would be under TJ's example the allotment was already closed versus a transfer of class of livestock which it would remain an allotment so those are slightly different situations.

>> Julie Weikel: Right.

>> Dean Bolstad: Yeah I think June's are not in a wild horse area so they're two different things.

>> June Sewing: They're not.

>> Kathie: Jim, would you restate what you had said a minute ago. It included within the law.

>> Julie Weikel: It was me, removing impediments that result in a change of use within an HMA within an existing -- I think it captures what your intent was. But -- does it -- does it address your objection because how this started is you didn't

want this to go forward.

>> Steven Yardley: Obviously different people on the board have different opinions. I guess I can just see where the doorway can maybe be open for the BLM to -- HMAs to buy out permittees and say, hey, we're going to give you this much for your permit take it or leave it because we need it for the wild horses and that's a legitimate concern that I have and like you said maybe having within the existing law or -- maybe that'll address it.

>> Ben Masters: That's exactly what I was attempting to do is if somebody wanted to buy out the cattle AUMs so they were fairly compensated and they were sold and that individual wanted to open up more available forage for the wild horses that those wild horses the AML could be increased inside of that HMA.

>> Steven Yardley: And my issue is the coercion factor that could exist within the BLM trying to get horses to AML and seeing this as a means of doing that and getting their permittees. Does that make sense? That's where my concern is.

>> Kathie: These are your ideas that go to a group that Mary Jo is heading to put together for strategy to give to Congress. It's not going -- I doubt it's going to get labeled as -- I take it back. Just tell me what you want to say.

>> Julie Weikel: It was Ben's suggestion, your concern --

>> Kathie: Julie, microphone.

>> Julie Weikel: It was Ben's suggestion and Steven's concern about the language. Are you both content about the language now that it could stay or not?

>> Ginger Kathrens: Steven, the permittee would have to agree, would they not? There's no mandate. I mean, if you agreed to do it then it would be your decision. So I would think it's okay.

>> Julie Weikel: No, they can't make you. Does the phrase within existing law make it palatable enough?

>> Steven Yardley: I guess that'll work.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, one down. Two to go.

>> Ben Masters: We'll use the second one and remove the first one is that okay, Julie?

>> Julie Weikel: I think so.

>> Kathie:

>> Julie Weikel: I think so we have the wrong one highlighted I have the last was concern value wait if any areas that could contain wild horses was that not your concern? Okay. Okay, and I believe this came from you originally, Ginger this evaluate, remember, this is under the topic how can the BLM sustainably maintain AML within all HMAs. And then you said evaluate if any areas that, again, could contain wild horses. And I'm pretty sure I know what you mean from this because this has come forward many times in the past. So zeroed out ranges and HMAs would be looked at again for repopulation. Is that what you meant?

>> Ginger Kathrens: I'm sorry, where are we on this?

>> Kathie: Bottom of page two, second column.

>> Julie Weikel: It pertains to question two.

>> (Speaking off mic).

>> Julie Weikel: It's question number two.

>> Steven Yardley: On the book side of the page.

>> Kathie: Second page second column at the bottom it says evaluate and you can see it on your screen if that's easier. Evaluate if any areas that, again, could contain wild horses.

>> Ginger Kathrens: I'm not sure that, you know, that that was typed in there exactly

correctly. It probably evaluate if there are any areas that have been zeroed out probably could contain wild horses. Something like that. Does that make sense?

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, now, Steven, this was your objection to that language which is now fixed.

>> Steven Yardley: And I guess whether they have been zeroed out they are obviously zeroed out for a reason and I would rather see the HMAs that we currently have addressed and taken care of and gotten down to AML rather than expanding and opening up new areas when the areas we currently have are faced with AMLs or with numbers that are way above AML.

>> Ben Masters: What if we put in the wording non breeding wild horses? Non reproducing wild horses? As an alternative to sticking them in a pen.

>> Jim French: That makes sense because you wanted to exclude horses and some of those HMAs are just vacant.

>> Julie Weikel: I would remind this board that this recommendation that accomplishes exactly that asking BLM to look at previously zeroed out areas about the potential of repopulating with non reproducing herd has come out of the board more than once historically.

So if you leave it in you're not putting anything out there that isn't already out there as a recommendation to BLM.

>> Ginger Kathrens: I don't know why it can't be there. I mean, when was it -- when was it suggested before? And it was a formal recommendation?

>> Julie Weikel: Yes and at least once since I've been on the board. And I would -- my guess, trying to remember as best I can and you can help me here I think Tim brought it forward.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Okay.

>> Julie Weikel: And sometimes it does with respect to a specific area because we had that one in Utah that we were looking at specifically. Had a water issue. Anyway, the point is this recommendation already exists. To leave it here doesn't add to the pile.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Well, but it was a recommendation -- it was something that was added at this meeting. So it bears repeating.

>> Julie Weikel: Yeah but I'm kind of saying.

>> June Sewing: This is not a recommendation, this is part of what they're going to present to the -- and so -- but the recommendations that we have made would not be a part of this thing that they're going to present to Congress.

>> Julie Weikel: Exactly and that's what I'm trying to say is leave thing in here doesn't really change what has been even more strongly stated in the past. And to which BLM has already responded and I can't speak to what the response was because it's pretty much area specific pertinent to why it's zeroed out.

>> Dean Bolstad: So we can go out and get the exact response. BLM periodically revisits the standard use pl in -- plan to review areas, should they be activated. Also to review the herd management area to determine if they should continue to be herd management areas. What's changed in the last twenty years so it's a standard procedure already there but we are not wholesale and I think that was a response to the board. We're not wholesale planning to revisit all, however many 100 and some that have been designated for nonmanagement.

>> Julie Weikel: Steven, does putting in the word non-reproducing and knowing that this has come forward as a recommendation from the board in the past make you comfortable with leaving it right there?

>> Steven Yardley: My concern is as a permittee that would run on that ground it

would be concerning to think of bunch of horses being put back on that ground when you look at the areas where there are HMAs and the permittees have been asked or required to reduce their AUMs because of the overpopulation of wild horses.

And that was my big concern with that.

>> Dean Bolstad: I'll just repeat that. As BLM revisits their land use plans this is standard procedure to review herd areas should they continue to be herd areas or not or HMAs nor not.

>> Would it help to start this with continue to evaluate.

>> Steven Yardley: It sounds like whether it's in there or not BLM's going to keep going whatever it's been doing.

>> Ben Masters: Still working on that survey.

>> Julie Weikel: Ginger, are you happy with it now.

>> Ginger Kathrens: That's fine.

>> Julie Weikel: We're done with that one. Let's go to the third one. This really was yours, Ginger, it said phase out helicopter roundups and water trapping. Steven objected. To leaving it in. I would add I object to leaving it in. Goodness knows the original act prohibited helicopters. BLM had a real need for them. Got the law changed to put them back in place and there are places where they are absolutely essential and, yes, Jim?

>> Jim French: I'm agreeing with what you're saying relative to that. It needs to be part of the toolbox and I would also point out that there is a conflicting statement in here anyhow because if you go in question one it says we use helicopters for gathers and later on says we don't. I would later say use them more appropriate because I don't think it should be the first order of business in every gather. I think -- and I don't think the BLM does that anyhow I think they're going to say yeah, do helicopters every time but I don't think we should take that tool out of the toolbox.

>> Dean Bolstad: BLM last year removed 800 horses with bait and water traps which is kind of unprecedented compared to previous things and we just renewed our five year contract and I don't recall if we have six bait water trappers or not but we obviously want to continue that to be a part of our program.

>> Steven Yardley: Can you clarify too and I think it was kind of mentioned I think one of the biggest issues with helicopters is the expense but it sounds like what you said is water and bait trapping can be every bit as expensive or more.

>> Dean Bolstad: It can be very expensive or inexpensive. It depends on the site specific place. What's the best tool for the job. That's what we ought to do and I'd remind the board that Velma Johnson testified when this change allowing helicopters her position was after five six years of not having it that BLM needed it. Helicopters.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay. So we have three people on record as objecting to this going forward.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Maybe phase out helicopter roundups if bait and water trapping is feasible. Because the helicopter roundups if you can do bait and water the animals are far less apt to be damaged in the process and it's less stressful and it's less dangerous to them physically because I know adopters and it's so sad when they get a horse and they realize it's not a sound animal and it maybe was run very far at a very young age. If we can use bait and water trap if it's economical and feasible then we should do it.

>> Julie Weikel: How then are you suggesting that the wording be changed?

>> Ginger Kathrens: Where economically feasible -- what was the other word I used? Where --

>> (Speaking off mic).

>> Ginger Kathrens: Are feasible and economical. Okay.

>> (Speaking off mic).

>> Jim French: Then we need to take item four out because --

>> Kathie: I put the word in here increase the use -- rather than talking about phasing out helicopters increase the use of bait and trapping where economically feasible.

>> Ben Masters: So I'm looking at a lot of these ideas. And there's a lot of good ideas and there's a lot of problems with a lot of them and a lot of them are recommendations that we've already given in the past. So what is the purpose of this? Because this is not a professional document to hand over to Congress. So like be a legitimate recommendation.

>> Julie Weikel: This is a working paper for her group and I tried to make that really clear but if there were any big glaring problems I wanted to give you all a chance to address them but there are contradictory things in here and I don't think that -- please address us would you, Mary Jo's going to tell us whether we're just wasting our time.

>> Mary Jo: This is just to inform the group that's working on the report. So it's not like this document's going to be taken and handed to Congress. This is just going to help inform us as we work on that report that will be -- everything that we thought about. Everything that we're getting from you. Is all going to be considered as we're preparing that.

>> Steven Yardley: Would we have that report presented to us when we have our next meeting or will it be ready by then?

>> Julie Weikel: It might already be law.

>> Mary Jo: Well it's not ready now I can tell you that but I would imagine once, you know once we have it finalized and of course in order to do that it has to be approved by the Secretary of Interior and, you know it has to go up the Washington office 100 chain and then up to the secretary before we're even ready to present it to office.

I'm sure once that's happened it'll be given to the board I would imagine, right? Right, Kristin?

>> Is there any chance the board can see that report prior to it going to Congress?

>> Mary Jo: That's a question I'm going to have to give to Kristin. The secretary would be the one to make that decision. We'd love to give it to you but the secretary get to make that decision.

>> Kristin Bail: It also goes to OMB may also want to see it before it is officially transmitted to Congress so there's a lot of people that want to look at it. We can certainly ask the question but we do give deference to, you know, the final product being the product of the, you know, the president essentially and when the administration choose to share it.

>> Jim French: My level of concern is that report is going to reflect this document. Obviously because we're giving it to you. And which is -- which are our words. And so my comment and I'm uncomfortable with representing myself as a member of this board without having -- making sure that that representation is accurate.

>> Mary Jo: That's a good point and everything we do we vet through our solicitor as well so we're not inadvertently propose something that's not legal currently and so that would be a part of this process as well.

>> Steven Yardley: I think what Jim's getting at too is even though the suggestion's put up, were put up by members of the board the board as a group doesn't necessarily give their stamp of approval.

>> Mary Jo: I understand and I understand the desire to see it when it's finalized and

I'm not exactly sure -- what I think we would probably do is have a section that discusses what the discussion was here today. I'm not sure exactly how we would -- I'm sure we won't just attach this or anything like that. It'll be used to inform the narrative about that and maybe.

I don't know, Kristin, we would obviously have to check up the chain to see, perhaps we could give the board that section to look at.

>> Kristin Bail: We can certainly ask the question but I don't see this as verbatim insertion. It's more a reflection. This is what we heard at the board meeting and particularly those items that are new and we do reflect what we heard from the board previously and will reflect what we hear as recommendations from this meeting as well.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay. I call for concerns and we've been here for awhile on three little concerns. I'm going to ask each of you, if you are comfortable enough with this document going forward with the modifications we've already made as a work product to the working report. If you are comfortable enough let's just let this stand. I hear you Jim that you couldn't defend every one of these bullets but as an accurate reflection of this discussion we could. We all could I think. So -- I guess I want to make this recommendation number two. That the board present the discussion results from points one through nine of Mary Jo's presentation. As an accurate reflection of the discussion relevant to these questions acknowledging that there are inherent contradiction and concerns. Can we live with that? Sue, did you hear that clearly enough because apparently you don't get to see the board anymore, is that right?

>> Sue McDonnell: That's right but, yeah, I heard it. I've been able to follow your discussion.

>> Julie Weikel: So we're going to vote now. All those in favor of presenting this inherently contradictory document as an adequate representation of our conversation and concerns to the congressional committee.

>> Ben Masters: Is really worth wasting people's time for them to look at that recommendation? I mean, I just think that the board present the discussion results from question one through nine of a presentation as an accurate reflection of a discussion but there's contradictions and concerns. Like, to me, I don't know if that recommendation is worth the Secretary of Interior's --

>> Kathie: She's just trying to get you to vote on whether it's okay to turn this over to Mary Jo's group.

This has nothing to do with the secretary.

>> Ben Masters: I thought these recommendations were going to the Secretary of Interior. BLM wild horse and burro recommendations go where then?

>> Kristin Bail: They will be shared forward. You are correct. If this is an official recommendation of the board you are making this recommendation that this team consider this document and its work.

>> Ben Masters: And should we send a recommendation to the secretary of the interior about this presentation in which there's inherent contradictions and concerns is that a good use of his time?

>> Kathie: I think Julie was trying to get each of you to vote on whether or not it's okay -- if you're reasonably comfortable with --

>> Steven Yardley: Can we vote on that is having a formal recommendation is what Ben's getting instead of having all the verbiage that's going to go before the secretary let's just vote okay, nee.

>> Kristin Bail: It's not to be included as one of the recommendations. Okay.

>> (Speaking off mic).

>> Julie Weikel: Can we technically submit this to the committee? Instead of to the secretary?

>> Kathie: That's the question.

>> Kristin Bail: It would not be a formal recommendation of the board per the usual process of recommendations but if you -- it would be essentially the board's group consensus, you know that, yes, we want to have this go to the team that's working on the report that you all agreed that it's good enough to go but we wouldn't include it in that record and then come to the next meeting and say, okay, this is one of the recommendations and this is how we responded to it.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay take away the number two and give it a big star because it's somehow in a world all its own now.

>> June Sewing: Couldn't we just do it as a motion?

>> Julie Weikel: Sure. Do you want to make that motion?

>> June Sewing: Yes.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, June has moved that we and Steven seconds that this document move forward to the congressional preparation committee as an accurate reflection of our concerns all those in favor say aye. All those opposed say no.

>> Dean Bolstad: You made a request of the program a number of times before. That were not formal recommendations. And of course we honored that.

>> Julie Weikel: All right.

>> Jim French: That was the primary reason that we have number one.

>> Julie Weikel: Yeah. That's right. That's exactly right. Okay. The ayes have it. Please take this thing and -- make it let's make it part of a positive going forward I hope. All right. Back to are there additional recommendations that the board would like to bring forth at this time? These are now formal real recommendations from the advisory board 2017.

>> Ben Masters: Phase out long-term holding for three years and take that budget and put it towards on-range management. Three years.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Ben, where would the horses go that are living long-term.

>> Ben Masters: They would be destroyed.

>> Ginger Kathrens: (Speaking off mic).

>> Julie Weikel: Okay. Additional discussion for recommendation number two? Which is --

>> June Sewing: I would like to add the adoption program as well.

>> Julie Weikel: Wait a minute you want to phase out the adoption program?

>> June Sewing: No, that the budget go to on-range management and adoption if that's okay with that guy down there.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay Ben is nodding so now recommendation says phase out long-term holding over the next three years and apply that budget to on-range management and adoptions.

>> Ginger Kathrens: I think it should add what it is and that's that it would be destruction of the animals.

>> Steven Yardley: I wonder if we would be better off to put as stated in the act that we -- the horses be put up for adoption at least three times, all horses in long and short-term holding facilities be offered for adoption at least three times. And all unadopted horses be made available for sale without limitation or humane euthanasia. Those animals deemed unsuitable for sale should then be destroyed in the most humane manner possible.

>> Ben Masters: That recommendation was made in 2016 and is made in

recommendation number one currently.

>> Julie Weikel: It's not obligatory that recommendation number two contain the mechanism.

>> Jim French: I think that's great point because destroying of the animal is just one of the options that is offered in the toolbox and I would hope that as we have moved through the process of trying to, and that was going to be my other motion I was going to make here for is that we, I believe we have the opportunity here to actually engage those organizations which have shown an interest in adoption, in tip training and also the system that's in play right now. To actually take those animals, those excess animals, that are going to be released out of long-term holding and actually put them into the system for training and adoption down the road. I would hope that we could actually list that as well as one of the options and not just drop to the final one but obviously there's that but I want to add a third one after we're done with this one.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay. I want to wipe out all the modifying language and vote on the original recommendation number two just the way it stands and if you want we can add the operand if you will leaving BLM any options that accomplish this. You know, short of putting them back on the range but -- I think it just muddies the water. Ben's exactly right. These are separate issues. And if there's an alternative, for example, we have in front of us a proposal that Russia would like 20,000 mares and all you have to do is pay the freight to get them there. And if it turns out that BLM does the cost benefit analysis of that and Congress allows it, then fine. I don't mean to preclude those options in this -- perfect. Okay now recommendation says, thank you to Kathie, phase out long-term holding over the next three years and apply that budget to on-range management and adoption. BLM will use all options that accomplish this focusing on humane options.

>> Steven Yardley: Could we add to that excluding putting them back on the range.

>> Julie Weikel: No, Steven.

>> Ben Masters: How about we keep out phase out long-term holding over the next three years. Just keep it simple.

>> Julie Weikel: Well, it's called call for the question and as member of the board you can say call for the question.

>> Steven Yardley: Call for the question.

>> Julie Weikel: Take out the second sentence. Call for the question. We vote on it up or down and if it goes down we add the next sentence back and see if it passes. Phase -- phase out long --

>> Sue McDonnell: Is it still going to have where the savings will be put.

>> Julie Weikel: It says apply that budget to on-range management and adoptions.

>> Ben Masters: Call for a question.

>> Julie Weikel: All those in favor for recommendation number two --

>> Julie Weikel: Call for the question.

>> Ben Masters: Call for the question.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, all those in favor of recommendation number two, please say aye. All those opposed to recommendation number two, please say no.

>> Ginger Kathrens: No.

>> Kristin Bail: Did Sue vote?

>> Sue McDonnell: I said aye.

>> Julie Weikel: The motion carries. Recommendation number two is in place. 5-1. Okay. All right. Are there additional recommendations to bring forth at this time?

>> Jim French: I was trying to see if we could divert some of the maybe I just -- I'll

just say it anyhow but I would like to divert some of that revenue that's going to be saved from the long-term holding facilities into enhancing the tip program make sure it's fully funded. As far as the training side of it and that we by policy the BLM increases the ability for those training facilities to process more horses.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay the motion that just passed says and adoptions of which the tip program is one of those. So that summon now all specified for range management and adoptions. Are you suggesting an additional recommendation relative to adoptions that accomplishes the other things and I'm suggesting maybe it is a separate, it's not a modification to, it's a separate recommendation about adoptions?

>> Jim French: My sense is that because it's contained within the language that involves open range management as well, that the intent of my motion will be lost and I believe that my feeling is that in order for us to maximize the number of horses that can be adopted we need to fully fund the capability of those organizations that are actually doing that hard work and I'm not sure how this is going to work but I would like some of that funding diverted into that process.

>> We had some other language, Jim, I don't know if you want to combine them. To take excess animals and put them in for training and adoption. Do you want to combine this?

>> Jim French: Ultimately that's what I'm trying to accomplish but I'd like to include somehow a funding mechanism to go about that because that's what's been missing in the past for a good portion of and it I would like to give the opportunity for those horses for adoption at the same time that, you know, we're actually doing the hard work in terms of trying to determine how we're going to move forward with long-term management. And in one of the options in that is to enhance the adoption program and that's how I would -- that's what I propose.

>> Could we maybe amend that recommendation to say adoption programs? Which should include --

>> Jim French: It would include all of them, won't it?

>> Right.

>> Jim French: Yeah, I think that would be more complete?

>> How does that work for you Ben?

>> Ben Masters: That's fine.

>> I want a little clarification about the phrase in current systems.

>> Jim French: Is there a regulatory moratorium which limits the number of horses that these organizations can actually take into there system.

>> Kristin: It's a funding mechanism. You saw that pie you shrink one piece and grow one piece.

>> Jim French: I don't want to later on be sitting here talking about we were going to do this and hit a wall in terms of the funding side and the rest of those animals were euthanized I would like to make sure that somehow we put -- we enhance that fund to where we can maximize that number.

>> Kristin Bail: So you can grow the pie or reallocate the pie.

>> Jim French: Whatever it takes but adopt as many as we possibly can.

>> Julie June Sewing: What if it just said create funding mechanisms to maximize adoptions? Does that work? I mean, it allows us to tap into the foundation, to take donations it asks BLM to make a bigger pie slice I mean it kind of does all those things. Doesn't it?

>> Jim French: As long as in the discussion we capture those organizations and then secondly we capture the international adoption because those are the things I spoke

of earlier today. Because I think we have a lot of options out there to pull a lot of those horses that are going to be coming out of short-term or rather long-term.

>> Julie Weikel: Kathie's getting it down again. Through successful programs because I think that's one of the things we want to prioritize. We heard that over and over again about prioritizing those programs that can get it done. So maybe instead of especially through partnerships but especially through successful programs. Does that capture your intent? I think we all have it on our list. I mean, in one version or another --

>> Steven Yardley: Is that going to exclude like newcomers that want to take part but feel like they can't because --

>> Jim French: No, I hope it would encourage it. That's -- my term maximize adoption means if we got -- if we double the number of people out there that can actually perform that service let's get after them. So --

>> I think it needs to include international adoptions. Okay so at this point recommendation number three says create funding mechanisms to maximize adoptions especially through successful programs and to include international adoptions. Dean, you're looking like you want to say something.

>> Dean Bolstad: I get in the weeds and very technical. Adoption maybe sales might be an appropriate term to transfer animals to other nations but -- anyway I get the concept.

>> Julie Weikel: Adoptions/sales fits for me everywhere that it says adoptions. Now it says make recommendations through adoptions/sales and to include international adoptions and/or sales.

>> Jim French: Yep.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Do we want to put any other verbiage in there that would maintain a humane transfer or something.

We've tossed out in the past numerous international sales things before. Don't we have some concerns about this and should we put some protection in there for the animals? Gym

>> Jim French: What do you recommend?

>> Ginger Kathrens: I don't know, Dean, what do you think?

>> Dean Bolstad: So I don't think the United States Government can enforce U.S. regulations on the soils of foreign countries if that's the question.

>> Jim French: Well, I understand that we're not going to go to war but I can tell you that, you know, certainly within the context of an MOU or something along that line we could at least go on record that if they don't meet a set of standards in terms of ethical treatment of animals they lose that contract as null and void.

>> Dean Bolstad: So Ginger's intent here is that if we provide them to another country they're going to go for something other than meat on a hook. That's what Ginger's concerned and that they be taken care of if and you talked about third party monitors in other countries. The boroughs to Guatemala had that. It was veterinarian to other countries. We're not going to spend 7,000 dollars an animal to get them to Russia for somebody to eat them. That's ludicrous.

>> Jim French: I agree and I'll tell you I think in the context of this thing I think we're covered then under what, under the regulations that were outlined for the Guatemala thing, right?

>> Dean Bolstad: Well they're not regulations but it was all part of the deal. The concept and the, yeah, it's not policy but it was the proposal included veterinarian assistance once they got over there.

>> Jim French: Sure. Well I guess ultimately that's what Ginger's talking about that

the protection is here as well.

>> Kathie: I threw some words up. Do they help at all?

>> Jim French: I'm sorry?

>> Kathie: I threw in maximize adoptions or sales that meet basic humane standards. Does anything like that help, Ginger?

>> Jim French: If that's direction more towards bureau in terms of how it orchestrates those types of transfers, yes, because that sets the stage for what you were talking about, Dean, and that satisfies what Ginger's talking about.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Is that right?

>> Dean Bolstad: The print is too small for me. I'm sorry.

>> Ginger Kathrens: She added that meet basic humane standards. I'm not sure if there's teeth in that or not.

>> Dean Bolstad: I hear Sue committing a comment.

>> Sue McDonnell: They could be shipped to Japan and humanely slaughtered.

>> Dean Bolstad: And that's what I was thinking too. The intent is they're put to a productive use and purpose that's really what's being discussed here if we go to the expense of transferring them to other countries. They could be breeding herds and create their own free roaming herds on the steps of Russia.

>> Julie Weikel: That's one of the proposals you have in front of us is they're going to be free roaming herds in a habitat that has three endangered big cats so --

>> (Speaking off mic).

>> Julie Weikel: No. It's Jim's baby.

>> June Sewing: My comment would be that, I don't know whether we're talking about adopting or selling but if it's a sale thing it would be the same as any other sale. Once those people have their animals they can do anything they want with them.

>> Jim French: I'm wondering then obviously the bureau looks at these recommendations for implementation.

I'm guessing if you want a full feeling for what the intent of was for the board you go back to the minutes of this meeting and hear this conversation and I think that suffice because your comments, Ginger are on the record on that. Agree with you on that and I think and that's the nature of my motion.

>> Ginger Kathrens: I had a long conversation with this gentleman a year ago maybe. Maybe less and as he explained it to me, the endangered cats would have a prey base that currently does not exist. So the horse would be going to an environment that's somewhat different than where they came from and they would be a prey species. Wild horses are a prey species. When we talk about no predators which was said in this meeting in the states, the predator's the mountain line so in this case it's the endangered bengal tiger or something I don't have a problem with them being considered a prey species.

But they do, just like what Dean says they have to be handled humanely and I don't know whether based on the discussion I've had with them I'm not sure if that would occurred or not. I'm just not sure.

>> Julie Weikel: Are we ready to vote on this recommendation. For Sue's benefit the recommendation now says, create funding mechanisms to maximize adoptions and/or sales especially through successful programs and to include international adoptions and programs. Or sales. Okay all those in favor of recommendation number three please say aye. I didn't hear Sue.

>> Sue McDonnell: Aye. Did you hear now?

>> Julie Weikel: Did you want to add to that, Sue?

>> Sue McDonnell: No, I just wanted to make sure you heard me. It takes me a second to get my mute undone here. All those opposed say no.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Because I have those same reservations and I'm a little worried about this. Thanks.

>> Julie Weikel: All right any other recommendations to come forward at this time.

>> (Speaking off mic).

>> Julie Weikel: Where's that guy from meeker that could do basic math. I need a tutor. Hey.

>> Kathie: Right at the beginning there were seven ayes.

>> Julie Weikel: Quick question are Jen or Fred on the phone yet? Okay. No. All right. We miss you. Are there any other motions to -- or recommendation to come forth at this time?

>> Ginger Kathrens: Dean is it appropriate to make a suggestion on budgets and allocation of funds this the pie chart?

>> Dean Bolstad: Okay.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Then I would like to see an increase in the percentage of funding for fertility control right now it's at 0%. In other words I think it's around 100 some thousand dollars. Well, it's going to have to at least, yeah, I mean, even a million dollars is, I don't know, Ben, do you have a thought on that?

>> Ben Masters: What is the budget for long-term holding right now?

>> Dean Bolstad: I'd have to go back to my notes but it's about 24 million that we spend on pasture contracts. That's your question. It's 23 or 24 million. Michael could say exactly.

>> Ben Masters: If we phase that out over three years and split half of that between fertility control and half of that between adoption just throwing some numbers out, I would say increase the funding for fertility control --

>> Ginger Kathrens: -- to ten million.

>> Julie Weikel: Wait a minute you -- we have -- we have recommendation number one or number two that says that budget will go to on-range management and adoptions. It doesn't say anything about it going to fertility control and now --

>> Ben Masters: On-range management is fertility control. I consider on-range management to include fertility control.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay. All right. I was going to rehab pastures with that but anyway.

>> Ben Masters: How about three million dollars just, you know --

>> Ginger Kathrens: In the next fiscal year. Yeah. And, you know, I'm thinking a percentage of that of course would help not just buying the vaccines but also maybe helping with some of the expenses to deliver the vaccine.

>> Ben Masters: Dedicating personnel and subsidizing the volunteers.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Yeah, it would be for the volunteers as well. Yeah.

>> Julie Weikel: So recommendation number four says increase wild horse and burro funding for fertility control in the next fiscal year to three million dollars.

>> Ben Masters: What's it currently at?

>> Ginger Kathrens: It's 140,000 dollars. I'm trying to remember.

>> Dean Bolstad: Well those numbers don't capture all of our costs. Not even close as Michael explained but it's not a large percentage of our budget. I'm not going to say it is. And on the other hand we can spend three -- I like broad discretion to do what you're suggesting. So throwing three million dollars out there and treating ten horses in each of the 177 HMAs doesn't do anything. So I think we would have an eye towards maintaining AML once it's achieved. Those kind of things that you've talked about earlier.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Well it's to stabilize population growth. Something like that. Yeah.

>> Dean Bolstad: And I think we're going to be looking to maximize the leverage these dollars through partnerships and where we can do those kinds of things. We can fly a hell copter and spend three million dollars but I don't think that's what you folks are intending here.

>> Ben Masters: You get what the recommendation is that I would like to see a lot more fertility control used and if you're comfortable with that we can further specify how it would be used.

>> Dean Bolstad: Used responsibly getting the most bang for the buck so to speak is what your intent is and increasing the programs in a meaningful way. That's what you mean.

>> Ginger Kathrens: That sounds good to me.

>> Julie Weikel: Good and Kathie's just about to get it there.

>> Kristin Bail: Just to clarify in question we are now in fiscal year 18 so you are saying for fiscal year 19 which begins October 1, 2018 just want to make sure everyone is on that page.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Yeah, I understand that, that's unfortunate but I understand that.

>> Dean Bolstad: So which fiscal year did you mean?

>> Ginger Kathrens: I would love for it to be tomorrow but Kristin is pointing out that we are already in FY 2018.

>> Julie Weikel: So put fiscal year 2019.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Is it possible to reallocate funds, move them around at all or not?

>> Kristin Bail: We could look within our discretion but in order to address to a 70 million dollar budget from an 80 million dollar budget we had to eat our young and cut staffing, support, administrative support. So it would be difficult but we could see whatever we could do.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay. Recommendation number four says increase wild horse and burro funding for fertility control in fiscal year 2019 to achieve -- to enable goals for achieving AML.

>> Ben Masters: I think for maintaining AMLs in appropriate HMAs.

>> Julie Weikel: What happened to the three million?

>> Ben Masters: I think it'd be good to have a number in there.

>> Julie Weikel: Three million comes back.

>> Ben Masters: In appropriate HMAs.

>> Kathie: Thank you. Okay, I apologize I thought the conversation was (speaking off mic).

>> Julie Weikel: Now recommendation number four says increase wild horse and burro funding for fertility control in fiscal year 2019. Increase to three million.

>> Dean Bolstad: Instead of specifying the funding perhaps we could suggest numbers of animals treated or something like that. I mean, it equates to funding too but, I don't know, just another thought.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Well it's not all for buying darts it's --

>> Dean Bolstad: It might be three million, it might be two million, it might be one and a half. It might be a thousand animals. It might be two thousand animals. We kind of get what you're saying.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay the question is whether we want to change from a monetary measurement, three million, to per head treated goal. It's your motion.

>> Kristin Bail: Would it be fair to say this would also be fair to protect potential public private partnership so we can increase the numbers not only from federal funds but outside federal funds as well and clarifying that.

>> Dean Bolstad: I think that would be a lot more open and helpful and --

>> Julie Weikel: Okay would you help us capture that because that just okay so it's to longer about three million dollars is that right?

>> Ginger Kathrens: No, it is.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay --

>> Ginger Kathrens: Because the money, you know, quantifying how many mares are going to be darted for three million dollars is not what this is about. It's about the whole program is the volunteers that go out there and do it. I don't know how many we're talking about. We need to be doing thousands of of course. The word -- what did you mean by appropriate, Ben?

>> Ben Masters: By appropriate I meant if there is a two herd management area that's right next to each other one of them is seven times over AML and the other one is at AML I would say that the one at AML is much more appropriate because the one that's seven times over AML is more likely to be facing a gather in the next few years.

>> Ginger Kathrens: I guess that's okay. I don't know, what does everybody else think.

>> Dean Bolstad: Ben you're thinking to get the spring creek and replicate that within AML and healthy rangeland, lots of grass and really good condition horses under management plan that doesn't call removals. That's what you're saying when you say appropriate HMA.

>> Ben Masters: Right the HMAs that, I mean, if you look at an HMA that's seven times over the AML that is going to be gathered next year or is on a high priority list to be gathered I think it's more appropriate to spend money doing fertility control to try to prevent an HMA to be gathered for the next five or ten years to have some type of prioritized list of where do we begin the darting process on a scaled up level.

>> Ginger Kathrens: I'm thinking of the herds in the red desert and those herds are over AML but some of them have such small AMLs like, and I'm just using this as an example lost creek which has some Spanish colonial markers in there the AML is like 70 and maybe there's 150. There are other extenuating circumstances I think in trying to maintain a herd that is really very special even though it's over AML. You can bring that down to close to the AML with fertility control. And still be really selective.

>> Dean Bolstad: So sand wash would be a better choice to focus money and contraception to improve -- to increase what's going on compared to going to antelope valley where we visited last year there's thousands of horses I think Ben you're saying don't go to the valley but to target places like sang wash.

>> Ben Masters: Places that are more feasible.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Right and I think the red desert calls under that and sang wash but they are over AML. I don't want AML to be the reason why we would use fertility.

>> Ben Masters: How about we take everything out after fiscal year 2019.

>> Ginger Kathrens: That's fine by me if it's okay with everybody else.

>> What if we added such funding might be applied to males and/or females. It does and that's the point of putting it right there. There's kind of been a usurpation of that phrase to mean immuno contraceptives and fertility control means fertility control. It's such a big jump of what we have I am not going to quibble over the number.

>> Ginger Kathrens: My intent was for fertility control not overreactimizing mares

certainly you know me well enough that I believe that we should be doing things that we can take back if we have to if we have a weather event in the prior months and we use two-thirds lose two-thirds of the herd and taken the ovaries out of the mares.

>> Julie Weikel: Would you amend to say reversible fertility control because fertility control control means fertility control control.

>> Ginger Kathrens: I understand and yes.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay so now take out -- might be used for -- reversible and take out all after six. That all comes out too.

>> Kathie: Take out what's now called five but it's not really five. That's all gone? I didn't know if we agreed to it. Thank you.

>> Julie Weikel: Isn't that what you said, Ben, and everyone said okay? So now number four says increase wild horse funding for reversible control by three million dollars in fiscal year 2019. All right? Ready to vote? Sue, is that clear?

>> Sue McDonnell: Yes.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay all those in favor of recommendation number four please say aye. All those opposed say no. No.

>> Ben Masters: Madam Chair, you have been voted against.

>> Julie Weikel: Yes I have. Thank you for reminding me of that but it's not the first time. Let's move on do we have anymore recommendations coming from the floor?

>> Steven Yardley: I have a recommendation. I'd like go to go into a little bit of background because I believe this discussion deserves it.

All the recommendations we've made thus far do nothing to deal with the excess of three times AML that are across the ranges some places six and seven times over the levels and the dire consequences that are happening because of these. If we leave it alone we're going to go from 75,000 horses this year to potentially 150,000. That's assuming there's not a population crash. From 150,000 four years from then we're going to be going to 300,000 horses assuming there's not a population crash. I don't think a lot of these areas and sustain those numbers without having a population crash. A population crash can is really kind word for animals starving and dying of thirst. I don't think that's humane in any way, shape, or form. I think that's one of the least humane things you can do to an animal and as an advocate for animals, and someone who takes care of them, I believe and part of why I'm here and why I'm doing what I'm doing is I believe we're all children of God and he's given us a stewardship over this earth and over his animals and he expects us to take care of his animals and sometimes that means making hard decisions that's best for them. I would suggest that we follow the wild horse and burro act as written in its entirety and most of my recommendation comes directly from that. And I'll start with the BLM immediately and by immediately within the next three years remove excess animals. Defined as any animals over AML from the range so as to achieve Appropriate Management Levels. Such action should be taken in order in priority to restore a thriving balance to the range and protect the range from the deterioration associated with overpopulation. BLM shall order old, sick or lame animals be destroyed in the most humane order possible. BLM shall charge additional free burros to be captured and removed for private maintenance and care for which the BLM determines an adoption demand exists by qualified individuals and groups. All animals shown offered for adoption three times and thereafter should be made available for sale without limitation or humane euthanasia. Those animals deemed unsuitable for sale should then be euthanized in the most humane manner possible. Ladies and gentlemen, we are facing one of the greatest travesties that's ever happened in your country regarding our range resource. And if we don't make hard

decisions now, generations to come are going to be making much harder decisions. The damage that's taking place currently nears impossibility to repair. I don't know if you can do it. We have ranges. We have reseed that had were homesteaded that we tried to reseed three times and because of the arid nature of the ground, we haven't had any success to speak of. We have tried various things from grading the land to making berms so that the seed would catch more moisture. We've tried spraying off the cheat grass and the mustard weed to get salvaged seeding and none of it has worked and that's using Siberian wheat grass, the most prolific producers of perennial grasses that are nonnative. That doesn't even come close to approaching the perennial bunch grasses and the winter fat that's out there that I think right now is the time to act. And I feel unfortunate that this problem's been kicked down the road for a long, long time and now we're having to make some really hard decisions because of that but if we couldn't to kick it down the road the decisions are going to get harder and harder.

And animals including horses, burros, and wildlife are going to suffer the dire consequences because of it. And that's why I'm making this recommendation. Okay, Steven, please indicate your first statement. Follow the build and horse and burro act in its entirety and then you immediately start quoting and wild horse and burro act which you just read. If you could help Kathie out by telling us exactly where in the wild horse and burro act you're starting. Pull it up and where you're ending. This is the exact words out of the act. Okay? And we don't have to -- I mean, it is what it is. Now you did say, did you say within three years because that's not in the act.

>> Steven Yardley: It is not in the act. Immediately is in the act and I propose we define immediately in this recommendation as within the next three years.

>> Julie Weikel: Do you want to put that in parenthetically behind immediately and then just use the rest of the wording intact because if we wordsmith the act very much it will turn into a big deep discussion. I'm in favor of hanging onto the act.

>> Steven Yardley: I am also in favor of hanging onto the act.

>> Kathie: So you give me the proper citation or whatever.

>> Steven Yardley: I had it pulled up for some reason it's not pulling up.

>> Julie Weikel: I had it here marked also but I'm not finding it.

>> Ben Masters: Steven I would like to write something down and it may kind of be what you wanted to say is to achieve the Appropriate Management Level within three years. Then to use fertility control to slow the population growth to where the recruitment meeting the adoption demand. At that point in time we would have a perfectly sustainable solution.

>> Steven Yardley: I think that would be excellent to add to it. I also failed to mention I think we should include in this that we further recommend the BLM utilize the help and assistance of all state and local governments and agencies and individuals in achieving AML. I agree is that should be the end goal and that's what I would like to see is a sustainable herd of healthy horses on healthy ranges and using fertility control, adoptions and permanent sterilization as part of that.

>> Julie Weikel: Before we modify the act language let's be clear about what you're including. Okay?

>> Steven Yardley: Okay. So if you go down to --

>> Julie Weikel: Because you start literally in the middle of a sentence.

>> Steven Yardley: Let me find -- if you go 1333 powers and duties of secretary. Down to --

>> Julie Weikel: I see where you are and you started reading right here where you

said exist -- that an overpopulation exists on a given area of public land and an action is necessary to -- and that's where you started. Remove excess animals. You shall immediately remove excess animals.

>> Steven Yardley: Yes.

>> Julie Weikel: Is that where you want to start?

>> Steven Yardley: Yes. That's where I want to start. With he, he shall immediately decrease the size of the ALM. We can't make recommendation to him. We're making our recommendation to the BLM. The BLM referred to here is he, referring to the Secretary of Agriculture shall immediately remove excess animals from the range so as to achieve Appropriate Management Levels such action shall be taken in the following order and priority comma --

>> Julie Weikel: I have a question, if you just stopped it right there. Immediately remove excess animals from the range to achieve Appropriate Management Levels. BLM is already obligated to follow this law about, from there on. Even without us recommending it. They are. And so I don't know why we have to add all this extra language. You're asking BLM to follow the wild horse and burro law.

>> Steven Yardley: I agree but they're not.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay, so do we need all that verbiage or can we just said BLM will immediately within the next three years follow the wild horse and burro act in its entirety and remove excess animal to achieve AML.

>> Steven Yardley: That's fine with me. And I would like to include -- we further recommend that the BLM utilize the help and assistance of all state and local governments and agencies and individuals in achieving AML. Thereafter, the goal should be to maintain herds at AML through darting, adoptions, and permanent sterilization.

>> Julie Weikel: Sue, we're just kind of caught up in a little wordsmithing right now.

>> Sue McDonnell: I'm still here. I'm listening.

>> Kathie: We're going to lose closed captioning in -- we have about nine minutes left. We will lose closed captioning.

>> Dean Bolstad: That doesn't mean the broadcast stops, right?

>> The closed captioning we can continue to record but the live streaming will end because it has to be captioned by law. Just to clarify.

>> Julie Weikel: All right. Nine minutes. BLM will immediately within the next three years follow the wild horse and burro act and remove excess animal to achieve AML. Further, use help and assistance of all state and local agencies and individuals in achieving AML. The goal should be to maintain herds at AML through darting, adoptions and permanent sterilization. There's a lot in that. Is there any chance you'd be open to having some separate recommendations. One is achieve AML and a separate one is about maintaining AML. Just so it's clean and tight.

>> Steven Yardley: That would be fine.

>> Julie Weikel: Okay. So I would suggest that number five BLM will immediately within the next three years follow the wild horse and burro act and remove excess animals on the range to achieve AML. From the range. From the range. Okay. That's the end of five. Or do you want --

>> Steven Yardley: Include the next --

>> Julie Weikel: He want to keep further use of all states and individuals in achieving AML. Okay. So that stays part of five. Let's discuss that, number five, right now, okay?

>> June Sewing: I would like to add organizations to that state agencies. Organizations.

>> Steven Yardley: I agree.

>> Julie Weikel: Any further discussion of number five? Ginger?

>> Ginger Kathrens: Who does the killing?

>> Julie Weikel: Number five doesn't say anything about the processing. It says get them off the range.

>> Ginger Kathrens: And then what?

>> Julie Weikel: That's a separate issue?

>> Ginger Kathrens: It is?

>> Julie Weikel: Yes, it is.

>> Ginger Kathrens: In 2007 BLM had meetings that contemplated destruction of healthy wild horses and I think that they came one within a thousand or two thousand that they could do a year without violating clean water standards and other EPA acts. And they talked about the psychologists and how many they would have to have to counsel employees that were told to destroy healthy animals. I think that if we're willing to make this kind of a -- recommendation then we have to be responsible for taking part in the deed itself. I can't even imagine it.

>> Steven Yardley: That's what's required in the end.

>> Julie Weikel: Further discussion? Calling for a vote on recommendation number five. BLM will immediately within the next three years follow the wild horse and burro act and remove excess animals from the range to achieve AML. Further BLM, I might be getting tired, further BLM will use the help and assistance of all state and local agencies, organizations and individuals in achieving AML. All those in favor please say aye. All those opposed please say no.

>> Ginger Kathrens: Same as before. No, absolutely not.

>> Julie Weikel: Sue, I think we might have drowned you out. Did you vote on that motion?

>> Sue McDonnell: I voted aye.

>> Julie Weikel: All right. We're up against losing some of our ability to communicate with the public. Actually that topic of maintaining AML, that statement, we have language drafted about that, I'm looking at you because do you want to provide that or will this start with, okay, all right. This was in that basic goals and then somewhere at the end of it where removals with the goal that eventually removals equals adoptions.

>> Ben Masters: And I think that's what we should all have is a goal. What are we doing. What are we looking forward? What are we trying to do and I think that the goal is to achieve the Appropriate Management Level within the next three years. Then to use fertility control to slow the population growth, to where --

>> Julie Weikel: Just let Kathie get started. Are you going to use the language that's up there, Kathie to start with?

>> Kathie: I'm just listening to what he is saying.

>> Ben Masters: Let's just start on a new one here if you can write down exactly what I'm saying we'll just start a new one. To achieve the Appropriate Management Level --

>> Julie Weikel: To maintain the Appropriate Management Level.

>> Ben Masters: To maintain the Appropriate Management Level by using fertility control to slow the population growth to where recruitment equals the adoption demand. Where removal equals the adoption demand.

>> Julie Weikel: Can I ask for what clarification of what fertility control means. All the tools in the toolbox or just immuno contraceptives.

>> Ben Masters: I would like to see a priority in immuno contraceptives but I

understand that permanent is more realistic option but I would prefer it to have as fertility control in this. Unless we want to, I mean, unless we want to try to flesh that out right here.

I guess we can.

>> Julie Weikel: I was just asking you if you were confining it.

>> Ben Masters: This is not confining it. No.

>> Julie Weikel: And number seven is really number six.

ROUGHLY EDITED TRANSCRIPT

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADVISORY BOARD
OCTOBER 17, 2017
8:00 A.M.

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>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Ladies and gentlemen, if you could take a seat.

We need to get started this morning.

Gosh.

It's nice to see you all here.

Whoa!

There's a lot of enthusiasm back there in the back of the room.

Do you want to lead us in some calisthenics.

Thank you for coming.

Another meeting of the national Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board.

I want to start the morning off with Kathie Libby who is going to kind of explain our format going forward and we all have learned to have lots of respect for this little lady, because she runs a tight ship!

So Kathie, if you would kind of tell us how this will work today and we'll get on with it.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you, Julie.]

That, by the way, was Dr. Julie Weikel, who will be running our meeting this morning, and tomorrow if she does it well today.

(Laughter)

>> No pressure.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: So, serious issues all the time here and every once in a while we just like to interject a little smile to remember that we are all human beings attempted to make progress in some very difficult areas and it's hard.

The issues are hard.

The conflicts are hard.

Our perspectives are different.

So before we get officially started, I will go through some of the ways that we suggest that we encounter each other and work with each other over the next couple of days.

Let me say briefly that for this morning at least, the agenda, after I stop talking, Kristin Bail who is the designated federal officer for the wild horse and burros will give us some opening remarks.

We will then have two sets of comments from our local Colorado officials around what they are involved with and they are involved with some very interesting stuff in Colorado for wild horse and burros.

Then we'll take a look back, just to bring us forward at our last session, we had some meeting minutes from those sessions, and then there was some specific recommendations that we want to respond to.

And then Dean Bolstad, the head of the wild horse and burro program in DC will give us an overview of the program at large.

After our break yes, we will have a break.

It will be 15 minutes.

We don't always but we do like to stop and start at the times designated.

So we will work our best at that.

It means if you take a break, please come in quietly, if you don't quite get back at 10:30.

We will have a US Forest Service update and a nice presentation on the influence of feral horses on native wildlife in the Great Basin.

So lots of really good information this morning.

I won't go through all of it.

There's more this afternoon, but that's just a bit of it.

So largely, as most of you or many of you understand, this is a meeting of the national advisory board.

The public is invited, more than welcome.

We love to look out and see your faces.

We don't see the faces of people watching us on the web and yet, the largest majority of people, that's how they are seeing this.

So that's why you see all of this equipment all over the place.

And we do ask and I do need to remind the board members as well, that you do have microphones, and they have a little button on them so that when it's your turn to speak, you want to press button first and you want to speak as directly into the microphone as you can.

It helps everyone.

But because it is, we do have because it is a meeting of the board, we do have a couple of hours this afternoon set aside for public comment.

There are signup sheets in the back, if you wish to provide a public comment, once we know how many people are signed up, we'll divide the time equally amongst you.

Quite frankly, it usually ends up being two to three minutes.

So it's good to know what you say and say it as directly as you can.

There are specific seating arrangements and rules that allow us to have this as a meeting and allow everyone to listen and engage with everyone.

So I want to review those.

They are in the back.

You don't have to learn them by heart but I do need to make sure that you know them in general.

So we do provide seating, and we're pretty filled up today.

That's good.

If you wish to stand, there are designated areas behind the seats that you can stand.

The because it is a board meeting, the speakers and other attendees will not approach the dais at any time other than when you are speaking during the public comment period.

There is actually this lovely bright orange tape right here which means if you are visiting, you are on this side.

Okay?

And the media is asked to check in at the door.

We do have places if anybody at all has camera, there are designated camera places.

They are labeled in bright pink.

If you can sit with your camera, we welcome you to be right up front.

If it's a standing camera, there are two sections along the side that we ask you to use, just so that you are not spoiling everybody's view.

If you have any issues about uses of camera or whatever, Jason, are you in the room?

Okay.

Well, we'll just let you know who he is later, that you can come to.

No visiting attendees are allowed to place microphones, cameras or other equipment in the space beyond me, beyond in orange thing, okay?

Please most importantly, we just really want to show mutual respect for each other and for the speakers and the board members.

That includes if you have that cell phone with you and I know you've got that cell phone with you, please make sure it's either turned down or off.

And please don't use it during the session, don't speak into it during the session.

If you decide that you will be disruptive, you will be asked to leave the room.

Simple as that.

We won't have a dialogue.

You will simply be asked to leave the room.

We really need to let the session work as it is intended.

If you are wishing to address the board, as I mentioned, sign in at the door and at that time, you are addressing the board, not the public at large.

It will be, you know, live shot and you will be heard and seen, and if I say that you have two minutes, then you have two minutes.

You don't get two and a half and everybody else gets two.

Whatever amount of time you have, you will be asked to stop at that amount of time.

If you have handouts that you would like to give to the board from your group or whatever, please give them to Dorothy in the back.

And we will ensure that the board members get your handouts but just don't be we can't have a lot of people walking up to the table and handing things or throwing things to the board members.

Within the meeting room, we ask that you do not bring signs or placards and display them around.

Feel free to do that outside the room if you have something that you would like to draw people's attention to, but not inside the room.

When you are making your public comments, the board will not respond.

We save that time for you to speak, not for them to interject and dialogue with you.

That does not mean that they agree with you or disagree with you.

It doesn't mean anything.

It means we asked them not to respond and they will live up to that.

The chair does reserve the right to comment on any factual inaccuracies that may be shared during the public comment period.

And lastly, and very importantly, the BLM commits to maintaining these rules to the

benefit of all involved and appreciates your cooperation in helping us do that.

Okay?

So let's get started.

I'm going to turn it back to Dr. Julie.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you, Kathie.

We all appreciate how Kathie tries to run the meeting in a way that allows everyone to have a voice in this important topic.

I want to briefly take a minute and introduce the board to you.

First, I want to send a big thank you from the board to Friends of Mustangs for a most gracious tour yesterday, and the best representation of people who love horses as individuals.

(Applause)

It was great.

And we like the food too!

(Laughter)

Dean has more to say on this topic in a few moments, but I just wanted you to know how much the board appreciated that.

So at this point, I would like to start with introductions over here to my right.

Ben Edwards represents wildlife management.

Oh, Masters!

I'm sorry, Ben.

I know a Ben Edwards.

I'm sorry.

It just fell out there.

And you just smiled.

You didn't correct me.

Thank you, Kristin.

Oh, my goodness.

Should I blame on this aging or what?

I don't know.

Anyway, sorry, Ben.

Ben represents wildlife management on the board, but I would hasten to assure you all, everybody who serves on this board is doing the very best they can to comprehend this entire issue, wild horse and burro management in all of its aspects and we certainly don't confine any of the board members to their little slot.

Everybody participates equally and but Ben's our wildlife expert at this point.

To my left is June Sewing, and she has been on the board for the longest of all of us, I do believe that's correct.

>> JUNE SEWING: I'm also the oldest.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: June brings a longtime resume of caring for mustangs and she's here in the wild horse and burro advocacy position.

Steven Yardley from just up north in Utah, west in Utah, is representative of livestock management owner board.

He's a real active voice and is doing a good job of representing his constituency and he just drove in this morning.

Commitment!

To his left, we have our very newest board member, Mr. James French, and he hails from northern Nevada, Humboldt County, in fact.

We are delighted to have you on the board.

And welcome to immersion in these issues which I know you spent a long time up against in Nevada.

As you all may know, Nevada has over half of our wild horse and burro population.

So it's nice to have somebody on the board who actively represents that.

To his left is Ms. Ginger Kathrens, and Ginger Kathrens brings a very well respected voice to the board for humane advocacy.

Has been on the board a short time, but very effective in that short time.

So that's your board.

And I would remind you there are some board members not on the dais today, but they are here with us.

Dr. Sue McDonnell has recently been reappointed to the board.

She will be on the call most of today and tomorrow.

Can you tell me if she's on right now?

Doctor, are you there, Sue?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Yes, hi.

Good morning.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: It's great to have you here.

Sue is going to Dr. McDonnell is going to try to be present for every minute of our meetings.

I said that out loud so you would feel obligated.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: No, it's my plan to be here.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Awesome.

We are so glad to have you.

I just spoke on the phone with Jen Sall who is our public interest representative.

She too will do her very best to be present at as much of these meetings as she possibly can.

She's busy rearranging in her schedule in Wyoming right now to try to free up as much time as possible.

And, of course, your much beloved and much missed chairman of the board, Fred Woehl is here in spirit, I assure you, because he made me give him a onehour presentation last night of everything that went open the tour.

He so wants to be here with you.

And he will be joining us on the phone as often as he possibly can.

So this is a full board in terms of participation, and the other members are just as present in this room as if they were sitting up here today.

At this point, there are more introductions, important people in the room, but I'm going to let Dean Bolstad introduce those to you.

Dean?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Thank you, Julie, I want to make a comment about Fred.

He called me at 5 a.m. this morning, hey, are you up?

Are you ready for the meeting?

Anyway, welcome back board members.

A special welcome to you, Jim, the newest member on the board.

Kristin Bail, the designated official assistant director of renewable resources and management in Washington, D.C.

And Mr. Greg Shoop, Colorado state director.

There is a number of BLMers in the room, and I will introduce and acknowledge them, so the public will know who we are so that you can interact and ask questions and get familiar with things if you are new to these issues.

So Ms. Holle' Waddell, please stand up Holle'.

On off range branch chief located in Norman, Oklahoma, and Mr. Alan Shepherd, on range branch chief in Reno, Nevada.

Some other Washington folks, Dorothea Boothe is your point of contact and organizer of this meeting.

She's been introduced.

Mr. Jason Lutterman and Hannah, in Washington, D.C.

She's our senior specialist.

Mr. Michael Reiland in the back, our budget analyst and our wonderful team that broadcasts this meeting international, Mr. art Ferraro from Phoenix, and Kimberly Menning.

Thank for what you folks do to bring this meeting to everyone who could not be here.

And from the Forest Service, Ms. Hope Woodward.

Where are you, Hope.

And Mr. Jack Isaac who is doing a stint in Washington, D.C., normally in Reno.

So in Colorado, Mr. Christopher Joyner.

Chris, where are you?

You are also one of our public affairs specialists in the back, contact for the media.

And our state leads for Colorado, who will present shortly, Laria Lovec, and Steve Leonard who oversees the wild horse corrals in Canyon City.

Katie Stevens, our Grand Junction field manager, are you here?

Helped to host the tour yesterday and thanks to the wonderful Colorado team that helped to pull that off.

Dana Wilson, are you here?

The acting district manager?

Thank you, Dana.

I didn't introduce Mr. Jim Dollerschell, I left him last.

(Applause)

And also I believe there are some members of our wonderful Friends of Mustangs that were going to come to the meeting today.

Are you here?

Can you please stand up?

(Applause)

I didn't even have to ask for that.

Thank you.

Everyone knows of your dedication to this program, and probably Laria might address that or Greg, but from my perspective, and 42 years with BLM, I have never seen such dedication and cooperation and working with the BLM that I observed yesterday.

The Friends of Mustang have 30 years of relationship with BLM.

These kind of good relationships don't develop overnight and they don't develop unless we have BLM managers like Jim that foster and grow this kind of thing.

These folks annually dedicate 2 to 4,000 hours per year to help out with PZP, taking care of the horses and the land that they rely on.

Fantastic!

Wow!

Thank you guys so much for what you do.

So I apologize if I missed introducing anyone.

So, again, welcome to everyone across the world to this meeting, and back to you, Julie.

Thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you, Dean.

We're really pleased that you brought all of this power to listen to us.

(Laughter)

Hmm... hint, hint.

At this point, Kristin Bail would like to address us and we are really glad you came back to see us, Kristin.

>> KRISTIN BAIL: Thank you so much.

And I want to reiterate, because it really bears repeating, we had an excellent field tour yesterday, a Little Book Cliffs, just a dedicated group of folks.

It bears repeating, 2,000 to 4,000 hours of volunteer, and that's not easy work.

You know, it's in hard conditions.

You know, a lot of patience, a lot of grit.

So these folks earn every bit of the appreciation that we have shown them this morning and then some.

It was very impressive, the successes, as well as the logistical challenges and the realities that were discussed yesterday.

Very, very informative and I so appreciate hearing directly from the folks who are there in the trenches helping out.

So many folks are here and work with us all over the country on ways to maintain and reach appropriate management levels.

These public/private partnerships are crucial and will be even more crucial as we go into the future and talk about future of the program.

BLM has an important new tool that was provided by us by Congress to us, that's called the BLM Foundation: I wanted to spend just a little minute on that.

Again, partnerships are key and anything that helps us form, foster and grow those partnerships is very important.

The BLM Foundation is in its infancy but Congress actually provided the BLM authority to have a foundation that will help us do all of our multiple use activities, but this program, I see, has a very strong possible future with the foundation and I'm really looking forward to in the years to come how the board of that foundation will help us work with you to increase our capacity for partnership efforts, you know, such as what we saw yesterday.

What can we do to grow and, you know, get that all over all over our country and each AML having the level of excuse me, each herd management area having the level of care and commitment that we saw.

And this year, Congress also gave us another charge in the fiscal year 2017 appropriations.

It asked the BLM to prepare and submit to Congress a plan and I'm going to quote to achieve longterm sustainable populations on the range in a humane manner and that plan will be informed by our discussions today and tomorrow and I'm very much looking forward to the board's discussions and contributions on this very important matter.

Since the board last met, there have been some important changes.

We just reflected on we have a new board member and my personal welcome to Jim.

We have folks that are returning to us, as board members and I appreciate everyone's flexibility and patience with the process.

We have a new administration and a new secretary, and everyone has been very interested in and engaged with this program.

This is definitely one that is receiving a lot of time, in terms of conversations, asking questions, and really diving deep into, you know, what we have done, what we are doing and what might be possible into the future.

We also have a President's budget request for fiscal year 2018 that asks Congress some very crucial and difficult questions about the program.

You know, what tools that are provided for in the 1971 Act does Congress want us to use?

How can we achieve and maintain AML?

How can we reduce program costs and how can we have a sustainable longterm future and have healthy horses on healthy rangelands for the long term?

Those are very important questions and folks have reflected on that, that we will continue to be wrestling with them.

So I'm really looking forward to the board's conversations today and tomorrow, about the program, the challenges and creating that sustainable future, the opportunities.

What more can we do with public/private partnerships?

And, again, having that thoughtful conversation about the challenges.

Everyone here has a very strong passionate and important perspective, and having the advisory boards is a very important way for us to hear about that and to share in the conversation.

And so I thank everyone here who is choosing to participate in person and also everyone who is online and participating that way, because the future of the program is going to take all of our continued involvement, commitment, personal involvement and you all are very much demonstrating that by being present today.

So thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you, Kristin.

I greatly appreciate we greatly appreciate your attending this.

This is the highest ranking BLM official in the room, I would share with you.

And I know Kristin is listening carefully and trying to help us navigate the process that will lead to effective change and we appreciate that, and we appreciate the consistency of having you back again.

You know, if you had been replaced, we wouldn't know if that was better or worse until we met that person, but I personally think we are lucky to have you.

Thank you very much.

Our next speaker is Greg Shoop who is the acting state director here in Colorado, and wow!

What a great piece of geography you have just across the road.

Thanks.

Welcome.

>> GREG SHOOP: Did I do it right, Kathy?

If I'm green, I'm good?

So hello, guys.

I apologize, I have to wear these.

So apparently it's customary that the state director of the state hosting the board do a little presentation, a little introduction to their state.

I'm going to I don't have pictures.

I'm sorry, but Laria Lovec will be up later to talk about more specific thing with respect to the wild horse and burro program in Colorado and she's got pictures!

So I want to welcome you guys.

I have some history with this program and this board and I want to start off by telling you folks that I truly appreciate the challenges and I say the magnitude of the challenges that are before you guys and I sincerely appreciate your dedication and your service, truly.

I mean that quite personally.

Thank you very much.

Now, about BLM Colorado.

So I travel all over the state as part of my job and I have to say it's a special pleasure to be in a state with such diverse landscapes and issues as Colorado, and to work with staffs and managers who are so qualified, professional and dedicated to our mission.

Our diversity of landscapes and uses is a reflection of the resources across BLM lands nationally, however, let me say quite shamelessly, they are better here.

And thank you for the acknowledgment, Julie.

It is true.

Phenomenal geography.

We manage over 8 million surface acres of public land and 27 million subsurface acres of federal mineral estate.

The lands we manage for the red rock canyons to wide open sagebrush country and we manage a few 14,000foot peaks.

These lands and the activities on them are important contributors to the economy in Colorado.

We contribute more than \$4 billion and 23,000 jobs to the Colorado economy in 2016.

Energy development is a large economic driver in Colorado to which the BLM contributes significantly.

Recreation too is a growing economic driver here.

We have phenomenal recreation resources and a growing population that lives here for the great outdoors.

The BLM in Colorado is proving to be a great investment for recreation dollars, contributing about \$200 in economic output for every \$1 of recreation program budgeted for BLM Colorado.

And Kristin, I just want to make note that I put that remark in there specifically for you.

Okay.

So the BLM has responsibility for protecting and managing America's wild horse and burros on the public lands when the act was passed.

In Colorado we have three herd management areas and coincidentally, I drove through one had the MA, one is near Craig and Spring Creek southwest of Montrose.

I remember.

We also managed the Little Book Cliffs wild horse range northeast of Grand Junction which is exclusively set aside for horses and which the board toured yesterday.

The BLM has the most challenging mandate of any federal land management agency, I think that's no secret to anyone.

We manage lands nor everything from energy development and recreation to wilderness, grazing and wildlife habitat and all sorts of programs and resources in between.

The decisions we make about how to manage these lands affect a lot of people.

We simply can't manage these lands without working closely with our diverse stakeholders, partners and advisory boards and councils.

We work to ensure a thriving natural ecological balance between wild horses and the many uses outlined in the multi use mandate to achieve this we work with many partners and friends groups on a variety of programs and projects such as trail clearing, spring development and maintenance, tracking horse numbers, locations and range conditions, training horses and hosting adoptions.

In 1986, the BLM and the Colorado department of corrections formed a partnership creating the wild horse inmate program in Canyon City where select mustang, are trained by inmates through an accredited college curriculum.

Since the inception of the program, more than 3,000 inmates have gentled or trained more than 5,000 animals gathered from western rangelands.

Our partnerships with groups such as the San wash advocacy team and great escape mustang sanctuary has greatly increased the ability of what we can do on the wild horses.

Given the small geography, fertility control is showing promise to manage the reproduction levels within many of our HMAs.

We are working with partners, the Little Book Cliffs and others.

We rely on the help of committed and engaged members of public lands such as a number of folks who are in the room today, who believe in our mission, love the public lands and are willing to invest time and energy to help us complete this important work.

I want to thank you guys for improving wild horse management on your public lands.

I want to thank you all for being here.

I want to encourage you to get out and enjoy your public lands while you are in the area, especially those of you from out of state on behalf of the civic leaders and businesses in the greater Grand Junction area, please spread your money around.

Stay a few extra days.

We have tremendous recreation resources you can enjoy.

BLM manages several national conservation areas just outside of town, with trails to hike and bike and great scenery to enjoy.

There are other nearby hiking and biking trails on public lands too, and I'm sure there are great businesses in town from which you can rent bikes, if you so desire.

I should also mention the Colorado national monument managed by our sister agency, the National Park Service.

I hope you all have a productive meeting, and welcome to Colorado.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you, Mr. Shoop.

Before you leave, does the board have any questions of Mr. Shoop at this point?

Hmm.

Okay.

No passing notes, class!

Okay?

(Laughter).

>> GREG SHOOP: So I'm dismissed?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: You are dismissed.

We are all anxious to hear from the Colorado wild horse and burro program, and to do that, we have Laria, please correct me, am I saying your first name correctly, Laria?

Laria Lovec who is the wild horse and burro specialist and she will now share some pictures with us.

Is this your picture?

>> LARIA LOVEC: I didn't take it.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Okay.

Okay.

We like it.

Thank you.

Laria, carry on.

>> Please turn your mic on.

You have to press the button and it has to go green.

>> LARIA LOVEC: Good morning on.

Behalf of the wild horse and burro program Colorado program, I would like to welcome

you to colorful Colorado.

As I was introduced, I'm Laria Lovec, I'm the state range and wild horse and burro lead.

There are three of us, who are overseeing the wild horse and burro program in the state, myself, Steve Leonard is in charge of off range and Ben Smith is in charge of on range.

Ben is not able to join us today, because he's been helping the gather in Wyoming.

We have three herd management areas and one wild horse range.

All of our management areas are in the western quarter of the state and I will give you some background on all of them.

Our first one starting in the northwest corner is the Sandwash Basin.

It's our second largest.

It's in the little snake field office.

We are just shy of 155,000 acres.

We have almost twice the high end AML for horse population out there, and it the horses share the landscape with four sheep permits.

The sheep graze primarily in the winter, although they do trail back and forth in the spring, and in the fall.

It is our only HMA with priority and general sagegrouse habitat within it.

We have a partnership in place, the Sandwash Advocate Team.

If you guys could stand so the board can see who you are.

(Applause)

So SWAT is actively darting mares, and it's my understanding that in 2017, over 100 mares were darted.

We're still a work in progress, but we're getting there.

This year, we completed a bait gather, a bait, trap, gather and we removed 42 horses.

Another partnership with Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary, they will stand later.

Anyway

(Applause)

they helped us place those horses to adoption roughly 100% with two adoption events.

We had one out at their facility and then one in Fruita and we have been able to successfully adopt those horses with that partnership.

So moving south, we've got the Piceance East Douglas and it's the most challenging HMA at 190,000 acres.

It's home to 740 horses.

It's very rugged, which is over three times the high end AML.

Four grazing allotments intersect parts of the HMA, and those are predominantly cattle allotments.

And their season of use is starting in May and going through October, and some later grazing.

It's in general sagegrouse habitat.

We do not have an established partnership at the moment.

We do have a group who is forming with the intention of applying PZP to the mares this that HMA, due to its rugged terrain, it will be very very challenging for them to do that, but we're excited how they will how they will accomplish and what kind of other skills they will bring to it, whether it's fencing, project maintenance and we're really excited to get that group going.

Our third is the Little Book Cliffs horse range which is what we toured yesterday, and thank you to Jim and everybody who made that a very successful tour.

It's at 36,000 acres, and due to the work with friends of the Mustangs, we are able to keep that close to high end AML.

Right now, we are over, as you heard yesterday, we have between 170 and 175 animals out there.

1982 or 1980 was when the horse range was established.

There's no domestic livestock that overlap.

They were removed in the late '70s.

And in 1982, Friends of the Mustangs were created.

They have been active in that HMA ever since they were created, and very involved as what we saw yesterday.

Grand Junction is having some concerns with drought this year, and we'll take a look at the seasonal drought outlook in a minute or two, but they have sent out letters to permittees requesting the permittees be prepared, either with reductions or changing their season of use.

So it is something that we need to be aware of on horse range as well.

We have one more HMA to look at, and that is Spring Creek Basin.

It's our smallest HMA.

It's just under 22,000 acres, and the one grazing allotment that the one grazing allotment that over that was in the HMA has been the livestock have been removed.

I'm not sure if it is a closed allotment or if it's currently vacant.

That all depends on how it's outlined in the land use management plan.

We do not have any sagegrouse habitat in Spring Creek Basin either and TJ Holmes has been diligently darting for us to keep the population at 65, which is our high end AML.

Those are our four HMAs or horse habitats.

Here's the drought outlook, and this is good until the end of December.

As you can see, we have drought in the state and that will impact Little Book Cliffs wild horse range and Piceance East Douglas.

It's something that we are watching.

We are watching horse conditions.

We are watching conditions on the ground, and we'll take we'll request action if we need to at the appropriate time.

Our partners are helping with that.

They are our eyes and ears on ground and we have quite a few partnerships within the state.

We have talked about Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary, they are the off range portion of Sandwash Advocate Team.

The Sandwash Advocate Team, and TJ Holmes are all focused on on range issues and activities and Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary and burro management are all

partnerships for off range activities.

GEMS has been very instrumental.

It was first store front with the Mustang Heritage Foundation.

They have been very helpful in adopting out horses request with their help, we have gone from 150 animals adopted in 2015, to over 400 in 2017.

(Applause)

GEMS has helped with the spirits of the west 4H club.

And Steve Leonard started the 4H project in Idaho in 2009 and continued it on in Colorado.

With his help and Jim's help, they created spirits of the west 4H Club in boulder County.

We adopted four weanlings.

He's worked with Mustang Heritage Foundation and Great Escape Mustang Sanctuary to add a full adoption component to their store front.

We have not only offered TIPtrained horses but also untrained horses during their adoption events.

And we expanded that.

That has allowed members of the public who are not able to come in to Colorado Correctional Facilities an opportunity to adopt untrained horses.

And it's been fairly successful.

We have had a partnership as Greg mentioned with Colorado Correctionals since 1986, with the wild horse inmate program, and that facility down in Canyon City, is the facility that Steve oversees.

It was started in '86.

We have a 3,000 head capacity.

The inmates feed and care for and train horses and burros.

The training program for burros is halter trained.

For horses we offer halter, pack and saddle trained animals.

We hold monthly adoptions and we have had partnerships with other agencies such as U.S. Border Patrol, USDA Forest Service, a variety of local law enforcement agencies and then public has also come in to adopt.

This month, we adopted three animals, which is about average for us.

Some months are bigger.

And not all of them so everything we adopted this month was untrained.

On average, we are adopting out between 80 and 100 trained animals every year.

Cumulatively, we adopted out over 5,000 animals since 1986, when the program was started.

So, again, our numbers this year were over 400, and we have done that through a variety of partnerships outside of the normal players.

We have also had some partnerships with other groups that have wanted to buy a large number like the Serengeti Foundation, they bought 100 head, sales authority animals and that was as a result of a partnership and relationship with TJ Holmes and with Steve.

Unfortunately, we are not without our challenges.

Weather concerns are drought, large winters and dry summers.

Those are challenges that everyone sees.

We are also not competitive for gathers because we don't have a lot of sagegrouse habitat and we are not as competitive as stated like Idaho and Nevada.

That is a challenge for us.

We are working to increase our adoptions and the prison is attempting to meet the demand for trained animals.

We are not able to meet the public demand currently.

If we did, we would be very successful with trained with adopting trained animals.

And as I mentioned earlier, fertility control, like in PiceanceEast Douglas is a big challenge for us and we are working on that by creating partnerships and getting help.

And as our populations increase, we are also met with a challenge of horses trespassing on to private lands.

We completed a gather outside of PiceanceEast Douglas in September to remove horses that were trespassing on private ground at the landowner's request and we

have two other requests within the state to do the same.

So that is a challenge for us.

We are actively trying to meet those challenges by being innovative.

The 4H project in Colorado, Steve has started that here and we are outreaching to other counties within the state to get the project going there.

Steve and I also traveled up to Montana to assist MontanaDakotas in starting the project.

We had interest in three counties.

So we're actively working with them to try to get horses up to Montana, to start and it's my understanding that MontanaDakotas also has interest in North Dakota and South Dakota as well.

Once we get that started, I'm sure Jerry will be able to expand that throughout the TriState area.

We have worked with Forest Service, with the Middle Fork ranger district with the salmon chalice to provide a horse trained for the recreation crew and as a result of that horse's work, we have requests from the weed crew to have some horses trained to go into the back country and work with weed control there.

We have as I mentioned earlier, we have partnered with GEMS to foster horses to provide the public with an expanded opportunity to adopt outside of the prison, and that has been very successful.

We have again, we have adopted out over 400 horses this year, which is a huge increase from what we had two years ago, and that has been with Steven Leonard's leadership we have been able to do that.

So we're we're moving forward and trying to be as innovative and get as many horses into good homes as we can, and increase our footprint.

So with that, do we have any questions from the board?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Jim.

>> JAMES FRENCH: I had one question with your Douglas HMA.

You said you are mentioned you are three times over HML, I wonder how long you think that situation has has existed and whether you have documented any longterm sagegrouse impacts to especially to like habitat.

>> LARIA LOVEC: I'm not sure I'm sure we have not been at AML for quite sometime.

As far as sagegrouse impacts, that's a question that the local field office would be

better suited to answer.

I don't know.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Laria, would you mind if we asked Kali when the last gather was done at Douglas.

Did we get to high AML at that time?

>> LARIA LOVEC: Go ahead.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Kali Hendrickson.

Okay, Kali is shaking her head and I don't know if that means she doesn't know or she doesn't want to answer, but that's fine.

Sorry, Kali, to put you on the spot.

>> LARIA LOVEC: I will reach out to White River and get that information back to you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you very much.

Three times AML kind of speaks to range concerns, I think, for lots of us.

>> LARIA LOVEC: And having looked at it, we do have some range concerns out there.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Good.

Thank you.

Not good that we have range concerns but good that you are aware of them.

Any more questions for our yes, sorry, Steven.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: I was wondering along those terms what is your plan to get the that HMA down to appropriate range level?

>> LARIA LOVEC: For PiceanceEast Douglas, we would like to gather.

It's one of our top three priorities for 2018 to gather in that HMA.

As I saw in September, when we were gathering in the general area, it's going to be very difficult to do that, because it is so steep and a lot of tree cover is in that HMA.

So it's going to be a challenge, but that is our plan.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: What is the range trend like with that excessive AML or

threetimes the AML there?

>> LARIA LOVEC: I have not seen the trend data and I'm not sure we are meeting range standards, based on what I have seen, we are not meeting standards for range land health, and it is in a downward trend, just based on what I saw.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Laria, I noticed that we had four grazing allotments.

Have those people been put on restrictions?

>> LARIA LOVEC: They have not been put on restrictions.

They voluntarily reduced their numbers.

For PiceanceEast Douglas, it's a little different than the Sandwash Basin.

Those four allotments are contained entirely within that HMA.

PiceanceEast Douglas are bits are pieces.

So it is a little different.

They have more flexibility of moving elsewhere and to different pastures.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Right.

I know that those things occur when we when we get range degradation, we lean on those permittees to try to give us some breathing room so I just wondered if we were there yet.

More questions for the Colorado wild horse and burro program?

Ginger has a question.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: It's great to a meeting in Colorado, my home state.

I'm glad you are here.

I know we think very highly of our BLM in Colorado.

Can you tell me what the livestock population is in PiceanceEast Douglas.

How many head of cattle are there?

I know it's difficult because they are

>> LARIA LOVEC: Right.

They are not contained within that HMA.

I will get back to you with those numbers.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Okay.

Thank you.

>> LARIA LOVEC: I don't know them offhand.

Do you want just allotment level or do you want within the HMA itself?

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Well, if you could do an estimate of within the HMA and then and then the total numbers would be interesting.

Having been in that area, I think that that is an area that can be like BLM has done there, divided it into three sections, I believe, and have I think have teams probably, volunteer teams would need to be set up in each of those three areas.

But this is a beautiful HMA and I would invite the public to maybe take a visit there.

I have only been there a couple of times.

It's really lovely as all of our herds are in Colorado.

Thanks.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you.

We really appreciate hearing about real stuff right out the front door, so to speak.

Our next we're ready to move on.

If you have had a chance to look at the minutes, that's tab, I believe, tab 4 in our booklets.

Do we have a discussion about any aspects of the minutes?

This will be our Elko meeting last September.

Any questions from the board with respect to the minutes?

Do I hear a motion that we accept the minutes as presented?

>> GINGER KATHRENS: You will so move.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Ginger Kathrens has moved.

And I take a not from Ben Masters, not Ben Edwards, the most famous man in the public reach, I can't believe I messed up his name.

We have a motion and a second, with respect to accepting the minutes as presented.

Any more discussion?

All those in favor of approving the minutes as presented, please say aye.

[Chorus of ayes]

>> JAMES FRENCH: I will abstain.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: We have an abstention from our new board member.

Obviously he's not even had a chance to look at these minutes, I'm pretty sure.

Thank you for that.

All of those in favor, please say aye.

[chorus of ayes]

Sue, are you still on the phone?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Yes, Julie, and I will have to obtain as well.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Sue is obtaining from the minutes also, I assume she doesn't have the board booklet.

All right.

So all of those present and in favor of accepting the minutes as presented, please say aye.

[chorus of ayes]

So we have 5 votes accepting the minutes as presented.

That's a quorum, and they are approved.

Thank you.

At this time, Dean, are you ready?

Because we want to hear from you.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So Kristin is going to address the recommendations from the last meeting.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Excuse me, I did not know that.

So at every board meeting, the board puts forth some suggestions to BLM, and that's all they are.

That's all we can do is tell them what we think collectively and we appreciate them reaching out to get that kind of public input into their decision making.

So we did that back in Elko, and at this time, we usually have a report from BLM which basically tells us what they have done with respect to our recommendations.

And sometimes they are fully implemented and sometimes they are tabled because they are not possible, and everything in between.

So at this point, Kristin Bail is going to address the topic of last year's recommendations.

>> KRISTIN BAIL: Thank you, Julie, and you will also see some realtime coordination.

So Dean, if there's something I don't cover, please add to what I say.

So Julie is right.

This is the time that in general we provide feedback to the board as to the recommendations from the previous board meeting, and how those were addressed and if they have not been addressed, either at all or only partially, we talk about why that is, and we have a conversation.

And this year, as I reflected earlier, we have some changes and we also have a very important task ahead in terms of delivering a report to Congress next month about the future for a sustainable program.

And in looking at the recommendations from last year's meeting, they really touched to what it is we are talking about today and tomorrow, and they really speak to what is going to go into that report to Congress.

So we we thought a lot about it, real hard, and what we wanted to do is say, we're going to pause on saying we have decided to do, X, Y, Z, on these recommendations because we are having the conversation about the same issues today and tomorrow.

And we wanted to use those conversations today and tomorrow to inform what we submit forward to Congress.

And so this is this is different and it is new but it also means we haven't predecided anything.

We are not closing the door in terms of deciding something that what the board is going to talk about.

They say this is what we are going to do and then turn around and talk about it all over again.

So we aren't going to be presenting on the recommendations from the last board meeting, because we will be talking about them very vigorously and in full today and tomorrow.

So that is different.

It was a decision made by our leadership with a lot of concern and care, and truly wanting this to be a meaningful process for the board and being able to actually take realtime recommendations and use them to inform what we send forward to Congress.

So with that, if I haven't covered what I need to, Dean, please make sure that you put that into the room.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: No, I don't have a lot to add, Kristin.

Thank you.

Tomorrow at 10:30, I believe, it is, state director Mary Jo Rugwell will present the key elements of a strategy that BLM thinks are important and we're going to ask the board to provide input on how we should consider those key elements.

We have obviously been thinking about this and working on this report to Congress, but we are not going to provide our thoughts on what we think the path forward is.

We have definitely been thinking about it, but we will tell you what the key elements are and ask for the board's feedback.

So tomorrow's discussion, as Kristin said, will be very important and some of those same discussions relate to the recommendations you made in Elko.

So we're taking a pause for the time being to hear further thoughts from the board.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I guess you gathered, this is part of an ongoing discussion and we will be addressing these issues.

I would urge us as board members to review the minutes thoroughly about the recommendations as they came forward last year, to inform our discussions moving forward here, because as we have now heard this is part of a continuum to try to develop some cohesion and implementable Recommendations.

So thanks for that explanation.

And Dean, do you want to head into the rest of your comments?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Yes.

It's traditional that we provide an yes, please, thanks.]

That would be handy.

It's traditional that we provide the board an update on the wild horse and burro program.

I will do that in conjunction with Holle' Hooks, Alan Shepherd and Michael Reiland will join us later in my presentation, but first, we have a lot of new folks to this issue that keep coming online repeatedly.

I'm sure there are a lot of folks out and about watching our international broadcast.

So I thought it would be important to talk about what BLM's mission is, talk about some specifics of the Wild Horse and Burro Act and I need to figure out how to work this thing.

Which way do I need to aim them to make it work?

Do you have access to this manually do it over there?

So next slide, please.

I talked about BLM's mandate and what the laws direct us and how we manage public lands.

I want to talk about the Wild Horse and Burro Act and the status of the program and some of the numbers, how they have changed since our last meeting, and I will talk about land use planning, as it relates to wild horses and other things that BLM manages for I want to talk about the existing management schools, management challenges and some of the thoughts about moving forward from where we are at today.

Next slide, please.

So BLM's mission is to manage the public lands to sustain the health, diversity and productivity very, very important sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the multiple use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The BLM manages 245 million acres of land and 700 million acres of mineral estate, both of which are integral to the lives and the livelihoods of communities and families across the nation.

The BLM was established in 1946, but its roots go back to the years after America's independence when our young nation began acquiring additional lands.

At first, these lands were used to encourage homesteading and westward migration.

The general land office next slide, please.

The general land office I got kind of lost here.

The general land office was created in 1812 to support this national goal.

The values and attitudes regarding public lands shifted and Congress merged the government land office and another agency, the United States grazing service to create the BLM in 1946.

Today, the BLM is governed through the series of laws passed by Congress.

None of these laws are more important than the second to the last on this list, than the 1976 federal land management policy act.

It established that BLM is to manage the public lands for multiple use and sustained yield.

Sustained yield.

Maintaining the productivity and health of the land over time.

Federal land management policy act or FLPMA as we call it, defines the term multiple use as the management of public lands and their resource values, one of which is wild horses, so that they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people.

FLPMA lists six principle or major uses of public lands and those six uses are:
Domestic livestock grazing, fish and wildlife development and utilization, mineral exploration, and utilization, rights of way, outdoor recreation, and timber production.

Those are the uses that FLPMA lists and identifies, and it also refers to resource values.

Can we go back one slide, please.

It's worthy to note that if any one of these uses, these six that I listed, are entirely eliminated or proposed to be eliminated by BLM from tracts of land that are 100,000 acres or more, we have to have congressional approval to do that.

So that's our multiple use mission and our mandate.

Let's move on to the Wild Horse and Burro Act.

Next slide, please.

That's where we are at.

You got it right.

So BLM and the Forest Service are to manage for horses and burros where they were found in 1971.

Consider management.

We are not required to manage it in all places but we are to consider managing them where they were found in 1971.

We are to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance in combination and support of multiple use.

Next slide, please.

Our clicker is not working very well.

So while they are working on that, the Act also allows for the designation of specific wild horse and burro ranges on which wild horse and burros would be given principal status over other uses.

Currently there are three wild horse ranges and one wild burro range in Nevada.

We toured one of them in the Little Book Cliffs yesterday.

There's another in Montana and the other two are in Nevada.

Hang in there, guys, I'm having a hard time keeping track of my notes and slides.

That's an entirely different presentation than mine!

(Laughter)

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Technology.

I want to reiterate, in FLPMA, where six major uses of public lands are delineated, wild horses and burros are in there.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So they are not one of the principal uses listed in the federal land management policy act.

They are not one of them.

But they are among the resource values that BLM is to consider as we manage for those principal uses.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you for that clarification.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: I have a slide with all the resource values, or a number of them, at least.

So we should be on slide 6, and there you are.

Thank you very much for getting back to the presentation here.

So continuing with the mandate of the Wild Horse and Burro Act, in 1976 the act has been amended three times.

The first time was in 1976, when we got authorization for the use of helicopters for the capture and management of wild horses and burros along with the use of moped motor vehicles for their transportation.

That was an amendment in 1976.

Another series of amendments were in 1978, through the public rangelands improvements act.

It provided that we are to immediately remove excess animals and determine if appropriate management levels, target numbers that we manage for on the land are to be achieved by removal or destruction of excess animals or other means such as sterilization or natural controls.

Also in 1976, it there was a stipulation added to the act that BLM is to destroy those animals for which no adoption demand exists.

And again, in 2005, the act was amended and it provided for sale without limitation of those animals that are offered unsuccessfully for adoption three times, or animals that are older than 10 years.

BLM has maintained a policy to not sell without limitation or humanely destroy healthy animals and Congress has also prohibited, up until this time, the use of funds to sell without limitation or destroy healthy animals and those prohibitions have been in place from 1988 to 2004, and then again from 2010 to present.

So this slide next slide, please.

This slide is pretty much the status of the program.

Most of you know we manage for horses and burros in ten western states.

BLM has designated 177 herd management areas for the management of horses and burros.

The Forest Service, I can't remember but I think they have 19 territories.

Hope will probably update that a little bit later this morning.

BLM has designated 27 million acres for wild horse and burro management.]

That's not the areas that existed in 1971, but those are the areas we have determined to be compatible with other uses and the land capability to manage for horses and burros.

Our target numbers, the appropriate management level are about 27,000 animals.

As of March 2017, we have 73,000 animals on the range.

And probably at least 13,000 foals have been born since that time.

Along with those on the range, BLM maintains about 44,000 in holding corrals and contracted land pastures.

The maintenance of those animals comes at great cost.

Last year about 47 over \$47 million.

And it's worthy to note that 90% of these animals are five years and older.

Only 10% of those 44,000 are younger than five, the common age that folks find desirable for adoption.

So we have a lot of animals that are not of high demand to the public.

In 2017, we removed or we adopted or sold to good homes about 42,000.

Adoptions have generally declined since 2002 from about 8,000 to an alltime low in 2014 of 2200, but the good news is there's been an uptick over the last couple of years, primarily due because we are providing more trained animals.

They are much more adoptable than untrained animals.

In 20 17, we removed 42,000 or 4200, 4,200 animals from public lands through removals both bait trapping and water trapping.

Alan will talk a little bit more about that later.

So those 4200 removed are far less than those 13,000 approximately, guesstimating foals that were born.

So we have continued unchecked growth on public lands.

So here's a little schematic, next slide, please, that shows the purple areas where the wild horse herds are that BLM manages for in the designated herd management areas.

The green are where there are both horses and burros.

The yellow are where the burros are located primarily in Arizona, Southern Nevada, California, a few in Utah, and a few in Oregon as well.

Next slide, please.

So this is something that I haven't presented on before, but for 2016, we used our GIS technology to overlay grazing allotments over the herd management area boundaries that BLM manages horses and burros in.

And then we correlated with our grazing database to estimate how many livestock AUMs were licensed within herd management areas and then compared that using the March 2017 population estimate to tabulate and calculate how many AUMs horses and burros have used versus livestock licensed use.

So in 2016, the estimated number of animal unit months consumed by wild horse and burros was about 800,000.

Filled livestock AUMs was about 600,000.

200,000 more AUMs used by horses and burros in those areas estimated in 2016.

Next slide, please.

So let's talk about land use planning.

In our land use plans, there's one decision to be made for horses and burros and that decision is to be whether we manage for them or not, and that means the designation of herd management areas.

So in doing so, during our land use planning process, we are to consider horses and burros in a comparable manner to other resource values, some of which are listed here.

And when we say comparable manner, we mean through the same process, not comparable as in equal acres of wilderness study area to equal acres of horse management area.

Just that we use the same process to evaluate these values, and to consider how we are going to manage for them.

Next slide, please.

So sometimes in land use plans, but also sometimes in activity plans, implementing the goals and the objectives of our Resource Management Plans, our umbrella land use plans, we establish appropriate management levels.

So that normally is a population range that establishes a low number of animals to be

managed for with an upper range.

I think the upper range for Little Book Cliffs was 100 animals.

And so we allocate to that many animals in combination with the other uses of public lands.

So it's established through a NEPA process, and is aimed at and you are going to keep hearing this thriving natural ecological balance.

It's aimed at taking good care of the land, providing for its health and productivity and at the same time considering for other multiple uses.

Next slide, please.

So in considering how much forage can be allocated to horses in combination to grazing and other uses, we rely on rangeland monitoring data that involves grazing utilization, trend, ecological condition data, the actual use of how many animals have grazed over time, climate and weather and BLM is now implementing a new monitoring process called assessment inventory and monitoring, AIM, where we are incorporating satellite imagery and randomly selected plots across all the western landscape.

This will add a new dynamic and tool to determine if we are meeting land health standards.

Land health, land health, sustainable use, thriving natural ecological balance.

It's a recurring it's really what things are all about.

If we don't take care of the land, really nothing else matters.

Next slide, please.

Thank you.

So in managing horses and burros, we really only have two tools to manage their numbers on the range, removals and then we have fertility control vaccines that are about one year effective, unless they are reapplied.

If they had multiple years reapplication, then we begin to have a longer effectiveness, rather than just one year.

Other than those animals that we can dart, like the team does in Little Book Cliffs and in other areas here in Colorado, we have to gather the animals have our hands on them, where they are not readily approachable.

So if we were to stabilize, 73,000 on the range, stabilize their growth, we would need to contracept 30,000 animals located over 27 million acres.

Pretty tall order.

Adoptions and sales, I said have declined from about 8,000 in 2002, down to the low of 2200 in 2014.

Good news is an uptick to about 4200 in 2017.

Next slide, please.

The high cost of maintaining unadoptable animals is a huge issue for the bureau.

The upper line on the graph indicates BLM's enacted budget and the lower line indicates how many million of dollars we spend to maintain unadopted animals.

So in 2017, repeating here, 47 million over the course of the last ten years, it's been over 60% of our budget on annual basis.]

That doesn't leave a lot of money to do other things and the things we really need to be aiming at which is management on the range.

Next slide, please.

So this slide, the green line depicts removals over time since 2001, and you can see that it's been a lot of removals to not so many, and the lower line, which equates to the access on the right is the population on the range.

In recent years, when we have only been removing 2500, 3500, 4500, approximately last year, the population on the range just skyrockets and is increasing, increasing, increasing.

Next slide, please.

So the management challenges, it doesn't matter if there's too many horses and burros or livestock, when there's too many grazing mouths on the land, it has an effect on the range and I assure you that in some places, the over populations of horses are having a great effect on the land and especially so in Nevada.

These pictures are in the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, where there's no livestock, showing some of the effects of horses and burros.

I think one of our science presentations is going to talk about reshoots on the Sheldon this afternoon.

Next slide, please.

In some areas of Nevada, the populations have outgrown the supply of water and the horses have become imperilled.

This is not across all ten western states, but there are certainly areas where horses don't have enough resources.

And we have had imperilled horses that we've had to go in and do emergency gathers to rescue.

There's been other areas and the most wellknown example is in Las Vegas area, where the animals totally outgrew the capability of the vegetative resource to support them.

So you know, our eyes all go to these very skinny conditioned animals, but really, the animals are important, but what is important is the landscape behind them and the range land resource.

Over grazing by any animal, over time, will change the perennial rangeland communities, in the Great Basin, where the horses and burros live and where most of the public lands in the west are.

It will convert those perennial bunch grass ranges to annual grass lands and to the subception of noxious weeds.

Once we lose the perennial plant communities, they can't be reclaimed usually by receding and they will probably never come back naturally.

So what we have lost is the very habitat that horses and burros and others depend on.

We lost a stable water shed, the rain and the snow melt carries off the soil and compromises the fish habitat.

Those perennial plants in a more productive and healthy state, maintain the soils and allow it to recharge our aquifers.

So it is about managing for horses and burros and it is about other uses of the land and it is about wildlife, but the most important thing, and the only important thing in my mind being a student of rangeland management, is the health of the land.

We have to keep our eyes on it and it is so hard to communicate why that's so important and why it's so critical and it is vital that we manage the uses of the land, including horses and burros in a manner that we can maintain the productivity and the health of the public lands.

Next slide, please.

So there I was talking about one of my slides.

I talked about a thin horse and that the landscape was important.

Next slide, please.

So with the growing populations of horses, burros, they are beginning to leave their designated areas.

They are going out on to private lands and in some cases along highways.

In Arizona, since 2015, there's been 190 vehicle collisions, and I learned last night that not long ago in Nevada, there was a collision where there was a fatality where a car slid with a horse.

It wasn't a BLM horse, but it was one of the Nevada estrays along the highway near Carson City.

So what is the way forward?

Probably most of you know in the president's budget, there's a request to remove the rider for unrestricted sale.

So always it will be BLM's priority to place animals in good homes.

That's what we want to do but absent the ability to do that, perhaps this needs to be consideration of other tools in the box.

There are perhaps other legislative options that could be considered.

We need to continue in the future our research that's aimed at developing longer acting fertility control tools.

If we had those and if we could apply them, we wouldn't have the need to remove excess animals from the range.

Next slide.

It will be important to maintain existing partnerships.

The Mustang Heritage Foundation is one of them.

They worked with BLM to place almost 2,000 animals.

We have the inmate training programs, the big one in Colorado that provide the trained animals that are more adoptable.

Next slide, please.

We need to seek more partnerships to not only support on range management, but the off range management as well.

We need to engage the private sector to begin to assume some of the financial liability for the animals for which BLM is caring for at great cost.

And once AML is achieved, BLM needs to aggressively buy fertility control so that we don't need to remove so many animals in the future.

So at this point, I'm probably going to defer to Alan and Holle'.

Alan has a few slides and then moving into Allen's three or four slides and Holle's three or four slides.

So Alan, just a few slides here about on range management, some of which I guess I have already mentioned a bit.

>> ALAN SHEPERD: Good morning.

In 2017, we had the ability through appropriations to complete gathers where we removed roughly 4200 horses from several locations in several states, roughly I believe it's 30 HMAs that range in sizes, due to public safety, emergencies, and protecting sensitive wildlife habitat in are northern Nevada.

Those gathers were made up of roughly 3400 that we facilitated with the helicopter contracts, and then about 800 that were utilizing our bait and water trap contracts.

During our various gather operations and our darting programs, we were able to dart 234 horses in roughly nine locations, and during some of our helicopter gathers we were able to do just over 600 fertility control treatments with those.

In fiscal '18 with the current appropriation status within a continuing resolution until early December, we have a target of a removal target this year covered by that date of roughly 1600 animals.

That those we will we will be working on a more thorough year complete year gather schedule, once we know our budget status in December.

We have a pretty good idea of what we are doing.

We just need to find out where our budget sits and what we can allocate towards our gather and removal operations at that point, once Congress has finalized an appropriations for us for '18.

Our research activity is up and running.

We've got a lot of work going on right now looking into various improving or developing new fertility control population control vaccines and methods for us.

We've got 17 that are ongoing right now, through USGS or academia.

We've got two more that are planned to start but they are currently in the planning stages.

They will start potentially later in the year or next fiscal year.

And we have got in the last year, we have also had five projects conclude doing various things for us.

The we have also got partners with other agencies that are doing some work on seven other projects that will be benefiting our program, and a complete list and summary of each of those projects is in your binder.

I think it's in section seven, I believe of the binder and it will give you a better explanation of each of the ongoing projects where their status is and where their next targets and goals are.

The other piece that my branch covers is we help a lot with any litigation that the states may encounter during the year.

Since our last Elko meeting, we had activity in 30 different litigation cases in the western states.

You can see there as well as California and or the Forest Service in California has had two litigation cases that they have been working on.

So these cases, some of them some of them resolved, some of them are new.

So that litigation update is also in your binder where you can a more thorough understanding of what those litigation cases were and the complaint involved.

Do you want to do questions now or after Holle'?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: We can cover those, as long as Alan's comments are refresh in your minds.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Does anybody have any questions?

Go ahead, June.

>> JUNE SEWING: I noticed that the number of horses gathered nearly meets the number of horses adopted.

Is that the current trend?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: That's what we would hope.

So we can balance what's been moving into the statement.]

That would help us financially to stay fairly solvent but it's definitely not going to make us any headway in solving our ontheground management problems, but it definitely is a goal of ours, to balance it as much as we can to be able to the animals that are going into the private sector, into public placement would equal our the gathers that we have to do to remove from the public land.

>> JUNE SEWING: Yes, and I realize that that comes nearly no not close to what the increase in population is, as far as the horses are.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Correct.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: You refer to both the litigation update and the research update, those are in tab 9 for those of you who are searching for that.

And so we do have that information.

It's just under tab 9.

Just wanted to point that out because I think we are all flipping around trying to find that.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Sorry about that.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Jim, did you have a question for Alan?

>> JAMES FRENCH: Sure.

I had one and I'm not sure if it's a question that's appropriate for anybody but a newbie on this board, but I need to ask it anyhow.

On one of the presentations going back a little bit, we were talking about AML and we are talking a little bit about the HMAs and touch, and I'm wondering what the policy, Interior's policy is right now for those horses which have drifted on to or off of HMAs on to lands that have not been analyzed and AML has not been established on and whether or not there's and how we are dealing with the rangeland conflicts that might occur with those distributions.

In Nevada, we are seeing a lot of movement of horses off of traditional HMAs, mainly because of climate change and some vegetative changes and fire cycles and whatnot.

I'm wondering what Interior's policy is on that.

Thank you.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So the provision in the Wild Horse and Burro Act is when we have a request from private landowners to remove them, then we are to do that.

But as June pointed out, we had limited removals and as Alan explained, we have limited those pretty much to the number of animals that go out of our system through adoptions and sales and through attrition, natural mortality of elderly animals.

So if we remove more than that, we would immediately become insolvent, but your question is: What are we doing about animals that are moving outside the HMAs, many on private land.

Among our priorities in allocating the limits resources we have, last year about 4200 removed, our priorities and criteria have been in response to court orders, in response to public safety, those animals on highways, and then those animals that are encroaching on private lands as best we can, the most we can, and we are not able to deal with all of them, Jim, to be straight up about it.

And then also some removals from very important sagebrush habitats like those removed from important sagegrouse habitat in Oregon last year.

We are not able to accommodate all the priorities, like those along highways and encroaching on public land, but it's among the criteria we consider.

>> JAMES FRENCH: So basically it requires either a state or a federal agency to make a formal request based on their observations?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Yeah.

They are the ones that first aware of animals that have moved outside the herd management areas and in the most important areas they alert us to the need and the request to remove and we do the best to accommodate but we are not able to in all cases.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I have a request.

Because you have limitations on what you can gather, you have to prioritize those things that you mentioned over and over again and that word has to sink in.

Where do sagebrush focal areas sit now, today, on the priority list?

Because at one time, two years ago, they were pretty it was pretty high up on the list, and I'm just curious where FSAs sit today.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: So Kristin, do you want to take that or do you want to take the first whack?

>> KRISTIN BAIL: A larger conversation about the sagegrouse, and the manage of the greater sagegrouse, right now we have just entered into a public comment period on the sagegrouse plans and looking at various elements ever those plans, including the sagebrush focal areas.

So right now we feel that it is give than we are in a very active conversation about the future of sagebrush focal areas, is it truly needed to have these specific subsets of priority habitat management areas identified?

We want we wanted to broaden it out, have a conversation with our state partners, as to it may or may not be an FSA that is the priority within the sagebrush habitat for the bird or for wildlife in general.

So given deference to the active conversation and the decisionmaking process that has just started, we are more general in terms of how we are articulate where our priorities are.

And we work closely with the state, if the FSA is continues to be very important, that is something that we continue to consider very, very carefully.

But just because it's an FSA doesn't automatically move it up in the list as part of a very difficult prioritization process that we undergo, again in cooperation with our state partners.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: I don't think I have anything to add, Kristin.

They continue to be important.

Again, recognizing team work with state and local governments to figure out where the most important areas are.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I'm not sure where the appropriate place to put this is, but in the interest of having a public that's as informed as possible and when one brings into the discussion rangeland health, and we bring into the discussion the subject of strays and Jim was speaking specifically to the strays from HMAs who get on to other lands, I would just share with us all that there's another big issue of strays.

We have on our public lands lots of horses and don't make me define lots, but in excess of a thousand that I know of that are estrays from reservations and these are separate and apart from the wild horse and burros wild horses and burros but they are an impact on our public lands.

And the gatherer of those animals are frequently fall on the shoulders of BLM, as you guys well know and so they figure into priorities some of sort or another.

So it's a huge additional factor.

It's kind of a miniature elephant in the room, if you will.

And if anybody wants to address that further in terms of clarification, but in certain ranges, that's a big factor!

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So I don't know, Julie, maybe add some context here.

There are some horses in Nevada that have also roamed into some parts of Veil district in Oregon, that are not protected by the Wild Horse and Burro Act.

They are horses that strayed off of private tribal lands on to BLM lands and probably more than BLM lands on to Forest Service lands and so there's those horses and other little pockets of horses here and this that are not on herd management areas, not within them, that are essentially trespass animals on public lands.

So they are part of the issue also, as you point out.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Yes, Alan, your statistic on the removals for 2017 was it, of 1600 something?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: That's our target going into fiscal year 2018?

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Okay.

Would that include the removals that are currently going on?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yes.

And some of those that are occurring right now were already covered a portion of those were covered with the 2017 numbers.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Okay.

So you are saying that there are in addition to the checkerboard round up, there were 1600, in addition to the checkerboard roundup that's going on?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Part of the Wyoming gathers going on, account for a part of that 1600 number.

A part of them started in '17 and so they count there.

So there's a split because there's two different fiscal years.

It went over the two fiscal years and that's why there's a split between the two.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Well, and it might be important to reiterate what you said earlier, our fiscal '18 projection for removals is 1600 that Alan mentioned is own up until December 8th during the continuing resolution, the.

We anticipate additional resources but until we know what Congress is going to decide, we have projected a number of removals beyond December 8th.

I think Alan said that earlier.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Right.

>> BEN MASTERS: Alan, I have a few questions for you.

Do you have an estimate on the foal crop in 2017?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Right now I would say based on our current March population, we will be right in that 13,000 number, pretty conservatively.

I think the Wyoming gather, if you look at it, it's running 22%, versus our normal 20%.

So it's a little higher.

You know, there would be some associated death loss associated with, that but I would definitely say conservatively, we will have about 13,000 born or have had about 13,000 born this year.

>> BEN MASTERS: Thank you.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Alan, just reviewing over some of slides and some of the information that's been given to us, with the population increase that doubles every four years, there's approximately 75,000 horses currently on the ranges, which is about three times the appropriate management level.

Potentially in the next four years, that number would then again double to 150,000 horses and thereafter 300,000 in eight years.

If left unattended or if there isn't natural predation which by natural, I mean starvation or lack of thirst, it looks to me like with the amount of horses that are being gathered off, we are in we are headed straight forward disaster if things aren't if something isn't changed from the status quo.

Do you have any comments on that?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: I mean, we are definitely in a situation now in most of our HMAs where we are two and three times or more above our management levels.

And we are we are going to definitely see increasing impacts to the lands, to the waters, the condition of the animals themselves, they are going to expanding their ranges.

Looking for new habitat, trying to find those life resources they need, so, you know, it's it's really on our part to try to monitor that as much as we can and try to keep track of where they are going and what they are doing, the impacts they are causing and try to keep them out of trouble in a lot of cases.

But we're going to until we find a mechanism that's consistently effective to control the population growth, we can't make the gains that we need and plus holding the number of animals, we are we need that movement into the private sector to help us move animals that way so we have the resources to do the work we need to do on the ground.

So the populations as they increase are definitely going to impact the public lands, the habitat they are in, as well as the animals themselves and it will continue until we get to appropriate management level and can sustain it at that number.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: What is going to be the effect of the this kind of population on the rangeland resource that Dean Bolstad commented was the most important thing we need to protect?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: With any over population, you will start removing those key perennial forage plants that are very important to sustaining the health of the public lands.

You know, whatever habitat they are in, whether it's a sagegrouse or sagebrush community or just a natural grass area, you are going to be removing those key plants because that's what those horses and burros or whatever are going to key in on, and with the over population, make repeated and repeated use on those and they will either become more and more less healthy, and eventually you will you will transition

into a likely and invasive plant species community such as cheatgrass or red brome in some of our areas or medusahead in some of our area and you will become very dependent on annual forage base, versus a perennial forage base and you will change your plant community because of the over population.

And you will likely never get it back.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: And how will that affect the horses?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: It will affect them tremendously because you will lose the higher protein die that the they need and replacing it with a diet that is going to is really usable just for a few weeks of the year, when it's growing and green.

You know, they can get some filler material, to eat the cheatgrass but they are not getting a lot of nutrition out of it.

In the pictures that you were seeing that we showed of Vegas area, for example, those horses rely a lot on red brome that grows from usually February through April.

Those horses rely on that and some scattered perennials to sustain themselves for a long time.

So they are going to start eating other plants that they really shouldn't be eating, you know, horses generally don't eat a lot of brush species.

In that Vegas area, for example, they were eating the barks off of yucca trees, and things like that to sustain themselves and you will see that same type of thing, you know, where they are going to rely on salt brush and various brush species in these Great Basin areas when those key perennial plants become so scarce or completely depleted.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Thank you.

>> Thank you, madam chair.

We framed this conversation around the overall horse health coming from this over population issue, and in some cases, it changes in caring capacity and our public lands.

I think one of the things I wanted to jump into my mind and I wanted to get on record.

As we are concerned and as we move down the road towards an ecological disaster having to do with public utilization, we miss the wildlife that's competing for the same vegetation on the ground.

In my experience, in my previous career, when you see a collapse in a population of a large herbivore, such as a horse, you are also going to see a collapse in the sagebrush in my country, the sagebrush species which are utilizing that and competing for that same vegetation on the public lands.

And I wanted to state that this is much more than a wild horse issue this is an

ecological disaster we are looking at and just wanted to get that out on the ground.

(Off microphone comment)

>> HOLLE' WADDELL: Thank you, and good morning.

I was just going to kind of add on to Dean's presentation regarding the off range branch update.

As you can see, we reduced the number of animals currently in our corrals, mainly because we haven't increased the removals.

The number of animals in offrange corrals are nearly 11,000 and the pastures are sitting at almost 33,000 and that's with some additional new ones and also ecosanctuaries and I apologize.

That's my alarm.

Hang on.

I turned it on silent but it doesn't affect your alarm.

Sorry.

There were five no new awards made on an October solicitation, October 2016 solicitation.

We have four new ones in Oklahoma and one new one in Kansas that increased the off range pasture capacity to about 4700 spaces.

In addition to that, we have already begun delivering animals to all of the five new offrange pastures and things seem to be going well.

Since our last board meeting we also brought on another project inspector that would be going out to the pastures and engaging with the contractors and working as the in a sense the contractor's officer representative representative.

He's the front line to be able to communicate with both of them.

So now we have two that are looking at all the 30 I think we have nearly 32 pastures at this point.

The last time we spoke, I did mention to you that we were rebuilding and redesigning our Internet adoption website, and it is tentatively going to be online and ready for mousse in January of 2018 which we are really excited about.

In the past, it's had limited capabilities and also not been as user friendly and what we would like to do is be able to increase the number of events, whether they are facility Internet events or just Internet events, where people can pick up at some of the satellite locations our store front partnership with the Mustang Heritage Foundation

and also at some of the other offrange corrals.

We have extended the adoption demand study, the marketing firm has done a review of our adoption program and this is one of the pieces that was not able to continue through.

We had not received approval from OMB regarding a comment card which is necessary in order to distribute and receive public input on the program, and we have gotten that at this point.

So we are moving forward with the public survey at the off range public corrals where there will be an adoption event or the satellite adoptions as well.

The comment card has been distributed to the states that will present them to the public, but going in September 14th of 2017, through July 31st of 2018.

And at the end of this, this survey, we'll collect the comment cards.

We have been sending them over to Great Lakes marketing firm who is also going to be analyzing them and providing BLM with an evaluation report by 2019.

So we are looking forward to having that.

There is an example of the comment card in pretty much everything that I'm going to talk about in your binder so you can take a look at some of the questions.

It's very brief.

It's not an extended survey and we had some really good participation and feedback from the public.

The private care placement team, we have forged ahead and we have taken a look at this comprehensive review of the adoption and the sales program as it exists.

We identified some inconsistencies and are moving in order with action plan, phase one.

That draft has been presented and is now under review and we will be having some conversations and making any adjustments and then we plan to implement it immediately.

Next slide.

In addition this year, what we have done is we created or revised our our brochure, our basic adoption brochure, and we wanted to find a way to incorporate sales because so often we really were just focusing on adoption when we actually have to where we actually have two opportunities for placement of animals into private care and that's through the adoption program, as well as the sales program.

Okay.

I will look at my paper.

So we did revise it and produce a new adoption and sales brochure that I believe you have as well, that you can take a look at.

And you know the howto guide is very different than our previous adoption brochure.

It is more user friendly.

I think it provides some additional quotes and from past adopters, as well as many pretty specific information.

If you are interested in adopting or purchasing this is how you do so, and also, hey, by the way, we're BLM.

We are the wild horse and burro program, and here's why you should take home a wild horse and burro.

In addition to that, in the brochure, you will see an adoption application that has also been revised and every several years we have an opportunity to take a look at the current form and then submit it for OMB approval to have any revisions and we did do that.

We wanted to make it as well a little more user friendly, collect the information that's necessary, that will meet our minimum requirements as well as be very clear for our wild horse and burro specialists going out in the field and expecting some of these adopted animals.

You have a copy of that, if I didn't say that.

The next up is our ecosanctuaries.

We talked about this at the last board meeting.

I let you know that we would engage with the three ecosanctuaries two in Wyoming and one in Oklahoma, and I hosted an ecosanctuary workshop in December of 2016 to reengage the ecosanctuaries about events, and the ecotourism and outreach and make sure we had some better planned events and we will be reaching out to the public.

They did just that.

They definitely rose to the occasion and we increased the number of events that took place, as well as the number of people, tourists that were attending and visiting those ecosanctuaries in fiscal 2016.

We also renewed the Deerwood agreement which was our ecosanctuary in Wyoming.

We have a brochure to encourage people to go out and see some of the wild horses

and participate in the education programs that exist.

As I mentioned earlier about the Colorado correctional facility that's there and we have a total of six correctional facilities.

And we have been looking at increasing the number of events that happened there as well, but we have also been tasked with based on some recommendations that we received, to change the form or the instrument that is being used for those correctional facilities from agreements to contracts.

So we have begun that work.

And it hasn't stopped any of their work.

They still placed over 300 trained animals and then they also placed an additional 140 untrained animals.

They don't just adopt out or sell trained animals.

They also offer some of the untrained animals.

They increased their events there were some expos that took place.

We had the correctional facility that's in Wyoming brought over animals to one of the ecosanctuary and the mantle horse ranch brought over some animals as well.

It was a good increase and events and exposures but the correctional facilities training program.

Next slide.

So just a little bit about partnerships.

And as you look, pretty much everything is in your binders as well.

There's partnerships or MOUs we engaged with, but I wanted to highlight the Mustang Heritage Foundation, their partnership does assist us in placing many of the animals that we have placed into adoption and sales.

And this year, we we did have six different Extreme Mustang Makeover events and this was one mustang magic event and the continuation of the TIP program and of that, they did place over 1800 animals throughout those programs through EMM and TIP.

And one of the EMMs did concentrate on sales and that was new for 2017.

And so Mustang Heritage Foundation is more than excited about increasing their use of sale eligible animals through their programs and we're excited about that.

We do incorporate educational seminars at some of the Extreme Mustang Makeover events which has gone over extremely well.

We had some public that are there.

Mustang Heritage Foundation has invited the ranch coalition out as well to participate, and we also renewed the assistance agreement with the Mustang Heritage Foundation for another five years at the end of 2017, so we are looking forward to new work in 2018.

One of the things we did with the Mustang Heritage Foundation.

We debuted a trailer.

It debuted at Cheyenne Frontier Days and it came to the off range pasture tour that we hosted in Bartlesville, Oklahoma and closed the year out at the Fort Worth, Texas, Extreme Mustang Makeover event.

There's been several, and a writeup about it in your binders and notebooks.

It has several, three different screens on inside and people can learn information regarding on range at the or corrals and pastures and there's adoption and sales segment.

The virtual tour is a headset that a person is able to put on and they are able to walk around as if they are walking through one of the HMAs and there's several different footage and they are collecting footage so they can update the videos.

They do have five of these virtual reality trailer tours planned in 2018 and we hope one will be through streets of D.C.

Hopefully!

Maybe in 2018.

But as far as the virtual reality trailer, it has been well received so far from the public and it's been a part of our Americas Mustang campaign that we have used to educate the public.

Next slide.

And I mentioned the Mustang Heritage Foundation, helping to place 1800 animals.

The number of animals placed into private care is 4183 and that's over 4,000, which is a huge jump, as you can see, in this in this graph.

So it displays the number of animals sole and the number of animals adopted and total number of animals placed overall in gray.

And you can see them on an incline, which is really, really great.

We plan to increase those things with a number of events and opportunities that we provide to the public to adopt and purchase an animal.

Any questions for me?

>> JUNE SEWING: I have something to add that's correct number adopted and the number gathered, does little to relieve what is happening on the range.

It does, I would believe, affect the number of horses that are either on range or off range, which would reduce the cost of doing that.

Does that make that much of an effect on it, do you think?

I mean

>> HOLLE' WADDELL: Not right now.

And basically because of the number of animals that we currently have in holding, it almost balances them out, because we still have a large number or inventory of animals that are in our off range facilities so both corrals and pastures and the number of animals that are being removed, it essentially cancels one another house.

We hope to make some strides to increase the number of animals we place in private care and maybe one day that will exceed the number of animals that Alan removes.

>> JUNE SEWING: Thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you for the question, June.

What a nice segue into budget.

I think we are ready to go there.

We are scheduled for a break but can we can we get into budget numbers.

Thanks.

Thank you, all.

>> So I just have a couple of slides here.

One is a breakdown of the overall expenditures within the program, and into some of the main categories that we look at and a couple of key ones I wanted to point out here is the holding.

Actually, the percentage of the total budget has gone down, and this is due to us moving more animals into the pasture, which are cheaper.

So even though our overall off range population has stayed pretty static, our overall costs have gone down.

So that's allowed us to be able to use more money in other areas of orange.

So that was good.

The other part is the population growth suppression, so the fertility treatments that is a continuing on a slide up, going up.

So we spent more on that, but the one key thing that I wanted to point out on that particular program element is that this includes only those costs that are directly related to the fertility hold treatment.

A lot of people point to this and talk about the BLM not spending very much money on this particular aspect of the program, but when we do gathers that combine removals and treatment, that is all in our JJ element, our gather element.

So when people look at that, it seems like the BLM isn't spending that much money on fertility treatment, but in reality, it's a lot more than just that.

And another aspect of that, we just signed a new contract to provide PZP to the BLM over the next few years, and those costs have actually gone up per unit.

So that will also that has become more expensive for BLM as well.

So those costs will continue to increase.

Okay.

Next slide.

And here are just some of the averages across the nation, and one thing before I go through each one of these, just point out that this is a national average.

So when we look at these, some costs in certain areas are way higher than this and some are lower.

But this is a national average for each one of these.

So for gathers which is a per head removed number, just right about \$1,000 per.

To that stayed pretty static over the last few years.

Fertility control treatment, \$2,500.

The adoption sale \$1,891, so this one here dramatically decreased from last year.

We were in the mid200s and now down to about \$1,900.

So while we are adopting more and more, we are lowering our costs per head to adopt sales.

So that's a positive aspect of the program as well.

And then our holding costs you can see there, just over \$5 for corrals and just under \$2 for pastures.

Those both will go up a little bit as those contracts get annual increases but they are staying relatively static as well over the last few years.

This is where you can see the difference between moving those 4700 new spaces that were opened up in pastures as Holle' mentioned, how much money that saved the BLM in an annual cost.

It's \$3 per head on average savings for that movement.

So in '18, if we continue the path of removals and those placed into private care being equal, we would anticipate once again our percentage of the overall pie will go down a little bit again.

Any questions?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Any questions?

Budget questions.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: When you say PZP, is that PZP22 the contract?

>> MICHAEL REILAND: Yes.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Is the amount on the PZP, the breakdown?

>> I don't have a breakdown when we talk about our fertility treatment control, it's whether they are darted or whether they are a part of it's the PZP, whether it's GonaCon being used in other locations and so it's all of those different aspects.

We don't have a specific breakdown.

I can tell you that our contract that we just let out was \$300,000 that we obligated towards that contract or \$400,000 over the next five years to be able to make that supply consistent over the next few years.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: And that's how many applications?

How many animals?

>> MICHAEL REILAND: Alan, do you remember?

I think it's 1500.

It's about 450.

So if you do the math, there we are talking just under 1,000 units of PZP and that's not necessarily that's all we are going to use.

That's just our initial obligation towards that contract.

So as we use that up, we will obligate more money to that contract to be able to provide more doses.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: All right.

That's you know, kind of a drop in the bucket of what is needed.

>> MICHAEL REILAND: Like I said, we continue to do that.

That's continuing to increase.

Alan pointed out we had just over 800 treatments this year this last year which is an increase from the year before, which was an increase from the year before that.

So we continue to look at where can we effectively use those funds in order to be able to continue that trend up.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: What do you think the how much can be produced of the PZP?

It's kind of a single source, isn't it right now?

>>> MICHAEL REILAND: Right now we have a single course where we get that.

Certainly they looked at that they were able to be able to guarantee this current just under 1,000 in this initial thing.

We haven't gotten to the point of, okay, how many can you produce?

It's just simply this is what we had the funds for the initial obligation.

Can you produce that many?

Yes, we can.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: So you don't know what the capability really is?

>> MICHAEL REILAND: At this point, no.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: That's something that I think this board should know if possible.

>> MICHAEL REILAND: We may ask for more than they can supply, but at this point we are not there.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Yeah, with on the range management, which is where we have to be going.

We have to know these things, it's very important.

>> BEN MASTERS: To follow up on the fertility control treatment at \$2,500 per treated animal, that seems incredibly high, because a lot of the animals that need to be treated need to be need to do so annually.

What are the costs that go into \$2,500 per treated animal because I have seen PZP applied to horses and, you know, I'm just does that include an average of what was spent by volunteers?

Or is that just BLM or what goes into that number?

>> MICHAEL REILAND: That's for gathered animals.

So in darting, much, much less than that.

It would be barely more than the actual dose cost because a lot of them are volunteers, like the awesome volunteers that we have here today.

So that cost is actually much lower.

So when we are talking \$450 a dose, it's maybe \$500, in order to be able to treat those animals.

This particular is basically saying we need to treat one mare and return one stallion back to the range.

So gathering two horses plus then the 450 and then the \$50 for applying the dose and stuff like that.

So that's how we get to the \$2,500.

So two animals gathered, returned, one of them being the mare that's treated.

>> BEN MASTERS: Thank you.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: And the cost for PZP is \$25 for a those?

Thanks.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Okay.

And something that informed the answer to your question, would you address the difference in the gatherer costs between a helicopter gather per horse and bait trapping per horse?

And I'm familiar with those in some particular situations but perhaps you can speak to it at the national average level.

>> MICHAEL REILAND: That's an interesting thing.

In past years we had a drastic difference between the costs per head of removals on bait/water versus helicopter.

Some of our bait/water this last year in '17 were actually higher than helicopter average gathers.

So even those costs have actually increased and part of that is what area are they in, the number of animals that can be captured, I mean, there are a lot of factors that enter in.

What is the per head cost of doing that?

And they literally range anywhere from \$300, \$400 a head, up to \$1,500, \$1,600 a head depending on all of those different factors.

So there is a lot of things that come into each one of these.

You can't take them and look at any specific instance in a specific state or a specific gather or the treatment, and say this is what it is, because this is just a national average.

How much did we spend in these areas divided by how many units of accomplishment do we have?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thanks.

I appreciate that.

I'm aware of a bait gather, actually fairly successful one where the average cost was about \$1,500 a mare but you don't know going into it what the costs can be, because you can't predict the weather, which influences it.

Some sites are more remote than others and so access is a big issue especially in winter and in certain latitudes it's only winter that you can bait trap, blah, blah, blah.

At any rate, these are big variables from place to place, but I think it's important that the public understand that bait trapping can be a very expensive process and especially in our more remote sites.

Any more questions because it's break time, folks!

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: One last question.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: No, second to last.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Two last questions.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I would ask you to defer to June.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Ladies first.

>> JUNE SEWING: I just have a question on the adoption and the sales cost of \$1,800, \$1,900, where I think I read some place where the income is like \$1,000 per head.

So is that not a deficit in costs where it might be reducing the number of horses, but it's still not equaling the cost?

>> MICHAEL REILAND: The income we have coming in from the sales and the adoption program, are far out cost by how much is cost.

After every animal that goes off, you can see the per head, per cost holding those animals longterm, they are way higher.

So we are spending more money if we spend more money on any one year, on adopting or selling a horse, absolutely.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: My question was on the pie graph on constructing and maintaining the shrub grass projects it was kind of cut off and it doesn't show the dollar amount, nor the percentage amount.

I was wondering that was?

>> MICHAEL REILAND: I don't know the off the top of my head.

I can get that for you.

As you can see, it's a very slim piece of the pie.

If I remember right, those two are I can't remember.

I wouldn't want to quote anything that would be way off.

I will get that for you.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: If I could just comment on that, it does seem like, considering that that's the most important resource that we are talking about here, it's really slim piece of the pie in comparison to the total budget.

Thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you all for participating.

I would remind you, we have got some really important presentations coming up this afternoon.

We are going to hear about the Forest Service program, and then we're going to get into some specific scientificallybased about ecosystem health, and I would encourage you all to try to attend those and let's take a break.

Let's get back here right at 10:30.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: I would suggest we take a full 15 minutes, since it's 10:26.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Very good, Kathie.

(Break)

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Okay.

Folks.

Everybody.

You are having way too much fun.

Okay.

Let's all get settled.

Where is the rest of the board?

Come on, everybody.

Let's get settled.

Okay.

When I count to three, there will be absolute silence.

I'm getting started.

One...

Two...

You are paying attention, Alan, right?

I mean, Al.

When I count to three, there will be absolute silence and I was already on two.

Three.

Good!

Thank you very much and welcome back.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: So our next presenter is Hope Woodward who will give an overview of the US forest service program.

Welcome back.

Hope, we are looking forward to this.

Take it away.

>> HOPE WOODWARD: Thank you very much, Julie.

Thank you, board, for the opportunity to present an overview and update on the Forest Service wild horse and burro program.

I will be presenting the overview and update, including accomplishments that we have done in last year, noting a limited staff and budget to work with.

If you please keep the information in mind that I'm presenting, and from now until next meeting and continue to engage with us, we now have a new chief, as well as new secretary with the USGA, and we're looking for solutions and creative ideas and feedback to solving solutions for our wild horse and burro program that are based on science and involve the students, volunteers, and engagement with ontheground staff.

So I have a series of 12 slides that you will be seeing.

We are limited to about half an hour.

So I will try to limit myself in covering some of this information so feel free to follow up as well afterwards.

The basic information is that we are our program is on 19 national forests and 8

western states.

We have got 34 active territories on 2.1 million acres and 19 inactive territories on approximately 500,000 acres.

And we have approximately 7100 wild horses and 900 wild burros.

Some information to keep in mind with the program are our staffing is based on one program manager out of the Washington office, myself, and a dedicated staffing in Region 3 of the Forest Service in Arizona, New Mexico, and the Carson national forest, where we have a wild horse specialist and the wild horse program manager and seasonal technician.

Also the region also has hired a new wild horse and burro coordinator that's also over feral and special status horses for Arizona and New Mexico.

And Region 4 has a position for wild horse and burro coordinator that is currently vacant.

The total budget is \$1.5 million for the program, and approximately half of that is spent for transfer funds to BLM for the care of horses in longterm holding that were gathered for 2015.

We have 750, 700,000 we may be able to help out with the 34 active territories within our management.

This terms of our management capacity and planning of the active territories, we have six with completed NEPA decisions, based on NEPA analyses, two of those are joint managed areas.

And currently we are having six territories that are working on management plans and four of them are joint managed areas with the Bureau of Land Management.

One of the things to keep in mind with the BLM and the her management area, a majority of these are with permitted livestock, and it's immediately adjacent to the Bureau of Land Management area and they use the term JMA complexes and joint managed areas.

And so on these, as with BLM, we manage not just for wild horses but also multiple uses.

In terms of 19 inactive territories, three of those have had analyses with NEPA signed decisions.

Just a little bit digging into on and off range management, approximately four have on range fertility, and that's with PZP, and that's native PZP and three of them have gentling and training contracts.

Five have friends or advocacy groups working with them, more dedicated groups.

And then in terms of shortterm offrange facilities two territories actually have one

facility that's on the Carson.

We don't have shortterm offrange facilities for any animals that might be removed off the territories or for adoptions where people might come to adopt the animals except for one of the territories in the Forest Service system.

And then as far as territories that have done removals, we have three other territories and adoption sales, we have four territories.

With just one territory doing sales or two territories doing sales.

Regarding population appropriate management levels, our overall appropriate management level set for all territories is about 2,000 for horses and 296 for burros.

AML review of those territories that are active, as I noted six are completed management plans.

So we have AML review as needed for 28 territories.

In terms of looking at where some of our largest territories are in terms of population numbers, not acreage, in California, those are in California and Northern California, Montgomery Pass and the Modoc National Forest, they have the highest AML which is actually greater than 150.

No other territories have that high of AML.

The Modoc is at seven times the AML and they do have a management plan and they did a removal and I will discuss that later on.

This happened a year ago, all private and tribal lands and the among Pass is approximately two times over AM L. and we see that as a target for fertility control and water development and they need to also have revision of the management plan, but we see a lot of opportunity there.

Nevada is an area where we have nine territories that are actually at or below AML.

Some of those are joint managed areas.

So that could reflect the forest service side at the time that the aerial survey was taken.

Some of them are very small territories.

And then in Nevada, we have about eight territories with two to six times over AML, and of those, we are working on management plans for four of those eight.

Noting that, actually, one of those is Spring Mountain complex, it's a joint managed areas with the BLM that we are working on the management plan.

One of those actually, territories or complex it's actually a combination of wild horse

and burro.

So wild horses and burros on those outside of Las Vegas.

And then also in terms of the management plans that we are working on, two territories are over approximately two times over AML, that's Oregon and one about four times over AML in Utah, and we are working on management plans so that we can actually do managing of horses in those areas.

I think the summary statement here, although we have approximately 8,000 animals on those territories, the AML is set for about 2300 for both of those.

Average three times over AML, but really need to fine tune that and look at where there are maybe higher populations and also where there's opportunity for management, including involvement of the community, where else do we have, perhaps, sagegrouse issues and then also where there's issues where habitat may be more degraded and others where the habitat is actually better.

So it's actually not it's a complex solutions to looking at AML.

It's not kind of one size fits all.

So kind of a little bit of revision from last year's look and give than we don't have management planning for most of our territories that's also consideration and so opportunity for prioritization.

Going into program updates and accomplishments, the next few slides, we will discuss NEPA or management planning, a little bit about population surveys, the what kinds we do, fertility control accomplishments, gentling?

Training, gathers, adoption and sales, key items about how we manage populations of wild horses and burros which is looking at how to manage how do we limit the population.

Then also going into a little bit about administration for the program, as well as grants and agreements, revisiting litigation update that's also in your packets, and then forest profiles in a couple of the forests.

Very busy slide, kind of reiteration of some of the information presented earlier.

This information is a little bit in your packet as well, kind of fine tuned it a bit.

It's noting those forests that do have signed decisions.

So Carson, we actually have two it territories and then HumboldtToiyabe and the Custer Gallatin National Forest which is the Pryor Mountains is located there.

And then the San Bernadino National Forest and then the six dual management plans.

We already reviewed.

That just a little review on the territories that are working on management plans.

There's some information there.

This is really similar to what I presented last year.

These are the same territories that we're working on management plans last year.

They have advanced them, we are looking at having some documents out this for scoping, either the end of this year, more likely in January of 2018.

In terms of population surveys I don't have particularly information on the surveys done this year.

A number of them were actually done jointly with the Bureau of Land Management as part of the double observer analysis with USGS analyzing that data.

And then we also have just on US Forest Service only territories, not jointly managed, we may do a combination of different territories will use aerial surveys, the same USGS double observer analysis.

Also we have formal annual horseback surveys in at least one territory and then there's formal and informal ground counts, including one forest using game cameras as part of that.

And then on a few territories we have permittee observations.

So we're still working since we became more independent from the Bureau of Land Management I believe in fiscal year '15, separating our management.

We are still working and developing a lot of our operations and tools for managing horses, including population monitoring surveys.

Another busy slide.

This is presented somewhat in terms of more of a spreadsheet.

Just wanted to note these are some of the key management items that we'll be doing in terms of population on range and off range.

We had 60 animals that were treated with PZP fertility control, most of them were on the Devils Garden horses that were removed about a year ago.

The mason, and the Jicarilla, it reflects one of the individuals who passed away who was key in that program.

Dan Elkins excuse me, I'm getting old and nervous.

Definitely know his first name is Dan.

He was the mustang group that he had, however, we are continuing on with his partner there who is furthering on the work on range fertility control, as well as helping with population counts.

Gathers, large gather we had was on the can Devils Garden, and then we did have bait trapping removals off the Carson, in 26 and 24 on each of those.

On Murderers Creek which is a joint managed area.

Those animals have either been still in BLM shortterm holding.

I'm not sure if some of those have been adopted off yet.

Regarding animals, the gentling and the adoptions and sales, the numbers are up there.

A large number of the adoptions this year clearly, the devils garden, and Modoc National Forest rose to the challenge of the animals removed in the fall.

221 were sent to the BLM Litchfield corrals.

One gather happened October 2nd.

At the time they didn't really have partnerships with the community.

They didn't have a training program.

They developed their own Modoc mustang training program, and they managed to have 44 adoptions were trained by the MMT program.

So they really set some really strong ground work for going forward for managing their program.

Another I want to mention too, and one of the highlights is the Carson national forest, in order to bring down our costs for longterm holding that we transfer funds over to the Bureau of Land Management, one key is to actually remove some of our man malls out of longterm holding.

The Carson national forest was successful in doing that last year in FY '16 and also again in FY '17, and so they were able to remove this usually happens when animals are being transferred from one facility to another, of Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service horses.

And so we had 22 horses removed and sold, and then also some other South Dakota horses removed.

One of the things too that the Carson, the only facility that does the only forest that does have actually, an off range facility, they had a visitation by the Modoc National

Forest this year, as far as operational technology exchange, just this fall, excuse me, earlier this year, but no, earlier this fiscal year.

And so they had taken on some of the horses from Devils Garden that were sale eligible.

All of those horses were adopted out and were sold.

They didn't have a need to be adopted.

They found homes to one or two horses were sold too.

So they were able to find homes for 36 of the Devils Garden horses.

Just moving on to some other kind of offrange administration aspects of the program, we were able to establish procedures to collect fees for adoptions and sales, determine the disposition of funds and transfer of the those fees to the treasury and BLM.

By 9 act according to the act, the any funds that are collected from the sale of horses get transferred to the BLM and any funds collected via adoptions because the Forest Service doesn't have the authority to do, that those go on to the treasury.

So none of those go directly back to the Forest Service.

And then we are working on a process for getting OMBapproved forms.

In terms of grants and agreements, we renewed our service first agreement, overall agreement, national agreement for transferring funds to the BLM for longterm care of horses.

We issued new MOU for guiding the BLM and Forest Service staff to jointly manage wild horse and burros on the 24 jointly managed area.

Service first was used in the Litchfield corrals and the Modoc National Forest.

I didn't really fame size enough the importance of the partnership with the BLM and the involvement of Litchfield staff to actually assist and make that possible.

Without having those shortterm corral facilities, we wouldn't be able to have the area there where the horses could become adopted as well as other aspects of that operation.

Another ongoing is after having developed that MOU, local units are now developing interagency agreements.

And their own local MOUs that will assist in providing options for managing herds that are across agency boundaries.]

That will be helpful as they develop their management plans and love to share

operating costs.

Also this year we signed an agreement with the Humane Society of United States, HSUS, the idea is to help facilitate coordination and cooperation, ongoing relationship, and to note the US Forest Service commitment to using fertility control on range.

Getting towards the end of my presentation here.

This is already in the packets in terms of litigation updates, Alan had presented this noting they were two cases.

This is actually both on the Modoc National Forest.

This related to earlier litigation and appeals, several going on since I think 2014.

So I just wanted to note here that finally we did get a decision just before the end of the fiscal year and the decision was that the panel has filed the amended judgment, this vacates the Forest Service exclusion of the middle section of the devils Garden wild horse territory in the Modoc National Forest.

Noting that it's one entire territory, including the middle section that was part of the litigation, in the 2013 management plan had indicated it was removed from the entire territory.

Those decisions are readily available on the Internet.

So the last two slides, just some general bullet points about the Carson National Forest.

I have already mentioned I referred to them, the Jerita Mesa, and Jicarita, Carson was first national forest to treat horses with PZP starting in 2009.

They were already doing roundup and removal but this added a strategy for onrange management.

One of the key things is that early on, they entered into partnerships for onrange remote and bait trap darting.

This also helped to gain confidence in the region to further support the program with additional personnel as well as funding, and seeing that it was an important to really put the funds in up front, to put the time in to help to manage those territories and that's become somewhat of a model for the Forest Service as I mentioned earlier, they have done some technology exchange with the Modoc National Forest, and then also with some of the forests in Region 6 in Oregon.

We had a little bit of referral to the Modoc, really see that as an incredibly hard to imagine the amount of work that they achieved, success achieved in working with the partners, with the BLM, with other nonagency partners and volunteers and some really dedicated people.

Actually, this week, Thursday, they will have another placement meeting.

So they are continuing the work, and just want to note kind of a quote here, just the district manager that because of the hard work of volunteers, Modoc county, BLM, the Indian community council and BLA, the adoption effort has been more successful than anyone thought possible.

One of the things key to that is having training of those animals and also having younger animals and older animals available for adoption was also one of the key points to that program.

That's the last slide that I have and I'm very happy to take any comments or questions from the board.

Thank you.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Yes, I have a question.

Can you explain what an inactive area.

You said there are 19 inactive areas.

>> HOPE WOODWARD: Correct.

Generally inactive areas are territories where it's been determined that there are no wild horses or burros on those territories.

Three of those territories have already done management planning.

They have done analysis to determine why there are not it's not appropriate to have wild horses and wild horses on those territories.

A lot of documentation of the status is actually at the at the district level.

As far as explaining what that means, I don't have full answer on that.

Some of the response has to do with the prioritizing of the forests to perhaps prioritize it off the other range administration and say we are going to look at these territories.

Let's look at the status.

Let's look at our monitoring and let's do range analysis and say do we have AML set at zero?

What is our status so right now, those inactive territories don't have management plans.

Either it may be because the animals moved off and so they are inactive.

They could have moved off and so they are vacant.

It could be that they didn't have the resources there.

It could be that any number and that's where the management planning would come in.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Well, with that in mind, is there any opportunity to take horses from holding and reduce those costs by and let these animals be nonreproducing, of course, animals, is the forest those inactive areas, are they candidates at all for looking at that as a solution to reduce shortterm holding?

>> HOPE WOODWARD: I think in context of us having a new chief, as well as having a new secretary, particularly a new chief, he's asked us at the Washington office to gather together all different ideas and being creative and presenting different ideas.

Maybe some things in the past, we would say, no, way!

Those are inactive, like, we don't want to add anymore.

There's already enough of a burden just limited staff as well as funding and other priorities for existing range management staff to be managing even because most of those are multiple use and having allotments and active allotments and then to have additional task.

But in light of really the need to present more put more emphasis on management of the wild horse and burro, I think we have that with our new chief, willingness to listen, we are willing to present any suggestions you may have and present them not chief.

They may have to do with the forest to make the decisions but as I said starting off the talk, we really would like to hear any creative suggestions for management solutions.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Well, I think you can we probably will have people that will jump right on that and want to, you know, look at that possibility and would need your assistance.

I have no idea where these 19 areas are, but if they are areas where there's an opportunity for volunteers, and organizations to also be involved, then you wouldn't have that heavy burden that could come with I mean, these animals will die out obviously, because they would be nonreproducing, but, yeah, that's interesting.

Thanks.

>> HOPE WOODWARD: Sure.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Steven.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Along those lines it looks like you might enlarge like when you talk about staffing and you talk about what you are dealing with and three times the AML across the board, recognizing that there's some areas like Devils Garden that have a lot more and others closer to AML, it looks like if you were to put animals there, you could potentially enlarge a problem that you are already struggling with.

>> HOPE WOODWARD: You are saying your comment is in response to Ginger's question?

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Yes, in response to her comments.

>> HOPE WOODWARD: Right.

I think that whatever would be considered what you just asked, awful those would be taken into consideration and analyses.

Is there do we have capacity there?

What are existing conditions on the range?

What is the existing conditions of the livestock?

Are we already administering those permits to standard?

Are the permittees having to reduce the numbers of livestock?

So all of those things would be taken into consideration to see if it would be feasible at all.

So if you would manage any of the territories and all of those considerations when you do a management plan, that also would be taken into consideration.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: One other question, I had, how has the especially at the Devils Garden where they are seven times, AML, how has that affected the livestock and how has that affected the habitat and the wildlife habitat?

>> HOPE WOODWARD: I think in the Modoc, that's one of the places on of the national forest, where there are some permittees that have had to take reduction of up to 50%.

So that has affected them in terms of habitat and some of the areas.

So one response in terms of how it has affected.

It's affected some permittees and the landowners.

The horses are not just on the territory.

There are also horses off the territory, but another consideration with that is while, you know, the question is: What is the effect on the land or the other side of that is what are the management solutions?

The Modoc is the territory that does have a management plan and they are very I'm just trying to look for the word here.

They have already presented to their region projections and plans to go forward.

So I say that all the partners are aware of the situation on the Modoc, private landowners, permittees, legislative people, commissioners, and so we are working on a solution.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you, Hope.

Our next speaker is Lucas Hall.

He's going to bring us some information about the influence of feral horses on native wildlife in the Great Basin.

You have his presentation behind tab 12.

Thank you for coming.

I look forward to the information.

>> LUCAS HALL: There we go.

I would like to begin by first acknowledging those that helped us get to this point.

My advisors, Brock and Randy Larson, who weren't able to attend, unfortunately they are stuck doing some pretty rigorous field work in Hawai'i.

(Laughter)

We all feel bad for them, but someone's got to go out and trap some ungulates.

I would like to thank Robbie Knight who was our main contact and the director of environmental programs at the Dugway Proving Ground where the majority of our research was conducted.

I would also like to thank, of course, BYU, where I was able to conduct most of this research, and a special thanks to the Utah division of natural resources for all the help and the support that they provided over the years.

All right.

So I have been studying water sources now for a good number of years, and it never ceases to amaze me how influential water is across desert landscapes.

I actually love this photo because you can't see water per se, but you can see the evidence of water everywhere.

Water shapes desert ecosystems.

It provides that foundational resource, that availability for life, for vegetative life and for animal life as well.

And what we're finding, now more than ever, is that this resource is being is being tapped from several different angles and for several different purposes.

We have increasing human populations which is and those are tied to these other factors that I'm going to talk about.

But just simply supplying that drinking water for increasing numbers of people and civilizations living in arid and semiarid situations out here in the west is problematic.

We are continually pumping groundwater from aquifers and that is at least based on recent research is indicating that these underground water reservoirs aren't necessarily some of them are not replenishing at the same rate they have been historically, which is kind of troubling.

Also just the use of irrigation and agricultural practices in a lot of these arid systems is, again, continually putting that draw on water sources and, of course, for the same reasons livestock operations piping off water sources, from natural springs, all of these all of these factors in unison are really putting the crunch on water sources.

Then you add to the mix invasive species, like tamarisk and it's water guzzling capabilities.

Again, it's just one more layered and we consider drought you know, drought, and all the desert seems to be in drought.

Some more than others but all of these factors combined make this what is normally a very powerful resource, is kind of limiting its abilities to provide for wildlife or vegetation, et cetera.

It's not too many of a stretch to say that water is a limiting factor in the desert.

Anyone who has visited the desert or gone hiking, one of the first things on your check list is a bottle of water, right?

Water is both limiting across temporal and spatial axis.

What that means is there's a good deal of distance between water sources and deserts.

I have been studying water sources, like I said, for a while now and sampling a bunch of them, and, you know, sometimes it's half an hour, 45 minutes to get from one site to the next.

So they are partially limiting across landscapes.

But also temporally limiting towards some of the end of our or towards the end of summer seasons.

We have we have a number of water sources that just dry up.

They are femoral in nature.

And so we have this spatial, temporal limitation on this resource and it coincides with some of the greatest fizz physiological demand.

We have species that lactate during the summer and these lactating females are highly dependent on water sources.

When the water is often not available, it's when it's most needed and that results in the competition for the resource.

There's a great deal of research coming out of Africa.

Elephants tend to run the show.

When they show up, you let them come and get water, right?

And so a lot of what we are what I like to call kind of inferior or subordinate competitors to elephants they tend to give way to the kind of the peak arrival hour for elephants.

And they have over time, adapted different strategies and kind of morphed their life history strategies to the point that they can compensate for those times when elephants come.

They can modify their behaviors.

They adapt to use water at different times of the day, to use different water sources, and these adaptations are critical.

These behavioral adjustments, they have optimized their fitness, their ability to transfer their genes on to the next generation.

The question is: Are horses which is the largest bodied animal at our water sources are they serving the same purpose as elephants in this case.

Are they driving these dynamics.

Are they pushing some of the native species out of their optimum.

So this might be new to, some but we have a lot of horses on rangelands.

In our particular study area, at the cedar mountains, in Tooele County, high AML is 390

and as of the last count, in 2016, there were 654 horses.

So a little more than one and a half times AML there, just to provide a little bit of context.

But that seems to be a pretty wide spread story across a lot of different herd management areas.

And so the question is: Are horses, are they adding this additional constraint to an already limited and constrained resource for native wildlife?

And so what our main objective was, was to determine the influence if there's an influence of horses on water use by native wildlife and this is just kind of a just a map showing where most our study occurred, kind of north central western Utah and the Great Basin desert.

We are interested in primarily three metrics, in richness, diversity and temporal activity.

These are our response variabilities in our study.

Richness is the sum total count of species that occur at a water source.

For example, a water source could have ten different species using it and it would have a richness value of ten.

Diversity takes into being richness but it includes a metric which we call evenness.

At that same water source, you may have your ten species but those ten species may be they may not be equally abundant or representative at that water source and so that's going to that's going to tend to sway your overall diversity metric, and so a water source that ends up having a high diversity metric will have equal representation of all the species that are using it.

And so that's what we call diversity and that's a very common a very common metric used to kind of put kind of a biodiverse value on different areas.

And temporal activity.

We will get more into temporal activity but we try to study several different facets and take different measurements on when basically it boils down to frequency, duration, and timing of use of water sources.

And so our methods, we will be touching on two studies, one that was published last year and one that is nearing publication this year.

But first one took place back in 2010 to '11, and we used remote cameras, and we monitored 25 water sources around the clock.

At each of these sites we took a variety of habitat measurements and get an idea of the characteristic of each of these sites.

And so we have 12 horse includes of those 2500 water sources and that will be that's denoted by HI and you will see HI and HE through the rest of these slides.

And at these HI water sources, horses had free access and at the horse excluded water sources there were specific exclusionary fencing to keep livestock, as well as horses out of water sources.

Now on the Dugway military proving ground, there's no cattle and it hasn't been grazed for several decades but you might get a few head to stray on and these fences were primarily set up to keep them out of these water sources.

The fence is also of note.

The fences did not prevent any of our native species from accessing water.

They were relatively generous in their perimeter size, which some ungulates, like pronghorn and mule deer tend to care about and they were Barbless as well and they were just two tier and so based on our photo evidence, we didn't have at least we didn't find any evidence for these fences obstructing the use of these water sources by in of our native species, in fact, it's almost the opposite for these guys.

For any of you guys who dealt with camera traps, you can multiply that by two, three, four, five, and that's about the number of pictures that we had to sort through.

And we'll talk more about pictures here in a moment, but of those 101,000 pictures, a little less than half, 48,000, were of native wildlife at all the 25 water sources.

A little more than half were of horses at just the 12 water sources, and so you kind of get an idea of just the presence of horses at these water sources and we began to notice some rather contrasting differences in the metrics that we were choosing to measure between these water sources in relation to wildlife activity.

And so coming back to our objectives, getting an idea of overall species richness, we see that at the horse excluded sites, there was over a twofold difference in species present.

That is to say that the horseincluded sites, we were detecting far fewer species of native wildlife.

We break that down for birds.

We see an even sharper contrast in their species richness and for mammals not so much but still a significant difference and one thing to note is that the mammals we were counting here don't include your rodents which are largely carnivorous and can acquire most of their water through food and metabolically and really don't have a reliance on outside water sources and this includes our lagomorph and ungulates, and others.

We look at the overall water species where the horses had access, we had half of diverse communities of wildlife and compared to where horses had been excluded by

fencing, and, again we break that down for birds.

We see the same pattern and for mammals we see, again, a similar pattern.

And this is our I really like this graph I don't know how many of you have experience with nondimensional scaling.

We will walk through and get our brains wrapped around what we are talking about here.

Every single one of these points on this graph represents a water source.

And where that water source lies on this graph depends on the species that are there and their relative abundances.

And so we see based on whether horses were present or absent, we see a fairly decent grouping of these water sources.

And so what does this mean?

Well, what this means is that we're seeing a complete shift in wildlife communities, where horses are present, compared to where they are absent.

A complete shift in species composition, and the relative abundances of those species.

Now, one the main points of criticism that our paper faced during peer review was that the differences that we might be observing could be penned to habitat characteristics.

And so like I said, we took a variety of habitat measures and we threw them in the same analysis and what we show is that there's really no grouping based on whether horses are present or absent.

All of these water sources while they had differing overall habitat characteristics, they we couldn't necessarily group them, when we ran the analysis based on horse presence, it was far from significant, and there's just no general pattern.

And so we couldn't really pin it on habitat similarity.

Kind of changing gears and moving towards temporal activity of wildlife activity, we see that at horse excluded water sources, wildlife would visit more often than at horse included water sources and at those water sources where they would visit, at the fenced water sources they tend to spend a little more time accessing water.

Now, difference in time we see there is roughly two minutes.

The question is, what biological relevance does two minutes have?

You know, it's hard to say.

We didn't study that specifically but when we go back to talking about the optimum, we talked about life history strategies and adaptations, two minutes could have a physiological consequence for animals.

Again, it was outside of our scope of measure but that possibility definitely exists.

We look at time between visits, wildlife, we're visiting water sources where horses were present, just far fewer times as the gaps between those visits were rather extensive.

And we look at overall minutes on average per day across the year, wildlife are spending roughly 24 minutes a day at water sources, where horses were excluded, and about five minutes per day at water sources where horses were included.

And to give you kind of a little better representation of kind of what we are talking there, we have this graph here, and so this is the fit for the first of the first year, the 53 species of native wildlife that we detected graphed across the year.

And so what you see in blue is the sum total minutes that were spent or excuse me, the average minutes based on site per day.

And we see that it you know, there's a fairly tight correlation with temperature which is not very surprising.

You can throw precipitation in there as well, and would you have a similar pattern, but what we see is that during the summertimes, wildlife usage goes up.

Big surprise, right?

Big surprise.

I would like to draw your attention to our Y axis.

There it peaks out at 60 minutes.

During the July and August, wildlife usage will kind of peak out at least on an average basis at about an hour per site per day.

Now, if we keep this same graph and simply add in horse usage, we see a rather contrasting difference here.

We see horse the time that horses spend at water sources dramatically overshadows that of wildlife.

And, again, I would like to draw your attention to that Y axis.

We added a zero there.

We are looking at close to 600 minutes that horses could spend at water sources.

Some water sources we have them occurring up to 73, 74% of the day.

We had horses at the water source.

And, again, that can be particularly challenging if you are a native species and you are trying to access that water source.

A lot of the water sources that we studied weren't very much bigger than this desk that I'm sitting at right now.

And so some of these water sources could only water one to a few horses.

And so then you are let's say, you know, whatever else kind of species, you are on the outside kind of looking in, trying to figure out when you can get a drink and it's particularly at least based on our evidence, provides a challenge for native wildlife.

Actually, before I go forward anymore so that kind of capitulates the first study that we had published last year.

The next study that we are working on and hopefully we just sent some revisions into the journal, as of Friday, I was working feverishly trying to get some updated graphs but was unable to do so.

We will still talk about it.

We talked about the 101,000 pictures that we had of wildlife for this first study.

We extended our sample period out an additional four years, and extended our study area northward along the cedar mountains and so for the second study, we had 44 water sources that we had studied for an additional three years.

And out of those out of all of those years, we were targeting the ungulate community.

Those species will likely be the most sensitive to the added competition from horses and we wanted to isolate them and see how they are responding to the presence of horses.

And so we had about 800,000 pictures of ungulates over the course of the five years at those 44 water sources, pronghorn were about 30,000 of those pictures.

Mule deer were another 30,000 of those pictures and horses were about 740,000 of those pictures.

So, again, just an overwhelming presence of horses at those water sources and we have in our database for the cedar mountain area, we have two and a half million pictures of wildlife or animals into our database.

72% of that database is horses.

And so, again, just kind of paints of picture of just how common these animals are occurring at all of these water sources.

And so, isolating pronghorn and mule deer with these additional years we look at the relative activity of pronghorn, at horse included sites they were about half of what it was at horse excluded sites.

And similar for mule deer, about half as what it is to horse excluded sites.

We also in the second paper included some interactions of horse activity with temperature, and we found that to be a significant interaction.

So as temperature increases, as horse activity increases at water sources, visits decrease by both mule deer and pronghorn.

We look at kind of temporal use of both pronghorn and mule deer.

If you are a pronghorn residing in the Great Basin desert, your happy hour is about 9:00 in the morning.

Its a little early for most of us, right?

They like to get a jump on their drinking for the day, I guess.

But we found a rather narrow band of time that these animals access the water in the area.

We found the same thing, that the 9:00 window was when pronghorn would come to do the majority of their watering.

In areas where horses were common, we could not exactly pin down a time when pronghorn would come to water.

It was all over the board.

We found them watering before they normally like to.

We found them so in the wee hours.

I mean at 5:00 in the morning and as late as nightfall, which seemed to be just atypical for them, at least in the absence of horses.

And so we couldn't really pin down a time.

And so what we are thinking a lot of that variation is due to, is the variation in horse drinking patterns.

Horses didn't have a particular or optimal watering period across all of our sites.

It seemed to be specific per site.

Depending on what time that was, that would largely determine when the pronghorn would come in.

We didn't see a pattern with mule deer.

Mule deer or usually knock ternal in activity and pronghorn are diurnal.

The pronghorn being diurnal, having that temporal overlap with horses we did see a pretty strong pattern.

And so, again, kind of going back to our annual graph of wildlife and horse usage of water, we see a similar pattern here on a daily basis.

We see horses again just running the show on an hourly basis.

In fact, it's even kind of hard to decipher what mule deer and pronghorn are doing but upon closer examination, you can see mule deer primarily active at night and the early morning and dusk hours whereas pronghorn have that bump into the early morning hours and taper off in the afternoon.

But, again, just showing you kind of really just the presence of horses there.

So in conclusion, based on our first study, we detected overall fewer native species at water sources where horses were present.

We observed decreased diversity which accounts for both richness and kind of the relative abundance of those species.

We also saw overall less time being spent by wildlife at water sources, where horses were present.

And this boils down to what I like to call the water fountain effect.

Each one of us in this room can go and get a drink from a water fountain.

We just can't do it at the same time, right?

We have to all get in line.

What we are noticing out in our study area, is this long line at water sources.

You can set up on any any ridge and watch a water source and you will see a band of horses at that water source and then you will see another band on the hillside waiting to come in.

And so when band A clears out, band B comes in and band C is now on the hillside

waiting to come in.

And so the question is, where do the wildlife fall in this pecking order?

And so far based on our based on our data, it seems to most of them, it's not worth hanging out around those water sources where horses are present.

So as we look forward, there's a lot of research coming out over the last decade and still coming out today, indicating that the southwest is going to get hotter and drier as we look forward in the future and this is not too far forward in the future.

Over the course of this country things are predicted to get hotter and drier and so the question is: What does that mean for some of our already crowded water sources for native species?

You know, what is this added competition from horses going to meet for them?

And kind of in conclusion, based on our second study, we did find strong evidence that horses displaced native wildlife, pronghorn and mule deer from water sources and our study provides further evidence that horses are negatively influencing native wildlife and I have time for questions if you have any.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Jim, go ahead, please.

>> JAMES FRENCH: Thank you, madam chair.

I just have several questions having to do with the conversation about the subordinate wildlife behavior around no watering holes and I will fall back a little bit on my experience.

I wonder if you had a chance to evaluate the whether or not especially during the hottest time of the year, whether or not the camping or the occupation of the vicinity around a watering source by horses had an exponential change in terms of how wildlife used those sites, because in Nevada, that seems to be the mode, especially if there's a riparian overstory that they can shade up under.

Many times they camp on those locations.

They will migrate and move towards them and stay there for a month or two.

I wonder if you had a chance to evaluate that aspect of it.

>> LUCAS HALL: That wrapped into our intervisit time and overall visits per day.

But, you know, some offthecuff observations that I noticed going through some of our data sets, we would have I remember one time in particular, are there was a four or five day span where horses were at a watering hole and we didn't have a single wildlife.

It was middle of July and it was two or three weeks that we didn't have a drop of

precipitation.

The horses were, like you say, camped out there.

We didn't get any pictures of anything other than horses nor nearly a week.

>> JAMES FRENCH: Along that same line, did you also observe aggressive behavior on the part of horses.

I don't know if you had any burros in this study or not, but horses with regard to becoming territorial and actually defending a piece of real estate away from other wildlife in this?

>> LUCAS HALL: So we seem to be the odd guy out in terms of those studying water sources and native wild sources.

Our data don't support that, based again, and you think about photographs.

Photographs just capture a small instantaneous point in time and so to be able to document some of those occurrences as they play out over time can be kind of challenging.

What we what we observed was that when there were horses there, there just weren't native species there, but other studies have shown that aggressive behavior of horses can deter use of wildlife.

In fact, there's a study that came out just last year, or the year before, where they had really good camera trap evidence of horses chasing elk off of water sources.

And so that possibility definitely exists.

Horses are you know, they are a large behavioral animal.

We have seen the research supports aggressive behaviors towards both pronghorn and mule deer in the literature, it's just based on our photo evidence, we can't uphold that but there's within other studies including the big horn sheep where the presence of horses would deter them from drinking from a water source.

We have talk about this all the time in classes but animals don't want to compete.

They don't want to compete for resources.

This results in the mortality.

And a lot of species of avoid conflict.

That's what our evidence suggests is straight up avoidance of tangling with a larger bodied animal.

>> JAMES FRENCH: And that segues into my final question.

Does this look at other ungulate, such as neotropical birds and amphibians and small mammals.

I know you mentioned small mammals in.

My experience, that avoidance that you just spoke of is it actually will exclude many of those species from a water source.

I wonder in you observed that.

>> Yeah, so again, we didn't go out and study this but previous work from Eric Beaver in the early 2000, demonstrated that anything that makes a burrow has a hard time existing where horses are, because of the trampling effect and the compaction on the immediate vicinity of where they are.

Again, off the cuff, we won't find a lot of rodent burrows around any of our active horse sites.

That's not something that went out and exclusively pressures.

>> JAMES FRENCH: Thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I have a comment and a request and in a way, I apologize, but if you wouldn't mind, I'm asking you to resubmit your slides in a color format where they come across well.

If you want to take a look at what we, there's a lot of power here, a lot of objective power in this study and in this presentation, and but we can't see it all.

I had to write like crazy to capture everything that you said that is not apparent on the slides and it's just a color intensity thing and I know you can manipulate that.

Pardon?

(Off microphone comment).

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I noticed what slides we have, represent improved water sites where the mud hole kinds of things that we see at springs and riparian areas, it is somewhat different.

In the did you say 44 water sites?

How many of those are actually improved and how many of them are natural?

And what that has to do with is, is there any way to separate out the effect when horses stay up to 10 hours a day on a water site?

The result of that, as anyone can imagine, it's pretty stomped out and so now the water, instead of being in a stream or a pond or a pool is in a bunch of hoof prints and I'm curious, is there that effect or are all the improved water sites like troughs where we won't necessarily see that sort of thing?

>> LUCAS HALL: Yes so about a third of them is natural seeps.

We had one spring that I guess you can call a good spring, but the rest were seeps and about two-thirds of them were what you would call improved water sources and it's interesting because you bring up a good point about kind of stomping and the wallowing that horses will do at some of the seeps that we study.

They have a very different effect but similar in outcome at developed water sources.

On a neighboring mountain range, for example, where horses we were able to capture the movement of horses and their use of water sources over time.

We had ten years of data where there were no horses, but as the Cedar Mountain herd grew, they're expanding and so we are we are capturing some of that southern expansion on to a different mountain range.

And horses would find their way to an unfenced water source and developed a guzzler, a wildlife guzzler.

And over the course of like two days, two and a half days they would just drink it dry.

And during the summer, those water sources don't replenish.

And a lot of that winter runoff and spring time rains and so forth.

So while it's a different impact than drinking buddy water out of horse hooves, it's very much the same concern where that water just isn't there and then our cameras we have set up, just didn't capture any other activity because nothing will come drink from an empty water source.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I will give you a chance, I'm sure you have things to say.

Having been involved in a conflict between a wildlife group who put in place guzzlers and maintained them and stuff and expressed extreme frustration of the horses tearing down the guzzlers and pushing on the fences and that sort of thing, do you are you aware of that same sort of thing?

In other words in cooperative agreements with organizations that are trying to help provide water in the desert, do you have groups who are being frustrated in their attempts to help wildlife when we have guzzler deaths or guzzler overuse to the extent that they are not aware when they need them.

Are you aware of those type of conflicts.

>> LUCAS HALL: I'm aware of conflicts but I'm not aware of any particular groups that excited about that.

Based on our evidence, the photo evidence of horses coming into unfenced guzzlers and drinking them dry and even, you know, even damaging them somewhat, you know, we would report that to the state which was the entity responsible for the management of these water sources, and based on their discretion, they would either they would set up exclusionary fencing around those water sources to prevent, you know, horses from accessing water sources.

Going back to your questions, I don't know of any particular groups but I tend to kind of keep to myself.

That's I didn't love to work in deserts.

I don't have to deal with a lot of people and do my own thing and keep to myself.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Have a question for the speaker?

>> BEN MASTERS: I D. the water sources that didn't have the horses higher richness, and those that did have horses.

I was wondering especially in regards to birds what particular birds species seemed to avoid locations with horses?

>> LUCAS HALL: Oh, that's a good question.

We had about because of the 53 species, over 40 of them were birds.

I could I can almost answer that question from the reverse side and tell you that cow birds and ravens didn't have a problem with horses.

So those are very common out at the horse sites.

There's a variety of passerines and golden eagles and redtailed hawks, great horned owls, I mean, there's a variety of species that avoiding the horserelated sites.

Yeah, I could get you a list.

I have just don't have that list offhand.

>> BEN MASTERS: Sure.

And then I was wondering if you had any data to compare the study area that you were in versus a similar area close to that, that did not have horses on ungulate mortality, age structure and if there was any conclusions to draw from that?

>> LUCAS HALL: Now you are talking, Ben!

That's exactly what we would love to do.

Because both both ungulates and mule deer are not doing all that great in the Great Basin.

And it would be it would be really awesome to see if if there's an impact that we haven't considered, like competition from horses at this point.

Again, it's something we haven't done but would love to do.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Sue, are you still online?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Yes, I am and I'm patiently waiting to ask some questions if we can.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Would you please do so.

I'm sorry I haven't called on you sooner.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: That's okay.

Thank you so much, Mr. Hall.

That was a wonderful presentation.

Very helpful.

And I just had a couple of little questions.

One was and I apologize if I missed, this but how large were the exclosures?

>> LUCAS HALL: These exclosures what would they be across?

Maybe 50 feet across, 40 to 50 feet across.

So from that's from one fence one fence line to the other and then the water source would be in the middle.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: And they were more or less circular.

>> LUCAS HALL: No, they were square.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: And following up on Mr. French's, about interspecies aggression and, again, I know you only had still photographs, but if you know from your own observations or from the photographs or from anyone else's work, have you seen horsetohorse aggression at the water sites?

>> LUCAS HALL: Yes.

So horse to horse, that would be intraspecific aggression.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Right.

>> LUCAS HALL: And we did document that quite frequently, horses rearing up, you know, trying to determine who was going to get that next drink.

Yeah, we do have quite a few pictures of that.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Thank you.

That speaks to considerable or significant compromised welfare.

Horses usually don't fight over water, unless it's extremely limited.

Thank you very much.

>> LUCAS HALL: Yep.

Thank you.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: That's all, Julie.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you for your patience.

>> Please turn on your

>> GINGER KATHRENS: It is on.

It's been on.

Well, we'll debate the nativeness at some other time, luke.

Thanks for your presentation.

I really enjoyed it.

Can you tell me, I'm familiar with the enclosure system that they have in the Pryor Mountains and the water runs from an angle down into a tank that's I bet it's not any larger than that.

Is that kind of what we are looking at or is this totally different kind of a system?

>> LUCAS HALL: So for some of the for the developed waters, they will have a catchment pad that is fenced in, that is usually 40, 50 feet away from the drinker.

And then the water the water lands on the catchment and then is drained to underground water tanks, which then have a smaller drinker available, which is about half the size of this table I'm sitting at right now.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Yes, it sounds like it's the same.

>> LUCAS HALL: Yes, similar.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: And there are, I think 10 or 12 of those in the Pryors and, although, of course, it's a different it goes from very much a desert system, as well all the way to subalpine, and concerning the aggression of horses, I mean, I have documented horses since 1994.

And that is just a natural pattern, a way of life with wild horse bands, particularly when they are in close proximity to each other.

The dominant band stallion and his mares will get to drink first if there's a competition for water, but that is a natural phenomenon in the wild horse world.

So it's it's not anything that's unique, I don't think to the to the Great Basin, but very, very interesting report.

Is there some way I mean, I guess you think it's a real problem that there are horses in the legally is designated ranges and they are diminishing wildlife habitat for other species, is that your conclusion?

>> LUCAS HALL: Yes, at least in terms of water usage, they are definitely restricting or constraining access for native species and and appear at least based on our data, appear to be a problem for them.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Our data would indicate that the dominant species or bears and mountain lions and when you see the activity of those predators, if they are allowed to live and, you know, we would like to see them protected, then you will definitely see a change in pattern of horses and mule deer we don't have pronghorn, but definitely mule deer and the horses.

They are nowhere around there, when there are predators in the vicinity.

So thanks very much.

>> LUCAS HALL: Thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you for a very it's nice to see good, solid objective data.

Thank you so much.

And thanks for all of that time out on the ground to make that happen and I like to see data points instead of just too much opinion.

So thank you very, very much.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: I agree with what you said.

The data is fascinating to me.

The wild horses is not a diurnal species.

It's just as active, in my experience, at night

>> LUCAS HALL: Yes, that's what we are finding.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: And having them come through camp on a regular basis.

They are very, very active at night.

And, of course, their digestive systems require movement.

So they the camping out is not something I'm terribly familiar with.

Thanks.

>> LUCAS HALL: Yes, that was yes, we were we were told initially starting, you know, find some of our stuff, that, you know, they were not active at night and we had all of these photos of them at night.

Well, they are but, then again based on our data, they are mostly diurnal.

Very much less of that does occur during nocturnal activity.

And that nocturnal activity tends to be correlated with availability of water, like during some of the roughest times in the summer is when we see the most nocturnal activity of the horses.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Really?

I can't mine is not scientific study, and just years and years of being there.

Some of the most interesting stuff was going on at night.

That's why we would send our sound crews out there to record it because there was so much activity and interaction going on in the evening hours but anyway, thanks a lot.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: You said yesterday you had 7 million different pictures.

Can we anticipate more analyses and if so, what are you going to look at?

>> LUCAS HALL: Yes.

We have paper number two that will be hopefully coming out pretty soon, but just

request the temporal and spatial aspects of our data set, we have a number of a number of things that we would like to look at, in addition to what we already have, and hopefully add some more some more evidence and some more just objectivity to the question at hand.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you so, very, very much.

Let's take a break.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: No.

Let me say a few things.

We are still running a little bit late but I would like to suggest that we can start again at 1:15, as scheduled.

So you've got a little bit more than an hour for lunch.

But I think that's important.

Thank you.

That was really wonderful about every one of you.

We will have somebody somebody asked me earlier.

I failed to mention it.

All of the power points that you are seeing today and tomorrow will be posted on the BLM wild horses website, probably next week, you know, after the meeting we generally do it.

So those will be available to you.

I think we are good.

Have a nice lunch.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: See you at 1:15.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: And if you are going to do a public comment, please sign up.

(Lunch break)

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>> KATHIE LIBBY: There we have some volume.

So we would like a little more volume up front and a little less volume in the room.

Don't forget to resilience your phones.

You have between now and -- Dorothea.

Are you there?

When do the sign-ups stop?

Okay and that's pushing it a little.

I will make it 2:30.

Sign-ups will stop at 2:30.

I'm still hearing an awfully lot of conversation.

Okay.

I will turn it over to our chair.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you, Kathie.

When Kathie came in the room, it all got orderly.

Thank you.

So let's introduce and welcome our next speaker, Chad Boyd.

My proudly say Chad is a neighbor.

Out in eastern Oregon, that means you are 30 miles apart.

Chad works at the ag center in Burns, Oregon.

Thank you for coming Chad.

>> DR. CHAD BOYD: Thank you, Julie.

Can you hear me?

Are we on here?

Okay.

Are we on?

Check.

Okay.

First off, thank you for having me today.

Any time I get a chance to crawl out of my research realm and talk to folks who are doing what you folks are doing, I really appreciate it.

It makes the work more interesting and I appreciate the opportunity to be here today.

I appreciate Dean inviting me.

I don't know most of you.

I know one of you.

And what I thought I would do is share with you a little bit about who I am.

So you kind of know where I'm coming from.

And then get on to the business at hand, looking at some of the research that I'm here to talk to you about today.

I'm originally from central Texas.

My family has had a ranch there since the latter part of the 1800s.

And as a kid growing up, one of the things that central Texas is noted for is its white-tailed deer abundance.

And in particular, that part of the world has got some of the highest deer densities ever recorded.

On our ranch, during an annual censuses we have counseled up to 3 acres per deer deer density.

That's a lot of deer.

That's Pennsylvania level deer.

And as a kid, I was really interested in wildlife, and the more I started thinking about how those animals interacted with their habitat and how it influence them and how they influence the habitat and that culminated in me getting my undergraduate degree in wildlife management.

I was lucky enough spend some summers in Alaska working with the US national wildlife botany crew.

I went to get graduate degrees in rangeland ecology, and today I would consider myself a plant community ecologist with an abiding interest in wildlife.

So my current position is the research leader at the -- for the agricultural research service in Burns, Oregon.

We are looked at the eastern Oregon agricultural research center.

We are not alone there.

We are collocated with Oregon State University and recently we've had some of our

partners from the nature conservancy establish an office there.

So we have nature conservancy on site as well.

The Eastern Oregon Ag Research Center is a little different than a lot of ARS locations.

It's a place that does research on more ecosystem issues and there's a reason for that.

Our customers came to us -- oh, gosh, over a decade ago, and said, you know what, there's a lot of work.

There's a lot of quality work on how to -- a lot of research on how to produce more pounds of beef per acre.

What we really need to know is how do we deal with the ecosystem issues and invasive annual grasses, increasing presence of wildfire, expanding native conifer populations.

Those are the kind of issues that our customers are asking us to deal with.

Ranchers and regulatory agencies, state agencies, environmental groups, and nongovernmental organizations are our customers.

So we tend to work on those overarching ecosystem issues that affect multiple values, including sage-grouse, which keeps us hopping these days, as well as horses on rangelands.

So today I'm here as a scientist.

I'm not here as a person to offer up opinions on policy.

I'm not here to be an advocate for or against horses on rangelands.

I'm here to talk about -- with data in hand to talk about some of the work we have done looking at the relationship between free ranging horses on Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge and their habitat.

So with that, we'll get started.

To give you an idea of where I'm going today, I want to start out with a little background information on Sheldon.

Then we'll move into a discussion of the research itself, that I'm here to -- that's the

reason I'm here today.

We'll go through the results of that research.

I will give you some conclusions, based on that research, but then I want to kind of take those conclusions to a broader context and talk about what does it all mean?

The Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge is just under -- just shy of 500,000 acres, it's located in northwestern Nevada.

It has an interesting management history.

Historically it's been grazed by cattle and wildlife for many decades.

Cattle were removed in 1994, from the entirety of the refuge.

However, the refuge is still grazed -- was still grazed during that time period since 1994 by between 700 and 1200 free ranging horses.

Very minimal interior fencing presence within the landscape.

So there's not a whole lot to restrict the movement of those horses within the landscape.

US Fish and Wildlife in 2014 completed removal of the horses from the refuge.

And I should back up a step.

Speaking of US Fish and Wildlife, I did not acknowledge a couple of people and that's my coauthors in this research.

One is Dr. Kirk Davies who is also a rangeland ecologist and Gail Collins who is with the US Fish and Wildlife Service who works on both the Sheldon and Hart National Wildlife Refuges.

So an interesting place to do research, if you are looking for an archetypical big sagebrush landscape, this is it.

It's big country.

Few fences.

It's a really neat place to spend time.

So our objective was to evaluate horse use on plant community structure and

composition and also look at the effects of horse use on soil properties.

We focused on both riparian areas, as well as the associated uplands around the riparian areas.

Sheldon is a pretty cool spot to do -- was a pretty cool spot to do horse work and the reason for that is that there aren't livestock there.

And most of the places you could go to do horse work, you will be stuck trying to figure out, okay, what effects are associated with livestock, what effects are associated with horses?

This is a pretty unique -- this was a pretty unique opportunity to study free ranging horses and the relationship to their habitat in a large landscape in the absence of -- not the absence of other large herbivores.

There's certainly wildlife presence on the mule deer, antelope present on the refuge, but the livestock are not present.

This was an interesting opportunity to study horses.

We focused on really the southern half of -- of Sheldon.

It's about 200,000 acres, and it was occupied during the time of the study by about 500 horses and if you do the math, that comes up to something on the order of 375 acres per horse, to give you an idea of the number of animals there.

So for our study design, we selected five study sites and the study sites were centered around springs or seeps, and we selected those from a population of 60 springs that were located within the study area.

They were randomly selected.

Then when we got to a location, we established two 50 by 60-meter plots and if you don't think in meters, just think yards.

It basically works out the same.

But we established these two plots, and we then flipped the coin and decided which one of those two plots would be fenced and which one of those plots would remain open access for horse grazing.

And each of the plots had both the riparian component as well as an upland component.

So if you can picture roughly an area the size of a half a football field, half of which was in the riparian air and half of which is in the uplands that's what one of our plots look like.

We had a grazed plot, non-grazed plot at each of our study sites.

We collected the pretreatment data in 2008 to kind of characterize any differences, preexisting differences between grazed and non-grazed areas that might exist.

We did not find differences in any of the major variables that we measured and that I will be presenting today.

So no pretreatment differences.

The fences went up in the fall of 2008 and we collected post-treatment data from 2009 to 2013.

So basically a five-year study.

So the data that I'm going to present today or not comprehensive to every single scrap of data that we collected.

What I want to do is -- and frankly we don't have time to go there because we collected a lot of data in this study.

I want to present the highlights that characterize the major themes that we saw come out of this research.

And different pieces of data will have different numbers of years of collection associated with them and I will note that as we go through the data.

So the place I want to start is utilization.

And when I say utilization, I mean the amount of biomass consumed by a horse relative to the amount of plant biomass that's out there.

What percentage of that total biomass was consumed.

And I say by a horse and I need to back up just a step there again.

This area was also grazed by pronghorn and mule deer.

So we can't -- we can't factor out the influence of those two species because they did have access to the excluded areas.

The horses -- yeah.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: The mule deer and the other species could they get on both sides of the enclosure, was the fence such that they prevented them?

>> DR. CHAD BOYD: They could get on both sides of the enclosure.

There was another study by a guy out of Utah, he did report some mule deer in the enclosures.

But it was minimal.

Basically the plots were just small enough that I think behaviorally, we didn't have a lot of critters that wanted to jump in there, certainly antelope are a little skittish about that kind of thing.

So let's look at utilization levels.

This is for the riparian sites, you can see the average utilization level and this is averaged over the five-year period of the study.

And we went from -- we had a couple of sites that were really heavy, buckaroo spring and the Smith spring.

Smith was over 80% and buckaroo was over 70%.

Then we had a couple of the sites with a little bit less utilization, probably a fair bit less utilization.

10 miles and close to 50% and corral springs was 50%.

If you look at the standard this is a plus or minus, it's really, really high.

The reason that's high is because the use varied strongly in accordance with years.

Some years we would have a lot of horse use and some years we wouldn't.

So we had a pretty huge plus/minus associated with utilization on those two sites.

You will notice we actually have four sites listed here instead of the five.

One of our sites, it turned out there were so anti-pyrogenic modifications in the springs and the place where we put the study site -- the spring itself was migrating back into its natural channel.

And so it was desiccating.

We did retain all five for the upland study.

And in the upland study we saw anywhere from 14% utilization at 10-mile, which is pretty low, all the way up to 61% at buckaroo spring.

Two of the sites were fairly low utilization in the uplands, three of the sites were what we would consider moderate to heavy utilization for the upland areas.

Let's look at some of the results that we found in this study.

And I'm going to present upland results first.

I will spend most of the -- Kurt Davies was in charge of the upland and I was doing the riparian.

So I will spend more time on the riparian.

First, I want to look at the percent change in cover of perennial grasses and specifically, sagebrush.

And apologize for the codes.

That's perennial grasses, big sagebrush and I should point out these were all mountain big sagebrush sites, 6,000 feet or greater and then we had other shrubs which included bitter brush and rabbit brush.

But if we look at the change in cover from the time that the fences went up, to the end of the study, five years, that's what we are seeing here.

This is the percent change in cover, and areas that were excluded from horse grazing, we saw fairly significant increase in the cover of perennial bunch grasses relativity to the areas with horse use.

That was statistically different.

Same goes for artemisia or sagebrush.

We saw an increase in sagebrush, an increase recovery of sagebrush in the horse excluded areas versus the horse use areas.

Other shrubs didn't seem to matter much, rabbit brush and bitter brush.

Okay.

Sagebrush density.

Let me explain this graph.

This is, again, sagebrush, plants that are mature, and that's what the M stands for.

I'm having trouble with the pointer.

Let's try this one.

Right there.

And then sagebrush plants that are mature and this is a density, just the number per meter squared and we found that areas -- and apologize.

I flipped the grays and the excluded color.

The gray is the excluded area.

The black bars are areas that were open to horse grazing.

What we saw is an increase in density of mature shrubs and we did not see a significant difference between treatments with juvenile shrubs and let me explain what that means.

Mature shrubs, that doesn't mean a shrub that's 4 or 5 feet tall.

It's a shrub that's producing reproductive structures and so that can a 2-year-old shrub.

What I think is happening here is after the fences went up in the excluded areas we saw an increase in the number of shrubs coming into the system.

And so therefore we had an increase in mature sagebrush in the excluded treatment.

Again, with other shrubs, bitter brush and rabbit brush, didn't seem to matter.

We also saw an increase in overall floral diversity and the previous speaker spoke a little bit that.

Diversity is richness, which is the number of species and it's also equitability, and equitability just means how well is that abundance distributed across species.

Do you have a whole bunch of one species and not a lot of other species or is it pretty

well distributed anyways you multiply those two things to go and the formula gives you an estimate of overall floral diversity and we saw a 20% decrease in favor of higher diversity -- excuse me, we saw a 20% increase in the areas that were excluded from horse grazing, versus those that were open to horse grazing.

We also looked at soil properties associated with the upland areas and we did this at the end of the study.

This was collected in 2013.

And we looked at two things.

Looked at soil aggregate stability which is the measure of basically how well the surface horizon stays to go, if you were to take it out the ground, does it crumble or does it take together in a block?

That's a good indication of erosion potential.

The higher the soil aggregate, the lower the erosion.

And we looked at the soil surface penetration.]

That means how hard the soil surface is.

The harder of surface is, the less water you get to infiltrate in there.

If we look at soil aggregate stability, soil aggregate stability was higher had the excluded sites versus those open to horse grazing.

I think that's about 20% higher.

And soil surface penetration suggests that the soils in the grazed areas were quite a bit harder on the surface than those in the -- in the excluded areas.

Okay.

So that's a snapshot and brief of some of the results from the upland work.

I want to switch gears now and look at the riparian work.

And I use the term riparian because there are plant communities that are influenced annually, seasonally long by water.

Some people reserve that for streams.

These were really seeps and springs, but that's where I'm going with riparian area.

Plant communities influenced year round by water from flowing source.

So I want to start out looking at ground cover and ground cover, let me explain this a little bit can be one of three things.

It can be bare ground, which you can see here.

It can be litter, which is previous year's plant growth that has fallen to the ground, or it can be covered by the base of a plant.

Okay?

If this water pitcher were a plant, this is the area that would -- its base of cover would be defined by that area.

It's the basal coverage of plant or bare ground.

That's the we looked at ground cover.

And some interesting differences.

Some expected differences too.

We had higher cover of bare ground in the areas that were open for horse grazing, these black bars.

We had a much higher cover of litter, ground -- much higher percentage of ground that was covered by litter, within the excluded areas, but the one that's really interesting is the one on the right, the plant basal cover.

There was a higher plant basal cover in areas that were open to horse grazing than areas that were excluded and that seems kind of counterintuitive, litter buildup in the exclosures, was so significant that it covered so much of the ground that there's not as much room available for plant establishment within those exclosures if that makes sense.

Okay?

So we did have some differences, again some expected, some not in terms of -- in terms of ground cover.

Now how does that play out in terms of actual species of plants.

I call the functional groups those that may have economical roles and we'll take a look at each of those and the measurements here were collected at the end of the study.

So this is after five years of horse exclusion and the specific variable we are measuring is density, basically the number of above ground plants per unit area, in this case tenth of a meter square.

Sedges, we didn't see much of a difference.

Going into this, I suspected that we would see a pretty strong difference in terms of higher sedges, we did not see that.

Expected differences, rushes were higher in the grazed areas, rushes and eleocharis.

It's a genus.

And eleocharis was higher.

The grasses were slightly higher in terms of density of plants within grazed areas, but they didn't really make up a large proportion of the plant community.

They were -- it was almost incidental and the same for forbs, to the areas that were open to grazing.

Shrubs.

We expected going in that we might see a strong increase in shrubs in the excluded areas and usually if you are going to see an increase in shrubs associated with grazing, I say usually, you run into trouble when you say that, but oftentimes that occurs in the first three years after you change grazing management, if you are going to see a change in shrub abundance.

We only found shrubs at one site and the only shrub that we found was wild rose.

There were no willows at any of our sites.

So we really can't say a lot about shrubs.

What I can tell you is that the one site where we found shrubs, we had a much higher density, and much greater height on the shrubs within the excluded areas versus the grazed areas, but, again, that's one out of five sites that had shrubs so we really can't make any strong conclusions about the effects of horses on shrub component of the vegetation.

Okay, the biggest changes we saw in grazed and non-grazed areas within the riparian

zone had to do with what I will call habitat structure.

How tall is it?

How thick is it?

And this starts to get into the arena of potential implications for wildlife species.

If we look at stubble height, this is just the height of the vegetation at the end of the growing season.

We measured it in 2012 and 2013, the last two years of the study, and much greater stubble height, 40 centimeters stubble height in the excluded areas compared to under ten in the grazed areas.

And we saw a similar difference but less magnitude of a difference in 2013, but the same pattern, much lower structured vegetation, and the stubble in the areas with horse access.

Visual obstruction is just another way of saying how difficult is it to see through the vegetation, okay?

And visual obstruction scores were much higher in excluded areas, about three times as high as compared to areas that horses -- that horses had access for grazing.

So, again, habitat structure as opposed to necessarily composition was probably the biggest change that we saw within the riparian zone.

So what does all of that mean?

A want to throw out some conclusions here and then to spend just a couple of slides to wrap it up by offering some -- some thoughts on the context in which these conclusions occur.

So first off, conclusions.

In the upland areas we definitely saw a reduction in sagebrush.

That's something that -- that could be concerning with respect to sage-grouse habitat, which is a popular topic these days.

So we did see an impact on woody species in the uplands, again in the riparian area.

We have a hard time making that call because we don't have a large enough sample size.

The diversity decreased within the upland areas.

We did not measure diversity specifically in the riparian areas, but in the upland areas we did see a decrease in diversity.

Less stable soils in the upland areas, higher potential for erosion, and I didn't talk about it on the riparian slide, but this is something that would also concern me with respect to the riparian areas, that dramatic increase in bare ground that we had, those areas are going to be susceptible to both rain drop erosion, as well as wind erosion and more on that in just -- in just a moment.

These are springs.

They are not channelized riparian systems.

So the erosion dynamics are a little different than you would have in a channelized stream, but there is more bare ground susceptible to the effects of erosion within the horse-grazed areas.

The big environment change, again, that we saw in the riparian areas and probably overall in the study was just the alteration of habitat structure.

Inside the exclosures versus outside the exclosure.

I was talking about ground cover a while ago.

This is kind of what I was talking about in the lower right picture, this is all going to be -- this brown vegetation is going to be next year's litter.

That's a bit big change between the exposure and outside the exclosures.

Some final thoughts on the study.

This is a five-year study.

And five years -- it was five years that not surprisingly had abnormal weather.

Actually I do know what normal is.

We ran at statistics at Burns, Oregon, if you consider it 5 or minus 5%.

So it's occur 25% of the time.

So unsurprisingly, three of the five years within this study would have been considered

drought years.

So would we have seen different responses in wetter years?

Good question.

But that's something to think about when looking at the results of this study.

Most years were drought years but the thing I really want to focus on in the last couple of slides is springs vs. streams and the heterogeneity associated with horse use.

So let's look at springs vs. streams first.

So just for scale, that right there, those are two horses.

Those are rocks that look like horses.

But I'm standing at the upstream boundary of our study blocks at little buckaroo, and it's about a quarter mile from the spring source.

So all of our locations were very close to the spring source and they had very predictable water patterns, okay?

And therefore they had predictable energy patterns.

You can think of water as energy.

And energy the potential to do bad things to, say, a channel structure in a stream.

So we had predictable energy flow through these systems for most of the growing season.

We had a little bit of snow melt at the beginning of the season but for the most part this was predictable water amounts within these systems throughout the year.

And also this doesn't drain a large area, right?

This is pretty much the area drained by this particular seep.

So it's not like we are draining an entire portion of a mountain range here.

And the reason I'm bringing that up is I think we need to contrast that with channelized systems which are very different.

I've got a couple of pictures here in the lower right is sawtooth creek.

And it's the C channel stream, another channelized stream in the background of this picture on Steams Mountain, mere where I live.

And in channelized streams, they are what we call pulse driven systems.

So this' a huge pulse of energy that goes into the system every year about the time the snow melts, okay?

And the reason I'm bringing that up, if you had this level of utilization and this is one of our plots, this is Tenmile Spring, in this riparian system, it's probably going to blow up.

And what do I mean by that?

What I mean by that is when you have this level of hoof impact in a channelized system, what you are going to do is flatten out your banks and as you flatten out your banks what is happening to the water table and the soil column, yes, it's going down.

The sedges were not impacted in this.

I think that's because we had springs and not channelized riparian systems.

Sedges, they are resilient no grazing.

What they can't take is a loss of water in the soil.

Right?

And so if you were to impart this level of use on a channelized system, you are very likely to see a lowering.

Water table.

As the water table lowers, you will start to lose your sedges and as you lose your sedges, you are losing the glue that holds the channelized riparian systems to go.

The reason I'm bringing that up is I want to throw in a word of caution when taking our results and interpreting them across the board to other systems are more channelized pulse driven nature.

The last thing I want to talk about is heterogeneity, it's a favorite topic of mine and I want to think about some larger scales here.

We did some plot level work.

I want to think about a landscape, though.

Let's do a little exercise here.

This is inside on the right, and outside of our exclosures.

This is little buckaroo spring.

Is this good or bad?

What do you see in this picture that is good or bad?

Human nature -- go ahead.

>> JAMES FRENCH: And that's bad.

I can tell you that for a number of reasons I think you could argue that it is bad, but it is -- you increase the risk, I believe, of altering that habitat permanently when you get it to the left side there.

>> DR. CHAD BOYD: We have a lot more bare ground.

If this were a channelized system, I would be suspicious that it will blow up the next high flow event.

What about from a wildlife standpoint if you are a Kildeer, what side will you live on?

The left side.

If you are a sage-grouse chick, what are you going to be looking for?

Probably something in between those.

There's actually been some work done on that at Sheldon.

Looking at chicks during the brooding period.

This was done when the livestock was present in 1984.

It could have been livestock or horse use, who knows but they found that the chicks preferred areas that were utilized in a moderate fashion.

So something that's going to be in between these two particular extremes.

If you are nesting passerine bird, you will probably prefer the area on the right side.

I can attest to the fact that we were constantly attacked by brewers black birds when reading the transects within our -- within our riparian exclosures.

But the point that I want to make here is good and bad have a management concept associated with that.

You need it have an objective in mind when you make that determination.

And the problem that we saw at Sheldon was not necessarily that we had some areas that looked like the area on the left, it's the extent of the landscape that was occupied by those areas.

And its effect on -- so we've got some habitat heterogeneity that may support a diversity of uses but when -- when the majority of riparian habitat looks like on the left, then the benefits of that heterogeneity start to go away.

And this relates to a couple of things and one of them that's been talked about today -- actually both of them have been talked about today.

One of them is the number of animals and certainly the density of horses is going to have an impact on how they graze the landscape and how your landscape looks relative to those two extremes but there's another aspect to it that's frankly, probably more difficult to manage than the numbers and that's how the animals are distributed across the landscape and anyone who runs cattle knows this.

Distribution is a really tough thing and it relates to seasonal habitat preference in this case of horses.

It came out in the last presentation that towards the end of the growing season there was increased horse time that was spent in these areas around the water source and we saw the same thing.

So that area on the left could very well look like this picture in the upper left early in the growing season.

Okay?

Later -- early in the growing season, what you are going to find is you will find more horses in these uplands surrounding the seep in this case and they are there.

It's less buggy.

A little bit more wind.

Their water demand will be a lot less than it is later in the growing season, but as those grasses and shrubs start to die towards the end of growing season, you are going to begin to see more and more horse use in this -- in and around the riparian seeps and that's exactly what we saw.

So, again -- horses could create heterogeneity that might be beneficial to some species, however, the problem is managing that effect, and when you have animals that are on the rangeland for 12 months out of the year, and when you don't have control over distribution, you are going to -- it's easy to get to a point where the majority of the landscape is looks like the other on the left in the previous slide.

To me, that's the real problem from the management standpoint.

It's more than the number of horses but it's how the horses distribute themselves across the landscape throughout the year.

And with that, I will just add that the results from this work can be found in a couple of different journal articles, one in ecosphere and the riparian work has been published in "Rangeland Ecology and Management."

With, that I would be happy to take any questions you might have.

>> JAMES FRENCH: Thank you for your presentation.

It's very timely for me.

I cut my teeth on the Sheldon.

So I know that country very, very well.

But I was wondering if in the process of this five-year period, if you had observed a process of plant replacement going into an early sorel stage where you are seeing some plants that are in worst case scenario nonnative nocuous weeds.

And I know depending on elevation -- the second question is what were the elevation of the sites.

Depending on that, that will dictate as to whether or not -- how high the risk is for those high -- those areas of high use like that.

I just wondered if you observed that, just over a five-year period.

>> DR. CHAD BOYD: Yes.

Good question.

In the elevation of the sites, all of the sites were above 6,000 feet.

So we were at a point in the ecosystem where resistance to annual grasses will be high enough that they were only sporadically encountered in the study period.

So if we would have been at a lower elevation, I suspect we would have seen some very different results.

If we would have been in that particular part of the world, if we would have been less than 4500 feet, I think we would have -- my guess -- and this is a guess -- is that we would have seen an increase presence of things like cheatgrass, in the areas that were exposed to horse.

We were above 6,000 feet, and pretty resilient systems there.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I noticed that when you were referring to some species that might be in competition for some of these resources you specifically mentioned pronghorn and mule deer.

As you know, the history of the Sheldon, a big piece of that is that it was established primarily -- I mean, legally when it finally got established for pronghorn, but before that, it was a reserve for big horn sheep.

And as you know, in the CCP process, where they were planning the future of the refuge, the relationship between the big horn sheep and the horses was a major contributing factor on why the horses came off the Sheldon.

I wondered why you didn't refer to the big horn sheep?

>> DR. CHAD BOYD: Yeah.

We didn't get into the wildlife issue strongly, other than to document the habitat.

Yes, that could be a factor.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: One comment I wanted to make on this picture you had right here with the -- kind of extremes on both side of the fence and you kind of touched on it in your statements if you were to leach that grass in that enclosure and those -- not just the grass but the other plants in that enclosure, and never grazed them again, potentially they -- that won be a healthy situation either.

They would crowd themselves out at some point in time and I have seen where there's been exclosures where that's happened.

>> DR. CHAD BOYD: Yeah.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: It seems like kind of having a balance is really what is optimal for everything.

Do you want to touch on that?

>> DR. CHAD BOYD: Yeah, sure.

And I will be able to touch on it with data here next year.

It will be five years since the conclusion of the study and we're going to go back.

This will be year ten since the exclosures went up to collect the data on that and that will be one of our questions.

But generally what you see and we certainly saw it in these systems is these seeps will be really high-producing systems and any time you produce the amount of vegetation that you are seeing in these systems what you are going to get, you will get a strong litter layer and that litter layer can serve as an impediment to recruitment of new plants and into.

Plant community.

And, yeah, you can certainly see that over time.

One the things that might be different than it was historically that goes right along with that, is historically it's very likely that fire frequency was a lot higher than it is now and it probably helped to reduce some of that litter buildup.

You are going to see some pretty crazy levels of fire suppression in this particular area because this is primo sage-grouse habitat.

Without fire, you would begin to see a decrease in the density of new plants recruited into that system with increasing litter layers that you will see in the excluded areas.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Sue, are you still on the line?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Yes, I'm here.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Do you have some questions?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: I had a question to clarify and I might have missed this being long distance but for your exclusion, were you working at a single riparian area or a seep and you excluded a portion of that seep and left a portion open or were you

having different sites where more or less the entire area was excluded, if you -- does that make sense?

>> DR. CHAD BOYD: Yes, it does.

No, we did not exclude entire seeps.

So we were working on really a microcosm of five different drainage systems and we had our study design with the grazed and the ungrazed plots 50 to 60 meters each within those -- within the systems.

We didn't fence out an entire system.

Am I answering your question, Sue?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: How large was a given system?

And what -- what portion of the it were you excluding is I guess my question?

>> DR. CHAD BOYD: It's going to be a very small percentage of the overall system.

And I'm hesitating a little bit there because the farther -- it depends on how you define the system.

We tended to stay pretty close to the headwaters spring because the farther you get from the headwaters spring, the earlier in the growing season you are going to start getting below a water potential that is going to support hydrophilic plants that define a riparian area.

So basically there's your gradient that starts at the spring where you have got a lot of riparian plants, riparian obligate plants around the spring but you dry out the farther that water travels over land and so it's moving target as to -- and what sort of the plant community to have really depends on the distance from the head water streams.

So that's why we tried to stay within a quarter mile of the head water spring.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Thank you.

That answers my question.

And thank you, Julie.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Do we have any more questions from the board?

>> JAMES FRENCH: If I could get back to Steven's question and the idea of how plant

production changes if you don't graze it and you have this massive litter buildup.

What we tended to see was bigger plants, like, if you take sedges.

We had bigger plants in the excluded area.

They look more robust at the base of the things.

The question is: Are they going to decrease in density over time?

So -- and I didn't present the data today.

We didn't see any differences in production.

So the last year of the study, we went in and put some cages in, in grazed areas and we compared the after vegetation produced in a single growing season, new vegetation and not standing dead, in the grazed versus excluded areas it comes out the same.

Okay?

We are still having equal production of plant material but my question is, and one of the reasons why I want to go back next year, is that going to decline over time if we continue to see fewer but larger plants, do you get to a point where -- in terms of litter accumulation, where that can offset the difference between grazed and ungrazed and I don't know the answer to that?

But we hope to find out.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Already a lot over tools where, intensity, duration, how can that -- what kind of effect you would have on the grazed versus the ungrazed?

>> DR. CHAD BOYD: Yeah, really good question.

So if -- one of the factors that relate -- that really I brought up is, for example, a conspicuous lack of shrubs at our sites and one of the things you see is -- that you can see with cattle, you can see the same thing.

If you graze too late in a system and too hard in a system, you can start to hit the woodies, the willows and it's just because the sedges have died, and there's a switch that goes on when they start to hit the willows.

I think the same thing -- the same thing happens with horses.

We saw it in this study and so that's one aspect of it, if you can control the season of

use, I would be really interested over time to see what impact that has on the woody component here.

But, yeah, I think season of use in addition to go -- I mean, it's about the density of animals.

It's about how they disperse themselves across the landscape and it's how those two things equate or sync up with season of use.

I think there's some differences.

There's big differences between this system and a well-managed livestock system.

First off, you will be able to control the density of animals, the stocking density of animals.

You will be able to control the season of use and you are going to be able to control through herding practices how those animals are distributed within a season across the landscape.

So to me, this is something -- this is something very different and I want to be clear about that.

I have think this is something that is very different than a well-managed livestock grazing system.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Thank you.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you, Chad, for your presentation.

>> DR. CHAD BOYD: You bet.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: During the 1990s, the wild horse and burro, in the Pryor Mountains.

They had half a dozen or more researchers and all of that is bound in a book, you know, and it seems to me that we -- that we should have that maybe as a tool in our -- in our tool box to review, and just compare the season of use, like in the Pryor Mountains.

If you are familiar with it, it goes from 3,000-foot desert ecosystem up to subalpine.

And so when you talk about moving livestock around, well, the season of use up there isn't -- is driven by the season of the year, how much snow and moisture and so forth.

But a couple of conclusions were that the range condition up there was primarily all about moisture, how much moisture there was and within the exclosures I remember an interesting point was that there may have been more density of foliage outside the exclosures but the diversity was greater within the exclosures which I found interesting.

Interesting.

So I throw that out.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you.

Thank you, Ginger for that observation and, yeah.

A lot of data, wherever it comes from, it's pertinent to different landscapes.

It's time for our next presentation.

And Dr. Al Kane will talk to us about some of our current tools that we have available.

Again, thank you, Chad.

We really appreciate the info.

Are.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Just a reminder because of the public comment period, we will want to stop at 2:45 and we have eaten into a little bit of Dr. Kane's time.

So if we can help him get through all of that by that time, that would be lovely.

>> DR. ALBERT KANE: I heard you loud and clear.

Just start going like this if you want to cut me off.

So thank you for the invitation to share this with you guys today.

Dean asked me to do this talk.

It's the exact same talk I gave in Salt Lake City at the summit.

So for those of that you were, there my apologies for repeating it.

For those of that you weren't there, you get to see it here.

On that -- the day before the meeting, we were asked a question by somebody in the group that said, you know, I really still don't understand the problem.

We all love horses.

We hear that everybody loves horses and why do we want to get rid of them?

Nobody wants to get rid of all the horses.

The problem is we have too many excess horses and in our facilities we have excess horses because the adoption demand is too low, given the supply of horses that have been removed from the range, to try to keep things in balance, and on the range, we have too many excess horses because the population growth rate is too high.

If you look at population growth rates, they typically grow in the 15 to 20% per year, when there's uncontrolled reproduction.

There's really three things that determine that population growth rate.

Of the biggest one is foaling rate, but then you also have ingress and egress out of the system, or out of the land area you are talking about, that is horses migrating on to adjacent lands or coming in from adjacent lands and then obviously, you have removals, whether that's from mortality or a gather and removal situation.

So some numbers to keep in mind, as we talk about contraception is typically for untreated animals in these studies, what we see is about a 60 to 75% foaling rate among mares on the range.

And so that's kind of our baseline control group number that we see over and over again from these studies.

Most all of these studies had control groups and typically on the range, we see a foaling rate in untreated horses.

Now in captive trials be the foaling rate is a little bit higher.

There tends to be more stability in the captive setting and we tend to use mares of sort of prime reproductive age to give the contraceptions a good challenge.

In those studies typically we see 85 to 90% foaling rates in the untreated mares and that's just a test to make sure that our stallions are doing their job and truly challenging the contraceptive.

Though, ultimately when we talk about fertility control, we are obviously concerned with individual mares getting pregnant and foaling but the ultimate goal is population

growth suppression.

And that is reduce the rate of population growth and in order to achieve, that you need two things.

The first thing is a fertility control agent with high efficacy and we want to see 10% of the treated mares foaling.

If you have an agent where fewer than 10% are foaling, that's even going to help you achieve population growth suppression even faster.

But if you have an agent where half the mares are still foaling, that are treated, chances are you may never see a change in the population growth rate.

You may reduce individual mare foaling but if the population level, once you start adding those numbers up it's hard to see an effect.

So what we want to see is something -- typically our goal is for less than 10% of the treated mares to foal and then you have to treat enough pairs in the population to have a measurable effect and what we like to see is treat 75 to 90% of the mares in the population.

If you are only treating 10 to 20% of the mares in the population, it will be difficult to get to this goal of ultimate growth suppression.

So I will talk about the history of fertility control.

The research really started in the late '70s and early '90s.

BLM supported a lot of this early work.

At that time, male and female contraception was examined.

Mostly these were hormone treatments.

Unfortunately they had two aspects that were not desirable and one, they were short acting; and they tended to leave residues in the animals that persisted in the environment.

So most of the steroid, estrogen, and progesterone persist in the environment after they are excreted hasn't that's not a good thing in the big picture: At that time, they determined that female contraception would be a more promising target than male contraception.

Wild horse bands are what we call dynamic and polygynandrous.

That means multiple males will breed multiple females in a harem.

They have seen up to 30% of the foals in a given population can be sired by secondary stallions, and that's without fertility control treatments.

So in a normal setting, up to 30% of the foals you see, typically it's not that high but it can be as high as 30% and that means they are sired by something other than the dominant harem stallion.

Either a bachelor stallion or a secondary harem stallion.

It's my opinion when you use fertility control, even if you have contracepted the mare partially or for a period of time, instead of those mares getting pregnant in the first or second heat in a month and a half breeding season, those mares will cycle for five, six, seven months.

If you sterilize males and the 10 or 20% of males that you can't capture will get the job done and they will get those mares bred because they are hiding in the wings and when the stallion chased somebody one direction, another stallion comes in and breeds the mare.

So male contraception has not really been pursued too much.

The focus shifted to female contraception, specifically the focus really shifted to porcine zona pellucida or PZP.

PZP is a glycoprotein.

And we mix adjuvants with the antigen to help stimulate the immune system.

The mare makes antibodies against PZP and those antibodies -- the actual numbers here aren't important but the point is the green arrow indicates where an injection of a vaccine was given, and so you have a boost in antibody production and then they decay over time.

And so it's the antibodies that are active in the mare.

They block fertilization of the mare and they bind the proteins in the ovary and modify the function of that ovary.

And some of the studies that they look at the effect on the ovary and weighed them, taken them out of the mares and weighed them, they have seen that ovaries shrink when they are under the influence of the PZP vaccine and some have demonstrated a change in the estral cycling with one treatment of certain PZP agents or repeated

treatments of the most common PZP agent which this is ZonaStat H and this is a baseline status.

Some people call it native PZP.

But it's the typical PZP, that the darting programs that the BLM has typically used.

It is registered with the EPA.

It's produced by the science and conservation center at Zoo Montana.

There's a primary shot and a 30-day booster, given roughly 30 days, say three to four weeks aft primary and that's kind of one treatment.

So if you just give a primary shot, you get a little bit of antibody production but the way the immune system works is it likes to see an antigen once and make a little bit of an antibody and get boosted and then you have the amnestic response and that's when the antibody levels really go sky high.

So with the second booster you see good efficacy with this product.

Ideally you administer it one to two months prior to the breeding season because if you remember back to that chart, antibodies decline over time, and if you boost those antibodies a month or two before the breeding season, then you have good antibody levels during the season.

This costs about \$30 a shot to BLM.

The application costs for darting can vary obviously.

You have heard a lot of discussion and you saw yesterday some examples that rely heavily on volunteers to administer darting programs.

Those costs are low to the BLM but the people doing the work, this they spend a tremendous amount of time pursuing individual mares.

BLM applications will run from \$500 a mare to personnel costs up to the catch, treat and release costs that you heard Michael estimate this morning of about \$2,500 a mare and this is because you have to catch a horse to treat her and you can't just catch females.

So to treat one, you've got to catch typically two because half of them will be males.

Now you paid to catch two horses so you can treat one and treat her and release her and that's one of the reasons why that number is so high.

ZonaStat is pretty effective.

If you can get it in there every year, only 7 to 18% of treated mares foal.

It's used very successfully by the BLM on a handful of areas, five or six areas, I would say, including some areas here in Colorado.

So we have heard that it's being used in the Sandwash.

It's being used in Little Book Cliffs and has been done for several years and Spring Creek and very successfully because of the dedication of the one person who does the darting there.

This can greatly reduce the gather frequency, as long as you treat a high enough percentage of mares.

In and of itself an effective product.

We will look at one of the alternatives for Zonastat-H, and that Assateague.

They were basically 46% over AML.

So not in a severe condition as many BLM HMAs they were not two or three times over.

They were half again over AML.

In the early days it did about two weeks to dart all the mares.

In the later days of study it took about four weeks and they get wily and they don't like being darted.

Not a huge impact on the mares but they still don't like it.

They learn if somebody is sneaking to me in the bushes holding something like this shaped in the hands maybe I want to move more than 50 yards a hand.

Good darters might go out to 60 yards, typically, they try to get a 30 or 40-yard shot.

You have to get that close to the mares.

Typically and their treatment is 0 to 7% of the treated mares were foaling each year.

So that's very good efficacy.

Their application rate varied and this had to do with things like budget and weather and timing, as well as biological reasons but they averaged a 70% treatment rate, which is a little low, but that's starting to get up to where I would say is a high enough percentage to affect the population.

Ideally you would be able to treat some 90% of your mares.

And if we look at population foaling rates, they drop to about 7% plus or minus 2% a year, and that would have been from -- a population foaling rate, again, as we said in the beginning would have been typically 60, 65%, probably, I don't remember what it was specifically for Assateague.

But if we look over time at the population level, you can see that they started with 156 horses.

After two years they had 166, after five years they had 171, after eight years -- so after eight years, the population is growing, and it's growing slowly but it's growing.

And there's a lot of reasons for that.

Maybe foal survival is better among the mares that did foal.

The treated mares lived longer.

So mortality decreased.

After 13 years, they finally saw a decrease in the population and then after 24 years, the study was over then, but using their population estimates from this year, they are down to 89 horses.

And so this is a success.

This is treating the vast majority of all the horses with the very effective agent and it took 13 years to see a population decrease and probably somewhere around the 20-year mark to see a decrease to where they wanted to see the population in terms of numbers.

But when we look at Assateague, this is a slide I used and showed the students in Colorado when I lectured to them.

A lot of people say, why don't you do what they did on Assateague.

This is a scale representation of the size of Assateague compared to a typical BLM HMA.

So Assateague island has 120 horses on about 9,000 acres.

And this is the typical scenario.

I drive down the highway, if you pull over on the side of the highway and you make the sound that a bag of Fritos, and they come gather around your car.

This is commonly what they see and they have their share of wily mares that are hard to dart that live in the salt grasses and that sort of thing.

But compare that to what I would call a typical BLM HMA, over here on the Jackson Mountains, the AML is 170 horses and it's 238,000 acres and this is what it looks like and there are no roads in there.

Either because there's just no roads because there's no reason for a road or maybe it's a wilderness area.

But can't just drive around and pull your car over and have the horses come up to you.

You can imagine in a vast area like this, how difficult it may be to find a horse, let alone get close to dart a horse.

What works well in this setting, may not work in this setting.

And there's settings in between, the and the Sandwash Basin.

I spent a fair bit of time in the Sandwash Basin.

The amount of hours that goes into the -- I think they said they darted 100 horses last year.]

That percentage of the population hasn't gotten high enough to really drop the numbers yet.

But unfortunately, they are several times over AML and they have 300 breeding mares out, there just looking at the numbers and they are darting 100 of them, but they are using an effective agent and if they get that population down, and then they start being able to dart 70 plus percent of the population, of those mares that is, then I think they have a good chance of affecting population growth rates in a significant way and that's actually our goal.

So because the Zonastat-H had to be given every year.

We were looking for other opportunities.

PZP, we were looking at pelleted PZP or what we call PZP-22.

The idea was a one treatment, longer lasting agent.

And the treatment itself consists of that primer shot, which is a liquid shot, given at the very same time as a shot that includes pellets and it includes PZP-22, it includes three pellets, a one month, a three month, and a 12-month pellet and the idea was that it was meant to release PZP in a pulsatile fashion over time.

It was costing \$300 a dose and we just heard this morning that the current contract, that number is \$450 or thereabouts a dose.

The first study that was don't published in 2004, again, about 50% of their untreated mares were foaling.

That's the lowest foaling percentage I have seen in one of these projects for treated mares.

Something to keep in mind.

Only about half of their untreated mares were foaling.

And then when they applied and measured the outcome here, they found that in the first two years, only 6 to 18% of their treated mares were foaling, and at 3 to 4 years 30 to 40% of their mares were foaling.

So in the third and fourth year, them unable to reduce foaling even by half.

But they started with a fairly low foaling rate.

So the first two years looks pretty efficacious and the advantage it's one shot -- they are two shots given at the same time.

If you get your hands on the mare, you give them two shots at the same time.

Now we had a fairly highly efficacious two-year project, unfortunately this level of efficacy has never been repeated in another study.

When we look at the following studies, typically their untreated foaling rate was 60 to 75% and the first one was HSUS study on the Sandwash where 68% of the treated mares were foaling first couple of years hasn't this seemed much higher than expected and puzzling.

So with some other work that was being done to make it last even longer, they

repeated looking at PZP-22 in a captive setting at Carson City.

The first year, 10% foaled, which was pretty good.

That's on par with Zonastat-H given that it was one shot, one treatment.

Unfortunately in the second year, 68% of the mares foaled.

That indicates that you have no effect in the second year, from a product that we thought would last two years and maybe into the third year.

They went back to the laboratory to try to figure it out.

We know that PZP-22 has the same safety profile but the efficacy does not make it usable.

It's the best treatment we can touch the mare one time.

It the advantage of not having to given a 30-day booster because you give them both shots at the same time.

So the studies in the Sandwash continued with some studies where they gave boosters following the initial PZP 22 treatments and in the Sandwash, they had 18 to 22% foaling rates.

They were doing similar studies at Cedar Mountain and had 15% foaling rates for three years.

I think 40% foaling rates is probably too high.

That's not efficacy that I will get excited about.

15% foaling rates you start to sort of say, okay, that will be helpful.

I think more work needs to be done.

Just because you see something once doesn't mean you will see it the next time and the next time.

When I see good results two, three, four times in a row, then I start to have confidence in any drug or product like that.

One of the things to note is in their -- in their darting programs up to 68% of the injection sites do show a reaction, but aesthetically they do bother some people and they are something to take note of.

So there are some other PZP products, one of them is SpayVac which was developed in the '90s.

It's a one-shot long acting PZP product that uses liposome technology to be a sustained release.

It has been shown to block fertilization and it was one of the PZP products that was shown to shrink ovarian size.

So it's having some impact on ovarian tissues as well as blocking fertilization and it's successful in other species in deer and seals.

It was very effective and lasted a long time it showed promise for horses and it was tried in a captive situation in Carson City correctional.

And in the first year, none of the treated mares foaled and two to fourth years, 17% foaled.

Maybe this is longer lasting and it's pretty good efficacy.

There were only 12 treated mares and eight controls and it seemed like it was worth looking into further and repeating.

We did a couple of trials at Pauls Valley at the BLM facility there.

These are captive trials where the mares were treated and put in with stallions.

We were trying to repeat that Carson City efficacy and see if would be even better, hopefully.

The first year we had 13 to 17% of the mares foaling.

Again, that's on the margin of good enough, but I would like to see it a little bit lower but in the second and through the fourth years, 45% of the mares foaled.

And that's just way too high and that study our controls about 85 to 90% of them were foaling.

So we are barely even cutting foaling rates in half.

We did not have good efficacy when we repeated this trial.

15 of the mares that were treated never did become pregnant but a lot of other treated bears became pregnant quickly.

And there's something going on there immunologically, why certain individuals it seemed to have a very long lasting effect, but during the course of the study towards the end these were only 15 that didn't get pregnant.

And these were pretty much prime age breeding mares.

It's not like they got to be 25 plus years old or whatever.

We repeated a trial and we added a stronger adjuvant and 50 to 70% of the mares foaled it was disappointing and we talked to the manufacturer and challenging them, about you know, we don't think the variability is in the horses and what could be the variability in the vac seep.

There were not good explanations for this outcome.

The results were very variable and getting worse.

So we ended these trials.

We pulled the plug on them early.

We were going to follow them out to three, four, five years but after the second trial, the first year, we folded that up.

We followed the mares for a few more years.

I think another year or two.

When we looked at the limitations of SpayVac, there were some formulation changes in terms of the amount of PZP antigen, the type of adjuvant that was used.

It was difficult to obtain the product the manufacturer had kind of lost interest in producing it.

The good news is although it's not currently available, that is presently changing, the proponent of this product Mark Fraker who has found a new manufacturer who is interested in producing it, they will try to return to the original formulation and apparently pursue EPA approval.

I know they are trying to find opportunities to do some feed trials going back to go what they have explained as the original formulation.

In my opinion, this product still has some promise but we need new larger efficacy studies to demonstrate efficacy with reliability and repeatability before I have enough

confidence in it for field applications.

Just a note about PZP and what is PZP.

This is -- these are protein electrophoretograms of PZP.

These should essentially look the same if it's the same protein.

This is a pure PZP, and this will only show one band.

This is the PZP produced by Dr. Brown that's used in Spay/Vac, that method.

This is produced by Irwin Liu.

And this has a heavier ZP2 band, but the point is all PZP is not created equally.

If you have three or four vials of PZP in front of you, they may have slightly different proteins in them and these electrophoretograms, they show different substances.

I think we need to better understand the differences between different PZP formulations and preparations because some of them may stimulate certain types of antibodies better than others.

If we shift gears a little bit and look at GonaCon, it's not based on PZP.

It's against the hormone GNRH, it's a sex hormones that the follicle stimulating hormone.

It's registered with the EPA.

It's a one-shot for multiyear.

It's been studied in rabbits, elk, deer and horses.

It was used in?

Trials at Carson City, where they showed only 6% foaling the first year and 40% foaling years two and three.

So good first year efficacy, not so good second, and third year efficacy but, again this was a one-shot product.

So it looked kind of promising.

We didn't pursue it in field trials because the Park Service was pursuing a study at

Teddy Roosevelt National Park and so we knew that was ongoing, and what they found was 45 to 54% foaling rates in the first two years, which is not great efficacy.

Their foaling rate and controls, I think was about 75%.

So they did not cut it in half, but after a booster, three years later, they had 0% foaling first year, and only 16% foaling the next two years.

So with a booster, this product looks a little more promising it is a fairly simple shot to give.

It comes premixed.

It can be darted or hand injected.

And our hope is that as they continue to understand how these boosters work, we'll see good efficacy with it.

BLM is using it in one area currently.

It's a small kind of pilot study.

Just a note about EPA registration.

Regulation of contraceptives for free ranging wild and feral animals was transferred from the FDA to the EPA.

The EPA regards this as a restricted use pesticide.

Compared to the drug, it has little or no information on the mechanism of action or no information on side effects or complications.

But the EPA's mind-set and goal is pretty different than that for the FDA.

Typically, their burden is to establish environmental and nontarget animal safety.

So if you are trying to target mice, they want to make sure the product is safe and isn't going to adversely affect song birds, for example.

There is no minimum EPA requirement for efficacy, unless you make a public health or a food safety claim for a product.

So keep in mind, just because something is registered with the EPA, it does not mean it's an effective product.

It just means that it's -- that the environmental safety has been demonstrated and it's safe for the nontarget animals.

Now, they consider efficacy data, when they looked at the contraceptives and they considered the safety data, including for the target species but that's not their typical pattern of the products they regulate.

So just because you see EPA registration doesn't necessarily mean you can just go pull it off the shelf and it will solve your problems.

We have seen a lot of things. You try to use in your feed room to control the mice, they are determined to be safe, but they are not effective and they let the market sort that out, in seems.

We looked at a few items that were charged, and that would include IUDs and marbles have been used to reduce estrus in saddle horses.

Over a period of time, you can't leave them in indefinitely.

They fracture and cause problems in the uterus.

And when you put stallions in without mare, he's flushing a quart of lube and the marbles flush right out.

Some IUD studies were done with a ring in the '90s.

They reported over 80% efficacy rates and said the silastic rings were effective and the mares returned to fertility when they were pulled out.

So we attempted to repeat these studies in some work we did with USGS and Oklahoma State University.

We attempted to repeat the SILASTIC ring.

And 60% of the mares lost the IUD pretty quickly and this was effective as long as it was retained but the majority of the IUDs fell out.

They are currently in the process of trying to reengineer the IUD so it stays in better.

And some of the results are promising.

The one big limitation of IUD you can only put them in an open mare.

And most wild horse mares are pregnant.

They are usually already pregnant when you catch them.

If you can catch them when they are open, that might be promising.

BLM has started to consider and look at surgical methods for sterilizing females, including spaying mares by ovariectomy.

Two of the leading techniques are colpotomy which takes 15 to 30 minutes per mare and laparoscopy which is a fiber optic-guided technique and that takes about an hour to an hour and a half per mare.

The colpotomy has been applied to wild horse mares.

The survival is related to the experience of the surgeon.

The one surgeon I know his survival rate is very good but you have to ask yourself, what is very good?

Can you accept a survival on the range of castration of adult wild horse stallions which is probably 95%, but it's not going to be perfect.

The safety and practicality of these mares is largely unknown.

As I said wild horse mares are usually pregnant.

One of the reasons we were trying to do research along these lines was to try and spay mares at different stages of pregnancy by colpotomy to see how much success they had.

Unfortunately those studies were stopped mostly because of the litigation.

The Sheldon reportedly reduced the number of foals per harem when they had combined vasectomy with spaying.

They later examined the horses they vasectomized and when they studied them, they saw that the vasectomies were not effective.

The tubal ligation are relatively untested because there's no demand for them in domestic horses.

There are some techniques that have been used in open mares, BLM was similarly interested in pursuing these areas with wild horses at wild stages of pregnancy and those studies were halted mostly by litigation.

Male surgical sterilization has been done, the surgical vasectomy is pretty successful.

The procedure itself is successful.

Whether or not you can affect population growth rate, as I said in the beginning, it's questionable in my mind.

I don't think you are going to be able to do a high enough percentage of stallions to have a population level effect.

This is not well studied because not used well much in wild horses.

The studies have a little bit of an effect the first year in the harems where the stallion was vasectomized, but as long as you get two or three years out, it's greatly diminished and soon disappeared.

Chemical vasectomy is described as something that should be easy to adapt to application.

That was a disservice, I think, to the community, because the one study that tried chemical vasectomy, 100% of them failed.

Clearly it's not that simple.

There's no established technique to chemical vasectomy, there's nothing on the shelf in terms of product or technique that has been demonstrated to work.

Castration of stallions it doesn't matter if you castrate them or vasectomized them.

If you replace stallions with geldings.

A gelded stallion cannot reproduce, but you have the same population level questions of can you treat a high enough percentage of the animals?

There are also behavioral and ecological consequences of gelding a large population that are unknown and BLM through the USGS currently has some studies that are going to examine that very question.

So right now, Zonastat-H is really the best available product in my opinion.

Especially for small or closed populations that are at or near AML.

It has to be used in an area where animals can be cataloged by appearance so that you can keep track of which animals you have already treated.

If the 90% of your herd is bay with no markings, it's pretty hard to apply these

treatments because you don't want to dart of the same one over and over every week.

You've got to be able to tell them apart.

Animals also have to be approachable by darting, typically within the, say, 50-yard range, 40 to 60 yards, which is not applicable no many HMAs that the BLM has to manage.

If you can dart with it every year, I think you can expect good efficacy, particularly at the population level if you can treat about 90% or more of the population.

It certainly stabilizes population growth, but as we saw in Assateague, it may take you 15 to 20 years to start to decrease population size even a little bit.

GonaCon equine, I think is promising when it's followed with a booster smaller population at or near the AML because of the need to give it more than once.

I would expect good multiyear efficacy the more times it's given but the exact duration at this point is probably unknown after repeated treatments.

I forget which buttons to push.

PZP-22 has good efficacy that first year as a one hands on treatment.

Better efficacy with boosting, but the repeatable and the duration is unsupported.

SpayVac may still be promising, but we need to look at the ideal formulation and look for reliability in the results there.

Spaying and surgical techniques need to be examined in pregnant mares as far as their practicality and usefulness at the population level.

And with that, I went kind of fast, but if the board has questions.

I did that in 20 minutes at the summit, believe it or not.

I went really fast!

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you, Dr. Kane.

I want to ask -- because we are up against our timeline, I want to ask Sue right off the bat if you have any questions.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Oh, thanks, Julie.

I had one question about -- for gathering for PZP, is most of that gathering done with helicopters or with bait trapping?

>> DR. ALBERT KANE: I would say it's done both ways.

I think for PZP treatment, most of it is done with helicopters because the goal is to treat a large number of mares.

A lot of bait trapping is used in areas where they are so far over the population or where they are, they need to remove the mares that they catch.

It's pretty unusual to do, catch, treat and release by bait trapping but it could be done either way.

There are some projects right now with burros going on where they are using bait trapping, treating the burros and releasing them.

It could be done either way.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: And when you do it with helicopters, is the integrity of the harems maintained when you release them?

>> DR. ALBERT KANE: Typically not.

Typically, there's quite a bit of reorganization that goes on after you repiece them.

I think once that settles down, probably some of the horses return to their same harems but anything that disrupts a population, whether that be, you know, big movements because of drought or a gather or something like that, causes some remixing of harems.

Harems -- the idea that harems are stable and that one stallion holds a harem, it makes for a good movie, but it's -- they are a lot more dynamic than most people realize.

And that's certainly true after a gather.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: I can't I imagine that we know how doing that on an annual basis for something like PZP control, how that would disrupt over time.

>> DR. ALBERT KANE: I think gathering them on an annual basis has a lot of logistical basis.

I agree with you, the more you will do it, it will be a blender effect every time.

But the fact is if you repeatedly try to keep the same horses every year, regardless of the methods you use they get harder and harder to catch and after two or three years they can be almost impossible to catch.

Just because the jig is up.

They don't know that they don't really have to go into the trap.

They get to where they get smart.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: And one other --

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: , Sue, go.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: For GonaCon, when you say it's a one-shot, does it mean it's just a single injection, there's not a boost -- a primer and a booster?

>> DR. ALBERT KANE: Correct.

So the initial formulation was one shot.

At present, I think everyone would say to get good efficacy, you need to booster it.

The work on Teddy Roosevelt really suggests that the efficacy after one shot has not been good and so they are boosting mostly by darting there and that's the approach BLM used.

We boosted it after 30 days but the formulation --

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: And is that what Teddy Roosevelt was doing, the primer and then 30 days later a booster?

>> DR. ALBERT KANE: Not initially.

Initially they were following the label with one booster and one shot.

The initial studies was just one shot.

It was very irregular, just because of the course of the study and the budgeting and everything else.

They gave a booster three years after the original shot because they wanted to see it play out for two or three years to see what the effect was and they came back and boosted it and thankfully they showed zero foaling even though the booster was three years after primer in a sense.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Okay.

Thank you very much.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank you for those good questions, Sue.

We are going to have to wrap up our questions.

I apologize, but we do have to stay on schedule with respect to the public comment.

So we have a break scheduled for right now.

And we will begin public comments precisely at 3:00.

(Break)

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Ladies and gentlemen, we really do need to get back to our seats.

Back to our seats for various reasons.

Some of which are just about as hard and fast as they can possibly be.

The recording of the public comments section will shut down at 5:00.

So in order to be fair to people, we have to give them their entire allotted time.

So let's get started.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Okay.

Let's get settled, please.

Thank you.

We have been listen to a lost really, really important information.

This couple of hours, for many of us is really almost the most important part of our time over these two days.

So we welcome you.

We know there are 40 people who wish to speak.

We have two hours.

And so here's your prize, ladies and gentlemen.

You get a whopping two minutes each.

And what's going to happen, you are going to come up to this microphone right here.

You are going to be seated -- please listen.

You will be seated at the table.

You will not stand or walk around or do a dance.

You will be seated at the table and you will give us two minutes, and really, really focus on what you want us to hear.

At the end of two minutes, you will hear a little song from my phone, and if you are still talking, when the song finishes, you will hear from me.

Okay?

So two minutes a piece, and as always -- and you have been wonderful today and I really -- we all appreciate it.

Let's just show respect for each other as people get up and speak.

We won't always agree with them.

That's our business, not the world's at large.

Let's give each other some respect.

Let's see if there's anything else I need to tell you before we start.

I will give you three names and so that you know you are coming up so that there's less time spent getting in and out than there is actually talking and us listening.

Okay.

We are going to -- and I will apologize.

I'm reading your writing.

And I'm doing my best.

I will say Barlin Higby.

Don't get up yet -- no, no, you can get up.

>> I sound like my mother.

Get up, sit down, shut up.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: We women do that.

And then Tom Allen and Stella Trueblood.

So you guys be prepared.

>> Now is this turned on already?

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Is it green?

>> Yeah.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Then it should be on.

>> Test.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Yep.

You are good.

>> Lincoln county commissioner, Lincoln county, Nevada, Barlin Higby for the county.

Our tax base is solely based on the natural resource industries, which are the livestock industries, the mining, the other resources that are associated with those, with the livestock industry, and in the last few years, the horse populations have increased to such a number that it has affected our -- it has affected our tax base adversely, because of the numbers.

The livestock has been removed to protect the resource, because that's the only available option that the BLM has had to use and because of that, our tax base has dwindled.

It's had a major impact on our county's ability to function and provide the services for our citizens in our county, and we're at a critical point right now, where if the horses aren't brought to AMLs, we're going to lose that resource for good.

It will be gone.

And then there won't be -- we won't be a county, we will be broke.

We are to a point now that it's -- the resource has been too degraded in some areas that it won't recover in the '80s we had some others overrun by horses.

Some of it was natural and some of it they gathered.

There's areas that are still never recovered and it's been 30 years, 40 years.

So if we allow the horses to keep increasing and increasing, it's going to be not just small areas, small pockets.

It will be huge areas, and it's not only devastating to the livestock but it's -- is that you or -- oh, I thought I was done.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: That's two minutes.

And I thank you.

That's a lesson in how long two minutes is.

Not very long.

Thank you, sir.

>> My name is Tom Allen.

I'm a member of the board of directors of public land foundation whose membership represents thousands of years of professional experience in managing resources.

I want to jump to the numbers.

Under current policy in 2022, there's going to be 150,000 horses on the range.

That's 175,000 or so in round numbers over AML and to give that perspective, that's the equivalent of adding 500 ranching enterprises to the public lands, each running 500 head of horses for six months.

I don't think there's anybody would believe that that's a good idea.

And I would suggest it's not the same with the horses.

The fertility control PZP is ineffective for managing most populations for reasons you

have heard.

It's effective for one year.

It's increasingly difficult to gather horses, especially when there's trees.

It's difficult to keep track of mares that have been treated, and even if the numbers were at AML, which they are a million miles from being, the reality is, it's highly unlikely there's going to be budget capability to do the gathers.

A population reduction program based on PZP using darting, water, and feed trapping will fail.

The instances where these methods can be used are few and are not representative of the great majority of heard management areas and horse populations in the west.

The public land foundation is asking advisory board that the Bureau of Land Management be supported in using all tools available under the wild free roaming horse and burro act as amended.

Unrestricted sale of held horses and those that should be gathered to reach AML is essential.

Long-term fertility control drugs when they come along maybe in five years would be the answer.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: And Stella.

Thank you both for modeling what we need.

>> I'm Stella Trueblood and I'm the feel manager for the Sandwash Advocate Team, S.W.A.T. here in Colorado.

We administered 135 PZP treatments alone.

We are not done yet.

If I was not here today, I would be out on the range darting more.

We talked about the cost of PZP fertility treatments.

It's \$24 a dose and round that out to 30, including a dart and adjuvant, the cost of my work and labor is free.

We pay our own vehicle costs, gas, maintenance, repair, and we receive no salary.

If we were to treat 250 mares annually, with two doses, a primer and a booster that annual cost would be \$15,000 or \$60 per mare.

The cost would be \$1,200 per mare if it lived for 20 years, compare that to the cost of \$45,000 to gather and warehouse a horse in holding, and it's a no-brainer what we should be doing.

PZP should be the standard for population control, not large-scale gathers and removals.

I find it a lot easier to dart horses today than when I started four years ago.

We have a very extensive database of all the horses in Sandwash, when they were treated, and I don't find that it's difficult to dart them.

It gets easier and easier every year.

To talk a little bit about the impact of horses to other wildlife on the range, at water holes, I have never seen any aggression by any horses towards any other wildlife, in fact, we see antelope drinking with horses frequently and elk especially at night.

I'm wondering what the studies are on the impact of 2,000 to 3,000 sheep that are camped at a water hole over a period of days.

I would like to see the answers to that.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much, Stella.

Sorry.

Okay.

Numbers four, five and six, Dr. Terry Sweet, please come on up.

After that, Holly Kennedy, and Tammy Pearson.

>> Ready, set, go.

Madam chairperson, I'm Terry Sweet, a board member of the Rocky Mountain elk foundation.

We are a national hunting and conservation organization, based in Missoula, Montana,

over 220,000 members nationwide.

Our mission is to ensure the safety of elk.

And we are a member of the national horse and burro land management range, which advocates for common sense, and ecological sound approaches through managing horses and burros.

BLM estimates 72,000 feral horses and burros.

US Forest Service, 110,000 feral horses and burros.

Recent studies show it increases at a rate of 18 to 20% per year, doubling the population every four to five years.

BLM has estimated carrying capacity of only 27,000 feral horses and burros on its land.

Significant long-term damage has occurred to vital range properties including forage and water resources, okay?

Evidence suggests to support the fact that the horses are much harder on range resources than wild undulates.

The horses degrade the water sources and forage the population.

The public demand for the feral horses has evaporated, okay?

Fiscal year 2018 interior, environmental and related agencies appropriations bill that was recently passed by the house of representative includes language authorizing BLM to utilize euthanasia to help control the feral horses and burro population, and we fully support providing the BLM this opportunity to encourage the senate to retain this in the provision in the bill to another tool in their tool box.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you, sir.

Holly.

>> Good afternoon, members of the board.

My name is Holly Kennedy and today I will be speaking on behalf of the over 12,000 associate and 2700 agricultural producer members of Wyoming farm bureau federation.

Rightly considered and iconic species of west, these horses are often viewed with a level admiration that is not assigned to other animals in the western climate to the point of them being knowingly allowed to wreak havoc on our environment, AMLs were not arbitrarily determined.

They were set at a level where multiple species could utilize a land scape without causing sustained or long-term harm.

By allowing wild horse and burro numbers to continue and increasingly exceed AMLs, a conscientious choice being made to allow the rangeland to degraded, some cases beyond repair.

Our members have dedicated their lives and livelihoods to raising healthy animals.

They a voluntary indicate for the humane treatment of all animals.

Knowingly allowing any animal to be deprived of adequate feed or water is not humane.

We support multiple methods of population control, including adoption, sterilization, birth control, sale, and humane destruction.

Furthermore, they support the utilization of a reliable, basic and holistic approach of introducing jacks to produce sterile offspring.

We must take drastic steps to reach AML and then take adequate steps to maintain the population at that sustainable level.

If we care about our western rangelands and all of the species that depend on them, we must allow BLM to utilize all management options, including unrestricted sale and euthanasia.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much.

Tammy?

>> Good afternoon, board.

I'm Tammy Pearson, Beaver County Commissioner from Utah.

This is not my first Rodeo up here.

But the story is still the same.

Our county is 77% public lands.

We have 7 to 9 different HMAs in our county.

We are currently anywhere from 300 to 600% of AML.

Not only has the livestock people, but also the wildlife people are affected.

The wildlife in our communities and our areas, the groups that are involved with them, the SFW, the sportsmen, all of the different wildlife groups, including Rocky Mountain elk and that have sent us pictures, pleaded with us to do whatever we can to encourage the full implementation of the Wild Horse and Burro Act, all the tools in the tool box, and we recommend that.

We need it.

I think ignorance is bliss for human beings for the American public, they don't understand what's going on in the -- on the ground, but reality is harsh.

It's going to be harsh for the wildlife.

It's harsh on the riparian areas.

It's harsh on our springs.

It's harsh on the ecosystem.

We're intentionally devastating our own rangeland.

This will be the worst man made ecological disaster and the worst case of inhumane treatment of animals and this will be the history of the West if we allow status quo to continue.

So I commend the board on taking the brave steps that they did last year.

I think it's important we finally have an administration that is willing to take -- make the hard choices.

It's that time.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much.

And now the next three people in this order are going to be: Kerry O'Brien, Kali Hendrickson and I have a question mark next to the next one, because it's TJ Holmes.

TJ, are you here?

Okay, you were given a number but you said no, I didn't wish to comment, so which is it?

(Off microphone comment).

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Okay.

So third is Cat Wilder.

That's a cool name.

>> I hope I can read this edit as always, thank you board members for your generosity and service.

I want to thank Dr. Kane for his presentation.

My name is Kerry O'Brien, I'm an independent advocate for healthy horses on healthy ranges.

Reduced to its lowest common denominator, we have a supply/demand problem.

Right or wrong, informed or totally ignorant, the American people are not going to allow the decimation of wild horses.

And I'm not going to go there.

I'm going to ask some elephant in the room questions.

Why are -- why are herds managed with native PZP by volunteers producing higher efficacy rates than those being treated by BLM with PZP-22?

And why have there been no follow-up efficacy correlation studies of PZP-22 after treatment where some herds show little or no reduction in foal crop?

If as reported the PZP-22 efficacy rate is very close to no treatment at all, why has BLM at great expense continued to gather and treat with a vaccine that apparently has close to zero efficacy?

How many mares were actually treated by BLM versus advocacy groups in the last

five years and which version of PZP?

You can't use PZP-22, ZonaStat-H and SpayVac interchangeably.

Using the tools available as they see fit, but also demands accountability.

People and organizations fail for two reasons, lack of vision and lack of follow through.

There's a community of visionaries in this room right now, who are successfully implementing fertility control.

They are impassioned, committed and view weather inconvenience and bureaucratic Stonewalling simply as hurdles to overcome, keeping their eye on the prize.

Fertility control by BLM is possible but it requires vision, accountability and follow through.

Thank you, board members.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much, Kerry.

Kali?

>> Thank you, board members.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here again today.

If I had only 30 seconds I would tell you, thank you so much for your recommendation from the last board meeting to sell and euthanize the excess horses.

That is the humane option that we have at our hand -- in our hands.

We don't yet, but we soon -- hopefully soon will.

Horses are going to die.

It is our decision whether we are going to help them die in a humane fashion or if we leave them on the range to starve to death and/or die of thirst.

So you guys made the tough decision, unfortunately you were criticized by some and the past administration did not heed your recommendation.

I would encourage you to reiterate that recommendation this meeting.

I will tell you the national horse and bureau rangeland management coalition, which

we are just involved with has over 10,000 members and represents 6,000 local governments and they support that recommendation.

I will also tell you in the many miles that I travel, if I talk to a total stranger on the airplane or elsewhere and you give the full concept, the full picture of the situation and they have not become emotionally attached to the issue, they understand it, and they support your recommendation.

I would like to tell you locally here, you guys saw yesterday one of the best examples of good management of a herd management area.

The numbers are at AML.

They are using PZP.

They are using volunteers.

They are gentling horses.

They are in a local, small area.

I would challenge you to go 50 miles to the northwest, to the Piceance-East where there should be 235 in the county and there's over 800.

Help us manage those.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Cat?

>> Hi, I'm Cat Wilder, representing the Spring Creek Basin mustangs.

I have an invoice from -- to a BLM office in Colorado from the science and conservation center.

It's for 60 doses of PZP adjuvant, the total \$1,657 which equals \$27 a mare.

Training at the science and conservation center in Billings costs \$200.

Mares darted in the Spring Creek Basin Heard Management Area since 2011, 118 times 27, equals 3,000, 186, plus 200 for training is almost \$3,500 spent on fertility control since 2011.

If every one of those mares had foaled and those foals ended up, one darter by herself would have saved the government \$5,900,000.

Add to that the cost of the roundups and processing that did not take place, and you are at \$6 million saved.

If only half of those potential foals had ended up in holding that one darter would have saved all of us \$3 million.

In Sandwash Basin this year, 135 mares have been darted by four people.

Three women, and one man.

If 50% of those 135 potential foals went to holding, it would cost the government \$3,000,375 instead the government saved \$3,000,375.

Combined can Spring Creek Basin, that equals \$6,000,375 saved by five volunteers!

Working in partnership with BLM, and that's only talking money, trauma to horse and human also have been saved, lives have been saved, the range has been saved.

You get all of this for less than \$35 a mare.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much, Cat.

(Applause)

Okay.

Let's appreciate and applause within.

Thanks.

Janet Smith will be next.

And then I have a question, Nicky Creecy, were you planning to speak today?

Yes.

Okay.

You are after Janet.

And then we will hear from Ian Evans.

>> Good afternoon and thank you, Janet Smith from King George, Virginia, for the record.

First thank you for the opportunity to address you all today.

I think the one thing we can all agree on is that this is a complex issue.

There's so many years of mistrust that must be overcome.

In order to achieve, that we must come together and be open to discussions between all parties to accomplish any kind of productive solutions.

And I hope the board and the BLM will take our comments today as real recommendations going forward.

If Tuesday's tour showed us anything, it showed us it can be done.

I understand all HMAs are different and it's a special circumstance but it's not only HMA that's being managed.

There are HMAs in trouble, absolutely, no question about that.

But we can't punish the areas that are being managed because others are not.

There are some HMAs that are being managed that are still over AML, but they are over AML because there's been no budget to manage them.

Just because we go for years not gathering, because there's no budget to gather and there's nowhere to put them doesn't mean that now we can just start throwing away all of that money we spent to manage them.

I know funding only goes so far.

Priorities must be set.

But that means that maybe we need to relook at the program in funding.

We have got to stop painting -- stop using these giant paint brushes to categorize the wild horse areas as all of them are starving and all of the rangelands are depreciated.

I know the range is in trouble and it's a very difficult situation on all sides of the -- on all sides of it.

But if we can sit down and discuss some real opportunities and real solutions together, volunteers, local communities, we can start to make a difference.

>> Good afternoon, members of the board.

My name is Nicky Creecy, and I'm the proud operator of a mustang heritage store front for burros here along the front range in Colorado.

Through my store front initiated by a burro incentive program, I'm now through the HMF trainer incentive program.

I placed 28 burros into homes this last fiscal year.

Had the TIP program not exhausted its funding within six months, many more burros would have found adoptive homes this summer through my store front.

I look with passion to continue gentling burros and finding adoptive homes for these amazing animals throughout the fiscal year 2018.

The Mustang Heritage Foundation have informed me because of funding limitations, storefronts will be limited 20 animals that.

Includes animals to local TIP trainers and for my own training purposes.

This number will not go far enough.

I'm here to ask the advisory board to place utmost priority in supporting the training -- the trainer incentive program and other adoption initiatives their absolute fullest potential.

Trained animals are more adoptable, period.

And the reason these programs are working and why they ran out of the funds is because the nation wide network of trainers do it because they care.

We have found adopters nurture relationships and follow the animal's progress and assist in reassigning animals in their circumstances change.

By limiting the number of animals I fear the momentum.

He said no one wants these animals.

It's not true.

I personally have adopters ready to stand up and say so.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much.

>> Thank you very much for allowing me to make some comments today, I'm Ann Evans representing the Cloud Foundation which has over 700,000 followers.

My very first request is that the BLM quick referring to wild horses and burro as feral as in their publications and program materials, since the Wild Horse and Burro Act designated wild horses as a wildlife species.

Wild horses are a return native species.

In fact, if they hadn't evolved here, there wouldn't be horses anywhere.

I believe that the real and most important issue that we face is protection of our public lands because without those protections we won't have any wild horses or any wildlife.

Our public lands are under attack, and we need to make sure that we can protect them.

Secondly, I would like to encourage the BLM to embrace the science outlined in the million dollars NAS report.

On the range management, can and does work.

We witnessed it yesterday.

I witnessed it in other ranges but it does require a change.

Mind-set and a change of the way we think about roundups and removals.

Roundups and removals have not worked.

They are not economically sustainable and cause compensatory reproduction.

Public/private partnerships are possible and do work.

And I realize this cannot be done overnight, but a long-term view is required for us to be successful.

I'm encouraging the BLM to spend more of its budget on PZP programs and volunteer programs working with the -- working in cooperation with the BLM.

And also to consider repatriation of horses that are in short-term holding to the zeroed out lands that were their lands originally when the act was passed.

This will also reduce costs and allow horses to live their life in freedom.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much.

Here we are.

Kevin is it Burrenell or Bunnell.

Kevin, are you here?

Is that you?

Okay.

And then Debbie Matthews, you were a maybe.

Did you go from a maybe to a yes or maybe to a no?

No?

The third presenter then will be Randy Pacca.

>> Good afternoon, members of the board and thank you for your service.

Dr. Hall's presentation probably tells you all you need to know on why a state wildlife management agency would be concerned with this issue.

I'm here representing the Utah division of wildlife resources, and we have big concerns on the impacts that wild horses are having on rangelands and consequently on the wildlife populations, ranging from deer and elk populations clearly down to endemic snail populations that occur in only some springs in the Great Basin.

I know you have a tough job in front of you.

I don't know that there are easy answers other than the horse population needs to be reduced that.

Brings up all sorts of prickly issues or decisions that need to be made but it's the reality of where we are at this -- in this situation.

This is the only topic that's as polarizing as wolves that I have dealt with in my career as a wildlife professional and I don't envy the decisions you have to make, but we are having real impacts on not only wildlife populations that exist today, but the future, the ability to have wildlife populations on some of these rangelands and I hope we can

make logical decisions and look at the science that's out there, not take anecdotal observations over scientific data that's been collected properly and that's my request for you today.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much.

>> Thank you for the opportunity to be here today.

My name is Randy Parker, I'm with the Utah Farm Bureau Federation, representing more than 32,000 member families.

Livestock production is the backbone of Utah agriculture.

Livestock grazing on public lands is critical to the economic well being of rural communities.

FLPMA requires consideration of the history, culture and economics of livestock grazing as decisions are made.

Utah food and agriculture generates \$21 billion in economic activity in our state and over 80,000 jobs.

Sheep and cattle ranching families we are nearly 67% of our state are compelled to combine private property, privately held water rights and access to grazing on federal lands to establish economically viable and sustainable businesses.

Since the 1950s, livestock AUMs in Utah have been cut from 5.5 AUMs to 1.8 million, AUMs.

We have need to stop the livestock grazing.

The reality that most of the wild free roaming horses are feral makes a compelling argument that management should be returned to the states.

At a time when the federal government is \$21 trillion in debt, it doesn't make any sense whatsoever to continue growing wild horse and burro numbers.

This morning Mr. Bolstad noted that wild horse and burro use 800,000 AUMs that means 500,000 AUMs are used by excess horses and burros.

How is that affecting ranchers grazing rights?

Voluntary, mandatory grazing cuts?

We all -- we as an organization support all of the tools to get to AML, including euthanasia.

Let's get to AML and then evaluate where we are at.

Until we get to AML, we have no idea what the impact is and what we can do with grazing, livestock grazing.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much.

That was Randy.

Next three.

Kia Swanson, and Bonnie Brown.

>> Good afternoon, my name is Kia Swanson and I'm here as the deputy director of the Cloud Foundation.

I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

A approached a band of wild horses for the first time yesterday.

My heart swelled.

I was raised in an urban environment and I was surprised that our sprawling strip malls haven't overtaken the wild area.

I drew two powerful conclusions.

First, Phi he will feel so fortunate to see the BLM and the friends of the mustang in action.

What an overwhelming victory in this movement to see these bodies working in harmony to benefit the wild horses and our public lands.

Mill second conclusion amounts to a word of warning.

It's foolish to waste what tools we have to preserve this wild and beautiful way of life.

While fertility control is touted as best option, so little of the budget that the line item in the pie chart is marked as 0%.

This board has an amazing opportunity at a time when the very concept of public land is under attack.

You hold the power to protect these lands and the animals on them.

Please invest in these contraception programs and the programs that I witnessed yesterday.

Please prevent the needless killing of horses and opening these untamed land to cattle, oil and other exploitive items.

This land can offer more than beef and petroleum.

The Cloud Foundation is opposed to any killing or ewe tan Asia in short-term or long-term holding.

Both with funding an manpower we can maintain the American west as wild, free, and devoid of roundups.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you.

>> Hello, thank you very much.

I was very happy to hear Christine say this more thanking to put a pause on your recommendations so that all of us could share what we have to say.

And that being so, I will read what I wrote.

The Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971 put the BLM as a stewards of the American people's western icons.

Yet the mantra today is special interest groups controlling the BLM and spewing propaganda to justify not only the removal of the, whats off the public lands designated for them but to change policy to destroy them as well.

Apparently influence of the livestock and oil and mining industries seems to be excluded from all these discussions and their impact on the public lands and the cost to the taxpayer.

We have know the truth.

This dialogue has to change.

First ranchers demand removing of wolves and coyotes and now wild horses.

Even when the environmental assessments have proven road, oil and gas development are responsible for the diminish of big game populations and wildlife.

This dialogue has to change.

In conversations with western watershed projects it was expressed their interest in reducing cattle grazing from public lands and as such acknowledged the wild horses are unjustly being blamed for everything.

Even blamed for 50% decline in bird population, so why not blame the horses for the extinction of species of bees as well.

Did you know that beef has the lowest source of protein and followed by fish, turkey and chicken.

So force utilizing our resources to provide food sources, beef is at the bottom of the list.

This dialogue has to change.

There's similar dialogue in Africa in blaming the elephants for the destruction of the ranges.

By the recommendation of a government official, 40,000 elephants were killed.

The government official regrets this today because the elephants were proven that they helped the range and the ranges got worse.

That's on Ted Talks if anybody wants to read it.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you.

>> I'm Bonnie Brown.

I'm the executive director for the Colorado Wool Growers Association and also representing the American sheep industry association today.

You have already received our written comments.

I would like to make a few follow-up statements.

We are asking the board to reaffirm your September 2016 recommendation to utilize unrestricted sales and euthanasia to get us back to the AML.

Friends of mustang have done a phenomenal job on what they are doing in the Little Book Cliffs and they absolutely deserve all the recognition they are seeing.

We cannot adopt infertility control our way out of this situation.

Next year, we are looking at over 100,000 excess horses on the range and in holding facilities.

Partnerships in collaboration are fantastic, but to date, they have failed to effectively address the overall problem of excess horses.

In many places our rangelands cannot with stand another 15 to 20 years of overgrazing, before we can see an impact from fertility control.

And you all know the numbers.

We have too many horses in holding.

We have too many horses on the range, and we have a program that costs too much.

So as already has been pointed out, you know, horses are going to die.

That's just an unfortunate reality.

They are going to die on the range, and horses are dying in holding.

Now, they need to have some options to die by humane means because our rangelands cannot with stand the irreputable degradation.

In many others the BLM has failed miserable in the mandate to maintain a thriving ecological balance.

Please recommend to use all humane needs to get our mustang herds back to AML and save the western rangelands for future generations.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you so much.

I'm so impressed sometimes how you get up here and before that little ticker goes off you are in your last sentence.

The next three, Steve, Les Owen and Maggie Kasem.

>> Good afternoon, my name is Steve Raffopolis, we are one of the permittees in the Sandwash Basin.

I would like to thank you for the work you do and would like you to reaffirm your recommendations from Elko because I think that's the only way you are going to get a start to be able to put these programs in place that you have so been working with these other people, the advocates and this may be a chance to do it.

You have to start at the right number to be able to maintain the habitat.

Today in Sandwash, we have two to three times the AML, depends on where you put the AML, and Sandwash today looks worse than I have seen it in the last 10 to 20 years.

One thing I would like to mention to Mr. Shoop from Colorado, is that he forgets to mention other partners in this whole scheme of things.

And that's the permittee.

The permittee needs to be brought in to focus and be part of these talks.

When we did our allotment management plan in the year 2000 in Sandwash Basin, we allowed the use of water that's adjudicated to us in the Sandwash Basin.

The permittees build and maintain the water that all animals use.

And we voluntarily took reductions, voluntarily took reductions in our AUMs and our use in the Sandwash Basin for the resource.

We can't forget that habitat is the most critical part of this whole discussion, folks.

Without habitat, you can have 800 horses but if you don't have the habitat, they are not going to survive.

You need to get the habitat going and then talk about management and so I think that's very key.

And if you will -- if you look, in the Sandwash Basin, all the permittees, the four permittees have taken voluntary nonuse and I would think that less than 20% of the allocated AUMs, allocated to livestock are used by the permittees because of the lack of forage.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you, sir.

>> Good afternoon and thank you.

My name is Les Owen with the department of agriculture here in Colorado.

I would like to look at the negative impact of horse in excess of capacity of native rangelands.

There was discussion earlier regarding allotment level impacts in the form of reduced AUMs available to livestock permitted to graze in the areas along with the wild horses.

These impacts are significant.

As an example, from the earlier mentioned Sandwash Basin herd management area, BLM data from a 2016 environmental assessment indicated actual use AUMs by livestock was 16,000 lower than authorized use in 2012 and 2013.

These AUMs have significant value to ranchers, and the rural communities that they are a part of.

Applying an annual value of production of \$100 an 12 month, the annual value production can be estimated at around \$80 per AUM.

Applying it to the 16,000 comes out to \$1.2 million of annual value production that's achievable give than amount of forage.

Ranchers take voluntary nonuse to protect ecological conditions.

This comes at a large cost, not only to the ranchers, but also to the businesses that make up the economies of the surrounding rural communities.

I appreciate recommendations that have come out of the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board and urge you to continue your efforts to ensure that federal agencies have all the tools authorized by the wild horse and burro protection act to maintain healthy horse and burro in the context of other multiple uses in healthy native rangelands.

Thank you.

>> My name is Maggie Kasem.

I'm just a private citizen.

I have 14 mustangs at home.

I love them dearly, so I'm obviously an advocate for the mustangs.

What I really would like to see is more and more requests for those volunteers that go out and dart the mares with the PZP.

I haven't seen requests.

I would like to see everything flooded with requests, volunteers needed.

We need to go here.

We need to go there.

Where are the requests?

I would like to see a lot more support for the TIP program.

I'm part of the TIP program it's been very successful with placing mustangs, and I would also like to see more ecosanctuaries.

Rather than just a blank statement of well, we just need to euthanize these horses.

Why not find a place for them to be?

Now, I know when we had the west Douglas roundup, we volunteered our ranch as a place to put these west Douglas horses.

We were told that we -- I saw the horses come in.

We have land that's exactly like the land that they were pulled off.

We could have put those horses in a place where they could still feel somewhat wild and free and yet we were told no, you have to wait until this' a request for solicitations.

So I would just like to see more positive ways at solving the problem, other than the blanket statement of let's just euthanize the horses.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much.

Next three, Lon Volles and Charlotte Row and Kirsten.

>> I'm Lon Bow, cattle, organic farm from Trout Lake, Washington, where there's no GMAs -- HMAs.

And also hue San county, Russia Ben and Ginger and dean, I think you know me from the end of last year.

I'm the young buck from Rancho Hosan who had the audacity to have the adoption all captive 44,000 horses before the new budget.

My comments are limited to the confined horses.

The elephant in the room is the slaughtered glue factory.

Russia wants and feeds surplus horses.

We appeal to you to give serious consideration do make a knew theoretical HMA.

We had the audacity to ask in violation of Section 13.33 of the 1971 Wild Horse and Burro Act that BLM pay for the overseas delivery cost.

The playing field has changed since my first submission of our project proposal to the BLM staff, and the rest of the advisory board, some of you might be -- and other of you, I think I sent emails and you may have received those before the new budget submission.

And the elements introduced by the new BLM -- with the new opportunities that Dean Bolstad pointed out this morning, Dean, if I heard you right, there are three new substantive budget mandates that you mentioned, consider -- already?

Okay.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: You will have to continue to address Dean online.

Thank you, sir.

>> Good afternoon.

My here representing the black hills wild horse sanctuary of South Dakota.

Now in the 30th year we have 14,000 acres for 700 horses.

Most of whom were once on public lands.

We are constantly aware of our land conditions and the health of our horses.

As a nonprofit, we rely solely on donation and tourism income to support the needs of the horses and subsequently all the wildlife that call the sanctuary home.

This is my fourth board meeting I attended and it's frustrating to realize that the same issues, too many horses and degraded rangeland and fiscal turmoil and it's all blamed on the horses.

When do we humans take responsibility.

When do we ask what is best for the horses?

Perhaps instead of removing them from the land and asking for more funds to warehouse or destroy them, we focus on PZP and ask for more land, expand their HMA boundaries, move them into areas where they were not found in 1971.

The protection act has been amended before, amend it now to give them some more space.

It's really not the horses that are diminishing the quality of our public land.

It's us humans.

We want it for our cattle, for our land developments, for our energy needs.

Yes, it's public land and if you ask the public how they would like to see it, I'm pretty sure they would like to see other horses getting priority.

That's what most of the 10,000 annual visitors to the sanctuary say when we explain why our horses came off public lands to begin with.

In the words of Davidson Hyde, our founder, I would like to give you a few of his comments.

Granted, I would like to see a return to the conditions of my youth, a half century ago, he's now 92, when wild horses were truly free, when nature selected what would survive and what would perish when mares had a surplus of stallions to choose their mates and when predators kept the herds from destroying their range.

>> My name is Charlotte Roe.

I'm with in defense of animals and I'm privileged to be a guardian of wild horses and burros that I have adopted.

And if they were here, they would be very confused, because burros are a very

endangered species worldwide.

And horses do not speak out of both sides of their mouth.

We have heard about the 1971 act.

It says that wild equus are a central component of these thriving natural ecological balance, but the BLM policies and words act as though something else, they are invasives and not integral, and feral being kind of like feral pigs, they harm the range and they starve and over populate, a biological impossibility.

It's as though they don't know how no live on the land, but they do.

I have heard a lot about habitat here, and we just have to think that at the beginning of 1900s, there were millions of wild horses.

And the great plains were a sea of grass, and we had all the wildlife we needed.

So I do agree with those who said that it's man that's the problem.

I just want to mention overpopulation as one aspect.

The BLM's target AML target of 26,710 is close to the guesstimate that was made when the '71 act was passed.

They thought that the population was somewhere around 17,000, and it was considered so dangerously low that we had a national emergency and it was unanimously passed and signed by Richard Nixon, with a great letter.

So I ask to ask and my wild horse and burros have to ask, why are we trying to implement a failed policy and make it even worse?

It is unsustainable.

It will plunge the west into deeper conflicts, litigation, a cycle of roundups that only speak -- spike population in what's called compensatory reproduction.

I have a number of proposals in my comments and I hope you will consider them.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Great.

Thank you so much.

The next three, Kimberly Earhart, Cindy Williams, Ginger Padott.

>> Hello.

My name is Kimberly Ehrhardt and I have traveled here today to address this board from the state of Pennsylvania.

I address this board as an American citizen, a taxpayer, an informed wild horse and burro advocate, as well as to advocate for the preservation of healthy rangelands, the public's lands.

In 1969, the United States put a human being on the moon.

This monumental achievement was accomplished through the combined efforts and the cooperation of our government, scientists, and a diverse group of people known as Americans.

Undaunted by past failures have proven the impossible to be possible.

All the aforementioned are present here today, although our discussion is centered around, cost effective, sustainable management of wild horses and rangelands, not space travel.

Every member of this board has not only the response, but more importantly the opportunity to make fair, sound, publicly acceptable recommendations.

The answers to the existing problems within the BLM's wild horse and burro program will not be found in failed and still failing past practice or by continued proposals that enrage the American -- the majority of American people and waste their taxpayer dollars.

The Colorado BLM districts, billings BLM, several others, including Assateague island, closer to where I'm from, are leading the way in proving what success can be achieved through their on range management, with PZP vaccine and true cooperation with the community, local advocacy groups and volunteers.

Wildlife such as wild turkeys -- oh, I'm sorry, excuse me.

The essential ingredients to this success are on range PZP usage and increasing that usage and dedicated volunteers.

These two methods have significantly reduced the need to remove horses from the rangelands which in turn reduces costs associated with helicopter roundups and holding facilities.

Costs to purchase and administer PZP are incurred only once per fiscal year, whereas horses in government holding incur costs daily.

After seeing what has been achieved here in Colorado, let us work together to see the same success in other states because it is possible.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you, Kimberly.

Eddie.

>> Hello, my name is Patty Williams.

I'm from range lake, Colorado, I will read this very quickly.

It's time for special interest groups to look at the science concerning our wild horses.

BLM and other groups have claimed that horses are responsible for destroying critical habitat, compete for grazing lands and over populate but reports by the general accounting office and the national academy of science dispute these claims.

BLM has never presented hard evidence that populations are what they claim.

But BLM and conservation groups in my area continue the horrendous assaults on these beautiful icons of the west.

Advocates -- do advocates want to work with BLM in my area?

Yes, they do, but let me tell you about a recent meeting that I attended in Meeker.

I went into this meeting with hopes for a partnership.

These hopes were dashed quickly.

When we realized that if we didn't agree with these goals, we were rudely told that we could not be on the committee.

Goal number one, wipe out zero out west Douglas horses.

Goal number two, zero out north Piceance horses.

There was a collaborative effort on these goals?

No, the west Douglas horses can be seen occasionally by the children on highway 139.

They get very excited and they tell me in the classroom when they see the horses.

I have spent most of my time in west Douglas this summer.

This is -- I have an aerial count that was done in BLM in 2016.

The count is about 110 horses but our local newspaper reports 275.

It doesn't match.

The math.

Not even by BLM standards.

These numbers are highly inflated to further agendas of special interest groups.

Let me be clear, I have nothing against oil and gas and ranching.

Oil and gas is my community's livelihood but everything needs to be done responsibly in conclusion, don't kill our horses with all the death and destruction in our country, we need positivity.

Leave these horses alone and let them live in a family band.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: I appreciate it.

Okay.

We are applauding internally.

Ginger.

>> Right here.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Oh.

You are fast.

>> Thank you, board, for this opportunity.

My name is Ginger Fedak, I'm representing sun pony ranch in Colorado.

I have to say that we have two things that we can all agree on, our government and its agencies are wasting our taxpayer dollars and going over budget on wild horse issues and.

Current management protocol for our wild horses is unsustainable.

We all agree.

As a person with a degree in range animal science, and range management, who has spent a large chunk of my professional career as a scientist, performing and documenting studies, I am expressly concerned with most of the presentations here today.

If you want a fair study, do a side-by-side study of comparable rangeland and water, one side equal number of horses, other side equal number of cattle.

It is well known in the range management academia, that sheep and cattle do more damage to the range than horses.

Why then are you only documenting and targeting 70,000 horses rather than the millions of cattle on public lands?

There is science that can solve the current issues and problems of population control and Dr. Kane's report was very helpful.

Why did the BLM commission at great cost the study by the National Academy of Sciences using science to improve the BLM wild horse and burro program a way forward and then totally disregard it?

Yes, there have been a few minimal efforts to implement in certain areas, but the general response by BLM seems to be it can't be done.

Too many horses.

Too vast and remote areas.

Expand the PZP protocol!

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much.

You were Ginger, right?

So next we have Suzanne Roy, followed by Ken Brown, followed by Tracy Scott.

>> Hi, everyone, I'm Suzanne Roy with the American wild horse campaign, and on behalf of my organization, and the Cloud Foundation, I brought with me petitions

signed by 300,000 American citizens in opposition to your board's recommendation to kill and slaughter tens of thousands of wild horses and burros.

Jason shoved my boxes under the table in the back, but I urge you to look at what 300,000 signatures look like.

It's six boxes filled with signatures of Americans who oppose the direction your board is taking.

We represent the voices of these citizens who hail from every state in the nation and care deeply about the protection of our wild horses and our public lands.

They are part of the 80% of Americans, including 86% of Trump voters and 77% of Clinton voters who oppose killing and slaughtering our wild horses.

The American people deserve better than this biased board meeting.

The American people deserve facts facts like over 80% of BLM rangelands have no wild horses present on them.

Wild horses are not from it.

The Utah wild horse and burro lead could not identify any starving horses.

That's' on the unscientific population limit that seeks to reduce the population to near extinction levels.

And finally there's a better way to manage wild horses, the PZP vaccine works if you use it.

My program has an organization on 3,000 horses on 300,000 acres in Nevada, the horses are under state jurisdiction and with a budget of less than \$50,000, and a team of five volunteers, we have vaccinated more mares so far this year with PZP than the entire BLM did in 2016.

The American people deserve better than the sham proceeding to enhance the fortunes of a tiny taxpayer subsidized powerful special interest group the public deserves a fair and balanced advisory board.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you.

We've got other people.

>> Thank you.

Got it.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: We appreciate it.

Ken brown.

>> Ken brown, western counties alliance.

Thanks for the opportunity to respond.

Wild horse and burro populations need to be managed within established appropriate management levels in order to avoid overgrazing.

Excess numbers continue to be a major problem in most areas where wild horse and burro are animals now exist.

WCA does not support reducing livestock AUMs to accommodate additional WHB roaming animals.

Coordination and communication should exist between state and federal agencies, county officials, and private stakeholders regarding population data and monitoring.

WCA continues to support an enhanced gathering process which assists in reducing numbers in over populated areas.

WCA continues to support the reintroduction of disposal facilities which are necessary to care for animals in need, wild and domestic.

WCA continues to support the working group concept established by the board and staff.

I think that gives you an enhanced opportunity with background and various issues.

WCA thanks the board and staff, as endeavor to make the WHB program better.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much.

>> Thank you, board, for your service and this project, it's hard work.

I'm Tracy Scott, citizen of the United States who is part of the overwhelming majority of Americans who oppose killing our wild horse and burro or selling them to someone who will.

And I support protecting them on our public lands.

According to the wild free roaming horses and burros act of 1971, the horses are living symbols of historic and pioneer spirit of the west, that they contribute to the diversity of life forms within the nation and enrich the lives of American people.

As a Coloradan, and a founder of a mustang horse sanctuary, wild horses are an integral part of this culture.

When people enter Grand Junction, Colorado, they are greeted by images of our iconic national treasure, the wild horse.

The Little Book Cliffs is just behind monumental mount Garfield.

The wild horses influence international tourism and the area's brand image and as Mr. Bolstad said, there are three wild horse hears in Colorado with successful PZP programs.

The Piceance-East Douglas has a growing number of people who want to support and cooperate with the BLM to implement PZP and work on the range and offer support to the horses removed from that range.

Several work days have already taken place, as well as group gatherings to organize and implement the dedicated team of individuals that want to volunteer time to support the BLM white river field office and the horses of Piceance-East Douglas herds.

Adopted wild horses are utilized in riding disciplines, border patrol, equine therapy and coaching programs to empower human individuals, employees and families.

The complex social structure of the family band is the basis of how we support human families with aging loved ones and special needs.

Therefore, it is our duty as American citizens to continue discovering ways of partnering with the living, wild horses that help society, and to utilize proven science to manage the horses in their wild habitat.

I do not want my tax dollars spend on killing God's innocent, healthy creatures to make budget.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you so much.

>> Thank you for your time.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: That was Tracy.

I have a question for Chad booth, did you -- you went from maybe to no.

Gotcha.

The then next we will hear from Blaine Scott, followed by Dustin Huntington, followed by Alison Wood.

>> Good afternoon, and thank you for the opportunity of listening to the voices of some of us.

I'm reverend Blain Scott, an ordained Christian clergyman and theologian, part of the 71% of the US population of adults considering themselves as Christians, seeking to be a moral voice, however, I promise not to pass any offering plates this afternoon.

I'm a founding partner of stead fast mustang sanctuary here in western Colorado and I oppose the slaughtering of what is called excess wild horses and the act of 1971 as we know says it's the policy of Congress that wile, free removing horses and burros should be protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death.

Gathered wild horses are treated with vaccines, and chemicals for parasite removal, therefore making them unfit for human consumption.

Now, in the holy Bible, the book of Leviticus, Chapter 11, the lord our God shares at the risk of quoting God from all the land animals, there are the creatures that you may eat, an animal that has divided hooves, such may you eat.

Horses, of course, are single hooved and single stomached and not to be consumed by humans.

Also there are mounting facts that the irreprehensible act of killing horses will be much if any benefit economically due to the complexities of how to implement it humanely and safely for horses and humans alike.

As American citizens, you respectfully on this board serve and dedicate only a small portion of your dedication and lifestyle.

Me and every American are judged by each decision you make 24/7.

Please therefore, avoid unjustly and inhumanely condemning 90,000 plus innocent souls of historic American West to death.

These deaths would increase a tiny portion of the budget and cutting American jobs.

There is the moral opportunity and obligation to advise BLM to maintain the long-standing prohibition on killing healthy wild horses.

Even God partners with horses and you hope you will too.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you, Reverend.

>> Okay.

>> Any consumption request help maintain a population but it will never get us back to the desired AML.

Hello, my name is Dustin Huntington from southeastern Utah.

Over the past 20 years the wild horse herd in our area has grown exponentially and the range lass deteriorated where they eaten everything utilized about the fence posts.

I do not consider this a cattle versus horse issue.

This is about saving the resource, and the range from total destruction.

The BLM micromanages every aspect of the federal land under their control.

Yet when it comes to a wild horse HMA, they are noticeably absent and ineffective.

Until the BLM can stand up to the advocates and do their job, the range will continue to decline.

And to the advocates, I beg you to visit any wild horse HMA across the western states.

And look beyond the horses and see the devastation on the ground.

In order to solve it problem, you have got to stop obstructing every reasonable solution put forward by knowledgeable, well-meaning individuals.

This is not about winning.

There is a well-known adage that fits this situation.

You may win the battle but lose the war.

Ultimately, we all lose, when the range and the resource is gone.

To the wild horse advisory board, I commend you.

I thought the recommendation committed last year were spot on, and I support them wholeheartedly.

The solutions are there.

I am hopeful that those recommendations will be accepted and implemented quickly.

If I can leave you with one thought it would be this: Listen to the land.

What is it telling you?

Listen to the land.

Thank you.

>> Good afternoon.

My name is Alison Woods.

I'm representing mustang camp, a certified nonprofit out of New Mexico.

Our mission is to utilize a scientific approach to animal training to foster a healthy, functioning relationship between wild horses and humans.

We train people to train mustangs so that more horses can be reached and find successful adoptions.

However, we have an imposing obstacle regarding perceived value.

If the value of something exceeds the could have, it will be purchased.

In our situation, if the perceived value of an animal exceeds cost of adoption, it will be adopted.

So what that means for us, we need to enhance the value in the eye of the adopter.

Especially regarding wild horses, value can be created via the trust in humans.

So we need to apply training methods, as well as husbandry techniques that will protect to the inherent value of the mustang, as well as create value.

Mustang camp has a proven viability in its methods through the training and adoption of close to 500 horses and burros since 2010.

We would like to note our instrumental relationship with the Oklahoma offices of the BLM as well as individuals in the Mustang Heritage Foundation, and invite everyone to explore our website, mustangcamp.org.

I hope we can find a way to improve the lives of horses and burros of the west.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much.

Let's see, you are now on to Tony Moore.

John D Hill.

And Randy Blacent.

>> I'm Toni Moore.

The misconception promoting that there's an over population on our -- the misconception promoting there's an over population of wild horses on our public land could not be further from the truth.

Due to the politics that directed policy at the passage of the Wild Horse and Burro Act herd use areas were decimated.

They are cut off, split up, fenced off and even sold.

In most cases the boundaries assigned to the wild horse use herd reflected livestock allotment areas and wild horses were systemically removed from their habitat, first by zeroing out entire herd areas and then reducing them to unreasonably small acreage.

It's a simple premise, who eats what, when and where?

Without that you are not going to have balance without this knowledge.

It can't be reached.

When over utilization by the livestock industry continues to significantly impact public lands.

What we have is an overpopulation of political power and the represented interests.

The groups pushing the hardest to remove and reduce wild horses, the ones pointing their fingers to wild horse population should check their own numbers.

Americans overwhelmingly face a financial and environmental burden of too many cows and sheep littering our public lands.

Subsidies for killing predators are astronomical and really who benefits?

Grazing on our public lands costs less than a 15-pound bag of premium cat food.

Seriously, folks who is the burden?

, place the wild horses in the holding areas back in these areas.

They are supposed to be a self-sustaining population.

Would someone explain to me how you can manage that on a plot of land of size of a postage stamp.

Until BLM addresses the overpopulation of livestock and the political pressure that keeps them there our public lands will continue in disarray.

Balance will be out of the questions and wild horses will continue to be blamed for their own mismanagement.

Who will be blamed when all the wild horses are gone?

Monitor and inventory all species and take appropriate action, and let's take politics out of science.

It's time to stop fake science.

>> Thanks to the board for hearing me today.

My name is John D Hill.

My family has been ranching in the book cliff mountains north of here since the 1870s.

I have been a member of the BLM northwest Resource Advisory Council and also I'm a former Rio Blanco county commissioner.

This morning, I was driving out to attend this meeting, I saw four young studs in trespass in the west Douglas herd area on my private property and just Monday I brought my own mares down for the winter, and thankfully there's two fences between them, even though that may not be good enough because some of the horses from west Douglas have crossed through my permits which are all outside the horse area and are now inside the Grand Junction field office boundaries.

So they are expanding even though they're supposed to be zero AML on west Douglas.

But we need to have annual roundups with no holds barred, culling of old, sick and lame horses and adopt out most of this year's current foal crop and then use the sale without limitation and euthanasia provisions of the Wild Horse and Burro Act and, you know, in other words just handle them like any rancher would his livestock.

There are also people like me who need to be able to get on their horse and ride out there and go ahead and chase a feral horses off their private land and permits when they are in trespass from a horse area some place.

One year ago in May, I attended the western region of the national association of counties meeting, during when BLM Director Neil Kornze asked for help with dealing with the horse problem.

And last September -- thank you very much.

Enough said.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Two minutes goes fast.

>> Good afternoon my name is Randy blazer, the director of operations for the Mustang Heritage Foundation.

Please accept a comment on behalf of the Mustang Heritage Foundation trustee board president, Paula Carr.

It costs taxpayers millions of dollars to house and feed excess animals removed from the range.

We have programming currently in place to substantially reduce this cost by increasing the rate of animal placement into private care.

Our efforts, however, are severely contradicted by available BLM funding.

The Mustang Heritage Foundation in partnership with the BLM wild horse and burro program has been actively places BLM wild horse and burro into private care since 2007, through a federal finance assistance agreement.

We are reaching nearly 10,000 total adoptions since we began, however our placement rate has grown exponentially in the past 18 months.

In 2016, we placed a record breaking 1,226 programs through our program.

We projected to place 1300 animals through our trainer incentive program alone.

We met that goal in March of 2017.

We then had to suspend additional TIP pickups, halting the placement of any additional animals for six months.

By the rate at which the TIP program was showing growth, the Mustang Heritage Foundation could have placed an additional 1,000 animals if the program had not been suspended, making our annual placements 2,886 versus the 1,886 animals that we placed this past fiscal year.

We have the program in place and the momentum to move 3,000 to 4,000 animals to BLM off range corrals and into private care over the next 12 months.

Unfortunately, at this time, there is only funding allocated through BLM to place 1,400 animals through the MHF partnership in fiscal year 2018.

MHF respectfully requests the Department of Interior and BLM leadership to evaluate its current budget in order to assist us in placing additional animals.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Just so you know, we have 11, just so you know, board.

Thank you all, very, very much.

So I want you all to keep up with that now.

Gary Moyer is going to be next, Kali Sublett and Ann Elliott.

>> Thank you.

I appreciate the opportunity to address the wild horse and burro advisory board and I want to thank you for holding this meeting in Grand Junction, Colorado.

We have requested years ago to come to rural western Colorado, where there are HMAs nearby.

Thank you for coming.

I want to thank the board for your recommendations at the last advisory board meeting regarding humane euthanasia.

I'm with the white river conservation district, as well as the Colorado and national association of conservation district and we have policy that supports wise use of our natural resources which is taking care of our rangeland.

That's our number one concern.

And I would remind everybody that the act that was passed in 1971, and this is what I'm not hearing here today, is -- it requires BLM to manage for the multiple use of our resources not single species management.

We hear a lot of comments here today with single species management.

How come horses condition be on more land, et cetera.

The act was very specific, about where horses could be managed and under what criteria.

I suggest that you always remind BLM that they are required by law to follow the act because it specifically also says that any time the numbers are above appropriate management level, they are required -- and an excess is determined, they are required to remove those horses.

So BLM is out of compliance with the law.

And we understand the problems with appropriations language.

This advisory board needs to educate Congress, as well as the public to the reality of what the situation is when it comes to the numbers.

Thank you.

>> My name is Kali Sublett, the executive director of the Mustang Heritage Foundation.

You already heard from a couple of our TIP trainers and Randy our director of operations but the Mustang Heritage Foundation has been in partnership with BLM for 12 years.

This year we signed our third five-year assistance agreement with BLM and so we are very excited about that.

We have a great partnership.

We placed approximately 10,000 animals over the past 11 years.

2017 was a record breaking year for us.

We had 1,886 adoptions, which you have already heard.

So much so we did have to suspend our most successful placement program, the trainer incentive program six months into the fiscal year.

We were fully funded as requested by BLM and met our goal within the six months.

Unfortunately there was not addition a funding to support the continuation.

Training of the animals.

This year, we also launched an educational project virtually -- virtual reality trailer that you guys, I think heard about this morning.

That's very exciting.

The public can come and experience wild horses on the range through this Americas Mustang trailer.

It will be on the road throughout the year.

So we'll give some updates on that next year.

I have brought some impact reports with me, with further details outlining the tremendous growth that we have seen and that Randy mentioned over the past three years.

Again, if I have to get to my comment very quickly, it would than the Mustang Heritage Foundation, through our network of trainers can place 3,000 to 4,000 adoptions this year.

I'm very confident of that.

The board is very confident.

Unfortunately, the budget is not there.

BLM is facing budget cuts.

We ask that the Department of Interior and BLM look at all the adoption programs and fund those which are successful and not only successful but cost effective also in their success.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much, yes, if you will leave them, we will get them.

>> Good afternoon.

My name is Anna Elliott, and I'm currently the vice president of the FOM, but I'm speaking solely for myself in this statement.

I would like to take this moment to applaud and thank the national Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board for making the decision to visit the Little Book Cliffs herd management area in conjunction with their business meeting in Grand Junction.

I hope you learned more about the working partnership local BLM employees and volunteers of the nonprofit organization friends of mustangs, it's been a win/win relationship for both with the little book cliff horses and the range being the winners.

It needs to be edge couraged and fostered with other HMAs.

The public hears and reads news stories about roundups using helicopters and crowded holding facilities overflowing and now spoken suggestions of slaughter to address the cost and impact of the increasing number of horses and burros that overpopulate the ranges.

Sadly, we are hear the same old story time and time again, and the tide never seems to turn.

Just recently was this quote, dated October 3rd, 2017 from an advisory board's news release for this meeting that states, the rapid growth rate and the chronic population of the west wild horses are already affecting the health of the animals and the resources on which they and many other species depend.

To be effective in solving this challenge, we must work together to explore a wide variety of solutions to an unsustainable situation.

I would like to offer a suggestion that could be implemented soon if acted on.

In an article written by Dennis Webb in the daily sentinel dated Saturday, October 7th an above the headline, state mum on the predators removing.

The Colorado parks and wildlife has entered into a study of the Piceance and an estimated cost of \$4.5 million.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Sorry about that.

And thank you.

Yes, you can submit it.

Okay.

Next we have Leah Biando, Jay Paul Brown, Richard Connelly.

>> Good afternoon.

My name is Leah Biando and I'm here on behalf of the national horse and rangeland coalition.

Our coalition composed of 18 national organizations representing sports men and women, livestock growers, state and local governments, resource management specialists and others who are concerned with the managing of horses and burros in a common sense and ecologically sound way including the society for range management.

A professional scientific society of nearly 4,000 members in 48 countries for whom I serve as their DC coordinator.

On a personal note, I grew up officially on the back of a horse, training and competing in many different disciplines of riding and horse biology and behavior, including the many physical characteristics of horses that differentiates them from native rangeland species.

As a coalition, we prioritize the inherent health of public rangelands above all other considerations.

Healthy rangelands are the basis which allow native wildlife to thrive and livestock to graze to support local communities and free ranging horses and burros and water quality to be sustained.

We would like to recognize a critical decision that the BLM should follow the stipulations of act, by offering animals deemed unsuitable for sale without limitation or humane euthanasia.

This was not an easy decision to make but represents your careful review of the current crisis.

We encourage the board to continue making decisions to move the needle towards the viable solution.

To ensure healthy rangelands for future generations the board should encourage the BLM and Forest Service to increase the number of animals removed from the range in order to restore rangeland habitat, and reemphasize their previous recommendation to both the secretaries of interior and Reiland culture to implement the management tools to sustain wild horse and burro populations within a reasonable amount of time.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment today.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you so much.

>> I sure am glad you got to me, because I need to go to the bathroom.

(Laughter)

>> I'm Former State Representative of Colorado, J Paul Brown.

And I'm a rancher from McNashville, Colorado, a member of the Colorado cattleman's association, Colorado farm bureau and others.

It's been said here this morning, or earlier, that we've got a crisis on our hands and I think that that's exactly what we have.

We've got -- we are going to have an ecological disaster if we don't do something and do something now.

I love horses.

Like everybody in this room, I love horses.

But I want them to be taken care of just like I do my own horses at home and my own livestock.

And so we have to manage the resources so that it is sustainable, and we've got to take these excess horses off of the range.

That's all we've got to do.

Your recommendation last year was spot on, and I encourage you to continue that.

We've got to do that to save the horses, to save the resources, to save our country.

Thank you.

>> Good afternoon, dear advisory board members.

Thank you for coming here.

I traveled almost four miles to get here from my ranch.

(Laughter)

I thought maybe someone would like that.

I am Richard Kanell, the vice president of the organization for the Colorado farm bureau and on behalf of our more than 25,000 members, we thank you for the recommendations that you made last year concerning unrestricted sales and euthanasia.

And we thank you for your representing your interests and we thank you for coming here and seeing a situation that is, as I would put it is not typical.

I have saw that term used in one of the other presentations.

It was already in my mind that that's appropriate to -- to characterize are the Little Book Cliffs situation.

I frequently over the last 36 years have traveled into all of the herd management areas in Colorado.

And continue to do so.

And let me tell you what you saw is not typical.

Number one, is the containment.

It's a contained area.

The other areas, including west Douglas and Piceance are not contained.

As was mentioned by John Hill earlier, one month ago I was on the west salt allotment which is part of this Grand Junction office, 25 miles west of here, northwest of here, and I learned and saw those herds -- horses that have come over the top of the Little Book Cliffs, almost in Utah, but coming over the top and coming into this area.

Some day this isn't going to be allow -- if we allow that to continue this won't be a contained area.

I have been in those areas as well and seen the degradation that the herds have caused the forage in those areas.

Thank you very much.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you, Richard.

Appreciate it.

So we literally have four people left, I will give you each of their names before we get started.

And much to his delight, our next speaker is Mark Winch, close, and following Mark is John Harris.

And then Lucy Powers and lastly, but not leastly, Jim Hyrup.

>> Good afternoon.

I'm Mark Winch.

I'm representing public lands council today, which represents 22,000 public lands ranchers in the greater west as well as the national cattleman's beef association today.

The national cattleman's beef association and the public lands council echo the comments of the national wild horse and burro rangeland management coalition, committed to the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board affirming reaffirmation of the management of the wild horses, streamlined practices that ethically and humanely reduce the number of wild horses and burros on federal lands through appropriate management levels.

Wild horse and burro populations already exceed levels which western rangelands can sustainably accommodate and their numbers continue to rise at an alarming rates of 15 to 20% annually.

Nearly 46,000 horses and burros currently occupy federal holding facilities bringing them dangerously close to capacity.

While NCBL and represent the horse as an icon of American west we reiterate that horses and burros are nonnative species on the western landscapes.

Per last September's recommendation, NCBA and BLC agree that BLM should follow stipulations of Wild Horse and Burro Act by offering all suitable animals long and short-term holding for sale or humane euthanasia.

Those deemed unsuitable for sale should be destroyed in the most humane manner possible.

While it's no less ethical or human than those of the same practice supported by both the Humane Society of the United States and PETA.

And on an estimated 1.5 million shelter pets each year.

Should wild horse and burro populations return to levels scientifically proven to be conducive to healthy animals and ecosystems --

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Mark?

>> Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you, sir.

>> I'm John Harris.

I'm veterinarian here in Grand Junction.

I have been here for 51 years and started as a large animal practitioner and since '79, we have been just doing horses only.

I have been in the Little Book Cliffs and I have seen the range.

I have seen the horses.

The horses are beautiful.

I treated some and just observed them and gone up there with my brother just to have a walk and get away.

I read an argue in a veterinary publication several years ago, and it was called "Hungry Horses, Hungry People."

At the time, I was on the board of practitioners or directors of the American association of equine practitioners and wild horses were always a topic of discussion at our meetings because of the tremendous expense of taking care of these horses, the AAP was not against humane euthanasia at that time.

Laws were passed by Congress shortly after that, requiring humane transport and euthanasia of the horses.

Most of those horses were taken to Mexico to slaughter houses that were inspected by a committee of vets from the United States.

Make sure they were killed and handled in a humane manner.

Other animals are part of the food chain and all animals deserve the same humane treatment.

Big changes have been made in the last several years.

A professor at Colorado state has stimulated big changes in the handling of livestock.

There has been a discussion in AAP of handling horses or calling horses livestock or companion animals it doesn't really matter.

All animals should be treated humanely.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you.

As Lucy comes up, my apologies.

So my apologies, there was a last page, and it was hiding and we found it.

Thank you.

So we have four more people after Lucy and Jim.

>> Great.

Lucy Powers and I'm so glad I came!

I wrote a letter.

It came by email and each of you should have it from me, if you don't I will send it again.

I addressed you.

I have been following the wild horses and you all since 2012.

And I have done a lot of research.

I have been a professional journalism person and always want the facts and want to dig deeper and there's a lot of deep stuff here, as most of us know.

My letter said you failed as a public business.

Stop and start over.

Get a mission.

Do it right.

This is not right, what's been going on.

It's a business.

And it can work, but you've got too many people pulling on -- pulling strings on you.

It's not honest.

It's not transparent.

I've had businesses.

I have been involved in the government and I would just -- if it were my business, the BLM, the way it's going, I would stop everything, and start over, regroup and do it right.

And that's all I really have to say.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much, Lucy.

And Jim Hyrup.

>> My name is Jim Hyrup.

I'm not here representing any different organization, or any other individual.

These are my thoughts and my thoughts only.

First of all, I would like to thank the whole board for all of their hard work and their dedication.

We need to pursue solutions for successful gathers.

Many of you view a successful gather as one that safely and as humanely as possible removed all targeted horses from a designated area.

All adoptable horses should then be placed in a holding facility as close to the gatherer site as possible.

We must then follow up with successful adoptions.

More successful adoptions may occur by educating the potential adopters prior to their adopting.

Adopters and their new mustang should go through a training program together.

We could make valuable -- make available, follow training, counseling and compliance

checks.

Of equal importance, we all have to be realistic and accountable regarding unadoptable horses and this requires considerable compromises.

We have taken horse from work animals to pets.

Pets that are uncountable challenges.

These challenges are crippling many segments of our government and society.

Through diligent work, compassion for horses and the people on the other side of the fence, we must and will find a workable solution.

All involved are going to have to compromise until it hurts.

We must save our western American heritage, the mustang.

Realistically, we cannot save or afford to save every mustang.

Many range where they done belong, and many are where they belong but there's no space for more.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: And now with my apologies to the last page, four more people.

We will start with -- I will try the last name.

Chris Colesh and then Lisa Rutledge and Mike Perry.

Come on up.

>> Thanks for the opportunity to provide comment today.

My name is Chris Coflesh, I'm with the white river and Douglas creek conservation districts which are located in the notice corner of Colorado up in Rio Blanco county.

We are home to the east Douglas and Piceance, but the current estimates there's over 800 horses in our county, and that's whether they are inside the HMA or outside or in the west Douglas HMA which has AML of zero.

Given the current production rates we could see 1600 horses by 2021.

We know we are not high up on the totem pole as far as numbers and all of that goes but we don't want to get that way.

So currently the wild horse and burro program under its current management is not sustainable, unless we implement all the tools provided through the act of '71.

The only solution big enough to address this issue, like I said to implement all the tools through the Wild Horse and Burro Act.

Some groups try to claim adoptions and fertility control will solve the problem, but reality is, we have the current adoption rate of 3,000 to 4500 and recruitment of 14,000 foals.

I went to school in Meeker but that math don't add up to me.

(Laughter)

We respectfully request that this board continue to support the hard decisions and big enough solutions that will truly address the situation this we are facing.

Thanks.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much, sir.

Patty Painter.

>> Thank you for this opportunity to give public input.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Right into the microphone.

>> Thank you for this opportunity to give public input.

My name is Patty Painter, I'm from Ridgeway, Colorado.

I used to have a mustang and a wild burro.

In the final weeks of World War II, General George Patton and Colonel Charles Reed, US Army risked their lives, reputations and standing in the military to save the Austrian Lipizzaner horses in Czechoslovakia from use, abuse and slaughter.

The Lipizzaner is a symbol of Austrian identity just as the mustang is a symbol of the American west today.

There's a place for living symbols.

These are pure blood animals but in terms of the freedom, the family bonds and wild, untamed spirit they represent.

Quality in these countries was founded and grown upon.

Now there are only small pockets of land where they remain, entrusted to the management of the BLM and competing with conflicting interests that also want use of that land.

There are -- these are the only species with the exception of some wildlife, that are protected somewhat by law.

This protection comes with a huge price.

Roundups, holding facilities and now possibly slaughter.

The wild horse and burro today are an endangered species.

You all know that horses are not cattle.

They have not been dumbed down through breeding for meat production and yet it appears they may become a commodity to earn their keep, so to speak.

There are numerous other humane options not sterilization for the treatment and the management of these living symbols can we put aside the individual and the special interest group agendas, look at the situation and problems without succumbing to economic and political pressure?

Think about the true value of these animals and follow the example from history when enemies, when they worked together -- can we lay down our arms?

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you.

I appreciate it very much.

And Lisa.

>> I will be reading an excerpt today from a book called "If There Were Courage" by David Glenn.

David was my neighbor in Colorado.

He died two years ago.

If he were with us, we would still be here.

Excuse me.

Why should one care?

Why?

What is it that can ignite the fire of compassion?

Perhaps it is the memory of debts unpaid to these beautiful creatures or perhaps it is simply the wild horse itself that offers a spark to the flame.

The flame that should never be extinguished, a flame that burns from both ends, the human and equine, only to meet in the middle, to mingle with one, the other, burning more brightly than each on its own.

To spend time with wild horses, is to spend time in the presence of magnificence.

As it is to turn back the clock, it is to see those who have offered us their backs in their natural state.

It is to see them beyond our desires and needs and it is to see them before their offering, before their acceptance, before our forgetfulness.

It is see them for what they are.

A more beautiful form in motion would be hard to imagine, with long, unkempt manes catching in the wind, wild eyes flashing and peering deeply into one's sole.

Unshod hooves, pounding the earth in blurred thunderous movement, every last ounce of their beings expressing their reality, a reality filled with wild grace, power and freedom.

And a power that draws us to them.

To experience the swift charge of a herd stallion as he bears down upon you with head tossing and nostrils flared to hold steady as he pulled up short, dirt exploding through the air and raining down at your feet.

To peer through the dust of the moment, your adrenaline surging only to see the intelligence and the promise of kindness behind the wildness in his eyes.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: I'm, I really, terribly do not want to interrupt that.

State once more what the name of the work is.

>> "If There Were a Truth," it's been David Glen.

I'm very much against slaughter.

There's nothing humane about slaughter.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you.

Mike berry.

>> My name is Mike Berry.

I'm in the range management business, and have been for the last 18 years.

I have been involved in agriculture my whole life, which is 70 something.

I have had horses all my life.

I like them as much as anybody.

Nobody wants to see all of these horses gone, but it's totally out of control.

I have done some work for BLM and Forest Service in places where there's horses and they can do a lot of damage.

In fact, they probably do more damage than any other domestic animal.

The wild horse act was signed, the BLM hasn't been able to take care of their obligations.

Every time they try to do something, somebody sues them, and stops the -- whatever they are trying to accomplish.

These horses have to get gathered down to the appropriate numbers according to their EA, but they can't do it because people who don't use logic or science, they use emotions to run their agendas.

Because the BLM's hands are tied, by these lawsuits, the act has done more damage to the wild horses, the feral horses I call them, than if the act had never been implemented.

And now it's against the law for ranchers to manage the herds the way they used to, and now we've got a bunch of inbred problems.

So thanks.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thanks, Mike.

Thank you very much.

And before we close for the day we have one more it's Mary Marky.

Are you here?

Come on up.

Sorry about that.

>> My name is Mary Marky.

I came here from Cave Creek, Arizona.

I'm a Vietnam War vet and register nurse for over 32 years now at a big community hospital in Phoenix, Arizona.

My husband -- thank you.

My husband was a World War II vet.

He lived by love lack, Nevada.

He joined the navy two weeks before he was supposed to graduate from high school.

As I was growing up, he told me many times about the horses running on the range.

Horses are very adaptable, very intelligent.

They are classified as farm animals, but pigs, cattle, goat, sheep, anyone that knows the horse knows that a horse is not anything like any of those.

Actually, recently, the horse was found to be more like the elephant.

They travel in familiar groups and they learn from memorization and once they learn something they never forget, unlike humans whose memory has to be refreshed at times to remember.

Some scientists believe that intelligence is based on the mass of the brain size.

The horse's brain size is one and a half to two pounds, that is the same size as a 12-year-old human brain.

There have been studies that show that horses can be taught to do math and to read.

Horses brains, however, developed in a different direction from humans.

That's not what they wish to do.

I work in the medical field.

I see hearts being taken out of dead humans and put into other humans to extend their life.

We talk on cell phones and almost every place in the world except two places I drove through on the way to get here.

(Laughter)

We have the Internet on there.

We have our whole work calendar on there.

We have cars now that can drive themselves.

Semitrucks that can drive themselves!

I find impossible to believe that if the humans will get together and put their predatory side aside, that we cannot find a way to save these horses.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you, Mary.

Okay.

(Applause)

So let's accept that as applause for all of you being here, presenting your opinions, your thoughts, your concerns.

It's been a wonderful afternoon and I will turn it back to Julie.

Went begin at 8:00.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Yell, we begin at 8:00 in the morning with more presentations and then the afternoon will be devoted to discussion on the part of the board which might or might not lead to new recommendations.

We will see.

I would also like to point out to those of you who made recommendations, we want to thank you for caring enough to come and do that.

Each of us in front of us has about a 9-inch pile of additional recommendations sent to the board.

There are literally thousands of them.

Thank you all.

See you tomorrow.

(End of session)