

# Wild Horse & Burro Program Overview and Update

*A report to the wild horse and burro advisory board*

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# USFS Wild Horse and Burro Program Overview



## Quick facts

- ~8700 wild horses, ~600 wild burros (USFS only)
- 19 national forests, 8 western states
- 34 active territories on 2.1 million acres
  - 27 wild horse
  - 4 wild burro territories
  - 3 wild horse & burro territories
  - 24 managed with BLM (JMAs)



# U.S. Forest Service Wild Horse and Burro Program

## Staffing & Budget

- WO: Program manager
- R3: Wild horse & burro coordinator
  - Carson NF:
    - Wild horse specialist
    - Wild horse facility manager
    - Wild horse technician, seasonal
    - 4 wild horse interns (2018)
- FY2018 funded at \$824,000
  - \$550,000 est. FY2018 costs for BLM care of ~ 700 horses & burros gathered prior to FY2015

## Management Capacity & Planning

### Wild Horse and Burro Territories

- 7 with NEPA decisions (3 JMAs)
- 4 working on management plans (2 JMAs)





# U.S. Forest Service Wild Horse and Burro Program

## On- and Off-range management

Territories with:

- On-range fertility control (2)
- Short-term off-range facilities (3)
- Conduct gathers (3)
- Gentling / training contracts (3)
- Adoptions / Sales (4)





# Population and Appropriate Management Level (AML)

AML population of all territories set at ~ 2000 for horses and 296 for burros  
– AML review needed for 26 territories (management planning)

USFS territories with highest AML (138/230, 206/402)

Devils Garden >9x AML (gather planned 10/2018)

Montgomery Pass >3x AML (JMA with BLM)





## Program Updates

- NEPA
- Population Surveys
- Training
- Fertility Control
- Gathers
- Adoptions, Sales
- Grants & Agreements
- Litigation Update



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# Management Planning

## 34 active territories

7 with NEPA decisions (3 JMAs)

Carson NF (2)

Humboldt-Toiyabe NF (2)

Modoc NF

Custer-Gallatin NF

San Bernardino NF

## Territories completing plans

Heber WH EIS (A-S NF, AZ)

North Hills WH JMA EA (Dixie NF, UT)

Spring Mountains WHB JMA EA (HTNF, NV)

Big Summit WH EIS (Ochoco NF, OR)

Murderers Creek WH JMA EIS (Malheur NF, OR)



# Population Surveys

## Territories as JMAs (24)

- Aerial Surveys every 2-3 years  
USGS double observer analysis

## USFS-only territories

- Aerial and infrared
- Formal annual horseback surveys
- Formal and informal ground counts
- Permittee observations





# Fertility Control, Gathers, Gentling, Adoptions & Sales

## PZP Fertility Control

Jicarilla (32)  
Pryor Mountain

## Horse gentling program

Devil's Garden (several partners)  
Jicarilla (JMHA, Carson)

## Gathers

- **Aerial** (planned removal for Oct 2018)  
Devil's Garden (1000)
- **Bait-trap**  
Big Summit (1)  
Spring Mountain (148 horses)  
Jicarilla (42)

## Adoptions

Jicarilla (15)  
Big Summit (1)

## Sales

Jicarilla (37)





# Agreements

## Cost-Share Agreements

- Jicarilla Mustang Heritage Alliance
- Sky Mountain Wild Horse Sanctuary

## Resource Assistant Program and Internships

- Salish Kootenai College - TREES (6)
- MobilizeGreen (2)
- Modoc NF-Modoc Farm Bureau (1)

## Interagency Agreements

- BLM-USFS local agreements for managing herds across agency boundaries (3)
- U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict and Resolution (Udall Foundation)
  - Salt River Horse Collaborative
  - Forest-level convening

## Informal Agreements

- Central Oregon Wild Horse Coalition
- Modoc Placement Committee



# Litigation – Devil's Garden Plateau WHT, Modoc NF

## California

Devils' Garden Preservation Group, et al. v. McAdams and U.S. Forest Service.  
Case 2:17-cv-02185-MCE-KJN (E.D. Cal). Plaintiffs filed suit on October 19, 2017 against the Forest Supervisor, Modoc National Forest and the U.S. Forest Service alleging defendants violated the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), National Forest Management Act (NFMA), Modoc National Forest Land Resources Management Plan, Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (WFRHBA), and the implementing regulations for those Acts by failing to remove excess wild horses and for eliminating grazing from the Pine Springs and Emigrant Springs Allotments and reallocating forage to wild horses. The case was stayed by U.S. District Judge England on May 2, 2018, pending completion of administrative appeals. Those administrative procedures are still ongoing. The District Court has not yet ruled on this case.



# Questions?

