Wild Horse & Burro Program Update

Bruce Rittenhouse, Acting Division Chief, Wild Horse & Burro Program
Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board Meeting
Washington, DC ~ October 30, 2019
Presentation Outline

• Program Goals
• Gathers and Fertility Control
• Research
• Private Placement
• Off-Range Holding
• Looking Ahead
WHB Program Goals

- Maintain healthy herds on healthy rangelands
- Ensure the health and welfare of animals in our care
- Place excess animals into good homes
Estimated wild horse and burro population: 88,090 animals*
National appropriate management level: 26,690 animals
Total on-range excess: 61,400 animals

* As of March 1, 2019
Population Surveys

**FY 2019**

HMAs surveyed: 75
HMAs over AML: 146*
HMAs at AML: 31*

Antelope Valley HMA

* As of March 1, 2019
Gathers

- Gathers are dependent on space and funding.
- Removals restricted to most urgent needs (emergencies, fire rehab), wildlife habitat protection, and removals from private lands.

**FY2019**

**HAs/HMAs gathered:** 30

**Animals removed:** 7,276
Gather examples

Silver King HMA
November 27 – December 17, 2018
Near Ely, Nevada

AML: 60-128
Est. population: 1,224
(950% over AML)
Removed: 996
Method: Helicopter

Wild horses at a nearly dry spring in Silver King HMA
Gather examples

Antelope & Antelope Valley HMAs
August 10, 2019 – present (on-going)
Near Elko, Nevada

AML: 187-361
Est. population: 2,794
(773% over AML)
Target Removal: 1,250
Actual removal: 939
Method: Bait-trap

Wild horses at Deer Spring in the Antelope Valley HMA
Fertility Control

- The BLM supports the use of fertility control where it can be effective.
- Fertility control is difficult to implement in large and overpopulated herds.

Est. animals treated with fertility control in FY19: 800
HMAs where fertility control was used: 16
Research

1. Fertility Control
   • Vaccine formulation & delivery, IUDs, new methods, modeling

2. Improved understanding of WHB ecology
   • Movements, behavior, and relation to public safety

3. Improved survey methods
Private Placement

Private Placements FY14-FY19

Adoptions  Sales  Transfers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Adoptions</th>
<th>Sales</th>
<th>Transfers</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2,222</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>2,135</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>2,899</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>2,631</td>
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<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>3,125</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>2,912</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>4,101</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>3,517</td>
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<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>4,609</td>
<td>1,451</td>
<td>3,158</td>
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<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>7,104</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,967</td>
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Private Placement

Private Placement Breakdown: 2018-2019

- Animals Offered
- Adopted (w/o Incentive)
- Adopted (with Incentive)
- Sold
- Transferred

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<tr>
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Private Placement

Adoptions and Sales by State FY19

- **Adoptions**
- **Sales**
- **Transfers**
Off-Range Holding

Off-Range Pasture Solicitation

- Open March 4 – May 3, 2019
- Seeking ranches with capacity to hold 200-5,000 head
- Received 34 bids in response to solicitation
- Horses expected to ship summer 2020
Off-Range Holding

Off-Range Corral Solicitation

- Open July 30 – Sept. 16, 2019
- Seeking facilities with capacity to hold 500-3,500 head
- Open to facilities in CO, UT and WY to accommodate removals in those states
- Received 19 bids in response to solicitation
- Horses expected to ship fall 2020
Off-Range Holding

Fourth Public Off-Range Pasture Opened, April 2019

- Svaty Ranch, Ellsworth, KS
- 1,700 acres; 225 horse capacity
- Public tours and adoption/sale opportunities on site
- Joins three other Public Off-Range Pastures in WY (2) and OK (1)
Looking Ahead

• To reach a sustainable program, removals will need to continue and likely increase
• Increase the use of humane population growth suppression tools
• Look for new, innovative ways to place more animals into private care
• Maximize use of lower cost holding options (i.e. off-range pastures)
Questions