

Title 43: Public Lands: Interior

PART 4700—PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT, AND CONTROL OF WILD FREE-ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS

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**Subpart 4700—General**

**§4700.0-1 Purpose.**

The purpose of these regulations is to implement the laws relating to the protection, management, and control of wild horses and burros under the administration of the Bureau of Land Management.

**§4700.0-2 Objectives.**

The objectives of these regulations are management of wild horses and burros as an integral part of the natural system of the public lands under the principle of multiple use; protection of wild horses and burros from unauthorized capture, branding, harassment or death; and humane care and treatment of wild horses and burros.

**§4700.0-3 Authority.**

The Act of September 8, 1959 (18 U.S.C. 47); the Act of December 15, 1971, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1331-1340); the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1711, 1712, and 1734); the Act of June 28, 1934, as amended (43 U.S.C. 315); and the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321, 4331-4335, and 4341-4347).

**§4700.0-5 Definitions.**

As used in this part, the term:

(a) *Act* means the Act of December 15, 1971, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1331-1340), commonly referred to as the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act.

(b) *Authorized officer* means any employee of the Bureau of Land Management to whom has been delegated the authority to perform the duties described herein.

(c) *Commercial exploitation* means using a wild horse or burro because of its characteristics of wildness for direct or indirect financial gain. Characteristics of wildness include the rebellious and feisty nature of such animals and their defiance of man as exhibited in their undomesticated and untamed state. Use as saddle or pack stock and other uses that require domestication of the animal are not commercial exploitation of the animals because of their characteristics of wildness.

(d) *Herd area* means the geographic area identified as having been used by a herd as its habitat in 1971.

(e) *Humane treatment* means handling compatible with animal husbandry practices accepted in the veterinary community, without causing unnecessary stress or suffering to a wild horse or burro.

(f) *Inhumane treatment* means any intentional or negligent action or failure to act that causes stress, injury, or undue suffering to a wild horse or burro and is not compatible with animal husbandry practices accepted in the veterinary community.

(g) *Lame wild horse or burro* means a wild horse or burro with one or more malfunctioning limbs that permanently impair its freedom of movement.

- (h) *Old wild horse or burro* means a wild horse or burro characterized because of age by its physical deterioration and inability to fend for itself, suffering, or closeness to death.
- (i) *Private maintenance* means the provision of proper care and humane treatment to excess wild horses and burros by qualified individuals under the terms and conditions specified in a Private Maintenance and Care Agreement.
- (j) *Public lands* means any lands or interests in lands administered by the Secretary of the Interior through the Bureau of Land Management.
- (k) *Sick wild horse or burro* means a wild horse or burro with failing health, infirmity or disease from which there is little chance of recovery.
- (l) *Wild horses and burros* means all unbranded and unclaimed horses and burros that use public lands as all or part of their habitat, that have been removed from these lands by the authorized officer, or that have been born of wild horses or burros in authorized BLM facilities, but have not lost their status under section 3 of the Act. Foals born to a wild horse or burro after approval of a Private Maintenance and Care Agreement are not wild horses or burros. Such foals are the property of the adopter of the parent mare or jenny. Where it appears in this part the term *wild horses and burros* is deemed to include the term *free-roaming*.
- [51 FR 7414, Mar. 3, 1986, as amended at 59 FR 28275, June 1, 1994]

#### **§4700.0-6 Policy.**

- (a) Wild horses and burros shall be managed as self-sustaining populations of healthy animals in balance with other uses and the productive capacity of their habitat.
- (b) Wild horses and burros shall be considered comparably with other resource values in the formulation of land use plans.
- (c) Management activities affecting wild horses and burros shall be undertaken with the goal of maintaining free-roaming behavior.
- (d) In administering these regulations, the authorized officer shall consult with Federal and State wildlife agencies and all other affected interests, to involve them in planning for and management of wild horses and burros on the public lands.
- (e) Healthy excess wild horses and burros for which an adoption demand by qualified individuals exists shall be made available at adoption centers for private maintenance and care.
- (f) Fees shall normally be required from qualified individuals adopting excess wild horses and burros to defray part of the costs of the adoption program.

#### **§4700.0-9 Collections of information.**

- (a) The collections of information contained in this part have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget under 44 U.S.C. 3501 *et seq.* and assigned clearance number 1004-0042. The information will be used to permit the authorized officer to remove wild horses and burros from private lands and to determine whether an application for adoption of and title to wild horses or burros should be granted. Response is required to obtain benefits under 16 U.S.C. 1333 and 1334.
- (b) Public reporting burden for this information is estimated to average 0.1652 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Information Collection Clearance Officer

(783), Bureau of Land Management, Washington, DC 20240, and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project, 1004-0042, Washington, DC 20503.  
[57 FR 29654, July 6, 1992]

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## **Subpart 4710—Management Considerations**

### **§4710.1 Land use planning.**

Management activities affecting wild horses and burros, including the establishment of herd management areas, shall be in accordance with approved land use plans prepared pursuant to part 1600 of this title.

### **§4710.2 Inventory and monitoring.**

The authorized officer shall maintain a record of the herd areas that existed in 1971, and a current inventory of the numbers of animals and their areas of use. When herd management areas are established, the authorized officer shall also inventory and monitor herd and habitat characteristics.

### **§4710.3 Management areas.**

#### **§4710.3-1 Herd management areas.**

Herd management areas shall be established for the maintenance of wild horse and burro herds. In delineating each herd management area, the authorized officer shall consider the appropriate management level for the herd, the habitat requirements of the animals, the relationships with other uses of the public and adjacent private lands, and the constraints contained in §4710.4. The authorized officer shall prepare a herd management area plan, which may cover one or more herd management areas.

#### **§4710.3-2 Wild horse and burro ranges.**

Herd management areas may also be designated as wild horse or burro ranges to be managed principally, but not necessarily exclusively, for wild horse or burro herds.

#### **§4710.4 Constraints on management.**

Management of wild horses and burros shall be undertaken with the objective of limiting the animals' distribution to herd areas. Management shall be at the minimum level necessary to attain the objectives identified in approved land use plans and herd management area plans.

#### **§4710.5 Closure to livestock grazing.**

- (a) If necessary to provide habitat for wild horses or burros, to implement herd management actions, or to protect wild horses or burros, to implement herd management actions, or to protect wild horses or burros from disease, harassment or injury, the authorized officer may close appropriate areas of the public lands to grazing use by all or a particular kind of livestock.
- (b) All public lands inhabited by wild horses or burros shall be closed to grazing under permit or lease by domestic horses and burros.
- (c) Closure may be temporary or permanent. After appropriate public consultation, a Notice of Closure shall be issued to affected and interested parties.

§4710.6 Removal of unauthorized livestock in or near areas occupied by wild horses or burros. The authorized officer may establish conditions for the removal of unauthorized livestock from public lands adjacent to or within areas occupied by wild horses or burros to prevent undue harassment of the wild horses or burros. Liability and compensation for damages from unauthorized use shall be determined in accordance with subpart 4150 of this title.

§4710.7 Maintenance of wild horses and burros on privately controlled lands. Individuals controlling lands within areas occupied by wild horses and burros may allow wild horses or burros to use these lands. Individuals who maintain wild free-roaming horses and burros on their land shall notify the authorized officer and shall supply a reasonable estimate of the number of such animals so maintained. Individuals shall not remove or entice wild horses or burros from the public lands.

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## **Subpart 4720—Removal**

### **§4720.1 Removal of excess animals from public lands.**

Upon examination of current information and a determination by the authorized officer that an excess of wild horses or burros exists, the authorized officer shall remove the excess animals immediately in the following order.

- (a) Old, sick, or lame animals shall be destroyed in accordance with subpart 4730 of this title;
- (b) Additional excess animals for which an adoption demand by qualified individuals exists shall be humanely captured and made available for private maintenance in accordance with subpart 4750 of this title; and
- (c) Remaining excess animals for which no adoption demand by qualified individuals exists shall be destroyed in accordance with subpart 4730 of this title.

### **§4720.2 Removal of strayed or excess animals from private lands.**

#### **§4720.2-1 Removal of strayed animals from private lands.**

Upon written request from the private landowner to any representative of the Bureau of Land Management, the authorized officer shall remove stray wild horses and burros from private lands as soon as practicable. The private landowner may also submit the written request to a Federal marshal, who shall notify the authorized officer. The request shall indicate the numbers of wild horses or burros, the date(s) the animals were on the land, legal description of the private land, and any special conditions that should be considered in the gathering plan.

#### **§4720.2-2 Removal of excess animals from private lands.**

If the authorized officer determines that proper management requires the removal of wild horses and burros from areas that include private lands, the authorized officer shall obtain the written consent of the private owner before entering such lands. Flying aircraft over lands does not constitute entry.

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## **Subpart 4730—Destruction of Wild Horses or Burros and Disposal of Remains**

### **§4730.1 Destruction.**

Except as an act of mercy, no wild horse or burro shall be destroyed without the authorization of the authorized officer. Old, sick, or lame animals shall be destroyed in the most humane manner possible. Excess animals for which adoption demand does not exist shall be destroyed in the most humane and cost efficient manner possible.

### **§4730.2 Disposal of remains.**

Remains of wild horses or burros that die after capture shall be disposed of in accordance with State or local sanitation laws. No compensation of any kind shall be received by any agency or individual disposing of remains. The products of rendering are not considered remains.

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## **Subpart 4740—Motor Vehicles and Aircraft**

### **§4740.1 Use of motor vehicles or aircraft.**

(a) Motor vehicles and aircraft may be used by the authorized officer in all phases of the administration of the Act, except that no motor vehicle or aircraft, other than helicopters, shall be used for the purpose of herding or chasing wild horses or burros for capture or destruction. All such use shall be conducted in a humane manner.

(b) Before using helicopters or motor vehicles in the management of wild horses or burros, the authorized officer shall conduct a public hearing in the area where such use is to be made.

### **§4740.2 Standards for vehicles used for transport of wild horses and burros.**

(a) Use of motor vehicles for transport of wild horses or burros shall be in accordance with appropriate local, State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of horses and burros, and shall include, but not be limited to, the following standards:

- (1) The interior of enclosures shall be free from protrusion that could injure animals;
- (2) Equipment shall be in safe conditions and of sufficient strength to withstand the rigors of transportation;
- (3) Enclosures shall have ample head room to allow animals to stand normally;
- (4) Enclosures for transporting two or more animals shall have partitions to separate them by age and sex as deemed necessary by the authorized officer;
- (5) Floors of enclosures shall be covered with nonskid material;
- (6) Enclosures shall be adequately ventilated and offer sufficient protection to animals from inclement weather and temperature extremes; and
- (7) Unless otherwise approved by the authorized officer, transportation shall be limited in sequence to a maximum of 24 hours followed by a minimum of 5 hours of on-the-ground rest with adequate feed and water.

(b) The authorized officer shall not load wild horses or burros if he/she determines that the vehicle to be used for transporting the wild horses or burros is not satisfactory for that purpose.

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## **Subpart 4750—Private Maintenance**

### **§4750.1 Private maintenance.**

The authorized officer shall make available for private maintenance all healthy excess wild horses or burros for which an adoption demand by qualified individuals exists.

### **§4750.2 Health, identification, and inspection requirements.**

#### **§4750.2-1 Health and identification requirements.**

(a) An individual determined to be qualified by the authorized officer shall verify each excess animal's soundness and good health, determine its age and sex, and administer immunizations, worming compounds, and tests for communicable diseases.

(b) Documentation conforming compliance with State health inspection and immunization requirements for each wild horse or burro shall be provided to each adopter by the authorized officer.

(c) Each animal offered for private maintenance, including orphan and unweaned foals, shall be individually identified by the authorized officer with a permanent freeze mark of alpha numeric symbols on the left side of its neck. The freeze mark identifies the animal as Federal property subject to the provisions of the Act and these regulations by a patented symbol, the animal's year of birth, and its individual identification number. The authorized officer shall record the freeze mark on the documentation of health and immunizations. For purposes of this subpart, a freeze mark applied by the authorized officer is not considered a brand.

#### **§4750.2-2 Brand inspection.**

The authorized officer shall make arrangements on behalf of an adopter for State inspection of brands, where applicable, of each animal to be transported across the State where the adoption center is located. The adopter shall be responsible for obtaining inspections for brands required by other States to or through which the animal may be transported.

### **§4750.3 Application requirements for private maintenance.**

#### **§4750.3-1 Application for private maintenance of wild horses and burros.**

An individual applying for a wild horse or burro shall file an application with the Bureau of Land Management on a form approved by the Director.

#### **§4750.3-2 Qualification standards for private maintenance.**

(a) To qualify to receive a wild horse or burro for private maintenance, an individual shall:

(1) Be 18 years of age or older;

(2) Have no prior conviction for inhumane treatment of animals or for violation of the Act or these regulations;

(3) Have adequate feed, water, and facilities to provide humane care to the number of animals requested. Facilities shall be in safe condition and of sufficient strength and design to contain the animals. The following standards apply:

- (i) A minimum space of 144 square feet shall be provided for each animal maintained, if exercised daily; otherwise, a minimum of 400 square feet shall be provided for each animal;
  - (ii) Until fence broken, adult horses shall be maintained in an enclosure at least 6 feet high; burros in an enclosure at least 4½ feet high; and horses less than 18 months old in an enclosure at least 5 feet high. Materials shall be protrusion-free and shall not include large-mesh woven or barbed wire;
  - (iii) Shelter shall be available to mitigate the effects of inclement weather and temperature extremes. The authorized officer may require that the shelter be a structure, which shall be well-drained and adequately ventilated;
  - (iv) Feed and water shall be adequate to meet the nutritional requirements of the animals, based on their age, physiological condition and level of activity; and
- (4) Have obtained no more than 4 wild horses and burros within the preceding 12-month period, unless specifically authorized in writing by the authorized officer.
- (b) The authorized officer shall determine an individual's qualifications based upon information provided in the application form required by §4750.3-1 of this subpart and Bureau of Land Management records of any previous private maintenance by the individual under the Act.

**§4750.3-3 Supporting information and certification for private maintenance of more than 4 wild horses or burros.**

(a) An individual applying to adopt more than 4 wild horses or burros within a 12-month period, or an individual or group of individuals requesting to maintain more than 4 wild horses or burros at a single location shall provide a written report prepared by the authorized officer, or by a local humane official, veterinarian, cooperative extension agent, or similarly qualified person approved by the authorized officer, verifying that the applicant's facilities have been inspected, appear adequate to care for the number of animals requested, and satisfy the requirements contained in §4750.3-2(a).

(1) The report shall include a description of the facilities, including corral sizes, pasture size, and shelter, barn, or stall dimensions, and shall note any discrepancies between the facilities inspected and representations made in the application form.

(2) When an applicant requests 25 or more animals or when 25 or more animals will be maintained at any single location regardless of the number of applicants, the facilities for maintaining the adopted animals shall be inspected by the authorized officer prior to approving the application.

(b) The Bureau of Land Management will not allow the use of a power of attorney or any other instrument or writing authorizing one person to act as an agent for another in the adoption of wild horses and burros.

[51 FR 7414, Mar. 3, 1986, as amended at 55 FR 39152, Sept. 25, 1990; 63 FR 18340, Apr. 15, 1998]

**§4750.3-4 Approval or disapproval of applications.**

If an application is approved, the authorized officer shall offer the individual an opportunity to select the appropriate number, sex, age and species of animals from those available. If the authorized officer disapproves an application for private maintenance because the applicant lacks adequate facilities or transport, the individual may correct the shortcoming and file a new application.

## **§4750.4 Private maintenance of wild horses and burros.**

### **§4750.4-1 Private Maintenance and Care Agreement.**

To obtain a wild horse or burro, a qualified applicant shall execute a Private Maintenance and Care Agreement and agree to abide by its terms and conditions, including but not limited to the following:

- (a) Title to wild horses and burros covered by the agreement shall remain in the Federal Government for at least 1 year after the Private Maintenance and Care Agreement is executed and until a Certificate of Title is issued by the authorized officer;
- (b) Wild horses and burros covered by the agreement shall not be transferred for more than 30 days to another location or to the care of another individual without the prior approval of the authorized officer;
- (c) Wild horses and burros covered by the agreement shall be made available for physical inspection within 7 days of receipt of a written request by the authorized officer;
- (d) The authorized officer shall be notified within 7 days of discovery of the death, theft or escape of wild horses and burros covered by the agreement;
- (e) Adopters are financially responsible for the proper care and treatment of all wild horses and burros covered by the agreement;
- (f) Adopters are responsible, as provided by State law, for any personal injury, property damage, or death caused by animals in their care; for pursuing animals that escape or stray; and for costs of recapture.
- (g) Adopters shall notify the authorized officer within 30 days of any change in the adopter's address; and
- (h) Adopters shall dispose of remains in accordance with applicable sanitation laws.

### **§4750.4-2 Adoption fee.**

(a) Does BLM charge an adoption fee for wild horses and burros?

You must pay an adoption fee for each wild horse or burro you adopt. Usually BLM will charge you a \$125 base fee. BLM will not charge you an adoption fee for orphan foals.

(b) Can BLM increase the adoption fee?

Yes, BLM may increase the adoption fee. BLM may hold competitive adoption events for wild horses or burros. At competitive adoptions, qualified adopters set adoption fees through competitive bidding. For these adoptions, the fee is the highest bid received over the base fee of \$125. Horses or burros remaining at the end of a competitive adoption event will be available for adoption at the established adoption fee.

(c) May BLM reduce or waive the adoption fee?

(1) The BLM Director may reduce or waive the fee when wild horses or burros are un-adoptable at the base adoption fee.

(2) A reduction or waiver of the adoption fee is available only if you are willing to comply with all regulations relating to wild horses and burros.

[62 FR 5339, Feb. 5, 1997]

### **§4750.4-3 Request to terminate Private Maintenance and Care Agreement.**

An adopter may request to terminate his/her responsibility for an adopted animal by submitting a written relinquishment of the Private Maintenance and Care Agreement for that animal. The authorized officer shall arrange to transfer the animal to another qualified applicant or take

possession of the animal at a location specified by the authorized officer within 30 days of receipt of the written request for relinquishment.

#### **§4750.4-4 Replacement animals.**

The authorized officer shall replace an animal, upon request by the adopter, if (a) within 6 months of the execution of the Private Maintenance and Care Agreement the animal dies or is required to be destroyed due to a condition that existed at the time of placement with the adopter; and (b) the adopter provides, within a reasonable time, a statement by a veterinarian certifying that reasonable care and treatment would not have corrected the condition. Transportation of the replacement animal shall be the responsibility of the adopter.

#### **§4750.5 Application for title to wild horses and burros.**

(a) The adopter shall apply for title, using a form designated by the Director, upon signing the Private Maintenance and Care Agreement.

(b) The authorized officer shall issue a Certificate of Title after 12 months, if the adopter has complied with the terms and conditions of the agreement and the authorized officer determines, based either on a field inspection or a statement provided by the adopter from a veterinarian, extension agent, local humane official, or other individual acceptable to the authorized officer, that the animal or animals covered by the Agreement have received proper care and humane treatment.

(c) An adopter may not obtain title to more than 4 animals per 12-month period of private maintenance. Effective the date of issuance of the Certificate of Title, Federal ownership of the wild horse or burro ceases and the animal loses its status as a wild horse or burro and is no longer under the protection of the Act or regulations under this title.

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### **Subpart 4760—Compliance**

#### **§4760.1 Compliance with the Private Maintenance and Care Agreement.**

(a) An adopter shall comply with the terms and conditions of the Private Maintenance and Care Agreement and these regulations. The authorized officer may verify compliance by visits to an adopter, physical inspections of the animals, and inspections of the facilities and conditions in which the animals are being maintained. The authorized officer may authorize a cooperative extension agent, local humane official or similarly qualified individual to verify compliance.

(b) The authorized officer shall verify compliance with the terms of the Private Maintenance and Care Agreement when an adopter has received 25 or more animals or when 25 or more animals are maintained at a single location.

(c) The authorized officer shall conduct an investigation when a complaint concerning the care, treatment, or use of a wild horse or burro is received by the Bureau of Land Management.

(d) The authorized officer may require, as a condition for continuation of a Private Maintenance and Care Agreement, that an adopter take specific corrective actions if the authorized officer determines that an animal is not receiving proper care or is being maintained in unsatisfactory

conditions. The adopter shall be given reasonable time to complete the required corrective actions.

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## **Subpart 4770—Prohibited Acts, Administrative Remedies, and Penalties**

### **§4770.1 Prohibited acts.**

The following acts are prohibited:

- (a) Maliciously or negligently injuring or harassing a wild horse or burro;
- (b) Removing or attempting to remove a wild horse or burro from the public lands without authorization from the authorized officer;
- (c) Destroying a wild horse or burro without authorization from the authorized officer except as an act of mercy;
- (d) Selling or attempting to sell, directly or indirectly, a wild horse or burro or its remains;
- (e) Commercially exploiting a wild horse or burro;
- (f) Treating a wild horse or burro inhumanely;
- (g) Violating a term or condition of the Private Maintenance and Care Agreement;
- (h) Branding a wild horse or burro;
- (i) Removing or altering a freeze mark on a wild horse or burro;
- (j) Violating an order, term, or condition established by the authorized officer under this part.

### **§4770.2 Civil penalties.**

- (a) A permittee or lessee who has been convicted of any of the prohibited acts found in §4770.1 of this title may be subject to suspension or cancellation of the permit or lease.
- (b) An adopter's failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the Private Maintenance and Care Agreement may result in the cancellation of the agreement, repossession of wild horses and burros included in the agreement and disapproval of requests by the adopted for additional excess wild horses and burros.

### **§4770.3 Administrative remedies.**

- (a) Any person who is adversely affected by a decision of the authorized officer in the administration of these regulations may file an appeal. Appeals and petitions for stay of a decision of the authorized officer must be filed within 30 days of receipt of the decision in accordance with 43 CFR part 4.
- (b) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (a) of §4.21 of this title, the authorized officer may provide that decisions to cancel a Private Maintenance and Care Agreement shall be effective upon issuance or on a date established in the decision so as to allow repossession of wild horses or burros from adopters to protect the animals' welfare.
- (c) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (a) of §4.21 of this title, the authorized officer may provide that decisions to remove wild horses or burros from public or private lands in situations where removal is required by applicable law or is necessary to preserve or maintain a thriving ecological balance and multiple use relationship shall be effective upon issuance or on a date established in the decision.

[59 FR 7643, Feb. 16, 1994]

### **§4770.4 Arrest.**

The Director of the Bureau of Land Management may authorize an employee who witnesses a violation of the Act or these regulations to arrest without warrant any person committing the violation, and to take the person immediately for examination or trial before an officer or court of competent jurisdiction. Any employee so authorized shall have power to execute any warrant or other process issued by an officer or court of competent jurisdiction to enforce the provisions of the Act or these regulations.

**§4770.5 Criminal penalties.**

Any person who commits any act prohibited in §4770.1 of these regulations shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$2,000 or imprisonment for not more than 1 year, or both, for each violation. Any person so charged with such violation by the authorized officer may be tried and sentenced by a United States Commissioner or magistrate, designated for that purpose by the court by which he/she was appointed, in the same manner and subject to the same conditions as provided in 18 U.S.C. 3401.