



# Know Before You Go

Thank you for taking the opportunity to observe BLM wild horse gather operations. We hope you find the day informative and educational. Before you head out to the observation site, there are several things you must know.

## Viewing the gather

During the gather, the BLM will temporarily close certain public lands within the HMA to public access, however the public is welcome to observe the gather via agency escort on designated viewing days at locations that provide a safe environment for the horses, the public, BLM employees, contractors, and gather crews. Designated viewing days are September 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23. Federal Aviation Administration requirements, weather, and gather operations will determine the location and availability of observation sites.

Observation is available by reservation only and is limited to 10-15 people per viewing day. Reservations will be accepted by email only at [BLM\\_CO\\_News@blm.gov](mailto:BLM_CO_News@blm.gov), on or after September 10, 2026. Requests must be submitted no later than 4 p.m. the day prior to the public viewing day you wish to attend. In your reservation request, please state which calendar day(s) you prefer to attend so we can accommodate as many people as possible. Phone and voicemail reservations will not be accepted.

Reservations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis, based on the email date and time received. Individuals may request more than one viewing day, but priority will be given to those who have not yet attended. Once all interested participants have had an opportunity to observe the gather, additional reservations may be accommodated as space allows. (Everyone gets one chance before anyone gets a second.)

Participants must receive confirmation before attending. A BLM representative will contact confirmed participants the day before their scheduled visit with meeting times, locations, and additional instructions. This confirmation could come late in the evening after daily operations planning, however observers should generally prepare to meet near Craig, Colorado, between 4:30 and 6 a.m. for caravanning to the site.

Viewing opportunities may change or be canceled on short notice because of weather, changing gather locations, safety concerns, or operational needs and limitations.

The safety of the horses, the public, BLM employees, contractors, and gather crews remains the highest priority throughout the operation.

Every effort will be made to accommodate everyone interested each day; however, participation may be limited and/or some days of the gather may not provide a viewing opportunity due to circumstances such as moving the trap location (not gathering), no safe area to view activity or disguise vehicles, rainy or windy conditions (not gathering), poor vehicle access, etc.

Access to and distance from the capture site will be determined jointly by the Contractor and the BLM's Contracting Officer's Representative prior to gather operations. Observation areas will be established to provide viewing opportunities that will not disrupt gather activities. Observers must stay in designated areas. Terrain and topography will dictate the location of trap sites, and some may provide better viewing than others.

Travel to and from the observation site is by caravan, with observers in personal vehicles, following an agency representative. High clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicles are REQUIRED. If you do not have adequate transportation to the observation area, you may attempt to carpool with other observers (at their discretion), but this option is not guaranteed. Government vehicles cannot be used to transport you or your gear to the trap sites or holding facilities.

Roads are rugged and rocky. Your tires must be in good condition, and you must have a fully inflated spare in good condition and tire changing equipment. A shovel is a good tool to have along as well. We strongly recommend heavy-duty off-road tires, especially if you plan multiple trips.

Visitors may be able to view the temporary holding corrals at the completion of daily gather operations. BLM staff will be on hand to answer questions.

## **Conditions**

There are no amenities, including restrooms, at the observation sites. There will be restroom opportunities before we leave and when we return. You will be at the observation site most of the day – sometimes up to 10 hours. Plan accordingly.

Cell service is limited or nonexistent in much of the area. Plan to be out of range for most of the day. You must bring your own food and water.

Be prepared for weather extremes. You may need a jacket for the cool mornings, as we usually depart before sunrise. Afternoon temperatures could climb into the upper 80s on many days. There is limited shade. Bring a hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, and other appropriate protective clothing. You are welcome to bring a lightweight camp-style chair to the observation site, but please make sure it is dark neutral in color and without shiny supports. Pop-up shade structures are not allowed.

Parking will be limited at many observation areas. Be prepared to hike into some locations. Some hikes could be arduous, involving steep and rocky terrain. You are responsible for independently walking to and from the observation area, including shuttling your own gear. Please do not park on top of tall vegetation due to wildfire risk.

Binoculars, spotting scopes or high-powered camera lenses are strongly recommended to provide the best viewing opportunity. You are welcome to bring cameras and video gear, but you must follow BLM staff instructions regarding placement at the capture site. Tripods, monopods or any other equipment should be dark neutral in color. If this is not a possibility, plan to have something on hand to cover brightness (silver or polished metal) when horses are in proximity. Drones are not allowed.

Please do not bring any pets to the site. If you bring a pet, you will not be able to participate in the public viewing.

Please wear dark neutral clothing, including hats and coats, in dark or medium shades of gray, green, navy, brown or black. No khaki, white, or other light/bright colors, please.

## **Cultural/Paleontological Considerations**

Removing, damaging, excavating, or otherwise altering any archaeological resource on public lands is a criminal offense. Examples of archaeological resources are, but not limited to, pottery, beads, stone flakes, flaked stone tools or projectile points (arrowheads, etc.); historic bottles, tools, coins, or horseshoes; structures or rock imagery sites. Please honor and respect the heritage of Sand Wash Basin by leaving all archaeological resources in place.

Disturbing or collecting vertebrate or other scientifically important fossils, collecting large amounts of petrified wood (over 25 lbs./day, up to 250 lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes on public lands is a criminal offense. Fossils include all mineralized or non-mineralized remains, traces, or imprints of past living organisms.