



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
White River Field Office
220 East Market Street
Meeker, Colorado 81641

IN REPLY REFER TO:
4700 Wild Horses (CON05000)

February 2, 2011

SCOPING STATEMENT Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area (HMA) Population Management Action

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), White River Field Office (WRFO) has initiated a wild horse gather Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area (PEDHMA) and areas outside the PEDHMA, excluding the West Douglas Herd Area (WDHA).

The first step of this EA is public scoping. Before writing the EA, BLM would like to hear the issues and concerns the public and other parties think should be addressed in the EA.

This EA will be used to review inventories, land use planning documents, and other information to determine if excess wild horses currently exist within and outside the PEDHMA in accordance with The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burro Act of 1971, and to analyze the impacts resulting from any gather activities. The most recent census data for the PEDHMA and areas outside, was collected February/March 2010 (see attached 2010 Inventory Map), and at that time the wild horse population was exceeding the appropriate management level (AML) previously established for the PEDHMA.

The BLM anticipates that gather operations would include Helicopter Drive Trapping. This capture method utilizes a helicopter to herd wild horses into a temporary trap. The PEDHMA gather is not currently contracted and would not occur between the dates of March 1 and June 15 (considered the peak foaling period).

Relationship to Existing Plans and Documents

As outlined in the White River Resource Management Plan (RMP), wild horses will be managed to provide a healthy, viable breeding population with a diverse age structure. In addition the wild horse herd population will be managed to improve range condition. Wild horses will be managed in the PEDHMA so that a thriving ecological balance is maintained for all plant and animal species on that range.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

To comply with NEPA, the BLM is required to prepare an environmental analysis. The environmental document will serve several purposes. It will provide both the public and governmental agencies with information about the potential environmental consequences of the project and alternatives; identify all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the project and alternatives; and provide the responsible official with information upon which to make an informed decision regarding the project. The document will be prepared by an Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) of BLM resource specialists.

One essential element of the NEPA process is scoping. Scoping activities are initiated early in the process to: identify reasonable alternatives to be evaluated in the environmental analysis; identify environmental issues of concern related to the proposed action; determine the depth of analysis for issues addressed in the environmental document; and identify potential mitigation. Known resource issues include impacts to: recreational activities (such as hunting, wild horse viewing), special status plants species, wildlife, historic trails, oil & gas development, fertility control vaccine, sex ratio adjustment, and livestock grazing.

This scoping notice has been prepared to describe the means by which governmental agencies, public, and other interested parties may participate in and contribute to the analysis process. Public input is important in establishing the scope of analysis for any NEPA document, and the BLM encourages public participation.

Timing Requirements

The public is encouraged to participate throughout the environmental analysis process to help in identifying the level of analysis needed, alternatives to the proposed action, other issues or concerns that should be analyzed, mitigation opportunities, and any other comments or ideas to help ensure the completeness of the analysis process.

Your comments are important and will be considered in the Environmental Analysis process. **Comments are due by March 4, 2011.** Please note that public comments submitted for this scoping review, including names, e-mail addresses, and street addresses of the respondents will be available for public review and disclosure at the addresses below during regular business hours (8:00a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. Please include "White River HMA Scoping Comments" in the subject line. Please submit your comments to:

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This scoping notice and all other future documents corresponding with this action (including notices for any public meetings) will be posted on the White River Field Office website at: http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/wrfo/piceance_-_east_douglas.html. The web-site can be accessed by the public. The preliminary environmental assessment (EA) will be posted to this site after comments from the public are incorporated. The estimated time of posting of the preliminary EA is May 25, 2011. You may also obtain a paper copy of these documents by contacting the White River Field Office at the addresses or phone numbers listed above.



Kent E. Walter
Field Manager

Attachments:
2010 Inventory Map