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BLM to gather Piceance-East Douglas wild horses in September

MEEKER, Colo. – The Bureau of Land Management is planning a wild horse gather next month to return the wild horse population southwest of Meeker to an appropriate level that keeps the horses and the range healthy.

“We are committed to maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance, which includes managing for a healthy wild horse herd in the White River Field Office that’s in balance with other uses,” said BLM White River Field Manager Kent Walter.

Beginning Sept. 20, BLM will gather wild horses within the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area, which is a 190,000-acre area optimal for wild horses which BLM manages for a healthy wild horse herd that is in balance with other resources and uses. The gather will be completed by Sept. 30.

“Wild horses are not native wildlife and have no effective natural predators, so these gathers are needed periodically to keep the wild horse herd at a level that the range can sustain,” Walter said. “Since 1980, we have gathered wild horses within this area more than a dozen times, which has kept this wild horse herd and the range healthy.”

The appropriate management level identified for the population in this Herd Management Area is a range of 135 to 235 wild horses. Wild horse populations grow about 20 percent annually, typically doubling in about four years if unchecked.

BLM signed a decision today to reduce the estimated population of 382 wild horses within the 190,000-acre Herd Management Area to 135. To help reduce the growth rate of the herd, mares released back on to the range will be given a treatment that delays fertility, and BLM will adjust sex ratios of the herd to 60 percent studs and 40 percent mares. This should help decrease the frequency the area needs to be gathered.

Additionally, the estimated 78 wild horses that have moved outside the boundaries of the Herd Management Area and are east of State Highway 139 will be gathered and removed. Last October BLM gathered and removed 73 wild horses from outside of the Herd Management Area. Wild horses to the west of State Highway 139 in an area called the West Douglas Herd Area will not be gathered this year.

Wild horses removed will be taken to BLM's wild horse facility in Canon City. The majority will be available for adoption. The wild horses not adopted will be placed in long-term pastures.

More information is available at

http://www.blm.gov/co/st/en/fo/wrfo/wrfo_wild_horses.html, or by contacting the White River Field Office, (970) 878-3800.

Under the authority of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, BLM manages, protects, and controls wild horses and burros as part of its overall multiple-use mission.

BLM encourages those who are interested in providing good homes to wild horses or burros to visit http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/wild_horse_and_burro.html for information about adoptions or sales.

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