

West Douglas Herd Area

August 21, 2015

CURRENT STATUS

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) White River Field Office (WRFO) is planning to gather excess horses in the field office beginning in September 2015. Action is needed at this time to balance wild horse populations with other resources and to manage wild horses within the area designated for long-term wild horse management.

BACKGROUND

The 123,000-acre West Douglas Herd Area is located southwest of Rangely and west of State Highway 139 near Douglas Pass. Wild horses in this area became isolated from the larger herd in the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area in 1983, when construction of the State Highway 139 right-of-way fences created a physical barrier to movement between the herds.

The current 1997 White River Resource Management Plan called for the removal of all horses from the West Douglas Herd Area after 10 years. Through this and later planning efforts, the BLM concluded that wild horses could be better managed within the adjacent Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area. The BLM determined that all horses in West Douglas are excess horses.

Currently, there are 365 excess wild horses in the West Douglas Herd Area in addition to excess horses in other areas of the field office. The area hardest hit by excess wild horses is West Douglas. Insufficient forage and water exists in that area for domestic livestock grazing under current use. The primary livestock grazer in West Douglas began voluntary non-use in 2005 and continues non-use on grazing allotments.

