



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Billings Field Office  
5001 Southgate Drive  
Billings, Montana 59101-4669



IN REPLY TO:  
4700

June 29, 2006

Dear Interested Party:

In order to manage for healthy horses on healthy rangelands, I have made the decision to use fertility control vaccine on all mares 11 years of age and older (24 mares in 2006) on the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range (PMWHR). Seven mares 16 years of age and older have already been treated with the Porcine Zona Pellucida (PZP) vaccine and would continue to receive annual boosters for the remainder of their lives. Thirteen mares 12-15 years of age have also been treated and would continue to receive annual boosters through 2010. All mares that are 11 years of age would be added to the treatment program each year. Fertility control application is scheduled to begin no earlier than July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006, and will continue annually through 2010.

In addition, I have made the decision to capture and remove a maximum of 22 age-specific wild horses from the PMWHR. An estimated 11 bachelor stallions (4-8 years of age) and 11 yearlings have been determined excess and would be removed due to the need to reduce wild horse grazing impacts on the PMWHR. The method of capture will be bait-trapping which is scheduled to begin no earlier than July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006, and may continue through September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

These decisions are based on the best available information to date as analyzed within Environmental Assessment (EA) MT-010-FY06-19. This document was released for a 30-day comment period and BLM received 179 documents (520 pages of comments). The EA and Record of Decision are available by contacting the Billings Field Office (BiFO) or may be found at [http://www.mt.blm.gov/bifo/whb/Env\\_assessments.html](http://www.mt.blm.gov/bifo/whb/Env_assessments.html).

The Pryor herd currently consists of 138 horses (2 years and older) and 22 yearlings for a total of 160 adult horses. The herd is expected to produce up to 38 recorded foals in 2006. The scheduled population controls will reduce herd size by 22 horses and are estimated to reduce herd recruitment to 4% annual growth (2008 through 2012). Mitigation measures are outlined in the Record of Decision. Additional removals may be proposed as range conditions, utilization impacts, drought conditions and budget impacts dictate.

All excess horses will be available for adoption by a sealed-bid competitive process to qualified and pre-approved adopters as determined by the BiFO. Preliminary details for the adoption process are provided in the Record of Decision, Appendix 2. Timing of the adoption will be determined by the completion of bait-trapping efforts.

These herd control measures are implementation activities tiered to the PMWHR Herd Management Area Plan. Any adjustments in AML, designated range boundaries, revisions to multiple use provisions or other long-term goals for PMWHR management must be addressed by a revision of the HMAP. This revision is now planned to be concurrent with revision of the land use plans for the Custer National Forest and the BiFO beginning in 2007-2008.

Any person who feels adversely affected by this decision may file an appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals, Office of the Secretary. Please refer to section IX. APPEALS within the Record of Decision for information regarding procedures for appeal.

Thank you for your interest in the PMWHR. If you have questions, please contact Linda Coates-Markle, State Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, at (406) 896-5013.

Sincerely,

Sandra S. Brooks  
Field Manager