

# 6.4

## BLM BATTLE MOUNTAIN DISTRICT OFFICE RMP PLANNING FACT SHEET *Wild Horse and Burro Management*

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The BLM Battle Mountain District Office (BMDO) is revising the Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the BMDO planning area. The BMDO RMP will provide detailed information about the current state of resources on public lands within the planning area, and set forth a plan of action for managing those resources for the next twenty or so years under the BLM's dual mandate of *multiple use* and *sustained yield*.

Half of the nation's wild horses and burros live on Nevada rangelands managed by the BLM. In 1971, the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (Act) established herd areas which were identified by the presence of wild horses at the time the Act was passed. The BLM, for management purposes, further defined these areas into Herd Management Areas (HMAs). The Battle Mountain District manages 21 wild horse and 7 wild burro HMAs.

The appropriate management level (AML) has been determined for all of the HMAs within the district. AML is defined as the number of wild horses that can be sustained within a designated HMA which achieves and maintains a thriving natural ecological balance while preventing degradation of the range within the concept of multiple use.

Soil type and climate dictate the type of vegetation within each HMA and the type of vegetation dictates the success of foraging. Drought, overgrazing, wildfires and population growth can adversely affect habitat and in some instances herd health. However, the trend is moving toward a desired condition as wild horse and burro management efforts, including gathers and population control methods, have moderated population growth and habitat degradation. Managing for healthy rangelands improves habitat and forage quality for wild horses and burros.

### How Are These Resources Currently Managed?

The BLM manages wild horses and burros under the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195). Under the Act, the BLM is responsible for preserving and protecting wild horses and burros and for managing



Photo taken by Micheal Vermeys

healthy rangelands. The act was amended by Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 to require the protection, management, and control of wild free-roaming horses and burros on public lands.

The BLM collects data to determine if current management objectives are appropriate and to ensure the maintenance and/or enhancement of rangeland health to meet Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Standards and Guidelines.

RACs, chartered by the Department of Interior, occur throughout the State of Nevada to promote healthy rangelands and to maintain healthy wild horse and burro herds within HMAs administered by the BLM. The Battle Mountain District lies within two RAC boundaries; the Northeastern Great Basin Area and the Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area.

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These councils developed standards and guidelines to ensure the BLM adheres to mandates requiring multiple use management. The following is a list of the Standards by RAC.

### **Northeastern Great Basin Area RAC**

1. Upland Sites
2. Riparian and Wetland Sites
3. Habitat
4. Cultural Resources
5. Healthy Wild Horse and Burro Populations

### **Mojave-Southern Great Basin Area RAC**

1. Soils
2. Ecosystem Components
3. Habitat and Biota
4. Wild Horses and Burros



2008 Roberts Mountain HMA Wild Horse Gather

If you would like more information on the RAC Standards and Guidelines, please go to

[http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/res/resource\\_advisory.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/res/resource_advisory.html)

### **The BLM would like your input...**

- Should HMA boundaries be adjusted, combined and/or eliminated?
- What criteria should be used to make habitat and population suitability and viability determinations?
- What methods, other than removal through gathers, should be considered to achieve AMLs?
- How should BLM address wild horse and burro urban-interface issues?
- Which HMAs are suitable for the long-term management of wild horses and burros?
- What age structure and sex ratios are appropriate to ensure healthy future herds of wild horses and burros?
- Where are habitat improvement projects appropriate? What kinds of improvement projects are feasible? When is it appropriate to develop or augment water for horses and burros?
- Any other issues or concerns with the management of wild horses or burros?

**Email comments to:**  
[BattleMountainRMP@blm.gov](mailto:BattleMountainRMP@blm.gov)

**BMDO Planning Webpage:**  
[www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/battle\\_mountain\\_field/blm\\_information/rmp.com](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/battle_mountain_field/blm_information/rmp.com)

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