

## **General Gather Questions**

### ***Why are you gathering in the winter?***

In some areas, gathering wild horses during the winter may avoid the stress that could be associated with a summer gather. By fall and winter, almost all foals are of good body size and sufficient age (6 months or older) to be easily weaned. Winter gathers are often preferred when terrain and higher elevations make it difficult to gather wild horses during the summer months. Under winter conditions, horses are often located in lower elevations due to snow cover at higher elevations. This typically makes the horses closer to the potential trap sites and reduces the potential for fatigue and stress. While deep snow can tire horses as they are moved to the trap, the helicopter pilots allow the horses to travel slowly at their own pace. Trails in the snow are often followed to make it easier for horses to travel to the trap site. On occasion, trails can be plowed in the snow to facilitate the safe and humane movement of horses to a gather site.

Because one of the objectives for the proposed gather is to apply fertility control to the wild mares, the winter time frame is preferred because this window of time gives the highest success of the fertility control vaccine.

### ***If foals are orphaned during the gather, how does the BLM take care of them?***

A very small number of foals can be orphaned in any gather. Sometimes foals that have been previously orphaned (abandoned by the mare) are also captured.

We make every effort to provide prompt, humane care to orphan foals. We administer electrolyte solutions to orphan foals and feed them milk replacer as needed to support their nutritional needs. Orphan foals also may be placed in an approved foster home to receive additional care. Once orphan foals are large enough, they are made available for adoption to qualified individuals who can provide them a good home.



*Wild Horse Specialist gives electrolytes to a foal during the Silver Peak HMA Gather in summer 2006*

## **Adoption**

### ***How can I adopt one of the horses?***

Excess wild horses and burros removed from the range are offered for adoption to qualified people through the BLM's Adopt-a-Horse or Burro Program. Potential adopters must have the proper facilities and financial means to care for an adopted animal, and we always hope that they have experience working with a wild horse or burro, which will help ensure the gentling process.

During the first year, the government retains title to the animal(s), and will conduct compliance checks throughout the year in an effort to ensure as much as possible that the animal is properly being cared for and has gone to a good home. At the end of the first year, if the adopter has complied with all the adoption stipulations and has properly cared for their mustang or burro for one year, he or she is eligible to receive title, or ownership, from the Federal government.

The BLM has placed nearly 225,000 wild horses and burros into private care since the adoption program began in 1971. To apply to adopt a wild horse or burro on-line, please go to the BLM's adoption website at:

[www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/wild\\_horse\\_and\\_burro/What\\_We\\_Do/wild\\_horse\\_and\\_burro0.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/wild_horse_and_burro/What_We_Do/wild_horse_and_burro0.html)

If you are interested in adopting directly from one of the BLM's holding facilities, please visit the agency's facilities page. For more information about the BLM's Adopt-A-Horse or Burro program, please visit [www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/wild\\_horse\\_and\\_burro.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/wild_horse_and_burro.html), or you may call 1-866-468-7826 with any questions about the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program.