

Frequently Asked Questions About the Diamond Complex Wild Horse Gather

Other ways to control wild horse populations

Why doesn't the BLM just implement fertility control rather than removing wild horses from the range?

The use of Fertility Control was analyzed in several Alternatives in the Diamond Complex EA. However, an ideal fertility control agent has not yet been perfected for use in wild horses. For example, the two year fertility control vaccine is only about 70-90% effective when applied during a 3-4 month window prior to foaling. When applied during the summer, it is usually effective for only one year.

To substantially slow herd growth rates, most of a herd's mares would need to be captured and vaccinated every two years during the winter. Applying fertility control to a population of wild horses that is 387% of the existing AML without removing enough animals to achieve AML would not be consistent with the provisions of the WFRHBA which requires the BLM to "immediately remove excess animals from the range so as to achieve appropriate management levels". Application of fertility control as the only population control would also not result in the removal of wild horses from areas outside of the HMA boundaries and would not reduce or eliminate the ongoing impacts to the range by the current wild horse population. The use of Fertility Control without removal of wild horses was addressed in Section 2.3.1 of the Diamond Complex EA as well as at the end of Appendix E.



Bald Mountain HMA gather, January, 2009 – wild mares await release back to the HMA.