



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Mount Lewis Field Office

50 Bastian Road

Battle Mountain, Nevada 89820

Phone: 775-635-4000

Fax: 775-635-4034

[http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/battle\\_mountain\\_field.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/battle_mountain_field.html)

In Reply Refer To:  
LLNVB0000 (4700)

DEC 11 2012

Dear Reader:

Enclosed please find the Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Diamond Complex Wild Horse Gather. The Diamond Complex includes the Diamond, Diamond Hills North and Diamond Hills South Herd Management Areas (HMAs), administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Battle Mountain District, Mount Lewis Field Office, the Ely District, Egan Field Office and Elko District, Tuscarora Field Office. The area is managed as a complex due to movement of the wild horses between the HMAs.

The Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Diamond Complex available on-line at [http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/battle\\_mountain\\_field.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/battle_mountain_field.html). Hard copies are available from the Mount Lewis Field Office.

The Preliminary EA was issued on October 19, 2012 for 30 day public comment. Comments received were reviewed and considered in completion of the Final EA. As a result of the comments received, some additions were made to the Final EA for clarification purposes; including discussion in regarding safety and humane treatment of the wild horses, and information throughout the regarding the results of the wild horse inventory in November 2012. Additionally, photos were added throughout the document to further illustrate conditions of the range, wild horse condition, resource issues and inventory methods. Beyond these changes, no substantial modifications were made to the EA as a result of the comments received.

The proposed gather area is located north of Eureka, Nevada in Eureka, White Pine and Elko Counties. The upper range of the Appropriate Management Level (AML) for the Diamond Complex is 210 and the 2012 estimated population is 813 wild horses based on a comprehensive inventory completed in November 2012. During the inventory, 311 of the observed wild horses were located outside of HMA boundaries in areas not managed for wild horses.

The enclosed Decision implements a plan to use multiple gathers over a 10-year period for selective removal of excess wild horses to achieve the low range of AML (123 wild horses), adjust sex ratios and implement population growth control using fertility control treatments (PZP-22 or most current formulations). All wild horses residing in areas outside of the Diamond Complex HMA boundaries would be gathered and removed.

Due to national funding and holding space limitations, as well as gather efficiency limitations, BLM cannot achieve low-range AML or implement a sufficient level of population controls with a single gather in 2013. Under the Proposed Action as described in the EA, the 2013 gather would be the first phase in a 10-year management strategy that would help reduce the need for large scale wild horse gathers while still

achieving BLM's management goals of attaining AML, reducing population growth rates, and obtaining a thriving natural ecological balance on the range. The initial gather would begin on or about January 10, 2013 and take about three weeks to complete.

The BLM would gather and remove approximately 603 excess animals in the initial 2013 gather, resulting in an initial post gather population at approximately the high end of AML (210 wild horses). Wild horses would continue to be gathered in order to apply fertility control to all mares released back to the range. Since the first phase of the gather would not achieve the desired low AML, a follow-up gather would be planned in two to three years.

After the initial gather in 2013, the BLM would conduct follow-up gathers in the Diamond Complex during the period covered by the decision to continue the population growth control protocols and remove primarily younger, adoptable excess wild horses to reach low-range AML. Sex ratio adjustment to favor studs would be implemented during follow-up gathers over the 10-year period in which the low AML is not achieved. If gather efficiencies utilizing a helicopter do not achieve the desired goals of the gather, water/bait trapping may be utilized during the life of the plan to remove sufficient numbers of excess wild horses, achieve the management targets, to relieve resource concerns and/or remove concentrated groups of excess wild horses both inside and adjacent to the Diamond Complex.

Prior to subsequent follow-up gathers the BLM would review resource and inventory monitoring data and identify the need for continued implementation of population controls and removal of excess wild horses. Following this review, the BLM would issue a notification to the public informing them of our legal justification for the continuation of the management action initiated in 2013 and the need for the follow-up gather as well as any opportunities for viewing during the gather.

A special on-site wild horse adoption event is also planned with the date and location still to be determined. Information about public viewing opportunities will be available from the Mount Lewis Field Office as the start of the gather nears. If you have any questions, would like to view the gather, or are interested in adopting a wild horse during this event, please contact Shawna Richardson, Mount Lewis Field Office Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, at (775) 635-4181.

Sincerely,

/s/ Christopher J. Cook  
Christopher J. Cook  
Field Manager,  
Mount Lewis Field Office

Enclosures (3)