



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Elko District Office
3900 East Idaho Street
Elko, Nevada 89801
http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko_field_office.html

In Reply Refer To:
4700 (NVE03000)

Sept. 4, 2012

Dear Interested Party:

The Wells and Egan Field Offices of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Elko and Ely District Offices have prepared a Preliminary Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Three HMA Water-Bait Trapping Wild Horse Gather. The document (DOI-BLM-NV-N030-2012-0522) will be available to be viewed on September 5, 2012 online at: http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko_field_office.html. Hardcopies are available upon request from the Elko and Ely District Offices. Comments will be accepted until 4:30 pm Pacific Daylight Time on October 4, 2012. No comments will be accepted after 4:30 pm Pacific Daylight Time.

The Three HMA Water-Bait Trapping Project Area is located approximately 60 miles south of Wells, Nevada, within Elko and White Pine Counties. The Three HMA Project Area includes the Triple B Herd Management Area (HMA) managed by the Ely District Egan Field Office and the Maverick-Medicine and Antelope Valley HMAs which are managed by the Elko District Wells Field Office. (Refer to the attached map for general location.) The Wells and Egan Field Offices are proposing to gather wild horses from various riparian and upland areas within the Project Area as resource concerns are identified. (Refer to the enclosed map for the location of the three HMAs.)

The water-bait trapping gather is needed to:

- Bring wild horse numbers in balance with available water sources to maintain horse health;
- Reduce impacts caused by wild horses to limited perennial water resources and upland areas with limited forage within the Project Area;
- Remove excess wild horses within the HMAs and wild horses that are permanently residing outside areas designated as HMAs;
- Maintain a thriving herd as authorized under Section 3 (b) (2) of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act and Section 302(b) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

By implementing the actions outlined in the Preliminary water-bait trapping environmental assessment, the BLM will be able to improve vegetation, habitat, and watershed health; removing excess animals from areas of resource concern will allow the BLM to continue to make significant progress toward achieving the Standards for Rangeland Health identified by the

Northeastern Great Basin Resource Advisory Council. As part of the proposed action the BLM will also collect information on herd characteristics and determine herd health during the gather.

This EA is being provided to the interested public on the website for review for 30 days. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to submit comments, issues, alternatives, and/or recommendations for inclusion into the Final EA. Comments will be accepted until October 4, 2012. In order to provide meaningful input, please submit your comments that are applicable to the proposed wild gather, referencing the EA where possible.

Interested individuals should mail written comments to the BLM Elko District Office, 3900 Idaho Street, Elko, NV 89801 Attn: Three HMA Water-Bait Trapping EA. Comments may also be provided through email to this address: BLM_NV_ELDO_TripleBMaverickMedicine@blm.gov. Be advised that *only* the comments received by postal mail or to this specific e-mail address will be considered in the completion of the Final EA, Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record.

Written comments in response to this notice, including the names and addresses of each commenter will be available for public review. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

The public should be aware that submissions in the form of petitions are not generally considered comments. Submission of form letters or talking points will be considered as one comment, since they repeat the same thing and typically originate from single sources.

All comments received during the public comment period will be fully considered and evaluated for preparation of the Final EA. If you have any questions on this matter, please contact Bruce Thompson, BLM Elko District Wild Horse and Burro Specialist, at (775) 753-0200 or Ruth Thompson, BLM Egan Wild Horse and Burro Specialist at (775) 289-1800.

Sincerely,

//s//

Bryan K. Fuell, Manager
Wells Field Office

Enclosure