



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Elko District Office

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In Reply Refer To:

4700(NVE0300/NVL02000)

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)

Antelope Complex

Wild Horse Gather Plan Environmental Assessment

DOI-BLM-NV-N020-2010-0019-EA

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts in the environmental assessment (EA), we have determined that implementing Alternative A, the Proposed Action, will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Reasons for these findings are based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR § 1508.27) with regard to the context and intensity of impacts.

Context: The affected region is limited to the Antelope Complex (Antelope, Antelope Valley, Goshute, and Spruce-Pequop HMAs and adjacent areas of the Antelope Complex). The Complex consists of approximately 1,324,745 acres of public and private land, located southeast of Elko, Nevada within Elko County and White Pine County. (EA, Map 1) The environmental assessment was prepared with input from interested parties.

Intensity: There is no evidence that the severity of impacts is significant:

1. The Proposed Action is expected to meet BLM's objective for wild horse management of maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple use relationship consistent with other resource needs.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to gather a sufficient number of the total estimated population of 2,705 wild horses to selectively remove approximately 1,867-2,228 excess wild horses from within the HMAs and approximately 50 from outside the Goshute and Spruce-Pequop HMAs for an approximate total of 1,917-2,278 excess wild horses to be removed (approximately 339 excess wild horses in the Antelope HMA; 848 excess wild horses in the Antelope Valley HMA, 511 excess wild horses in the Goshute HMA, 530 excess wild horses in the Spruce-Pequop HMA, and 50 excess wild horses located outside of the Goshute and Spruce-Pequop HMAs) beginning on or

after January 20, 2011. Approximately 427 of the gathered wild horses (beyond excess wild horses to be removed) would be released back to the range following the gather. The sex ratio of released wild horses may be adjusted to a ratio as high as 60% males to 40% females. Of the wild horses released, about 214 mares would be vaccinated with PZP-22 (Porcine Zona Pellucida) fertility control vaccine. The gather, removal, sex ratio adjustment, and fertility control are intended to achieve the low range of the appropriate management levels (AMLs), slow population growth, maintain population size within the AMLs and extend the time before another gather to remove excess wild horses would be needed.

2. The Standard Gather Operating Procedures (EA, Appendix C) would be used to conduct the gather and are designed to protect human health and safety, as well as the health and safety of the wild horses. The Proposed Action would have no effect on public health or safety.
3. The Proposed Action would have no potential to affect unique characteristics such as historic or cultural resources. No adverse impacts to the Antelope Complex are anticipated. There are no wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas present in the areas.
4. The effects of the Proposed Action on the quality of the human environment are not considered to be highly controversial, and effects of the gather are well known and understood.
5. Possible effects on the human environment are not highly uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risks. The Proposed Action has no known effects on the human environment which are considered highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. This is demonstrated through the effects analysis in the EA.
6. The action is compatible with future consideration of actions required to improve wild horse management in conjunction with meeting objectives for wildlife habitat within the herd management area. The Proposed Action does not set a precedent for future actions. Future actions would be subject to evaluation through the appropriate level of NEPA documentation.
7. The Proposed Action is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.
8. The Proposed Action would have no potential to adversely affect properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and would have not cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
9. The Proposed Action would have no effect on threatened or endangered species or habitat determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act. The EA identified two candidate species (Greater sage grouse, a Columbian spotted frog) in the project area. Review of the Special Status Species section of the EA indicates an overall

improved/sustained ecological condition for the Special Status Species would be expected as a result of the Proposed Action. The Special Status Species are expected to meet life cycle requirements. Therefore, it has been determined the Proposed Action would not adversely affect any threatened or candidate species or their critical habitat.

10. The Proposed Action does not threaten to violate any Federal, State, or Local laws or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The Proposed Action is in conformance with all applicable regulations (Title 43 Code of Federal Regulations). The Proposed Action would not violate the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or Endangered Species Act.

/S/

12/17/2010

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Date

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12/17/2010

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