



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Elko District Office

3900 Idaho Street

Elko, Nevada 89801-4211

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko_field_office.html

June 7, 2010

In Reply Refer To:
4700(NVE0200)

Dear Reader:

The Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Owyhee, Rock Creek and Little Humboldt Herd Management Areas (HMAs) Wild Horse Gather (DOI -BLM-NV-N020-2010-0014) will be available to be viewed on June 8, 2010 online at:

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/elko_field_office.html. Hardcopies are available upon request from the Elko District Office.

The EA analyzed the effects of the proposed gather of wild horses in the Owyhee, Rock Creek and Little Humboldt HMAs. The three HMAs are located in northwestern Elko County. The HMAs comprise 482,191 acres of public and private lands.

The decision authorizes the Proposed Action/Alternative 1, to gather approximately 1,548 wild horses and remove approximately 1,137 to 1,197 (approximately 686 excess wild horses in the Owyhee HMA, 425 excess wild horses located outside of the Rock Creek HMA, and 26-86 weanlings to 4-year old mares from the Rock Creek and Little Humboldt HMAs) beginning July 9, 2010. Approximately 399 wild horses would be released back to the range following the gather. Of these, about 195 mares would be vaccinated with PZP-22 (Porcine Zona Pellucida) fertility control vaccine.

The gather, removal and fertility control are intended to slow population growth, maintain population size within the appropriate management levels (AMLs), and extend the time before another gather to remove excess wild horses would be needed.

The gather is needed to:

- Remove excess wild horses, and wild horses that are permanently residing outside areas designated as HMAs.
- To reduce potential impacts to Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) habitat within the Little Humboldt HMA and on areas adjacent to the Rock Creek HMA where wild horses have expanded outside the HMA boundary.
- The gather is also expected to reduce wild horse impacts to limited perennial water resources within the Owyhee HMA resulting from excess wild horse numbers.

The No Action Alternative was also analyzed but was not selected. Not conducting a gather at this time would not achieve AMLs, would not remove wild horses located outside of the Rock

Creek and Little Humboldt HMAs and would not allow BLM to manage the range for a thriving natural ecological balance and for multiple uses of the public lands. Moreover, not removing the excess wild horses would not be consistent with requirements of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (WFRHBA) and 43 CFR §4700, Protection, Management and Control of Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros.

A Preliminary EA was made available for a 30 day public comment period that ended May 21, 2010. In excess of 2,500 comment letters/emails were received from individuals, organizations and agencies, although the majority of these consisted of form letters expressing the same or similar range of concerns. All comments were reviewed and substantive comments were considered in finalizing the EA. Other comments received were either outside the scope of the environmental analysis or are matters of opinion or view point which did not affect the analysis. A summary of comments and responses is located in Appendix E of the EA which is available on the website listed above.

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact me at 775-753-0200 or at the above address.

Sincerely,

/s/

Kenneth E. Miller
District Manager
Elko District Office

Enclosures: Tuscarora FONSI
Tuscarora Decision Record
Form 1842-1

cc:
Adrea Lococo
American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign
Animal Welfare Institute
Barbara Warner
Barrick Goldstrick Mines Inc, Gary Sundseth
Cal Worthington Trust
Carol Clinton
Craig C Downer
Darynne Jessler
Dean Rhoads
Doby George LLC
Dolores Wilson
Eileen Hennessy

Elko County
Ellison Ranching Company
Friends of Nevada Wilderness
In Defense of Animals
Irene Lopez
John Carpenter
Lorraine Schanzebach
Mori Ranches LLC
Nelo Mori
Nevada Cattlemen's Association
Nevada Department of Wildlife
NFC Land and Cattle LLC
Patsy Stombaugh
Petan Company of Nevada
Richard Carter
Roxanna Lund
Sherry Oster
Squaw Valley Ranch LLC
Sustainable Grazing Coalition
The Cloud Foundation
Thomas Cristy
Trout Unlimited
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Western Watersheds Project
Wild Horse Commission