

# *Mustang Country* Wild Horses & Burros



Warm Springs Canyon wild horse band headed for water, summer 2005.

Herd Management Areas near the Black Rock  
Desert-High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National  
Conservation Area



## WELCOME

Welcome to *Mustang Country, Wild Horses & Burros*, information and companion map designed to entice you to explore the legends and habitats of current wild horse and burro herds managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The area of interest includes sixteen Herd Management Areas (HMAs) in or near the Black Rock Desert–High Rock Canyon Emigrant Trails National Conservation Area (NCA) located in northwest Nevada. This area was chosen because the history of the American Mustang exemplifies the spirit of the NCA which was developed to help preserve and protect the unique natural and cultural heritage of the area.



Mustang country – Calico Mountains on left, Granite Peak far center, and Fox Mountain far right.

## LEGISLATION

The *Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971* gave the Department of the Interior’s **Bureau of Land Management** and the Department of Agriculture’s **Forest Service** the authority to manage, protect, and control wild horses and burros on the nation’s public lands. Rangelands are managed consistent with these agencies’ multiple-use missions. Wild horses and burros are defined in the Act as “unbranded and unclaimed horses and burros that use public lands...” Let’s look at some history to clarify why Congress declared wild horses and burros “living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West...”

## HISTORY OF THE AREA...

Historical evidence indicates that the American westward expansion of explorers, settlers, cavalry, miners, farmers, and ranchers in the mid-1800s was the source of present day wild horses and burros in this area. For the century preceding the

widespread introduction of domestic livestock, horses had the chance to expand their range into the western Great Basin, but failed to do so (Young, 1976). However, the vast number of settlers entering the Great Basin, especially livestock operators, caused many changes to the native cold desert environment including water developments, supplemental livestock feeding, and farm crops. This enhanced the basic habitat elements for horse survival. Loss of stock, abandonment, and intentional horse breeding operations on vast acreages of unfenced public lands over more than a century provided the diverse genetic heritage of today's American Mustang.

### **Native Americans, Early Explorers, Emigrants, and the Cavalry**

By 1690, Shoshones to the north of what is now the BLM's Winnemucca District possessed horses, but the Shoshones and Paiutes in the immediate area did not acquire horses until after direct Euro-American contact.

In 1827, the first non-native trapper, Jedediah Smith, passed through the Great Basin. By the early 1840s, emigrants began trickling westward through this land, lured by the rich lands on the Pacific Coast. The 1848 discovery of gold in California stimulated massive migration from the eastern U.S. Thousands of California and Oregon bound emigrants traveled through Nevada on the California Trail. Although oxen were the preferred transcontinental draft animals, horses and mules also pulled the heavy wagons. Deep wagon wheel rutted trails cut across the desert, including the Applegate-Lassen Trail and the Nobles Cutoff.

The first federally sponsored exploration party led by John C. Fremont and guided by Kit Carson, entered the area from the northwest through High Rock Canyon on December 31, 1843. They traveled east to High Rock Lake, Fly Canyon, and Mud Meadows.

Significant Euro-American settlement did not begin until the mid 1860s, causing widespread impacts to the land and food base of the indigenous Indians, which in turn led to resistance and raiding. Roving bands of Indians harassed settlers and travelers to the point that several military forts were established in northern Nevada during that time. Military posts were established at Camp McGarry (Summit Lake), Camp McGarry Outpost (Soldier Meadows), and Camp McGee at Granite Creek near Gerlach. The leader of many of the attacks, an Indian named Black Rock Tom whose stronghold was in the Black Rock Desert, was recognized by the striking white horse he rode.

### **Early Settlement, Mining, Ranching, Farming**

Congress has recognized the public lands as a national asset since the country's earliest days. As the nation acquired new territory, through treaty, purchase or conquest, Congress directed that it be made available to American citizens to promote settlement of the West. Over the years, numerous laws have conveyed much of the original 1.8 billion acres of the public domain to individuals, corporations and states.

The 1862 Homestead Act, the Comstock Lode silver discovery, and completion of the Central Pacific Railroad between Winnemucca and Sacramento, California in 1868 accelerated local settlement. During the early days of settlement, homesteaders and others brought saddle and draft horses, burros, and mule teams with them to Nevada.

Numerous horse breeds were developed in eastern America in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Included in these breeds were the Morgan, Saddlebred, Standardbred, Tennessee Walker, Missouri Fox Trotter, and the American Quarter Horse. Spanish-Barb, Arabian and Thoroughbred bloodlines were already present and greatly influenced the American breeds. Draft breeds, including Percherons, Clydesdales, and Shires, were imported to North America as early as 1840. As the demand for horses grew, some ranchers began to raise horses to sell. Many of the wild horse herds originated as the result of large numbers of horses being imported into the area for the purpose of starting herds of high quality stock. One of the earliest horse operations in northwest Nevada was in the Smoke Creek Desert. Reportedly, 500 head of Spanish-Barb horses were purchased for 50 cents a head in San Diego, trailed north to the Smoke Creek Desert and released in the early 1860s.

Ranchers and settlers also turned draft and saddle horses loose on the open range to pasture, gathering them as the need arose. Other horses escaped, were abandoned or were set loose when hard times made feed unaffordable. These horses commonly became referred to as “wild” horses or mustangs. Once the wild herds were established, it was common practice for ranchers to release high-grade stock to improve the quality of the herds.

Large cattle and sheep operations were established in the 1860s and 70s as vast acreages of unfenced public lands became available for the industries. Farming expanded significantly after a severe winter in 1889 led to livestock mortality numbering in the thousands. Winter feeding of cattle became necessary and many livestock operators went bankrupt.

During this time, one of the largest corporate enterprises on the west coast in the 19<sup>th</sup> century set new standards for water and land acquisition. The Miller and Lux firm, based in San Francisco, acquired numerous ranch holdings in northwest Nevada. These ranches included the Black Rock, Battle Creek, Bitner, Massacre, Soldier Meadows, Leonard Creek, Quinn River Crossing, Big High Rock, and others. The firm owned over 80,000 acres of deeded lands. Much of these private lands were farmed and thousands of cattle, sheep and horses were run on millions of acres of unfenced federal rangelands in northwest Nevada.

### **“Wild Horses”**

Between 1870 and 1898 horse prices dropped as horse ranching increased in the west. Feral horse herds expanded as the open range filled up with unbranded and unbroken horses. By 1885, local wild horse herds were common throughout the area.

### **Turn of the Century - War and Automobiles**

In 1899 the Boer War in South Africa and later the Spanish-American War created a large demand for military mounts. Many wild horses were rounded up and shipped overseas. During World War I, ranchers such as Harry Wilson went into business with the federal government raising horses for the Army. Wilson provided Standardbred mares acquired from the Miller and Lux ranches and the government furnished Thoroughbred studs. Over 1,700 head of Wilson horses ran from High Rock Canyon north to the Oregon border, including all of the present day Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge.

Many carriage and farm horses were retired to the range in the early 1900s as they were replaced by automobiles and gasoline-fueled farm machinery. During the Great Depression, farm and ranch horses were often abandoned to the range when farmers and ranchers went out of business. However, some horse-drawn harvesting machinery was used as late as 1954 in the Black Rock area and ranch horses are still used today in the livestock business.

### **Federal Regulations**

In the 1930s when overgrazing threatened to reduce Western rangelands to a dust bowl, Congress approved the Taylor Grazing Act (TGA) of 1934, which for the first time regulated grazing on public lands. The TGA required ranchers who grazed horses or livestock on public lands to have a permit and to pay a grazing fee, but by that time, thousands of horses roamed the Nevada desert unbranded and unclaimed.

During the 1950s, Velma B. Johnston of Nevada (later known as Wild Horse Annie), became aware of the ruthless and indiscriminate manner in which wild horses were being gathered from rangelands for commercial purposes. She led a grass roots campaign to involve school children and the outraged American public in the issue. Public interest and concern continued to mount over the next several years.

In 1971, Congress introduced and passed *The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act*. President Richard M. Nixon signed the new Act into law (Public Law 92-195) on December 15, 1971. *The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act* required the protection, management and control of wild free-roaming horses and burros. Local livestock operators now had to claim and permit their private horses and burros grazing on public lands or lose ownership of them. After a specified time period following passage of the Act, any remaining unbranded and unclaimed herds inhabiting BLM or Forest Service lands were declared “wild free-roaming horses and burros” and became the property of the federal government.

### **Living Symbols of the Historic and Pioneer Spirit of the West**

The demand for, and thus the numbers of, horses, mules and burros has fluctuated over time – influenced by the changing nature of American lifestyles, attitudes, and various national and world events. These animals provided the primary means of transportation

throughout this country prior to the advent of the automobile. Burros were utilized by early prospectors as mounts as well as pack animals. They made excellent pack animals as they were able to carry large loads and subsist on the sparse desert forage. Horses and mules hauled ore and powered milling equipment. They pulled freight wagons and stages, carried the mail, and were used as riding mounts. Horses were essential to the livestock industry where good cow horses were needed to work the herds. In the farming industry, they were used to pull plows, harvesting machines, and other types of farm equipment.

Ultimately, the spirit, beauty, sense of unbridled freedom, and romance associated with the wild horse struck an emotional chord with the American public. Hence, the reason as to why Congress proclaimed “wild free-roaming horses and burros” as “living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West.”



Lone wild stallion and the majestic Granite Range near Gerlach, Nevada – symbols of the West.

## **WILD HORSE AND BURRO HABITAT AND HABITS**

Exploring the Great Basin Desert in northwestern Nevada is an opportunity to experience a land rich in diversity of landscape and resources. It is also an area of immense solitude and open spaces and home to numerous colorful herds of wild horses and burros.



**Colorful wild horse herd (family band) in the Warm Springs Canyon HMA.**

Wild horses and burros are managed today in designated habitat called Herd Management Areas (HMAs). An Appropriate Management Level (AML) is established for each HMA. The AML is an estimate of wild horses and/or burros the habitat can support while maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance with other resource values and uses. Population and vegetative monitoring is done to ensure that animals and rangelands remain healthy. AMLs are usually stated as a population range to allow for the periodic removal of animals (to the low range) and subsequent population growth (to the high range) between removals (gathers).



**Wild horses being gathered by helicopter.**



**Wild burros being gathered by helicopter.**

Wild horses roam over the range in bands of a few head up to 15 or more. Usually each band contains a dominate herd stallion and his mares and foals. Often a harem band will contain older siblings of mixed sex and sometimes an additional mature stallion.

However, the dominant herd stallion seldom allows other males to breed his mares. If you see a lone horse, it is most likely a bachelor stallion. Groups of stallions, often of differing ages, also form bands with few to many members. Bands of both harems and bachelors may loosely assemble into large herds upwards of a hundred animals, but with close observation, obvious family units can usually be identified.

Wild burros do not establish social bonds as do wild horses. These animals occur singly, in groups by sex, or in mixed herds. All of the groups are variable and their composition may change at any time. Few jacks (males) are territorial and are only defensive when jennies (females) are in estrus. A jenny may be bred repeatedly by numerous jacks during estrus. All adult members seem to be of equal rank and only the jenny and foal establish a short-term bond.

As the snow clears from the mountain tops in the late spring, the horses head for higher country in search of new grass shoots in the higher precipitation zones. They will stay high on the mountain slopes through the summer until snow forces them to lower slopes in the late fall. Breeding peaks in the spring months and foaling occurs mostly from early March through summer, but can occur year round. The seasonal pattern of burros is more closely related to water availability. Burros tend to congregate near water in the hot summer months and move farther away during cooler months.

Wild horses and burros are grazing animals. Both prefer grasses, but will browse on forbs and shrubs if grasses are unavailable. Forage species include: Thurber's needlegrass, bluebunch wheatgrass, bottlebrush squirreltail, Indian ricegrass, sagebrush, spiny hopsage, winterfat, sedges, rushes, buckwheat, phlox, and others. Horses can usually be found grazing along mountain slopes or in small meadows. They rest on breezy ridges before wandering to water later in the day. Burros appear to be highly adaptive with a relatively unspecialized diet. They usually inhabit lower elevations where fewer grasses are available.



Red roan stud foraging on Indian ricegrass.



Riparian forage utilization monitoring cage.

Annual precipitation amounts range from 4 inches at lower elevations to 18 inches at higher elevations (falling mostly as snow in the winter months). Wild horses and burros drink from intermittent (seasonal) and perennial (year-long) springs and streams scattered throughout the HMAs. They also utilize water improvements such as troughs and dirt catchments or reservoirs. Water sources may dry up in the summer, especially during a drought. Horses will paw at the wet ground or a trough in an effort to find additional water. Snow is often consumed in the winter. Burros exhibit high water economy, meaning they do not dehydrate rapidly and recover quickly when water is available. They are well-suited to dry, hot, desert environments.



**Perennial stream and riparian meadow.**



**Large dirt catchment/reservoir.**

Wild horses and burros share the landscape with numerous species of wildlife, including mule deer, California bighorn sheep, pronghorn antelope, coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats, sage-grouse, chukar partridge, California quail, and various rodents. The mountain lion is the only natural predator of wild horses and burros in this area and may occasionally prey on younger animals. However, mule deer and bighorn sheep are their preferred prey.



**Sage-grouse chicks.**



**Pronghorn antelope does.**

## HERD MANAGEMENT AREAS (HMAs)

### Bitner/Massacre Lakes/Nut Mountain HMAs

Wild horses move among these three HMAs. Massacre Lake HMA is situated in an interior basin without an outlet. The northern two-thirds of the area has a gentle slope with a southern aspect, which is dissected by shallow drainage courses. The southern third of the area is comprised of a shallow alkali lake known as Massacre Lake. The elevation ranges from 5,600 to 6,800 feet. The Bitner HMA includes the Bitner Table which wraps around the Massacre Lake Basin. The elevation in this area ranges from 5,600 to 6,600 feet. The northern boundary of the Nut Mountain HMA is County Road 8A. This terrain consists of rolling hills and elevation ranging from 5,600 feet to 6,900 feet atop Nut Mountain. Horses found here likely originated from historic ranching operations. Predominant colors are black, sorrel, bay, and black pintos. The HMAs total about 134,000 acres and the combined AML range is 55–100 head.

### Black Rock East/West HMAs

Horses move freely between the Black Rock Range East and Black Rock Range West HMAs, totaling about 196,000 acres. Elevations range from 4,000 feet at the valley floor to 8,508 feet at Big Mountain. The majority of horses are brown, bay and sorrel, but roans, blacks, palominos, and buckskins are also found here. The combined AML range is 112–186 head. The federally threatened Lahontan

cutthroat trout (LCT) is found in several streams in the area.



Black Rock Range East family band.



Black Rock Range East mare and newborn foal.

### Buffalo Hills HMA

This 132,000-acre basaltic plateau is dominated by large, rugged, rocky canyons. Elevations range from 3,800 to 6,800 feet. Genetic sampling of this herd indicates genetic variation is high, but these herds still maintain the genetic makeup most associated with the early settlement era. Recent genetic assessment indicates the Gaited North American Breeds (Morgan, American Saddlebred, Tennessee Walker, and Standardbred) are the group that contributed most to the origins of this herd. Horse colors

are predominately bay, sorrel, brown and black. Other coat colors and white markings are uncommon. The AML range is 188 to 314 head.



Buffalo Hills stallions at play.



Lone stallion in the Buffalo Hills.

### Calico Mountains HMA

The terrain in this 157,000-acre HMA consists of steep north-south trending mountains made up of volcanic materials, separated by narrow valleys. Elevations range from 4,000 feet along the Black Rock Desert to 8,491 feet at Division Peak. Ranch horses were raised and gathered in the area until 1971 by the Jackson family. Local herds were upgraded with thoroughbred studs and splashed white pinto mares. Calico horses are highly desired by adopters and make good ranch and performance horses. Herds are colorful – buckskin, palomino, grulla, cremello, and overo

pintos are common. Medicine hat, splashed white, and sabino patterns are also present. The AML range for this HMA is 200 to 333 head.



Calico Mountains bachelor band.



Wild horses in the Butte Spring Hills.



Historical corral used to gather horses, pre-Act.

### Fox-Hog HMA

This 119,000-acre HMA consists of rolling mountains with large expanses of plateau land. Elevations range from 5,300 feet to 8,000 feet, with the

majority of the area in the 5,500 to 6,500 foot range. Horses here exhibit a variety of breed types with some displaying draft horse characteristics. The AML range in this HMA is 120 to 220 horses.



Hog Ranch Mountain looking north.

### Granite Range HMA

This 102,000-acre HMA consists of a steep north-south trending mountain range with small narrow valleys in the south and broad sloping ridges in the north. Elevations range from 3,900 to over 9,000 feet. Herds exhibit much diversity of type – Quarter horse, Paint, Appaloosa, Draft, Spanish, and Thoroughbred. One local story tells of Appaloosa circus horses escaping a stalled train near Gerlach. Sorrel tobiano pintos are common in the south, while solid colors are more common in the north. Appaloosa

characteristics occur throughout both areas. The AML range is 155 to 258 head.



Wild foal with blanket (appaloosa trait).



Granite Range horses in the winter.

### High Rock HMA

The area consists of five deep canyons dissecting the surrounding tablelands. The elevation ranges from approximately 5,000 feet in the canyon bottoms to 5,800 feet on the tablelands. The southwestern portion of the HMA exceeds 6,000 feet, peaking at Mahogany Mountain at approximately 7,000 feet. Two separate home ranges, East of Canyon and Little High Rock, are managed in this 95,000-acre HMA. The combined AML range is 78-120 head. Some of the horses exhibit Spanish-type

characteristics. Sorrel and palomino pintos occur in these herds.



High Rock horses at Bernard Springs.

### Jackson Mountains HMA

The elevation in this 283,000-acre HMA ranges from 4,000 feet along the valley floors to 8,923 feet at King Lear Peak. The AML range is 130 to 217 head. Horses are most likely descendants of farm, ranch and cavalry remount horses that either escaped or were released into the area. The majority of horses exhibit a bay, brown, black, or sorrel coat color.



Jackson Mountains horses at a trot.

### Kamma Mountains/Lava Beds HMAs

These HMAs total 290,000 acres and consist of north-south trending mountains separated by broad valleys. The Kamma Mountains are managed for an AML range of 46 to 77 wild horses while the Lava Beds are

managed for an AML range of 89 to 148 horses and 10 to 16 burros. Animals are known to mix with other wild horse and burro herds located in HMAs to the east and south. Genetic analyses of horses in the southern HMAs near the Kamma and Lava Bed HMA's indicate herds are highly diverse. Quarter horse, Draft, and Spanish influences are most common. Horses are bay, brown or sorrel, but a few buckskin and dun horses are also found. Gray, black, strawberry, and pinto burros are descendants of pack animals used by miners and sheep ranchers.



Kamma Mtns/Lava Beds gathered horses.



Lava Beds burros, including a pinto.

### Mc Gee Mountain HMA

This 43,000-acre HMA is managed for wild burros only. Burros are also present on the neighboring Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The AML range for McGee Mountain is 25–41 burros. They are likely descendants of pack animals used by miners and sheep ranchers. The majority of burros are gray or black.



Mc Gee Mountain burros.



Newborn burro foal and jenny.

### Wall Canyon HMA

Harry Wilson operated Wall Canyon Ranch prior to WWII for production of horses for the Army's remount program in this area. This HMA is characterized by rolling hills and plateaus dissected by a few creeks. Most of the area ranges from 5,500 to 5,800 feet in elevation with high points at the northeast corner ranging to 6,500 feet. The predominant horse colors are black and bay, with some pintos. This 42,000-acre HMA has an AML range of 15–25 animals.

### Warm Springs Canyon HMA

This 83,000-acre HMA is managed for both wild horses and burros. The area

consists of a plateau that is dissected by steep north-south trending canyons made up of volcanic materials. Elevations range from 4,550 feet at Fly Canyon to 7,084 feet at Trough Mountain. Perennial water sources are limited. The AML for wild horses ranges from 105 to 175 and for burros from 14 to 24. Burros are usually found near Fly Canyon. Horses exhibit a wide range of colors and are generally of a ranch-type, although a few Spanish-type occur. Colors of bay, sorrel, brown, buckskin, and palomino are common, and a few striking overo pintos are present. Burros are standard grays. A threatened minnow species, desert dace, is found exclusively in the hot springs located in this HMA.



Warm Springs Canyon colorful family band.



Bachelor band on the run.

## WILD HORSE & BURRO INTERACTION HINTS

Wild horses or burros may approach you. They are curious by nature, especially if you are on horseback. Usually it is best to stand your ground, look big, and make noise or wave (a plastic grocery sack works well) and they will go on their way. More often, wild horses or burros will run away upon sight of you or your vehicle. However, they may visit your campsite during the night or while you are away. Secure your livestock, dogs, water, and feed supplies.

- Stay at least 100 feet away from wild horses or burros;
- Try not to place yourself between members of a band or between adjoining bands;
- Observe wild horses and burros quietly so wild behavior is not disrupted;
- If you are approached by wild horses or burros while riding horseback, stay calm, maintain control of your animal, and leave the area as soon as you can. Ride with others whenever possible;
- Mares, especially if in season, may attract wild stud horses to you or your camp. Keep domestic horses secure at all times. Ride with others who are experienced and skilled at resolving unwanted wild horse or burro interactions;
- A good pair of binoculars or a spotting scope is a must for observing animals;
- Do not feed or try to attract animals towards you;
- Keep dogs under control so they do not disturb or chase wild horses or burros;
- Report sick or injured animals, or violations, to the BLM;
- Please do not attempt to assist or handle sick or injured animals;
- Still or motion picture photography for personal use is allowed (however, photography for commercial purposes may require a permit). Contact the local BLM office;
- Always carry water, warm clothing, a hat, sunscreen, and topographic maps;
- Adequate water for livestock and dogs may not be available along your route. Springs and other water sources identified on maps may be dry at any time;
- Never use natural hot springs as water sources as they may be scalding or deadly hot and the banks are often very slippery;
- Bring a sufficient quantity of drinking water for your livestock (15 gal or more/day/animal);
- Feed weed-free certified hay or pelleted feed ([www.weedfreefeed.com](http://www.weedfreefeed.com));
- Secure your livestock adequately (use portable panels or corrals);
- Be sure your domestic riding stock are current with annual vaccinations;
- Do not bring sick or diseased riding animals into HMAs. Wild horses on the range are not vaccinated against any diseases;
- Check with your local *Backcountry Horsemen* group or visit [www.backcountryhorse.com](http://www.backcountryhorse.com) for additional information on trail riding and camping with domestic stock.

## **WILDERNESS AND WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS**

The BLM manages numerous wilderness and wilderness study areas in and around the NCA to maintain their natural character and to provide opportunities for solitude and primitive forms of recreation. Recreationists may camp, hike, take photos, fish, hunt, ride horseback, or generally pursue any activity that does not require motorized or mechanized vehicles or motorized equipment within wilderness boundaries. Motorized vehicles are prohibited within wilderness areas, however several “Cherrystem” roads also known as “Vehicle Access Routes” offer vehicle access to the interior of the wilderness areas. These dead-end roads and the area within 100 feet of their centerlines are surrounded by wilderness but are NOT part of the wilderness areas. These routes are identified with signs. Motor vehicle use within wilderness study areas is limited to designated routes.

## **CAMPING and CAMP SITES**

There are only a few designated camp sites in the area at this time. However, dispersed camping is generally allowed. All camping is limited to a maximum stay of 14 consecutive days per visit and is first-come, first-serve.

- It is unlawful to camp within 100 yards of a water source (NRS 503.660);
- Utilize existing primitive camp sites and campfire rings where possible;
- Check local fire restrictions, adhere to them, and extinguish all campfires dead-out;
- Do not drive across, camp on, or stake livestock out to graze on riparian areas;
- Water livestock only at springs or streams with stable banks and dry soils;
- Keep livestock secured away from camp sites and spread manure before leaving;
- Bury human waste 6-12 inches deep and at least 300 feet from any water source;
- Practice *Tread Lightly!* and *Leave No Trace* @ principles.

### **Massacre Ranch**

The Massacre Ranch site has a rustic cabin, wooden outhouse, corrals, and a loading chute. Stock drinking water is available at the corrals only during the cool seasons; by mid-summer visitors should bring water for their livestock. Road access to this site is generally good and there is sufficient room to park several horse trailers.

### **Stevens Camp**

The Stevens Camp site includes a primitive three-room cinder block cabin with a propane and wood stove (bring your own wood and propane, regulator, and fittings). Bunk beds, vault toilet, livestock water (non-potable for humans), corral and loading chute are present. Road access to this site is generally good and there is sufficient room to park several horse trailers. Dispersed camping sites are also in the area.

### **Soldier Meadows Guest Ranch**

The Soldier Meadows Guest Ranch is a privately owned facility. Originally the site of the military Camp McGarry Outpost, this historic cattle ranch currently operates as a guest ranch. Check the web at: <http://www.soldiermeadows.com> for contact information, rates, and availability.

### **Soldier Meadows Hot Springs**

The Soldier Meadows Hot Springs site is designed for **designated camping only**. Numerous hot spring pools are in the area. Road access is generally good, however trailers are not recommended in the area due to space limitations. Treat the springs with care as they are home to the Soldier Meadow Desert Dace, a threatened fish species.

### **TRAVEL ROUTES/ SAFETY HINTS**

Plan and prepare in advance as northwest Nevada is extremely remote. Be prepared for emergencies at all times. Most roads and trails in the area are not regularly maintained, are unsigned, and may be seldom traveled. Most roads are impassable in the winter and spring. Weather can change quickly and dramatically. Weather-related events may limit road access or cause dangerous driving conditions at any time of the year.

- Purchase and carry 1:100,000 scale topographic maps of the area – Denio, Eugene Mountains, Gerlach, High Rock Canyon, Jackson Mountains, and Vya;
- High clearance, four-wheel-drive or all-terrain vehicles (ATV) are necessary for most travel off State or County designated roadways;
- Closed routes are signed as closed, please keep vehicles and ATVs off of them;
- The High Rock Canyon road is closed from about the 1st of February until the second weekend in May. The closure is to prevent damage to the historic Applegate-Lassen emigrant trail and reduce human disturbance to lambing bighorn sheep and nesting raptors;
- Explore the area prior to hauling in a trailer to assess access. Pulling horse or other trailers off of State or County designated roads should only be done with prior operator knowledge of the road. Many roads are narrow, rough, steep, or impassable. Turning around may be difficult or impossible, especially with a trailer;
- Tire blowouts are common. Six-ply tires or better are recommended. Carry several, good, full-size spares for each vehicle and trailer;
- Bring extra gasoline as gas consumption is greater on rough, slow roads;
- Bring and carry at minimum one gallon of drinking water/person/day;
- Be respectful of private lands and property and obey all signs.

### **TOWNS & SERVICES**

Come prepared as **supplies and services are extremely limited** in the area. There is **no reliable cell phone coverage**. Fuel and limited supplies/services are available in

Cedarville, California; and, Denio, Denio Junction, Empire, Gerlach, Nixon, and Orovada, Nevada. At any time, services may be closed, limited, or no longer available. Nearest full-service communities in Nevada include Fernley, Lovelock, and Winnemucca.

## **WILD HORSE & BURRO PROTECTION**

Wild horses and burros are protected under the 1971 Act. Prohibited acts include but are not limited to: maliciously injuring or harassing a wild horse or burro; removing or attempting to remove a wild horse or burro from public lands; destroying a wild horse or burro; selling or attempting to sell a wild horse or burro; and, commercially exploiting a wild horse or burro. Crimes are punishable by fine and/or imprisonment. Examples of violations might include harassment by ATV, injury or death by a bullet or arrow, and illegal capture.

## **ADOPT A LIVING LEGEND**

Perhaps this brochure has inspired your curiosity and you've made plans to explore *Mustang Country*. Remember, you also have the opportunity to adopt a "living legend." These hardy, colorful equines have many fine qualities and are especially well-suited to trail riding and horse packing. Visit [www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov](http://www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov) to read more about the BLM wild horse and burro adoption program and to view a schedule of upcoming adoption events.

## **BLM CONTACT INFORMATION**

For more information about the BLM, NCA, or Wild Free-Roaming Horses & Burros contact:

*Bureau of Land Management  
Winnemucca Field Office (WFO)  
5100 E Winnemucca Blvd  
Winnemucca, NV 89445  
Phone: 775-623-1500  
Website:  
<http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/wfo.html>*

*Bureau of Land Management  
Surprise Field Office (SFO)  
602 Cressler Street  
Cedarville, CA 96104  
Phone: 530-279-6101  
Website:  
<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/surprise.html>*