# Visitation Protocol and Ground Rules for the Augusta Mountains HMA Wild Horse Gather

BLM recognizes and respects the right of interested members of the public and the press to observe the Augusta Mountains wild horse gather. At the same time, BLM must ensure the health and safety of the public, BLM's employees and contractors, and America's wild horses. Accordingly, BLM developed these rules to maximize the opportunity for reasonable public access to the gather while ensuring that BLM's health and safety responsibilities are fulfilled. Failure to maintain safe distances from operations at the gather and temporary holding sites could result in members of the public inadvertently getting in the path of the wild horses or gather personnel, thereby placing themselves and others at risk, or causing stress and potential injury to the wild horses.

• Observation days and gather operations may be suspended if bad weather conditions create unsafe flying conditions. A **Wild Horse Gather Info Line has been set up at 775-623-1728 and will be updated daily with the status of the gather.**
• Observers must provide their own 4-wheel drive high clearance vehicle, appropriate shoes, clothing, food and water.
• Observers are prohibited from riding in government and contractor vehicles and equipment.
• BLM will establish one or more observation areas, in the immediate area of the gather and holding sites, to which individuals will be directed. These areas will be placed so as to maximize the opportunity for public observation while providing for a safe and effective horse gather. The utilization of such observation areas is necessary due to the use and presence of heavy equipment and aircraft in the gather operation and the critical need to allow BLM personnel and contractors to fully focus on attending to the needs of the wild horses while maintaining a safe environment for all involved. In addition, observation areas will be sited so as to protect the wild horses from being spooked, startled or impacted in a manner that results in increased stress.
• BLM representatives will escort visitors to and from the gather and/or temporary holding facility during designated observation days.
• Visitors will be assigned to a specific BLM representative and must stay with that person at all times.
• Individuals will be directed to the designated observation area by BLM personnel and informed of behavioral rules (such as remaining quiet and still to ensure a safe and effective gather operation).
• BLM will delineate observation areas with yellow caution tape (or a similar type of tape or ribbon).

• Visitors are **NOT** permitted to walk around the gather site unaccompanied by their BLM representative.
• Observers are prohibited from climbing/trespassing onto or in the trucks, equipment or corrals, which is the private property of the contractor.
• When BLM is using a helicopter or other heavy equipment in close proximity to a designated observation area, members of the public may be asked to stay by their vehicle for some time before being directed to an observation area once the use of the helicopter or the heavy machinery is complete.
• When given the signal that the helicopter is close to the gather site bringing horses in, visitors must sit down in areas specified by BLM representatives and must not move or talk as the horses are guided into the corral.
• Visitors must direct their questions/comments to either their designated BLM representative or the BLM spokesperson on site, and not engage other BLM/contractor staff and disrupt their gather duties/responsibilities - professional and respectful behavior is expected of all.
• BLM may make the BLM/contractor staff available during down times for a Q&A session.
• Individuals attempting to move outside a designated observation area will be requested to move back to the designated area or to leave the site. Failure to do so may result in citation or arrest. It is important to stay within the designated observation area to safely observe the wild horse gather.
• Visitors who do not cooperate and follow the rules will be escorted off the gather site by BLM law enforcement personnel, and will be prohibited from participating in any subsequent observation days.
• BLM reserves the right to alter these rules based on changes in circumstances that may pose a risk to health, public safety or the safety of wild horses (such as weather, lightening, wildfire, etc.