

April 23, 2013

Alan and Amy:

BUR. OF LAND MANAGEMENT
NEVADA STATE OFFICE

2013 APR 26 PM 1:33

Please hands deliver and if possible acquire your state director's signature. Once you obtain the signature please use regular mail to send to the next recipient. Please send me and as well as in this case, Amy, an email that it is enroute. Once the final signature is obtained, send regular mail with an email to me with notification that the pony express is leaving town!

Thanks!!

Oregon State Office

333 SW 1st Ave

Portland, OR 97204

RD's Office - Region 1
Received:

MAY 22 2013

USFWS
Portland, OR

Operational 5-year Work Plan FY2010-2014

The Operation Work Group (Working Group) provides oversight and leadership guidance to implement direction provided by the Executive Committee and the items outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Working Group will include technical support staff responsible for wild and feral horse and burro program administration from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The Working Group will consist of BLM district managers, field managers, and state program leads and the FWS project leader/refuge managers or their designees. The tri-state geographic area encompasses a significant amount of public land administered by the BLM and FWS. The agencies have different missions, laws, and regulations for management of wild/feral horses and burros. Consequently, some activities will transpire independent of the other agency.

The Working Group charter issued by the Executive Committee defines the composition, member roles, operating protocols, and relationship to the Executive Committee.

I. ACTIONS:

A. Operation Work Group Coordination

1. The Executive Committee will coordinate a one-year rotation where a specific agency will be the main point of contact for synchronizing Working Group functions.
2. The Working Group will meet during January or February prior to the BLM's wild horse and burro annual, state lead meetings to:
 - a. review and prioritize the respective project proposals;
 - b. coordinate project finding/cost sharing strategies, planning, and implementation to leverage cost/benefits and establish strategy for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) completion where appropriate; and
 - c. coordinate field activities and develop or update necessary operational documents.
3. The BLM will explore options for consolidation of Herd Management Areas (HMA) on BLM-administered lands and, as necessary, use the BLM's planning process to adjust Appropriate Management Levels (AML), including the Massacre Lake HMA.
4. The Working Group will review and update the 5-year Operational Work Plan prior to February 28 each year and submit it to the Executive Committee for concurrence.
5. External communications on activities of the Tri-State Group and the United States Geologic Service (USGS) will be directed by the Working Group and cleared through the established communication channels and protocols of each agency.
6. The public affairs sub-team will review and update the communications plan annually, prior to February 28.

7. The Working Group will monitor and inventory populations and report on horse/burro movement and distribution surveys.
8. The Working Group will conduct aerial population inventories and composition surveys.
 - a. The Working Group will coordinate survey methods.
 - (1) Survey techniques will be based on the best available science.
 - (2) Survey techniques, where possible, will be standardized across jurisdictions.
 - b. The BLM and FWS will coordinate population survey flight schedules across jurisdictional boundaries.
 - (1) Schedules will include pre- and post-gather flights.
 - (2) After FY 2012, statistically based surveys across jurisdictional boundaries will be conducted on an as-needed basis. The next Tri-State aerial survey is scheduled for May/June 2014.
 - (3) Additional surveys will be coordinated and conducted as funding allows.
9. Research
 - a. The FWS will share results of horse movement distribution and exclosure research when completed.
 - (1) Horse movement and distribution study: data analysis is in progress.
 - (2) Horse exclosure study: Summer 2013 will be the last year of field data collection, analyses, and reporting expected to be completed by the end of FY2014.
 - b. The Working Group will coordinate between agencies to identify data gaps and research needs and annually seek additional funding to obtain this information. Hair samples will be collected from BLM HMA's for genetic testing on an as-needed basis.
 - c. The Working Group will develop a plan to seek research proposals to track horse movements across agency boundaries and between herd management areas.

B. Population Management

1. Gather
 - a. The Working Group will coordinate gathers and schedules where possible. For BLM-administered lands, the Working Group will review and evaluate population management techniques to comply with program guidance to achieve healthy and sustainable herds within appropriate management levels.

- b. The BLM will use the best available science when determining or evaluating AMLs.
 - c. The BLM and FWS will coordinate internal and external outreach strategies.
 2. Contraception
 - a. The FWS and BLM will continue to explore and apply techniques for reproductive control.
 - b. The FWS will collect general information on the location and age composition of associated bands of sterilized horses when possible.
 3. Sex Ratio Adjustments
 - a. The BLM will continue to explore using sex ratio adjustments to slow population growth.
 - b. The BLM will explore options where portions of a population in an HMA will be non-reproducing.
- C. Habitat Monitoring/Management
 1. The Working Group will share and review protocols and data management standards for vegetation monitoring.
 2. The BLM will work to support or update AML determinations with the best available science.
- D. Range/Habitat Maintenance
 1. The Working Group will review existing cooperative agreements and amend or develop new agreements necessary to reflect respective agency maintenance responsibilities and guidelines for boundary surveys, fencing, and other range improvements.
 2. Annual ground surveys and/or aerial detection flights for fence maintenance may be conducted jointly, and costs may be shared by the BLM and FWS when possible.
 3. Identified areas for fence repair will be prioritized and jointly managed and completed where possible. This may also include installation of gates or cattle guards or construction of new fence.
 4. There is an FWS contract in place for work on Sheldon in 2013 to replace 39 miles of boundary fence and repair 50 miles. In the summer of 2013, the BLM will assist the FWS with annual surveys and routine maintenance of boundary fence along the eastern boundary of the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge.

E. Data Management

1. The Working Group will coordinate the review of protocols for data standards for sharing, collection of, and storage of data.
2. The Working Group will maintain an internal FTP site for dissemination of data.

F. Adoptions

1. The BLM and FWS will coordinate adoption events and timing.
2. The FWS and BLM will coordinate internal and external outreach strategies.

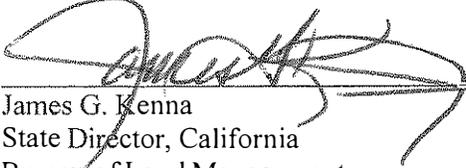
G. Annual accomplishment reporting will be presented at the October meeting.

II. APPROVAL



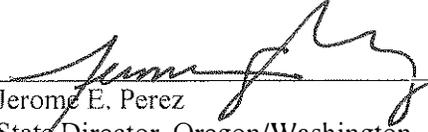
Robyn Thorson
Regional Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

May 23, 2013
Date



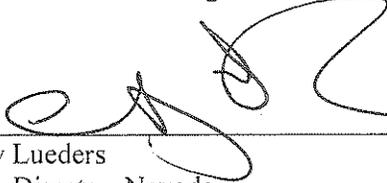
James G. Kenna
State Director, California
Bureau of Land Management

May 14, 2013
Date



Jerome E. Perez
State Director, Oregon/Washington
Bureau of Land Management

April 19, 2013
Date



Amy Lueders
State Director, Nevada
Bureau of Land Management

May 10, 2013
Date