

U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

National Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Deschutes Fair & Expo
3800 SW Airport Way
Redmond, OR 97756

April 13 – 14, 2016



U.S. Department of the Interior
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Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 2016	5
WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS.....	5
AGENDA REVIEW	5
OPENING REMARKS.....	5
WELCOME & INTRODUCTION TO OREGON.....	6
OREGON WILD HORSE & BURRO PROGRAM	7
APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 2015 MINUTES.....	8
BLM RESPONSE TO ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS	9
WILD HORSE AND BURRO PROGRAM UPDATE	15
PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD.....	18
BLM WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADOPTION DEMAND STUDY RESEARCH	18
TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2014.....	19
U. S. FOREST SERVICE UPDATE.....	21
MUSTANG HERITAGE FOUNDATION UPDATE	25
BUDGET UPDATE.....	29
RESEARCH UPDATE.....	31
ON-RANGE UPDATE	36
OFF-RANGE UPDATE.....	38
WILD HORSE AND BURRO WEB MAP UPDATE	41
WILD HORSE AND BURRO UPDATE – EASTERN STATES OFFICE.....	42
ECOSYSTEM SERVICES	44
WORKING GROUP REPORTS	48
ADVISORY BOARD DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BLM.....	53
CLOSING REMARKS	53
MEETING ADJOURNMENT.....	55
SUMMARY OF BOARD DECISIONS AND ACTIONS	55
ACRONYMS.....	56
ATTACHMENT 1 – WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADVISORY BOARD	57
ATTACHMENT 2 – FY15 & FY16 ACTUAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS.....	58
ATTACHMENT 3 – SUMMARY OF DECISIONS MADE AND COMMITTED ACTIONS	59

Executive Summary

The Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board (Board) advises the Secretary of the Interior, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Director, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Chief of the U. S. Forest Service on matters pertaining to the management and protection of wild, free-roaming horses and burros on the Nation's public lands.

During its April 13 – 14, 2016, meeting held in Redmond, Oregon, the Board received updates from BLM on a number of different areas pertaining to the management of wild horses and burros, which are summarized below.

Ms. Kristen Bail, BLM's acting Assistant Director for Natural Resources and Planning and the Board's Designated Federal Official opened the meeting by welcoming the Board to Oregon and briefly addressing the complexities surrounding management of BLM's wild horse and burro program including the need for new and different tools, the Greater Sage-grouse, and drought.

Mr. Lee Folliard, acting BLM Oregon Deputy State Director for Resources welcomed the Board to Oregon and provided an overview of Oregon's wild horse and burro program, which involves 17 Herd Management Areas (HMAs) and approximately 4,000 wild horses and burros. Mr. Folliard was followed by Mr. Robert Sharp and Mr. Bob Hopper, Co-Leads for BLM Oregon's wild horse and burro program, who addressed BLM Oregon's wild horse and burro program in more detail.

Mr. Dean Bolstad, Chief of BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Division in Washington, D. C. reviewed BLM's responses to 20 recommendations made by the Board at its September 2015 meeting.

In addressing the BLM's national wild horse and burro program, Mr. Bolstad discussed (1) the agency's three highest priority challenges – continual expansion of wild horses and burro into areas outside of designated HMAs; increasing costs for holding animals in short-term corrals and pastures; and large-scale removals, and (2) the need for new and different approaches for managing wild horses and burros.

Thirty-five speakers were given opportunity to address the Board with their thoughts, comments, and concerns during the meeting's public comment period.

In closing the first day of the meeting, Ms. Lori Mitchell from Great Lakes Marketing Research provided an overview of efforts and results from the BLM-funded Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Demand Study research project.

Mr. Barry Imler and Ms. Amanda McAdams from the United States Forest Service (USFS) opened Day 2 of the meeting by providing an overview the USFS's national Wild Horse and Burro program as well as an overview of efforts to establish a collaborative working group to address wild horse and burro management issues on the Modoc National Forest in northeastern California.

Ms. Kali Sublett, Executive Director for the Mustang Heritage Foundation, provided an overview of the Foundation's training and adoption programs (Extreme Mustang Makeover, Mustang Million, and the Trainer Incentive Program), education and awareness programs (America's Mustang and two youth-oriented programs), and non-BLM funded programs (Mustang Magic, Meet the Mustang, Veterans & Mustangs, and Mustang Open).

Ms. Renee Fuhrman, acting Budget Specialist for the BLM's national wild horse and burro program provided an overview of BLM's Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 accomplishments and the agency's FY16 program budget.

In his research program update, Mr. Paul Griffin, BLM's Research Coordinator addressed the membership and role of BLM's Research Advisory Team as well as providing updates on several research and pilot projects and the agency's research budget.

Mr. Bryan Fuell, BLM's On-Range Branch Chief provided an update addressing three areas associated with on-range management – program statistics, Greater Sage-grouse, and litigation.

Ms. Holle' Hooks, BLM's Off-Range Branch Chief, provided an update addressing three areas associated with off-range management including an update on holding space activities in corrals, pastures, and eco-sanctuaries; BLM's shade/shelter requirements; and placement of animals into private care.

Mr. Jason Lutterman, BLM's On-Range Public Affairs Specialist provided the Board with an interactive overview of the agency's new wild horse and burro web map.

Ms. Karlee Yurek, BLM's Eastern States Branch Chief for Natural and Community Resources provided a general overview of BLM's Eastern States office and its wild horse and burro program focusing primarily on adoption activities and events.

Ms. Rebecca Moore, BLM's Senior Economist provided a thought-provoking presentation on the background of the Ecosystem Services process, an understanding of the different values identified through that process, and how the process can be used to identify values people have related to the wild horse and burro program.

After the presentations, eight Advisory Board working groups presented updates of their efforts to address several different aspects of the program. Discussions related to the working group updates resulted in the Board developing seven draft recommendations, which were finalized for presentation to the BLM.

In summary, there was one overarching recommendation asking BLM to continue to work toward full implementation of previously accepted Board recommendations. Other recommendations included:

- The need for a crisis/emergency plan for severe drought and other natural emergencies;
- Making it easier for trusted trainers and/or other organizations to acquire sale eligible and 'riding desirable' horses;
- Creating and piloting a Mustang Mentoring program;
- Continuing to engage professional marketers to identify and attract appropriate demographic segments of the population to increase adoptions;
- Urging BLM to institute the volunteer strategy recommended at the Board's September 2015 meeting as soon as possible;
- Encouraging state and local BLM offices to embrace volunteers to document wild horses with photograph, work with local offices to create a sustainable management plan, and enable qualified volunteers to participate in implementation of the sustainable management plan including the use of reversible contraceptives; and,
- Encourage an aggressive use of all tools in the tool box.

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Fred Woehl, Chair, Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board

Mr. Woehl called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. by asking all veterans in the room to stand and be recognized. After leading the pledge of allegiance, the Board members were asked to introduce themselves (Attachment 1.) Mr. Woehl then introduced two Bureau of Land Management (BLM) representatives - Kristin Bail, Acting Assistant Director for Resources and Planning and the Board's Designated Federal Official, and Dean Bolstad, Wild Horse and Burro Division Chief. Mr. Bolstad introduced a number of other BLM and U. S. Forest Service (USFS) representatives attending in the meeting.

NATIONAL WILD HORSE & BURRO ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS	
Board Member	Representing
Mr. Fred T. Woehl, Jr. (Chair)	Public Interest
Ms. Ginger Kathrens	Humane Advocacy
Mr. Ben Masters	Wildlife Management
Mr. Steven Yardley	Livestock Grazing
Ms. Jennifer Sall	Public Interest
Dr. Julie M. Weikel	Veterinary Medicine
Ms. June Sewing	Wild Horse & Burro Advocacy
Dr. Robert E. Cope	Natural Resource Management
Dr. Sue M. McDonnell	Wild Horse & Burro Research

Agenda Review

Kathi Libby, Facilitator, BLM

Ms. Libby, serving as the meeting's facilitator, introduced herself and welcomed the new Board members as well as those attending the meeting in person and those participating via the Internet through online streaming. She reviewed the rules of the meeting which included the importance of being respectful of others to ensure work can be accomplished, voices can be heard, and respect can be paid.

Ms. Libby reviewed the agenda for the day and a half meeting and noted that the public comment period will begin at 3:15 p.m. this afternoon. Individuals wishing to provide comments to the Board should sign up no later than 3 p.m.

Opening Remarks

Kristin Bail, Designated Federal Official, Acting Assistant Director for Resources and Planning, BLM

Ms. Bail welcomed the Board and expressed her gratitude for their time and efforts to serve on the Board. She also expressed her appreciation for Dean Bolstad who is now the permanent Chief of the Wild Horse and Burro Division in BLM's Washington Office. Dean has an amazing background and experience with the program and working with the Board.

Wild Horse & Burro Program

The wild horse and burro program is very complicated with a complex series of resource issues that are important to people's values. Ms. Bail expressed her appreciation to the audience for their time in attending the meeting and sharing their thoughts and comments with the Board and BLM.

The Board has done a tremendous amount of work in developing robust recommendations for the BLM to consider and implement. The broad spectrum of recommended actions is indicative of the diversity of actions that need to be taken to address the needs of the program.

Over the past few days, it has been surprising how many different individuals expressed their goal of achieving “healthy range, healthy horses, healthy ecosystems, and happy people on the land.” There is a unity of purpose within those individuals who come from a diversity of backgrounds. The Board is set to make the most of this opportunity to provide advice to BLM for moving forward on such a long-term complex program that has a tremendous amount of interest and passion.

Greater Sage-Grouse

The Great Sage-Grouse initiative is truly a broad scale commitment for BLM and the USFS in managing the sagebrush ecosystem. The commitments and priorities affect not only the wild horse and burro program but all resource and mineral-related programs. Implementation of management actions to meet those commitments and priorities will be a focus of the wild horse and burro program as we move forward.

Drought

While drought conditions vary across the western United States, overall management of rangelands requires BLM to address those areas with limited water availability.

It has been and will continue to be a challenge to address recommendations and actions that need to be taken in a timely manner. People want to see action and progress right away; however, some aspects of the program as research require a long-term investment of time and money over a period of years. Some issues are more easily addressed as compared to others.

Different Tools

BLM continues to pursue different tools to meet its management responsibilities such as finding less onerous, easier avenues through BLM’s adoption program for providing long-term stability for animals’ removed from the range. BLM is working with the U. S. Border Patrol to provide wild horses allowing agents to complete their responsibilities while riding a trained wild horse. The more tools available translates to more opportunities to provide good homes for animals.

Everyone has a passion for the land, the program, and the animals. We all want to move forward and make progress in different areas of the program; however, we each define progress in different ways – which can be a good thing!

Welcome & Introduction to Oregon

Lee Folliard, Acting Deputy State Director, Oregon, BLM



Lee Folliard

On behalf of the BLM Oregon State Director, Mr. Folliard welcomed the Board to Oregon and explained that he is serving in the Deputy State Director position temporarily until the position is permanently filled. In his regular position, he is responsible for management of the BLM’s timber program in Oregon, which has similar passion, interest, and controversy as BLM’s wild horse and burro program.

Mr. Folliard indicated that Oregon’s current wild horse population of approximately 4,000 animals isn’t the largest program within BLM but does have 17 Herd Management Areas (HMAs) which accounts for approximately ten percent of the national Appropriate Management Level (AML). The size of the program does not dictate the level of interest or controversy.

Highlights of BLM Oregon’s wild horse and burro program include collaborative efforts and partnerships with the Malheur National Forest to develop a joint management plan on the Murderer’s Creek HMA in eastern Oregon, the Tri-State Working Group whose membership includes the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) as well as BLM Nevada and California who are working together to coordinate management of wild horses and burro on the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge and BLM-administered lands surrounding the Refuge. Other highlights include BLM Oregon’s participation in various wild horse and burro research projects and use of volunteers. The work needing to be completed within the program could not be done without the help and assistance of volunteers.

The Beatty Butte HMA wild horse gather, which removed over 1,000 animals from critical sagebrush focal areas was the first gather completed under the agency's national sage-grouse and sagebrush conservation initiative. That initiative was finalized in September 2015, identifying new land use planning guidance and requirements.

Mr. Folliard believes these are exciting times to be in public service and at the forefront of efforts to address sagebrush conservation!

Oregon Wild Horse & Burro Program

Robert Sharp and Bob Hopper, Co-State Wild Horse & Burro Program Leads, BLM



Robert Sharp

Program Overview

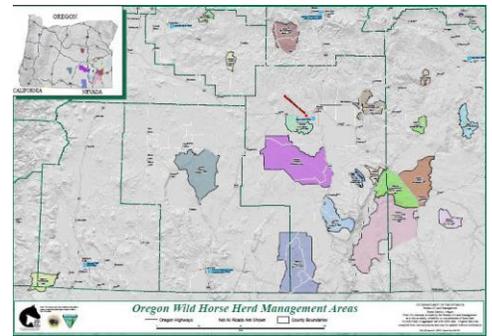
BLM Oregon's wild horse program includes 17 HMAs covering approximately 2.7 million acres and 2 USFS Wild Horse Territories of which one (Murderer's Creek) is co-managed by the USFS and BLM while the Big Summit territory is solely managed by the USFS (inset below.) In total, the wild horse AML ranges from 1,440 to 2,855 animals. The current 2016 wild horse and burro population within Oregon is approximately 4,136.



Bob Hopper

While Oregon's wild horse and burro population was at AML during the 1980s, BLM was able to select the best horses to be turned back on the rangeland as an avenue for managing wild horses that portrayed characteristics (temperament, size, color, and conformation) desired by adopters. Such an approach is difficult now with the state-wide population being over AML.

Oregon's Wild Horse Corral facility, located near Burns, Oregon, serves as the state's only off-range facility typically housing approximately 650 animals annually and serves as an adoption facility.



On average, Oregon adopts approximately 200 animals per year. The demographics of Oregon's adoptions have changed tremendously where, ten years ago, satellite adoption events across the state hosting 20 to 30 animals each were very successful. Today, with the change in economic conditions, the majority of adoptions involve "gentled" horses and events such as the Extreme Mustang Makeover (EMM), Trainer Incentive Program (TIP), etc.

BLM Oregon has partnered with organizations including the Mustang Heritage Foundation to develop several successful partnership programs such as the *Teen & Oregon Mustangs* and *Mustang Yearlings & Washington Youth* that are focused on providing gentled animals for adoption. The *Teen & Oregon Mustangs* program started as a teen-oriented program but has since changed to include an adult division.

Volunteers are critical to the success of Oregon's wild horse and burro program! Among other things, volunteers conduct compliance inspections, fostering returned animals, and monitoring on-the-ground and animal conditions in various HMAs.

A series of slides were shown displaying the "good", the "bad", and the "ugly" of on-the-ground conditions to highlight the importance of managing wild horses.

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Greater Sage-Grouse

On September 21, 2015, the Oregon Sage-Grouse Approved Resource Management Plan Amendment (Amendment) was signed. Major objectives of the Amendment that relate to the wild horse and burro program include:

- Preserve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance in a multiple use relationship;
- Manage population levels with established AML;
- Complete assessment of greater sage-grouse habitat indicators for HMAs containing Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFAs), Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMAs) outside of SFAs, General Habitat Management Areas (GHMAs), and non-habitat areas;¹
- Management decisions with the highest priority given to HMAs containing SFAs, PHMAs outside of SFAs, and GHMAs for gathers and population suppression, AML adjustment, and monitoring.

New and Different

Research

A new pen trial spay research project has been initiated with Oregon State University to examine the safety and efficacy of three separate methods of mare sterilization. The research will entail conducting an ovariectomy on 100 mares and tubal ligation and laser ablation on 50 mares, respectively.

Beatty Butte Effort

In 2014 and 2015, a series of discussions were held with various stakeholders addressing the need to reach and stay within AML in the Beatty Butte HMA. In January 2016, the BLM released a solicitation for an assistance opportunity to utilize local community assistance to maintain an appropriate horse population and reduce or eliminate excess animals going into permanent off-range holding facilities.

The solicitation closed in March with one application being received, which is currently being reviewed. The current timeline calls for the award of the assistance agreement to occur in April 2016, begin construction of necessary facilities in May 2016, and movement of the first animals to the new facility in Adel, Oregon in July 2016.

Habitat Improvements

BLM Oregon has been actively converting existing water wells to solar power to ensure a reliable source of water. Other range improvements activities have included construction of double gates on fences, which creates a 50-foot gap to facilitate horse movement and manipulation of vegetation (juniper control, etc.)

During the question/answer session following the presentation, Mr. Yardley inquired as to the impact of wild horses on sage-grouse habitat in Oregon. Mr. Sharp indicated that when a disturbance such as grazing, wildfire, etc., occurs, there will be an impact (either positive or negative) to the habitat. In the case of year-long grazing during the growing season every year, the impact is typically negative to perennial species, which are unable to remain resilient resulting in a transition to less desirable species over time.

In a follow-up question, Mr. Yardley asked about the body condition scores of the animals removed during the Beatty Butte gather and the rangeland trend in that area. The rangeland condition was rapidly declining prior to the gather due to the over-utilization of forage by wild horses. In addition, there were significant adverse impacts to riparian and spring habitats observed prior to the gather. Rarely do animals gathered in Oregon display a Henneke body score of two; however, several animals in that body condition class were observed during the Beatty Butte gather.

Approval of September 2015 Minutes

¹ Listed in order of priority.

Mr. Fred Woehl

Mr. Woehl offered the Board an opportunity to identify any necessary changes to the draft minutes of the Board's September 22 – 23, 2015 meeting minutes. Dr. Cope indicated that he meant the exact opposite of the first sentence of the third full paragraph (highlighted below):

“Dr. Cope was not convinced that it was a political decision rather than a scientific decision.”

It was agreed to revise the minutes by removing the word “not” from the sentence in question.

DECISION: The Board approved the September 22 – 23, 2015, meeting minutes with one minor revision – removing the word “not” from the first sentence of the third full paragraph on page 48.

BLM Response to Advisory Board Recommendations

Dean Bolstad, Wild Horse and Burro Division Chief, BLM



Dean Bolstad

Mr. Bolstad addressed BLM's response to the 20 recommendations made by the Board during its September 22 – 23, 2015, meeting.

Recommendation 1

BLM is encouraged to proceed with a programmatic EIS to evaluate on-range alternatives and ensure that an extensive outreach and consultation effort is instituted to expand and intensify relationships with all cooperating agencies.

BLM Response

The BLM appreciates the Board's support for conducting a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS). The PEIS is being considered but a decision has not been made to move forward.

Recommendation 2

Encourage BLM to proceed with utilizing pasture rotations for horses wherever feasible with respect to HMA – intended purpose of these rotations is to maintain thriving ecological balance.

BLM Response:

The BLM accepts this recommendation. The BLM agrees with the intent of this recommendation to assist in attaining and maintaining healthy rangelands but must point out that this practice is not feasible in most HMAs. Where feasible, animals might be moved from one area to another to provide for vegetation management, vegetation recovery following a fire, vegetation reestablishment, following rangeland rehabilitation treatments, managing Greater Sage-grouse habitat or movement into a new area when water declines.

Animals would be herded at the minimum level necessary to achieve resource objectives. Herding would occur via horseback or motorized vehicle depending on the urgency of the desired movement. Current policy allows for movement of horses from one area to another by enabling and disabling access to various water sources. However, this is rarely practical or successful.

Recommendation 3

Apply best management practices through restoration of rested pastures.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts the recommendation to restore rangelands to the extent such efforts are supported by land use plans and funding is available. As a first priority, most restoration projects will focus on Greater Sage-grouse habitat within HMAs. Restoration projects normally require tightly controlled grazing or full rest to be successful.

In the presentation, Mr. Bolstad indicated that BLM followed up with the Board after the September 2015 meeting to clarify the Board's intent behind this recommendation, which was to restore rangelands through range improvements and rest from grazing to facilitate recovery.

During the presentation, Mr. Yardley inquired as to the percentage of the wild horse and burro population that would be impacted by Recommendations 2 and 3. Mr. Bolstad explained that in extremely large HMAs such as those in Nevada with millions of acres and minimal fencing, it would be difficult to move animals. If on-the-ground conditions allow, it may be possible to manage animal movement by controlling access to water. Controlling animal movement in smaller HMAs with smaller populations may be more feasible. In general, it would be a small percentage of animals that could be controlled through grazing similar to controlling livestock through management.

Recommendation 4

Consider wild horse and burro management and monitoring activities at appropriate and multiple scales.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation. The BLM understands the recommendation to mean that future management should take a landscape approach in which groups of HMAs are managed as complexes or in aggregate versus by individual HMA. Within this landscape approach, some HMAs could be managed as reproducing and others as non-reproducing, wholly or in part, and still maintain genetic health and long term sustainability of the larger herd unit composed of a combination of HMAs.

Recommendation 5

Develop proposal to the NAB at large scale that combines population growth suppression and the concept of reproducing and non-reproducing herds.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation. Recommendation #8 requests the development of alternative management scenarios and the response includes scenarios that incorporate non-reproducing components. These management alternatives demonstrate how the principles and approaches of population growth suppression (recommended by the Board) could be applied. If the BLM were to pursue any of these options, analysis and public engagement would occur in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA.)

Factors to consider when selecting populations to be managed as reproducing or non-reproducing, wholly or in part, include things such as but not limited to:

- Overall population management goals (attaining//maintaining AML, genetic diversity, habitat requirements, etc.) for the complex or group of HMAs being managed as one unit;
- Current habitat conditions (e.g. availability of natural water, prevalence of marginal habitat);
- Critical habitats for Threatened and Endangered or special status species;
- Greater Sage-grouse habitat management goals; and,
- Historic public/private land issues.

(The rest of this page was left blank intentionally.)

Recommendation 6

Deadline of 2020 to achieve appropriate AML in 22 HMAs in SFA's is too far out – Board asks BLM to expedite reaching AML in GS SFAs as quickly as possible utilizing all effective tools.

BLM Response

The BLM agrees that it is desirable to reach AML as soon as possible in the sagebrush focal areas (SFAs).² A more rapid attainment of AML in SFAs will be dependent on additional funding to conduct removals and provide for lifetime care of the removed animals. The amount and timing of funding will drive how quickly AML can be achieved.

In the presentation, Mr. Bolstad indicated that the 5-year schedule outlines what can be accomplished to achieve AML in 22 HMAs considering the financial resources available. BLM is limited in terms of the number of animals that can be removed and; therefore, limited to achieving AML in SFAs over the next five years. Mr. Woehl indicated that at the time the recommendation was made, sage-grouse were being reviewed by the FWS for listing as a threatened or endangered species and, if that had happened, all HMAs would have been affected. Mr. Bolstad indicated that BLM would like to move quicker in achieving AML and will do so if opportunities, funding, and resources are made available.

Recommendation 7

Continue and expand efforts to embrace and implement Cohesive Strategy to make HMA landscapes fire resistant.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation and is committed to the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy and implementation of its accompanying National Action Plan. The current emphasis is to target resources to address the biggest threats to the West's most productive sage-grouse habitat. HMAs contain sensitive or priority sage-grouse habitats will benefit from these efforts. Key elements of the Federal Sage-Grouse Conservation Plans developed by BLM and USFS include improving habitat conditions and reducing the threat of rangeland fires.

The BLM's newly-established Fire and Invasives Assessment Tool (FIAT) program is identifying BLM projects address threats from wildfires, invasive annual grasses, and conifer encroachment to sage-grouse and sagebrush steppe landscapes in the Great Basin region.

Recommendation 8

Present to Board 3 - 4 draft alternatives (including a timeline and one alternative that includes AML without 'rider') to achieve AML in all HMAs.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation. The BLM will submit population management alternative analyses to the Board once they are completed.

During the presentation, Jennifer Sall asked when the alternative analyses will be submitted to the Board. Mr. Bolstad indicated the alternative analyses should be available relatively soon. He noted several Congressmen have asked a similar question and the Board will receive the same response sent to the Congressional inquiry. Mr. Woehl emphasized that the Board is not recommending implementation of the alternative analyses but stressed the importance of having the appropriate information or tools on which to base their recommendations. Mr. Bolstad explained that approximately six management scenarios have been evaluated in terms of costs, benefits, and the time required achieving AML. One alternative evaluates the maximization of PZP vaccine application, while other alternatives evaluate aggressive removal of animals to achieve AML in a short period of time as well as spaying and neutering animals. A "control" alternative

² Sagebrush focal areas (SFAs) are considered to be the best habitat for sage-grouse and typically contain the greatest density of birds. SFAs are the most important and highest priority habitat for management and conservation. Habitat falling into the second level of priority are called Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMAs.) A third level of habitat is referred to call General Habitat Management Areas (GHMAs.)

evaluates maintaining the status quo. The analyses will include a projection of the national wild horse population under each scenario.

Recommendation 9

BLM should structure AML so that the low extreme can sustain herds despite climatic change.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation and notes that current policy enables AML to be guided by changing environmental conditions (see handbook language below). Because most HMAs far exceed AML, the impacts on herd and range health being observed, particularly in drought-stressed areas, reflect the impacts of over-population. Thus, achieving and maintaining AML is our highest management priority. Once AML is achieved, managers can assess if the level is appropriate for environmental conditions.

Management handbook, section 4.2.2.2: “In-depth AML evaluations should be completed when review of resource monitoring and population inventory data indicates the AML may no longer be appropriate. The following should be considered when evaluating AML: Changes in environmental conditions which may have occurred since the AML was established. Changing environmental conditions could include drought, wildfires, noxious weed infestations, effect of varying numbers of WH&B on forage utilization or range ecological condition/trend, an increase or decrease in the available forage, changes in livestock management, etc.”

Recommendation 10

Develop strategy to train and use more qualified volunteers to support WH&B activities, off-range and on-range.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation. The Washington Office will work to identify a strategy and process that will encourage and enable increased use of qualified volunteers, which will be closely coordinated with the field.

In the presentation, Mr. Bolstad indicated that limited staffing in the Washington Office is preventing the capacity to address all of the Board’s recommendations in a timely manner. While this recommendation is important, it does not rise to the high enough priority for attention at this time. Mr. Woehl indicated that he feels very strongly about this recommendation and will raise it again in the future.

Recommendation 11

Develop strategy to publicize needs so financial donors are aware of opportunities to support the WH&B program by purchasing materials and supplies.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation. National policy for all BLM programs accepting donated materials and supplies has been drafted and is under review. The draft policy includes the steps that must be taken for the BLM to assume ownership and liability for donated items. The Washington Office will encourage the field to work with groups interested in contributing money and/or resources.

Recommendation 12

BLM, in conjunction with other Federal agencies, should explore the possibility of establishing collaborative groups regarding the management of specific HMAs. BLM should be an active participant in these groups which should include NGOs, local government, and State and Federal resource management agencies.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts the recommendation to actively participate in collaborative groups and notes that these groups are often more successful when established and driven by a coalition of stakeholders such as NGOs and local government. The BLM is willing to participate and is supportive of such efforts. The BLM recognizes the benefits of the involvement of HBOs, local governments and the public in land management decisions. Federal law and regulations determine where,

when and how the BLM can participate. For example, the BLM must remain the decision-making entity for management decisions on BLM-managed lands and cannot delegate this authority. The Wild Horse and Burro Program will continue to support existing collaborative efforts underway in various BLM State and Field Offices and welcomes future opportunities.

In the presentation, Mr. Bolstad indicated that it is recognized within the wild horse and burro program that partnerships are part of the path forward. BLM recognizes the importance of having all parties involved to bring forward a diversity of opinions to identify management actions that can be successful and supported. Local organization involvement is important to recognizing the benefits such as eco-tourism. Dr. Cope elaborated on his experience with collaborative groups including working with the USFS on fuel reduction as well as collaborative groups that assisted counties in developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans. Such groups lead to a better process and cross education of differing ideas when all players are brought to the table along with the land management agencies.

Recommendation 13

Consider using well-visited HMAs as an opportunity to educate visitors about challenges and adoption opportunities using interpretive signs, kiosks, cell technology, etc. Consider including in recreation plans for these areas.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation. These types of educational opportunities have been used in several States to promote wild horses and burros through touring maps, trail guides, and informational kiosks in the HMAs. The Washington Office will work with the State Programs to create additional interpretive resources for an HMA as a pilot project. A suitable HMA must be accessible and have easily seen animals.

Recommendation 14

Eco-sanctuary operators should be provided training and materials to adequately represent the challenges and opportunities associated with the WH&B program.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation. The BLM will work with the eco-sanctuary operators to modify their agreements as needed to ensure all agreements are consistent and contain provisions for public education. The BLM will also provide standards, training, and other information to eco-sanctuary operators to address any gaps and provide consistent guidance and oversight.

In the presentation, Mr. Bolstad recognized that the three eco-sanctuary operators do not have good public education materials. BLM is working to develop appropriate materials which will be provided at some point in the future.

Recommendation 15

Express support for continued commitment to long-term research – encourage BLM to keep its eye on goal of supporting horses on the range with minimal interference.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation and is implementing research to be conducted over the next five to six years, with some projects delivering nearer-term results within 1 – 2 years. The BLM will complete the research it has launched with universities and USGS on new tools to manage population growth, and on tools needed for population monitoring and management, which is an investment of about \$11 million. The goal is to provide tools to manage horse populations at a minimum feasible level to accomplish herd and rangeland management objectives.

In the presentation, Mr. Bolstad explained that the term “minimum feasible level to accomplish the objectives” may mean different things depending on the circumstances. It may mean a lot of intervention to accomplish an objectives or, in some cases, lesser intervention. Some define the term “minimum feasible management”, which is used in the 1971 Act, to mean a “hands-off, stand back, don’t do anything” approach whereas BLM interprets the term to mean whatever it takes to achieve the objective for management.

Recommendation 16

Prioritize use of currently available tools in the field to reduce population growth right now and implement promising new tools as quickly as they become available.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation. BLM's current policy is to treat all released mares with PZP where population growth suppression is desired. There are currently six HMAs with PZP darting programs and BLM is seeking to establish more. The BLM is also working to establish pilot projects to:

- Administer PZP vaccines to burros in the Black Mountain HMA in Arizona;
- Administer GonaCon® in the Water Canyon area in Ely District Office in Nevada;
- Enter into agreements with community groups for population growth suppression programs; and,
- Introduce non-reproductive animals in one or more HMAs using spay and neuter techniques.

The BLM is preparing to adopt new surgical and non-surgical techniques to manage population growth as soon as initial research project results become available.

During the presentation, Mr. Yardley asked for additional information on the GonaCon® pilot project in Nevada. Mr. Bolstad explained that the Nevada pilot project involves a limited number of mares that are being treated with GonaCon®. There is a larger GonaCon® study underway in the Teddy Roosevelt National Park that will yield additional results. Data is showing that one dose of GonaCon® is not as effective as a one-year PZP vaccination. Additional data is showing that a second application (or booster) of GonaCon® might be very effective; therefore, the smaller pilot project was initiated in Nevada.

Recommendation 17

Given that our goal is fewest possible handlings – and we can only achieve that by slowing reproduction rate – encourage BLM to use the best available technology for monitoring individual animals (e.g. use of long-range chips).

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation. The BLM sees the greatest utility in pursuing microchips or other devices that can be scanned with a reader will be at gathers when sorting animals, which should minimize animal handling. In the future, the BLM is also interested in adopting this technology for off-range animals as part of a larger record-keeping effort.

BLM will consult with industry, USGS, and the Board to gather more information on the best available technology that will meet our needs. The BLM invites the Board to share useful contacts such as ranchers using this technology for livestock, particularly the longer-range RFD tags.

In addition, the radio collar study being conducted by USGS is nearly complete and the results will enable using radio collars and tags to enhance field studies that will evaluate fertility control methods. Radio tracking will be useful in many other ways including but not limited to population survey and animal movement monitoring.

Recommendation 18

As population growth suppression decreases herd numbers, program \$\$ currently used in long-term care should be devoted to rangeland health improvement within HMAs – with goal of healthy horses.

BLM Response

The BLM accepts this recommendation and sees it as a long-term goal. The BLM is investing substantially in sage-grouse habitat improvement, including attaining and maintaining AML in those priority areas. As better methods for on-range population control are implemented and horses in long-term care complete their life-spans, more funding can be directed to on-range priorities.

Recommendation 19

Recommend BLM work with Board members to develop a comprehensive adoption program utilizing the following:

- Incentive adoptions;
- More pick-up places, e.g., store fronts in the East; and,
- Training facilities in the East similar to Mantle Ranch.

BLM Response:

The BLM accepts this recommendation. The Washington Office has been working with Eastern States to expand availability of animals for sale and adoption in the East and to expand training capacity and effectiveness. The BLM looks forward to engaging the Board in these efforts and tapping into their ideas, particularly on incentives and approaches to increase the number of trained animals available to the public.

During the presentation, Mr. Woehl recognized that BLM has been and continues to work on many of the Board's recommendations, using BLM's partnership with the Mustang Heritage Foundation as an example. The Board is impressed with the work done in this area and would encourage BLM to continue its efforts.

Recommendation 20

BLM arrange for a WH&B National Advisory Board delegation to meet with the Secretary of the Interior to discuss issues related to the program.

BLM Response

The BLM is working on this recommendation and will provide more information at the April 2016 Board meeting.

In the presentation, Ms. Bail indicated that BLM is working with the [Department of the Interior] Secretary's office to find a time compatible with the Board's availability. A factor complicating the process is the upcoming change in Administration as a new President is elected.

Wild Horse and Burro Program Update

Mr. Dean Bolstad

Mr. Bolstad addressed three of the highest priority challenges facing the wild horse and burro program today.

Continual Expanding Wild Horse Populations Outside of HMAs

Wild horse populations continue to expand outside of HMAs on highways, private lands, and areas where they are not designated for management. Currently, five percent of the 179 HMAs are within the established AML level. Achieving AML is BLM's one and only performance measure used to evaluate the success of the wild horse and burro program.

In March 2015, there were approximately 58,000 wild horses on public, private, and other ownership lands. Tabulation of the March 2016 census information has not been completed; however, it is anticipated that approximately 67,000 wild horses currently occupy the public lands as compared to the national AML of 27,000 wild horses. Some HMAs are expected to be between eight and time times their established AML.

As a result of the over population, forage and water availability has and continues to be an issue in many areas. An emergency gather was conducted in the Southern Nevada District Office in 2015 where animals were imperiled. BLM is in its third year of using population survey methods recommended by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) which are consistently more scientifically accurate as compared to historical population survey methods.

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Holding Costs

In 2015, approximately 47,000 animals were being held in holding facilities at a cost of approximately \$49 million, which is 64 percent of BLM's total wild horse and burro budget. Such a large percent of the agency's budget being used to care for animals in holding facilities doesn't leave sufficient funding to accomplish other program needs such as adoptions and fertility control on the range. Holding costs will continue to rise; not necessarily due to the number of animals in short-term facilities but per unit costs, which are increasing. The average pasture cost in 2015 was \$1.61 per animal whereas the same cost in 2016 is projected to be approximately \$1.99 per animal, which translates to a \$4 million cost increase from 2015 to 2016.

Large-Scale Removals

Large-scale removals are no longer possible with current funding levels. The agency is limited to removing approximately 3,500 animals annually, about the number of animals leaving the program through adoptions, sales, natural mortality attrition. Removing 3,500 animals annually will not reduce the number of animals on the range, which is increasing by approximately 15% annually, which means to approximately 10,000 new foals in 2016.³

Historically, animal removal has been the main tool to reduce the number of animals on the range. Some advocate for more removals, which, if an additional 1,000 animals (above the 3,500 target) were removed from the rangeland and placed in holding facilities at a cost of \$5.19 per feed day, would increase holding costs by an additional \$2 million. Removing more animals from the range than can be removed from the system by adoptions, sales, natural mortality attrition almost makes the program insolvent immediately.

Priorities for removing 3,500 animals include (1) court-ordered removals, (2) public health and safety, (3) private land encroachment, (4) research projects, (5) sage-grouse habitat sagebrush focal areas, and (6) selective removals necessary to maintain quality animals in the adoption program. BLM may or may not be able to address emergencies in the future without additional funding.

New and Different Approaches

Given the limited funding, it is important the wild horse and burro program change its course of direction to work towards a more sustainable program. While the agency has a limited capacity to change direction, it is critical the agency change. Mr. Bolstad identified ten key points important to changing the agency's long-term approach.

1. It is imperative that current and future research be advanced to identify more effective fertility control methods. It will be important to continue the use of fertility control methods such as PZP, ground darting programs, etc., currently available.

The long-term goal and the best outcome is to develop longer duration vaccines, which, hopefully, will be an outcome of current research efforts. In the absence of longer duration vaccines, other avenues such as spay and neutering may be possible, which, again, depend on current research efforts. BLM recognizes the concern and controversy associated with using spay and neutering but will proceed forward using good science, university protocols, and licensed veterinarians.

BLM recognizes that PZP and other fertility methods affect animal behavior. In the interim, in the absence of long acting contraceptive vaccines, it is reasonable to consider other avenues such as spay and neutering. Spay and neutering may not be the best long-term solution but may be a reasonable interim solution.

2. Reduce holding costs through the acquisition of lower cost pastures. It will be important to have more animals in lower costs pastures and less in higher cost corrals.

³ 67,000 animals on the range times 15%.

3. Increase the number of trained animals and store-fronts available in the eastern United States.
4. Embrace existing partnerships and increase the number of partnerships in the future. Partnerships are an important component of the adoption program and on-range management.
5. Greater Sage-grouse habitat conservation is critical. Twenty-two of the 106 HMAs containing sage-grouse habitat have high priority sagebrush focal areas.
6. Adoption Incentive Pilots – BLM is exploring a pilot program that might include an assistance agreement approach whereby adopters would receive incentives for adopting older animals that might otherwise not be adoptable. Such incentives could include revenue for providing care to and/or training of targeted animals.
7. The Board has received BLM's Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program standard operating procedures for review. BLM looks forward to receiving the Board's comments. BLM anticipates hiring a Comprehensive Animal Welfare Coordinator position which will oversee implementation of a full-fledged program.
8. Other actions include microchipping, bait and water trapping, fertility control treatments, managing herds for more adoptable animals, removal of animals that are more desirable for adoption, updating the agency's policy for HMAs, and considering contracting the NEPA analysis for new pasture contracts.

Following the presentation, Mr. Bolstad addressed several questions from the Board, which are summarized below.

Dr. Cope asked if the agency's 2016 funding identifies an emergency funding reserve to address potential disasters considering that there are 5½ months remaining in the fiscal year, summer is approaching, and there are many fire and drought prone landscapes. Mr. Bolstad indicated that decisions relating to finalizing the 2016 removal schedule have yet to be made and there is opportunity to consider such a reserve. Currently, 2016 gather/removal plans have identified approximately 2,500 animals for removal with a commitment to Arizona for an additional 250 burros which are creating a safety issue on major highways. It will be important to identify the highest and best use of the remaining capacity (750 animals), which will be a difficult decision as the demand is larger than the remaining capacity. If the decision is made against holding funding in reserve for emergency situations, other options may include requesting additional funding from other BLM or address the emergency in a different way other than removal of animals.

Mr. Yardley asked if there has been serious discussion given to letting the States or counties containing wild horses and burros take control of the animals to ease the burden on the federal government. Mr. Bolstad indicated that there have been two bills introduced in Congress that relate to Mr. Yardley's question. BLM's position is that it will cooperate and implement all legislation passed by Congress and signed by the President. To date, those bills have not become law.

Ms. Ginger Kathrens asked as to the latitude the agency may have for moving funding between different areas of the program. Mr. Bolstad indicated that there is latitude to move funding within the wild horse and burro program. Currently, the highest priority has been the feeding and care of 47,000 animals currently in holding, which required 64 percent of the agency's 2015 program budget. There is not much decision space remaining in which to address other needs and commitments of the program such as adoptions, partnerships, removals, research, etc. Ms. Kathrens indicated that use of PZP darting is relatively inexpensive which could be enhanced by a cadre of trained volunteers. Mr. Bolstad responded that he has committed support⁴ to a darting program in the Stewart Creek HMA in Wyoming.

Mr. Woehl expressed the Board's appreciation for Mr. Bolstad's willingness to try new methods that look beyond what has been done or used in the past. He believes getting people involved in the program whether through private partnerships such as the one in the Beatty Butte area in Oregon or volunteers is where the future lies.

⁴ Hiring of a term position.

Public Comment Period

A public comment period was conducted from 3:15 p.m. to 5 p.m. allowing 35 speakers opportunity to address the Board. Each speaker was asked to limit their presentation to three minutes to ensure all speakers had opportunity within the timeframe identified for public comment. Speakers were encouraged to submit their comments in a written format.

Following conclusion of the public comment period, Mr. Woehl asked BLM if there were any clarifying statements they would like to make based on the public comments. There were none.

BLM Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Demand Study Research

Lori Mitchell Dixon, PhD, President of Great Lakes Marketing Research



Laurie Dixon

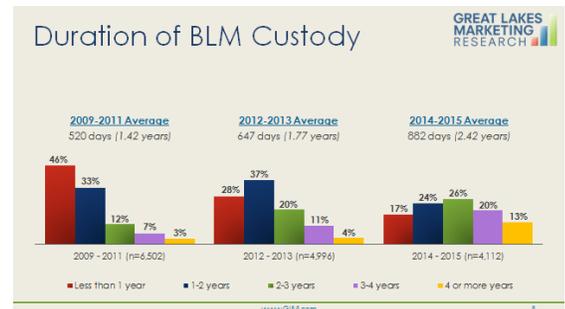
Ms. Dixon is a marketing research consultant working with BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program to understand the program from the staff's perspective using data and interviews to make adoption-related decisions.

Information depicting the profile of adopted animals found that approximately half of the sample reviewed were geldings (47%), female animals (44%) with only 9% being male animals. From a gender standpoint, 88% were horses, 12% burros, and <1% mules.

From 2009 to 2015, the number of animals born in captivity (corrals and pastures) has gradually increased from 15% in 2009 to 30% in 2014 and 2015. Ms. Dixon noted that the number of adoptions in the past three years has decreased from 2,493 and 2,437 in 2013 and 2014, respectively, to 1,675 in 2015.

While adoption/sale events occur every month of the year, it appears there is a disproportionate amount of interest to adopt or purchase an animal(s) in May, which may be useful information when developing an adoption calendar.

The duration of time animals are in BLM custody before being adopted or sold has increased from an average of 520 days in 2009/2011 to 882 days in 2014/2015 (inset to right.) There are significant cost implications as the amount of time required to adopt an animal increase. There is research being conducted on the costs of maintaining animals in corrals and pastures, which will influence the strategies that can be used as older animals become available for adoption.



Research shows that from 2009 to 2014, the number of animals adopted at temporary adoption events has decreased while more are being adopted through foster care/training and Internet adoption events, which is a reflection of the efforts made to find new alternative avenues to adopt animals. The significant trend of animals being adopted through foster care/training avenues indicates that BLM's partnerships with organizations such as the Mustang Heritage Foundation are working and becoming a more viable outlet. Ms. Dixon noted that the number of animals adopted through the foster care/training outlet increased by 100 animals between 2012/2013 and 2014/2015.



Data shows that 83% of the animals adopted over the past five years have been titled while 14% remain to be titled and 3% have been relinquished back to BLM. Only 0.2% of the animals have been repossessed or reassigned.

The inset to the left depicts the locations of 12, 976 wild horses that were adopted between October 2010 and September 2015. Each blue dot represents a location where an animal was placed into private care. To some extent, the map shows population clusters but also shows the number of States that are interested in and have

provided homes for wild horses and burros. This information could be used to identify opportunities for increased placement of the animals.

When comparing the percentage of wild horses and burros adopted in each state minus the percentage of all equine in each state, the greatest opportunities for successfully adopting animals appear to occur in Florida, Ohio, and Kentucky. Other states with a high likelihood for placement include South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and Oklahoma.

The distribution of animals adopted through Internet-based adoptions from October 2010 to September 2015 is about 50/50 between those states west and east of the Mississippi River (inset to right.) This data can be used to develop strategies to identify opportunities to have more animals placed in the eastern United States.

Placement of animals into private care is essential for the viability of the program. Factors to consider when addressing changes in the market for wild horses and burro include:

- Interest in animal ownership is waning
- No outlet exists for unwanted animals
- Animals are a long-term investment
- The skills to train wild animals are becoming more rare
- Animals are expensive
- Availability of domestic horses; and, supply exceeds demand

Suggestions offered during the presentation include (1) maintaining and/or increasing the number of partnerships to increase interest in owning wild horses, (2) increase emphasis given to training animals which allow the animal to become a companion with the owner right away, (3) incentives may be a logical avenue to encourage individuals to train animals, and (4) perform an analysis addressing the cost of maintaining an animal versus the cost of having an animal trained.

It is important to understand that wild horses are competing with domestic horses in terms of availability which will require a very specific marketing strategy and a strong commitment to that strategy to position wild horses and burro so they have an opportunity in the market place.

Most strategies suggested by Great Lakes Marketing Research address opportunities to increase demand for wild horses and burros. Attention should also be given to addressing the supply of adoptable wild horses, which may be limited, as the demand increases.

Mr. Woehl indicated that the presentation provided some eye opening and unique information and findings and thanked Ms. Dixon for her presentation.

First Day Adjournment

The first day of the meeting was officially adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Tuesday, April 15, 2014

Ms. Kathie Libby opened the second day of the BLM's National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board meeting by welcoming those attending in person as well as those participating via the Internet. Ms. Libby reviewed the "Rules of the Room", which outline how the meeting will be conducted.



Chair Fred Woehl recognized the efforts of Crystal Cowan and Debbie Collins who were the primary individuals responsible for coordinating the meeting.

Following a 2-minute video highlighting the Mustang Heritage Foundation's 2016 America's Mustang Campaign, the three new Board members were asked to introduce themselves and expand on their impression of being on the Board.

Mr. Steven Yardley indicated that he is honored to be on the Board and has been impressed with the vast amount of knowledge of the other Board members and their willingness to work together. He is quickly finding that working with the government is frustrating and not as progressive as being a small business owner in terms of being able to develop new ideas and moving forward with their implementation in a timely manner. Mr. Yardley is coming to appreciate the complexities of working within the government. Mr. Yardley expanded on how dedicated the public land grazers are to the public lands. They have developed a vast number of range improvements on public lands that benefit all animals. Mr. Yardley encouraged the audience to take that information into consideration as the livelihood of the ranching community depends upon their ability to have a sustainable resource. Mr. Yardley is grateful to be a public land rancher and to have the opportunity to serve on the Board.

Ms. Ginger Kathrens indicated that serving on the Board is certainly a different experience as she normally has been a member of the audience. Despite the vast diversity of opinions and backgrounds, the Board members are respectful of each other which is the only way to get things done. Ms. Kathrens indicated that it was a privilege to be introduced and welcomed into the wild horse society and to walk among them in order to understand how they live and how vital it is for them to remain in their social family units as undisturbed as possible. Management is supposed to be at the least feasible level and she would not have supported some of the initiatives that are now being contemplated. She believes the dedicated wild horse advocacy community is not one to disrupt but want to collaborate and move forward for the well-being of the animals, which, from her personal experience, have given her so much.

Mr. Ben Masters acknowledged Mr. Woehl for his knowledge and leadership. Mr. Masters indicated that he has trained several mustangs, completed many pack trips on public lands, and seen many wild horse herds. He has also been a journalist participating in the audience at several Board meetings. His initial impression from previous Board meetings is that it isn't that difficult of an issue- use fertility control to slow the population growth to where the gather demand equals the adoption demand, which would be a sustainable approach. While the issues may not be that simple, they are also not as difficult as we might think. It is an honor and privilege to be on the Board and he hopes to be able to make a difference.

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U. S. Forest Service Update

Barry Imler, Rangeland Program Manager, USFS

Amanda McAdams, Modoc National Forest Supervisor, USFS



Barry Imler

Mr. Barry Imler welcomed the Board to Oregon and was pleased to renew old acquaintances.

Mr. Imler provided a national perspective to the USFS's Wild Horse and Burro Program by addressing issues related to the wild horse program itself and those related to horses not covered by the *Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burro Act of 1971*. Mr. Imler noted that the USFS is concentrating its efforts within the wild horse and burro program in the four primary areas

addressed below.



Amanda McAdams

Working Cooperatively with the BLM

The USFS's highest priority is to continue working cooperatively with the BLM as much as possible within the confines of each agency's authorities. A major goal of this cooperative effort is to reduce the number of animals being held in long-term holding. Some progress has been made in this area as reflected by the funding provided to BLM for holding animals. Approximately five to six years ago, the USFS was paying BLM approximately \$1.75 million where they are currently paying approximately \$1.1 million.

The USFS is exploring avenues to expand the use of population growth suppression methods and build adoption programs in some local units, which would include working more closely with the BLM for joint adoption events.

Wild Horse Issues

Mr. Imler addressed three categories of horse issues – horses in wild horse territories, horses outside of wild horse territories, and a hybrid situation.

Wild Horse Territory Issues

There are four wild horse territories – Big Summit, North Hills, Red Rock/Johnnie/Spring Mountain, and Devil's Garden – that the Board will most likely hear about and be involved with.

The Big Summit Territory in Oregon has established a collaborative effort with at least one advocacy group, grazing permittees, and the local community to address management of the wild horse herd. This particular territory endured a hard winter this past year and had some unfortunate events occur.

The North Hills Territory on the Dixie National Forest in Utah has also encountered concerns about horse condition and the availability of forage during the past winter. Steps were taken to address those concerns, which were successful.

In Nevada, the USFS has three wild horse territories – Red Rock, Johnnie, and Spring Mountain. The Humboldt – Toiyabe National Forest is scheduled to complete an Environmental Impact Statement this fiscal year addressing management of those three territories. The USFS has a new pre-decisional objection process during which a number of draft documents will be released for public comment that will contain a number of controversial actions.

The Devil's Garden territory in northern California contains the largest number of excess animals of any territory in the USFS. Nationally, the USFS has approximately 3,800 excess animals of which 1,800 (47%) are within the Devil's Garden Territory. In many territories, the number of excess animals requiring to be removed are compared to the number of animals that can be adopted in the local area. This is not the case for the Devil's Garden Territory.

Non-Wild Horse Territory Issues

There are as many stray and abandoned horses on USFS-administered lands as there are excess wild horses. While these stray and abandoned animals are not afforded protections offered under the *Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burro Act of 1971*, there are many well-meaning members of the public who assume any free-roaming, not haltered, or unbranded horse is covered by the 1971 Act. As a result, there has been opposition to some gathers.

Two herds that include abandoned or stray animals is the (1) Salt River herd in Arizona, which was addressed during the public comment period and (2) Fort McDermitt herd in northern Nevada. The Fort McDermitt Paiute/Shoshone Tribe has acknowledged that there are hundreds of Tribal horses on USFS lands adjacent to the reservation. The Tribe has been working over the past few years to remove those animals with another effort scheduled for this summer to move Tribal horses from USFS-administered lands onto Tribal lands. The Tribe has asked for USFS assistance in that effort.

Hybrid Situation

Since 2000, there has been two large fires on the Apache – Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona that removed barriers to wild horse migration and created a tremendous amount of desirable, high quality forage. As a result, horses from surrounding Native American reservations and abandoned animals have migrated on to USFS-administered lands including the Heber Wild Horse Territory. To complicate the situation, there is a court settlement that hinders the agency's ability to respond to the influx of trespass animals.

In response to the court ordered settlement and the ongoing resource issues, the Forest is looking to move forward with developing a management plan for the Heber Wild Horse Territory, which will be delayed until the Forest management planning process is completed. The Forest management planning effort is currently in the appeal process.

Prior to the devastating fires, the USFS believes the Heber Wild Horse Territory was vacant of wild horses; therefore, the territory management plan will address the question (1) if the territory was vacant, (2) if there are any animals protected by the 1971 Act, and (3) how to manage the horses that are not protected under the 1971 Act.

Along the lines of the new and different approaches being taken by BLM, the Carson National Forest in New Mexico has been very successful in managing their wild horse herds within the established AML. The Forest has been working with various groups in the application of PZP and gentling of animals, which has resulted in a nearly 100 percent adoption success rate. The Forest has submitted a proposal where they would obtain 40 wild horses that are seven years of age or less that had been previously removed from the Forest. These animals would be trained and/or gentled and made available for adoption. Such an approach, if successful, would help the agency attain its goal to reduce the number of animals in long-term holding.

Following the presentation, Mr. Imler addressed several questions from the Board, which are summarized below.

Mr. Woehl asked how it is possible to differentiate between a wild horse and a Tribal horse on the range. Mr. Imler indicated that the agency has a State and Tribal livestock inspector onsite as well as agency personnel who are familiar with different animals. Many tribes have various methods of marking their animals for ownership purposes.

Dr. Julie Weikel indicated that she would like to better understand the Fort McDermitt situation. Having been raised in that part of the country, she recognizes that the Tribal headquarters actually lies in Nevada; however, the reservation itself lies mainly in Oregon. She does not understand the relationship between BLM, USFS, and the Tribe. She asked if reservation animals occupying BLM-administered lands are also gathered during USFS gather operations. Mr. Imler indicated that the USFS gathers only addressed animals on USFS-administered lands. There have been ongoing issues associated with trespass animals which have resulted in issuance of citations, working with the Tribe, etc.; all of which have been unsuccessful. Three or four years ago, the USFS entered into the cost share agreement with the Tribe to rebuild the boundary fences between the Forest and the reservation. With completion of the boundary fence, the agency is now focused on removing trespass animals that are currently on the Forest. In past removal efforts, the agency has made a point of using State and Tribal livestock inspectors as well as BLM Wild Horse and Burro Specialists to ensure they are not moving wild horses covered under the 1971 Act.

Ms. June Sewing asked if it was the agency's goal to remove all wild horses from lands administered by the USFS. Mr. Imler indicated that nationally removal of all wild horses from USFS-administered lands is not a goal of the agency. However, it is a goal to remove all trespass animals from lands administered by the agency. Ms. Sewing indicated that according to the 1971 Act, wild horses were to be managed in areas where they were located at the time of the Act's passage. She asked if there were HMAs identified on USFS lands. Mr. Imler indicated that there are territories identified

on USFS lands that are comparable to BLM's HMAs. Mr. Imler also indicated that there are 37 territories with some number of animals.

Dr. Cope asked if an entity (name was not audible) was the only early adopter on the 2012 planning rule in Region 3. Mr. Imler explained that the Apache – Sitgreaves National Forest is operating under the 1982 planning rule. Dr. Cope indicated that he was assuming that a Draft Environmental Impact Statement will be released. Mr. Imler indicated that under the transition language, the entity had the option of appealing the language, which they did. Dr. Cope asked if the appeal is upheld, would the USFS be required to revert to starting over using the 2012 planning rule process or would the planning document be modified under the 1982 rule. Mr. Imler indicated that the agency is discussing that very question internally at this time.

Ms. Kristin Bail asked Mr. Imler to explain the 1982 rule. Mr. Imler explained that the 1982 planning rule was the guidance under which almost of the agency's land use plans were developed. A new planning rule was finalized and approved in 2012 that changed the process and the content of the agency's management plans. Under the 1982 rule, management plans were more descriptive (what and how actions could be done) versus the 2012 rule that is more in line of a list of what you can do in a particular area.

Mr. Steve Yardley asked how wild horse population census counts along a BLM/USFS boundary determine which animals belong to the USFS and those that belong to the BLM. Mr. Imler explained that in many cases there are joint management agreements between the agencies. Often, the number of animals are prorated based on acreage or AML. Representatives from the national offices of each agency are working to develop a new agreement to address such issues including management of wild horse complexes involving numerous management areas.

Modoc National Forest Wild Horse and Burro Program

Ms. McAdams provided an overview of a collaborative effort on the Modoc National Forest in northeastern California. The Modoc National Forest encompasses 1.6 million acres of National Forest land of which approximately one million are rangelands. The 232,520-acre Devil's Garden Wild Horse Territory lies within the National Forest. A more detailed breakdown of the land ownership within the Territory is provided in the inset to the right. The Tribal, state, and private lands are not officially under the guidelines of the territory but lie within the boundard of the unit.

<u><i>Devil's Garden Wild Horse Territory Land Ownership</i></u>	
<u><i>Land Owner or Administrator</i></u>	<u><i>Acreage</i></u>
<i>U. S. Forest Service</i>	<i>224,000</i>
<i>BLM</i>	<i>7,000</i>
<i>Tribal</i>	<i>800</i>
<i>State</i>	<i>640</i>
<i>Private</i>	<i>500</i>

The territory was created by the *Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burro Act of 1971*, and lies within the sage/steppe ecosystem where forage, water and access is limited. Topographically, the unit is a relatively flat rough and rocky lava plateau.

The first territory management plan was approved in 1975, which established an AML of 300 animals. Up until 2006, helicopters gathers were conducted every one or two years removing between 175 and 250 animals during each gather.

There is an Environmental Impact Statement in place which guides management of the 785,000-acre sage/steppe ecosystem of which 240,000 acres are threatened by juniper invasion. Sage-grouse are located on the territory and are a concern for the agency. Ms. McAdams acknowledged that the Natural Resources Conservation Service performs much of the work for the USFS in the sage/steppe ecosystem as well as on adjacent private lands.

The most recent territory management plan was approved in August 2013 establishing an AML of 206 to 402 animals. In addition, the management plan authorizes gathering of excess animals, fertility control treatments using PZP, and actions to adjust the herd's sex ratio to 50/50. There was litigation associated with the management plan which upheld the territory's boundary as well as the AML levels.

A double-count census was completed in late February 2016 which found an estimated population of 2,246 animals of which approximately 100 animals were located on private and/or Tribal lands. Current conditions on the ground include degraded riparian areas, conversion of native rangeland to annual grasses and invasive species, degraded sage-grouse habitat, and increased juniper encroachment. It was noted that the increased juniper encroachment was a result of year-round ground disturbance and the removal of competing vegetation. The photo on the left depicts the North Fence Spring in June 2015 as compared to the same site in October 2015.



From an economic standpoint, there are multiple impacts occurring to private and Tribal lands. There have been multiple requests made to remove nuisance horses, a \$2 million conservation easement is in jeopardy, and there are potential safety issues near highways.

Due to several factors including a severe four-year drought, permitted livestock grazing use was reduced by 55% in 2014, 50% in 2015, and approximately 50% in 2016. Reductions taken in 2015 and 2016 were primarily due to wild horse issues. There are eight grazing allotments within the territory.

In 2016, the Forest is working to establish a Wild Horse Collaborative to make recommendations on management of the wild horses consistent with the territory's management plan. It will be important that the right people are involved with the Collaborative. The agency is working closely with the County and other partners to identify appropriate individuals and/or organizations that should be involved in the Collaborative.

There are plans for a gather in the fall 2016 on both private and Tribal lands. The animals will either be returned to the territory and/or adopted, which is the preferred approach. Looking toward the future, the USFS proposes additional gathers to reduce the wild horse populations to AML, additional gathers on private/Tribal land to address nuisance animals, and to adopt all excess animals removed from the range. Ms. McAdams recognized the active engagement of BLM and the local Tribe(s) in past efforts.

In conclusion, the Forest is inviting participation in a collaborative group, which will focus on identifying options for humane solutions that are economically feasible and ecologically sustainable. The Modoc National Forest views their wild horse herd as an overall asset to the Forest as well as the local community. The wild horse managed in a thriving ecological balance contribute significantly to what the Forest has to offer by drawing tours to the area and giving the American people one more reason to connect with their national forest.

Following the presentation, Ms. McAdams addressed questions from the Board, which are summarized below.

Ms. Ginger Kathrens indicated that the Board has heard a lot about this particular territory from a strong wild horse advocate in the local area. Ms. Kathrens asked if the Forest has reached out to that advocate who is willing to collaborate and wants to help in any way possible. Ms. McAdams indicated that the first press release addressing formation of the Collaborative was issued last week. She would like to ensure the agency reaches out to the advocate referenced by Ms. Kathrens and asked if she might share the name of that person with her.

Dr. Cope indicated that his experience over the past decade is that the relationship between the County and the Modoc National Forest has occasionally been rocky and was glad to hear the Forest is working with the County on this effort. Dr. Cope asked if the county was becoming involved in the Collaborative process and to what degree they are working with the USFS. How is the relationship between the Forest and the County at this point? Ms. McAdams indicated that the effort would not be where it is today without the County, who has enabled the USFS to have the political power necessary to start moving the process forward. The Forest has a strong relationship with the County, who would probably like the Forest to do more; however, the agency is starting at a place where they feel they can be the most successful. The Forest has had great support from the County.

In relation to the second part of the question relating to the County involvement, Ms. McAdams indicated that the County is directly involved with the gather on private/Tribal lands in the fall 2016. The County's involvement in the long-term collaborative effort has yet to be determined; however, the Forest is hopeful the County will be actively involved.

Mr. Yardley asked as to the livestock permittee's livestock on and off dates on the Forest. Ms. McAdams did not have that information immediately available. She indicated that they had just held their annual grazing permittee meeting this week to discuss wild horses. Mr. Yardley indicated that it must be frustrating for the livestock permittees who are only on the allotment and territory for a limited time each year under very control conditions to see the downward trend of riparian areas, conversion of native rangelands to annual grasses and invasive species, and increased juniper encroachment, which is caused in part by the excess wild horses. Ms. McAdams agreed that the livestock permittees are very frustrated but the good news is that they love the wild horses as well. The permittees are working with the agency to find the solutions necessary to manage the situation as best they can. They are engaged and understand that the agency is doing what it needs to do but they are frustrated. Mr. Yardley indicated that throughout the West many permittees love the horses and the rangeland but, in this case, there is a downward trend and it appears that imminent action is needed to prevent it from becoming worse.

Mustang Heritage Foundation Update

Kali Sublett, Executive Director, Mustang Heritage Foundation



Kali Sublett

Ms. Sublett who has been with the Mustang Heritage Foundation (Foundation) since 2007 provided an overview of several different cooperative efforts the Foundation has ongoing with the BLM. In its decade-long partnership with BLM, the Foundation has taken on several projects in three major areas – adoption, education, and awareness.

In summary, the mission of the Foundation is to increase the adoption and awareness of excess mustangs and burros. The organization's bylaws were created and adopted on June 3, 2002. From 2001 to 2005, the Foundation worked on selecting a comprehensive and effective Board of Trustees.

In 2006, the Foundation entered into a continuing Financial Assistance Agreement with the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program., under which the first training program, Extreme Mustang Makeover (EMM) took place with 100 trainers and 100 mustangs. The Trainer Incentive Program (TIP) was also launched in 2006.

In 2013, the Foundation produced the richest, wild horse training event, Mustang Million, adopting out over 500 animals in three weekends and attracting over 5,000 spectators.

In 2015, the Foundation created and launched a national awareness campaign, Americas Mustang.

In 2016, the Foundation is proud to announce that it has been working with sale eligible animals in the TIP program, EMM events as well as the Storefront programs across the United States.

Ms. Sublett briefly touched on the Foundation's Board of Trustees as well as the organization's eight-person staff, which includes a few contractors.

Since 2007, the BLM has worked in partnership with the Foundation placing over 6,000 mustangs into adoptive homes. The Foundation expressed its

National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting



	Media Partner of the Extreme Mustang Makeover	www.westernhorseman.com
	Truck Partner of the Extreme Mustang Makeover	www.ramrodeo.com
	Wound Treatment of the Extreme Mustang Makeover	www.vetericyn.com
	Buckle of the Extreme Mustang Makeover	www.gistsilversmiths.com
	Apparel of the Extreme Mustang Makeover	www.resistol.com
	Saddle Partner of the Extreme Mustang Makeover	www.martinsaddlery.com
	Television Partner of the Extreme Mustang Makeover	www.ridetv.com

appreciation for the efforts of the BLM's national, state, and local District/Field Offices and staff for their continued support. Oregon BLM has participated in three EEM and seven Youth & Mustang events.

The Foundation has also worked hard to develop industry partners which are highlighted in the inset to the right.

Training & Adoption Programs

The Foundation facilitates its mission primarily through training and adoption programs – Extreme Mustang Makeover, Mustang Million, Trainer Incentive Program, and the Storefront Program.

Extreme Mustang Makeover



Publicly, the Foundation is most well-known for the EMM program, which has visited 40 cities and 22 states and hosted more than 62 national events that have resulted in the adoption of over 6,300 animals since its inception in 2007.

The EMM is a competitive program where trainers pick up a mustang at a designated location, which is trained for approximately 100 days. Trained animals are brought to one of the national EMM events where they compete against other trained mustangs and are then adopted. Over the ten years since its inception, the Foundation is observing many new as well as returning trainers participating in the program. In addition, the Foundation is seeing a lot of interest in the youth division, where animals are adopted, trained, and then compete at a national EMM event.

Mustang Million

In 2013, the Mustang Million event occurred over three weekends adopting 562 mustangs, yearlings to age 6, saving the taxpayers over \$6.72 million, and helped raise awareness about other mustangs that are currently awaiting adoption. Offering \$1 million in cash and prizes with no entry fee ranked Mustang Million among the most prestigious equine events! In total, 412 competitors representing 40 States participated in the event. Over 6,000 people attended the Saturday final.

Repeating this tremendously successful program is possible and the Foundation is working to gain support from the public as well as the equine industry.

Trainer Incentive Program



The TIP program is becoming fairly well known but is still overshadowed by the EMM program, which been covered by several national news organizations. The TIP program is a non-competitive self-paced program where the trainers work at their own pace to train the animals. TIP is more of a gentling program as compared to the EMM, which results in saddle-trained animals.

In addition to serving as a training program, TIP serves as a marketing program where trainers bring an animal home, gentle the animal, and then market that animal to the public for adoption. The program currently has over 320 approved trainers, who are required to reapply for the program every twelve months. Since its inception in 2007, the TIP program has expanded each year including the addition of a youth division in 2009, incorporation of older animals and the StoreFront program in 2010, and, in 2015, completing a record breaking 600 adoptions! Since its inception, the TIP program has found good homes for 2,988 mustangs.

Mr. Woehl interjected that he has been a TIP trainer for a long time and is especially appreciative of the Foundation and BLM's efforts associated with the program. Many people would like to adopt a mustang but don't have the knowledge to train an animal so the TIP program meets a very important need!



Part of the TIP program, the Storefront program was initiated in 2010 where participation in the program was offered to individuals known to (1) posse the necessary skills to train mustangs and (2) have the ability to take more than ten animals at one time.

Trainers participating in the StoreFront program are compensated at a higher rate as compared to those participating in the TIP program. TIP trainers are paid \$800 at the time of adoption whereas StoreFront trainers receive \$800 at the time of adoption and an additional \$200 at the time of delivery or pickup.

More locations have been (or are pending) added to the StoreFront program including Texas, California, New Mexico, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Wyoming, and Massachusetts.

The Foundation is excited to see where this program will go in the future. The Foundation has been working closely with BLM's Eastern States office focusing on getting horses to the people, which is what the TIP program is doing on a smaller scale. The StoreFront program offers many opportunities to expand (such as serving as locations where Internet-adopted animals could be picked up) where the program is currently.

Education and Awareness Programs

The following programs are more focused on creating awareness of the wild horse and burro program.

America's Mustang



Education and awareness of America's mustang is an important part of the Foundation's mission. Working with BLM, the Foundation created the America's Mustang Campaign as an effort to provide opportunities for more Americans to discover the mustang by learning about their special characteristics; where they are located; what they need as a breed; and how we can all help manage, care for, and adopt or purchase one of our own.

The intent is to promote the American mustang; therefore, logos advertising various expos do not display a logo of either the Foundation or the BLM. The purpose is to get people interested in and emotionally attached not only to the animals but also the issues faced by America's mustangs. Hopefully, people will be interested enough to go to the www.Americansmustang.com website and become more educated as to the program and its issues.

Most of 2015 was spent preparing the campaign and hosting a celebration expo in Missouri. Three celebration expos are scheduled in 2016 – April 22 – 23 in Queen Creek, Arizona; July 14 – 16 in Sedalia, Missouri; August 25 – 27 in Lexington, Virginia – where demonstrations and seminars will be provided as well as reaching out to other organizations that may like to be part of the celebration. The Foundation has hired an individual who will be visiting other equine events across the nation to promote the America's Mustang Campaign.

Mr. Woehl and Ginger Kathrens both expressed their appreciation for the person hired by the Foundation to promote the America's Mustang Campaign. Ann is extremely passionate, friendly, and feels strongly about the animals as well as educating the public. Ms. Kathrens indicated that she had attended the expo in Topeka, Kansas and was pleased to see the photos at the booth portrayed not only mustangs but people with those mustangs.

In addition to the 2016 celebration expos, the Foundation has worked with BLM to conduct events like off-range corral tours, visits to HMAs, eco-sanctuary tours, etc.

Youth-Oriented Programs



There are two youth-oriented programs, *Extreme Mustang Makeover Youth & Mustang Division* and the *Youth and Mustang Challenge Events* program.

In the *Extreme Mustang Makeover Youth & Mustang Division* program, young trainers have approximately 100 days to gentle and train randomly assigned, previously "untouched" mustang yearlings. Goals of training include halter breaking, trailer loading, picking up feet, and leading through obstacles and maneuvers. At the end of the training program, youth compete at EMM events. Over 80 youth (ages 8 – 17) from Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, California, Idaho, and Texas have competed in the program.

The *Youth and Mustang Challenge Events* program events are held regionally and managed by approved trainers in the TIP program. Youth gentle and train a yearling mustang to prepare for a competition in their region where prizes and awards are presented. Since 2010, over 520 youth (ages 8 – 17) have been involved in the program's events.

In total, over 1,000 animals have been adopted through youth programs.

Camp Wildfire events do not have an adoption component but focus on education of youth ages 8 to 18. At each *Camp Wildfire* event, youth learn about the American mustang and its inhabitation of the West through fun and exciting activities.

Non-BLM Funded Programs

Over the past several years, the Foundation has focused some of its attention on developing programs that are not dependent on BLM funding for support.

Mustang Magic

Mustang Magic is an event conducted each January at the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo, which uses the same premise as the EMM but is a local event for the Foundation.

Meet the Mustang

Over the years, the Foundation has had opportunities to attend many equine events to provide demonstrations, which did not have an adoption component. The *Meet the Mustang* program allows the Foundation to educate the public about the American mustang and have mustangs available to viewing and/or adoption. There are two events scheduled in 2016 – one in Decatur, Texas and the second in Cross Plains, Tennessee.

Veterans & Mustangs

The *Veterans & Mustang* program is conducted at the Foundation's headquarters in Austin, Texas. Currently, there are ten veterans participating in the program. Each veteran adopts a mustang which they train over an eight-week period at the Foundation's facility. Typically, there are five to ten veterans per session who participate at no cost to themselves (other than the adoption fee). The program is an experiential program where the veterans learn about mustangs, rangelands, how to own a horse, what it takes to care for an animal, etc. Through the program, 26 veterans have been served and 26 animals adopted.

Mr. Woehl asked if there is any thought or interest in making the *Veterans & Mustangs* program a national program. Ms. Sublett indicated that there is interest but it is important for people to understand that this is not a therapeutic program. Mr. Woehl indicated that although the Board will not probably make a recommendation concerning the program, it is interested in the future of the program.

Mustang Open

The Mustang Open encourages adopters to exhibit their BLM mustang or burro in a fun show atmosphere that offers something for every level of horsemanship. There are three events planned in 2016 – July 14 – 16 in Sedalia, Missouri; August 25 – 27 in Lexington, Virginia; and September 25 – 27 in Fort Worth, Texas. These events are held in conjunction with an EMM event but will have its own arena and show. The program entails three divisions and two different classes.

BLM Wild Horse & Burro Program Marketing

BLM approached the Foundation with a need for marketing materials focused at the wild horse and burro program. The intent was to find a tagline that would incorporate adoptions, sales, mustangs, and burros. Based on this effort the slogan "Uniquely American – Uniquely Yours" was developed. The Foundation is appreciative of being asked to participate and help with this effort. The Foundation is currently working on a BLM Adoption/Sale Information brochure.

In closing, Ms. Sublett summarized a report that she sends to BLM monthly, which outlines by state the number of animals adopted through the Foundation's programs as well as pending adoptions by program/event. From October 1, 2015 through April 1, 2016, the Foundation has adopted a total 369 animals and 530 pending adoptions. If no additional adoptions were to occur in the remainder of 2016, the projected 2016 adoption target would be 899 animals. Conservatively, the Foundation is projecting their total 2016 adoptions will be approximately 1,200 animals.

To demonstrate the how important of the Foundation’s partnership is to BLM; Ms. Sublett reviewed figures which demonstrate that the Foundation has saved the American taxpayer \$217 million since 1977.

Mr. Masters expressed his appreciation for Ms. Sublett’s efforts and those of the Foundation to promote and move the BLM’s wild horse and burro program forward. While there is a tremendous amount of controversy surrounding the program, the Mustang Heritage Foundation is a “beam of bright light!” Mr. Master’s asked if there were things the Board and/or BLM could do to increase the number of animals adopted by the Foundation on an annual basis. One issue that Ms. Sublett expanded on was the selection of horses for adoption and/or training. It is important to ensure that the people selecting the animals for adoption and/or use in various programs understand and are educated as to what it takes to put an animal into training, what type of animal best fits the adoption program, etc. Another need is to ensure that animals are continually supplied to adoptions in the eastern United States and making animals more accessible to people in the east. A third area raised addressed the adoption process – ensuring everyone understands the process and that the process is consistently implemented across the nation. Mr. Dean Bolstad indicated that screening animals before they are submitted for adoption has been an issue raised by the Board in the past.

Mr. Yardley asked if training and educational materials concerning America’s rangelands, rangeland practices, etc., are addressed and available as part of the Foundation’s youth programs. Ms. Sublett indicated that animal training programs don’t allow many opportunities for education with the youth. There is quite a bit of educational information provided to the youth under the *Camp Wildfire* program. BLM has attended these events and provided training for the youth. There is also a “kid’s dome” as part of the *America’s Mustang Campaign* where there are different stations for kid’s activities. One station allows the kids to create their own rangeland.

Budget Update

Renee Fuhrman, Acting Wild Horse and Burro Program Budget Analyst



Renee Fuhrman

Ms. Fuhrman provided an overview of wild horse and burro expenditures in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 and 2016 (as of March 31, 2016) and development of the FY17 budget.

Fiscal Year 2015

BLM’s enacted appropriation for the wild horse and burro program was \$77,245,000. The three major obligation areas (known as Program Elements) are highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1

FY15 Highest Program Element Obligations

Program Element	Program Element Description	% of Total Obligations	\$ Obligated
HI	Off-Range Corral Holding	42	\$ 31,848,991
HH	Off-Range Pasture Holding	27	\$ 20,688,975
	Program Support/Overhead/Uncontrollables	18	\$ 14,217,242

Ms. Fuhrman noted that “program support/overhead/uncontrollables” area includes all activities that don’t fit into the other program elements.

When Population Growth Suppression (KF) was addressed, Mr. Woehl clarified that there was \$76,174 spent to accomplish 429 units. Ms. Sewing asked for clarification as to what was considered a unit. Mr. Bolstad explained that the unit of accomplish is the number of animals treated. For example, an animal that received a primary PZP injection as well as a booster would be counted as one unit of accomplishment. Likewise, an animal that received PZP 22 one time would also be counted as one unit of accomplishment. Mr. Woehl clarified that the cost of the vaccine as well as the administration of that vaccine was included in the obligations for Program Element KF. Mr. Bolstad indicated that the intent was as described by Mr. Woehl; however, he doubted that \$76,174 addressed the total expenses incurred in FY15. The agency has been struggling with how to capture growth suppression costs.

Mr. Woehl explained that the Board was trying to understand how 429 units could be accomplished in FY15 spending \$76,174 (\$178/unit) when 59 units are proposed to be accomplished in FY16 with \$103,283 (\$1,751/unit). Ms. Fuhrman noted that other items such as labor are included in this program element. Mr. Woehl indicated that taking the information at face value could lead the reader to an erroneous conclusion. As referenced earlier, coding has been a continual issue for the agency.

Mr. Woehl indicated that the Board would like to see use of PZP increased in the future. Ms. Kathrens noted that while the projected cost to use PZP in FY16 is \$1,751 per animal, the actual cost of a dose of PZP and PZP22 is approximately \$25 and \$225, respectively. Mr. Bolstad indicated the cost for PZP22 is currently approximately \$340 per dose. Mr. Bolstad also noted that PZP application using ground darting programs are much less expensive. BLM is currently considering additional use of PZP in FY16, which has not been included in the FY16 budget allocation figures. Costs increase substantially when treatable mares⁵ are gathered using a helicopter, which, on average costs \$900 per mare depending on the size of the gather. Field-level managers are having difficulty understanding the need to turn treated animals back on to the range when populations are so far over AML. There are some locations where use of PZP is appropriate and BLM clearly understands that the Board would like to see the agency do exactly that.

Mr. Woehl indicated that the Board has passed several recommendations concerning increased use of PZP and was assured three years ago that such an increase was forthcoming. Mr. Bolstad indicated that there many factors that need to be considered when determining the use of PZP or other grow suppression vaccines. He also stressed the importance of also considering the use of GonaCon® and other contraceptive vaccines. Use of GonaCon® and other contraceptive vaccines could and probably should be targeted toward HMAs at or near AML. Turning animals back on to the range when populations are so far over AML invites additional litigation. Mr. Bolstad expressed his appreciation for the Board's support in the use of population growth suppression tools. Mr. Woehl indicated that the Board believes use of population growth suppression tools and volunteers is the future for this program.

FY15 and FY16 units of accomplishment, which are the agency's performance measurement, were reviewed and are depicted in Attachment 2. In yesterday's discussion, Mr. Bolstad mentioned that FY15 holding costs were approximately \$49 million, which is a contradiction with the holding costs figures (\$52,017,888) depicted in Attachment 2. Mr. Bolstad, explained that in FY15, BLM paid contractors approximately \$49 million. The \$52 million depicted in Attachment 2 includes the \$49 million paid to contractors as well as an additional \$3 million for ongoing obligations to contracts that may actually be spent in FY16. Mr. Woehl verified the performance measurement figures depicted in Attachment 2 are an actual count of the number of animals being held in both corral and pasture holding facilities.

Fiscal Year 2016

BLM's enacted appropriations increased in FY16 by approximately \$3.31 million to \$80,550,000. Changes highlighted in the presentation include a slight decrease in the off-range corral holding and a slight increase in the off-range pasture holding figures. As of March 31, 2016, the agency was obligated \$44,656,024 (Attachment 2.)

Dr. Cope asked if the shifts in the program's FY16 accomplishments and financial obligations may be a result of the timing in the fiscal year. For example, corral holding costs may be lower at this point in the fiscal year as the summer gathers have yet to be conducted. Ms. Fuhrman indicated there are expenditures that haven't be obligated or spent at this point in the fiscal year such as obligating funding for some contracts or gathers as referenced by Dr. Cope.

Ms. Kathrens asked for an explanation of the "Plan for Herd Management" program element. Mr. Bolstad indicated that the DI program element is dedicated to land use planning for herd management areas.

Ms. Sewing asked why so little funding is allocated to program elements JB and JC (Construct/Maintain Shrub & Grass Projects.) Mr. Bolstad indicated that activities such as juniper cuttings, grass seeding, etc., may be occurring in HMAs but are financed through other BLM resource programs; not the wild horse and burro program. Rangeland restoration efforts

⁵ Typically, approximately 40 percent of mares gathered from the range are considered to be treatable.

supported by the wild horse and burro program are primarily dedicated to water development and improvements similar to those discussed earlier in the week when touring the Burns BLM District. Wild horses and burro benefit from rangeland restoration efforts undertaken in HMAs for the conservation of the Greater Sage-grouse.

Mr. Bolstad indicated that the wild horse and burro program could dedicate more funding to rangeland restoration; however, the funding would have to be removed from other aspects of the program. The program does not have much in the way of discretionary funding. Ms. Fuhrman mentioned that the wild horse program received a \$3.1 million increase in FY16; however, as discussed earlier, pasture unit costs have increased from \$1.61 in FY15 to \$1.99 per day per animal in FY16. If you take the number of animals in off-range pastures (31,000) times 365 days per year times a \$0.38 per feed day increase equals \$4.3 million, which translates to a \$1.3 million decrease in FY16. The decision space on how to spend the program's budget is quickly becoming smaller and the Board can assist the agency in determining priorities as to how the limited budget should be spent. Ms. Fuhrman indicated that while the program received a \$3.1 million increase from FY15 to FY16; the President's FY17 budget calls for a \$500,000 reduction, which, if enacted, would place additional challenges on the program.

Ms. Sewing stressed the importance of being able to use funds and/or materials from other (private) sources. Mr. Bolstad indicated that the use of volunteers has been very beneficial and recognized the efforts of Ms. Sewing's group as well as other groups and individuals. Ms. Sewing indicated that many District and Field Managers are reluctant to accept funding or materials from outside sources. Mr. Bolstad indicated that that was one area that needs additional work.

Ms. Sall asked what percentage of the funding spent in the category of "program support/overhead/uncontrolables" was spent on research. Mr. Bolstad indicated that \$11 million has been dedicated to research over the past three years (FY14, FY15, and FY16) but a specific percentage for each year has not been calculated. Additional funding will be dedicated toward research when field-research projects associated with population surveys are implemented. Mr. Bolstad estimated that BLM is approaching a total of \$13.5 million for research at this point.

Dr. Weikel inquired as to where funding for the Mustang Heritage Foundation was primarily programmed. Ms. Fuhrman indicated that funding for the Mustang Heritage Foundation is primarily located in the Adoption program element (HG.)

Mr. Woehl inquired as to the reason for the large number of personnel vacancies within the program. Mr. Bolstad indicated that the primary reason for the large number of vacancies is not funding but that individuals have moved on to other jobs and the vacancies haven't been filled. It is critical to have staff to complete the essential work so funding has been set aside; therefore, the vacancy issue will be resolved as recruitment can be completed.

Research Update

Paul Griffin, Research Coordinator, Wild Horse and Burro Program, BLM)

Mr. Griffin provided an overview of BLM's research efforts associated with the wild horse and burro program. The Department of the Interior has prioritized advancing science as the basis for making informed management decisions. The *Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burro Act of 1971* directs BLM to manage wild horses and burros as an integral part of the natural system of the public land under the principle of multiple use as set out in the *Federal Land Management Policy Act of 1976*. Managing wild horses and burros in this context is complicated and requires a good understanding of many areas such as the animals themselves, their behaviors, population dynamics, the ecosystems they live in, and their relationship to society. The BLM's goal is to support and participate in research of the highest quality caliber that is primarily directed at solving wild horse and burro management challenges. Currently, the program is making efforts to support and make use of science to the maximum extent possible to inform that understanding in our management decisions.

Prior to the meeting, the Board had received a summary of ongoing, approved research and pilot projects that have not yet been started, or projects proposed by the U. S. Geological Survey (USGS), which are under review. Not included in the notebook materials are a number of proposals submitted by non-federal entities which are also under review.

Wild Horse and Burro Program Research Advisory Team

The agency's Research Advisory Team was re-chartered in 2015 with the mission to help BLM identify and support legitimate research of the highest quality addressing the needs of the wild horse and burro program while ensuring humane treatment and responsible use of animals in research. The team is charged with providing guidance so that resources can be most efficiency directed to scientific research that supports management.

All wild horse and burro-related research is first reviewed by the Research Advisory Team (inset.) Aspects of the research program that are addressed by the team include (1) determining the relevancy of study questions to be asked, (2) examining the validity of the proposed study design, (3) determining the feasibility of success, (4) discussing the logistics of BLM helping to make the proposed work happen including compliance with NEPA, other laws, and policies, (5) budget, (6) personnel qualifications, (7) potential pitfalls, and (8) other opportunities that may/may not had been considered by the investigators.

*Wild Horse & Burro Program
Research Advisory Team*

*Paul Griffin (Chair)
Bryan Fuell (Co-Chair)
Dr. Sue McDonnell
Alan Shepherd
Dr. Al Kane*

Expert peer review is sought for research proposals that require expertise outside that provided by the team. Assistance is also sought from other BLM or federal agency staff when needed. Mr. Griffin also provides assistance in administering and monitoring the assistance agreement (grant) that funds many of the research projects.

Research and Pilot Projects

Research and pilot projects that are supported by BLM fall into six broad groups (below).

Evaluate Spay and Neuter Effects

Improve Wild Horse and Burro Contraception

Improve Population Models

Improve Burro Survey Methods

Gauge Public Opinion, Improve Marketing

Improve Understanding of Ecology and Genetics

The agency's motivation for funding research principally lies behind the large population of excess animals and the consequences of unchecked population growth, which can result in unacceptable suffering and death from disease, dehydration, starvation as well as public land degradation. Removals alone are not a tool BLM can use to reach and maintain AML due to the high cost of long-term care. The larger the on-range population becomes, the more difficult it becomes to reach and maintain AML. Having a safe and effective spay/neutering program as well as long-lasting contraceptive methods is a high priority for the agency.

With the high population levels, contraception alone cannot reduce the population size to AML within a reasonable time frame. There is need for a combination of approaches to slow population growth rates. Spaying mares and neutering stallions could serve as a "bridge" to reduce population growth rates until other options for long-term contraception are available. Before using spaying and neutering wild horses on the range is a wide-spread management tool, the agency must ensure that these methods will be safe and effective. Therefore, several projects are being funded to examine the

safety of surgical techniques as well as behavior effects of having some spay and/or neutered (gelded) animals in herds that also contain breeding animals.

In cooperation with the U. S. Humane Society, BLM is funding a project where PZP treatments would be applied to burros on the range. Normally it is difficult to approach animals in the wild; therefore, having a contraceptive method that does not require annual application would be important. Several university research projects are being funded that explore new PZP delivery systems and new contraceptive drugs that could serve as a longer-term single dose contraceptive.

It will be important to improve the current population model known as WINEQUIS, which is not structured to allow for the variety of new and different management approaches that we have and will use in the future. BLM has asked the USGS to update the WINEQUIS program to account for different contraceptive methods and makes use of new demographic data.

Use of aerial population census methods has consistently under estimated wild burro populations. BLM is funding USGS to test more reliable methods of aerial survey for wild burros including the use of infra-red cameras and making use of data from radio-collared burros.

BLM is interested in several socio-economic studies and are funding two contracts to study public opinion about the program and ways in which BLM could improve the program. The Board heard from one of those researchers yesterday.

BLM is always interesting in improving its understanding of wild horse ecology, habitat use, behavior, and genetics. Several USGS funded studies are collecting data along those lines.

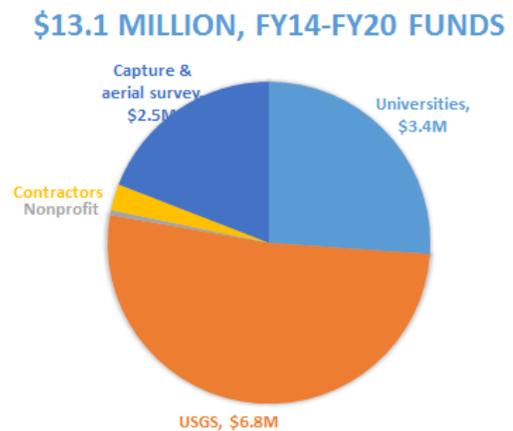
Research Budget

One measure of BLM's commitment to advancing science-based management is the amount of funding that has been committed to research. In total, BLM is committed to obligating approximately \$13.1 million toward research from FY14 through FY20 (inset.)

New research on population growth monitoring and management is primarily being conducted by universities and the USGS. The program is moving forward with research on new tools for management population growth, monitoring, and management, which is an investment of over \$11 million with an additional \$2.5 million in support to the research programs.

There are eight studies being initiated or are currently underway with several universities specifically examining surgical spay/neuter methods, longer term contraceptive vaccines, or use of GonaCon®. A total of approximately \$3.4 million has been allocated for those projects with the potential for an additional \$600,000 should the researchers exceeded their milestones.

BLM is reviewing 12 USGS projects totaling \$7.4 million of which \$6.8 million has already been approved. Two of these studies in Wyoming and Utah will examine if surgically spaying or neutering will change the animal's movement and behavior as well as movement and behavior of other animals in the herd. Several other studies were summarized in the presentation and in materials provided to the Board but are not included in these minutes.



Research Slide 4

2016 Wild Horse and Burro Field Research and Pilot Projects

The spatial relationship of approved and ongoing projects was briefly summarized (inset.) All projects have been approved by the Division Chief and are in various staging of the NEPA process.

Functional Assessment of Ovariectomy (Spaying) Via Colpotomy of Wild Mares

This research is being conducted by the Oregon State University (OSO) at the BLM Burns Corral facility. The study was initiated in September 2015 and is scheduled to conclude in December 2016.

When reviewing the research proposals submitted in response to BLM's request for proposals concerning contraception-related research studies, the NAS identified the three surgical techniques – spaying, tubal ligation, and laser ablation of oviduct papilla – as being potential methods that could be used by BLM in the near future to improve wild horse and burro management.

The purpose of the research is to determine the safety and efficacy of each technique in wild horses. BLM is working to develop contraceptive tools to reach and maintain AML using the minimum feasible level of handling. The spay technique which is ovariectomy via colpotomy is widely used in rural equine veterinarian medicine. Testing of this widely used method is not designed to lead to new surgical methods but to verify the safety and efficacy of its use with wild horses in a corral setting.

Two new less invasive techniques are tubal ligation and laser ablation of oviduct papilla, both of which leave the mare's ovaries intact allowing the mare to cycle but not get pregnant. The tubal ligation technique would sever the oviduct while the laser ablation would scar the oviduct papilla to a point where eggs would not travel from the oviduct to the mare's uterus.

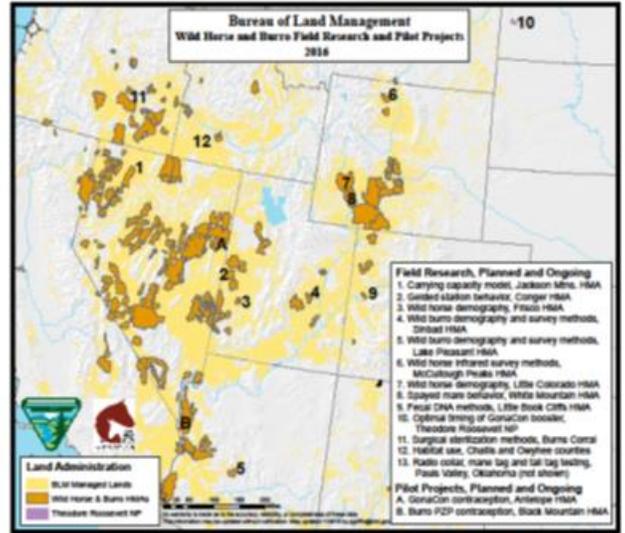
BLM has also funded two additional research proposals⁶ being conducted by the University of Kentucky and Colorado State University that could possibly be used in management of wild horse populations in the short-term. The study being conducted by Colorado State University addresses the use of a booster dose of GonaCon® four years after an animal received the first dose to lead to a zero percent fertility, at least, in the first year after the booster is given.

Longer term studies listed in the materials provided to the Board before the meeting are studies 6, 7, and 8.

Mr. Griffin addressed several questions from the Board, which are summarized below.

Dr. Weikel indicated that BLM has continued to use the term “spay”, which is a term the public is familiar with. Mr. Griffin was asked to elaborate on the fact that the uterus of wild mares is not being removed in the spay techniques being tested. Mr. Griffin confirmed that none of the techniques being funded or considered would involve any surgery that would damage the uterus. All research being conducted involves techniques that are less invasive and involves less surgical removal of tissue as compared to spaying in other animals.

Dr. Cope indicated that there is a tendency to forget that the overall objective is natural resource conservation as it applies to wild horses on the range. Dr. Cope asked if the data from LandFire is sufficient to monitor changes in vegetation or is



Research Slide 5

⁶ Projects 4 and 5 on pages 2 and 3 of the research summary in the notebook under Tab 6.

there something equivalent to the fire regime condition class that would apply to the HMAs to monitor the degree of change occurring in vegetation before it becomes critical. Is it possible to correlate the changes in wild horse demographics (population increases/decreases) with changes in vegetation, which could be used to prioritize efforts for population control based on vegetation changes? Or, is the data from LandFire sufficient to reach such conclusions? Mr. Griffin indicated that the research team has not discussed the possibility of incorporating remote sensing data and other records of fire severity; however, there are other BLM program's whose central focus is management of vegetation and monitoring responses to disturbances. There always has been interest in understanding how wild horse population size and growth rate influence landscape change and vegetation condition. The 2013 NAS report indicated that the population surveys, in general, relied on direct counts that did not lead to precise enough measures of population size that could be used to correlate with vegetation change. Current survey techniques provide more defensible population size data which could be correlated with vegetative change; however, this effort is not currently on the Team's radar. It would be possible to coordinate with other BLM resource programs that have a more direct connection with vegetation management. Also, USGS could be contacted to address such a research question. If the Board feels that this is a direction research should address, it was suggested the Board make a recommendation for BLM's consideration. Mr. Bolstad indicated that BLM's Assessment, Inventory, and Monitoring effort is the one Mr. Griffin referred to when mentioning activities in other BLM resource programs.

Burro Studies in Utah

Mr. Griffin summarized two wild burro studies⁷ being conducted by the USGS and Colorado State University on the Sinbad HMA in Utah. These studies will evaluate wild burro demography and behavior by radio collaring jennies. As of April 13, 2016, 126 burros have been gathered over 11 days of water and bait trapping with an additional 56 burros being removed over the past 3 days by helicopter. Approximately 100 animals will be returned to the HMA including 25 to 30 jennies that will be fitted with GPS radio collars. The collars contain a "drop off" device that can be triggered remotely as well as a timed "drop off" device.

A second study will test two new population survey methods for wild burros. First, data from radio collars to evaluate how often observers in a helicopter fail to observe wild burros and, secondly, using infrared cameras with a precise measure of the distance from the transect to the burro groups to obtain abundance estimates. Using these studies, BLM is maximizing the value received from research by having two separate set of questions addressed by the same animal.

Population Estimates

In most years, obtaining census information has required one to two percent of the program's overall budget. Census information is important to have accurate population estimates for making management decisions. While there are a few areas where ground counts can produce accurate census, in most instances, aerial surveys are necessary.

From 2003 to 2013, USGS assisted BLM in developing new and improved aerial census methods - simultaneous double observer and photo mark-resight, which allow for a statistical analysis of the observations. Since February 2014, BLM has made a concerted effort to implement the new methods. By the end of 2016, almost all HMAs will have been surveyed using the new methods. BLM has an interagency agreement with USGS for technical assistance in conducting the surveys.

In closing, Mr. Griffin noted that the majority of BLM HMAs and USFS territories have been surveyed using one of the new methods.

Following his presentation, Mr. Griffin addressed questions from the Board, which are summarized below.

Dr. McConnell complimented Mr. Griffin for his leadership to the research program as well as to the research team. In particular, she noted his efficiency in completing his responsibilities. Chief Woehl echoed Dr. McConnell's comments.

⁷ Studies 13 and 14 in the notebook.

Dr. Weikel wanted to ensure the public was aware that the BLM research programs discussed at today’s meeting are available and described in detail on BLM’s national web site. Mr. Griffin indicated that all research follows animal care and use protocols that are overseen by institutional animal care and use committees.

On-Range Update

Bryan Fuell, On-Range Branch Chief, Wild Horse and Burro Program, BLM



Bryan Fuell

Mr. Fuell provided an overview of the program’s on-range activities by addressing three major areas – program statistics, sage-grouse, and litigation.

Wild Horse and Burro On-Range Statistics

The statistics for the program are current as of March 1, 2015, as the summary of the FY16 data has not been completed. Mr. Fuell estimated that approximately 9,000 additional animals are on the range, which would bring the on-range population to approximately 67,000 to 68,000 animals. With the 2016 spring foaling season underway, BLM expects to be over 70,000 animals on the range by the end of 2016. Nationally, BLM’s AML is 26,715 animals.

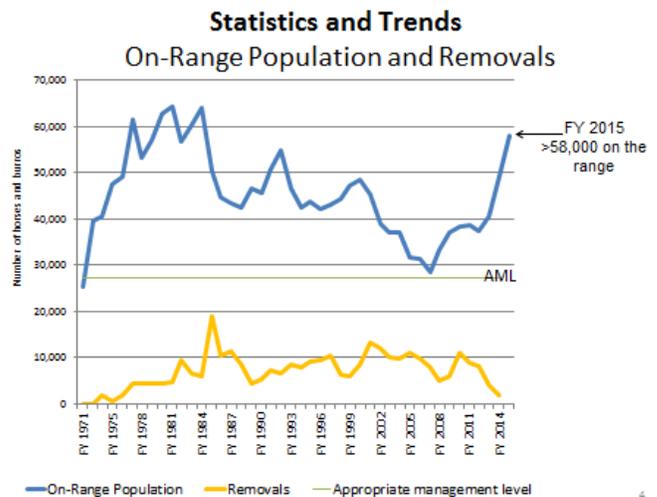
In FY15, 3,819 animals were removed from the range of which 469 mares were treated with PZP.

The inset to the right provides a summary of the on-range population and removal statistics from 1971 to 2015. The top graph displays on-range population levels by fiscal year. At the end of FY15, the population level was approaching the highest observed levels in FY1978 through FY1984, which are expected to be exceeded in FY16. The lower graph depicts animals removed through gathers.

BLM’s FY16 removal target is approximately 3,500 animals, which is approximately half of the annual on-range population increase. Priorities driving FY16 gather efforts include public health and safety, encroachment of animals onto private land, Greater Sage-grouse focal areas; research, court mandates, and land or health emergencies. Another potential priority is threatened/endangered species whose habitat is being affected by wild horses and/or burro.

The current FY16 schedule currently addresses the gathering of approximately 1,636 animals of which 1,245 animals will be removed from the range. The remaining 391 animals will be returned to the range as part of research efforts.

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Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat

Greater Sage-Grouse

Thirteen land use plan amendments or revisions that affect 106 HMAs containing important sage-grouse habitat have been approved (inset.)

Type	# HMAs	Acres of Habitat	Estimated WHB population	Total removals to reach AML
SFA	22	2 million	7,364	4,563
PHMA	66	6.5 million	26,408	18,561
GHMA	18	6.5 million	3,836	2,117
TOTAL	106	15 million	37,608	25,241

As mentioned in previous presentations, there are three major categories of sage-grouse habitat – sagebrush focal areas (SFA), primary habitat management areas (PHMA), and general habitat management areas (GHMA.) The approved land use plans call for wild horse and burro populations to be managed for AML, which may be adjusted if wild horses and burros are determined to be a causal factor of non-attainment of sage-grouse-related management objectives.

Category	States	HMAs	SFA/PHMA Acres	Planned Removed/Fertility Control
FY16	OR, UT, WY	Beaty Butte, White Mountain, Little Colorado	617,000 SFA	1,920
FY17	WY	Divide Basin, Salt Wells, Adobe Town	100,000 SFA 819,000 PHMA	1,900
FY18	WY	Red Desert Complex	890,000 SFA	2,450
FY19	NV	Owyhee Complex	292,000 SFA 155,000 PHMA	2,100
FY20	WY, CA, ID	Lander Complex, Nut Mountain, Bitner, Massacre Lake, Challis	491,000 SFA	1,750
TOTAL	5 States	24 HMAs	2,390,000 SFA 974,000 PHMA	10,120

The wild horse and burro program has received direction to prioritize gathers and removals beginning with the highest priority sage-grouse habitat in SFAs. To meet that direction, BLM has developed a 5-year removal strategy (inset to left) to reach AML in 22 HMAs. It was noted a removal is not scheduled in FY16 in Utah. In the “States” column, Utah should not have been included.

Without management intervention, the number of animals above AML over the five-year period between FY15 and FY19 will increase dramatically in all three important sage-grouse habitat areas (inset below and right.) Based on a 17.5% annual population increase, the total number of animals above AML in FY15 (38,159 animals) would increase to 72,736 by FY19.

Bi-State Sage-Grouse

In April, 2015, the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service announced the decision to not list the Bi-State sage-grouse population, which is considered a Distinct Population Segment (DPS) located in Nevada and California, under the Endangered Species Act, primarily due to the voluntary conservation efforts to recover the species and its habitat. Within the Bi-State sage-grouse management area, there are five HMAs⁸ that are currently 922 animals above the designated AML.

Category	# HMAs	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
HMA w/SFA	22	6,605	7,760	9,119	10,714	12,589
HMA w/PHMA	66	27,221	31,985	37,582	44,159	51,887
HMA w/GHMA only	18	4,333	5,092	5,983	7,030	8,260
TOTAL	106	38,159	44,837	52,684	61,903	72,736

Litigation

Currently, there are 17 active litigations against BLM’s wild horse and burro program that are in various states of resolution. A detailed summary of litigation is provided under Tab 7 in the notebook.

Following the presentation, Mr. Fuell addressed several questions from the Board, which are summarized below.

Dr. Cope asked if any of the 17 active cases were being litigated under the Equal Access to Justice Act. Mr. Fuell did not have that information immediately available. The litigation is being heard by the Department of the Interior’s Interior Board of Land Appeals and federal district courts.

Mr. Woehl asked if the contracted facility in Fallon, Nevada was open to individuals for adopting animals. Currently, tours of the facility are conducted semi-annually. The Fallon facility does not adopt animals; however, if a person identifies an animal of interest for adoption, BLM can arrange for that animal to be transferred to the Palomino Valley

⁸ There are also two USFS Wild Horse Territories within the Bi-State Sage-grouse management area.

facility, which is just outside of Reno, Nevada. He asked how often the avenue of transferring animals to the Palomino Valley facility has been used. Mr. Fuell was not able to address that question specifically but mentioned the BLM is considering modifying the Fallon facilities contract to allow more opportunity to adopt animals from that facility.

Mr. Yardley asked for Mr. Fuell's opinion on the trend of rangeland condition in the future considering the limited number of animals proposed to be removed and the substantial increase of animals on the range. Mr. Fuell indicated that based on his experience as a Field Manager in Nevada, the number of animals far exceeds the capacity of the range especially considering other uses such as livestock, wildlife, etc. Mr. Fuell would expect that rangeland trend would be downward resulting in wild horses and burro leaving HMAs to find suitable forage and water. He noted livestock grazing permittees have taken voluntary nonuse due to the lack of forage and water. The outlook for the future is not good as the range can only support so much grazing use.

Mr. Masters asked if there was a crisis or emergency plan in place to address conditions where the health of several thousand animals may be in jeopardy. Mr. Fuell explained that drought management plans are being developed at the field office level of BLM's organization, which include management of wild horses. There is not such a plan at the national level of the agency.

Off-Range Update

Holle' Hooks, Off-Range Branch Chief, Wild Horse and Burro Program, BLM



Ms. Hooks provided the Board with an overview of BLM's off-range activities including an off-range space update, shade/shelter requirements, and placement of animals into private care.

Off-Range Space Update

Holle' Hooks

Currently, the number of wild horses and burros in off-range pastures and corrals is 30,492 and 15,801 animals, respectively. The number of animals in eco-sanctuaries is 534. In total, there are approximately 47,000 animals currently in holding.

At the Board's September 2015 meeting, Ms. Hooks discussed an effort to create an adoption and educational component as part of the contracts for eco-sanctuaries. Ms. Hooks was pleased to announce that that effort was on schedule. Currently, the existing eco-sanctuaries, two in Wyoming and the other in Oklahoma, have a capacity to hold 600 animals and are close to reaching their maximum capacity.

The agency received 12 off-range proposals to a 2015 solicitation, of which three awards will be made increasing the sanctuary holding capacity by 900 spaces, which will increase the total number of off-range pastures to 28. More detailed information is available under Tab 7 in the notebook.

A new off-range pasture solicitation opened on March 10, 2016, and will close on April 29, 2016. The area addressed under the new solicitation addresses 17 states⁹ and changed the minimum and maximum capacities to 200 and 5,000, respectively. BLM has already received an overwhelming response to the solicitation and has developed the Technical Proposal Evaluation Committee (TPEC) to review the proposals with a goal to make an award within six months.

Mr. Woehl asked Ms. Hooks to explain why it takes so long to award an off-range pasture contract after the solicitation has closed. Ms. Hooks explained that there are several steps involved with processing a solicitation after it has closed. Steps include review and rating by a TPEC, conducting site visits, recommendations are reviewed by the Contracting Officer, completion of a NEPA analysis, and, finally, award of the contract. Timely completion of many steps is affected by other workload commitments. Changes are being implemented in relation to the 2016 solicitation to shorten and/or streamline the process for awarding the contract.

⁹ Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Texas, Washington, and Wyoming.

Mr. Masters inquired as to the length of time addressed by the contracts. Ms. Hooks explained that BLM has authority under the Appropriations language to issue multi-year contracts and/or cooperative agreements for a period up to ten years. The length of time for the contract is determined by the contractor.

Ms. Sewing noted that during a tour last year, a contractor indicated that it was necessary to hire someone to fill out the application for responding to a solicitation due to its complexity. Ms. Hooks explained that in 2016 BLM is making an effort to find a federally funded organization that provides individuals with assistance in responding to proposals. There are other individuals and private organizations who provide such a service but they are relatively expensive. A follow up question was asked relating to the difficulty of renewing an expiring contract. Ms. Hooks indicated that the current contractors need to respond to an open solicitation and completed that process.

Mr. Masters inquired as to what action would need to be taken if a long-term holding pasture were to become unusable. Ms. Hooks explained one situation where a long-term holding pasture experienced more severe drought conditions than expected and the contractor requested additional funding. The request was addressed by the Contracting Officer's Representative responsible for overseeing the contract.

Shade/Shelter Requirements

There has been a change in the requirements for providing shade and shelter for animals. The new requirement is based on Part 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations Section 4750.3-2(a) (below), which is now BLM policy. BLM will be working to revise its manual and handbook as well as developing a new brochure that will be provided to potential adopters.

(3)(iii) – Shelter shall be available to mitigate the effects of inclement weather and temperature extremes. The authorized officer may require that the shelter be a structure, which shall be well drained and adequately ventilated.

Placement of Animals into Private Care

At the Board's September 2015 meeting, Ms. Hooks explained that a Private Care Placement Team was being developed to address several areas including adoptions, training, and sales programs to identify inconsistencies, issues, and challenges with placing animals into private care. The team will be an essential component of implementing significant changes such as revising the program's manual and handbooks. The goal is to ensure the requirements for adopting an animal are the same in California as they are in Maine.

Mr. Woehl asked if it was possible to have a Board representative on the Private Care Placement Team to provide outside input into the process. Ms. Hooks indicated that such a representative would be welcome on the team.

BLM is considering an adoption incentive program to increase the number of older wild horses and burros¹⁰ being placed into private care. Ms. Hooks referenced a summary sheet provided under Tab 7 in the notebook entitled "Adoption Age by Species for FY11 to FY15", which identifies the ages of animals in holding corrals and was used to establish the ages of horses and burros that would be part of an incentive program.

In theory, the incentive program is designed to encourage adopters to train animals to a certain level after which they could apply for title and ownership after 12 months from adopting the animal. Specific incentives have yet to be identified but could include offering a set payment or payment at set training milestones.

Mr. Woehl indicated that the Board has been very active in incentive discussions and asked if the program is an outreach of the Board's previous discussions. Ms. Hooks indicated that it is a form of the Board's previous discussions within the

¹⁰ Typically defined as horses older than seven years and burros over the age of nine.

Government's limitations. Mr. Woehl expressed his appreciation for the willingness of the agency to embrace new ideas and approaches.

Efforts are being made to offer more trained animals especially sale eligible animals. Such efforts include building on existing successful partnerships, opening dialogue with other organizations to develop partnerships that might offer therapeutic programs.

Mr. Masters indicated that one barrier to adopting or purchasing an animal is the paperwork requirements. Mr. Masters believes organizations such as the Mustang Heritage Foundation would be more successful in placing horses into private care if the animals didn't have all the paperwork attached to them. Ms. Hooks clarified that the paperwork requirements referenced by Mr. Masters included the adoption application, requirements for obtaining title, etc. Ms. Hooks noted that the requirements are in place to ensure the animals are placed in good homes, appropriate facilities are available; the adopters understand the animal's needs for proper care, etc. Organizations such as the Mustang Heritage Foundation are required to follow the same requirements as other individual adopters.

Mr. Woehl asked Ms. Hooks to discuss what it would take to reduce the one year period of time to receive title to an animal. Ms. Hooks explained that the one year requirement is a legislatively mandated requirement, which would require legislation to make a change. She indicated that such an effort was unsuccessfully tried once. Mr. Woehl indicated that the process and requirements to adopt a horse are not much different than those required to adopt a dog or other type of animal, except for receiving title.

Mr. Yardley asked what would be the process to reduce or eliminate the \$125 adoption fee. Ms. Hooks indicated that BLM has authority to reduce the adoption fee and has done so in the past at different events. Currently, the authority to reduce the fee lies with the Assistant Director for Resources and Planning and may be delegated to State Directors. In a follow up question, Mr. Woehl asked if Ms. Hooks thought dropping the adoption fee would result in an increase in the number of animals adopted. Ms. Hooks indicated that she does not believe a reduction in the fee would result in an increase of the number of animals adopted. Based on her experience, she believes a person coming to adopt an animal will do so whether the fee is \$125 or \$25. The reduction in the fee has made a difference when an adopter has the opportunity to adopt a second animal as is done in the Eastern State's "buddy animal" program. Ms. Kathrens noted that based on her experience with the program, the "buddy animal" program or similar approaches devalues the animal when there are outreach programs describing how incredible the animals are. We need to be consistent in the marketing message. She believes the days of the "buddy system" program are limited if the agency truly wants to market these animals to wonderful, long-term care homes. When she adopted her wild horses, she did not find the process burdensome.

Mr. Yardley noted that horses are more content when they have a companion animal. Reducing the adoption fee helps the adopter acquire a companion animal while reducing the number and cost of holding animals in pastures or corrals. Funding saved by reducing the number of animals could be applied to other needs within the program.

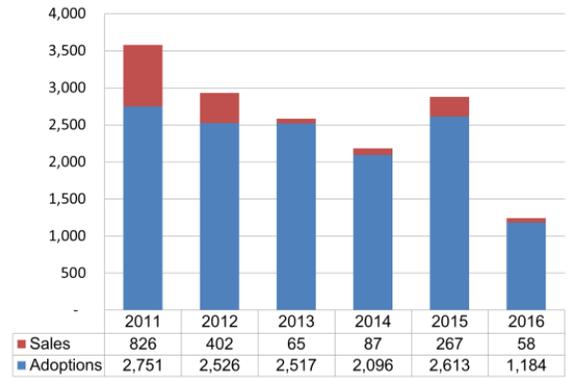
Over the past year, discussions have centered on meeting the demand for trained horses east of the Mississippi River. BLM recognizes that trained animals have a higher likelihood of being placed into private care as compared to untrained animals. Based on that recognition, BLM had identified barriers to expanding current trainer networks. Such barriers include the need for basic and specialty training, trainers having adequate funding, and lack of convenient pickup locations. BLM completed a query to which there was a large interest in adopting trained animals, which resulted in development of the Trainer Ambassador Pilot Program (TAPP). The program offers two tiers – Foundation Ambassador Trainer level as well as a Specialty Ambassador Trainer level.

As part of the TAPP program, BLM is interested in developing a new trainer incentive for people who are experienced trainers and willing to work with untrained mustangs. These individuals would need to be willing to promote and place animals into private care either through adoption or sale. The objective of TAPP is for trainers to market mustangs and to locate other individuals that would increase the program's outreach to allow them to reach markets that BLM typically does not reach.

Based on the initial trainer level, BLM has released a solicitation for that training. Mr. Woehl asked if there was a “train the owner” component to the program that addresses training after the animal has been adopted. Ms. Hooks indicated that such a component has been incorporated. Due to BLM’s outreach and the overwhelming response in terms of questions and interest, the original date of April 22, 2016, for the solicitation to close has been extended to May 6, 2016. The intent is to award contracts under this solicitation by the end of September 2016.

Efforts to develop a solicitation associated with the Specialty Trainer aspect of the program are underway.

The number of animals adopted over the past six years has remained relatively constant at approximately 2,000 animals whereas the number of animals sold has fluctuated (inset.)



Following the presentation, Ms. Hooks addressed questions from the Board, which are summarized below.

Mr. Woehl noted that five members of the Board have adopted and/or worked with mustangs.

Ms. Hooks noted that the contracted facility in Fallon, Nevada, while not open for adoptions, does participate in Internet adoptions. Mr. Woehl inquired as to how horses were picked for Internet adoptions. Ms. Hooks indicated that she was not familiar with the process used at the Fallon facility for selecting animals but people with questions could contact John Neill at BLM’s Palomino Valley facility located near Reno, Nevada. Mr. Bolstad indicated that the staff is experienced and have an understanding of the animals people are willing to adopt.

Wild Horse and Burro Web Map Update

Jason Lutterman, On-Range Public Affairs Specialist, Wild Horse and Burro Program, BLM



Jason Lutterman

Mr. Lutterman provided the Board with an update on the program’s web map, which is designed to visually display wild horse and burro-related information in a more interactive and user-friendly format on the Internet. Current information such as upcoming adoption events are posted on the web page in a table format that is not very user-friendly. Other data such as currently population levels are currently depicted in a .pdf format, which, again, is not very user-friendly.

The new web map was just released for public use this week. The web page will continue to be a work in progress.

Mr. Lutterman demonstrated how to use the interactive map to find information of interest such as population levels by HMA, links with HMA photos, etc. The map allows the user to compare other data layers such as drought information, sage-grouse habitat information, etc., with wild horse and burro-related data. The tool also allows for the user to locate upcoming off-site adoptions as well as BLM wild horse facilities by a zip code. The program contains a search feature for ease of finding HMAs.

Mr. Yardley explained there is a difference between an HMA and a Herd Area, commonly referred to as an HA. Mr. Yardley indicated that AML levels are not depicted for HAs because they are not being managed for wild horses but, in some circumstances, there are wild horses and burro on those areas.

After his presentation, Mr. Lutterman addressed questions from the Board, which are summarized below.

Mr. Woehl recognized that this tool has been in the developmental process for several years and was impressed with the tool as presented.

Mr. Yardley thanked Mr. Lutterman for his efforts to develop the interactive tool. Mr. Lutterman recognized that development of the interactive tool has been a team effort involving many different professionals.

Mr. Masters suggested making the “find an adoption” locator larger or more visible so that it can be easily found. Mr. Woehl echoed the suggestion as not everyone is computer literate. Mr. Masters asked a follow up question if the web site or tool would be cell phone compatible. Mr. Lutterman did not know the answer to that question but noted that BLM will be relaunching its national web site this year, which is expected to be mobile friendly. Mr. Masters suggested that it might also be possible to develop an “app” for the web map tool.

Dr. Weikel indicated that there was not any sage-grouse-related information shown during the demonstration, which would be important considering the emphasis and priority given to the sage-grouse conservation effort. Mr. Lutterman indicated that he will find out what sage-grouse information can be added to the tool.

Wild Horse and Burro Update – Eastern States Office

Karlee Yurek, Branch Chief for Natural and Community Resources and acting State Wild Horse and Burro Lead for the Eastern State Office, BLM



Karlee Yurek

Ms. Yurek provided the Board with an overview of the Eastern States Wild Horse and Burro Program by providing a general overview of the Eastern States office and addressing adoptions and several different programs focused toward placing animals into private care.

General Overview

The Eastern States office covers a wide ranging and diverse area consisting of 31 states adjacent to and east of the Mississippi River (inset) that includes approximately 66% of the United States population and 40% of the country’s land base. There are two District offices – one in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and the other in Jackson, Mississippi. The State office is located in Washington, D. C.



In its September 2015 meeting, the Board made a recommendation for the Eastern States office to work with the Advisory Board to develop a comprehensive adoption program utilizing the following:

- Incentivized adoptions;
- More pick-up places, e.g., store fronts in the East; and,
- Training facilities in the East similar to the Mantle Ranch.

Since September, the Eastern States met with members of the Board on two separate occasions. The Eastern States office is continuing its robust satellite adoption program with over 20 events scheduled in 2016. In addition, other efforts include updating the Internet adoption web site, piloting the TAPP program, working with the Mustang Heritage Foundation to increase the number of Storefronts, and adding regular adoptions by appointment days at the Ewing, Illinois.

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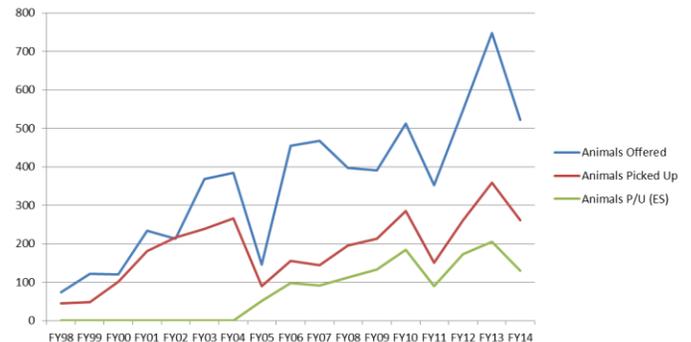
Adoptions

Efforts associated with satellite adoptions include working with the Mustang Heritage Foundation at their Extreme Mustang Makeover events and adoption of TIP-trained animals, and analyzing equine and adoption data to determine areas with the highest potential for successful adoption events.

The Eastern States office will open the Ewing holding facility for regular adoption days, as well as adding adoption by appointment days. A permanent BLM employee is now located at the facility on a regular basis to assist with adoption activities.

A Request for Proposals is being developed for a facility in the Jackson, Mississippi area, which will serve as a “layover” point allowing horses to rest as they travel to various satellite adoption events.

Efforts are underway to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Internet adoption web site to improve both the user’s experience as well as it’s behind the scenes functionality. From 1998 through 2014, there has been an upward trend in both the number of animals offered as well as the number of animals picked up from Internet adoptions (inset on previous page.)



Mr. Woehl indicated that there have been discussions within the horse community concerning the need for better, higher quality pictures of animals being offered for adoption over the Internet. He asked what was being done to address that concern. Ms. Yurek noted that, in February, videos taken by a volunteer were posted on U-Tube and worked very well for the Internet adoption. BLM does not have data to demonstrate that the videos were the reason for the successful Internet adoption; however, use of videos is being explored. The Eastern States office will be revising the Internet adoption site to more accurately meet the public’s expectations. The goal is to have the Internet adoption site have the same look and feel as the new national BLM web site, which will be mobile friendly. Mr. Woehl asked if there was still one person within the Eastern States office dedicated to the Internet adoption program. Ms. Yurek indicated that that was still the case.

Mr. Masters asked if the effort to revise the Internet adoption web site was an internal (Department of the Interior) effort or a contracted effort. Ms. Yurek indicated that they are currently working with BLM’s National Operations Center in Denver, Colorado to identify the needs of the site. Future discussions will address the need for a contract or to address the revision using in-house resources. Mr. Masters indicated that he was supportive of that effort and would like to see the web site be mobile friendly.

Training Ambassador Pilot Program

As referenced earlier by Ms. Holle' Hooks, the Eastern States office is working with the Off-Range Division on the TAPP program to bring more trainers into the wild horse and burro program as well as provide more trained animals for adoption and/or sale. Mr. Masters asked why the TAPP program was limited to states east of the Mississippi River. Ms. Yurek explained that the TAPP program is currently a pilot program. Following conclusion of the pilot program, a determination will be made as to expanding the program to the western United States. The evaluation of the program will be used to make appropriate changes to increase its effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, the Eastern States office is working with the Mustang Heritage Foundation to increase the number of storefronts in the eastern United States. Currently, there are three storefronts. They will also continue working with the Mustang Heritage Foundation to find qualified TIP trainers.

In conclusion, the BLM Eastern States is working in collaboration with the Washington Office and various partners to strategically improve adoptions efforts in the 31 states adjacent to and east of the Mississippi River.

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Following her presentation, Ms. Yurek addressed questions from the Board, which are summarized below.

Mr. Woehl encouraged the BLM to continue its effort to work with the Advisory Board, who has a lot of interest in the adoption program.

Ms. Sewing asked if there was an avenue to ensuring the public recognizes wild horses that have been trained and are providing a service such as those used at Arlington National Cemetery (inset.) It was noted that wild horses have a freeze brand but it is not always visible. A suggestion was made to have an identification mark or information placed on the animal’s halter.



Ecosystem Services

Rebecca Moore, Senior Economist for the Wild Horse and Burro Program, BLM

Ecosystem Services Background and Understanding



Rebecca Moore

BLM is just beginning to think about how ecosystem services could apply to the wild horse and burro program. In its simplest definition, ecosystem services are all of the things that nature provides that are a direct benefit to humans. For example, ecosystem services provided by rangelands include wild game, fish, recreational opportunities, water and air quality benefits, educational values, cultural and heritage values, etc.

In many instances, a person needs to interact with the resource to receive its ecosystem services; however, there are some services or values that can be received without interacting with the resource such as the water quality benefits a person may derive from living downstream or receiving a climate benefit from the rangelands. Values received without having to interact directly with a resource are commonly referred to as existence values.

Some values are realized by making economic market decisions. Market commodities such as energy or raw materials can be bought and sold which are considered market values. There are also non-market values for which there is not a market such as clean water or air, the existence value of some species, etc.

To more clearly understand and recognize ecosystem services, they are often placed into four major categories – regulating services, provisioning services, supporting and habitat services, and cultural services (Table 2.)

Table 2
Major Ecosystem Categories

Category	Service Examples
Regulating Services	Regulating processes (clean water and air, climate control, erosion control, pollination, etc.)
Supporting and Habitat Services	Primary inputs to other ecosystem services – things that must occur or be present to ensure other ecosystem services (e.g., primary production of soil formation)
Cultural Services	Values derived from human interaction or preferences and how they relate to the environment (recreation benefits, spiritual values, existence values, etc.)
Provisioning Services	Providing of goods and services

Within federal resource management, the concept of ecosystem services is not new; however, use of the term “ecosystem services” is relatively new. There is a significant amount of scientific research and academic literature behind the concept, which began in the 1970s. While active research is ongoing, there is a solid foundation of scientific principles on which to discuss how these ecosystem services produced as well as how these services are valued.

Ecosystem services are also referenced in agency regulation and policies such as the USFS 2012 planning rule, the 2013 update to the principles, requirements and guidelines for federal water investment as well as in the October 7, 2015,

memorandum from the Office of Management and Budget, Council for Environmental Quality, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy which directs agencies to “develop and institutionalize policies to promote consideration of ecosystem services, where appropriate and practicable, in planning, investments, and regulatory contexts.”

Recognizing the concept of ecosystem service fits well into its multiple-use mandate, since 2008, BLM has undertaken a series of pilot studies to understand what it would mean to be more inclusive of ecosystem services in the decision-making and planning processes as well as in general actions taken by the agency. The Federal Resource Management and Ecosystem Service guidebook is available at www.nespguidebook.com. Currently, BLM is developing specific guidance and tools for considering ecosystem service. In addition, there are future plans for more demonstration projects to consider ecosystem services in the planning and day-to-day decisions made by the agency.

Using the four major categories of ecosystem services, examples of rangeland ecosystem services are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3	
Rangeland Ecosystem Services by Major Category	
Category	Service Examples
Regulating Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water quality and quantity regulation • Air quality regulation • Climate regulation
Supporting and Habitat Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil formation • Primary production
Cultural Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values of on-range wild horses and burros (viewing, aesthetic, cultural, heritage, etc.) • Values for threatened and endangered and other species of interest • Recreational values for hunting and fishing
Provisioning Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forage for livestock, wildlife, wild horses and burro as well as other species • Wildlife (viewing, hunting, etc.) • Wild horses and burros for off-range uses (adoptions, sales, training programs, etc.)

Key Ecosystem Services Principles

In reality, BLM already incorporates these values in its decision-making; however, there are two key principles (below) that are not often incorporate into the agency’s processes.

1st Key Principle

Ecosystem services and an ecosystem service approach must connect the biophysical and the social.

2nd Key Principle

Ecosystem services and an ecosystem service approach include both market commodities and nonmarket values.

The first key principle involves explaining how and why biophysical characteristics of the environment such as species population, rangeland health, etc., are useful or valued by humans (social).

The second key principal involves addressing both market and nonmarket values for a complete ecosystem service approach.

Ecosystem Service Examples

Benefits of Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Action

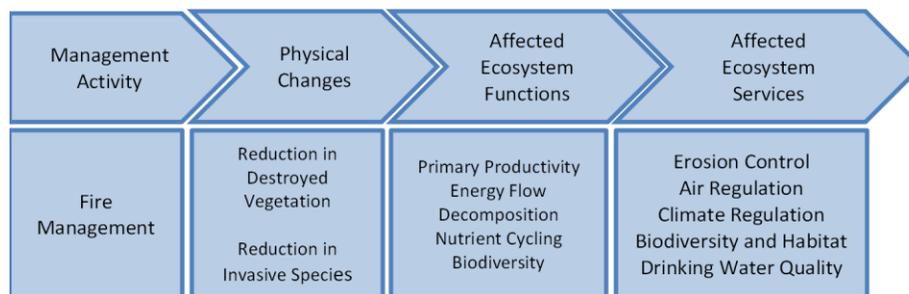
BLM has recently undergone a significant planning effort to update/revise its land use plans to ensure the conservation of the Greater Sage-grouse. Efforts to preserve and improve sage-grouse habitat not only benefit the bird but will result in many other ecosystem service benefits.

To understand the other benefits that will be derived from sage-grouse conservation actions, BLM funded a study, which is now just being completed, that used an ecosystem services approach, which identified the ecosystem services or benefits that may be realized from implementation of actions identified in the planning documents (Table 4.)

Table 4 Ecosystem Services Realized from Sage-Grouse Conservation Efforts		
Category	Service Examples	
Regulating Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air quality regulation • Climate regulation • Water flow regulation • Erosion prevention • Drinking Water Quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Treatment • Biological Control • Pollination • Moderation of extreme events
Supporting and Habitat Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil formation • Nutrient cycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity • Primary production
Cultural Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aesthetic • Recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scientific and educational • Spiritual and religious

The effort involved reviewing various sub-regional Environmental Impact Statements associated with revising/updating the agency’s land use planning documents to identify management actions that were being considered. The study evaluated six of the identified management actions – fire management; vegetation treatments and invasive plant control; energy development, infrastructure, and locatable and salable minerals and materials.

Figure 3. Process Diagram for Fire Management Actions



The first step was to determine how management actions would affect ecosystem services, which was connecting the biophysical to the social (first key principle). To identify how one management action could affect several different ecosystem services and values, a process diagram (inset) was used to address fire management actions.

The number of ecosystem service valuations derived from the analysis of the fire management actions were too numerous to summarize; however, the key messages portrayed during the presentation was (1) it is not always necessary to associate a monetary value or figure to an action or benefit and (2) the analysis results in useful discussions relating to more qualitative values or benefits. The ecosystem services approach provides the structure for thinking about how management actions affect many other values, which will place the agency in a stronger position to move forward with management.

A second example involving the Western Oregon Resource Management Plan was presented but not summarized in these minutes.

Ecosystem Services and the Wild Horse and Burro Program

BLM is just beginning to discuss how ecosystem service concepts and tools may benefit wild horse and burro management. BLM should begin using ecosystem service concepts in general discussions both internally within the agency but also with the general public or when engaging the public in wild horse and burro management decisions.

BLM is considering an opportunity to develop a pilot program that would incorporate ecosystem services concepts into a specific decision-making process.

Following her presentation, Ms. Moore addressed questions from the Board, which are summarized below.

Dr. Cope indicated that there were two important factors that he didn't hear in the presentation - desired conditions and adaptive management. An important management step involves the assessment and development of desired conditions. Dr. Cope explained the adaptive management cycle which involves implementation of actions, monitoring those actions, determining the success of those actions in reaching the desired conditions, and, if necessary, adjusting management actions to achieve the desired conditions. His question related to how the adaptive management process or cycle could be used with the ecosystem services approach to achieve desired conditions in HMAs that are significantly over AML and management cannot be significantly changed due to various factors (i.e., lack of funding, limited holding space, etc.). Ms. Moore indicated that the ecosystem services approach is not a "cure all" approach and will not be helpful when there is little or no decision space. One avenue where the ecosystem services approach may be helpful is during initial discussions outlining or defining desired conditions, which, in some circumstances, could avoid having conflicting definitions of desired condition. The ecosystem services approach could be used to identify desired conditions associated with the wild horse and burro program while recognizing that the ecosystem is not capable of or achieving all desired conditions at once. At that point, discussions can focus on tradeoffs that might be appropriate recognizing the limited decision space. Dr. Cope indicated that he doesn't discount the value of ecosystem services evaluations but believes it absolute vital that the approach be engaged at the beginning when working collaboratively and cooperatively to establish desired conditions. Likewise, he believes the adaptive management approach should be included as part of the resource management plan.

Dr. Weikel thanked Ms. Moore for her presentation, which addressed a topic that can quickly "go over people's head". Dr. Weikel views the ecosystem services approach as an important educational component in collaborative processes where people with different values and needs can better understand the numerous values derived from the public lands. She believes such a process would have helped to bring people from eastern Oregon (Malheur County) together to address an issue they were having.

Mr. Yardley believes the process places subjective determinations on many values. He asked who is responsible for making the determination of a value. The process appears to make things more subjective than objective. Mr. Yardley would like to see sound and proven rangeland management science applied to situations on the ground, which, in some circumstances, is being blatantly ignored. In response to Mr. Yardley's question relating to who makes the determination of values; Ms. Moore indicated that no one can tell you what your values are. Each person is the best determinant of their values and what tradeoffs they would make. There are sound methods and research available focused toward eliciting the more subjective, nonmarket values from people. How to reconcile competing values or differences is a challenge. From a science perspective, the first step is to describe and understand the competing values by indicating how different people would make a decision, which eventually becomes a management and policy decision. Dr. Cope noted that some things thought to be subjective can be quantified.

Mr. Yardley indicated that there is a lot of sound and proven scientific rangeland management data describing conditions on the ground and we know what needs to be done but it is all being ignored. We don't have a way to address the over population and, until we figure out how to address that issue, the rest is irrelevant. He believes there is a need to get back to basics. Ms. Moore indicated that the ecosystem services approach would connect the rangeland science referenced by Mr. Yardley to the values that people get from the land. It appears to her that this connection is not be being made for everyone at this time.

Working Group Reports

Prior to yielding the Chair to the Board's Co-chair for the working group presentations, Mr. Woehl recited a poem that expresses how he feels about America's wild horses and burros.

The early predawn silence is like music to the ears;
Of the rested and contented who take the time to hear;
I've missed that predawn silence and found upon that track the world says I must follow;
But, I shall have it back for once again I have horses that fill my spirits whole;
Dear God oh how I've missed that and how they make me whole.

The chair of each working group provided an overview of the efforts and discussions of their respective working groups since the September 2015 Board meeting, which, in some cases, generated considerable discussion at this meeting. From the Board's discussion, a series of draft recommendations were developed, which were later revised to form the Board's final recommendations to the BLM (see the *Advisory Board Discussion and Recommendations to the BLM* section below).

Eco-sanctuary Working Group

Membership of the Eco-sanctuary Working Group include June Sewing (Chair), Steve Yardley, Ben Masters, and Jennifer Sall. Ms. Sewing indicated that she had just been informed that the Eco-sanctuary working group had been disbanded. Ms. Sewing explained that there were two similar committees – the Board's Eco-sanctuary working group and a BLM Eco-sanctuary committee and a decision was made during the Board's September 2015 meeting to disband the Board's working group.

Herd Area Repopulation Working Group

Membership of the Herd Area Repopulation Working Group include Ginger Kathrens (Chair), Dr. Sue Weikel, June Sewing, and Ben Masters. Ms. Kathrens indicated that the working groups had not had opportunity to meet. Ms. Kathrens recounted a discussion with then-Director Abbey that lands were available for repopulating herd areas but it would be necessary to identify which lands of the original 24 million acres taken away from wild horses were still available and appropriate to relocated animals. Ms. Kathrens indicated that there are 160 HMAs that have a wild horse population but there are 19 HMAs which do not for several reasons such as a lack of water. Ms. Kathrens indicated that there are ways to create water and expanded on an example where water sources were created for the Pryor herd in Montana.

Ms. Sewing indicated that repopulating herd areas has been one of her long-term goals. Ms. Sewing indicated that she has been in discussion with Gus Warr in Utah concerning one area that may be suitable for reintroducing animals. Ms. Sewing indicated that she would continue her discussions and efforts.

It was noted that BLM has a conference call number available to the working groups for discussions between formal Board meetings.

Resources Working Group

Membership of the Resources Working Group include Steve Yardley (Chair), Dr. Julie Weikel, Jennifer Sall,¹¹ and Ben Masters.

The working group recommended BLM develop a crisis/emergency plan to address times of severe drought and other natural emergencies that necessitate removal of over (1) 1,000 animals or (2) the number of animals that can be held in

¹¹ At the end of the Resources Working Group discussion, the decision was made to replace Dr. Robert Cope with Jennifer Sall on the Resources Working Group and replace Jennifer Sall with Dr. Cope on the Volunteer Working Group.

short-term holding corrals. The emergency situation should be quantified by either range condition or the average body condition score.

After considerable discussion, the Board crafted the following draft recommendation.

The Board recommends the BLM create a crisis/emergency plan in cases of severe drought or natural disaster that necessitates removal of either over 1,000 horses or over the amount BLM can hold in short-term holding facilities. The situation would be triggered by BLM's determination that horses are imperiled.

As the Board's Natural Resource Management representative, Dr. Cope requested that he either (1) be included as a member of the working group or (2) be kept advised of issues that are being addressed and actions being considered by the working group. **DECISION:** Mr. Woehl indicated that he would (1) replace Jennifer Sall with Dr. Robert Cope on the Resources Working Committee and (2) replace Dr. Robert Cope with Jennifer Sall on the Volunteers Working Group.

Comprehensive Animal Welfare Working Group

Membership of the Comprehensive Animal Welfare Working Group include Dr. Robert Cope (Chair), Dr. Julie Weikel, Dr. Sue McDonnell, and Fred Woehl. Dr. Cole noted that it has been his experience that it is worthwhile to review documents such as the Comprehensive Animal Welfare Plan every four to five years to ensure the document remains current and viable. Dr. Cope asked the working group to review the plan prior to holding a conference call in May.

Mr. Woehl noted that the plan, which was distributed to members of the working group two to three weeks prior to this meeting, is a final draft. BLM is waiting for the Board's comments prior to finalizing the plan. Mr. Woehl suggested having a working group conference call next week; instead of in May. **ACTION:** The Comprehensive Animal Welfare Working Group will have a conference call during the week of April 18 – 22 to discuss the final draft version of the Comprehensive Animal Welfare Plan.

No recommendation was presented by the working group at this time.

Adoption Working Group

Membership of the Adoption Working Group include Dr. Julie Weikel (Chair), June Sewing, Dr. Robert Cope, and Steve Yardley. An effort was made to identify variables that are preventing wild horses from being adopted. Such variables include the adoption process paperwork and not having a sufficient number of saddle broken horses. Mr. Masters made a recommendation to make more riding desirable horses eligible for sale through the Mustang Heritage Foundation and other partner organizations to help them get more horses into private care.

Mr. Woehl asked if Mr. Master's recommendation was similar to the recommendation made by the Board during its September 2015 meeting, which states:

Recommend BLM work with Board members to develop a comprehensive adoption program utilizing the following:

- a. Incentivized adoptions
- b. More pick-up places (e.g. store fronts in the East)
- c. Training facilities in the East similar to Mantle Ranch

Mr. Master's thought it would be important to get those partners sale eligible horses; rather ones that have to go through the adoption paperwork process.

Dr. Sue McDonnell indicated the Board passed two specific recommendations during its September 2015 meeting addressing the Trusted Trainer Pilot Program and the Mustang Mentoring Pilot Program and asked if those were still

being pursued. Mr. Masters indicated that the Mustang Heritage Foundation would do a better job of advertising those horses as compared to the BLM and would take the role of the Trusted Trainer Pilot Program.

The Board agreed upon the following draft recommendation.

The Board recommends BLM make it easier for trusted trainers or MHF or other organizations to acquire sale eligible and 'riding desirable' (based on age and adoptability) horses.

Dr. Cope asked the Board to consider an additional recommendation which states "the Board supports efforts by BLM to engage professional marketers to identify and attract appropriate population segments in order to increase mustang adoptions." Ms. Kristen Bail indicated that BLM has a strong commitment to modernizing how the agency provides information to the public in terms of transparency and ease of use. The effort will address how the agency can provide professional, high quality, and consistent messaging and branding for the wild horse and burro program. She left it up to the Board to decide how they would like to recommend BLM proceed but welcomed the Board to express the outcomes they would like to see in terms of delivery and making the public excited and aware of the program.

The Board agreed upon the following draft recommendation.

The Board supports efforts by BLM to engage professional marketers to identify and attract appropriate population segments in order to increase mustang adoptions.

Mr. Woehl explained that the Board had discussed the Mustang Mentoring Pilot Program where a limited number of people (up to ten) would come to a BLM short-term holding facility for a two-week period during which they would work with an experienced trainer to train their selected horse to a minimum of TIP standards. The program would also include an educational component that could include touring nearby HMAs, understand different aspects of managing animals on the range, etc. After the two-week period, the person would take the animal home. Under the program, the adopter would be required to cover their expenses (room and board, etc.) as well as the \$125 adoption fee.

After a short discussion the Board developed the following draft recommendation.

"BLM create and pilot a Mustang Mentoring program consisting of a two-week onsite training at a short-term holding facility for up to ten horses and ten adopters with a minimum standard of TIP training."

Volunteer Working Group

Membership of the Volunteer Working Group includes Dr. Julie Weikel (Chair), June Sewing, Jennifer Sall,¹¹ and Steve Yardley.

Ms. Kathrens explained that the Cloud Foundation has been working on a volunteer handbook for on-the-range management support of BLM. The concept is to have volunteers in HMAs targeted for management with a goal that natural mortality and reproduction would be equal over time through the application of PZP either as a darting program or a bait/trap darting program. The volunteers would be trained in identification of bands, developing charts available through the Cloud Foundation, focusing on when and where animals are located on the range, documenting markings, and would work closely with the BLM to accomplish whatever was needed. Dr. Weikel noted that at its September 2015 meeting, the Board recommended BLM develop a strategy to train and use more qualified volunteers to support wild horse and burro activities, off-range and on-range (Recommendation #10). In its response, BLM referenced much of the information relayed by Ms. Kathrens concerning field coordination, etc. Ms. Kathrens believes what she read was a more detailed and focused program and that BLM only accepted the recommendation and promising to develop a strategy.

Dr. Weikel indicated that she was going to recommend the working group reiterate support for the September 2015 recommendation and urge BLM to expedite completion of that strategy. Ms. Kathrens indicated that she would like to add more "flesh and bone", which might help clarify the recommendation.

Mr. Masters agreed with Ms. Kathrens that use of various darting programs is part of the future of this program. Mr. Masters suggested the following language for a recommendation to BLM.

Encourage State and local BLM offices to (1) embrace volunteer organizations, (2) document wild horses with photograph, (3) work with local field offices to create a sustainable management plan including the use of PZP, and (4) allow the volunteers the freedom to implement the sustainable management plan.

Other draft recommendations received from the working group include:

Urge the BLM to institute the volunteer strategy as soon as possible as addressed in the Board's September 2015 Recommendation #10.

Encourage State and local BLM offices to embrace volunteers to document wild horses with photography, work with local offices to create a sustainable management plan, and enable qualified volunteers to participate in the implementation of the sustainable plan including the use of PZP.

Jennifer Sall asked if the first bullet depicted on the screen spoke to the Board's discussion during the previous evening concerning an overarching recommendation to implement in full all previous recommendations that had been accepted over the past year.

Dr. Cope suggested the following language for a summary.

The Board recommends the BLM continue to work toward full implementation of previously accepted recommendations.

Dr. Weikel suggested adding the following language at the end of Dr. Cope's suggested language – "prioritize according to the matrix of meeting AML.

Population Growth Suppression Working Group

Members of the Population Growth Suppression Group include Dr. Sue McDonnell (Chair), Ginger Kathrens, Dr. Julie Weikel, and Dr. Robert Cope. Ms. McDonnell indicated that the working group is recommending moving forward aggressively with tools that are currently available within the tool box, which was a recommendation from the Board's September 2015 meeting.

The working group crafted the following draft recommendation.

Encourage aggressive use of all tools in the tool box as addressed in the Board's September 2015 Recommendation #16.

Ms. Kathrens indicated that she doesn't support the sterilization research.

Public Comment Working Group

Members of the Public Comment Working Group include Jennifer Sall (Chair), Ginger Kathrens, June Sewing, and Fred Woehl.

Ms. Sall thanked the public for the public comments received during yesterday's meeting as well as the numerous e-mails and letters received by the Board. She indicated that all correspondence is read and not taken lightly. Mr. Woehl echoed Ms. Sall's comments and mentioned that he also reads every piece of correspondence. He also mentioned that there was a

common thread of misinformation between many of the letters involving the spaying of mares. The Board did not ask for nor is BLM spaying all mares; however, there is research to determine if spaying could be a tool in the future. Mr. Woehl indicated that when he sees something in a piece of correspondence that is not true, he begins to question if other information in that correspondence is true. He asked people submitting letters to vet those letters to ensure information is factual.

Ms. Sewing indicated that she has been impressed with the quality of the comments received, which have been more positive as compared to the past. She also complimented those who have stayed for the entire Board meeting.

Dr. Weikel asked if the public comments received by the Board between formal Board meetings become part of the permanent record if they weren't sent to the National Program Office. Ms. Hooks explained that letters and e-mails are collected by the National Program Office. Letters and e-mails received directly by the Board are not part of the official record as BLM does not have access to them. Mr. Woehl indicated that when he receives correspondence addressed to the entire Board, he forwards that correspondence to the National Program Office.

Ms. Kathrens asked if the correspondence received by the National Program Office was collated or summarized in any fashion. Mr. Bolstad indicated that the correspondence is not collated. In the Federal Register notice announcing Board meetings, a date is specified by which correspondence should be submitted to the National Program Office. Correspondence received before the identified date is included in the notebook and provided to the Board of its use.

Ms. Kathrens indicated that from an ongoing informational knowledge base, it might be interesting to categorize correspondence into topics to see how the Board is doing and see what the public is concerned about. Ms. Kathrens asked if the working group had considered or discussed her suggestion in the past. Ms. Sall indicated that the working group is new and hasn't had a chance to meet. Ms. Kathrens thought there would be value in tracking the public's input.

Ms. Sewing indicated that based on her experience, there typically is a common thread between letters depending on the topic or item of interest at that particular period in time.

In response to public comments that Mr. Yardley read personally concerning livestock grazing on public land, he doesn't believe that all the good done by livestock grazing permittees for the rangelands is recognized. A tremendous number of range improvements (juniper/brush treatments, seedings, controlled burns, water developments, etc.) that have been constructed or financed by the public land grazing permittees also benefit wildlife, wild horses, and other species. He believes livestock grazing permittees cherish the public land and its resources as much as anyone. The rangeland is crucial to the livelihood of those who run on it. Similar to the wild horses and burro being part of the American heritage, America's rangelands are part of the livestock permittee's heritage. Public land rangelands are crucial for everyone but especially for those living in the western United States. We need to do everything possible to use sound science to manage the rangelands so it will be a viable resource for many generations to come.

Building upon Mr. Yardley's statements, Dr. Cope indicated that it is very easy to narrow your focus when looking at an issue when actually there is a need to look at all issues holistically. It is not only one factor but all factors that lead to the problems being experienced by the wild horse and burro program. The focus needs to be on the ecosystem itself. The wider we place our viewpoint and the more our focus encompasses all factors vital to the ecosystem, the better we can work toward solutions. When he reads a public comment, he looks to see how narrow the focus of that comment is and how much this person is seeing the overall issue.

Ms. Kathrens indicated that if we don't have the land or the resource, we don't have anything. We must be fair in the allocation of resources on HMAs, which are a small component of public land. Being a small component of the public lands doesn't mean that we shouldn't be fair in its allocation or that we shouldn't focus on the health of the land and all the creatures that live there. On HMAs, she would like to see a fair allocation of resources to wild horses and burro as that is the only home they have left.

Advisory Board Discussion and Recommendations to the BLM

The Board reviewed and modified their draft recommendations crafted in the previous section resulting in a consensus decision to forward the following recommendations to the BLM.

Recommendation #1: The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board asks the BLM to continue to work toward full implementation of previously accepted recommendations of the Board and prioritize according to BLM matrix of meeting AML.

Recommendation #2:¹² The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends BLM create a crisis/emergency plan in case of severe drought or natural disaster that necessitates removal of either over 1,000 horses or over the amount BLM can hold in short-term holding facilities. The situation would be triggered by a BLM determination that animals are ‘imperiled’.

Recommendation #3: The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends BLM make it easier for trusted trainers or MHF or other organizations to acquire sale eligible and ‘riding desirable’ (based on age and adoptability) horses.

Recommendation #4: The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board support efforts by BLM to engage professional marketers to identify and attract appropriate demographic segments in order to increase mustang adoptions.

Recommendation #5: The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends BLM create and pilot a Mustang Mentoring program consisting of a two-week on-site training conducted by a qualified trainer at a short-term holding facility for up to 10 horses and 10 adopters.

Recommendation #6: The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board urges BLM to institute the volunteer strategy as soon as possible (September 2015 Recommendation # 10 which states “Develop strategy to train and use more qualified volunteers to support wild horse and burro activities, off-range and on-range.”)

Recommendation #7: The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board encourages state and local BLM offices to embrace volunteers to document wild horses with photography, work with local offices to create a sustainable management plan, and enable qualified volunteers to participate in the implementation of the sustainable plan including the use of reversible contraceptives.

Recommendation #8: The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board would encourage aggressive use of all tools in the tool box as addressed in the Board’s September 2015 Recommendation #16, which reads “Prioritize use of currently available tools in the field to reduce population growth **right now** and implement promising new tools as quickly as they become available.”

Closing Remarks

Mr. Woehl noted that there have been over 400 viewers from around the world observing the Board meeting via live streaming technology. The observers are from many different countries including the United States, Canada, Switzerland, Slovenia, Norway, United Kingdom, and Mexico. Thirty-one percent were new viewers.

Ms. Kristin Bail indicated that she has been impressed and grateful for the work the Board has done and the commitment that has been shown, not only over the past few days but for the time spent working on Board issues and actions outside of the regular meetings. The Board has spent long hours discussing issues and sharing different perspectives, which is the

¹² Mr. Bolstad committed to providing Dr. Cope with the definition for “imperiled”.

power and promise of different advisory boards. The agency has been wrestling with defining what is new and different and holding that in balance with continuing those things that have been successful.

Ms. Bail expressed her appreciation for the efforts and hard work of the wild horse and burro staff in supporting this meeting and the Board. Ms. Bail also recognized the willingness and openness of the staff to take a fresh look at the program. Discussions relating to partnerships and community involvement have resonated well with Ms. Bail.

Ms. Bail indicated that it is her commitment as well as the agency's commitment to provide high quality information and support to the Board. BLM wants to continue working together with partners, stakeholders, volunteers, and the Board to implement the recommendations provided in 2015 as well as those provided today. The BLM is committed to open, transparent accountability to report results fully ensuring the Board fully understands what the agency has and has not been able to accomplish.

It is important that people continue to care about the public land and its resources. The Board provides an excellent example of engagement, which Ms. Bail recognized and thanked the Board for its efforts.

Mr. Dean Bolstad offered a sincere "thank you" to the Board. He had received an e-mail from Director Kornze earlier in the day asking how the meeting was going to which Mr. Bolstad was able to provide a very positive response. Mr. Bolstad indicated that he will do his very best to act on the highest priorities recognizing that funding is a limited resource and that it may not be possible to move forward on some things to the degree and extent that BLM and the Board would desire. Recognizing the funding limitation as well as the limited number of staff necessary to get the work done, the national office will be reaching out to engage the field offices to a greater degree.

Mr. Woehl extended an invitation for the Director to attend the Board's next meeting and go on their field trip, if possible. Mr. Bolstad indicated that he would pass along the invitation to the Director, who is very interested in the wild horse and burro program.

Ms. Sall indicated that she is excited about Mr. Bolstad's comments relating to what is limiting as well as where there is opportunity for new and different approaches. She is hopeful for the future when moving forward to Mr. Bolstad's identified metric for success is possible.

Ms. Kathrens recognized that the Board has spent many long hours over the past several days. While individual members may not agree on everything, she is confident that the Board can work together and move forward in a collaborative way for the good of the animal.

Mr. Masters suggested the Board should take a pack trip to get to know one another better. Dr. McDonnell seconded Mr. Master's suggestion but recommended ATVs be included for some members.

Ms. Sewing indicated that she appreciates coming to Board meetings. Adding new Board members is exciting and the comradery is great.

Mr. Yardley thanked the Board and Mr. Bolstad for the discussions and encouraged those in the audience and watching via live streaming to recognize and remember that America's rangelands are a priceless resource. It is important to manage the wild horses and burros as well as all other animals to preserve the rangelands for future generations. He also highlighted the commitment of public land grazing permittees to continue improving the rangelands.

Dr. Weikel noted that there thousands of BLM staff hours represented in the room over the past several days. She recognized that BLM is a government agency that reaches out to access public opinion and to ensure that the public is informed as to the program's activities. Recently, there was a national incident that claimed government agencies are proceeding without public input or concern for the public, which she believes is not true. There has been a tremendous amount of staff input and support provided to the Board. It is important to recognize that BLM will do its best to

implement its best management practices while operating under many constraints. She also thanked the Board and the audience for coming to Oregon.

Mr. Woehl recognized the efforts of Ms. Kathi Libby for facilitating the meeting. Mr. Woehl indicated that managing a group with such diverse backgrounds is always challenging. He has been impressed with the three new Board members who have been very passionate in their beliefs, willing to explain what they feel but also able to compromise to reach consensus in the end. He has appreciated how the Board interacts with one another and has never encountered a situation of a member losing his/her temper. Mr. Woehl is thankful for being the chair and personally thanked the Oregon staff for their efforts and support.

Dr. Woehl closed the meeting with a poem.

You know I can't explain it;
There are no words of course;
To describe that moment in training when you connect with your horse;
It happens in an instance while it sets your mind to reeling;
You either get it or you don't;
It such an indescribable feeling;
So let's just call it swapping spirits;
For there's nothing that compares;
When you are the horse and the horse is you and you're breathing the same air.

Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was formally adjourned at 4:50 PM.

Summary of Board Decisions and Actions

A summary of decisions made by the Board and actions committed to during the meeting is provided in Attachment 3.

(The remainder of this page was left blank intentionally.)

Acronyms

The following acronyms were used during the meeting and listed in alphabetical order.

<u>Acronym</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
AML.....	Appropriate Management Level
BLM.....	Bureau of Land Management
DPS.....	Dependent Population Segment
EMM.....	Extreme Mustang Makeover
FIAT.....	Fire and Invasives Assessment Tool
FWS.....	U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
FY.....	Fiscal Year
GHMA.....	General Habitat Management Area
HMA.....	Herd Management Area
MHF.....	Mustang Heritage Foundation
NAB.....	National Advisory Board
NAS.....	National Academy of Sciences
NEPA.....	National Environmental Policy Act
OSO.....	Oregon State University
PEIS.....	Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement
PHMA.....	Priority Habitat Management Area
PZP.....	Porcine Zona Pellucida
SFA.....	Sagebrush Focal Area
TAPP.....	Trainer Ambassador Pilot Program
TIP.....	Trainer Incentive Program
TPEC.....	Technical Proposal Evaluation Team
USFS.....	USDA, United State Forest Service
USGS.....	U. S. Geological Survey

Attachment 1 – Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board

National Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board



Fred T. Woehl, Jr.

Chair

Public Interest

Term Expires: April 3, 2017



Dr. Sue McDonnell

Co-Chair

Wild Horse & Burro Research

Term Expires: April 3, 2017



Ginger Kathrens

Humane Advocacy

Term Expires: March 28, 2019



Ben Masters

Wildlife Management

Term Expires: March 28, 2019



Steven Yardley

Livestock Grazing

Term Expires: March 28, 2019



Jennifer Sall

Public Interest

Term Expires: March 30, 2018



Dr. Julie Weikel

Veterinary Medicine

Term Expires: March 30, 2018



June Sewing

Wild Horse & Burro Advocacy

Term Expires: March 30, 2018



Dr. Robert Cope

Natural Resource Management

Term Expires: April 3, 2017

Attachment 2 – FY15 & FY16 Actual Accomplishments

FY15 Actual Accomplishments and Financial Obligations

Program Element	Units Accomplished	Financial Obligation
Plan for Herd Management (DI)	4	\$ 188,263
Adoption Program (HG)	2,644	\$ 4,314,678
Off-Range Pasture Holding (HH)	31,327 animals	\$ 20,688,975
Off-Range Corral Holding (HI)	16,523 animals	\$ 31,848,991
Construct/Maintain Shrub & Grass Projects (JB/JC)	35	\$ 413,871
Gather/Remove (JJ)	3,319	\$ 1,807,498
Population Growth Suppression Efforts (KF)	429	\$ 76,174
Conduct Census of WHB Areas (MC)	92	\$ 893,099
Monitor Herd Management Areas (MP)	168	\$ 1,544,059
Compliance Inspections (NK)	2,506	\$ 501,165
Program Support/Overhead/Uncontrollables		\$ 14,127,242
Wild Horse & Burro Direct Program Element Costs		\$ 76,404,016

FY16 Actual Accomplishments and Financial Obligations as of March 31, 2016

Program Element	Units Accomplished	Financial Obligation
Plan for Herd Management (DI)	1	\$ 73,808
Adoption Program (HG)	1,187	\$ 3,816,767
Off-Range Pasture Holding (HH)	31,026 animals	\$ 20,726,645
Off-Range Corral Holding (HI)	15,801 animals	\$ 11,028,863
Construct/Maintain Shrub & Grass Projects (JB/JC)	3	\$ 83,976
Gather/Remove (JJ)	1,473	\$ 553,366
Population Growth Suppression Efforts (KF)	59	\$ 103,283
Conduct Census of WHB Areas (MC)	26	\$ 875,793
Monitor Herd Management Areas (MP)	25	\$ 522,026
Compliance Inspections (NK)	1,049	\$ 224,581
Program Support/Overhead/Uncontrollables		\$ 6,646,913
Wild Horse & Burro Direct Program Element Costs		\$ 44,656,024

Attachment 3 – Summary of Decisions Made and Committed Actions

The following is a summary of the decisions by the Board.

General Topic	Decision	Page of Meeting Minutes
Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes	The Board approved the September 22 – 23, 2015, meeting minutes with one minor revision – removing the word “not” from the first sentence of the third full paragraph on page48.	9
Working Group Membership	Dr. Robert Cope will replace Jennifer Sall on the Resources Working Committee and Jennifer Sall will replace Dr. Robert Cope on the Volunteers Working Group.	49

The following is a summary of actions committed to during the meeting.

General Topic or Action	Action	Party Assigned Action	Page of Meeting Minutes
Working Group	Complete a conference call during the week of April 18 – 22 to discuss the final draft version of the Comprehensive Animal Welfare Plan.	Comprehensive Animal Welfare Working Group	49