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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER  
WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADVISORY BOARD

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>> Okay everybody. I just  
want to say we're about to get  
started. We are about to get  
started. So, I'm going to  
invite you all to stop your  
private conversations, all of  
you -- even you two. Okay.  
And let's get settled in and  
let's turn it over to our  
Chairman.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you,  
Kathie. I appreciate you. If  
you all would, I'd like to

recognize any current active  
military or past Veterans and  
stand with me and be  
recognized. So if you're a  
Veteran or have been in the  
army or currently in the army,  
would you please stand?

[Applause] Now, I'm going to ask  
everyone else to stand. We're  
going to have the Pledge of  
Allegiance.

>> ALL: I pledge allegiance,  
to the flag of the United  
States of America and to the  
Republic for which it stands  
one nation under God,  
indivisible, with liberty and  
justice for all.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you all  
very much. You can be seated.  
Thank you all for coming this  
afternoon to our Wild Horse and  
Burro Advisory Board meeting.  
We are very fortunate and lucky  
to be here in a state where  
there is more wild horses than  
any place else in the state

of Nevada. I have been  
counseled council instantly on  
how to say the state Nevada. I  
have called it Nevaida. And I  
also -- but I have now learned  
how to say it the correct way.  
So we're going to do that. So  
every start out this morning,  
or this afternoon, we're going  
to have the Board introduce  
themselves starting with Mr.  
Steven Over there. press your  
-- press your button.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Sorry. I'm  
Steven Yardley. I'm here  
representing the livestock  
industry.

>> And my name is Robert Cope  
from Salmon, Idaho representing  
resource natural -- Natural  
Resource Management.

>> BEN MASTERS: I'm Ben  
Masters from Montana  
representing Wildlife  
Management.

>> DR. SUE MCDONNELL: Hi, I'm  
Sue McDonnell from Pennsylvania.

And representing the research position.

>> [Away from mic] I'm from Oregon, Veterinarian.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Hi, I'm Ginger Kathrens and I'm from Colorado. And I'm the Humane Advocacy on the Board.

>> MS. JUNE SEWING: June Sewing from Cedar City, Utah. And I'm a Wild horse and Burro Advocate.

>> FRED WOEHL: And I'm Fred Woehl, and I'm the Board Chair. And I also represent Equine Behavior. Now I'm going to turn the microphone over to my good friend Mr. Dean Bolstad, who will introduce the Bureau of Land Management staff.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Thank you, Fred. I'm the division chief for the wild horse and burro program stationed in Washington, DC. Welcome to all the visitors and member to the public. The Board wanted to

come whether hear wild horse management challenges, so we are in the heart of north central Nevada. And we do indeed have challenges in the wild horse and burro program. So thank you for coming. And I hope you all participate in the public comment period. So to introduce BLM staff, John Ruhs, state Director of Nevada. John, thank you for you and your team for hosting a tour for the Board and some members of the public came along around. It was a great tour. We got to see what challenges you all face. Alan Shepard, Nevada state lead, stand, please. Thank you. And Jill Silvey, District Manager of Elko. Mike Herder, district manager of Ely. Melanie Mitchell, are you out and about? I hope I'm not missing any Nevada staff. Other agency personnel, Hope Woodward, United

States forest service. I hope  
Dr. Al Kane is here, but not  
in the room. There he is.  
APHIS Veterinarian. Assistant  
BLM. Our off range branch  
chief in Oklahoma, Holle  
Hooks. Jared Bybee, acting on  
range branch chief in Reno.  
Our production crew back in the  
corner that live streams this  
meeting across the world. And  
thank you, guys  
for being here. And our  
facilitator, Ms. Kathie Libby.  
Dr. Paul Griffin, BLM research  
coordinator, thanks, Paul.  
Jason Lutterman, our public  
affairs specialist. And Debbie  
Collins, outreach and adoption  
and marketing. Michael  
Reiland, budget analyst in the  
the back. And Gordon Toevs  
will be presenting remotely  
tomorrow, not here in the room.  
And Dorothea Boothe who is  
coordinating and facilitating  
and putting this meeting on in

the back of the room also. So if I miss somebody, stand up and we'll be recognizing you. Thank you very much. Fred, back to you.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you, Dean. We would also like to recognize Dr. Braid and he's been on the Board for nine years. So if you will stand up, please. You're a tough act to follow, my friend. Let's give him a round of applause, because there's a whole bunch of folks trying to herd a bunch of cats and he upside down that.

[Applause] Now I'd like to recognize and turn the microphone over to another one of my good friends, someone that has just recently been permanent in this job, and this is my good friend Kristin Bail.

>> KRISTIN BAIL: So I'm having to learn that as well. And I do think that we do want to

have an agenda overview. Do we need to have that with you? So we'll make sure that is happening, but I'm Kristin Bail and yes, as Fred discussed, I am now permanently the assistant director for resource and planning. And Wild Horse and Burro is one of a portfolio programs that I have. And I'm personally very gratified by being able to continue my involvement with this program. I have been struck by the amount of passion, the amount of engagement, the amount of commitment that you all represent. Because as you will hear today, there are so many important parts of this program that require thoughtful dialogue, they require action, they require all of us working together, you know, on behalf of having healthy horses on healthy range lands. So I want to thank you and acknowledge

you for being here today, and for those of you who continue to be our partners in whatever capacity you are here on today. And thank you for that. And we appreciate you taking time to share your thoughts with us and continuing to work with us.

So I'm going to keep my remarks short, because we have a lot of important things that we want to discuss here today and to share information about.

And with that, I'm going to hand it over to Kathie Libby who is going to help us lead us through the agenda and maybe give a few other overview remarks. Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Perfect.

Thank you. So, first of all, welcome everybody. Both to our new people and our returning friends. It is just always a pleasure to show up and see how many people care enough to come to these sessions. And we do

recognize that we have a number of people watching us on webcam. And when I do the rules of the room, in part, those rules are designed to make sure that the folks watching on the webcam can actually see something and that we're not getting in the way of their ability to do that. So just briefly, because the agendas are available at the table. Help yourself to one if you have not already. But we'll spend the first several minutes today, you know, getting ourselves set up. And then getting a welcome introduction and some very useful information from the Nevada state office in terms of the Wild Horse and Burro Program here. And after that, Bill Wolf has been kind enough to join us and he's going to speak with us about the Resource Advisory Council in

Northeast Great Basin. We'll then go through some administrative stuff where we've got some minutes that need to be approved. And the Board in each instance, in each meeting makes recommendations to the BLM. And then the BLM responds. You know, studies them and responds to those recommendations. So we'll go through the BLM responses to the recommendations that were made at the last session. And Dean Bolstad will give us a brief, but not the only update we'll be getting this session. But we'll have a brief update. Most importantly, obviously, is that this afternoon, from 3:15 to 5:15, we are scheduled to have a public comment period. You may sign up if you have not already. Sign up at the welcome desk to speak. And we do have two hours set aside. So it tends to work out so that

folks have about 3 minutes to speak. But it all depends on the numbers. So if 10 people want to speak in two hours, you've got a little bit more time. If 50 people want to speak, then you have a little less. But we'll have that worked out for you by 3:15 when we get started. And I'll go over later some of the more specifics on that. That two hours is really, really important to the BLM and to the Board. So please, if you have some things you want to share, please do so. So that's today and we will end at the end of that comment period. I'll just do tomorrow briefly. Because it's a little long. A lot of updates. It's really, really informative. So, hopefully, you can be here with us as well. We will have updates from the forest service, both our off range and on range

program from BLM. And a budget update. And the folks, the wonderful folks who do great work at the Mustang Heritage Foundation will also give us an update on their work. And a research update from Paul. Research in this program is terribly important, as you may know. It also takes forever, as you may know. So important to keep up with that. We just before lunch, Jason will be sharing with us the stakeholder engagement partnership toolkit we're developing. And just after lunch, something really, really critical for the BLM in the overall. Not just the horses. Gordon Toevs will be joining us to go over by phone land health fundamentals, and a lot of this has to do with the extraordinary amount of effort going into saving sage-grouse habitat. And horses and cows and just about everything else

is an important part of that.  
So I hope you will be here for  
that. It will be quite  
informative. The afternoon is  
really dedicated for the Board  
to share what their working  
groups are coming up with, make  
some recommendations, and we do  
have a few people before we  
leave tomorrow that we want to  
recognize particularly. So,  
now, as you know, we are all  
here to listen, to learn, and  
to speak our minds. But we  
want to do that gently. And we  
want to spend a lot of time  
listening. So I'm going to go  
over some rules that help us do  
that. And I apologize for  
that, but we're terribly  
interested in the public's  
statements, the kinds of things  
you do want to share, and  
because we are also webcam, we  
also want to make sure anybody  
and everybody who wants to can  
hear you as well. So the

session is, most of it is basically designed as a meeting of the board. And, so, except for the public comment period, you are really listening. And to help us all do that, we ask a few things. There will be enough chairs for you to sit in. If you really want to stand, there's room in the back. Feel free to do that. Very important that no one at anytime approach the desk where the Board sits. You just want to stay -- there's a red tape right here. And that's where you want to stay back from. Okay? So if you get real excited and you want to really kind of want to get in somebody's face, you just do it from here. The media, if there are any with us, will check in at the door, and we'll help them get set up. There is spots -- there are spots for microphones and cameras and

other kinds of equipment. If you have a short camera and you want to sit down with it, there's a space right upfront here. Camera spaces are designated by pink tape. Okay? And we can help you with any of that. Very important though, it is a board meeting, if you are anybody that is disruptive in an intentional way, we will ask you, we will ensure you are escorted out of the room so the board can do its business and you can all hear each other's comments. I've already mentioned there's a sign up at the door that will be available to you until 3:15. We would like you to get signed up before 3:15 so we can figure out how much time you have. But technically, you have until 3:15. If you do speak, and we hope you do, this is where you're going to sit. Okay? If you have handouts

that you want to share with the Board, you're going to leave them at the front table. You're not going to bring them to this table. You're not going to bring them up to the board. We're going to just stay a little bit more organized than that. But you will use that table. And, again, we'll tell you beforehand how much time you have. Hopefully up to 3 minutes, but we'll see. No signs. No placards. No other items that are going to obscure the view the people need of the board. So we really are here for conversation. And let's use that opportunity to listen and learn. The Board will not respond to comments that you make. That doesn't mean that they agree with you. It doesn't mean they disagree with you. It just means that this is your time to speak and

they're going to be doing some listening. If at the end of this session, somebody on the Board or the bureau wants to correct an actual factual error, they may take the opportunity to do so. I will tell you it doesn't happen very often, because that's mostly because you're very right. But we do reserve the right to do that to just keep things accurate. And largely, the BLM is really committed. We didn't write these things down for nothing. So we are very committed to working with you and using these rule as our guide. Other than that, thanks again for coming. I hope you have a great day and a half. And I'm going to turn it back to Fred.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you Ms. Kathie. I appreciate it. Based on what I've seen since I've been here, we're not going

to have any trouble at all.

This is a great bunch of folks.

They really have made us feel

welcomed. And in doing that,

we're going to have the state

director of the state of

Nevada, Mr. John Ruhs come up

and talk with us at this time.

>> And I think coming with him

is Mr. Alan Shepard who's the

wild horse state lead for the

state of Nevada.

>> JOHN RUHS: Good afternoon,

everyone. This is John Ruhs,

the BLM state director for

Nevada. I want to welcome

the advisory board here to

Nevada. We're very thankful

that you're able to make the

trip here. Also, for the ones

that were able to participate

in the tour yesterday, I

thought it was a great tour.

So thank you very much for

that. Also, I want to thank

the national Wild Horse and

Burro team for being here.

Kristin, it's good to have you here as well. Members of the public, we're very thankful to have you and the audience as well also. So, appreciate that. Again, it's very exciting for to us have you here in Nevada. So thank you for making the request and being able to make the trip here. Yeah, that might work better. [Chuckles] Thank you. So, BLM's mission is to manage the public lands to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. So what I wanted to do is to follow in this mission, I want to kind of give you an overview of the Nevada BLM. And then we'll turn it over to Alan and he will talk to us about specifically the Nevada Wild Horse and Burro Program. So

Nevada BLM is the largest landlord of lands in the state of Nevada. We have 63% of the land area. We manage 48 million surface acres. 59 million subsurface acres. And we have three of the largest programs in the Bureau; the Wild Horse Program, the Mining Program, and the Livestock Grazing Program. Again, one thing about public land is that it's owned by the American people and managed by the BLM, so that's important for us to remember. For 2016, BLM Nevada performs its complex and challenging work on the ground. We have a lot of statewide priorities that we'll kind of get to, some of the highlights of those. And we'll talk about things like wild horse and burro gathers. And another thing that we won't spend a lot of time on, but one of the things that happens to us in

this state is, we have a lot of wildfires. And as a result, the wildfires, we have to do a lot of emergency stabilization and rehabilitation. And that sometimes help us make a move to restore some of our range lands back to where we want them. Compared to other states, again, BLM Nevada has the most wild horses and the largest wild horse program. We have the largest mining program in the bureau. And, really, when you talk BLM, everything that BLM manages, we have here in Nevada. So that's one of the things about this state and the programs here is that they're very complex and we cover the whole gamut of programs. So BLM is given lots of laws to help us manage these public lands. They go back to the 1876 mining law. 1934 Taylor Grazing Act. 1964 Wilderness Act. 1970 National

Environmental Policy Act. The  
1971 Wild Horse and Burro Act.  
The 1993 Endangered Species  
Act. 1976 Federal Land Policy  
and Land Management Act. FLPMA.

That is our organic Act.

And then the 1978 Public Range  
Lands and Improvement Act. As

a federal agency, our purpose  
is to implement these various  
federal laws. So everything

that we do is either mandated  
by law or authorized as a  
discretionary activity aimed at  
carrying out the act of

Congress. So that's our  
purpose. So some of the things  
that BLM regulates. Renewable  
energy. Solar. Geothermal.

Wind. Nevada BLM has all of  
those. Non-renewable energy,  
oil and gas. We have some of

that. Mining, grazing. So  
going back to solar, we have  
one of the largest solar

programs in the United States.

Geothermal, we have roughly a

million acres under lease in Nevada for oil and gas since 2014. We've had over four million acres of potential oil and gas leasing parcels that we deferred for sage-grouse habitat. So that's a pretty significant chunk of ground that we've decided to set aside at least for now in order to ensure sage-grouse have the right kind of habitat. I've mentioned mining. Mining is the third largest industry in Nevada. It's Nevada, the world's fourth largest gold producer. And produces about 76% of the U.S. gold is produced here in Nevada. Our grazing program is a fairly large one as well. We administer 677 grazing permits and leases. We have the most public land that has authorized grazing on it in the BLM. Nearly two million AUMs are permitted for livestock grazing

in this state. But because of our drought conditions and other issues, working with our permittees and oftentimes as much as 25% of that is in non-use because of the conditions on the ground. So some of the services that BLM Nevada provides, again, wild horse and burro management, wildland fire, national landscape conservation system, areas of special designation, recreation. So I talked about the wild horse and burro program and you're going to hear a lot about that from Alan. But our current population is over 34,000 wild horses and burros on the range, that's half the wild horses in the United States. We have 83 herd management areas in Nevada. And 87% of those are over AML. Our fire management program, as of August 30th this year, BLM had a total of

240 fires that burned 219,936 acres. Statewide on lands other than BLM, we had 355 fires consuming 257,000 acres. So, again, this was as great a spring as we had with all the forage we have on the ground, we've actually had a fairly mild fire season compared to some of those historic fire seasons we've had in the past, but it still a pretty huge number when you think about a quarter million acres that burned in the state of Nevada this year. Again, I've mentioned our national landscape conservation system. Lands in our wilderness program, Nevada BLM in itself has three national historic trails. The California trail. The Pony Express trail. And the Old Spanish trail. We have three national conservation areas. The Sloan Canyon, Red Rock Canyon, and Black Rock

Desert-High Rock Canyon. We have 45 wilderness areas in Nevada on just over two million acres. We have 63 wilderness study areas. And we have 54 areas of critical environmental concern. And before I go on, I want to just make a little plug since you're all new to Elko. On the West side of town, we have a place called The California Trail Center. Please take the time to go visit. Sign the little register book. Leave a little donation. It'd just be good, it's a good facility and we're pretty proud of that. On the recreation front, annually, Nevada has approximately eight million visitors that recreate on the BLM land. And we authorize over 300 special recreation permits each year. That includes Burning Man which is permitted for a maximum attendance of 70,000

people. That makes it, when that event occurs, which just finished last weekend, when that occurs, it's the 6th largest city in the state of Nevada. In addition, we have 47 million acres open to recreation use which includes equestrian trails and other uses. Some of the BLM Nevada's priorities -- go ahead.

Include our resource management plans. I can't really read that which is probably good, because I recognize some of the dates are wrong, but in our Ely District, we have six districts in the state of Nevada. The Ely District RMP was signed back in 2008. So it's a pretty fresh resource management plan.

The Winnemucca plan was signed in 2015. We have a plan that we're working on right now for the basin range national monument. We hope to have that completed sometime in fiscal year

'17. Our Carson City District, we have a proposed final RMP that we hope to have out in fiscal year '17. Our Las Vegas, our Southern Nevada District RMP is somewhere between draft and final. And, so, I don't want to really give a projection on that date. And then we have our Battle Mountain District and the Elko District where we have resource management planning that needs to start. Battle Mountain has actually started and stopped a couple of times and we need to get that back on track. And the Elko plan, we need to get it in shape to start moving that. Sage-grouse plan implementation, so in 2015, the Assistant Secretary signed our land use plan amendment for sage-grouse for the West United States. We are just in the process of completing a scoping process for the sage brush

focal areas which are drawn on the northern part of the state. And there was a scoping report that was released on that in April of 2016. But we're moving forward with that process. A big event for us this last year in 2016 has been in April. The United States Forest Service, BLM Nevada, and the state of Nevada's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources signed a memorandum of understanding to where we agreed to work together to implement the State of Nevada conservation credit system as a tool for mitigation. And, so, we're in the process of implementing that. We've signed the MOU, but as the Agency, we're starting to work together on getting that actually accomplished. Some of the external outreach that we've had, we had some meetings to

engage our stakeholders and partners on the implementation process earlier this year. The highlight for us so far this year has been in June. We had a round of meetings, workshops, if you will, that were basically funded, if you will, or supported by the Nevada Cattlemen's and the Nevada Department of Agriculture in conjunction with BLM, and we went out and had four or five of these sessions across the state where we met with permittees and we talked about the implementation of the sage-grouse plan and the impacts and how we're going to move forward. We have some of those meetings that will be held later on this year or first of next year. So we have a lot of work to do on that front yet, but we are making progress on some of our bigger projects. One of the things

that we're behind on in Nevada with the BLM is our grazing permit renewals. In late 2015, early 2016, we actually hired a team of six technical professionals to work together as a grazing permit renewal team. That team will be working on our high priority permits. Our permit renewal team lead is Jake Vialpando. And right now, this year and next year, they're working on the first set of permit renewals that they're focused on are Arjana Mountain complex allotments. And then we have a list of other allotments that they will be working on as well. So -- go ahead. And this is my one slide on horses. Again, I've mentioned before, we have 83 herd management areas. Our appropriate management level is 12,811. Our March 1 population estimate was 34,500. With a population

increase of 20%. That could be projected out to be 41,000.

And one of our major issues is that we are facing a lack of water, and in some cases forage and it's impacting some of our HMAs pretty heavily right now.

And as a final note, of our 83 herd management areas, 72 of those are at or over AML. So with that, questions from the Board? Yes.

>> Quick question. You said you have 677 permits, how many permittees does that represent?

>> JOHN RUHS: You know, I did not bring that number.

>> Sorry. But --

>> JOHN RUHS: I will get that sent to you.

>> Do you think it's about --  
I mean, you know you've got a bunch of people with multiple permits. So do you think you've got 450 permittees?

>> JOHN RUHS: You know --

>> 600?

>> JOHN RUHS: You know, I'm thinking somewhere around 450.

>> Okay.

>> JOHN RUHS: That's a guess.

But I've got it written down actually in my brief case.

>> Thanks, John.

>> JOHN RUHS: I'll get you the number.

>> All right.

>> FRED WOHL: Go ahead, Cope.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: John, I know you had several of the districts that are in the planning process or preparing to. How many of those that are revising RMPs or doing it under the new BLM rules under 2.0?

>> JOHN RUHS: Well, since the planning 2.0 hasn't been implemented yet, we don't have any of them. The two that will be forthcoming, Battle Mountain and Elko certainly, if the rule is finalized, they will fall under that and the other

planning process. They should marry up pretty well, if the rule gets passed.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: There was a recommendation from this board I think two years ago that the BLM should encourage the development of collaboratives similar to the forest collaboratives that are going on to bring all advocates and representatives to the table. As planning 2.0 comes into effect, which I believe it will, it would seem like a wonderful opportunity to develop these and have more public outreach, more public involvement and help to get agreement from different facets and factions on just exactly how the resources and horses come under that. The management techniques that are acceptable to everybody, and I would hope that that happens throughout Nevada and through

other states as 2.0 comes into effect. I think the more public engagement and involvement and collaboration we get, the better the plans will be and the more defensible they will be in litigation.

>> JOHN RUHS: I definitely concur with the importance of that collaboration.

>> FRED WOHL: Judy.

>> JUDY: One more quick question, I believe I heard you say you have about two million AUMs in Nevada and at most times, recently, about 25% of those have been in the state of non-use. Would you kindly show us a reason for that non-use?

What percentage of them are the ranges of degenerated? What percentage of them are voluntary at the request of the permittees for reasons you don't know? Or could you kind of help us understand why those aren't getting used?

>> JOHN RUHS: So, I would say that -- I don't want to take a stab at percentage, obviously. But several reasons. One, we were coming out of the drought, so I think during the drought period, we had a lot of voluntary non-use and in some, directed non-use. So I think that's part of it. I think in some cases, we have rangelands that are degraded to the point to where they don't sustain the numbers they should. So that's part of it. In other areas, I think we have some producers that are obviously very good. And, so, they know what the range needs to hold and so they, again, take voluntary non-use on their own.

>> In a situation where there has been range degradation that you're talking about, what's been the primary cause of that?

>> JOHN RUHS: I would say that in many cases, it's going to be wild horses and burros. Other cases, it may just be straight drought.

>> FRED WOEHL: Anybody else have any questions for John? John, thank you very much.

>> JOHN RUHS: You bet. Thank you.

>> FRED WOEHL: Alan? You've got a tough act to follow.

[Chuckles]

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: It's always tough following John. I'm Alan Shepard, I'm the state program lead here in Nevada. I've been here in this position for seven years now. And started my career in Nevada, in Southern Nevada. And, really, really have enjoyed my time here. For my talk, I'm going to cover a couple of little points, some highlights of what our program is trying to do. Some problems we're having, and

then kind of end the presentation with some information about some of our adoption partnerships that we really are keen on right now and going forward and doing positive things for our adoption program here in the state. It's just not working.

Some basic information about the horse program here in Nevada. We've got nine horse specialists spread across the state in our six districts.

When I started my career in 1990 in the Horse Program, we had 17. So we're half of what we used to be. So we've got eight or nine folks doing a lot of work for our program and trying to spread their time as much as possible across 83 herd management areas. We've got 83 that were managing for horses and burros, or combinations thereof. But we also have a large number of herd areas that

still have horses and burros on them that we have to also manage. So 83 is a big number, but the workload is even bigger when you add in the areas where we're managing or taking care of horses that aren't supposed to be in those locations or were not planning for management due to our changes from HMA to HA status. As John said, we've got over 34,000 horses here in our state right now. With projections in excess of 40,000. In fiscal year '15, we removed over 1,600 excess wild horses and burros, primarily due to water issues, forage issues, various things like that. No large herd scale management operations in the direction to get to AML. We conducted 43 population inventories. That's surveying entire herd management areas to get our accurate information as much as possible. We tried to

average about half of our HMAs every year. We monitored resources, water, forage, animals distribution, and things like that on 59 of our 83 HMA last year and we were successful in adopting 111 animals to the public, other agencies across the program. Some targets that we're working through and trying to accomplish this year, we're on track to remove roughly 830 wild horses and burros across the state. Again, tied to mostly resource conditions, escalating issues we have across the state. We should finish here soon, a roughly 42 inventories. We'll cover about 50. I think we'll probably hit 60, actually, on our monitoring goals. And our goal this year is to adopt 110 animals. We're on pace to achieve that. We're actually at about 100 right now, including some work with

other federal agencies. Okay.

Ooh, that map. That thing washed out bad. This is a map of all of it across the state in Nevada of where our HMAs are located. We've got horse and burros in every district here in the state. And if you can really see this map better, I apologize for that. It shows our neighboring border states as well. And we've got HMAs across the state that really -- that are bordering our neighbors. We've got -- we work with our Utah folks, we work with California, Oregon, California, we've got HMAs that border U.S. forest service territories. So it's not just 83 HMAs that we deal with in the state of Nevada. We're actually closer to 100 when you include the California ones that are in Nevada, but administered in California. And then our forest service

territories that we also work closely with. Okay. Some of our significant challenges in the state. The biggest definitely is the fact that we're in excess of two and a half times appropriate management level for our state. Horses are going anywhere and everywhere they want to at this point in time looking for food and water. So extended drought periods here. Though the drought map show that we're out of drought here in most of the state, we're still being heavily impacted, because we're coming out of four years of drought. So we're really closely monitoring water and forage and movement of horses in and out of our HMAs. So it's definitely something that we're tracking as much as possible here. Shortage of water is impacting many HMAs right now as we speak here.

We've got multiple operations that we've had to do that I'll talk about in a second.

Because of shortage water, where horse and burros were short on water, and we needed to do something right for them to protect their health.

Program budget limitation -- wide budget limitation and other program priorities is limiting our ability to achieve AML. We have program priorities that we have to achieve. And we need to do that, but we're doing a lot of work here just trying to bandage our program together and manage the horses. I think we're trying to -- I think we're doing a good job doing it, but we still need to look for other avenues, other tools to use to help us with the management. Wild horse population and burro populations are expanding daily

across our state. They're looking for food and water. As the populations expand, as I've talked to you about yesterday on the tour, the population, as they're building, they're building outside. They're moving, they're looking for new homes, new territories. So we're constantly monitoring and trying to figure out where these horse and burros are going. The result of that movement is increasing private property concerns, public safety on our highways. Into private property, hay fields and urban areas, they're just -- they're going about, like I said, about anywhere they want.

Okay. This is a set of drought maps. The one on the left is one year ago. And the one on the right is the one from last week. You can see that we've, for a third of the state, 40% of the state

roughly, the drought map shows we're out of drought. But, you know, I truly don't believe we are. I still think we're in the 5th year of consecutive drought here in state. It takes a lot longer than some nice rainfall in the winter that grew the grass that we got this year. And the a little bit of water that we retained to take us out of it. But we've got a long ways to go to guarantee that the range is healthy for these horse and burros and all the other resource and users. Okay.

These are four pictures of some problem areas that we have going on right now here in the state. And if we didn't have water problems and issues that we have, we wouldn't have animals stacked up like this.

We've got pot springs which is in the Ely District. On any given, we use trail cameras a

lot to monitor our horses to document use on different areas. And any time of the day, could you have 40 to had head of horses standing wait to go get a drink. We've got Woodhill Springs, which is a private -- it's on public land. It's a little tiny mud hole in checkerboard lands here in Elko County. Horses are not supposed to be there. It's a non-HMA area. But we've got horses that have moved out of HMAs on to this area. And they're impacting the spring and getting stuck in the mud where we've had to do -- we're actually working on removal as of today, right now, to remove the animals that have there roughly 50 or 60 that are there. Cherry Spring in here, also in the Elko District, down under Maverick Madison HMA. Again, it's another little spring that these horses rely

on that they're not willing to leave even though that the water is down. We've got Howes Lit Spring in Pine Nuts in Carson City. These horses are standing there and wait to go get a drink. They're drinking out of horse hoofs. So they're spending a lot of time trying to get a drink. As I've said earlier, Nevada was for the approved for any large scale management gather in fiscal year '16. Our national priority was our greater sage-grouse, sage brush focal areas and research projects. So any large management gathers toward AML, we weren't successful in getting. This year, we requested gathers in our sage-grouse focal areas which is in Owyhee Complex between, spread between the Winnemucca district and the Elko district. We also requested a large gather in

what we call the Antelope HMA Complex in the Maverick Madison HMA to relief horse pressure on the range lands there, and to where we were drastically over AML by over four and five times. And then the other one is revel HMA which is a court ordered gather that we need to do to maintain AML according to a court order. Some of the gathers in management projects that we're working on this year throughout the course of the year, and most of these gathers are, again, related to escalating conditions. Water, forage, public safety, and things like that. So we've got a number of them. They're, most of these events with less than 100 animals each. Just to take some of the pressure off, solve some of the little itty bitty problems until we can get something bigger and better in the future to get us towards

AML. John went over the sage-grouse stuff. I won't touch on that much. But it is going to impact the horse program in the sense of the SFA areas being priority. Okay.

And, again, this map washed out too. Sorry. But this is a map of all the sage brush, or great great sage-grouse area habitat across the West. And in the Northern Nevada, I've mentioned the Owyhee Complex. That's our only area of SFA sage-grouse focal area here in the state.

That is our number-one priority for management gathers here in the state of Nevada. For this year as well as next year should we be approved. Okay.

So let's talk about something better, I guess. Our adoption program is one of the smallest, really, in the nation. I've always looked at it as we're the producer, not the user, if you want to look at it that

way. It's supply versus the demand. But one of our partners that we've got here in the state is the northern Nevada Correctional Center. It's a state agency with the Department of Corrections. It's a program that I think is second to none in what we do. It's our second largest prison training program here in the nation. We've got roughly 1400 head of horses there right now in various stages from three to four-year-olds to 20-year-olds. We're holding some horses until we put long-term holding as space holders. They do a wonderful job maintaining our animals there. The inmate training program there, we train between 75 and 100 horses a year through that program. And it was extremely successful. We're averaging on most of our events about \$1800 a horse when we train these

horses. And they go out to everybody. We're training for horses that are going to go to work ranches, to trail horses, to backyard pets. They're going to be at all avenues. And we're shipping them all over the West to adopters. They're coming from great distances to pick up these horses when we hold our events. And through our partnership with them, we're about 12 years into it now. We've trained almost 1100 head of horses to that program and placed them with the public, and then state and federal agencies. Okay. This is just a couple of pictures from the prison. The upper left corner is just the interaction between the inmate trainers and the public looking at the animals they have trained. The picture on the upper right is one of our trainers. He just loves

working with burros, so he taught this little burro to jump things and pull a cart and all that. And that little burro was adopted for \$2,300. And then every catalog we do, we a lineup of all of our horses. We do a really nice line up so the adopters can see what these horses like like almost a month ahead of time. So we always do a lineup of our horses where they're welcoming them to come visit. So, okay. Through our training program there, we've developed some outlier training -- or adoption program that we're really building on heavily. We've got outside partners now with the U.S. Border Patrol in several states in training programs. But ours is doing really well. We're training horses for the U.S. Marine Corp to help our service men in their training effort. Recently, we adopted

horses, the Washoe County Sheriff Department to use crowd control and public interactions and things like that. We've sent horses to the U.S. forest service in Montana and Oregon within this last year. So we're building an outside base as much as we can to work with this. We've got an individual with a California Game and Fish Department. That's an extremely successful -- I wish I could hire him as a spokesman. He talks to more people than any other of us could ever could. And he's promoting Nevada horses in California doing his warden work in the back country of California. And it's pretty cool. So we're -- we're always looking for new partners of how to spread our trained horses around and get that benefit. So we're going to continue that into the future as much as we

can. This is a few picture of  
some of those guys at work.  
U.S. Border Patrol on the upper  
right-hand corner of we've sent  
a number of horses to  
California. We've got horse  
that is patrol the Mexican  
border in San Diego on the  
beach. So they get to go to  
the ocean every day. The upper  
right picture is two horses,  
the gray horse and the beige  
horse. Those were trained at  
the prison. They're just coming  
back from hauling dynamite to a  
trailhead to do some trail  
work. So they're being used by  
the federal government to do  
good work. The bottom left  
corner is the Washoe County  
Sheriff's troop. This is from  
the Reno Rodeo. This sorrel  
horse in the middle, this gray  
on the outside are both  
northern Nevada correctional  
trained horses. And the young  
officer here, the young lady

officer, she actually just recently adopted a second horse to put in so she can use a second one. So they're really helping us promote our training program. And the individual on the bottom right, that's Jerry Carnelle. He's our game warden in California, and that's just on patrol out in the middle of the California back country. So very positive program there. And it got really good partners being developed. Okay. And our last one that we're going to talk about a little bit. In the last two years, Nevada has joined further with the Mustang Heritage Foundation and promotion of the Extreme Mustang Makeover here in Nevada. And our other partner in it is the Reno Rodeo group. And we've had two extremely successful EMMs at Reno. We've adopted 45 horses there. We're

averaging well over \$1,300 a horse. We've had 1,000 people in the stand come watch these events. So I think it's going to be a really good thing. I'm hoping we can continue that partnership. Because it's bringing in a whole different clientele into our training program and looking for what we can do. So. You know, this is a picture a little bit from the EMM. The upper right corner, or left corner is our winner. She's actually a trainer from Arizona. Kingman, Arizona. She did really well in the event on the Nevada Mustang. Our fan favorite, another Nevada horse this year, and you know, these guys just do crazy things with these horses. It's just what they can do in 100 days is really phenomenal. And I think the public and the fans are really appreciative. So I think that's it. Any

questions? Cope.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: Alan, it's really good to see your adoption program. I think those successes are really gratifying. If my memory serves me correctly, I believe you said there are roughly 34,000 horses on the Nevada range. And last year, you collected 1,600.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yes, sir.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: And adopted 111 of those.

>>

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yes, sir.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: My math says that's less than one-half of 1% going out of adoptions when you've got an annual increase of 15% to 20% in population. So apparently, adoption is more than likely not the pan over panacea here. As you go ahead and revise your RMPs, how are you addressing that disparity?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Well, I

think a lot of it is just we're just going to have to take serious looks at where we're managing horses further. We have to. You know, forage condition, habitat availability, and make the calls that need to be made.

Look at the tools we can get in and incorporate into the management plans. Whether if it's increase fertility control or, you know, if it's non-reproducing herds. Looking at just how we're going to look at management options for adjusting AMLs, and looking at AMLs that we have currently based on resources available and habitat conditions. So we've got to take a good look at them. We can't just assume everything is cool.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: Well, the problem with that is if you hit zero population growth today,

you've still got two and a half  
times the number of horses out  
there that you need to have.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: You bet.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: And BLM  
is already made it clear for  
the next three years, they're  
only requesting Congressional  
funding to remove 3,500 annually  
nationwide.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Right.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: That's  
not good.

>> FRED WOHL: So I've  
wondered, how do would I  
address this? Because it looks  
to me like we've got a problem.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: We do. You  
know, we're -- we've got a lot  
of horses. We've got a lot of  
concerns with the management of  
our horses. But we've just got  
to keep looking for the tools.  
We have to be open to try  
things and show success. We  
can't sit back and just expect  
something to be fixed for us.

John and I have had numbers of discussions on what we're going to propose to the Washington program into the future to try to help with some of the stuff.

You know, and support the program itself. We have to.

We're the biggest player in this thing. We have more horses than anybody else combined. So we have to look at the -- at all the tools and be willing to use the tools once they become available.

>> Alan, I was wondering, when you talked about the two and a half percent, and then you said on 72 HMAs, or three year or 10 times the amount of horses that are supposed to be there. If these 20% increase trends continue on in repeated year after year, you know, the numbers get pretty astronomical pretty quick. With a do you see as the end result for the horses, for the wildlife that

utilize those ranges, and  
ultimately for the arrangements  
if that occurs?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Well, as  
these populations keep  
building, the more pressure is  
going to be put on the  
resources that they live in and  
they're reliant on. We're  
going to impact wildlife  
habitat, watery sources, water  
quality, soil, the soil  
component is going to be  
impacted. Because we're going  
to be removing the valuable  
perennial forage and replacing  
it with invasive species and  
you know that aren't beneficial  
to wildlife, aren't beneficial  
to other grazers, you know,.  
It's going to impact the horses  
and burro's health in  
themselves. They're not going  
to get the forage that they  
need, the water they need.  
They're going to be bulging out  
into the other areas impacting

those. So it's going to be a continuous building problem until we find a solution to the problem to slow that growth and, hopefully, protect the habitat.

>> And as those areas get over grazed and over used, how is that going to affect the rate into the future for those ranges and herd management where the horses currently are?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: You know, as the bigger populations get, they're going to record more resources which is going to take those needed resources away from the other users.

It's going to happen. It's happening now. We talked about yesterday a little bit about the -- just in the area of the tour where, you know, the allocated AUMs in that area was roughly 7,000 AUMs for livestock and horses combined in the initial settings. And

we've got 1,100 head of horses there using 13,000 AUMs. We're using almost twice the AUMs in that area. And it shows the impact. We showed you that yesterday in the invasive species in some of that area building and expanding and degrading that habitat. So it's going to continue until we find the solution to solve the problem.

>> Alan, so last year Cold Creek herd management area, where there was dozen of horses at, you know, at a body square area of one and two and were starving to death and there was an emergency gathered. Some horses were put down, but it was a manageable size herd management area. You know, hopefully, this won't happen, but say next year, you have a terrible drought. You have two inches of precip, and you have a situation that happened at

Cold Creek, except for with couple of hundred horses, now we have 10,000 horse that are in terrible body condition.

And you know, we have to enact an emergency plan on a scale of not hundreds of horses but thousands. Do you have any type of emergency program for that kind of situation? And is that situation possible? Could that happen within the next few years?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: To answer the first part, we do not have a plan to that scale by any means. I would say the program-wide, we're probably not prepared for a catastrophe at that size to that proportion of thousands of animals. You know, I think we can handle, you know, hundreds of animals or maybe less than a thousand animals, but anything bigger than that is going to be such a grandiose scale that it's

something that we need to start really thinking hard about and getting into place to have a thought process and a plan to about to forward with. Because I think it's going to happen at some point if we continue on the pace we're going with the populations building the way they do. You know, earlier in my career, I dealt with the NELIS, Nevada Wild Horse Range, NELIS, as it's commonly known. When we had 10,000 animals there and lost water, where we had hundreds of animals dying and we had to remove lots of animals in very, very poor conditions. I don't ever want to see that again. It's just wrong for the habitat and it's wrong for the animals themselves. But if we don't find the solution to these building populations, and protect the habitat, we're going to have a catastrophe

that we're not going to be able to manage. And I think everybody realizes that. We just have to come up with a plan to at least help alleviate some of the problem.

>> FRED WOEHL: Ginger.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Yes, Alan and John, thanks for yesterday and your team. I think it was a great tour. We really appreciate it. You mentioned in the area where we were there were 7,000 total AUMs? That is what you were saying?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: There's roughly that, yeah.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: How do those breakdown between the users?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: It was a little over 4,000 for livestock and a little over 3,000 for horses at the high AML and the permitted use.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Okay. And

you also said that in most of those cases, there hasn't been any livestock use for how long?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: In part of it, it was for the last eight years I think it was, or seven for sure. That there was livestock grazing at all. And that was the most heavily impacted area we were on.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Thank you.

>> FRED WOEHL: I'd like to thank you both for yesterday. That was very good to see that contrast of what invasive species will do compared to what it was. And the thing that stuck in my mind throughout the whole thing was all the water sources that we saw were private. And I appreciate those owners of water sources allowing the horses to use them. But it's still stuck in my mind all night, what if they wake up one morning and say, I'm tired of

them horses drinking my water.

I want it and they go and -- I

mean, that would be

devastating.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yes, sir.

It would. If we lose a lot of

the sources that our horses are

reliant on, to control that

elimination access to those

waters, because in most cases,

it is private property, it

would be -- it could be that an

event Ben is talking about. We

could find a project, or an

area that the horse population

is decimated, because they have

lost their principal water

source. Where we were at

yesterday, that landowner, that

water certificate holder fenced

that property and secured it,

we would lose access for

700-800 head of horses to water

or more. And there's nowhere

else for them horse to see go.

>> the little tiny springs on

the mountain will not support

that volume of horses.

>> FRED WOEHL: No. No.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: No, they  
would not.

>> FRED WOEHL: No, it  
wouldn't. Julie?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Just a  
quick question. On your first  
map, the one that is so  
difficult to read on the slide.

Is that online? Because I  
believe --

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: There's  
variations of it. That one, I  
just had made the other day  
because I wanted my neighbors  
on there to show that.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: So I  
could go online and see what  
those color-codings mean?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yes.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Enough.  
Thanks.

>> FRED WOEHL: Anybody else  
have any questions?

>> I just have one more quick  
question. You know,

representing the interest of wildlife, obviously, sage-grouse is a huge concern, you know, to both wild horse situation and also the grazing allotments. What other wildlife species do wild horses have a big impact on? Or are there any key issues going on in Nevada right now between the wildlife species and wild horse and burros?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: I think depending on the situation, wild horses and burros can have an impact on every native species that's in the state.

Burros will compete with big horn sheep for water. Horses will compete with elk and mule deer and Antelope for water, forage and it will go all the way down on to the little guys, all the way down to losing seed sources for rodents and birds and soil crusts and things like that.

So it's not just the big animals that are going to be impacted if these populations keep building and the threats occur. It's going to be all species. It's regardless.

>> FRED WOEHL: You know, we hear all the time, member of the boards receive e-mails and letters about all the cattle and the stock, how they're taken over and all this and HMA we saw yesterday was what? A million acres? Antelope?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yeah, a little over million.

>> FRED WOEHL: And they hadn't had cattle or livestock or sheep or anything on it for eight or nine years, and the problem is just as bad or worse. I mean, no change.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yeah, it just keeps building. It keeps changing, you know? It increases by the year as the population increases the

impacts to the lands there.

Correct.

>> Alan, could you give us kind of a longer range perspective in history of the use of this area? Because I know that a lot of lands were degraded by massive numbers of cattle and sheep in the past.

So can you kind of give us a longer picture of it other than just the seven or eight years?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: You know, I don't have a, you know, not being from the district all the time, you know, associated with it all, but I mean, it's had historic grazing for sure in all those areas. The area that we were principally in, for the bulk of the tour yesterday was an area that has not been grazed for eight years. But it does have a history of cattle and some level of sheep grazing across that whole complex. It's 11 different grazing

allotment. We were primarily in just two of those involved in the Antelope Valley HMA. But it's livestock industry is, you know, very historic here in the state. So it's been there. It's, you know, -- it was an important area, I believe. But to give a long history of it would be tough, I think. Other than the fact that, you know, it did have grazing, you know, since the area was -- has been settled and then forward to now but at different levels and degrees.

>> I want to follow-up on that. How long has BLM managing that habitat to protect it from being degraded?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: [Chuckles]

We've been trying since 1971.

>> Thank you.

>> Chairperson Woehl, I just wanted to point out at our last stop on the tour yesterday, as a reminder going back to the

area we had no livestock of grazing, and then where we ended up, we had cattle use, we had wild horse use, and we had elk use. And to remember that in a more balanced environment and in a more managed situation, the range can look a whole lot different than where we're completely out-of-balance.

>> FRED WOEHLE: That's a good point. Because it was different as day and night, the overall whole thing was -- I mean, that was -- and that contrast that you all was very eye-opening to the Board. And on behalf of the board, we really appreciate that. That was one of the best field trips that I've been on. And I've been on several. And that was really, really good.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Thank you, I appreciate it.

>> FRED WOEHLE: Okay. Anyone

else have any questions? We need to move on. We're getting kind of up -- kind of behind and Kathie is giving me the skunk eye. [Laughter]

>> Just really quick, Alan.

With a kind of cost and time constraints would it take to rehabilitate that range where it has been decimated? Can we get it back to the right condition that you like it to be in that type of situation?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: If we can get it to rehab or restore, I think naturally, it's going to take decades upon decades upon decades without anybody being there. You know, anymore significant damage. You know, a lot of those vegetative communities that are there aren't easily reestablished by man in the sense of re-seeding and things like that. A lot, I would believe those would have to -- you would have to do

your best to let them naturally re-vegetate, and I think some of them are probably to the point now that it would be almost impossible.

>> Thank you.

>> FRED WOEHL: All right.

Dean, did you have something to say?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Maybe I just

I'll add a little bit to the answer to the question that Steven asked. And the question was how much would it cost to rehabilitate? Tremendously intensive practices would need to be employed. Naturally, it's decades or hundreds of years before it would come back, and probably not, as Alan said. But if we employ mechanical procedures and I'm driving on some cost estimates to rehabilitate fire areas that have been burned over and damaged, aerial seeding cost are generally \$20 an acre,

depending on the seed mixture.  
Drilling, depending on the seed mixture. And also, in these areas you saw yesterday probably require a \$35 an acre treatment to knock down the cheap grass to prepare it to drill seed which is probably \$100-\$125 an acre, depending on the to your rain and the circumstances. But very, very, very expensive. So it's almost irretrievable, which really makes the point where we still have good habitat, we have to pull out the stops and take care of it. Because that's really what's important at the end, the very well-being of the horses are threatened if we don't care of the habitat they depend on.

>> Chairperson Woehl, I guess, again, I want to add as well. Remember we're talking about range sites in the 5 to 8 precip zones. So mechanical

treatments and rehabilitation that way probably aren't going to do a lot of good anyway. So it's going to have to be either a targeted grazing kind of scenario where we've had, we've seen some success in some of our areas where we've gone out with those kinds of experiments and done some targeted grazing on cheap grass. But beyond that, I don't know there's any other solution but time.

>> FRED WOHL: Okay. Thank you both very much. And, again, I really appreciate you. On behalf of the board for the time and effort it took to put that field trip together.

John, you've got some of the best people working with these horses that I've seen. And I appreciate it.

>> JOHN RUHS: Thank you.

>> FRED WOHL: All right. Moving it along, we're going to have Mr. Bill Wolf from the

Nevada Northeast Great Basin  
Resource. And he's the Chair  
and he's got his co-Chair with  
him. And I am so sorry. I'm  
not very good with names, but I  
know your first name is Julie.

>> [Away from mic].

>> FRED WOEHL: Okay, thank  
you. Thank you. And this is  
the first time that the Board  
has engaged with the RAC at  
all. We think this is a good  
way forward, because they're on  
the ground. They represent  
local interests, and their  
input and their comments to  
this board means an awful,  
awful lot. Bill was with us  
yesterday, and he showed us  
where all the bodies are  
buried. So we have lots of  
information now. So, Bill,  
I'll hand it over to you. And  
just feel free to tell us  
what's on your heart and RAC's  
mind.

>> BILL WOLF: Thank you very

much, Chairman Woehl. Again,  
my name is Bill Wolf, Chairman  
of the Northeast Great Basin  
Resource Advisory Council.  
Council with me is Julie  
Hughes, the Vice Chair. And I  
would again like to express my  
deep appreciation for myself  
and for the RAC on the  
invitation for us to meet with  
the board and offer our  
opinions and little  
information. Our presentation  
is basically going to be a  
little bit about the RACs. One  
example of how we're working  
with the bureau. And then some  
of our concerns moving forward.  
I'm hoping that people could  
read and see our map little  
better than Alan's. Sorry,  
Alan. But what this map shows  
and is something that Julie  
will be talking about in our  
presentation, it shows the HMAs  
in Nevada. The red on the map  
is the priority habitat

management area for  
sage-grouse. The kind of a  
orange or brown, I guess, is  
going to be general habitat  
management area. And then the  
green is other habitat  
management areas. And, so,  
like I said, it overlays the  
HMAs over sage-grouse habitat.  
So with that, I'm going to do  
everybody a favor and turn this  
over to Julie. Thank you very  
much. Julie.

>> JULIE HUGHES: I don't know  
how big of a favor it's going  
to be because I've got to read.  
[Chuckles] But we have several  
opinions, but to save you all  
from all of them, we just put  
together a presentation with a  
bunch of suggestions. And some  
of our opinions and how we  
really encourage you folks to  
carry on with the Wild Horse  
and Burro Management. Our RAC  
is one of three RACs in the  
state. Mojave Southern Great

Basin and Sierra front  
Northwestern great basin are the  
other two. Each RAC consists,  
just like you guys, of  
individuals representing  
different interests on uses for  
public land from wildlife to  
mining, to wild horse, to  
political and more. Bill  
represents public at large and  
I remember dispersed  
recreation. our RAC has a  
history of reconvening four  
times a year. Although others  
might meet less regularly. One  
of those meetings is a  
gathering of all three Nevada  
RACs known as a Tri-RAC. And  
generally occurs in the winter  
when field trips can be  
problematic. As with the  
individual RAC meetings, the  
Tri-RAC members may decide to  
work on specific issues to  
provide the BLM advice on those  
issues. At the most recent  
Tri-RAC, three statewide

subgroups were formed. One, two address concerns regarding the wild horse management program. One, to look at some issues surrounding livestock term permit renewals. And another to provide advice on issues pertaining to the Nevada Northeastern California greater sage-grouse approved resource management plan amendment. Policy, as you know, is set statutorily through Congressional acts such as the Federal Land Management Policy Act. Or the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act as well as by the executive branch of the federal government. The best we can do to provide the Agency input on how it meets the demands of policy and procedure. We do this through consensus building within the RAC to come to a course of action we would recommend to the Agency. For

example, the recommendation from our RAC to implement the water canyon wild horse growth suppression pilot program, a wild horse advocate on our RAC would bring a proposal to the council and convince the council that this was a good alternative technique to help manage population growth in wild horse herds. The RAC forwarded the proposal to the secretary of the interior, and we were very pleased to see her endorse the proposal. With your indulgence, we're going to give a little bit more information on the water canyon wild horse growth suppression pilot program. Originally, the program presented to use the RAC using PZP, but following the approval of the pilot program, the volunteer project coordinator, Jeannie Nations, working with agency wild horse specialist decided to use

GonaCon. They felt this drug would be a better choice, because the recommended application rate is only approximately two years. PZP would require the annual gathering of the animals to treat them. The goal of the 10 year pilot program is to stabilize and maintain a wild horse population of 25 to 30 animals within the project area. The test area is about 60 miles north of Ely, and on the east side of U.S. 93. The management number is based on range conditions, water availability, and acreage comparisons as well as seasonal movement of the band during the summer and dryer winter months. Between October of 2015 and December of 2015, BLM gathered 53 wild horses using a feed and water trap. The BLM released 22 horses back into the project area after holding them for

three days. Mares were selected for release -- 30 days, sorry. The mares were selected for release, were treated with fertility control vaccine GonaCon equine, which has an expected efficacy of about two years. On November 12 of 2015, each mare was given a shot of GonaCon in the hip area. On December 12 of 2015, a second shot was administered as a booster. There was no noticeable swelling or abscess in the injection area. The side effect had been noted as a concern in other studies. Ms. Nations reported that the bait and trap method was done in a very humane way and that the horses were treated well during the 30 days of holding. The released horses were freeze branded with the FC brand to differentiate them from other horses that might wander into the area. Whether they join

the band or they with wander to another. DNA samples were taken from both mares and the Stallions so the project may determine the genetics of the herd and possibly determine some of the history of this band. The BLM monitors the treated mares and applies a booster every 20 to 24 months to maintain the vaccine's effectiveness. The BLM will remove a small number of horses when the population exceeds 40 animals. Horses selected for removal, approximately 5 to 10 primarily young horses born within the project area will be offered to the public through a trap site adoption. All 14 yearling and yearlings available from the original trap site were successfully adopted. The volunteer coordinator has stated that it was no easy task, but it was accomplished with the help of

wonderful people through some staff at Palomino Valley that could have been, although, some staff at Palomino Valley could have been a little more proactive in getting the horses adopted. All 15 treated mares have continued to maintain good health. Using the Henneke I-9, horse body conditioning scoring system, the mares going into the program in October 2015 scored at about 4. The GonaCon did not cause any birth defects or abortions in the treated mares. Some were in the early stages of pregnancy at the time of the treatment. Going into fall of 2016, most of the mares seem to be in condition level 6 or better. This is only the first phase of the study. The next foaling season will tell just how well GonaCon is working. If it is working as it should, there should be no foals born next season to

treated mares. They can be mainly, there can be many variables to consider over the course of the next foaling season, but we would consider even in 80% success rate to be successful. The volunteer coordinator is very encouraged by the early finding of the study. She and the RAC see this as a positive way forward and a solution for managing over population in wild horse herds. And we hope that might be implemented in other areas of the state. Battle Mountain District is implementing a similar project with a ban in the Rocky Hills area. They're using the PZP and darting the animals as they gather at water instead of bait and trapping and holding the animals. However, we feel these measures are a small step to resolving a problem that requires much greater action.

These current measures will do nothing towards bringing wild horse populations to appropriate AML. Current population levels are demonstratively damaging both the resource and the health of and longevity of the horses themselves. the Northeast Great Basin Resource RAC members wants to see healthy wild horse herds. Our mandate, as is the secretary's is for managing healthy ecosystems. This is Congressionally mandated under the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act. The RAC is routinely shown projects put forward by the Agency and cooperators whose purpose is to improve habitat. Additionally, we are briefed on agency post fire emergency stabilization and rehabilitation work. As part of ESR action, cattle use is restricted until adequate forage demands are met.

However, we rarely see the same actions taken with wild horses.

The recent drought through Nevada has had huge impact on the resources as well as the animals that depend on it.

Nevada BLM was a leader in managing drought impacts with livestock permittees. Most permittees were asked to take voluntary non-use or adjusted season or length of use in greater sage-grouse priority habitat areas. It is the understanding of our RAC that little to no actions have been taken in regards to wild horses and their management under the same circumstances. In response to these conditions, the Nevada Department of Wildlife implemented special hunts. Like The California desert big horn U hunts, mule deer doe hunts, as well as prong horn Antelope doe hunts. And I'll receive much criticism

for implementing these hunts, but they were a crucial management tool to keep wildlife populations in check with the current habitat capabilities. Wild horses are the only large animals on the range that is not actively managed to keep populations to appropriate levels. This RAC has written to the Secretary previously encouraging the Agency take actions to reach AML. The purpose of this is to ensure healthy herds as well as success of greater sage-grouse action management plans. As all the public land cooperators move progressively towards actions that will not only restore habitats, specifically to improve greater sage-grouse populations, we also believe these actions are showing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the public land managers are paying

attention and are seriously --  
serious about implementing  
changes to prevent listing.

The Northeast Great Basin  
Resource RAC fully supports the  
current determination of  
listing a sage-grouse as not  
warranted. However, the USFWS  
has been mandated to revisit  
the current sage-grouse listing  
in less than four years. We  
feel strongly the BLM national  
office needs to take immediate  
action in herd management areas  
that are over population AML.  
To ensure that all managed to  
benefit the range or -- or kept  
at permitted stocking rates.  
23% of the priority habitat  
management area for sage-grouse  
is found in HMAs. Currently,  
only wild horse populations are  
allowed to exceed the  
recognized or appropriate  
stocking levels. This  
imbalance poses a real danger  
to undo all the work being done

to meet the requirements upon between the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service -- Forest and Fish and Wildlife. This state to prevent the listing of the sage-grouse and a TNE species. With that in mind. We want to extend our support to you to go a step further and utilize all fertility control methods in the toolbox on horses in the field. We encourage any type of PZP application, and applaud your persistence on your own going field studies. We also encourage you to utilize and prioritize approved fertility controlled methods including PZP and GonaCon in HMA areas where appropriate management levels are at, under, or close to target levels, or where applications have been applied in recent years. We feel those areas should be a priority for darting as application should not be allowed to lapse. We

more specifically ask you to prioritize areas such as the Rocky Hills HMA and the Battle Mountain district which has received several applications of PZP to date. We, again, encourage rigorous collection of scientific data of the results. We encourage the fall gather plans for the Elko area. These horses are at risk and numbers need to come down to AML before we have more dead horses. The longer horses are left on the range unmanaged and over AML, the fewer horses the range can support in the future due to the degradation of the range and damage to the habitat that supports them and other wildlife. We want to see the overall AML remain where it is and a habitat that can support those numbers. The Northeast Great Basin RAC recognizes that one of the more difficult management problems

facing the BLM in Nevada is that of the wild horses and burros. All the herd management objectives must continue for the long-term in order to improve management of horses and burros, improve range land health, and foster cooperative alliances among agencies, interest groups, and land users. We want to encourage the BLM to look at spending money on range restoration. There is a very small percentage of the money within the horse program that goes back to the range. During one of our more recent field tours, we visited the area of receding with forage acacias, [Laughter] As well as native seeds and protecting spring sources by fencing animals out of the spring source and piping water to troughs in order to improve the water flow and water production for all

animals on the range. We encourage BLM to take steps in this direction. If one never made improvement or repair to the house they lived in, it would not stay standing forever. With this analogy in mind, please encourage the BLM to reinvest in the resource as this is the house for all users of the public land. Since holding fitters are adding maximum and short- and long-term holding is expensive, we should encourage the BLM to continue to work with the Mustang Heritage Foundation and other groups to enhance adoptions. The Mustang Heritage Foundation opened adoptions back east by providing general horses through the Extreme Mustang Events. Please continue this partnership with the Mustang Heritage Foundation to encourage the growth of the tip

trainer program, enhancement of adoptions, east of the Mississippi. We encourage the Board to seek out other partnerships to develop programs like the one with the Nevada Department of Corrections which has a successful history of gentling, training, and helping with wild horse adoptions. The Board might consider encouraging similar programs in other areas by seeking out partnerships through the country. It might find the Nevada Department of Corrections willing to lend its expertise in developing these partnerships. The RAC has not given up on the idea that there might yet be suitable designs for sanctuaries. And we would encourage the Nevada Tri-RAC wild horse subgroup to explore what has worked, what hasn't, and other suggestions to the Agency. There are numerous

examples of eco-sanctuaries  
that may offer a way forward.

We encourage BLM to look at the  
education of the public  
regarding the horse program.

And public lands overall is a  
multi use. MHF has hosted  
speakers at some of their  
events to discuss the  
sustainability of the land and  
what it means to have a healthy  
ecosystem. We suggest BLM look  
at other partnerships to share  
their messages such as the  
Safari Club and teacher  
workshops. For example,  
Safari Club has a summer  
program in place which teaches  
youth about conservation.

Would it be possible to partner  
with them to have their  
workshop include a few hours of  
Horse Management 101? Also  
with the teacher education  
workshops, such as the one  
hosted by the Ely District, it  
is possible to incorporate a

little information regarding horse management within those programs. We ask the Board to explore all these options at a national level while we work at the local level. I believe I can safely say, we can safely say that the Northeast Great Basin RAC members indeed, all three Nevada RACs are willing to work more closely with the board to reach solutions.

Thank you.

>> FRED WOHL: Thank you very much for that. Is there anybody on the Board have any comments? Julie.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I have a quick question. Is your supporting forage kochia or the Acacia family of plants? Which?

>> BILL WOLF: My apologies, that was a spellcheck that is correctly spelled wrong word.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: So you are supporting --

>> BILL WOLF: It should be  
forage kochia.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Forage  
kochia which is a very  
different plant than Acacias.

>> BILL WOLF: It certainly is.  
And, again, my apologies for  
that quickly spelled wrong  
word.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank  
you.

>> FRED WOHL: Well, whatever  
that was, we ain't got it in  
Arkansas. I don't know what it  
was anyway. [Laughter] So.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: It's a  
big difference.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Thank you  
so for that report. I mean,  
I'm -- I just absolutely loved  
so many of your suggestions.  
And what I would suggest that  
we all have a copy of it? And  
it is in the book? Okay.  
Wonderful. Thank you. So nice  
to meet you and spend time with  
you too, Bill. Thank you very

much.

>> FRED WOHL: Anybody else?

>> BILL WOLF: Before I go though, Mr. Chairman, if you don't mind, in the discussions we've had, over the last two days have been absolutely wonderful and I've been really impressed with the individuals on the Board and really pleased with the direction of some of your conversations. One of the issues that's kind of been coming up just within the last several hours that I've been having discussions with other folks is the one regarding freeze branding. And I understand there's going to be -- there is some contention on freeze branding the animals and there's some conflict with Nevada branding laws and those kind of things. And, so, for these programs to move forward, I would hope that the Board

would become more well-versed in what those conflicts might be with the state branding inspector and work with the state office on helping push forward resolution on these difficulties. Because as part of these fertility programs go forward, one of the things they're talking about is branding the animals with specific numbers so that you can treat it and it's much easier to track animals. And if so, there's going to be a conflict between the Agency and the state regarding the branding itself, then that is going to be a key thing to overcome as we move forward with these projects.

>> FRED WOEHL: Bill, I promise you that we will look into it and I will give you an answer or get back to you. And like you said, you just heard about it within the last couple of

hours. This is the first time we've heard bit. But I promise you that we will look into it, because that's major. I mean, we have to have some way to I.D. these horses.

>> BILL WOLF: Thank you, sir.

>> FRED WOHL: Anybody else?

All right. Bill, Julie, thank you very much. Your hospitality is just great. I spent all day with that man in a cab, a truck yesterday. So I'm a little bit hard-of-hearing today, but I'm sure it will come back.

[Laughter]

>> JULIE HUGHES: Well, I apologize for making it worse.

[Laughter]

>> FRED WOHL: Thank you all very much. Thank you. All right. Kathie, we're getting back on time.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: We have 20 minutes left. We'll get done as much as we can.

>> FRED WOHL: All right. All right.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: [Away from mic]

>> FRED WOHL: Okay. Dean. Yeah, we absolutely have to break at 3. I promise you.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So do you want to deal with your minutes as on the agenda or have me go forth?

>> FRED WOHL: Oh, I forgot. Well, let's go ahead and -- yeah, let's go ahead and do the minutes.

>> Move approvals from the minutes from the meeting in April?

>> FRED WOHL: And in doing that, Dean, there's a follow-up on some of the minutes on recommendation 8 and recommendation 10. If you would, those were minutes that you said that you would look into and get back with us on? And I know I'm hitting you

between the eyes with these. I didn't brief you on this, but one was to present to the Board three to four draft alternatives to achieve HML -- AML and all HMAs, and you set you would duet back to that? And No. 10 was to develop strategy to train and use more qualified volunteers to support wild horse burro activities off range and on range. And your answer to that was you had limited staffing and you were looking into that and would report back to us. And, so, --

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So, let's take the volunteer one. You made a similar recommendation that I'm going to go over if we had enough time.

>> FRED WOEHLE: Okay.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: And in part, the answer is the same.

>> FRED WOEHLE: Okay.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: My answer is a little bit more expansive for

the interest. And also in regards to the No. 8 asking for an evaluation of various alternatives, I believe it involved how much money is it going to cost to conduct some different management scenarios.

We had worked on those and have completed some. And they're not available at -- today, but we are going to be getting those to the Board.

Kristin, do you want to comment further on that?

>> KRISTIN BAIL: We have looked at different combinations, you know, gather fertility control and one of the things that has taken some time is there's a lot of number crunching. I'm learning a lot about this. And truly, economic analysis, because we were looking well into the future, because, you know, long-term health and stability of the horses and of the

program was involved. So, that's what we wanted to bring to you is not just a one year snapshot, but a look into the future and, again, because when animals can live up to 30 years, we make a long-term commitment to them if and when they're gathered and not adopted. So we've done that homework and want to bring that in, that information to you.

>> FRED WOEHL: Well, good.

Thank you. It's, you know, as a board, we feel like that when we make these recommendations, there's no sense of making any other future recommendations until we resolve these in such a way. And that's been the emphasis that we have worked on and we appreciate BLM answering. Anybody else have anything on the minutes?

>> I moved an approval a while ago. We haven't had a second.

>> FRED WOEHL: Okay.

>> I second.

>> FRED WOEHL: We have an approval and a --

>> Second.

>> FRED WOEHL: Yeah, all those in favor say aye. Or I or something. All right. It's done.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So, Fred, Kathie has informed me that we are going to break at 3 o'clock. So there is a 15-minute break before public comment. With that exception, I cannot get through the recommendations in 15 minutes. We have some options here. Maybe you read what has been submitted to you, and we deal with it tomorrow afternoon with further discussion? Or I can go through what we get through in 15 minutes? Or I could do some opening remarks and comments deferring the recommendations until tomorrow. But I'm at your pleasure.

Whatever you prefer. I guarantee you, if I read these things like I have in the past, it's going to get to about No. 3 of 8 and our 15 minutes has expired.

>> FRED WOHL: Well, I'll tell you what. Let's allow the Board an opportunity to look at them tonight, and then you -- we can, that way we can grill you pretty heavily tomorrow.

[Laughter]

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: I expect it. Feel free and ask some things. So that's good.

>> Mr. Chair, may I suggest that if we jump to Dean's wild horse and burro program update, we are exactly on time?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So, let's --

>> Can I have a handout?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So for my program update, no. I have some verbal remarks here prepared and they're not extensive. They're going to be

rather brief. If that's the  
pleasure of the board, I'll  
jump right into that.

>> FRED WOHL: Cope, it's a  
very good recommendation. It  
gets us back on line and it  
keeps Ms. Kathie off my back.  
And that's always a positive  
thing to be. So Dean, would  
you please give us an update  
from the wild Wild and  
Wild Horse  
and Burro Program on the  
national level.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So my goal  
here and what I intend to do  
within the next 15 minutes is  
kind of outline the major  
challenges and issues this  
program faces. None of them  
are new to you, but just kind  
of a reminder and a status  
update on where we're at on  
some of those. And then I'm  
going to outline the program  
priorities, and what we can and  
what we cannot do with our

existing resources. There will be many more details presented in the off range and on range report tomorrow. And then finally, I'd like to make some general remarks in conclusion. So the challenges and issues facing the program, it's pretty doggone obvious from what Nevada presented and presentations in the past that we have populations that continue to grow beyond appropriate management level. In 2015 on a national level, we reported 58,000 animals and last April, we hadn't compiled the 2016 March statistics, but those have been done. And that number is 67,000 nationally. And we need to keep in mind that this spring, since March, there's probably been another 10,000 foals born bringing the on range population to over 75,000. So, that's three times appropriate management level of

27,000. Our next challenge and issue is -- and this is a quote from the National Academy of Sciences 2013 report. There is no highly effective affordable easily administered fertility control method available to BLM. So our third issue and challenge is adoptions, even though they have increased. It looks like we're going to exceed last year's accomplishments in 2016. But they still have around 26,000 encouraging their up a bit, but 26,000. I should have said 2,600.

>> I was going to say.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Oh, my goodness. [Laughter] I wish they were 26,000. So that's a limiting factor that we're only able to place 2,600 in good homes through adoption or sales. Our holding cost still are hovering around 60% to 65%. That of our total budget last

year, you remember, that there were 49 million, 64% of our budget. And that still holds true. We are still constrained to 3500 removals per year, about the same number that leave the system via adoptions, sales to good homes and then a natural mortality of those that are on pastures and then holding. We cannot remove significantly more than that, because we will immediately become financially insolvent because of the cost to maintain unadopted animals. I think I reported last time, if we bring in 1,000 more than leave the system in any one year, if we bring 1,000, that's about \$1.8 million that we take on in an additional cost of holding on unadopted animals. The program does not have the money to proceed, and we have absolutely no authority to exceed our budget. So those are the

challenges and the issues.

Program priorities, what we can do and are doing within our existing financial resources, we're continuing research to develop new management tools and more effective contraceptive methods. You recall we've invested \$11 million to be expended over the next five years on 21 proposed research projects. Some of them underway, some of them proposed to be underway.

That's the first program priority. Our second priority is to reduce holding cost by a inquiring a more less expensive pasture and moving animals our corrals that are old and not desired for adoption, move them out of pastures at about \$5 a day into -- move them out of corrals and move them into pastures \$5 a day versus \$2 a day and in an attempt to save money, creating money to divert

to on range activities and operations to manage horses. You recommended in the past, we have a program set up that we have turned into our procurement staff to launch a pilot that involves an adoption incentive, a financial stipend that's outlined. Holle is going to get into more of the details, but it's aimed at adopting some of these animals that are just beyond the age of people desiring them, but not really too old too train. So an adoption incentive program is still a priority through the program. That stems from a recommendation that you made in the past. So, also, we're striving to increase the number of horses and burros available to adopters in the east. That's through the storefront programs that we've been talking about. If we're going to increase adoptions back

there, we've got to make the horses more available to the people. We intend and plan to increase the use of Internet adoptions. Holle is going to talk about a revamp of the software that serves in adoptions that will be an improvement, and also some more expansive use of that new software. This is a new and different thing that I don't think we briefed you on before. With the limited amount of removals at 3500, we are at risk and on the cusp of not having enough suitable and desirable animals to fuel our adoption program. So where we can, we are targeting and aiming of the limited amount of removals to select a removal of animals that are five years and younger and that are a much more desirable to adopt than many of the older animals in our system. We have to fuel

the adoption program if we expect to expand it. I think Ben spoke last time about having saddle ready animals more available. So finally, as far as the program priority, we need to embrace and encourage new and different management approaches, including contributions and assistance from community groups. We've talked about that before, and it remains a priority. So in general, and in summary here, my final comments are there is great urgency for resolution and determination of a path forward. You've seen and heard about the issues in Nevada, and they are continuing to escalate. I'm encouraged, because there's an increasing awareness and conversation in Congress. We've been called to the hill frequently. It seems like weekly to deliver

briefings to various  
Congressional representatives.  
You're aware that there was a  
Congressional hearing. And  
I've heard there may be another  
hearing scheduled. So that  
conversation and that awareness  
is occurring. And I believe  
Congress is going to be the  
key to the future here. I'm  
somewhat cautiously optimistic  
that we will have greater  
funding in the future. I'm  
hopeful for that. And that  
greater funding will allow  
implementation of new tools  
that we hope to gain out of  
research. These are extremely  
difficult times. And it is  
imperative that everyone come  
to the table and begin to work  
together for solutions.

Success and a sense of --  
success and a sustainable Wild  
Horse and Burro Program is  
going to be composed of  
multiple management approaches.

Not any one thing is going to solve this. It's going to have to involve many things, many approaches, and the use of many tools in regards to both on range and off range. So if we remain polarized and can't come to an agreement, then the courts are going to decide where we go, and others are going to make these decisions for all of us. And they may not be very satisfactory. So that's the conclusion of my comments. And I'm glad to answer questions. I know there's going to be a lot of discussion when we go through some of these recommendations. And just finally, I guess, we're aware of all your recommendation. We take them to heart. And as our funding allows, we're pursuing the priorities that you have recommended. They are our priorities as well. And we're

going to move as fast as we can. But it's not an easy trail to negotiate. There's a lot of bumps in it, and there's a lot of two tracks, and when it rains, things slip and slide, and you know, we are making progress, but it just seems so slow.

>> FRED WOEHL: I think we are.

I -- a lot of those initiatives that you talked about have been things that the Board has talked with you about, have recommended to you, and, you know, that -- a unified board is always better than one that's split. And we've been unified to try to help BLM manage this program on down to a field level. And on behalf of the board, I appreciate BLM's work that they have done, because I know it's not easy. Because it's not easy for us a lot of times. And I appreciate it very much.

Anybody have any questions or comments for Dean?

>> I just just wanted to say thank you for taking our recommendations seriously.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Thank you, Ben.

>> I have a question.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: The Board is kind of our conscience, I think. And you're good reminders and good encouragement to work in the priority areas.

>> As you've stated that decisions may be made for you. If they are, how would they be funded?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Well, we have no authority to go yon the boundaries of our funding. What I meant about decisions being made, when we can't agree on a path forward, sometimes court decisions are made that aren't very suitable or acceptable to anyone. That's

one thing I meant.

>> I know, but I mean, say for example, you know, you plan on removing so many horses in your budget. And if there's so many horses and the court decision says you have to remove more than that, then who's going to pay for that?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: The BLM is going to have to figure out how to rise to that challenge. And it could be the Agency might try to make more resources available beyond those that are allocated for horse and burro management. But those are going to be very difficult decisions and we'll have to cross that privilege when we get to it. Kristin, would you like to add anything to that?

>> KRISTIN BAIL: I'll put it in two contexts. I mean, we want to continue to have dialogue with all y'all. We're going to continue to have

dialogue with Congress. And we also are, we have an election coming up if anyone didn't notice. But what that means is that there's a transition. We are in a process of doing a lot of gathering information and we're going to have new people coming in that we're going to be able to tell our story to. We're going to be able to talk about the Wild Horse and Burro Program and our challenges, and our opportunities. Things that we want to do together for the benefit of the animals in the range. So that's an opportunity to talk about, hey, these are some things that are needed, these are some things we'd like to do. So we're going to take that at one point as new individuals come into the administration and to leadership to talk about what the program needs, what we want for the program. And I think

that's a real opportunity.

Transitions are never easy.

But I think that the more people are hearing our story and are with us, that gives me even more hope for what you're talking about, June, which would be maybe your willingness to invest in moving forward in some areas.

>> FRED WOEHL: Ginger.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: And we do have to break at 3 o'clock.

It is now 3 o'clock. So. If it's something quickly then that's lovely.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: I don't know if there's a short answer to this, but did BLM request less money from Congress this time around? And if so, why?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Kristin, you want to try that question?

>> KRISTIN BAIL: One of the strange things about making the budget is that you do that several years in advance.

We're actually talking about 2018 even though we aren't even close to 2018 yet and we'll also have a new administration. There are often really, really difficult decisions to make when we do budget requests. We are given from the administration and from our department the amount that we are allowed to request. And that amount is informed by kind of an overall cap for the entire agency and for the entire department. So I think y'all have heard about sage-grouse and, you know, some of the west wide work that we are trying to do and to accomplish. That's another very important effort. And those are some of the trade-offs. And sometimes you have to make room in one program by squeezing another one. I don't -- another thing is that, the President's budget

is an articulation and a starting point for conversation with Congress as to what the needs and programs are and we continually -- that's why Congress has hearings on the budget. We are continually able to provide updates and information. And also, you know, make sure that the current information, since these budgets are often done well in advance of the actual year what you're talking about, so we want to make sure everything is up-to-date. And as you say, we now have a much larger number to deal with than we were talking about in that budget. So never an easy thing. We never like having to ask for less or not -- or ask for less than what we think we are. But bigger pictures in mind, a lot of tough decisions, and at the end of the day, we have fiscal responsibility and

expectation to see meet.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Okay. So

Dean is with us for another day

, as well as Kristin and

everything, and, so, we put

more time in the morning to

talk about those things. I

would like to invite you to

take a short break. We will

very clearly try to -- I'm just

going to say 3:20. Because I

don't want to be silly about

it. These are very small

restrooms. It does appear that

we have about 26 people signed

up. If that doesn't change in

the next 10 minutes, you may

have up to 4 minutes. Whoa! To

do your public comments. So

come on back. [Break] Horses

and burro over the time period.

The state of Utah recommends

the advisory board urge the BLM

to manage wild horse and burros

at the minimum AML in all 23

herd amount areas in the state

of Utah. The BLM should

fulfill its statutory response by the time by removing at a minimum 3,884 excess horses in Utah and return the horse to the burro population to the HMAs appropriate AML. The state urges the Board to recommend the BLM to remove at a minimum additional 500 horses throughout the state to ensure we have a thriving ecological balance in our landscape on our state's range land. The state of Utah request the Advisory Board to acknowledge the BLM to identify the cost and ask those necessary funds in their next annual budget to address and throughout the West without the increase in rate of removal of horse and burro in Utah. The wild horse and burro population in the state and throughout the West will continue to expand thus harming our livestock produces, wildlife, our healthy land, and resources. The state

of Utah will submit a letter to  
you and that letter will  
reflect and support the  
comments that are made today.

Thank you very much.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: And I thank  
each of you very much. And our  
next three commenters include  
Dr. Gerald Huff, Betsy  
McFarland, and Tom Bernes.

When you're perfectly settled  
and you're ready to start,  
that's when it starts.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's a bit  
of a challenge to solve all of  
your problems in three and a  
half minutes. But I'm going to  
give it my best shot. I'm a  
Veterinarian equine  
practitioner from Nevada,  
raised in Utah, the heart of  
Mustang country. Let's cut to  
the heart of the chase. We  
need to find the funding to  
remove excess horses in as much  
as possible. When we're  
removing those horses, we need

to get all the Stallions. And the best fertility control is removal of semen donors and we should make every attempt to get the horse population to a zero population growth.

Castrating Stallions is the optimum form. We can return to the bands the following year and guild those young Stallions, and over a period of few years, we can get the reproductive rates down to where we have manageable levels in these herds. Numbers that are acceptable to both horse enthusiast and cattlemen. Users of the range, as Dr.

Sprattlingly eloquently quoted, if you're concerned about genetic pooling, once those numbers are reached, we can reduce Stallions into select situations where those populations can be maintained, and monitored, and managed. We have nibbled around the edge of

the population quagmire for the entire course of the so-called wild horse and burro issue.

These are feral animals. They have to be managed like any other livestock. I'm the ultimate horse lover. I've spent my entire career caring for them and caring about them.

We do no service by allowing them to starve to death, die of thirst, if then gather and corral. I might make one suggestion, there's a bit of additional technology on the horizon. We have viral vector GNRH vaccine which is shown to be successful in neutering both male and female laboratory cats. It shows every evidence of being successful in horses as well. It would be a very good task to do a trial on that particular piece of technology. And some already gathered adolescent horses. Its efficacy is particularly in

prepubescent animals and  
monitored over the next year or  
two and then make the whole  
fertility situation much more  
manageable in our hands. I  
appreciate your kind attention.  
If there's any way that I can  
be of any value to you in your  
attempts to rectify this  
situation, I'm at your service.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good  
afternoon. My name is Betsy  
McFarland, and I'm the Director  
of Eastern Landscape Coalition.  
We were established 15 years  
ago to facilitate landscape  
restoration such as BLM forage  
service private to state land.  
Our mission is to restore the  
dynamic and diverse resilient  
landscape of the arid and  
semi-arid land through  
education, research, advocacy,  
partnership, and the  
implementation of on the ground  
projects. We envision a future  
where the ecosystem of the arid

thrives. If this will be achieved and maintained with natural occurring services such as fire in combination with other management services. To this end, we're extremely concerned about the negative impact the current excessive numbers of wild numbers wild horses are having in sage-grouse habitat. With the majority of herds, exceeding the appropriate management level one to two to three times, we're reaching a threshold. If we lose these native landscapes, it would have a direct impact on the sage-grouse. Nevada and much of the West is affected, and as a result of the number of wild number of horses is unacceptable. With the current horse population, it is not unusual to see large number of horses outside the management area throughout Nevada.

Therefore, it is no longer the herd management area being impacted. They're being driven away. And as you guys heard this morning, not some of them haven't used certain areas in years. NLC is many of our affiliates that are reluctant to work with restoration projects. These restoration project range from removing stage step communities to wildfire restoration. We also spend considerable amount of time obnoxiously used control and vegetative and species. We advise to work with Congress and allow the BLM to exercise sale authority in order to move excess forces off the range land and get the population down below AML. The current birth control program is a tool, but in order for it to work properly, the herd management area need to be at or below AML. With the HMA high

population, this is desk end to fail. If this happens, not only the horses lose out, but so do the wildlife and other users and ecosystem as a whole. Thank you for this opportunity to comment. And my comments have been submitted at the back of the table.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Tom Bernes. I'm a cattle producer, horse producer, and a sportsman. I also serve as a first Vice President for the Cattlemen. and I believe the Board has our letter on the position of sterilization. This has become an insurmountable problem. We need to get the horse numbers down to appropriate level for many reasons. Range degradation is one thing why I think it's important. The health of horse and wildlife depend on healthy range land.

Range will flourish under proper grazing systems. The high number of mustangs roaming our range land, we've seen abusive staging by horses as they're on the the same range year long, year after year.

The certain soil types, this will cause trampling damage.

Bunch of communities are not tolerant to abuse of grazing.

And in these cases, the ecological slide will transition allowing the invasion of early annual grasses low sage brush. And this will bear the spaces where underground grasses are sparse.

At this stage, grazing could not be maintained to provide health. These ranges provide nothing for horse life or wildlife. This is the path of management wildlife horses are headed down. I think we can all agree that sick undernourished animals are

something we don't want to have. It is selfish and cruel to allow these animals to suffer and starve. The explosion of the wild horse population has occurred because of sentiment. And the horses have become the victim of those who want to help them.

Domestic livestock are managed or Magdalene for health.

Wildlife is managed for heard and range health. Where is horse management? Through resolution through this problem, it may be painful in the short-term, but something must be done to ensure long-term success sustainability for all range land for all who depend upon them. Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much. Next we're going to have Megan Dixon, Wild burro. You can correct me when I get up here.

>> [Away from mic]

>> KATHIE LIBBY: And Julie  
Hughes.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, there,  
everyone. My name is Megan  
Dixon. I also go by the name  
Wild Mustang Megan. Horses  
saved my life. So now I  
dedicate my life to help save  
them. You see, I have a very  
misunderstood disability that  
is invisible. It is  
characterized by inability to  
understand how to interact  
socially. This makes me almost  
impossible to make friends and  
keep friends. It also made me  
a target for my bullying. The  
name of this disability is  
autism spectrum disorder known  
as Asperger syndrome. I'm  
often asked how it feels to  
have Asperger syndrome? and it  
feels like I am in a huge water  
and everyone is playing in the  
water and I'm underneath the  
water struggling with all my  
might to struggle to reach the

top. People refuse to or choose to see me. Some prefer to laugh and make jokes, or even push me back down as I'm about to reach the top. No matter what I try, I can't reach the top. I just want to reach the top. I try with all my might. However, I fail. I since fell into a deep depression and thought about ending my life. When the pressure and bullying escalated, I started to self-harm. Being thrown into an unknown world with strangers unwilling to understand me was terrifying. The mental and physical abuse became too much and led to post-traumatic stress disorder. So at the age of 15, the doctors removed me from the school system. My dad had -- the reason why I'm here today is because my dad had gotten me a rescue horse that was saved from going to Mexico

to get slaughtered. He was  
very -- the horse had been  
through very tremendous amount  
of abuse. And he took me to  
meet this horse. And as soon  
as I looked into the eyes of  
this horse, I could see and  
feel the healing hands of God.  
And this horse led me on this  
fight. And it is now my  
mission to do all I can to  
educate others on the plot of  
the wild horses and to stop the  
slaughter of all of our equine.  
I really would suggest to -- I  
really suggest my friend's  
solution that is caught and  
reserved through this design.  
I believe right now, this is  
the answer. We need to  
promote, reserve the sign and  
we need to get this out there.  
The PZP, the sterilization,  
they're not the answer. And I  
don't believe it is in the  
horse's best interest. Thank  
you and God bless. Thank you.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is

Wilde Brupt, better known as

Wild Burro. And I live in

Nevada. You guys have a hard

job ahead of you. All I have

is my opinion, I guess. I

don't have a lot of statistics

and stuff. But since you put

the wild horse on the welfare

role, he's lost his freedom

anyway. And you canny Kuwait

it to some indigenous people we

have in this country. I was in

Carson in 1961 when wild horse

Annie was there. I don't

think this is anything close to

what she was shooting for, but

people are saying they want to

save the horse. In my opinion,

they are not. They're the

worst thing that could have

happened to that wild horse.

And I call them wild horses

because that's what they are.

They're not mustangs. Anybody

who thinks they are, they're

crazy. They're wild horses.

Those horses are run and used and predecessors to a lot of work horses. And now they're interbred and some of them have some pretty tough genetics. If those folks that want to save those horses would put up and come up with the money, and buy a ranch and put them horses on, it seems like all they want to do is get into the government's pockets. I don't understand that. They have got all those people that say they want to save the horse, but they don't have any solutions to it. All you want to do is starve them to death and put them out in some middle of Nevada where there's nothing to eat anywhere and watch them starve to death and call them mustangs. It's just , in my opinion, idiotic. and the main reason I came today, you need to do something with the horses. I had a dream the other night. And I had

this thundering herd running by me. And I woke up. And they were running into this lush alpha field and it looked like heaven, animal heaven. And I realized that my need in life is to save the wild and noble ground squirrel. And I've come today to ask if you can share a little bit of your money with me for that ground squirrel.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: So I think I misspoke and Julie Hughes did not sign up to speak.

>> [Away from mic]

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Yes, you would like to? Okay.

>> JULIE HUGHES: I expected to be back here. But I'm the Vice President for Northeast Great Basin Resource. In my opinion, I'm a horse woman, I'm a sports woman, and an avid outdoorsman. And I spend a lot of time outside. First of all, I need to reiterate. I'm going to

reiterate what probably has been said a dozen times. We need to deal with what's best for the resources for all at use for this land. Whether it would be wildlife, grazing, whatever it is out there. If the land only has habitat to support 10 animals, and it's not just two or three that's going to starve, it's all of them. Whether it be horses, elk, or cattle, they're all going to starve. They may not starve to death, but they're going to starve. We need to remove the protection of the horses and we need to start conversations. Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much. The next three commenters are Jake Tidbits, Maggie Ore.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good evening, I'm Jake from the Natural Resource Manager from Eureka County, Nevada. There's

a letter that's been provided  
to you through the e-mail and  
both physically here today.  
You're copied on there as one  
of the C C's on the letter.  
That is from the Eureka County  
Board of Commissioners. So I  
would like to step through some  
of the main points that are of  
concern to Eureka County. What  
you saw yesterday on your tour  
is the rule more than the  
exception in Nevada. You could  
block out the next 30 days and  
I can take you somewhere else  
that looks that bad or worse.  
There truly are emergency  
conditions in this state  
because of the over population  
of wild horses. We hear a lot  
of acknowledgement of these  
issues at these meetings by  
BLM. But there's never been a  
formal acknowledgement of that.  
We believe there needs to be,  
through the Board, a  
recommendation of formal

acknowledgement of emergency condition and emergency declaration to allow to move forward to gather the appropriate resources to tackle this issue head on. The letter that we provided to you also goes through and specifically highlights herd management areas within affecting areas of Eureka County. Many of the herds in Eureka County expanded, well, out of their HMAs. They're on private lands. We have informed BLM multiple times about this issue. One of the complex we highlight in that letter is the diamond complex. We heard earlier about the conversations about positive working groups and bringing the stakeholders to the table. I do want to point out that AML's and Diamond Complex were set through a course management type group of process. There were wild horse advocacy groups

involved in the Department of  
Wildlife And stakeholders, and  
anybody wanted -- who wanted a  
seat at the table. The  
ranchers in that situation,  
every one of them took a  
reduction in grazing numbers  
for their new allocation. And  
that came out in the early  
2000s. That also set the AMLs  
for the Diamond Complex. The  
only entity that came to the  
table that has not been able to  
uphold their part of the  
coordinated resource management  
plan to develop that process  
has been the BLM. Every  
rancher has a reduced number  
from what they have allocated,  
and that is one of the working  
group policies. So that works  
within everybody, works to the  
table and holds up their end of  
the bargain. We stepped  
through all the HMAs in Eureka  
County. I would ask you to  
please take a look at that.

And look at the individual HMA issue. Last thing I want to talk about here is the BLM running a foul of state laws. Particularly related to water law is the state law and the Brown law. But I want to focus on the water law. There's water hauling taking place as you sit here. There's water sources. They're being controlled by BLM where there is no legal water right held for those uses. And we ask you to look at that. Please look at the letter and the specific recommendations there. Thank you very much.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hello. My name is Maggie Ore. Nevada conservation district. And this came out of the strategy of dust bowl. They're state government governed by elected residents founded on the philosophy that conservation decision should be made at the

local level. Federal government owns 85% of CDC and service a vital role to pursue proper management of range land resources. The Nevada conservation commission and district supplements these following statements. It is essential that all established solutions to excess number must be allowed and followed. Long-term holding is not a solution but a misuse of public funds. The 1971 Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act should be enforced as well as enacted. The Lincoln County District sees unacceptable habitat of wild horse and burro and try to file solutions in our areas. In May 2015, we request our BLM RAC which states, remove wild horse and drop herd management area for those areas that do not provide sufficient habitat resources as listed in table 13. Table 13

of the RMP herd management area. The 2016 census found 1952 horses almost double the number in less than five years. Not obtaining five in contractual agreement with the American people committed through the process and ERENP. Many cities in Nevada are working hard on the sage-grouse habitat and melding over \$80,000 from three state agencies. The wildlife group from an important corridor area. The results of these projects are in jeopardy by overuse. I have looked at previous minutes of your meetings. Mr. Harvey stated that letters are real value and positive solutions. Dr. McDonald wanted to courage BLM to keep their eye on the goal with minimal interference. I wish those statements could be true and applied. But it's hard to be positive in the face

of such difficult situations.

With only one real solution.

get to AML by all means allowed

from the 1971 Act, including

sales without limitation. Here

in Nevada, you are the

epicenter of the wild horse and

burro problem. I cannot ignore

what can be observed by anybody

who looks at Nevada range lands

where wild horses and burros

are present. Conservation

district stand ready today to

assist by overcoming our range

land while our horse numbers

are above AML. We cannot come

to a solution until we deal

with the problem. Please tell

the secretary in Congress

what you saw on the tour today

And I did submit my

comments in the back. Thank

you.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good

afternoon. Sheila from the

Pine Nuts Volunteer Group in

the Pine Nuts HMA with the PZP.

I'd like to recommend you reverse prior recommendation. Prior to what the other Veterinarian said, it's ludicrous to spray out in the field. We also would like to urge the BLM to implement large scale PZP programs utilizing remote darting like we do. Bait and water trapping. And helicopter as a last resort and only when keeping the horse's social structure intact at all times. This can be done with humane standards and eliminating per head fee for each horse brought in and instead modify to a daily helicopter rate which might save you money also. BLM has told us that PZP can't be implemented on a large scale. We think that is not true. In fact, the only thing that stops BLM from implementing the large PZP program is the BLM. So if BLM doesn't understand how to

implement this, ask the advocates. We're happy to help you to make it a success on the range. We also hope that the advisory board can steer the BLM in the right direction. But please start by withdrawing the gelding of the horses and recommended a large scale PZP program that can work with the advocacy group. Along those lines, they also might think about compensating ranchers who want to voluntarily retire their grazing permit and give the AML to horses. One last note. Dean alluded to the mention of additional land being added to HMAs. I would like him and the advisory council to please recommend Pine Nuts HMA land, and things are changed out there. The current major land owners are not opposed to that. Neither are the tribal allotment land holders. And that's a way to

increase AML which I know is a no-no today, but in an area which you sustain horses healthily, in a healthy fashion. It will allow BLM to have more horses on the land, safe money in the long-term, and it's a win-win for everybody. Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much. Our next three speakers are Devon Blister, Kim Earhart, and Marie Milimum.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you, Committee members. For the record, my name is Devon. And I sit on the Federal Advisory Council for the farm view Federation. Where to start? Nevada Farm Bureau would like to say thank you for coming to Elko to hold this meeting. Given the degree to which Nevada range lands are severely impacted by the overpopulation of wild horses, we think it's warranted that

you come to see us. Thank you.

Nevada Farmland Bureau policy developed by our members and adopted through the annual policy process has called for proper management. We believe it's essential that the number of wild horses and burros be kept at or below AML and statewide level. Our policy also encouraged the actions that we have taken in conjunction with the Nevada Social County to seek legal action for the failure of the federal agency to follow the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act. We support the proposal for the state of Nevada to enter legal action.

It is extremely frustrating that the Agencies have no problem in requiring others to follow the regulations but aren't held accountable for their actions. Other multiple users of federal lens will

carry out the extra burden for the conservation of sage-grouse. We're told this will apply to the wild horse and burro. But, frankly, given the track record of federal agencies following the requirement of the wild horse and burro, we remain skeptical. We don't know what positive solutions can be brought forward. You've heard the facts. You've been on the ground and seeing what's really happening. The BLM is giving you the science. You know where the true position is. You've also heard a lot of emotional rhetoric about all of the -- all of the wonders that those that sit in a city cubical can fantasize about what the wonderful wild horse is. A feral animal that admittedly, the ranching community knows managing really well for well over 100 years,

to the point that when the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act in 1971, there were 17,000 of them on the range in the state of Nevada. And it didn't cost the BLM or the public a penny. How many millions of dollars have been spent since then? How many horses have been gathered and against the law relocated and transferred and now in this current situation, Stafford to deaf or thirsting to death? It's kind of hard for somebody simple like me to get my head around it. Nevada supports a healthy thriving population, but we need sound resource management. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to you. My name is Kim Earhart from Pennsylvania. I am deeply concerned about the uncertain future of the wild horses and burros of America.

I am a 30 year public servant  
as a letter carrier. Formally  
known as the Pony Express. As  
I continue to learn the  
challenges and concerns  
relating to wild horse and  
burro management from the HMAs  
and other open range lands, two  
concerns have emerged. Number  
one, that the humane BLM policy  
always be given precedence in  
implementation over immediate  
quick fixes such as the  
helicopter gathers and wild  
mare experiments.

Overpopulation numbers in  
Nevada is not a new problem.  
Nor did it happen suddenly as  
if overnight. But as a result  
of allowing a problem to slowly  
unbalance out of control, we  
allowed this. The horses are  
paying the price. But we have  
allowed this. And together, we  
must fix it. We are strong  
together and we can do this.  
From wise and thought out

suggestions have been offered here today. This is a multifaceted problem. And it must have been multifaceted and enforced solution. Number two, that the BLM budget maximum funds to a heavy PZP, GonaCon campaign. Make use of Nevada's limited water resources or HMAs in general. If starters are constantly demanding water resources, the horses will be naturally forced without water from the drought. Then vaccinate, vaccinate, vaccinate. Zero birth equals a bench full of long-term sustainable AMLs and healthier range. As number of decreases as the HMA range improves, the wild horse burro may not be singled out as the only range villain and other factors will be exposed. And I also wanted to, if I have time, since I have been here in Elko, I've driven over 600 miles all the

way down to 28, all the way  
down to Eureka and all the way  
up to 93 to Wells. I've  
encountered from the road small  
vans, small vans of 7 to 8  
adults. I observed one with a  
definitely Stallion. And they  
looked amazing. And I know  
what a horse should look like.  
And the range condition, I saw  
no animals on the range. And  
it looked the same as we saw  
yesterday.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you  
for the opportunity to speak  
today. I'm a little nervous,  
so my voice gets really [Away  
from mic] And I talk fast  
because I have so much that I'd  
like to go through. But just  
on my initial statement, I  
strongly opposed, am opposed to  
field spay or fertilization.  
Appropriate follow-up care  
would not be possible on the  
range or any holding facility.  
I vehemently oppose. And these

are necessary if PZP is used as recommended by the 2013 NSA report adds an intermediary data that is comprised, this proposed fertility control will be continued to be challenged in court and will become a waste of taxpayers dollars in defense of it. Those can be utilized towards PZP instead of some sort of, say, sterilization process.

Management process are facilitating high population growth. That's high population growth rate that could be increased by removal by compensatory growth from decreased forage. As a result, number of animals through holding facilities is probably increased by the management of the horses. That's in the 2013 NAS report. Please accept moving forward in my recommendation everyone referenced to the BLM or DOI's

and undue challenges. And wild horse and burro finding page 10 and 11, the wild horse and burro lacks the specificity to guide managers and establish an appropriate management level. The handbook does not clarify the vague definitions relating to implementing for strategies for free roaming-roaming horse range equines. How they're monitored and established are not transparent to stakeholders, supplemented scientific information, and amendable to adoption with new information and environmental and social change. So that's the report that came out in 2013. I'm not trying to be accuse to, and maybe there's been progress in that. I recommend BLM adopt any stand off of wild horse or based off of for minimum of five year basis moving forward and justification of any horses or

burro remove. And they should utilize the body condition scoring for horses as a priority for any of the removals. Initially, NAS and on one HMA, and five year monitoring program. Data that were used in actual use range condition and trends.

Utilization, precipitation, range sites, observation. I'm not going to continue to read that, but basically, based on the scientific information, based upon these scientific determination, I recommend for the health of our entire ecological system and the BLM's responsibility to the citizens of the United States, any grazing permit object issuance of removals should be modified accordingly.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Debbie, you're going to tell me we have one more person remaining. If we'll go on this order. Craig

Downer. Tammy Pearson. And

Ramona Morrison. One more?

That's it. Okay.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was on

the tour yesterday. My name is

Craig Downer and I appreciate

that on being able to give a

few comments and allowing me to

be there. I would like to say

that I think one thing is being

overlooked, and that's the

water tables and how they

influence the ecosystem. And

in many areas throughout the

West, where the water tables

are greatly drawn down by

ranchers and golf courses and

mines, and I've flown quite a

few of these herd areas on

behalf of the wild horses, as

wild horse advocate. And I

know how dry they look. And

you can see a rancher with big

pools and lush pastures and

alpha field in town. And you

can set up these little Islands

for habitat and that would be

for all the wildlife species.

So anyway, my testimony, I just want to get that in about water tables. That should not be overlooked. And especially if the horses are set up in that way and not allowed to set up for failure. Sincere greeting to all the advisory board and those present. I'm still a faithful believer in fulfilling the noble and true Wild Horse and Burg Act. I implore each of you to seriously weigh the following. We live in a world that is rampantly overrun by our own species. And our machines and chemicals that alter the ecosystem. Present population rates have been increased. They're increasingly globalized and in homogenized society. And new technology aimed at exploiting what remain to the natural world to the maximum. All in order to increase our

population in the comfort and convenience of our modern lifestyle. But left out of the equation has been the welfare for the rest of the life that we surely depend on. The great majority of human activities today come at the expense of well functioning, healthy and balanced ecosystem. These activities are increasingly compounded with our increase in numbers and cast of a poll over the earth. We must question the many livestock and eating habits that's inflicting the community about who's health and vitality we depend on the future of our well-being. We should learn to eat lower on the food chain such as picking pine nuts which has been done to provide nutritious staples to the Native Americans for thousands of years. We must recognize that it has taken millions of years to life to

become established on earth.

First on the sea and then upon  
the land, this is established,  
but it's made by the  
interrelationships of many  
different creatures.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: I want to  
apologize to Ken Jones. But  
you will be our final provider  
of final comments.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good  
afternoon. I appreciate the  
opportunity to testify today.  
I'm Tammy Pearson from Utah,  
and I'm the owner of Pearson  
Ranch and BLM grazing owner.  
And also the owner of the Rocky  
Mountain Elk foundation and  
Daughters of the pioneers. And  
I've served for 30 years as a  
conservation district manager.  
And I've lived in the Southwest  
Utah my entire life. I've been  
active in agriculture in  
farming, hunting, and private  
state, and BLM permit holder.  
I've had an agriculture

education from Utah State University. And the School of Hard Knocks. I've seen the population of explosion of the feral horses. When the horses exceeded AML over 450% on average on our area, my family's property, our culture, and our livelihood is at risk.

As an avid hunter and sportsman, I see water habitats described due to feral horses in our area. The wildlife, the mule, deer, and sage-grouse and elk are all suffering because of this damage caused by overpopulation of horses. As a district manager of the Twin M Conservation District, I'm concerned about this damage that our natural resources in this fragile range is expansive that it's beyond repair. Our district board is aware and looking for avenues to improve these situations.

As a citizen of the United

States, the selfish interest groups far out weigh. If these groups don't understand the management or the impact of the overgrazing can do. As a county commissioner, I am worn to protect the health and safety and welfare of my county and citizens who live there. In a small rural county that is 87% that is federally managed land, we're affected by the overgrazing.. This will continue to be an economic hardship, and this will continue to be paid that grazing fees on pastures they're unable to utilize. My recommendation to this advisory board is to use common sense for solutions. As a county commissioner, I pledge we are going to do everything we can on a Congressional level to make and bring them out on the ground education. Bring some actual awareness. I'm not sure

that the word, that we're trying to make, the statements we're making is getting to Congress. And, so, we are having a Congressional horse tour a year from now in August. And it's going to be on the ground in Nevada and Utah and I'm hoping to pledge that Utah does not end up like Nevada in of their horse population. Thank you.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good afternoon. Ramona Morrison. Protecting the Harvest. It's been a long day and we've heard a lot of comments, many of which I would like to reiterate. Jake Tibit and several others said. But I do want to touch on couple of things that we have not touched on, the protect the heart vest has been for a long time documenting some of the travesties we've talked about today and I just received a

call yesterday from Eureka County and J.J. talked about it. A number of young horses dead in the spring as a result of choking down for lack of water. And this is going to continue. We have a problem in the West. With regard to this, one animal in that is the only unmanaged animal out there. Every other large animals, even small animals from foxes on up to elk are managed by the Fishing Game, or local Game department or in the case of livestock, strictly managed by the regulating agencies in the point in my own family's case where they show up at gunpoint on allegation of overgrazing. so I think that what we have seen in the West and particularly in Nevada, we are about a quarter of our permitted livestock number roughly, because it's hard to get accurate numbers out of the

federal agency in terms of permitted range stocks in Nevada in them. However, it is the ranchers in Nevada who have the ownership of the vested water rights that are watering these horses. So horses that are dying and it's being watered based upon the fact that ranchers are maintaining those waters for their own livestock as well as the horses. In the case of Austin Valley when our ranch was shutdown in 1991, all the water was shutdown. So this is the problem for the horses in terms of water, the water is coming from the ranchers. One of the things we hear quite often, whether you're in Congress or in Nevada legislative hearing or a public setting is that the western federal lands could not possibly be well-managed if it weren't for the federal agencies here managing these

lands. And what we have today is the gross mismanagement of this one animal. In addition to that, we have everything from forest where you drive from New Mexico to Montana to Sierra of California through Utah, wherever you go, dead dying forest, or if you drive up I-80 from Reno to Nevada, you see grass, as I can see. And to follow their own laws and manage these courses according to law written by Congress and remove the horse to see where you want to take them as set by Congress in 1971. Thank you. And we'll go from there.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Ken Jones. And I came up here at 11 hoping to catch you folks while you were fresh. I appreciate the opportunity to give you a synopsis of my interaction and association with the Wild and Free-Roaming

Horse and Burros Act. After purchasing and in the Robinson sheep and cattle operation in 1973, my wife and I moved with our young children to Elko County. And we established our own livestock operation. Our share of the Sorenson Jones Partnership permitted a BLM permit for 1472 on the allotment. Our newly designated use and we sold our interest in the sheep and we began to process converting our permit from sheep to cattle. In 1992, the conversion was completed. The BLM concluded our allotment was better from sheep to cattle, our permit was reduced from 1432 to 432 active AUM. From that reduction from 1437 to 4543 represented a cut of 66%. And loss of 895 AUMs. Those AUMs were fully purchased through substantial effort. They were not a gift from the U.S. government as some people

seem to think. One of the reasons for such a draconian cut in the livestock, those two management horse areas were included within the boundaries of our mountain allotment. And there had to be sufficient forage for the hit of horses for those two levels. In 1998, the BLM issued their final multiple use of allotments. Which management and cattle horses were outlined. This past year, 2015 and 2016, you need to move rapidly increasing horse number and we reduced the cattle usage to AUMs to less than 3,000. At the same time, according to the BLM census, they're currently approximately 1800 to 2000 horses present on these two HMAs that include our allotment. Those are above 700% determined by the preliminary to be appropriate for those areas. Under the final multiple use addition,

the BLM has mandated to maintain the horses within a range of plus or minus 15% of AML. Some areas of allotment have become unusable for cattle because of excessive horse use. Some locations experience from 70% to 80% forage utilization by horses by the time our cattle got in the fall. It must be remembered that our livestock are only on the range six months. Mid-November to mid-May each year. Am I out of time? Okay.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Sorry.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can I just make one closing statement?

>> KATHIE LIBBY: If it's brief.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

Simply following the growth of the wild horse herd will not solve this problem. Horse numbers have got to be reduced to the appropriate management level, and then managed to

maintain their numbers within those levels as spelled out in the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you so much, Mr. Jones. Fred, before I turn the microphone over back to you, board members, please stay seated. If you're in part of this -- part of this room, please stand up for a moment. Just for a moment. Oh, I know you want to. Come on. So you've done an amazing job this afternoon. You really have. And I would like you to give yourselves a standing ovation. [Applause] And we hope to see you back at 8 o'clock. [Meeting in recess until Friday.]