



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Wyoming State Office
P.O. Box 1828
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82003-1828



In Reply Refer To:
4720 (930) P

December 14, 2005

Instruction Memorandum No. WY-2006-011
Expires 09/30/2007

To: Field Managers and Deputy State Directors
From: Associate State Director
Subject: Wild Horse and Burro Gather Plan Development Procedures and Gather Schedule Implementation

Since 2003, the Wyoming Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has made significant progress towards achieving the statewide appropriate management level (AML) for wild horses. Based on current population projections for our sixteen (16) herd management areas (HMAs), Wyoming will need to remove approximately 1,300 wild horses in Fiscal Year (FY) 06 and 500-700 horses annually starting in FY 07 in order to maintain our state-wide AML. In order to standardize our gather planning and scheduling process, Wyoming BLM will be implementing the attached Gather Planning Checklist and Gather Schedule. The processes detailed within the Gather Planning Checklist will streamline the planning and coordination of our targeted removals while the Gather Schedule will help us coordinate our current and future gather needs with the Washington and National Program Offices as well as the other States.

Gather Planning Checklist :

The attached gather planning checklist contains a series of standard operating procedures that will be followed in our planning of future gather operations. The checklist covers all activities from documenting the need for the gather to the initiation and development of the gather plan and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document as well as the scheduling and completion of the gather. The initiation of the checklist will be coordinated between the Field Office Specialist and the State Program Lead prior to the start of any gather planning process.

Key State and National policy and guidance for gather planning that will be followed in addition to procedures contained within this checklist are as follows:

1. During the initial scoping of the gather plan and NEPA document, consideration will be given to the development of one consolidated document to cover all HMAs being gathered with common boundaries (HMA Complexes) regardless of Field Office boundaries and management responsibilities.
2. Appropriate Management Level Achievement (AML): Removals will achieve the lower limit of the AML.
3. Where removals are necessary to achieve or maintain thriving natural ecological balance, all decisions shall be issued effective upon issuance or on a date established in the decision [43 CFR 4770.3(c)].

4. Gather Policy and Selective Removal Criteria – The National policy and guidance as described in the most current Instruction Memorandum (I.M. No. 2005-206) applies to all Wyoming initiated wild horse gather documents.

Gather Schedule :

The attached gather schedule will serve as a guidance and scheduling tool that will be followed in our planning of future gather operations until management, budget, and/or policy dictates a need to change the schedule. Implementation of the schedule will assist us in maintaining our statewide AML by having a defined plan of where and when we anticipate future gather needs. Changes in the schedule could result from budgetary changes and emergency situations such as disease, fire, or inadequate forage or water due to drought. Other changes may be made due to changes in on-the-ground management of the HMAs from land use planning revisions (AML/HMA size) or increased use of fertility control which would facilitate a longer interval between gathers. All potential changes will be handled on a case-by-case basis between the Field Office and State Program Lead and then authorized by the State Director.

Conclusion :

I look forward to further refining and improving our wild horse management processes. I see our Field Offices continuing to play a significant role in our statewide success in achieving and maintaining our appropriate management levels.

If you have any questions, please contact Alan Shepherd, Wild Horse and Burro (WH&B) Program Lead, at (307) 775- 6097.

/s/ Donald A. Simpson acting

2 Attachments:

- 1 – Gather Checklist (5 pp.)
- 2 – Gather Schedule (1 p.)

Wyoming BLM Standard Operating Procedures Checklist for the Wild Horse Gather Planning

Gather Plan and NEPA Document Development				
Item #.	Action Needed	Staff Responsibility	Target Due Date	Actual Completion Date
180 to 365 days prior to Target Gather Date				
1.	Conduct a thorough census of the HMA 6-12 months prior to target gather date to attain a current population estimate for the HMA. (This is necessary for the development of Purpose and Need section of the Gather Plan/EA as well as being used in the Statement of Work and Task Order for contract gathers.)	Specialist		
2.	Document and make determination that excess horses exist in HMA through review of existing monitoring data compiled for the HMA. (6-12 months prior to target gather date)	Specialist		
3.	Initiate development of Gather Plan/EA. Internal scoping of affected resources should occur. (6-12 months prior to target gather date)	Specialist		
31 to 150 days prior to Target Gather Date				
4.	Draft Gather Plan/EA begins 30 day internal Field Office and WYSO review. If proposing use of fertility control with gather, NPO requires mandatory 45 day review of Draft EA and supporting documents. (Min. 120 days prior to target gather date)	FO/SO/NPO staff		
5.	Incorporate internal comments to Gather Plan/EA.	Specialist		
6.	Document date that Annual Helicopter and Motorized Vehicles Hearing was held within the State.	State Program Lead		
7.	Coordinate with the livestock grazing permittees within the HMA on proposed gather operations, target removal numbers and gather dates.	Specialist		
8.	Coordinate with local Game and Fish Office on potential impacts with wildlife winter range, hunting seasons, and critical habitat closure periods, etc. that may exist within the HMA proposed for gathering.	Specialist		
9.	Coordinate with the Private landowners within the HMA if access across their lands, use of private lands for holding corrals/traps, and access to water sources are necessary for completion of the gather.	Specialist		
10.	Letter to interested parties notifying them the document will be available for review. Press release noting availability on Web page. (10-14 working days prior to start of Public review period.)	Specialist/Web team		
11.	30 day Public review of the draft Gather Plan/EA begins. (Min. 90 days prior to target gather date.)	Specialist		
12.	Draft the FONSI and Decision document.	Specialist		
1 to 30 days prior to Target Gather Date				
13.	Finalize the GP/EA and FONSI/Decision based on Public and internal review. Decision document will be issued “effective upon issuance or date established in the decision” (4770.3(c)). (Min. 30 days prior to target gather date.)	Specialist		

Item #.	Action Needed	Staff Responsibility	Target Due Date	Actual Completion Date
14.	Field Manager signs FONSI/Decision document. (Min. 7 days prior to target gather date.)	Field Manager		
15.	GP/EA and FONSI/Decision document sent to all who commented.	Specialist		
Gather Operations				
	NOTE: All timeframes listed below are in regards to regular scheduled gather operations. In case of emergency operations, all scheduling will be a case by case basis depending on severity of emergency.			
National Gather Contractor				
45 days prior to Target Gather Date				
16.	Coordinate with Rock Springs Corrals' Facility Manager to project corral capacity for time of gather to determine if additional corral space at other BLM facilities needs to be planned for with the NPO Shipping Coordinator.	Specialist/State Program Lead		
17.	Coordinate with USDA-APHIS Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC) within the state if APHIS vet presence is requested during gather operations (courtesy call to APHIS/BLM liaison who can also assist making this contact if needed). APHIS presence during gather is recommended if there are particular concerns re. animal health or if advocacy group or media presence is expected to be a problem. APHIS inspection of horses is mandatory prior to interstate movement of horses from WY to CO without a negative coggins test (i.e. shipping to Canon City, CO directly from trap site). (Min. 45 days prior to target gather date.)	State Program Lead		
18.	Coordination with State Veterinarian and APHIS State AVIC if equine health issues exist within the HMA proposed for gathering. Health issue may require the contracting of local DVM to conduct required testing of animals gathered.	State Program Lead		
19.	Coordination with PAO at Field Office and State Office levels for media inquiries and visitor requests.	Specialist/State Program Lead		
30 days prior to Target Gather Date				
20.	Complete final coordination with NPO for implementation of fertility control vaccine if identified as part of gather protocol. (Min. 30 days prior to target gather date)	Specialist/State Program Lead		
21.	Statement of Work and Task Order sent to Contracting Officer at National Business Center in Denver. (Min. 30 days prior to target gather date.)	Specialist/State Program Lead		
10 days prior to Target Gather Date				
22.	Coordination with State Brand Inspector for movement of horses across County and State borders. (Min. 10 days prior to target gather date)	Specialist		

Item #.	Action Needed	Staff Responsibility	Target Due Date	Actual Completion Date
1 day prior to Target Gather Date				
23.	Verify the Field Manager has signed FONSI/Decision document.	Specialist		
24.	Contract pre-work meeting one day (minimum) prior to commencement of gather operations.	Specialist/Contract COR		
25.	All necessary personnel and equipment for gather operations on site.	Contract COR		
During Gather Operations				
26.	Daily reports of gather activities will be supplied to the State Program Lead for reporting to the State Director, Field Manager, and NPO.	Specialist		
After Completion of Gather Operations				
27.	Contractor payment invoices and contract documents finalized and sent to Contracting Officer within 3 working days of completion of gather.	Contract COR		
28.	Gather completion report to NPO with Actual number gathered and removed. Number of animals treated with fertility vaccine if applicable.	Specialist/State Program Lead		
In-house Gather Crew (as authorized by State Director)				
14-45 days prior to Target Gather Date				
29.	Approved Project Specific Special Use Aviation Plan in place.	Specialist/Zone Aviation		
30.	Coordinate with USDA-APHIS Area Veterinarian in Charge (AVIC) within the state if APHIS vet presence is requested during gather operations (courtesy call to APHIS/BLM liaison who can also assist making this contact if needed). APHIS presence during gather is recommended if there are particular concerns re. animal health, or if advocacy group or media presence is expected to be a problem. APHIS inspection of horses is mandatory prior to interstate movement of horses from WY to CO without a negative coggins test (i.e. shipping to Canon City, CO directly from trap site). (Min. 45 days prior to target gather date.)	State Program Lead		
31.	Coordination with State Veterinarian and APHIS State AVIC if equine health issues exist within the HMA proposed for gathering. Health issue may require the contracting of local DVM to conduct required testing of animals gathered.	State Program Lead		
32.	Coordinate with Rock Springs Corrals' Facility Manager to project corral capacity for time of gather to determine if additional corral space at other BLM facilities needs to be planned for with the NPO Shipping Coordinator.	Specialist/State Program Lead		
33.	Coordinate gather dates with BLM Dispatch and Zone Aviation to allow adequate time to schedule dispatch services, flight following, and helicopter manager. (Min. 45 days prior to target gather date.)	Specialist		

Item #.	Action Needed	Staff Responsibility	Target Due Date	Actual Completion Date
34.	Project Lead (Field Office Horse Specialist) will initiate the completion of Aircraft Flight Request/Schedule (Form 9400-1a). Aviation will complete and approve the Aircraft Flight Request/Schedule prior to aircraft being scheduled. (Min. 45 days prior to target gather date.)	Specialist/Zone Aviation		
35.	Aviation will finalize scheduling of appropriate aircraft through National BLM On-call WH&B Contractor list. (Min. 30 days prior to target gather date.)	Zone Aviation		
36.	Rock Springs Facility manager (and/or gather crew leader, if identified) will coordinate and schedule any additional personnel and equipment necessary for the gather operations. (Min. 45 days prior to target gather date.)	Rock Springs Facility manager		
37.	Complete final coordination with NPO for implementation of fertility control vaccine if identified as part of gather protocol. (Min. 30 days prior to target gather date)	Specialist/State Program Lead		
38.	Coordination with PAO at Field Office and State Office levels for media inquiries and visitor requests.	Specialist/State Program Lead		
39.	Aviation approved Helicopter Manager will be assigned to the project and involved in the helicopter operations, to ensure the operations are being carried out safely and comply with BLM requirements. (Min. 14 days prior to target gather date.)	Zone Aviation		
	10 days prior to Target Gather Date			
40.	Coordination with State Brand Inspector if movement of horses across State borders is necessary. (Min. 10 days prior to target gather date)	Specialist		
	1 day prior to Target Gather Date			
41.	Verify the Field Manager has signed FONSI/Decision document.	Specialist		
42.	Aviation meeting between Rock Springs Facility manager (and/or gather crew leader, if identified), Helicopter manager, Specialist, and Contract pilot to discuss gathering plan, identification of critical animal locations and removal numbers.	Facility manager / Dispatch/Helicopter Mgr/Specialist		
43.	All necessary personnel and equipment are available for project.	Crew Leader		
	1 hour prior to Target Gather Date			
44.	All necessary personnel and equipment for gather operations on site.	Facility Mgr/Crew leader		
45.	Helicopter Manager and crew leader make determination that conditions are favorable for start of gather operations. Helicopter manager must make a mandatory phone or radio call to Dispatch with determination. Dispatch then formally contacts Field Manager with decision.	Helicopter Mgr/ Crew Leader		
46.	The helicopter manager will complete the load calculation, test the radios with dispatch, AND call together a preflight mission (safety/operational) briefing between him/her self, the pilot, and the entire gather crew before firing up the aircraft and going to work, at least on the first day of the project, and preferably daily since trap locations and conditions may vary.	Helicopter Mgr		

Item #.	Action Needed	Staff Responsibility	Target Due Date	Actual Completion Date
During Gather Operations				
47.	Daily reports of gather activities will be supplied to the State Program Lead for reporting to the State Director, Field Manager, and NPO.	Specialist		
After Completion of Gather				
48.	Aviation operations debriefing, complete payment document	Pilot, Helicopter Mgr., Gather crew		
49.	Initiation and Completion Dates of Gather	Specialist		
50.	Gather completion report to NPO with actual number gathered and removed. Number of animals treated with fertility vaccine if applicable.	Specialist		

