

National Wild Horse & Burro Advisory Board Recommendations

September 24, 2020

Present: Ms. Susan McAlpine, Dr. Sue McDonnell, Dr. Barry Perryman, Ms. Celeste Carlisle, Mr. Fred Woehl, Jr., Dr. Tom Lenz, Mr. Jim French, Mr. Steven Yardley, Dr. Vernon Bleich

1. The Board recommends that BLM immediately begin to integrate wildlife management plan concepts (template developed by wildlife management agencies) on an HMA-by-HMA basis into a comprehensive, range wide WH&B management plan that includes contingencies for stochastic events and rangeland integrity, including riparian habitats.

Approved. Vote was unanimous.

2. The Board recommends that future research include: development and implementation of predictive models for animal movements that will likely expand resource degradation areas; and development and application of new tools (e.g., terrestrial laser scanners, drones, GPS collars) to measure concurrent forage use among large herbivores.

Approved. Vote was unanimous.

3. The Board recommends that the agency expand fertility control implementation and develop measurable objectives outlining a targeted reproductive growth rate reduction and multi-year plans, on an HMA-by-HMA basis. The effort should include fertility control treatments combined with gather operations, including HMAs where AML will not immediately be achieved. The Board recognizes that reproductive growth rates on the range must be reduced immediately so that overall numbers of horses or burros, as well as overall numbers of gathers, begins downward trending.

Approved. Vote was unanimous.

4. The Board recommends BLM compile and furnish to the Board an inventory of HMAs that have current, approved National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) decision documents, that contain fertility control components, as well as the type of fertility control(s) acceptable within the limits of that document.

Approved. Vote was unanimous.

5. The Board recommends that the BLM continue research into long term fertility control options, but that shorter-term, currently available safe and humane methods be utilized immediately. As longer-term fertility control modalities become available, the Board recommends that they be implemented, especially in more challenging HMAs, in order to increase management options.

Approved. Vote was unanimous.

6. The Board recommends that BLM identify the behavioral, physiological and social differences between wild horses and burros. BLM should expand the program's capabilities to manage burro populations humanely and appropriately based on those differences and burro interactions (neutral, negative, and facilitative) with other wildlife.

Approved. Vote was unanimous.

7. In order to improve the BLM's WH&B program decision efficiency and identify areas in need of improvement, the Board recommends an external audit of systemic internal organizational strategy and structure, capabilities and protocols. The Board recommends that BLM work collaboratively with diverse stakeholder groups. The transparent audit should be performed by a neutral, third party with capabilities in organizational structure and set up. The Board should have an active, robust, and positive role.

Approved. Eight in favor, one abstain, Dr. Vernon Bleich