



## Off-Range Highlights for Wild Horse and Burro (WHB) Advisory Board Meeting Phoenix, AZ, December 11-15, 2023

**Private Placement Results FY23** – The WHB Program saw near-record private care placements of 8,045 in FY23. This is the second-highest number of animals placed into new homes in more than 25 years and adds to nearly 300,000 animals the BLM has successfully placed since the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act was passed in 1971. Of the 8,045 animals placed in FY23, 6,220 were adopted, 1,798 were sold, and 27 were transferred to other government agencies. Wild horses and burros adopted through the BLM’s Adoption Incentive Program accounted for approximately 36% (2,908) of animals placed into good homes. The Program accomplished this feat through a robust combination of offerings at BLM facilities (31 events), satellite locations (45 events), Online Corral (7 events) and training programs with partners and correctional facilities around the country. BLM calculates that these results will save taxpayers upwards of \$181 million in lifetime holding costs for the animals. The Program plans to continue and expand on this success on all fronts in FY24 to responsibly steward public funds and advance the agency’s land and herd health objectives.

**WHB Partnerships** – The WHB Program coordinated the expiration of the partnership agreement with the Texas-based Mustang Heritage Foundation (MHF) that expired September 30, 2023, and developed a comprehensive plan that ensured the safe and timely return of all un-adopted/un-sold MHF-fostered animals back to BLM care. Through a recently released [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO) announcement the BLM is now seeking public and private partners to help support the agency’s mission to place wild horses and burros into good private care. The funding opportunity is open to local and state governments, tribes, other federal agencies and non-profit organizations through January 15, 2024. The estimated total funding for agreements under this funding opportunity is approximately \$7,500,000.

**NOFO Industry Day** – The Off-Range Branch supported the first-ever “Industry Day” workshop to educate stakeholders about opportunities to partner with BLM through a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). The webinar was well attended, with 157 registrants. Key topics included the process for applying for grants, including the need for applicants to register in the System for Awards Management, aka [SAM.gov](#). Panelists highlighted the off-range, on-range and research priorities the Program will consider when evaluating project proposals. Off-range priorities include support for private care placement, adoption compliance and education/outreach. A [video of the full webinar](#) is available on the WHB website.

**Off-Range Pasture and Corral Acquisition** – The Program plans to issue a Request for Proposals (aka contract solicitation) by the end of the calendar year or early next year for additional off-range pastures and corrals. The corral solicitation will allow for proposals that include not only holding and care but also training to support private care placements. The pasture solicitation will seek ranches that can support 200-10,000 unadopted WHB. The effort will support current and future needs to provide cost-effective, quality short- and long-term care for excess wild horses and burros off range. The Program is also working to finalize National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis on several other pastures from an earlier solicitation in 2021 that are expected to come on line in 2024.



**Off-Range Branch Hiring Actions** – The WHB Program filled three critical positions within the Off-range Branch to support and advance Program priorities:

- Off-Range Pasture Lead (Contracting Officers Representative (COR)), Rob Sharp. This permanent position oversees contractor compliance and animal welfare and manages the acquisition cycle for new and existing pastures to support the growing need for economical off-range holding.
- Outreach Specialist, Lemitchel King. This permanent position supports national communications strategies to promote public awareness of and support for the WHB Program. The position supports field-level efforts to increase private care placements, including administering national-level marketing contracts, and will take the lead on standing up a donations program to expand engagement and educational opportunities about BLM’s WHB management mission.
- Planning and Environmental Coordinator (P&EC), Zach Siegert. This time-limited position will facilitate the completion of NEPA for several pending Off-Range Pasture contracts to secure additional capacity in support of the Program’s strategy to reach AML.