



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

# Wild Horse and Burro Program Status

Presented by Dean Bolstad, Division Chief, Wild Horse and Burro Program

## Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting October 18, 2017



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





## Presentation Overview

- Bureau of Land Management Overview
- Wild Horse and Burro Act (1971 as amended)
- Program Status by the Numbers
- Appropriate Management Levels
- Management Tools
- Management Challenges
- Way Forward





# Bureau of Land Management



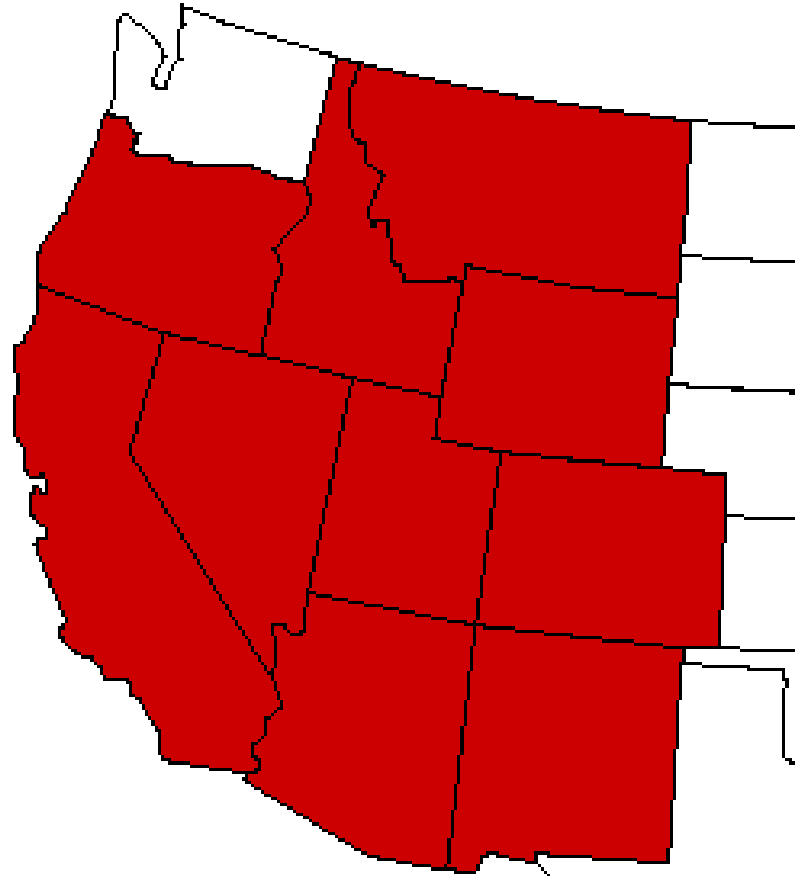


## Bureau of Land Management

- 1876 Mining Law
- 1934 Taylor Grazing Act
- 1964 Wilderness Act
- 1970 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- **1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act**
- 1973 Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- 1976 Federal Land Policy and Mgt. Act (FLPMA)
- 1978 Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA)

# Key Facts of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, as amended

- Manage wild horse and burro populations on BLM and USFS public land
- Manage where found in 1971 (no relocation)
- Maintain a thriving natural ecological balance in support of multiple use

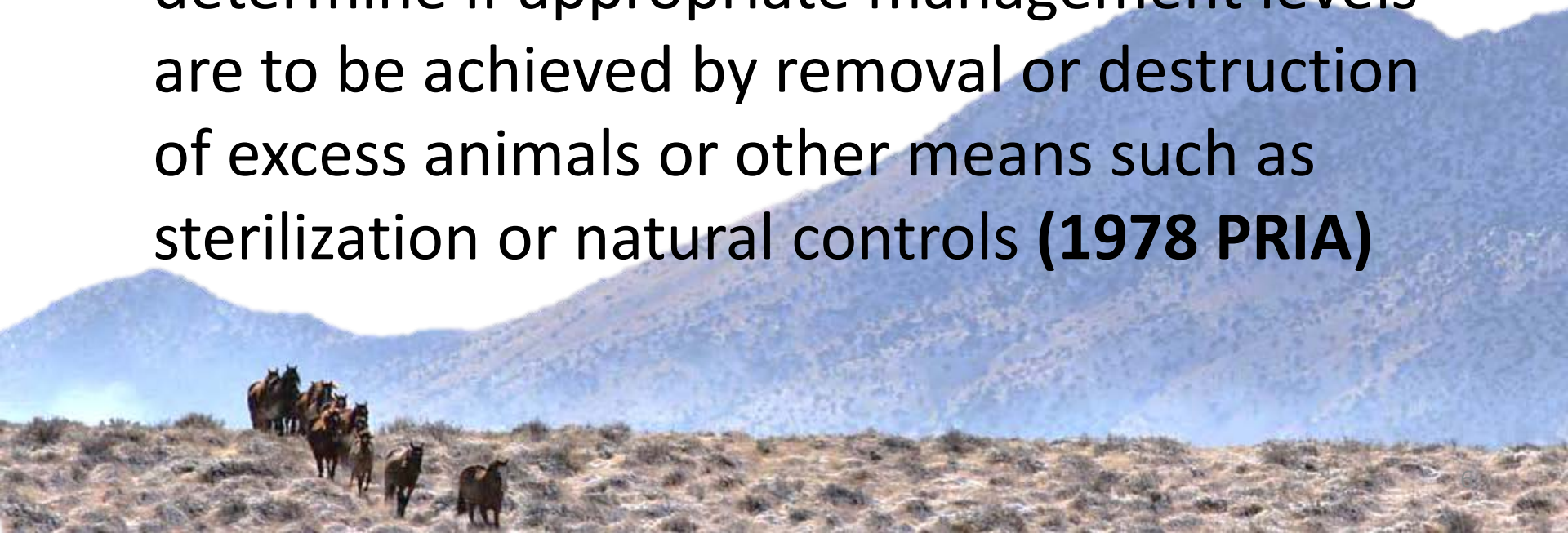


States where wild horses and burros are managed on public lands



# Key Facts of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, as amended

- Authorization for helicopters for capture and motor vehicles for transport (**1976 FLPMA**)
- Immediately remove excess animals and determine if appropriate management levels are to be achieved by removal or destruction of excess animals or other means such as sterilization or natural controls (**1978 PRIA**)





# Key Facts of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, as amended

- Humanely destroy those for which no adoption demand exists (**1978 PRIA**)
- Sale w/o limitation (**Appropriations Act, 2005**)
  - Animals offered unsuccessfully for adoption 3 times
  - Animals older than 10 years



## Wild Horses and Burros (WH&B) by the Numbers

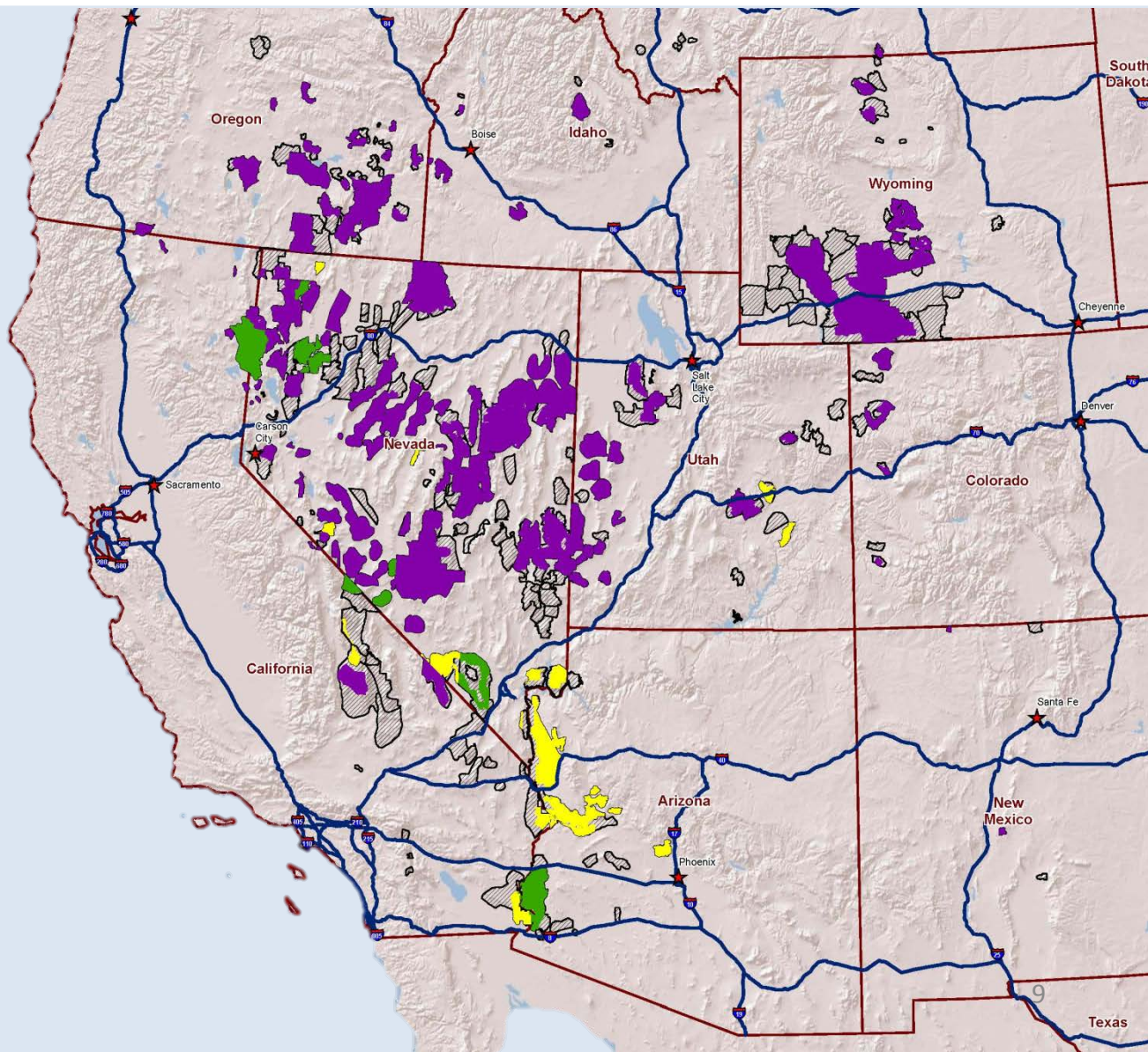
- **10** Western states have WHBs
- **177** Herd Management Areas (HMAs)
- **26.9** million acres of public rangelands
- **26,715** animals is the Appropriate Management
- **72,674** animals on the range (as of March 2017)
  - ½ in Nevada
- **43,813** animals in holding (September 2017)
  - 10,925 in 26 corrals (\$5.19 per day; **\$24.3 million** total in FY17)
  - 32,888 in 31 pastures (\$1.97 per day; **\$23.3 million** total in FY17)
- **4,183** adopted/sold in 2017 (\$1,891/animal adopted or sold)
  - **Adoptions have declined from 7,800 in 2002 but are rebounding**
- **4,209** removed from the range in 2017 (\$1,001/animal removed )







# Herd Areas and Herd Management Areas



- ★ State Capitals
- Road Classification
  - Freeway or Other Major Road
- Herd Management Areas
  - Both
  - Burro
  - Horse
- ▨ Herd Areas



## AUMs used by Wild Horses and Burros and Livestock In Wild Horse and Burro Herd Management Areas In 2016

- 793,000 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) consumed by WHBs in 2016.
  - Based on March 1, 2017 population Estimate
- 582,000 Animal Unit Months (AUMs) licensed & billed livestock use in 2016.





## Appropriate Management Levels

**WH&Bs are considered comparably with other resource values in land use planning**

- ✓ Cultural values
- ✓ Rangelands
- ✓ Natural scenic values
- ✓ Minerals
- ✓ Watershed
- ✓ Wildlife
- ✓ Wilderness
- ✓ Historic values
- ✓ Wild Horses and Burros



## Appropriate Management Levels

- Population range for long-term sustainability
- Established through public process
- Thriving natural ecological balance & multiple use relationships



## Appropriate Management Levels

- Relies on data collected over 3-5 years:
  - Grazing utilization
  - Ecological condition and trend
  - Actual use
  - Climate & weather





# Maintaining Herd Size at AML

- Gather, remove, adopt/sale



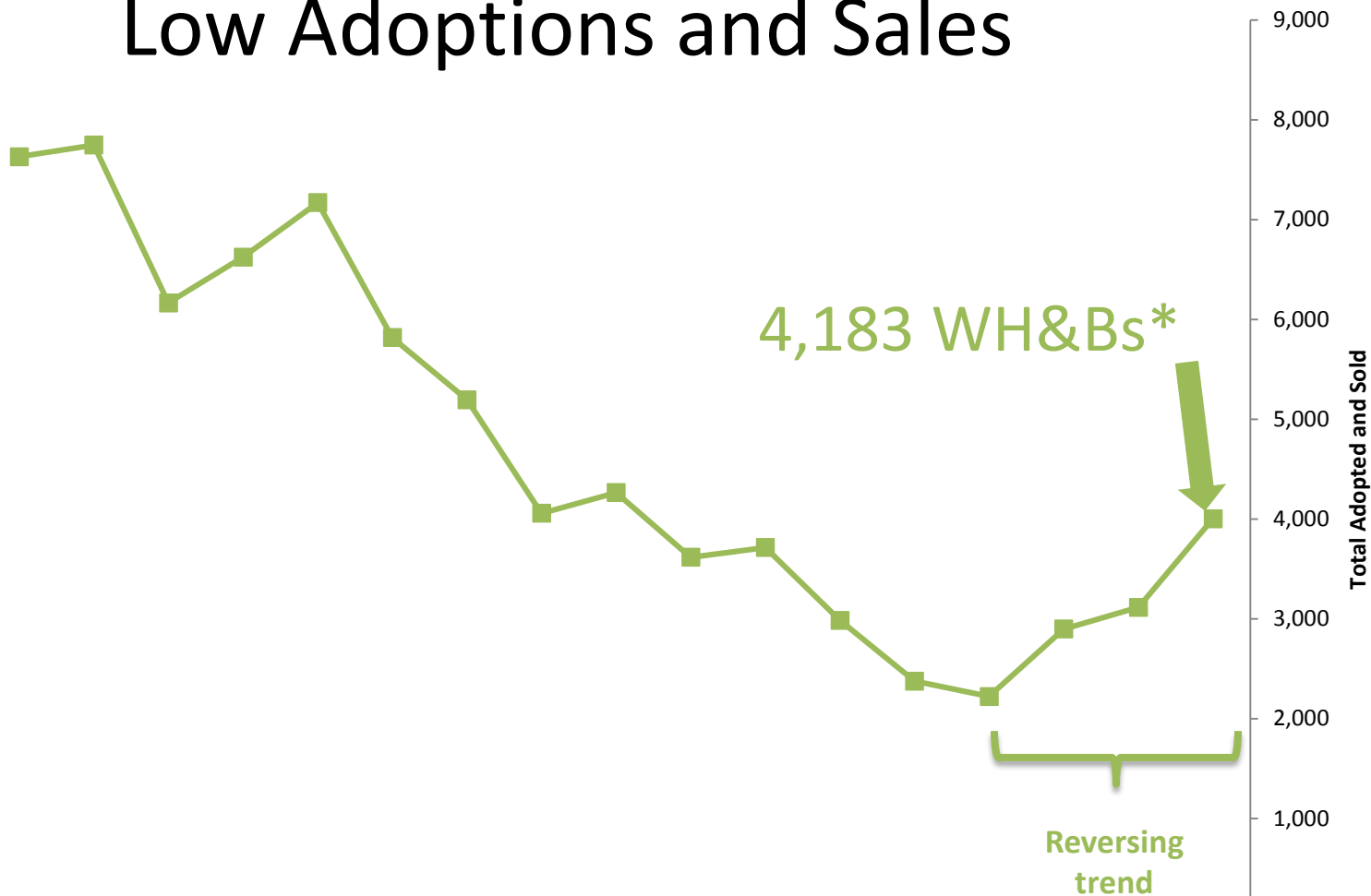
- Fertility Control





# Management Challenges

## Low Adoptions and Sales



Adoption + Sales

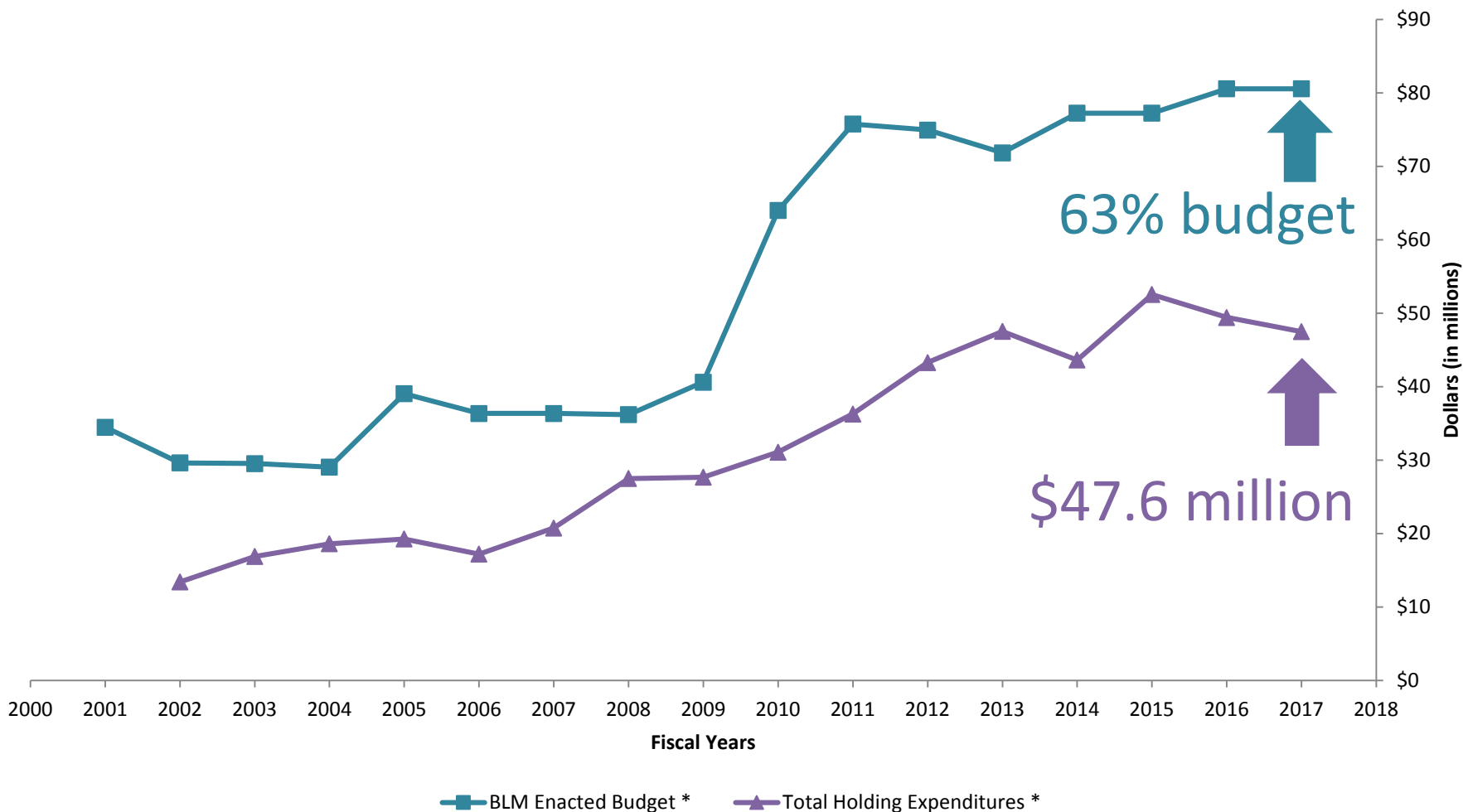
2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
7,630	7,746	6,165	6,624	7,169	5,817	5,195	4,057	4,265	3,617	3,715	2,985	2,376	2,222	2,898	3,116	4,003

\* Estimated for FY2017



# Management Challenges

## High Costs to Care for Unadopted Animals

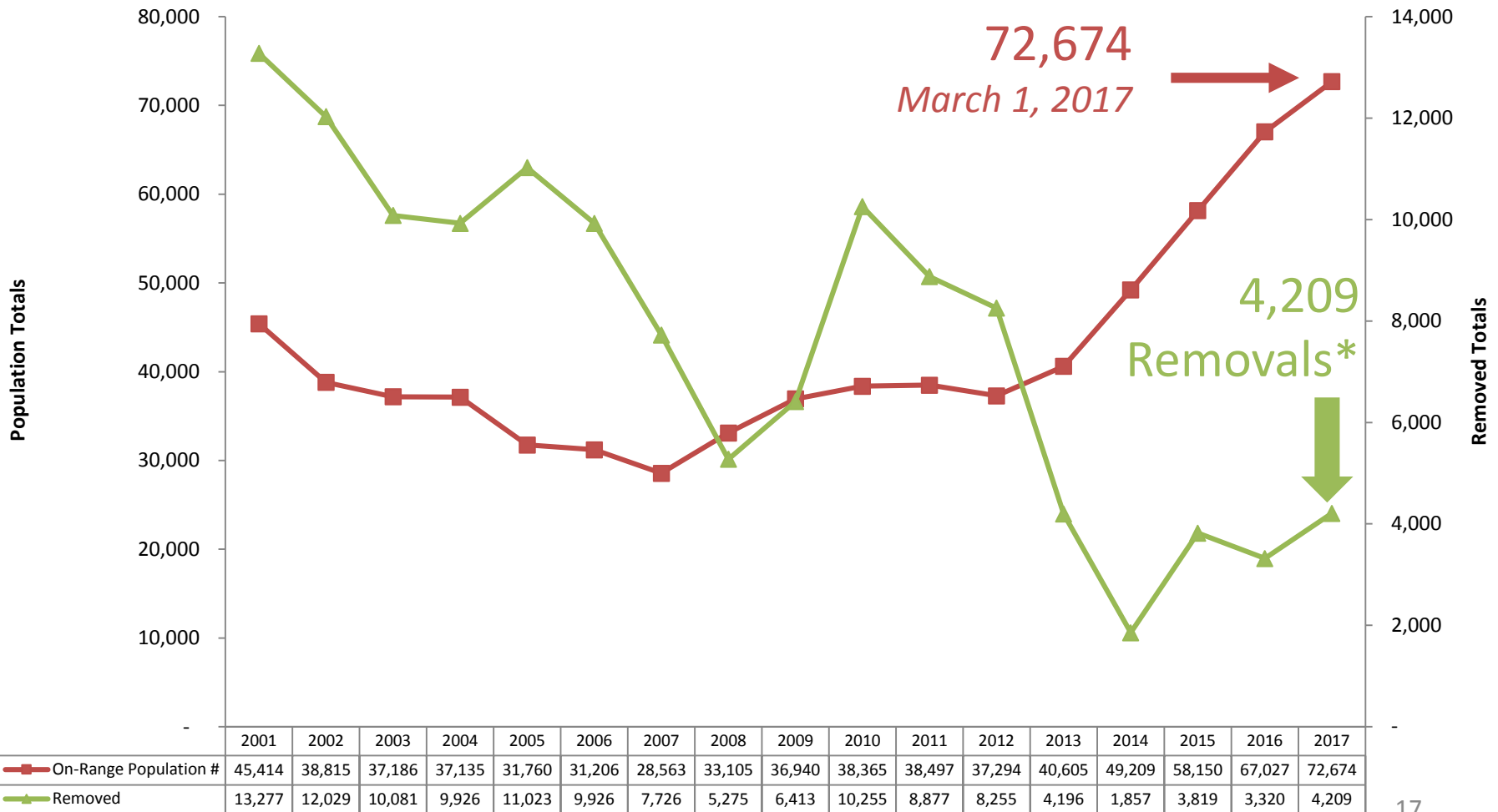






# Management Challenges

## Overpopulation



\* As of Oct. 5, 2017



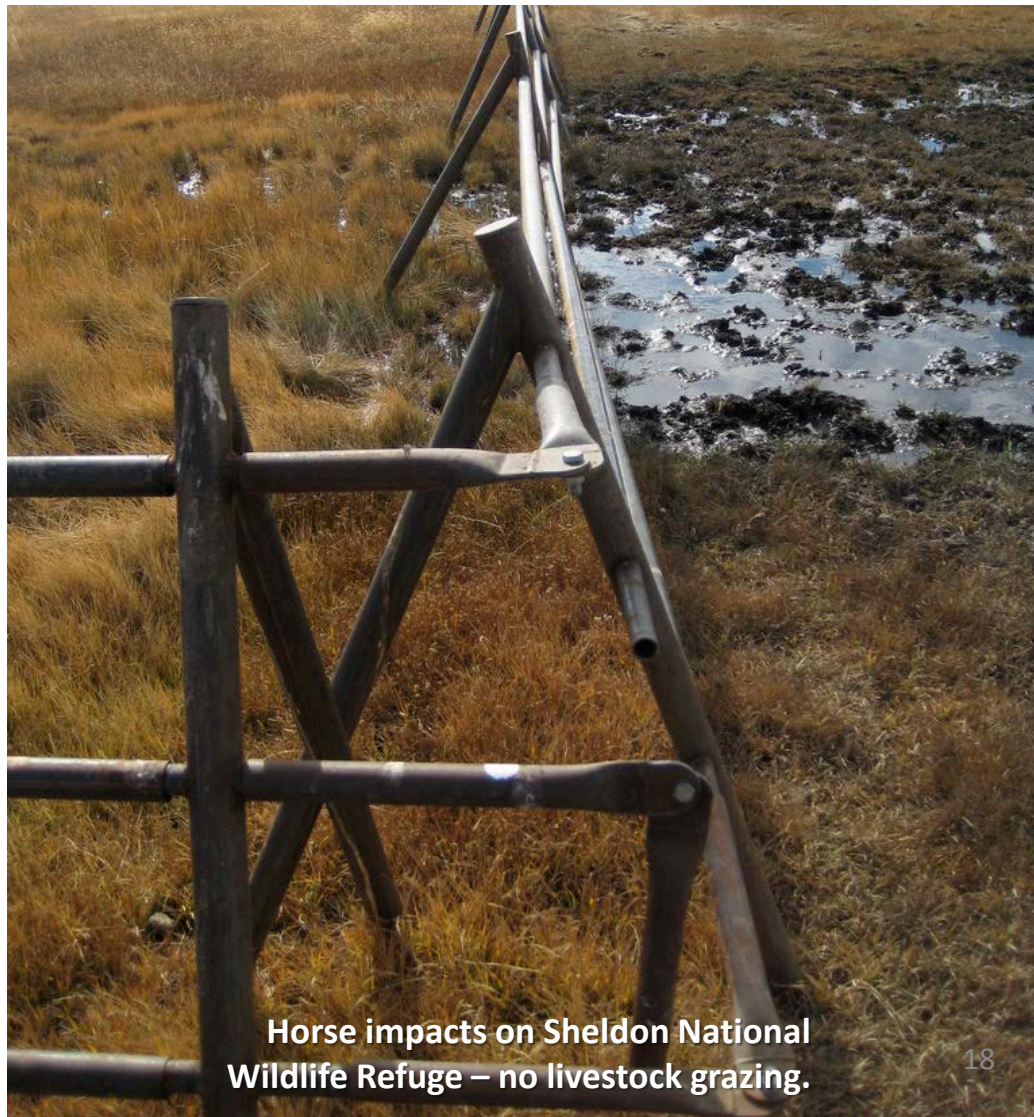
# Management Challenges



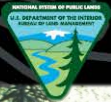
Horse impacts on Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge – no livestock grazing.



Overgrazing due to wild horses near Las Vegas – no livestock grazing (2007)



Horse impacts on Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge – no livestock grazing.



Pot Spring – Triple B HMA



Wood Hills Spring

Bushnell

07-26-2016 06:42:26



Cherry Spring – Mav-Med HMA



Moody Spring – Pancake HMA



# Management Challenges





# Management Challenges





## Way Forward

- The President's FY18 budget proposal includes request to:
  - Remove the rider prohibiting unrestricted sale and euthanasia of excess animal
  - Allow transfer to federal, state, & local governments for work animals.
- Consider other legislative options that support response to management challenges
- Continue 2015 research initiative to develop longer-lasting fertility control tools





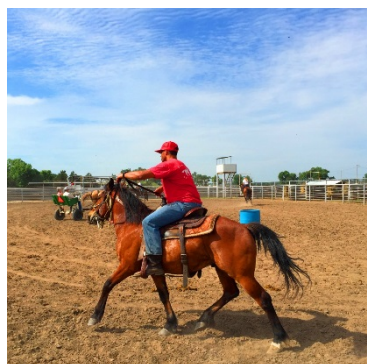
# Way Forward

- Increase efforts to train animals through partnerships

Mustang Heritage Foundation: 2,000/year



## Inmate Training Programs



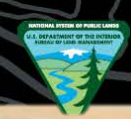


## Way Forward

- Seek more partnerships to support on-range and off-range management
- Engage private sector to assume the care of unadopted animals
- Once AML is achieved, minimize removals through widespread use of fertility control methods







End

Questions/Discussion





## On-Range Branch Update FY 2017 Removals/Fertility Control (Tentative totals for 2017)

- FY 2017 removals 4,209.
  - Helicopter Gathers = 3,399
  - Bait/water Trap = 810
- Contraceptive Vaccine Application
  - Darting = 234
  - Helicopter gathers = 607





# On-Range Branch Update FY 2018 Removals

- 1,623 removals scheduled through December 8, 2017
  - Based on funding available under Continuing Resolution Legislation
- Gather schedule will be finalized once BLM has budget.





## Research Update

- BLM Funded
  - 17 studies/projects on-going
  - 2 planned but not started
  - 3 studies cancelled
  - 5 studies concluded
- Studies funded entirely by BLM Partners
  - 7 studies





## WHB Litigation Update

(Update since Elko Meeting and Status as of September 27, 2017)

- Cases during the last year - 30
  - Colorado – 3
  - Idaho – 1
  - Montana – 4
  - Nevada – 2
  - Oregon – 8
  - Utah – 4
  - Wyoming – 6
  - USFS Cases
    - California - 2





# Off-Range Branch Update

- Off-Range Population *(as of September 2017)*
  - Corrals (10,925); Pastures (32,297); and Eco-Sanctuaries (591)
- New Off-Range Pasture Awards
  - Five awards made (KS and OK); 4,700 spaces
- Internet Adoption Website Rebuild *(tentative January 2018)*
  - New URL: [www.wildhorsesonline.blm.gov](http://www.wildhorsesonline.blm.gov)
- Adoption Demand Study
  - Public Survey at WHB facility and satellite events
  - Comment Cards: September 14, 2017 – July 31, 2018
- Private Care Placement Team
  - Comprehensive review of the Adoption/Sales program
  - Action Plan (Phase 1) Draft under review





# Off-Range Branch Update

- New Adoption and Sale Brochure Produced
- Adoption Application Revised
- Eco-Sanctuaries
  - Increased # of events and tourists in FY 2017
  - Renewal of Deerwood Agreement, 2017 – 2022
  - Promotional Brochure Drafted
- Correctional Centers *(as of September 2017)*
  - AZ, CA, CO, KS, NV and WY
  - Placed over 300 trained animals; over 140 untrained animals
  - Various events: Expos, Open Houses and adoption/sale events
  - Converting five from Assistance Agreements to Contracts





## Off-Range Branch Update

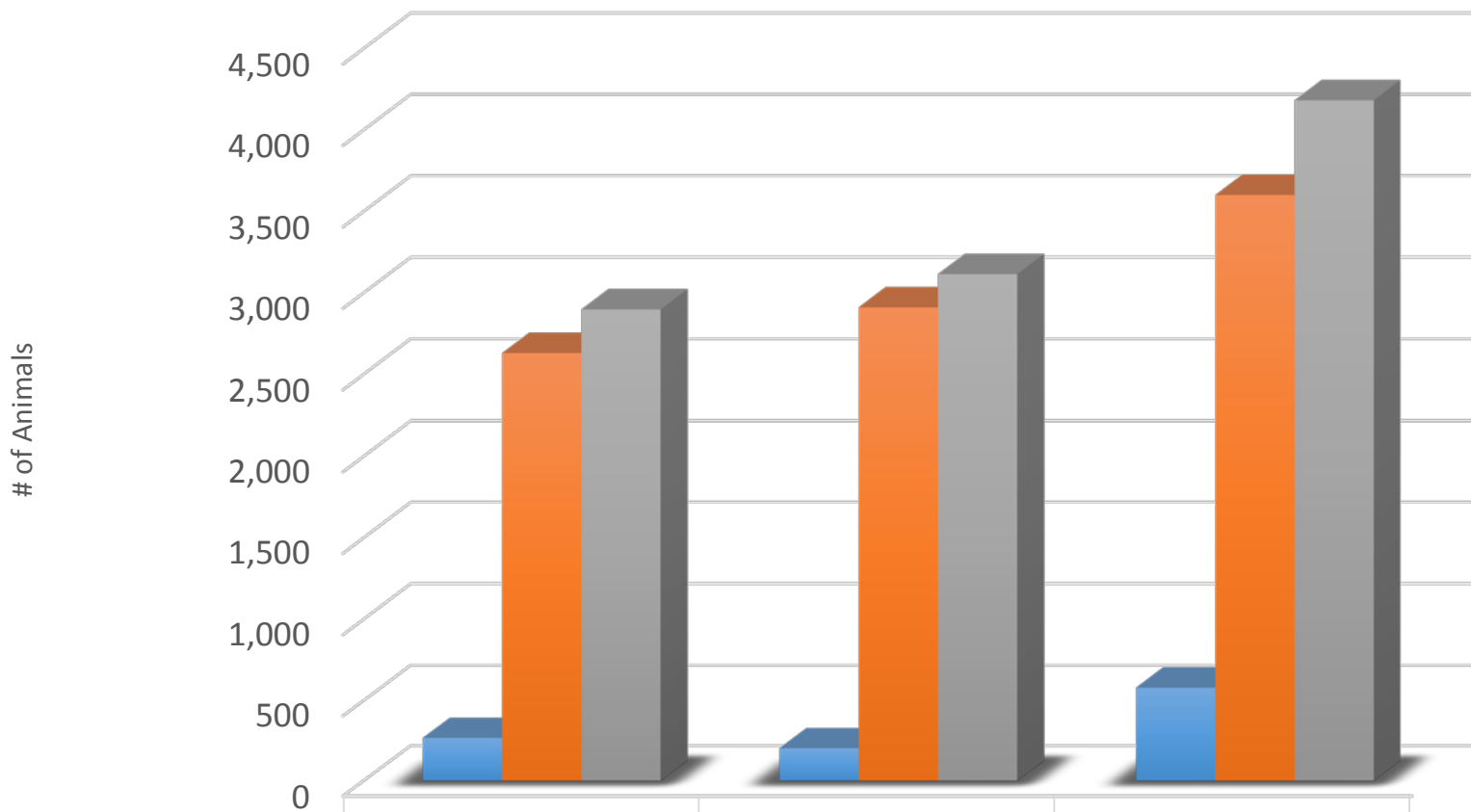
- **Mustang Heritage Foundation (Partnership)**
  - Programs include: Extreme Mustang Makeover (EMM), Trainer Incentive Program (TIP), Storefront Program, Youth Program, and Veteran's Program
  - Placed over 1,800 trained animals through EMM and TIP
    - Three EMM's included sale-eligible, trained animals
  - Educational Seminars
  - Assistance Agreement Renewed, 2017-2022
- **America's Mustang Virtual Reality Trailer**
  - 2017 Tours: Cheyenne Frontier Days, Bartlesville, OK Off-Range Pasture Public Tour and Fort Worth, TX EMM
  - Five Virtual Reality Trailer Tours Planned in 2018
  - 40ft x 8 ½ft; LED TVs; Virtual Reality headsets; Stereo functionality





# Off-Range Branch Update

## 2015 to 2017 Adoption & Sales Numbers



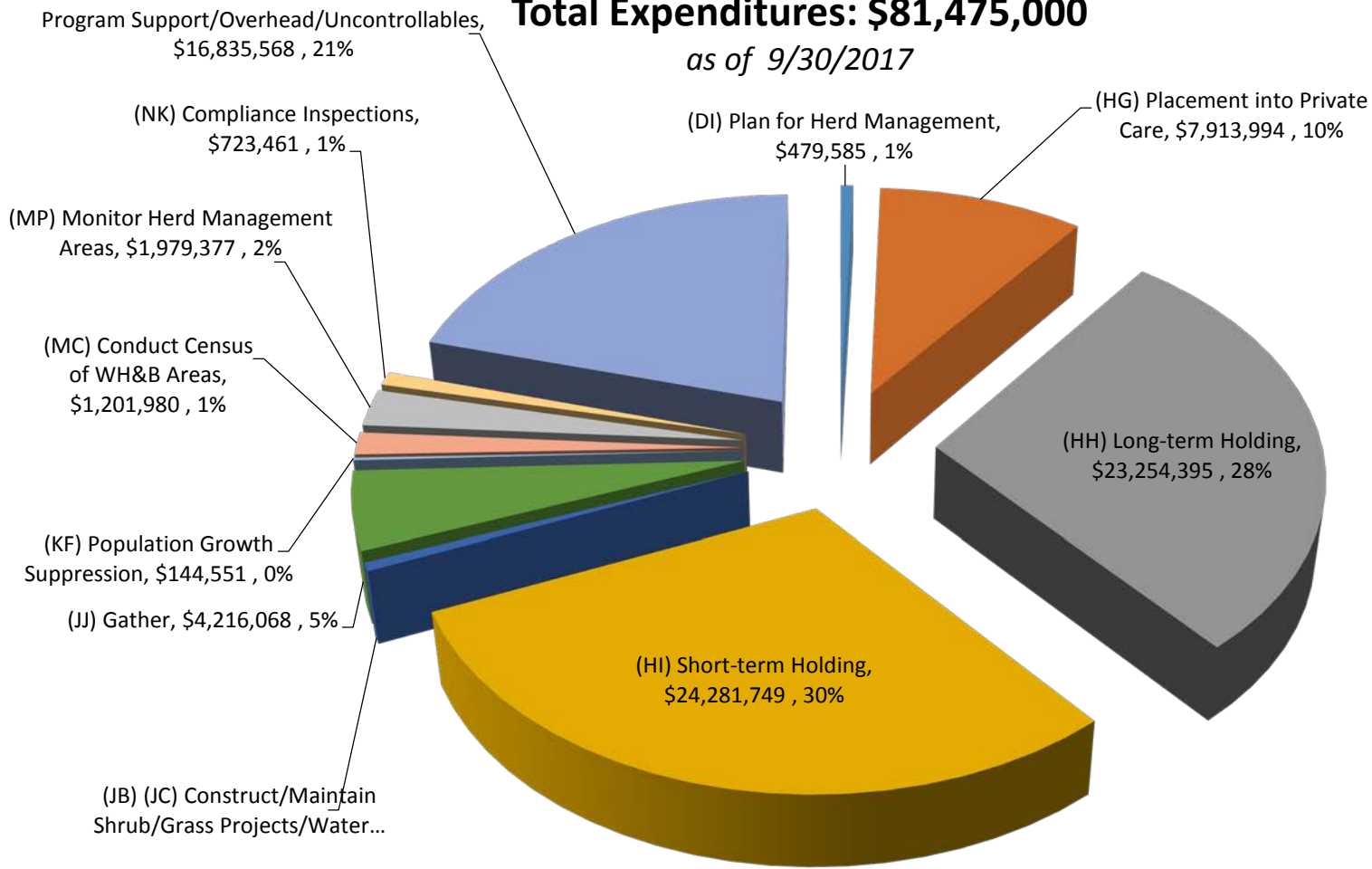
	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
■ Total # of animals sold	268	204	581
■ Total # of animals adopted	2,631	2,912	3,602
■ Total # of animals sold/adopted	2,899	3,116	4,183



# FY2017 WHB Program Expenditures\*

**Total Expenditures: \$81,475,000**

*as of 9/30/2017*



\* Total expenditures includes L1110, L5210, L5220, L1920, and L9830, as well as L1060 (WHB Program), funding expended in FY2017.



## FY2017 Unit Costs

- Gathers (JJ) - \$1,001 per head
- Fertility Control Treatment (KF) - \$2,500 per treated animal (includes gather costs)
- Adoption/Sale (HG) - \$1,891 per head
- Holding in Off-Range Corrals (HI) - \$5.06 per feed day
- Holding in Off-Range Pastures (HH) - \$1.97 per feed day