

Wild Horse and Burro Program

BLM Nevada

12/17/03

Key Messages

- ❖ Nevada manages more than half the nation's wild free-roaming wild horses and burros within 102 Herd Management Areas on nearly 16 million acres of public land. BLM's goal is to manage Nevada's wild horses and burros in a thriving ecological balance with the land's ability to sustain and produce forage for wild horses, wildlife and domestic livestock over the long term.
- ❖ In fiscal year (FY) 2000, the actual population of wild horses and burros managed by Nevada was more than 25,000 head, about 70% higher than the estimated appropriate management level (AML) of wild horses and burros of about 14,500 head.
- ❖ Today, largely because of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) National Strategy to achieve AML by FY2005, Nevada's population of wild horses and burros has decreased to about 18,000 head (25% above AML).
- ❖ Nevada has also made substantial progress toward establishing AMLs for all our herd management areas (HMAs). Currently, Nevada has AML set for 79 HMAs (compared to only 60 in FY2000). The goal is to set AML for remaining HMAs by the end of 2005.
- ❖ To remain on track with the national strategy to achieve AML in 2005, Nevada needs to gather and remove at least 5,500 head of excess animals in both FY 2004 and FY2005. Once AML is achieved, only about 2,500 excess animals will need to be gathered and removed in Nevada on an annual basis.
- ❖ At the present time, Nevada's top priority for a winter gather is the Nevada Wild Horse Range (Nellis). About 1,200 excess animals will be removed in December 2003. The gather began this past weekend (December 13-14).
- ❖ Other proposed Nevada gathers are on hold pending receipt of a final budget for FY2004.
- ❖ In summary, Nevada has made significant progress toward establishing and achieving AMLs since FY2000. Given adequate funding to support removal of at least 5,500 animals in both FY's 2004 and 2005, Nevada could achieve appropriate management levels at the end of FY2005. We will have AMLs established for nearly all the HMAs we manage in Nevada.

Supplemental Information on Wild Horses and Burros

12/17/03

1. How are continuing drought conditions likely to affect Nevada's wild horse and burro populations?

EXHIBIT <u>C</u> LANDS	Document consists of <u>3</u> pages
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Entire document provided.	
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Census data suggests that continuing drought conditions are resulting in reduced reproductive rates for many wild horse herds throughout Nevada. Many of Nevada's herd management areas (HMAs) are currently below appropriate management level (AML) due to lower reproduction and the removal of excess wild horses and burros since fiscal year (FY) 2000.

2. What is the status of planned gathers for 2004?

Nevada proposes to remove at least 5,500 excess animals in FY2004 in order to remain on track with the national strategy to achieve AML in 2005.

Currently, removal of 1,200 excess animals from the Nevada Wild Horse Range (Nellis) is underway (December 2003).

Other proposed Nevada gathers are on hold pending receipt of a final budget for FY2004.

3. Nevada manages about half the nation's wild horses. Why doesn't Nevada receive half the budget appropriated by Congress?

Nevada typically receives roughly 15% of the budget appropriated by Congress. However, Nevada actually benefits from a much greater percentage of the Congressional appropriation. For example, the Washington Office pays for all costs associated with the National Wild Horse and Burro Center at Palomino Valley Corral near Reno-Sparks. Nevada also enjoys corral capacity at Litchfield and Ridgecrest, California, and the services of other facilities. Other facilities support our national televised adoption event by serving as delivery sites. Additionally, Eastern States and the Elm Creek, Nebraska, facility support adoption of Nevada horses. Added together, these benefits represent a significant addition to Nevada's actual budget allocation.

4. How much money did BLM spend on the Wild Horse and Burro Program in FY2002, and for what? How does this compare with Nevada's expenditures?

Bureau-wide, the full cost of the wild horse and burro program in FY2002 was \$39.7 million. Of this, about 45% was spent on holding, 27% on adoptions, 12% on gather and removal, 5% on compliance inspections, and 3% on monitoring and census.

By contrast, Nevada's full cost for the wild horse and burro program was \$5.4 million in FY2002. Of this, 40% was spent on gather and removal, 29% on holding, 9% on adoptions, and 6% on monitoring and census.

In FY2002, Nevada's costs represented about 14% of the Bureau's full cost.

5. How much progress toward the National WH&B Strategy goals has Nevada made since FY2000?

Since FY2000, wild horse populations in Nevada have decreased from over 25,000 head to about 18,000 head. By the end of FY2003, AMLs will have been established on about 15 additional HMAs. Provided that Nevada receives the funding needed to support removal of 5,500 animals in both FY2004 and FY2005, Nevada expects to achieve AML (an estimated 14,000 to 15,000 animals) and have AMLs established on about 97% of our HMAs. This represents significant accomplishment of the National WH&B strategy goals since FY2000.

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6. **Is it true that BLM is holding thousands of horses in long-term holding facilities at considerable cost?**

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BLM is currently holding roughly 14,000 animals in long-term holding facilities (sanctuaries) at a cost of \$1.22 per head per day or about \$6.2 million dollars annually. This averages about \$17,000 per day. These facilities are in Oklahoma and Kansas and were selected via a public contacting procedure. A request for bids on another contract facility will open on January 12, 2004.

7. **How many animals does BLM place through adoption annually?**

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Bureau-wide, about 7,200 animals per year are placed through adoption.