



United States Department of the Interior



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In Reply Refer To:
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Dear Interested Party:

The Bureau of Land Management, Winnemucca District, Humboldt River Field Office (HRFO) and Elko District, Tuscarora Field Office (TFO) have issued separate decisions on an initial wild horse gather in the Owyhee Complex. The Owyhee Complex is made up of Herd Management Areas (HMAs) which are administered by each involved field office.

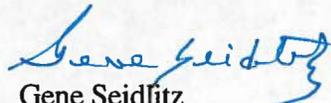
The HRFO has issued a decision on Alternative A from the Owyhee Complex Herd Management Area Gather Final Environmental Assessment for the HRFO managed portion of the Owyhee Complex, which includes Little Owyhee and Snowstorm Mountains HMAs. Alternative A includes a phased-in management strategy over the next ten years to remove excess wild horses, implement fertility control with PZP-22 (Porcine Zona Pellucida or most current formulation), and adjust sex ratios to 60% male population of the herd over several gathers to eventually reach the low appropriate management level (AML). AML for these two HMAs has been established as a range of 284-438. A helicopter gather would be the primary gather mechanism; however, the use of water/bait trapping may be used in this phased management strategy as a supplementary gather technique to assist in bringing the herd population to within established AML range. Due to funding, holding space limitations, and gather efficiency constraints, it will take multiple gathers over a ten year period to achieve the low range of AML and desired population growth reduction goals. Gather dates and numbers will be posted on the BLM Tentative Gather Schedule, found at http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/whbprogram/herd_management/tentative_gather_schedule.html. The initial wild horse gather in 2012 would result in the removal of approximately 800 excess horses, focusing on those areas where the health and well-being of the wild horses and rangeland health are at greatest risk and are a priority for removal of excess horses. The initial gather would begin on or about November 18, 2012 and take approximately 30 days to complete. Follow-up gather activities, potentially as early as Summer 2013, will be used to remove addition excess horses and implement the fertility control measures.

The TFO has issued a decision on Alternative B for the Owyhee, Little Humboldt and Rock Creek HMAs of the Owyhee Complex; by gathering 538 wild horses and removing approximately 296. Approximately 242 wild horses would be released back to the range following the gather. Of these, about 97 mares would be vaccinated with PZP-22 fertility control vaccine. The gather, removal and fertility control are intended to slow population growth, maintain population size within AML, and extend the time before another gather to remove excess wild horses would be needed. If there are funding and holding space limitations, it may take multiple gathers over a 10 year period to achieve

desired population goals and to fully implement the proposed action. The initial proposed gather would begin on or about November 18, 2012 and take approximately 30 days to complete. During the November gather it is anticipated that the Owyhee HMA will be the only area gathered within the TFO based on funding and holding space limitations. Approximately 186 wild horses would be gathered, 47 removed, and 139 returned of which 46 mares would be treated with PZP or the most current formulation for fertility control. Once the gather begins, the area would be gathered so as to minimize movement of wild horses and to reduce stress from competition for severely limited resources and multiple gather attempts.

The Final Environmental Assessment for the Owyhee Complex Wild Horse Gather and the two separate Finding of No Significant Impacts and the Decision Records are now available and can be viewed online by following the links from the Winnemucca District's NEPA website at http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/wfo/blm_information/nepa0.html. Hardcopies of these documents are available upon request from the Winnemucca District.

Sincerely,



Gene Seidlitz
District Manager
Winnemucca District Office