

United States Department of Interior

Bureau of Land Management, Boise District Office

Coyote Springs Bait Trap of Wild horses

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA and the associated DNA DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2014-0011-DNA would not constitute a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This finding was made by considering both the context and intensity of the potential effects, as described in the above DNA, using the following factors defining significance:

1. Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.

The Proposed Action will have beneficial impacts and minimal direct or indirect adverse impacts to wild horses, hazardous waste, soils, water quality, wetlands/riparian zones, wildlife/fisheries, grazing management, cultural resources, recreation, and the human environment over the short and long term (Sections 3.1.2.1.; 3.2.2.1; 3.3.2.1; 3.4.2.1; 3.5.2.1; 3.7.2.1; 3.6.2.1: 3.7.2.1 and 3.8.2.1 of EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA).

This new proposed action is essentially the same as the trapping proposed in the BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA except this proposal would use bait trapping instead of helicopter driving to capture the horses. This proposal would remove up to 35 horses verses 100 proposed for removal in the EA. Therefore this proposal is a subset of the proposal in the EA.

It should be noted that BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA didn't consider bait trapping as a viable alternative to capture 100 horses HMA-wide. The EA states:

“The BLM considered the use of bait or water trapping to capture wild horses. The BLM determined it would not be cost-effective or practical to use bait and/or water trapping as the primary gather method because the number of water sources on both private and public lands within and outside the HMA would make it almost impossible to restrict wild horse access only to the selected water trap sites. As a result, this alternative was eliminated from detailed analysis.”

The extended drought has changed the operating environment in the Habitat Management Area (HMA) by limiting other available water sources for these wild horses and caused them to congregate at Coyote Springs. This proposal is now viable because of the limited water sources in this portion of the HMA and the small area being considered for gather operations (Coyote Springs verses the entire HMA) make bait trapping cost-effective and practical. Furthermore, DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2014-0011-DNA concluded that the effects of bait trapping fall within the range of effects analyzed in BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA because this proposal is the same as

proposed in the EA except it is on a much smaller scale without the added stress level to the horses from helicopter herding into the trap.

The Proposed Action to reduce wild horse populations would benefit vegetation resources by reducing vegetation utilization (grazing by horses) and levels of mechanical damage (trampling) in this concentrated use area. Additionally, reduced wild horse numbers would result in benefits to wildlife through slight improvements in habitat conditions and would help limit competition for forage between wildlife and wild horses. Overlap between wild horse and livestock use areas would also be limited resulting in appropriate utilization levels across the allotment.

2. The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety.

No effects on public health and safety were identified in the EA.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

No effects on unique geographic characteristics of the area, cultural or historical resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas were identified in the EA (Consideration of Critical Elements, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA). Cultural resources would not be adversely impacted as planned trap sites utilize previously disturbed and inventoried areas (Section 3.7.2.1 of EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA). Removal of excess wild horses is expected to reduce negative impacts to riparian, wetland, aquatic and terrestrial habitat (Sections 3.3; 3.3.2.1; 3.4; and 3.4.2.1 of EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA).

4. The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

The analysis did not identify any controversy or disagreement concerning effects on the quality of the human environment. Public comments did express concerns about effects of management actions on various resource values (Section 1.8, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA). The effects have been analyzed and discussed in the EA (Sections 1.8, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA and section 4.2.2, Page 20, EA# DOI-BLM-OR-P040-2011-048-EA). Policy and management of the wild horse and burro program by BLM is a controversial subject nationally.

5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The analysis did not identify any effects on the human environment which are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. The Boise District has previously completed gathers in this

HMA (2010, 2007, 2004, 2000, 1997, and 1994) and no unique or unknown risks were identified during the past 5 gathers. None are expected in 2014.

6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

The proposed action represents a continuum of actions associated with wild horse management. Gathers have occurred periodically in the past and will continue periodically in the future, as long as the herd management areas exist. As such, the proposed action neither sets a precedent nor does it, in itself, trigger future actions. If successful, the proposed action would prevent further degradation of resources from excess horses concentrated in the Coyote Springs area of the Hardtrigger HMA.

7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

This proposal would have similar direct, indirect, and cumulative effects as those disclosed in the EA because the one trap proposed would be physically the same as proposed in the EA. However, the intensity of the effects would be less because only one trap would be constructed in an already disturbed area. The bait trapping scenario would cause less stress to the horses during the trapping when compared to helicopter trapping. This proposal is a subset of the proposal described in the EA and would therefore result in fewer effects because of the difference in the magnitude of this proposal. **This proposal is the same as proposed in the EA except it is on a much smaller scale without the added stress level to the horses from helicopter herding into the trap; therefore the effects of this proposal are substantially less than those disclosed in the EA.**

The analysis did not identify any significant cumulative or secondary effects (Section 3.9 through 3.9.7.3, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA).

8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

The analysis found that the alternatives would not result in adverse effects to cultural or historical resources (Section 3.7.2, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA).

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

No endangered or threatened species have been documented at or around trap sites (Sections 3.3.1 and 3.5.1, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA).

10 Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The analysis in the EA found that the alternatives are consistent with Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment and wild horses (Sections 1.5 and 1.6, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2012-0010-EA).

/s/ James M. Fincher

6/19/2014

James M. Fincher

Date

District Manager