



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Ely District Office  
HC33 Box 33500 (702 N. Industrial Way)  
Ely, Nevada 89301-9408  
[http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office.html)

In Reply Refer To:  
NOPA-040- 15-04

MAY 15 2015

## NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION LANDS IN WILDERNESS

**STATE:** Nevada

**COUNTIES:** White Pine

**FIELD OFFICE(S):** Schell

**WILDERNESS AREA(S):** Becky Peak

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Ely District Water Canyon Wild Horse Growth Suppression Pilot Program

### Description of the Proposed Action

The proposed action is to implement a pilot program to bait and water trap all the wild horses within the Water Canyon portion of the Antelope HMA and treat and release approximately 14-30 horses back to the area. The proposed action includes flying over the wilderness to push horses to capture sites outside the wilderness; however, no flights would land in wilderness.

All the mares that are trapped and selected for release would be treated with the population growth suppression vaccine Porcine Zona Pellucida (PZP)-22 (PZP-22) to prevent the animals from getting pregnant the following year. PZP-22 is a time-release pelleted PZP vaccine formulation with an expected efficacy of approximately 22 months.

The goal of this pilot would be to monitor the effectiveness of the treatments and overall reduction in foaling rates following treatment while stabilizing and maintaining a small wild horse population within this portion of the Antelope HMA. It is also expected that there would be a need to remove a small number (5-10) of excess horses (primarily young horses born to the project) during the routine trapping of the project horses, primarily when the population exceeds

40 head. This is to assure that the horses in the pilot area would have sufficient resources to sustain themselves throughout the year.

It is estimated, due to watering locations, four trap sites may be used during trapping activities; however, horses generally go to two main sources for water. Temporary trap sites (gather sites), including helicopter drive and water/bait trapping sites, as well as temporary holding sites, may be used to accomplish the goals of the proposed action.

No trap sites would be set up in sage grouse leks, riparian areas, cultural resource sites, or congressionally designated wilderness.

This proposed action is in accordance with the Becky Peak & Government Peak Final Wilderness Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (2014), which states for Wild Horse Management "aircraft may not land inside wilderness inside wilderness boundaries except in cases of emergency nor will capture pens be allowed."

Also anticipated for analysis in the environmental assessment are alternatives to 1) use GonaCon, instead of PZP-22; 2) gather horses and remove foals every other year; and 3) the no action alternative.

**Expected Decision**

Provide your comments on this proposed action to Emily Simpson, Wilderness Planner, at [esimpson@blm.gov](mailto:esimpson@blm.gov), or in writing to address above. If you do not have comments at this time, but wish to be notified when the EA is available for review, please respond to Emily Simpson via email to be included on future mailings regarding this topic.

The 30-day scoping period concludes **Wednesday, June 18, 2015**.

  
Michael J. Herder  
District Manager  
Ely District

5/15/15  
Date