

**United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management, Boise District Office
Black Mountain and Hardtrigger HMAs
Capture, Treat and Release Wild Horse Gather
EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2010-0021
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-B030-2010-0021 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 EA, 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-B030-2010-0021).

The Proposed Action will slow population growth in the Hardtrigger and Black Mountain Herd Management Areas (HMAs) to maintain population size within the Appropriate Management Level (AML) and reduce the need for long-term pasture of excess horses; thereby meeting Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar's Initiative. This action will directly enhance the long-term viability of the Black Mountain herd by increased genetic variability within the herd.

Maintaining AML within the HMAs will continue to achieve healthy lands and viable herds, and the protection and improvement of watersheds.

Beneficial impacts will result by extending the time before a removal gather is needed, resulting in fewer horses being relocated into long-term pasture (Section 3.5.2.1 of EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2010-0021). The action is expected to meet BLM's objectives for wild horse management in maintaining a thriving, natural ecological balance consistent with other resource needs and multiple uses.

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 major 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-B030-2010-0021). 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-B030-2010-0021). Treatment of mares with fertility control vaccine resulting in fewer offspring and slower herd growth and minimal removal of excess wild horses is expected to continue to make progress in meeting objectives for 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-B030-2010-0021).

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 # ID- B030-2010-0021). The effects have been analyzed and discussed in the EA (Sections 1.8, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2010-0021). 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 these HMAs (2007, 2004, 2000, 1997, and 1994), some of which included administration of the PZP vaccine; it is well aware of the associated effects. No significant adverse effects have been noted.

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 allow for the consideration of less frequent removal gathers due to slower herd growth.

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

The analysis did not identify any significant cumulative or secondary effects (Section 3.11 through 3.11.2.5, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2010-0021). See Section 6 above.

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-B030-2010-0021).

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 3.2.1 and 3.4.1, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2010-0021).

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 1.4 and 1.5, EA # DOI-BLM-ID-B030-2010-0021).

/s/ Aden L. Seidlitz
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Date