

APPENDIX 12. Public Comments and BLM Responses

An Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Bible Spring Complex Wild Horse Herd Management Area Gather Plan DOI-BLM-UT-C010-2022-0012-EA was available to the public for a 30-day review/comment period beginning on May 18, 2022. Comments were received from numerous individuals and agencies. Many of the comments could be clarified or answered by referring to sections within the EA. Others were outside the scope of the document. All comments were considered but many were grouped with similar comments as addressed below. Changes were made to the EA based upon the comments and public involvement. Comments which are clearly addressed in the EA are not readdressed here. Below is a summary of the comments received and how BLM used these comments to change the environmental assessment.

Support Gathering Wild Horses

#	Commenter	Summarized Comment	BLM Response
1.	Dusty White	The small seeps and natural water sources that used to carry water every year are now getting stomped out by the mustangs and now do not have water.	Thank you for the comment.
2.	Craig Laub	I have been out on the range where the wild horses roam. It is devastating to look at because the horses have over grazed to the point is ruining the natural growth of vegetation. Something needs to be done about the issue, so I am totally 100% in favor of the wild horse gather at the Bible Springs Blond Wash Management area! Do it now!	Thank you for the comment.
3.	Several	The population of wild horses is seriously over the estimated carrying capacity of the referenced management areas. We're in the worst drought ever recorded in Utah history and these horses will soon be dying of thirst. Immediate action is needed, and the method to use is the one that includes completely removing the most horses from the area and employing contraception methods to ensure the population doesn't rebound. Wild horses are not a native species or endemic to the area. They displace other wildlife species by taking a disproportionate share of the critical limited resources available. Many months of the year the wild horses are undernourished and even starving, and their foraging leaves nothing for other species that don't require as much	Thank you for your comment.

#	Commenter	Summarized Comment	BLM Response
		nourishment to survive. Horses that are lame or have suffered other debilitating injuries are frequently seen. Removing horses that never should have been in the area in the first place should not be problematic except to those who have no concept of resource management and/or who are basing their opposition based on feelings.	
4.	Chris Fausett SITLA	Excess wild horses have significantly decreased forage available for purchase as AUMs on trust lands by grazing permittees, resulting in financial losses to the Trust's beneficiaries. SITLA staff receive comments to this effect regularly from its grazing permittees on HMAs, HAs, and adjacent trust lands throughout the Cedar City BLM Field Office area. SITLA has already heard from some permittees that due to drought conditions, which are being compounded by wild horses, they anticipate significantly less forage available for grazing. Therefore, they will be turning out fewer numbers of livestock and requesting non-use on their permits in these areas. In the last six years, SITLA's largest permittee in the area has taken 100% non-use once and 72% non-use another year. These are significant shortfalls to the permittee which result in financial losses to the Trust's beneficiaries. Degradation of habitat conditions by excess wild horses also has the potential to decrease the value of the hunter access agreement between the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and SITLA, which provides significant financial benefit to the Trust's beneficiaries.	Thank you for your comment.
5.	PLPCO	The State commends the BLM's active management of wild horse and burro herds and encourages the BLM to perform similar projects on herds throughout the state. The State supports any effort undertaken by BLM to keep wild horse	Thank you for your comment.

#	Commenter	Summarized Comment	BLM Response
		and burro populations at AML thereby promoting healthy rangelands.	
6.	PLPCO	These excess animals are overdue for removal and creating unsustainable rangeland conditions for horses, wildlife, and livestock alike. The BLM remains bound by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act) (FLPMA), to make decisions that are consistent, to the greatest degree possible, with State and County Resource Management Plans. The State of Utah Resource Management Plan (SRMP) supports having wild horses and burros in existing HMAs at the appropriate management levels per the Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act.” Both the Beaver County Resource Management Plan (“Beaver CRMP”) and Iron County Resource Management Plan (“Iron CRMP”) address and support maintaining wild horse herds within the respective counties within AML.	Thank you for your comment. See Section 1.4. Relationship to Statutes, Regulations and other Plans
7.	Levi Millett	This plan will greatly benefit the wildlife in the area currently affected by the over objective wild horse population. I support the controlling of the wild horse population by whatever means is most ethical efficient and affective. I love having the wild horses on the landscape, but the sage grouse, elk, and deer populations are important and under objective in many areas due to drought conditions. I would hate to see these animals suffer from lack of feed and water anymore if we can help by rounding up some of these animals that is what we should do. I trust the science of federal biologist that are recommending this effort.	Thank you for your comment.
8.	Utah Department of Wildlife Resources (UDWR)	The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR) supports the Bible Spring Wild Horse Gather. The gather will occur in the DWR’s Southwest Desert big game management unit and it also occurs in a portion of the Hamlin Valley Sage grouse	Comment was added to the EA. See Section 3.3.6 Issue 5. How would the gathering of horses affect wildlife?

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		Management Area (SGMA). This area provides year-long habitat for mule deer, Rocky Mountain elk, and pronghorn. DWR biologists are observing lower big game population numbers all across the unit, as well as in the Bible Spring area. DWR has also reported declining habitat conditions where feral horse numbers exceed management levels.	
9.	UDWR	Utah is currently experiencing extreme drought conditions. Excessive numbers of feral horses that compete for limited forage and water are additionally harmful to native wildlife sustainability during this critical time. Horses also limit access to water sources for many other wildlife species such as pronghorn, which demonstrate an increased vigilance and decreased time foraging or drinking when feral horses are present.	Comment was added to the EA. See Section 3.3.6 Issue 5. How would the gathering of horses affect wildlife?
10.	UDWR	The Deer Herd Unit (#20) Management Plan discusses feral horses as a limiting factor to the big game habitat where large numbers of feral horses degrade range conditions by overutilization and trampling. Additionally, the Southwest Desert Elk Herd Unit (#20) Management Plan identified feral horse impacts on forage potential and destruction of natural water sources as a barrier to achieving unit population and management objectives.	Addressed in Section 3.3.6 Issue 5. How would the gathering of horses affect wildlife?
11.	Iron County Farm Bureau	The mentioned HMAs are well over the management objective and with the present range conditions the numbers need to be reduced to the management parameters. The horse numbers are too far above this plan and the drought has exacerbated the problem. Because the area is already over grazed by the horses, it would be the humane thing to do for the horses. This needs to happen as fast as possible to protect the integrity of the range resources. The wildlife (deer and elk) numbers are way down, and cow/calf	Thank you for your comment.

#	Commenter	Summarized Comment	BLM Response
		AUMs have been restricted or reduced either voluntarily or by the BLM. For these reasons Iron County Farm Bureau supports the plan to reduce horse numbers in the Bible Springs complex HMA gather.	
12.	Marilyn Wood	I am adamantly in favor of motorized and mechanical equipment to remove excess horses off the landscape. The BLM allotments, because of the rugged terrain and how overgrown the pinyon and juniper have become, makes it virtually impossible to gather these horses without help from helicopters and other equipment. I have witness personally several of the BLM's horse gathers and I was very impressed with the professional way they conducted their operation. Although in watching how the horses acted and the response to the gather it was evident that several of the horses were gathered previously, they were smart to know how it all worked and were not going to be caught again. For this reason, I feel that catch and release procedure is not a good practice, when it teaches the wild horses to get away and not be caught.	BLM's objective is to implement population growth suppression with the minimal action necessary. This includes doing as few gathers, removals and releases as possible to achieve and maintain AML.
13.	Marilyn Wood	Another big concern I have is the critical drought that our area has been seeing as of the past few years. Our cattle operation has cut our herd by one-third, although the wild horses stay over AML which is very discouraging for ranchers trying to make a living. I would ask for the BLM to please gather the wild horses to low AML in light of the current drought conditions.	See the Proposed Action of the EA.
14.	Several	Despite their legal classification as "wild" on federal land, unbranded and unclaimed free roaming horses and burros are nonnative, feral livestock that lack natural predators and can have significant detrimental impacts on native ecosystems and wildlife habitat. Wildlife habitat is declining in quality across many areas in the West due to the explosion of wild	Thank you for your comment.

#	Commenter	Summarized Comment	BLM Response
		<p>horse and burro populations, impacts that are being exacerbated by warmer and drier conditions as well as nonnative invasive plants.</p> <p>Fortunately, the BLM is directed by Congress to manage “free-roaming horses and burros in a manner that is designed to achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance on the public lands.” To achieve this ecological balance—and to conserve and restore America the Beautiful—wild horses and burros must be managed at Appropriate Management Levels to reduce impacts to native ecosystems.</p> <p>(Commentors include American Woodcock Society/Archery Trade Association/Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies/Back-country Hunters & Anglers/Bear Trust International/Boone and Crockett Club/Camp Fire Club of America/Congressional Sports-men’s Foundation/Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports/Delta Waterfowl/Ducks Unlimited/Houston Safari Club Izaak Walton/League of America/Masters of Foxhounds Association/Mule Deer Foundation/National Deer Association/National Rifle Association/National Shooting Sports Foundation/National Wild Turkey Federation/North American Grouse Partnership/Orion: The Hunter's Institute/Pheasants Forever/Pope and Young Club/Public Lands Foundation/Quail Forever/Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation/Ruffed Grouse Society/Safari Club International/Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership/Wild Sheep Foundation/Wildlife Forever</p>	

Oppose Gathering Wild Horses

15.	Georgette Contos	Please do not allow the catastrophic result that occurred in Canon City, Colorado, where 144 NW Sandwash	As outlined in the Design Features the gather operations and holding will be in accordance with the Comprehensive
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		wildhorses stressed by roundup and closed in corrals, died of equine flu. Despite protests, this was done, and the BLM has now stated they were short staffed and are rethinking this process. Please do not repeat this tragedy.	Animal Welfare Program (CAWP) assuring the proper handling, feeding and care of the wild horses.
16.	Several	Stop collecting horses to end up in slaughterhouses, or neglect and abuse situations.	BLM does not send wild horses and burros to slaughterhouses. As outlined in the Design Features the gather operations and holding will be in accordance with the Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program (CAWP) assuring the proper handling, feeding and care of the wild horses. The process of placing animals in good homes in private care is quite extensive (see adoption requirements on BLM website https://www.blm.gov/programs/wild-horse-and-burro/adoptions-and-sales). The impacts of excess wild horses on resources and impacts of the proposed action are addressed in Chapter 3 of the EA.
17.	Several	I am writing to ask you to please halt all horse roundups. They unnecessarily traumatize the animals and are ineffective as a means of birth control.	Impacts to wild horses and the use of different fertility control methods are address extensively in Chapter 3 of the EA.
18.	Several	Horses are being brutally rounded up to be stored in deplorable holding pens and most shipped to slaughter.	See BLM response to Comment 16.
19.	Lisa Perry	Please give rescues and other interested parties the opportunity to come to a better solution. Give ordinary citizens like myself a chance to save these animals.	The public, rescue (groups) and other interested parties have had the opportunity to give input and suggest alternatives on several occasions (see Sections 1.4 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, and Other Plans and Chapter 5 Consultation and Coordination). They can also purchase and/or adopt the horses through the wild horse and burro adoption program to take them into their care (see adoption requirements on BLM website https://www.blm.gov/programs/wild-horse-and-burro/adoptions-and-sales).

20.	Several	I strongly oppose the zero out of all wild horses from Blawn Wash and the removal of wild horses on our Utah public lands.	Thank you for the comment.
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Fertility Control

21.	Several	Prioritize the use of the scientifically proven and humane PZP fertility control vaccine, where necessary within the Complex, to stabilize wild herds at sustainable levels.	The use of PZP vaccine fluid injection and PZP pellet injection are part of the proposed action (see Section 2.2.1.3 Population Growth Suppression). It is one of the multiple scientifically proven and humane methods proven to reduce population growth in wild horses.
22.	American Wild Horse Campaign	Although AWHC supports the use of fertility control in the form of PZP, the BLM's plan does not specify the percent of mares of breeding age it plans to treat – this is information that should be included in the EA.	See Section 2.2.1.1. As shown in Appendix 11, modeling suggests that somewhere between 53 and 117 mares maybe treated over the 10-year period.
23.	Several	Eliminate the use of GonaCon for wild mares because research on its impacts and long-term effects is limited. More research on GonaCon in wild horses is necessary before this vaccine would be appropriate for broad use as a management tool. If the agencies wish to continue with GonaCon in this Complex, they should do so in the context of a research study and abide by the requisite animal welfare protocols for such a study.	Please see Appendix 5, pages 4 – 5 and 10 – 29, which address numerous protocols, studies, effects and impact of GonaCon.
24.	Several	Eliminate the use of IUDs as more research on the safety of this method for wild and free-roaming mares and their welfare is necessary before this option would be appropriate for broad use as a management tool.	Please see Appendix 5, pages 5 – 7, and 40 – 43, which address numerous protocols, studies, effects and impact of IUDs.
25.	Several	I oppose the use of IUDs in wild horse herds. The implant of this foreign, invasive item puts mares at risk for irritation and/or inflammation. This is in addition to welfare risks of the inhumane helicopter chasing; capture and confinement; and the unnatural, invasive procedure of inserting them. Their welfare is also at risk because there is no	<p>Please see Appendix 5, pages 5 – 7, and 40 – 43, which address numerous protocols, studies, effects and impact of IUDs.</p> <p>Please see Section 2.2.1.4 Identification and Tracking, which identifies the monitoring methods used for horses that receive fertility control.</p>

		monitoring after released back onto our public lands.	
26.	Several	Abandon plans to skew the sex ratios. This method is not scientifically supported and not effective in reducing population growth rates in wild horse populations. The BLM has rejected this alternative in herd management plans for other areas and should do the same in the Bible Springs Complex.	<p>Please see Section 2.2.1.3, Page 11 and Appendix 5, pages 8 – 9 and 30 – 35.</p> <p>BLM offices have not used sex ratio skewing as a management tool in cases where its use would not be appropriate.</p> <p>A change was made to the EA to clarify that should the population be reduced to 150 animals sex ratio manipulations would not be used.</p>
27.	Animal Wellness	The proposed action to lower the ratio of mares to stallions has been shown to increase violence among stallions and lead to social disruption of horse hierarchies. Sex ratio skewing in favor of an overabundance of intact stallions will lead to increased conflicts and injuries as the stallions fight over the comparatively small number of mares. The violence of the competing stallions is also likely to lead injuries or mortality of mares and foals and volatility among the family units.	See response to Comment 26.
28.	Joy Burk	Both GonaCon products are classified by US EPA as restricted-use pesticides. GonaCon has caused injection-site and lymph node reactions, which include abscesses, nodules, swelling and stiffness from the water-in-oil emulsions containing mycobacteria such as AdjuVac (Gionfriddo et al. 2011).	See Appendix 5, pages 21 and 22.
29.	PLPCO	Although the State supports the Proposed Action and commends/supports the use of immunocontraceptive vaccines and IUDs, as outlined in the EA, it would be beneficial to outline exactly which contraceptive is intended to be used. In this regard, the State supports both the use of PZP-22 and GonaCon contraceptives in herd management. However, the State takes the position that when comparing the two, GonaCon	Currently, the main population growth suppression methods used would be PZP and GonaCon due to availability, cost and effectiveness. BLM has not specified one specific method to maintain flexibility in implementing best management practices should new information regarding these methods become available during the 10-year plan.

		would likely be a more effective plan to manage the HMA to proper AML.	
30.	PLPCO	<p>The State provides the following supplementary analysis.</p> <p>“GonaCon is an immunocontraceptive vaccine that was developed and is used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Wildlife Services (WS) in the management of certain wildlife and feral vertebrate animal populations.” The active ingredient found in GonaCon is the Gonadotropin releasing hormone (GnRH), which is a naturally occurring hormone that “when injected into a target animal...induces the body to make antibodies...causing infertility.” As it applies to wild horses, “GonaCon...is approved for fertility control in female wild or feral horses and burros” and can induce infertility for multiple years in equids.” The multiple year effectiveness of GonaCon has been substantiated in multiple studies. (Studies cited in letter available on ePlanning).</p>	Please see Appendix 5, pages 10 – 14.
31.	Tammi Adams	If population control measures are considered necessary after BLM completes lawful HMAPs and AMLs, then the least invasive fertility control methods should be employed such as darting and only utilizing vaccine protocols proven reversible (PZP native annually). Furthermore, it is reasonable for BLM to allocate and exclusively utilize reversible fertility control protocol methods for less than 4 years within generated HMAP EAs for the Blawn Wash, Bible Spring, Four Mile, and Tilly Creek HMAs while taking into account foaling season.	See Section 1.1 Background. The Interior Board of Land Appeals has held that an HMAP is not a prerequisite to BLM conducting a gather operation (Animal Protection Institute of America, 109 IBLA 112, 127 (1989)), so long as the record otherwise substantiates compliance with the WFRHBA.
32.	Tammi Adams	Of immense concern is the agency’s proposed implementation of Intrauterine Devices (IUDs) is unreasonable in wild	Please see Appendix 5, page 5 – 7, and 40 – 43, which address numerous protocols, studies, effects and impact of IUDs.

		<p>horse populations. Without constant on-range veterinarian care for wild horses to determine common IUD reactions and complications (expulsion, hemorrhaging, uterine perforation, etc.), utilization is unreasonable. The agency does not present any meaningful research of IUD use in wild horses within this proposed EA, hence making the agency's proposal for IUDs as a safe method for population control arbitrary. Furthermore, the National Academy of Sciences Report (2013) does not support the use of IUDs in wild horses or burros.</p>	<p>Please see Section 2.2.1.4, Identification and Tracking, which identifies the methods used for horses that receive fertility control.</p>
33.	Tammi Adams	<p>Under 43 CFR §4710.4, management of wild horses and burros "...shall be at the minimum level necessary to attain the objectives identified in approved land use plans and herd management area plans." (Emphasis added.) The BLM LUP is void of up-to-date, site specific, and transparent AMLs, and proposed management actions in the Blawn Wash, Bible Spring, Four Mile, and Tilly Creek Wild Horse Gather and Population Control EA are not minimal. In addition to multiple and permanent removal of wild horses from the Blawn Wash, Bible Spring, Four Mile, and Tilly Creek HMAs, BLM proposed fertility control measures are not guaranteed reversible and demand delineation as such.</p>	<p>Please see sections 1.3 Land Use Plan Conformance and 1.4 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, and Other Plans.</p>
34.	Tammi Adams	<p>Studies of GonaCon (GnRH) as a contraceptive in horses are rare in the published literature (NAS 2013). The BLM proposed usage of a GnRH vaccine has potential genetic and health side effects since it is an immunocontraceptive. The 2013 NAS report states, "Methods that are not considered permanent may not be 100-percent reversible in all animals. Even if a contraceptive, such as an implant, is removed or its effect wears off (in the case of an injectable contraceptive), other</p>	<p>Please see Appendix 5, pages 4 – 5 and 10 – 29, which address numerous protocols, studies, effects, and impact of GonaCon.</p>

		factors may slow or even prevent complete restoration of fertility.” (Comment letter quotes NAS 2013.)	
35.	Several	<p>The EA fails to provide data and values to support the IUDs in mares and also GonaCon. These are experimental drugs and should not be used. BLM data even shows that they are not reversible after multiple injections and are also known to destroy natural hormone product necessary for preserving natural “wild” behaviors.</p> <p>There is insufficient data about the surgical insert of IUDs in wild mares. I know mares are usually observed before they are released but after they are released, they are not observed any more. There is no plan on removal of IUDs. The mares could get infected or have major problems.</p>	<p>Please see Appendix 5, page 4 – 5 and 10 – 29, which address numerous protocols, studies, effects and impact of GonaCon.</p> <p>Please see Appendix 5, page 5 - 7 and 40 -43, which address numerous protocols, studies, effects and impact of IUDs.</p>
36.	American Wild Horse Campaign	Until BLM proposes a well-designed, rigorously controlled and documented scientific study conducted in conjunction with a reputable scientific institution, and then receives IACUC approval from that institution, it cannot accurately describe the proposed IUD use or analyze its true impacts.	<p>Refer to response to Comment 32.</p> <p>There is no statute or regulation that requires BLM to wait for the results of any study before it utilizes a particular population control method. This notion cannot be squared with the WFRHBA, which expressly authorizes sterilization and requires BLM to remove excess animals to achieve appropriate management levels “immediately” upon determining that an overpopulation exists.</p> <p>SOPs for insertion of IUDs are included in Appendix 5.</p>
37.	American Wild Horse Campaign	If the BLM chooses to move forward with the implementation of IUDs as a management tool in the BSC, then the agency must develop clear and precise protocols similar to those included for PZP and GonaCon. Without clear protocols for use, neither the agency nor the public can begin to properly analyze and consider the use of IUDs on the wild	See response to Comments 32.

		mares in the BSC, and without these additions, the EA is considered incomplete.	
38.	American Wild Horse Campaign	Before the agency moves forward with using GonaCon, AWHC asks that the agency adds to its analysis and state that not much is known about the long-term safety, efficacy, and impacts to wild horse behaviors and natural social behaviors, which are the differentiating factors for these federally protected animals.	See Appendix 5 Page 16 Reversibility and Effects on Overies: GnRH.
39.	American Wild Horse Campaign	GonaCon is not appropriate for field use. It should be removed from consideration in this proposed analysis and others until the BLM conducts more research that follows the guidance of the federal Office of Research Integrity that requires an IACUC that approves protocols utilizing animals to ensure that the “animals selected for a procedure should be of an appropriate species and quality and the minimum number required to obtain valid research results.”	Please see Appendix 5, pages 4 – 5 and 10 – 29, which address numerous protocols, studies, effects and impact of GonaCon.
40.	RTF/ Humane Society	A booster dose of GonaCon after holding for 30 days will not change the efficacy of a primer. The most recent studies have shown that to achieve higher and longer efficacy than the primer shot (which has an immediate efficacy of 45-55%), a booster given six months or later (up to four years) from the initial primer (Baker et al., 2018 https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0201570) increases efficacy to over 90% for at least four years. It may be a waste of resources to hold horses for 30 days so that they can be provided a booster that will not actually enhance the efficacy of the primer shot. It may be more efficient to hold those horses for six months, boost, and release, but due to welfare considerations, it is preferable to primer and release immediately, with expectations for the enhanced efficacy of a booster during subsequent captures	Please see Appendix 5 Page 23 under the Effects of Marking and Injection heading. It is shown that “a booster dose of GonaCon-Equine appears to be more effective than a primer dose alone (Baker et al. 2017).” Horses would be held longer than 30 days if possible due to holding space, cost and other management concerns. The EA has been edited to make this clear.

		when they can be treated again, and/or via remote, opportunistic darting at the appropriate time.	
41.	RTF/ Humane Society	<p>“Although PZP-22 pellets have been delivered via darting in trial studies (Rutberg et al 2017, Carey et al. 2019), BLM does not plan to use darting for PZP-22 delivery until there is more demonstration that PZP-22 can be reliably delivered via dart.” (EA Appendix 5, p. 10) The cited studies (Rutberg and Carey) include 60 mares at two different field sites and delivered by different personnel. This is more than twice the number of mares that are reported in the single published study of the one free-roaming herd that received GonaCon. Based on the literature available, there does not appear to be any justification for not delivering PZP-22 via darting in herds that are approachable.</p>	<p>The herds in these HMAs are not approachable. Section 2.2.1.3 Population Growth Suppression in the EA states that darting PZP or GonaCon is not a preferred method due to excessive tree cover, vast area, terrain and behavior of the target animals. BLM does not plan to use darting for PZP-22 delivery until there is more demonstration that PZP-22 can be reliably delivered via dart.</p>
42.	The Cloud Found- ation	<p>The NAS recommends further studies to determine the behavioral effects on wild horses.</p> <p>The EA fails to provide any data that shows that reapplication is safe – the reason the BLM does not provide such data is because it does not exist.</p> <p>The EA fails to adequately analyze the effects of Gonacon which effectively destroys the ovary and/or ovary function. and destroys natural “wild” horse behaviors.</p> <p>The EA must disclose or analyze any scientific data that shows whether horses return to fertility after 2 or more applications of Gonacon.</p> <p>The EA must provide and analyze whether there is sufficient data that demonstrate Gonacon’s short- and long-term efficacy, safety and the ability to</p>	<p>Refer to response to Comment 34 regarding use of GonaCon as part of a comprehensive fertility control program.</p> <p>Scientific, peer-reviewed studies (see References) have been published since the 2013 NAS review of the potential effects of these vaccines. They include more recent information about the potential behavioral and contraceptive effects of those methods (see Appendix 5 Literature Cited for Fertility Control.</p> <p>It is not necessary for BLM to conduct an extensive suite of individual behavioral studies on the effects on GonaCon-Equine before continuing to use it in management applications because, based on available evidence, this vaccine is compatible with wild horses continuing to exhibit wild, free-roaming behaviors, and continuing to affiliate with other wild horses. There</p>

		<p>preserve natural wild and social behaviors which are valued attributes of wild horses.</p>	<p>is no published evidence that would suggest that application of these vaccine reduces mare survival on average, or their ability to thrive as free-roaming animals in the wild. On the contrary, as noted in Appendix 5, treated mares tend to have higher survival rates, than untreated mares. Similarly, even though the BLM acknowledged in the EA and in the Appendix that all fertility control methods have potential effects, and even though the BLM examined those potential effects in detail in Appendix 5, the BLM is aware of no peer-reviewed studies with evidence that IUDs or fertility control vaccines would be expected to undermine wild horses' free-roaming nature or their tendency to affiliate with other wild horses and live in social bands. The WFRHBA includes direction to the BLM and USFS about protecting wild horses in the context of the agencies' multiple use mandates. There is no evidence that mares treated with GonaCon-Equine suffer from the inability to live healthily in the wild.</p> <p>Appendix 5 includes a section on "Effects on Existing Pregnancies, Foals, and Birth Phenology: GnRH Vaccines."</p> <p>Behavioral studies of GonaCon, published since the 2013 NAS report, were based on free-ranging mares treated in the wild. There was no evidence to suggest that treated mares would cease to live in bands with other wild, free-roaming horses.</p> <p>The precise schedule at which mares treated with GonaCon will or will not return to fertility involves some individual variation and uncertainty but</p>
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			<p>is not a matter of scientific controversy. As reviewed in Appendix 5, treatment with GonaCon-Equine, especially delivery of a second dose that is given some months after a first dose, can lead to long-term infertility, though treated mares will be in all other identified ways healthy – that is the management goal of treatment with this vaccine.</p> <p>GonaCon is not considered an experimental drug. It is registered with the EPA for use in reducing wild horse and burro fertility rates. While additional studies may provide a more precise quantification of certain questions, the mechanism of action and the essential effects of the vaccine are well understood. Among other attributes, the potentially long-lasting effects of the vaccine after a booster dose is delivered make this treatment suitable for fertility control method for wild horses, in which it is preferable to limit the number of handling occasions.</p>
43.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>Any BLM studies of the in-situ use of IUDs on wild mares must be provided. The Proposed Action lacks data and scientific justification for IUD use in any of the four HMAs. Results and source documents for the Utah and Wyoming applications must be provided in the final EA. The EA contains insufficient in-situ data regarding the use of IUDs in wild mares.</p> <p>BLM cannot implant a medical device in a wild animal with no plan for retrieval of the device; this is not a humane policy. The EA fails to outline the re-capture process of mares, the monitoring of mares with IUDs, etc. The EA fails to provide scientific data that shows IUDs have been scientifically proven to be safe or effective for a longer period than PZP-22. The EA has not considered what may</p>	<p>Refer to response to Comment 42. and Appendix 5 in the EA regarding use of IUDs as part of a comprehensive fertility control program.</p> <p>Appendix 5 has been revised to reflect the fact that the Y-shaped silicone IUDs were used in Utah, in late 2020. That is a management application of IUDs, not a scientific study. Numerous studies noted in Appendix 5 have addressed IUDs in general, including Y-shaped silicone IUDs. The pasture study with silicone IUDs in particular found adequate effectiveness, and no notable morbidity associated with use. If IUDs fall out of mares, the expected result is that the mare would return to fertility, which does not constitute a cause for concern over the mare's health. "Partially ejected" IUDs were not</p>

	<p>happen to mares inserted with an IUD after 5 years or 10 years.</p> <p>The EA must fully disclose and analyze the BLM application of IUDs in wild, free-roaming mares such as the limitations of the study, frequency of mare monitoring, long-term success rate (beyond PZP-22 capabilities), deleterious impacts to the mares, behavioral impacts, ability to capture all mares to remove the IUDs, etc.</p> <p>Only soft IUDs should be used in free-roaming horses. Implementation of IUDs in domestic horses is not applicable to wild, free-roaming mares because, unlike domestic animals, wild free-roaming horses are not in a domestic setting whereby they are afforded medical observation and treatment as needed. An EIS is necessary before implementing the administration of IUDs in wild mares living on the range.</p> <p>There is no scientific justification to utilize IUDs over PZP-22. In fact, PZP-22 is proven more effective and safer.</p> <p>The EA must disclose that IUDs are not commonly used in domestic mares who have their movement confined and are regularly administered medical care and provided feed and water.</p> <p>The BLM has proposed use of Y-shaped silicone IUD is untested for in situ usage. The BLM is wrong to assume there are “inferences” for safety and efficacy on the use of IUDs in wild mares merely because IUDs have been implanted in domestic mares who are under watchful eye and medical supervision. Further study is needed to determine whether different types of IUDs suppress estrus which would in turn destroy natural</p>	<p>documented in recent studies with silicone IUDs or magnetic IUDs made at the University of Oklahoma or by the University of Massachusetts. The long historical use of IUDs in domestic mares, and the summary of available literature on effects of IUDs is adequate to conclude that use of IUDs in wild mares is not scientifically controversial in terms of expected effects. The specific studies that the commenter suggests may provide marginally valuable additional information but would not be necessary prerequisites prior to the management application of IUDs for fertility control in wild mares. Existing studies cited in Appendix 5 indicate that IUDs can prolong the diestrus period in mares, but that mares with IUDs tend to still exhibit estrus, albeit at lower frequency.</p> <p>There is no requirement of BLM, that wild mares treated with any given fertility control treatment to maintain a particular schedule of estrus timing; the available vaccines under consideration (PZP-based vaccines, and GonaCon-Equine) are expected to lead to the spectrum of estrus frequencies, from no observable estrus to predictably cycles of estrus throughout the breeding season, with individual variation in manifested effects possible. The silicone IUD study in Oklahoma was not a pen trial; the horses were free ranging on large pastures. The study by Killian et al. (2008) was included and considered in the review in Appendix 5. Appendix 5 refers to scientific research that is more contemporary than the 1980 NAS report noted in the comment. The purpose of IUD application is to provide fertility control of those mares treated with</p>
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		<p>hormone production which are necessary for natural wild behaviors.</p> <p>Medical issues that must be thoroughly analyzed in an EIS includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. identify the specific type of IUD that would be utilized. 2. conduct adequate pen trials and then to conduct limited on-range trials with mares that are known and easily monitored prior to implementation in wild, free-roaming mares who cannot be monitored or administered follow up medical care. 3. determine the short- and long-term affects to mares. 4. determine whether the specific IUD model proposed for use would destroy estrus cycles. 5. determine how IUDs would be removed from mares and when removal would occur. 	<p>IUDs; it is expected that IUDs will eventually fall out of treated mares but if they do not then the IUDs are expected to continue to provide that fertility control as long as the device remains in the mare. The devices to be used are made of medical grade, chemically inert, flexible silicone. There is no statute or regulation that requires BLM to wait for the results of any study before it utilizes a particular population control method, and that notion cannot be squared with the WFRHBA, which expressly authorizes sterilization and requires BLM to remove excess animals to achieve appropriate management levels “immediately” upon determining that an overpopulation exists, and that action is necessary to remove excess animals.</p> <p>Horses that receive IUDs may also receive GPS/VHF radio transmitter tags or collars to help monitor the horses. The mares that are released back into the HMAs that receive IUDs, GonaCon, PZP or other fertility control will receive a microchip with a specific identification number. They may also be hip branded with the last the last 4 numbers of their freeze mark.</p>
44.	The Cloud Found- ation	The BLM must disclose the effectiveness of sex ratio skewing given that BLM has done this previously.	Refer to response to Comment 26 regarding sex ratio adjustment as part of a comprehensive fertility control program.
45.	The Cloud Found- ation	<p>Gonacon is documented to destroy natural hormone production which is necessary to protect natural “wild” behaviors and is not been tested to be reversible after 2 or more applications</p> <p>Also, the use of IUDs which have, to date, not been sufficiently tested in wild mares and the Proposed Action fails to provide plans to address health issues</p>	<p>Please see Appendix 5, SOPs for GonaCon-Equine Vaccine Treatments (pages 4 – 5) and Effects of Fertility Control Vaccines and Sex Ratio Manipulations (pages 10 – 29), which address numerous protocols, studies, effects and impact of GonaCon.</p> <p>Please see Appendix 5 SOPs for Insertion of Y-shaped Silicone IUD for</p>

		arising from the implanted IUDs or the removal of IUDs from mares	Feral Horses (pages 5 – 7), and Effects of Intrauterine Devices (43 – 46) which address numerous protocols, studies, effects and impact of IUDs.
46.	The Cloud Foundation	We support the use of PZP and PZP-22 fertility control, when needed, because they are reversible and protect natural “wild” behaviors.	Thank you for your comment.

Gather Methods and Timing

47.	Dusty White	We need to get a handle on the mustangs and doing this over a 10 year period will not work, it will be a waste of time and money to expand this over a 10 year period and we will never be able to keep up with the foals of the herds, there are too many mustangs on the surrounding areas that when the area they are in is over grazed and water dries up they either thirst to death or they will migrate to a different location. We need to have the mustangs at management level within 2-5 years.	<p>The BLM’s objective is to reach AML as soon as possible. Based on the BLM’s experience with past gathers conducted in the project area, only 60-70% of the population can typically be gathered in a single gather operation due to excessive tree cover, vast area, terrain, and behavior of the target animals. Other administrative factors (budget, adoptions, holding space, etc.) and individual gather success could also impact the numbers gathered, removed, or treated over the 10-year period. Gathers would be scheduled by the BLM National Wild Horse and Burro Program Office.</p> <p>See Section 2.2.1.1 Gather in the Proposed Action.</p>
48.	Carol Anderon-Long	Cowboys should round up the horses when there are too many and they should sell them to ranchers, farmers and rodeo people.	This suggestion is outside of the scope of this EA.
49.	Several	Roundups are generally done via helicopters from private companies and result in many injuries or even deaths.	The environmental impacts of helicopter drive trapping are addressed in Section 3.3.7 Issue 6.
50.	Several	Placing the gathered horses in pens, separating all family members, without proper care, no trees, no place to run, is inhumane.	The gather and holding is conducted in accordance with the Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program (CAWP), which has been determined as humane care.
51.	Tammi Adams	Utilization of helicopters and motorized vehicles is unreasonable, and a vile harassment of wild horses as proven	The impacts of helicopter drive trapping is address in Section 3.3.7 Issue 6, Appendix 4 and the CAWP. The EA acknowledges “Some level of

	<p>repeatedly by advocate documentation of roundups. Videos and photographs from BLM led helicopter roundups validate contractor helicopters driving horses into barbwire fences, horses/foals being maimed/killed, foals separated from mothers left alone on the range, horses being pushed over vast distances (>10 miles) to trap sites running horses to exhaustion, contractor negligence to provide safe trap sites, etc. Agency documents identify helicopter/motorized vehicle gather-related wild horse and burro mortality averages about 1-2 percent (Government Accountability Office, GAO-09-77, Scasta 2019). However, roundup related injuries and deaths are not reported by BLM after wild horses and burros leave temporary corrals, and BLM does not compile and release spontaneous abortion statistics, all capture related deaths. From BLM data we calculated helicopter roundup-related deaths as high as 10-18%. Hence, BLM proposed use of helicopters and motorized vehicles for this gather is unreasonable.</p>	<p>transient stress is likely to result in captured mares, including those that do not have markings associated with previous fertility control treatments. It is difficult to compare that level of temporary stress with long-term stress that can result from food and water limitation on the range (e.g., Creel et al. 2013).”</p> <p>Although Dr. Nock compiled a detailed account of what he believes is the physiology of a “wild” horse during a gather, it is not based on an actual study, or systematically collected and reviewed data, and was not a peer reviewed study, nor does he reference actual work in the field completed by other researchers. In contrast, “Creel et al (2013) highlight that variation in population density is one of the most well-established causal factors of chronic activation of the hypothalamicpituitary-adrenal axis, which mediates stress hormones; high population densities and competition for resources can cause chronic stress.” This finding also points to the importance of reducing excess wild horses and burros, even with the known, transient, stress from gather operations, to avoid potentially far greater long-term stress to horses and burros from continued population growth over AML and resource availability.</p> <p>As described in the EA, the BLM recognizes that wild horses and burros experience stress and the BLM would take every effort to limit stress during gather operations. Through methods and experience learned through 30 years of gathering wild horses from public lands, the BLM implements the most effective and humane methods in</p>
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			order to reduce stress and injury to wild horses and follows the Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program (CAWP) for all gather operations, including use of helicopters. Opinion articles like Dr. Nock's (2010) are not included in the BLM's analysis of potential effects of actions. In BLM's experience, wild horses do not exhibit the widespread signs of chronic health problems that this comment raises, during capture or in holding facilities after removal from the public lands.
52.	Tammi Adams	Methods for safe capture require assimilation and demarcation. This includes HMAP delineation of foaling season (BLM Manual 4720.41), time of year associated with safe travel conditions, trap site locations, BLM employee and contractor Comprehensive Animal Welfare Policy (CAWP) training and current certification, etc.	Foaling season is addressed in BLM policy IM 2015-152 and Handbook H-4700-1. Time of year associated with safe travel conditions and trap site locations are determined at the time of each gather. All BLM and Contractor employees have CAWP training each year.
53.	Tammi Adams	BLM's public hearing on the use of motorized vehicles just occurred on April 26, 2022. The pending responses from public testimony have not yet been addressed by the agency. Therefore, the utilization of helicopters and motorized vehicles for any wild horse or burro gather is unreasonable and requires reform and alternatives for capture defined and applied.	The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 states "the secretary may use or contract for the use of helicopters or, for the purpose of transporting captured animals, motor vehicles. Such use shall be undertaken only after a public hearing". There is no requirement that the public comments be addressed.
54.	American Wild Horse Campaign	Information to minimize stress and injury to horses during roundups must be analyzed including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limit the distance horses may be chased by a helicopter to no more than five (5) miles. ● Require that the helicopter do not chase/move horses at a pace that exceeds the natural rate of movement of that specific animal. Every effort should be made to keep older, sick and young animals together with their companions or mothers as they are moved to the trap. The helicopter should not move or 	Amending the CAWP and national policies on public viewing is outside the scope of this document. The CAWP is available on the ePlanning website: https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2018159/510

		<p>capture compromised, old, weak, or young animals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish strict parameters for suspending helicopter roundup operations in temperatures below freezing (32 degrees F) or over 90 degrees F. We urge the BLM to prioritize the well-being of the horses by establishing and implementing a science-based policy whereby roundup activities cease when temperatures reach 90 degrees as recommended by the experts. 	
55.	American Wild Horse Campaign	<p>The NAS 2013 review of Wild Horse and Burro Program concluded the BLM's current management practices were not only expensive, but also ineffective. According to the NAS: Removals [conducted by the BLM] are likely to keep the population at a size that maximizes population growth rate, which in turn maximizes the number of animals that must be removed and processed through holding facilities.</p>	<p>Under the Wild Horse and Burro Act, it is necessary to remove excess wild horses and burros to ensure a thriving natural ecological balance and to address deteriorating range conditions resulting from the current overpopulation. Fertility control is a component of the proposed action and was analyzed in the EA (Section 3.3.7) as a means of reducing the population growth rate. However, use of fertility control only without removal of excess wild horses would be inconsistent with the Act because it would not allow for achievement of AML over an ecologically meaningful time scale or result in a thriving natural ecological balance in the foreseeable future.</p>
56.	Several	<p>The BLM must, at the very least, consider the use of bait and water trapping because, in addition to being a more humane practice, bait and water trapping could be significantly less stressful on the particular environment present in this Complex.</p>	<p>While the primary gather (capture) method would be the helicopter drive method with occasional helicopter assisted roping (from horseback), the BLM may also use bait and water trapping to capture animals for removal or for fertility control treatment, as stated in EA Section 2.2.1.1. The BLM does recognize benefits to bait and water trapping in circumstances where such trapping would be appropriate and effective as part of the proposed action alternative. However, it would not be possible to achieve the purpose and need by relying on the use of large bait and water traps alone due to the vast</p>

			<p>area covered by the Blawn Wash HMA and Bible Spring Complex, topographic features, and access limitations. Bait and water trapping may be helpful in smaller, site-specific areas within the HMAs to assist gather operations as a whole in combination with effective helicopter use.</p> <p>An alternative to exclusively use bait and/or water trapping was considered but dismissed from further analysis in the EA (see Appendix 3).</p>
57.	Several	Helicopters should only be used where bait and water trapping is infeasible.	<p>See response to Comment 56. Please refer to Section 2.2.1.5</p> <p>Bait and water trapping would be used in some small areas of the HMAs to remove a small number of wild horses or to conduct fertility treatments. This method is slightly less stressful to the horses, but after frequent gathers, wild horses would become more difficult to trap using this method. Horses would begin to avoid water sources or areas where the traps are set. During past water trap operations, some wild horses near death have been observed avoiding going into a water trap. Water trap operations had to be stopped and panels removed to allow these horses to drink before dying.</p>

Number of Horses Gathered and AML

58.	Robert Thomas-son	The culling of 800 wild horses down to 80 for the area concerned seems ridiculous, especially since their health concerns are the result of over cattle grazing.	Section 3.3.3 Issue 2, Section 3.3.4 Issue 3, Section 3.3.5 Issue 4 and Section 3.3.7 Issue 6 address the impact of excess wild horses on rangeland health, soils, riparian and wild horses themselves. Section 3.3.2 Issue 1 describes reduced or non-use that has occurred by livestock grazing due to excess wild horses.
59.	Not Provided	It has been scientifically proven that wild horses and burros actually help the lands recover from overgrazing.	There is no known study that validates this claim.

60.	Several	This removal is not based on science regarding sustainability of the herds and/or effects of the horses on the land. The BLM needs to launch a formal, documented, scientific rangeland conditions report (with unbiased input and/or participation) to determine the number of wild horses the resources (water/forage) the range can support.	A detailed Rangeland Monitoring Report was completed for the allotments within the HMAs. This report is available on BLM's ePlanning website: https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2018159/510).
61.	Several	The proposed reduction in herd size is unreasonable and can be detrimental to the genetic diversity of the population.	Section 3.3.7 Issue 6 page 32 – 34 and Appendix 10 address genetic diversity.
62.	Several	AML was set decades ago that your own 2013 NSA study found to be “not transparent to stakeholders, supported by scientific information, or amenable to adaptation with new information and environmental and social change.”	Establishing or modifying the AML is outside the scope of this analysis. AMLs were established through prior separate decision-making processes. The AML was set in Bible Spring, Blawn Wash, Four Mile and Tilly Creek Wild Horse Appropriate Management Level (AML) Assessment, UT-040-04-47 (DR signed April 18, 2005). Public involvement was asked for and accepted. An open house was held on May 25th, 2004 where the public identified issues and proposed alternatives. In addition, notice of the preparation of an EA was posted on the Utah BLM Environmental Notification Bulletin Board on May 5, 2004. See Chapter 1 of the EA. Available data confirms that wild horse numbers are currently in excess of the level at which a thriving natural ecological balance can be maintained, and the data does not support an increase in the wild horse AMLs.
63.	Tammi Adams	HMAs are designated specific ranges for protection of wild horses and burros under PL 92-195, while AMLs are an interpretation of the law. NAS findings demand further transparency of BLM AML calculations for the HMAs and proposed actions within this EA. Given the current BLM estimate of wild horses	See response to Comment 62. See Section 1.1 Background. The Interior Board of Land Appeals has held that an HMAP is not a prerequisite to BLM conducting a gather operation (Animal Protection Institute of America, 109 IBLA 112, 127 (1989)),

		on the HMAs (even if grossly underestimated), presented BLM AMLs are absurd. Therefore, the BLM proposed “need” to gather or use fertility control on wild horses because they are above the AML is unsubstantiated and fosters requirement of BLM to provide transparent and scientifically calculated appropriate HMAP AMLs utilizing HMA specific parameters before conducting the proposed action. Congress did not intend for AMLs to be arbitrarily changed by the agency under the WFRHBA nor NEPA.	so long as the record otherwise substantiates compliance with the WFRHBA.
64.	Friends of Animals	BLM presents no evidence demonstrating that the previously established AML is still valid or appropriate. To the extent that BLM looks at more recent monitoring reports, it fails to distinguish the impacts of wild horses from other uses, such as current and historical cattle grazing. Without this information, BLM cannot determine if there is an overpopulation of wild horses that needs to be removed.	<p>See response to Comment 62.</p> <p>A detailed Rangeland Monitoring Report was completed for the allotments within the HMAs. This report is available on BLM’s ePlanning website: https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2018159/510).</p> <p>In addition to the Rangeland Monitoring Report Chapter 3 address the impact of excess wild horses on rangeland health, soils, riparian and wild horses themselves. Section 3.3.2 Issue 1 describes reduced or non-use that has occurred by livestock grazing due to excess wild horses.</p>
65.	Animal Wellness	At the very least, any plan for reducing the BSC herds should be delayed until an accurate count of the herd can be completed.	An inventory was conducted in February 2022 using the Simultaneous Double Observer Method (See Appendix 9).
66.	Iron County	We support removal of excess wild horses to the low AML but are concerned that follow-up monitoring and excess wild horse removals will not occur in a timely basis allowing the populations to once again reach destructive levels. Although the EA mentions that monitoring will be done to determine when future population reduction management would kick in, there are no	Removals from the HMAs have been sporadic due to changing priorities and budget constraints. A population inventory will be conducted in the project area a minimum of every 4 years as required by BLM policy. These inventories will be used to estimate the population and proposed capture, removal, and treated numbers for each gather. This process would be

		identified triggers that, when reached, would require removal of excess wild horses. We suggest these triggers be defined.	<p>followed over the 10-year period to achieve and maintain the wild horse population within AML.</p> <p>Other administrative factors (budget, adoptions, holding space, etc.) and individual gather success could also impact the number of gather operations, numbers gathered, removed, or treated over the 10-year period. Gathers would be scheduled by the BLM National Wild Horse and Burro Program Office.</p>
67.	Iron County	Sage grouse populations are down statewide and wild horses in Hamlin Valley and upper Pine Valley impact sage grouse as mentioned in the EA. The EA also indicates that wild horses are mobile, traveling to water and forage for miles. We are concerned once wild horses are removed from the sage grouse ranges; more horses will migrate into these sensitive areas. We suggest that an intensive management strategy be considered where sage grouse areas are treated as private lands and wild horses are removed on the frequent basis.	<p>Sage grouse impacts are covered in section 3.3.6 Issue 5 “How would the gathering of horses affect wildlife?”</p> <p>Conducting a gather on private versus public lands has a different NEPA process.</p>
68.	Iron County	Iron County is supportive of the use of multiple tools to manage wild horse populations and encourage the BLM to continue research and field use of PZP-22, GonaCon-Equine, IUDs and other promising techniques. We consider use of fertility techniques a success when they can keep numbers down to where we are less reliant on large gathers. However, we are also very supportive to use gathers (helicopters and wranglers) to manage populations as they exceed the high AML.	Thank you for your comment.
69.	Iron County	We ask that the BLM to review the ICRMP, Wild Horse Section, and incorporate the Desired Future Conditions section into the EA.	The ICRMP is quoted in Section 1.4.

70.	Several	If the population is being managed properly with PZP fertility control, then an AML limit is unnecessary. Low AML is necessary in gather-only management scenarios (so that there is sufficient time until numbers above high AML are reached, triggering a gather), it is reasonable to adjust the expectation that reaching low AML is necessary.	Setting AML is in compliance with 43 CFR 4710 and current LUP policies. In 43 CFR 4710.3-1 Herd Management Areas I states: “Herd management areas shall be established for the maintenance of wild horse and burro herds. In delineating each herd management area, the authorized officer shall consider the appropriate management level for the herd, the habitat requirements with other uses of the public and adjacent private lands, and the constraints contained in 4710.4.”
71.	The Cloud Foundation	Given that the Proposed Action is based on the “Allowable Management Level” (AML) as a measurement to determine whether wild horses are deemed excess, the EA must be amended to include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete description of how and when AML was set for each of the four HMAs. • Include the source documents that are the basis for setting AML for each of the four HMAs. • List of groups consulted in setting AML for each of the four HMAs. • Disclosure of data and science that supports the AUMs allocated for livestock in each of the four HMAs. • Provide the original documents that established AUMs for livestock in the 16 allotments that overlap the four HMAs; provide the most recent rangeland health assessments (and other documentation that established the rangeland conditions/health) for all 16 allotments. 	See response to Comment 62.
72.	Animal Wellness	...the extensive population growth suppression measures proposed by the BLM will lead to the extinction of herds in the BSC.	Previous gathers have not resulted in the extinction of the herds. The population has been seen to increase by 15 to 20 percent a year.
73.	Animal Wellness	Ariel census is a method that has been proven to be inaccurate. Additionally, the estimation of animals that were present	The methods used to estimate wild horse and burro population numbers are considered the most up to date

		but not observed seems arbitrary and without any reliable basis.	methods. See Appendix 9 for the most current population inventory.
74.	Animal Wellness	Removal numbers were based on a 20% population increase. This figure also appears arbitrary and without any rational basis, as it relies on outdated data from 2013 and contradicts the BLMs claim that the horses are underfed and dehydrated.	There are several studies that have found that on average wild horse population increase at 15%- 20% a year. These references were added to the EA “wild horse populations have the potential to grow 15-20% per year (Wolfe 1980; Eberhardt et al. 1982; Garrott et al 1991; Dawson 2005; Roelle et al. 2010; Scorolli et al. 2010).” The NAS 2013 report affirmed these finding. No new studies or data discount these finding.
75.	OWHO/ CAES	The number the BLM now give in your EA’s as the growth rate is continually changing, we have seen from 12% -25% listed. The NAS report actually stated 15 - 25%. But that NAS report also used your reports, where you, the BLM gave them the 15 - 25% estimated growth in your reports for the 40 HMA’s that were used to evaluate and write the report. So this is not really scientific proof that herds do in fact grow at this rate. You have not explained how your plan will mitigate increased population rates so that this is not just creating a cycle of gather remove, gather remove, etc every 4 years.	See response to Comment 74. The proposed action in section 2.2.1 clearly states:” Once low AML is reached, additional gathers would be needed to implement population growth suppression to keep the population within AML. If the wild horse population exceeds AML, follow-up gather(s) with removals to keep the population within AML would be conducted during the 10-year period.”
76.	Janet Lynch	The BLM's reckless and unnecessary proposal would decimate the herds of legally protected wild horses in this vast complex, which is currently home to an estimated 830 animals, but would, if the BLM follows through on its reckless plan, number just 80 in the entire complex - resulting in an average of just one horse every 2,700 acres.	See response to Comment 62.
77.	Sarah Bassler	These AMLs are 17 years old, and the BLM is using these AMLs to justify removal of wild horses. As explained by the Interior Board of Land Appeals when discussing AMLs that were only 12 years old, these AMLs are too old to justify removal of wild horses. The IBLA’s	See response to Comment 62. Since that time the AML has been re-affirmed in three other environmental analyses. Chapter 3 address the impacts of excess wild horses and the proposed action. A detailed Rangeland Monitoring Report

		reasoning applies equally to this EA in terms of the lack of “current validity” of the AMLs. The BLM conducted no wild horse management plans, akin to HMAPs where they conducted in-depth analysis of the appropriate number of wild horses which could be supported in these HMAs.	was completed for the allotments within the HMAs. This report is available on BLM’s ePlanning website: https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2018159/510).
78.	Several	<p>In 2001, a land exchange between the BLM and the State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) placed the most critical wild horse habitat of the Blawn Wash HMA into SITLA administration...In April 2005, the BLM determined that the land tenure changes required that the Blawn Wash HMA would be managed at an AML of zero (see EA UT-040-2004-0047). (sec 1.1, pg 2) Here the BLM acknowledges that they knowingly placed the “most critical wild horse habitat of the Blawn Wash HMA into SITLA administration” resulting in the BLM terminating the entire existence of the Blawn Wash HMA horses. How does this termination fit under the mandate of the WFRHBA that wild horses are to be protected?</p> <p>If this land is lost, especially in such instances where lands are transferred to other agencies, then addition of lands equal to the amount lost to horses could be negotiated.</p>	The land exchange that occurred in 2001 was a Congressional action not a BLM action.
79.	OWHO/CAES	<p>You also claim the total number of acres for Blawn Wash in the total not only of the Complex, but also in the state and national totals for acres you claim are being managed for wild horses/burros. This is a fraudulent statement because these acres were sold, and any horse on these acres is subject to removal. Therefore, the real size of the complex is 160,142 HA acres, and HMA acreage, which is the REAL number of acres being managed for horses on this</p>	The designation of the Blawn Wash HMA to HA status is outside the scope of this document. At the time of the 2014 Bible Spring Complex Gather EA, this is being considered in the new resource management plan for the Cedar City Field Office. The EIS related to this effort was to be available for comment the summer of 2014 but was delayed. At that time the Blawn Wash HMA was being reported as an HA so that is why both the HA and

		complex is 152,563. BLM needs to change the UT HMA pages to reflect the actual acreage that horses are permitted to live on because they are not permitted to use the entire HA's. You now list the Bible Springs HMA acreage with the Blawn Wash HA acreage (which should not even be listed if it is not being managed for wild horses), The Four Mile and Tilly Creek HMA acreage. Again, giving the illusion that there are 62,787 more acres actually being managed for the wild horses in this complex. And again, fraudulently claiming the Blawn Wash as HMA acres instead of HA acres.	<p>HMA acres were shown in the 2014 EA. Blawn Wash continues to be an HMA until it is changed with a LUP amendment or new LUP. The state lands are still included in the HMA acreage until this is completed.</p> <p>In the EA the data used to calculate acreage is the local EGIS data.</p> <p>The proposed action is clear that the objective is to achieve AML on the Blawn Wash HMA, which is 0 for that HMA.</p>
80.	Sarah Bassler	BLM asserts that “[r]angeland resources and wild horse health have been and are currently stressed within the HMAs.” (sec 1.1, pg 2) This contradicts BLM’s claim that the horses population increases at 15-20% per year. If rangeland resources and wild horse health were truly stressed, this population increase would drop because mares would not be healthy enough to continue to produce foals at this rate.	<p>Most of Chapter 3 and specifically in section 3.3.7 Issue 6 addresses how the gathering and removal of excess wild horses would affect individual wild horses and the overall population of the HMAs. Also addressed are how rangeland resources and wild horse health has been and currently is being stressed.</p> <p>The NAS 2001 report states “On the basis of the published literature and the additional management data reviewed by the committee, the committee concludes that it is likely that most free-ranging horse populations on public rangelands in the western United States are growing at an annual rate of 15-20 percent. The most recent population inventories show the population growth of the HMAs is within that range.</p>
81.	Sarah Bassler	BLM claims a Herd Management Area Plan (HMAP) is not required because the “Interior Board of Land Appeals has held that an HMAP is not a prerequisite to BLM conducting a gather operation (Animal Protection Institute of America, 109 IBLA 112, 127 (1989)), so long as the record otherwise substantiates compliance with the WFRHBA.” In	Questioning the decision of IBLA is outside the scope of this document. It is outside the authority of BLM to overrule or change decisions that IBLA has held.

		reading this decision, IBLA relies on 43 CFR 4710.3-1 claiming that 4710.3-1 does not require preparation of an HMAP as a prerequisite for a removal action. However this reading of 4710.3-1 ignores the inclusion of 4710.4 within 4710.3-1.	
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Wild Horses vs. Livestock Use and AUMs

82.	Several	Attach a buyout provision allowing livestock permittees to voluntarily retire their grazing permit in exchange for direct or third-party compensation.	This is outside the scope of this document. Amendments to the Taylor Grazing Act and other laws or new laws would have to be completed by congress before this action could be considered.
83.	Several	This is only being done to help ranchers. Livestock should be reduced instead of reducing wild horses.	<p>This was addressed in Appendix 3. Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail and multiple other areas in the EA.</p> <p>Livestock grazing can only be increased, reduced, or eliminated if the BLM follows regulations at 43 CFR Part 4100 and must be consistent with multiple use allocations set forth in the land-use plan. Yearly adjustments of livestock use are made through coordination with the livestock permittees and the yearly application process. Forage allocations are addressed at the planning level. Such changes to livestock grazing cannot be made through a wild horse gather decision or through 43 CFR 4710.5(a) and are only possible if BLM first revises the land-use plans to allocate livestock forage to wild horses and to eliminate or reduce livestock grazing.</p> <p>BLM monitoring data also indicate that wild horses are causing resource degradation, including in areas where there has been no livestock grazing. There are utilization studies that show heavy to severe use allotments where there is little sign of livestock use.</p>

			<p>Not only would removal or reduction of livestock not be in conformance with the existing Pinyon Management Framework Plan (MFP) approved in 1983, but it is also contrary to the BLM’s multiple-use mission as outlined in the FLPMA and PRIA, and would be inconsistent with the WFRHBA, which directs the Secretary to immediately remove excess wild horses when such removal is necessary – as is the case in the Blawn Wash HMA and Bible Spring Complex.</p> <p>The WFRHBA requires that wild horses be managed in balance with other multiple uses such as livestock and wildlife – not as an exclusive use of the public lands. The Blawn Wash HMA and Bible Spring Complex are not a Secretarially designated wild horse “range” in the sense of section 1333(a) of the Act.</p>
84.	Several	830 wild horses do not degrade the land (they are nomadic and move around for grazing) in the way thousands of head of cattle degrade the land.	See response to Comment 83.
85.	Several	Please allot as much land to the wild horse population as you do to cattle.	See response to Comment 83.
86.	Several	Livestock grazing should not be allowed on public lands.	See response to Comment 83.
87.	PLPCO	The State is concerned given the fact that in Utah, grazing has declined on BLM lands by more than 66 percent over the course of the past century. While reducing livestock numbers and Animal Unit Months (“AUMs”) to a level consistent with the range’s carrying capacity is a worthy goal in some situations (like drought), past experience shows that temporary reductions in AUMs have a way of becoming permanent reductions. As such, the State has adopted a “no-net-loss” policy regarding livestock AUMs on federal grazing allotments. Here, “No	See response to Comment 83.

		<p>Net Loss” means, “AUMs within the state remain at or above current levels unless a scientific need for temporary reduction is demonstrated to the satisfaction of state officials...in the case that AUMs are temporarily reduced, these reductions are reinstated at the earliest possible moment once vegetative health has been restored to its previous levels. In keeping with the State’s “no-net-loss” policy, the State supports active wild horse herd management, and encourages the BLM to continue working towards restoring any lost or reduced AUMs as soon as practicably possible.</p>	
88.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The EA fails to take a hard look at the BLM’s clear authority to limit livestock grazing, pursuant to 43 C.F.R. 4710.5(a), to close livestock grazing on areas of public lands:</p> <p>“(a) If necessary to provide habitat for wild horses or burros, to implement herd management actions, or to protect wild horses or burros, to implement herd management actions, or to protect wild horses or burros from disease, harassment or injury, the authorized officer may close appropriate areas of the public lands to grazing use by all or a particular kind of livestock.</p> <p>(b) All public lands inhabited by wild horses or burros shall be closed to grazing under permit or lease by domestic horses and burros.</p> <p>(c) Closure may be temporary or permanent. After appropriate public consultation, a Notice of Closure shall be issued to affected and interested parties.”</p> <p>The EA fails to consider 43 C.F.R. 4710.5; the BLM cannot claim that this statute is usually applied in cases of emergency and not for general management of wild horses since it cannot be applied in a manner that</p>	See response to Comment 83.

		would be inconsistent with the existing land-use plans.” (43 CFR § 4710.1)	
89.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>FLPMA requires that BLM “balance” wild horse and burro use with other uses which equates at minimum to a 50-50 allocation of available forage between horses and livestock on HMAs. The BLM has chosen to target wild horses for elimination and removal on the small 11% of public lands authorized for their use and as their habitat.</p> <p>The EA fails to address that FLPMA highlights the importance of the non-market value within its definition of the term “multiple-use.”</p>	<p>The Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLPMA) mandates that BLM-administered land be managed for multiple uses. Livestock grazing and wild horses are both uses authorized to occur on BLM administered land in the Blawn Wash HMA and Bible Spring complex under the WFRHBA and Taylor Grazing Act. The WFRHBA specifically directs BLM to manage wild horses as one of the multiple uses of public lands, rather than as the primary use of those lands.</p>
90.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The BLM claims wild horses must be removed to achieve TNEB, yet the agency increased livestock grazing in the same area in the last year. If these public lands can accommodate the maximum permitted livestock grazing, there is no ecological or legal basis for the removal of wild horses.</p>	<p>The Taylor Grazing Act authorizes the use of rangelands for livestock grazing, the Wild Horse & Burro Act established HMAs and provided protection for WH&B in conjunction with multiple use (such as for livestock grazing).</p> <p>BLM cannot unilaterally reclassify lands within a grazing district to eliminate livestock grazing under the guise of a wild horse gather decision. Any change in classification of lands within a grazing district currently designated a suitable for livestock grazing would require a separate decision-making process under the applicable regulations, as well as data supporting such reclassification.</p> <p>Refer to responses to Comment 83 regarding differences between livestock and wild horse management.</p> <p>Livestock actual use data shown in the Monitoring Report (see the BLM monitoring report on the BLM’s ePlanning website: https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2018159/510) show a</p>

			reduction in livestock use last year compared to the previous year.
91.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The EA fails to provide hard data that shows there is a need to remove “excess” horses that cannot be fulfilled by reducing or eliminating livestock grazing.</p> <p>The Proposed Action is not intended to improve the Thriving Natural Ecological Balance (TNEB). The Proposed Action’s goal is to reduce competition for forage and water resource or to remove wild horses so livestock can continue to have greater use of the resource.</p> <p>The EA does not sufficiently justify the Proposed Action as the law does not require that wild horses be removed merely because they are over the AML; rather, the agency must show that the existence of the horses – as opposed to livestock or other factors – are causing harm to the TNEB and the EA must take a hard look at other alternative actions before implementing the Proposed Action.</p> <p>Despite the range conditions cited in the EA, the BLM is maintaining the current permitted livestock grazing levels. The final EA must include as attachments the latest livestock rangeland health assessments and livestock grazing permit renewal documents for all 15 allotments which overlap with the four HMAs.</p> <p>Additionally, the BLM continues to use the outdated 1,000 lb cow measurement that was established prior to the 1980’s and it is well documented cattle are bred at least 20% larger today. (Attachment 3a). Clearly the understatement of forage consumption by livestock and the resulting overstocking of allotments</p>	<p>This comment is outside the scope and purpose and need of this EA. This EA is not the appropriate mechanism to address other causal factors, such as livestock grazing, which is addressed through a separate decision-making process under the grazing regulations and through changes to the grazing management system that will allow rangeland health standards to be met. Rather the EA purpose and need is to achieve and maintain wild horse AML and remove all excess wild horses so as to be able to achieve a thriving natural ecological balance.</p> <p>The BLM recognizes that impacts to the land from wild horses and cattle are different. Livestock- which is more regulated (rest-rotation and deferred rotational grazing)- and wild horses are differentiated in the EA in terms of impacts to the land. In particular, Section 3.3.3 and 3.2.7 (with additions to final EA) distinguishes between livestock and wild horse impacts to upland vegetation communities.</p> <p>Section 3.2.7 and Chapter 8 References cite the following USFS report “Science Framework for conservation and restoration of the sagebrush biome” (2017). This report states “...many studies corroborate the general conclusion that high densities of wild horses can lead to biologically significant changes in sagebrush ecosystems... Wild horses are potential agents for the spread of nonnative plant and may limit the effectiveness of restoration projects. Grazing by wild horses can also have severe impacts on aquatic ecosystems and riparian communities. Wild horses can degrade</p>

		<p>causes livestock damage to the range further demonstrating that the EA fails to provide adequate data to support that rangeland damage is being caused by wild horses.</p>	<p>the quality of limited water sources and behaviorally exclude ungulates and other native wildlife (e.g., pronghorn, deer and elk) from these water sources. Even in areas with long histories of livestock grazing, once domestic livestock are removed, continued wild horse grazing may cause ongoing detrimental ecosystem effects. In the sagebrush-steppe ecosystem, plant communities can take several decades to recover from such impacts.”</p> <p>Wild horses and burros are cecal digesters and are less selective in forage preference than other grazing ungulates (Beever 2003, Janis 1976, Hanley and Hanley 1982). Because of this, they consume 20-65% more forage than ruminants of equal body size (Beever 2003, Hanley 1982, Wagner 1983, Menard et al. 2002). Additionally, because equids possess a set of upper incisors whereas ruminants do not, they are able to destructively graze forages to the ground thus inhibiting the plants ability to recover (Beever 2003, Symanski 1994, Menard et al. 2002). Furthermore, Beever (2003) observed that horse trails were of greater number, length, and spatial extent than cattle.</p> <p>Finally, horses concentrate dung piles, as opposed to spreading them out over the landscape as the commenter has implied. Pellegrini (1979) found that horse dung piles can reach greater than 60 cm in height and more than 10 m² in extent.</p> <p>Refer to response to Comment 83. Also, Appendix 3 Removal or Reduction of Livestock within the HMAs.</p>
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92.	Sarah Bassler	<p>This EA provides no actual data demonstrating that the BLM has done a thorough current assessment which is required under a Herd Management Area Plan to determine the carrying capacity of these HMAs and whether excess horses in fact exist. Exceeding AML is not the same as excess.</p> <p>Standards and Guideline Assessments have been completed in all the allotments since 2007 in conjunction with grazing permit renewal. Nested frequencies, utilization, Rangeland Health Assessments, actual use, climate, etc... were utilized to determine whether the Standards and Guidelines for Healthy Rangelands were being achieved. These assessments were completed as part of FONSI/Decision Records between 8/29/2007-5/28/2011. Again, none of these assessments are current and therefore do not justify the determination of a current excess of wild horses justifying removal.</p>	<p>Chapter 3 address the impacts of excess wild horses and the proposed action. A detailed Rangeland Monitoring Report was completed for the allotments within the HMAs. This report is available on BLM's ePlanning website: https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2018159/510).</p> <p>Rangeland health assessments were completed on 16 grazing allotments within the gather area from 2007 through 2015 as indicated by the monitoring report for the HMAs (see the BLM's ePlanning website: https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2018159/510).</p> <p>Nested frequencies, utilization, rangeland health assessments, actual use, precipitation, etc., were utilized to determine whether BLM Utah's Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health were being achieved. These other studies have been continued through 2021 and results are in the monitoring report. These studies are and will continue to be conducted.</p>
93.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The final EA must disclose the actual use of livestock-grazing AUMs (by allotment) in all four of the HMAs for each of the past 10 years. Data for livestock grazing by pasture must also be provided. Rangeland health assessments that support continued livestock grazing in the HMAs must also be provided.</p>	<p>Most of the data requested is available in the detailed Rangeland Monitoring Report that was completed for the allotments within the HMAs. This report is available on BLM's ePlanning website: https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2018159/510).</p> <p>There is no requirement for the data to be provided by pasture. See response to Comment 83.</p>
94.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The TGA provides the government broad discretion to decide whether to allow livestock owners to use public lands. The issuance of a grazing permit does not confer any entitlement or right to use the public lands; rather, it is a</p>	<p>Refer to responses to comments 82 and 83.</p> <p>Livestock grazing was reduced last year from the previous year, not increased.</p>

		<p>privilege that can be taken away, if necessary, to protect the health of the range and/or to protect the wild horses/burros.</p> <p>The BLM claims wild horses must be removed to achieve TNEB, yet the agency increased livestock grazing in the same area in the last year. If these public lands can accommodate the maximum permitted livestock grazing, there is no ecological or legal basis for the removal of wild horses.</p>	
95.	Janet Lynch	<p>There are so few wild horses already in the area, removing 90% of their already tiny numbers will make no difference to the land (although it would obviously decimate the area's wild horse population). It is my understanding that 17 of the 19 grazing allotments that overlap with the Bible Springs wild horse complex are failing the BLM's land health standards and, according to the agency itself, they're failing because of livestock grazing.</p>	See response to Comment 83.
96.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>According to the BLM's "FY2022 WHB Population Estimates" document, Congress originally designated 3.9 million acres of land in Utah for wild horses and burros. Of that, 3,224,891 acres were BLM-managed public lands. Of that, 2,154,458 acres remain in use for wild horses in the state. Over the past 50 years, BLM Utah has zeroed out 37.4% of all wild horse and burro habitat in the same and 33.2% of the original BLM-managed lands designated as wild horse and burro habitat. "Utah BLM currently manages approximately 1410 grazing allotments covering 22 million acres of BLM land in the State... Grazing on these allotments is authorized through the issuance of 1,462 grazing permits and provide for just over 1.3 million animal unit months (AUMs) of livestock use."2</p>	<p>The comment is outside the scope of this document as it is referring to the entire state and is not specific to the Blawn Wash HMA and Bible Spring Complex.</p> <p>However, the 4700 regulations require that BLM determine if an area has the correct habitat to management and sustain wild horses. After analysis, some areas are lacking the key elements of habitat to sustain wild horses.</p> <p>Refer to responses to Comment 83.</p>

		Compare that with the fact that BLM only allows 1,084 to 1,956 wild horses and burros to live in the entire state. That means there are more BLM livestock grazing allotments and permits than the number of wild horses and burros permitted in the entire state as per low AML.	
97.	The Cloud Foundation	we strongly oppose the Proposed Action which includes the removal of all wild horses from Blawn Wash HMA while continuing to allow livestock grazing in the same area. Also reducing wild horses in the Four Mile, Bible Spring and Tilly Creek HMAs while continuing to allow livestock to graze in the same area	See response to Comment 83.

Impacts to Gathered Wild Horses

98.	Several	Animals gathered and removed are at a significant risk of illness and death due to infectious disease. Disease outbreaks in several BLM holding facilities, including Cañon City, Wheatland, Delta, and Sutherland, are caused by overcrowding, understaffing, and filthy conditions. In Wheatland, the strangles outbreak – which has been shown to be more common among horses subject to crowded conditions, inadequate housing, deficient nutrition, poor sanitation, and stress from lengthy transportation – infected at least half of the horses at the facility and killed 19 horses in May 2022.	Comment is speculative in nature and outside the scope of this EA.
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General

99.	Kirk McAllister	Manage the wild horses like any other wild animal. Issue hunting tags at a low cost to residents.	<p>This is outside the scope of this document and doesn't match the purpose and need. It would require an amendment to the WFRHBA of 1971 or new law from Congress in order to enact this action.</p> <p>Wildlife is managed under the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and not the BLM.</p>
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			Information wildlife species can be found at the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources at: http://wildlife.utah.gov/dwr
100.	Laurel Gress	You never try to drastically reduce the populations of elk, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, etc. the way you do wild horses.	See response to Comment 99.
101.	Mary Ceallaigh	Conduct an internal investigation to identify BLM organizational issues that pose barriers to best practices aligned with current veterinary medicine and humane standards. Identify conflicts of interest that may be hindering high standards for wild horse stewardship.	This is outside the scope of this document and doesn't match the purpose and need. However, this is already required in the CAWP and continues each year in the BLM CAWP program.
102.	Tracey Loyd	Wild horses present a possibility for the control of fire hazards in areas of forest and scrub land. They eat the plants that are considered to be fire hazards.	The reduction of fire hazards (fuel reduction) by wild horses is outside the scope of this document and doesn't meet the purpose and need.
103.	Several	Let wild horses, bison, Longhorns, deer, antelope and predators run free on public lands. Stop allowing wolf and cougar trapping and hunting.	Refer to Appendix 3 Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail, Controlling Wild Horse Numbers by Natural Means. Wildlife is managed under the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and not the BLM. However, over the past 21 years an average of 6 cougars per year have been taken in the Southwest Desert wildlife unit (3,338,921 acres), of which the Bible Spring Complex (222,006 acres) makes up only 7%. The BLM does not have any known recorded evidence, sign, or sightings of the cougars within the Bible Spring Complex taking of a wild horse or impacting the wild horse population. The annual cougar reports can be found at: http://wildlife.utah.gov/dwr/hunting/319-cougars.html . Information on other wildlife species can be found at the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources at: http://wildlife.utah.gov/dwr

104.	Beth Hubbard	According to scientific studies, horses have a herd growth rate at about 5% not the 19-20% that you like to perpetuate.	There are no known studies that suggest growth rates below 15% in wild horses, with the exceptions of those that include population growth suppression methods being implemented.
105.	PLPCO	The State encourages the BLM to continue working with livestock operators on the affected allotments to achieve the County's policy that the public land plant communities be managed for the benefit of not just horses, but wildlife and livestock as well.	See response to Comment 83.
106.	Several	Without existing or current Herd Management Area Plans there is no viable way to infer impact nor mitigate damages to wild horse and burro populations.	See response to Comment 62.
107.	Tammi Adams	At minimum, in light of out-of-date information and lack of HMAPs, the agency's proposed EA should include all census data, seasonal use data, foaling season information, genetic data, and all data pertaining to wild horse use in, around, and through the project areas and throughout the neighboring HMAs prior to implementation of the proposed actions in this EA.	<p>This comment is address throughout the EA and supporting documents.</p> <p>See response to Comment 83.</p> <p>Appendix 9 has the most recent Population Inventory Data. Livestock actual use, vegetation, precipitation and vegetative trend data are all found in the Monitoring Report (see https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2018159/510), Appendix 10 has the Genetics Analysis for the 4 HMAs addressed in this EA. Foaling season is identified in the design features of the Proposed Action.</p>
108.	Several	Land Use Plans (LUPs) require HMAP inclusion just as LUPs include plans for livestock management, extraction industry management, wildlife management, multi-use management, etc. (FLPMA, 1976 as amended). BLM's suggestion to arbitrarily change three HMAs into one complex does not align with the intentions of the	Combining of three HMAs in to a Complex and suggesting that it become one HMA was evaluated in the Bible Spring, Blawn Wash, Four Mile and Tilly Creek Wild Horse Appropriate Management Level (AML) Assessment, UT-040-04-47 (DR signed April 18, 2005). As outlined in this EA the combining of the three HMA into a Complex was extensively analyzed. At

		WFRHBA nor does this decision align with NEPA.	that time an open house was held on May 25th, 2004 where the public identified issues and proposed alternatives. In addition, notice of the preparation of an EA was posted on the Utah BLM Environmental Notification Bulletin Board on May 5, 2004. The combining of the three HMAs into one HMA could only occur after a LUP amendment or new LUP that includes extensive public involvement was asked for and accepted. Both the management of the 3 HMAs as a complex or combining the 3 HMAs into 1 HMA are in line with FLPMA because multiple use of all resources must be considered through the NEPA process.
109.	Several	The agency states, “The Proposed Action and alternatives are in conformance with the Pinyon MFP approved on June 1, 1983.” These Proposed Actions are based on an LUP that is 39-years old and is out of-date. More recent Range Management Plans were identified by the agency in the EA, yet data from this outdated LUP were simply carried forward. Again, without legally obligated current HMAPs and updated LUP, any changes to the management of wild horses within the Blawn Wash, Bible Spring, Four Mile, and Tilly Creek HMAs is an arbitrary and unreasonable action by the agency.	The proposed action is in conformance with the MFP not based on it. There is extensive data since 1983 that has been used for the management of wild horses within the 4 HMAs. See response to Comment 108.
110.	Several	The appropriate place to determine necessity for any gather of “excess” horses or population growth suppression would be in conjunction with an evaluation of the process used to determine Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) within an HMAP.	See response to Comment 108.
111.	Several	It is the agency’s obligation to provide documentation that a Thriving Natural Ecological Balance (TNEB) has not been met specifically due to wild horse	Please see Chapter 3 and Appendix 3. Please see response to Comment 83.

		populations. Livestock-grazing data consistently affects monitoring standards for upland soils, riparian, and native species/T&E. It is reasonable to identify multiple-uses and impacts to TNEB within the Bible Springs Complex and Blawn HMA when formulating rangeland TNEB. Multiple uses include, but not exclusive to, livestock grazing, extraction industries, public encroachment, and recreational use.	
112.	Animal Wellness	We have questions about the involvement of Tammy Pearson, who was appointed by the BLM to the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board, in the BLM's wild horse management decisions for the Bible Springs Complex. Ms. Pearson is an influential and outspoken Beaver County Commissioner who operates a commercial livestock operation.... both her involvement and her close relationships with the BLM's program staff must be disclosed and addressed.	This is outside the scope of this document and the purpose and need of the EA.
113.	Friends of Animals	The EA should analyze additional alternatives in detail, including adjusting the AMLs, reducing the amount of forage allocated to private ranchers for grazing their domestic cattle and sheep, and protecting predators to create a thriving, natural ecological balance without the need to roundup wild horses and remove them from public lands. The BLM should also take a hard look at the impacts of wild horses and correct the EA which erroneously attributes a disproportionate share of range deterioration to wild horses despite the evidence that cattle, who far outnumber wild horses, are causing damage to the range.	See Appendix 3.

114.	Friends of Animals	<p>The WFHBA mandates that decisions to remove wild horses be based on currently available information and that they be implemented immediately. There is no authority for BLM to authorize removal and harassment in such a vast area for several years, as it proposes to do in the EA at issue here. BLM does not have, and cannot have, information that removal is necessary for ten years. Range conditions, wild horse numbers, and the AML can change each year.</p>	<p>See Section 2.2.1. The purpose of returning to conduct additional gathers and fertility control would be to reach and maintain AML. Multiple gathers will be necessary over the next 10 years to accomplish the objectives of the proposed action. Refer to the Proposed Action and Chapter 3.</p> <p>BLM has determined that rangeland conditions will continue to degrade, will be unable to recover if wild horse and burro populations are not managed and maintained within AML and ecological thresholds are crossed (Briske et al. 2005, Stringham et al. 2001). The BLM will continue to monitor ecological health conditions within the Blawn Wash HMA and Bible Spring Complex and evaluate whether grazing allotments are meeting rangeland health standards.</p> <p>See response to Comment 66.</p> <p>Updated population inventories will not change the need to achieve AML but will inform the need and scale of future operations, such as by helping identify where horses may be concentrated prior to a gather, or how many horses above AML remain to be gathered.</p>
115.	Several	<p>An EIS should be prepared. In particular, the proposed action would have a significant effect on the local area because it would remove the majority of wild horses from the area. It would have both short-term and long-term significant effects. In the short term, most of the wild horses would be removed, drastically altering the ecology of the area, and making it difficult for people to observe or view wild horses in the area. It would also have severe long-term consequences, including undermining the social</p>	<p>Impacts were analyzed in the EA (Chapter 3) and are known—the action alternatives are not expected to be significant, involve unique or unknown risks, and are not highly controversial. BLM has not identified any significant impacts that would trigger the need for an EIS. Refer also to “significance” as described in BLM NEPA Handbook 1790-1.</p>

		structure, stability, and viability of the wild horse populations in the Bible Spring Complex. In addition, the act of chasing wild horses with helicopters would significantly disrupt those areas and the animals that live there. The EIS should include a cost analysis of the different alternatives.	
116.	OWHO_ CAES	You have not provided all reference materials to the public pursuant to NEPA regulations. The materials you refer to in this plan must be reasonably accessible to the public. We have provided a list for you of those that we could not find, or that required a fee to buy.	The NEPA regulations do not require BLM to provide the public each and every reference used in the EA. Some of the references are appendixes in the EA or on ePlanning. Most of the others are in professional publication and journals that are accessible to the public on the internet. Specific BLM files and reports are available upon request from the Cedar City Office as per § 372.3 Information and assistance, which states, “Information, including the status of studies, and the availability of reference materials, as well as the informal interpretations of NEPA procedures and other forms of assistance, will be made available upon request.”
117.	Friends of Animals	Additional NEPA analysis is needed on the following: (1) the impact of the proposed action and alternatives on the genetic viability of the wild horse population in Bible Spring Complex; (2) the impacts of fertility control measures; (3) the positive impacts of wild horses on the environment and the actual cause of damage to the range; and (4) the behavioral and physiological impacts of BLM’s proposed action and alternatives on wild horses.	<p>Fertility control measures, behavioral and physiological impacts are addressed in Chapter 3 and Appendix 5. See response to Comment 61.</p> <p>Genetic monitoring will inform the BLM as to whether or not genetic diversity is acceptable.</p> <p>The herds in the Bible Spring Complex are not isolated herds. It has been standard practice to move and introduce animals across herds. Information on the relatedness of Bible Spring complex herds and herds in other HMAs (NAS 2013) demonstrated that Bible Spring Complex horses are highly similar, genetically, to other BLM-managed wild horses.</p>

			Published studies demonstrating benefits of increased ecological disturbance, caused by introduction of equids and other large herbivores, have generally been limited to mesic ecosystems, such as in previously farmed European lands. Such studies were not included in analyses of impacts of horses in this EA, as they are specific to different ecological circumstances.
118.	American Wild Horse Campaign	<p>The BLM is facing an escalating fiscal crisis off-the-range as a result of the mass removal of wild horses from the range and the stockpiling of captured mustangs in government holding facilities. The proposed roundup and removal will add wild horses to taxpayer-funded holding facilities. Instead, a comprehensive field- darting fertility control program will save the agency, and taxpayers, money while managing the horses humanely. BLM should evaluate, in specific terms, how a proposed plan of utilizing a darting fertility control program in the BSC will not only successfully manage wild horse population numbers without perpetual roundups, which are costly to American taxpayers and the horses themselves but will also decrease unnecessary and wasteful spending of taxpayer funds.</p>	<p>Comments on the Off-range facilities, budget of the national wild horse and burro program and personal attitudes and values of BLM are outside the scope of this EA, which is focused on agency action that would achieve and maintain the wild horse population within established AML over a period of 10 years and help the BLM in achieving and maintaining a TNEB on these public lands. The BLM's need for agency action is to prevent undue or unnecessary degradation of the public lands associated with excess wild horses, allow for recovery of degraded range resources, and to restore a TNEB and multiple-use relationship on public lands, consistent with the provisions of section 1333(b) of the WFRHBA.</p> <p>See response to Comment 41. BLM does not plan to use field-darting as the main delivery system for PZP or GonaCon because only a low percentage of mares can be darted in these HMAs given the size and remoteness of this Complex. This method could be used as a supplement delivery system. Also, field darting only shifts cost from holding to the field. Cost of damage to range lands from over populations contain much higher cost then holding of wild horses.</p>

119.	American Wild Horse Campaign	The EA must consider the social preference of American taxpayers, 88 percent of whom want wild horses protected and managed humanely on public lands.	The proposed action and alternatives meet these criteria to protect and manage humanely wild horses on public lands.
120.	American Wild Horse Campaign	The AWHC also asks the BLM to explore the use of public-private partnerships which can provide and train volunteers who become familiar with the territory and horses and assist the BLM in locating and treating herds with remote darting with PZP. The AWHC is willing to assist the BLM in this regard.	This comment is outside the scope of this EA. However, The BLM remains highly committed to the use of fertility control vaccinations, including the use of volunteers to administer field darting over the long-term. The BLM looks forward to working with volunteers and groups on fertility control vaccine treatments.
121.	RTF/ Humane Society	Consider planning for many levels of slowed, longer-term management objectives: instead of immediate reductions to low AML via gather-only techniques, taking into consideration the fact that NEPA actions must be put into place to facilitate an increase in short- and long-term holding facilities; analysis of whether a combination of slower removals in these HMAs paired with fertility control to slow reproduction could reduce impacts to already full holding facilities (fewer horses removed over a longer period of time); and, indeed, if horses might be allowed to stay on HMAs (at reduced numbers, but not at AML) because the program as a whole is greatly impacted at this time.	The proposed action covers gathers and fertility treatments for a 10-year period because of the difficulty of reaching AML in one or two gathers. This also allows the BLM to implement fertility control on the Bible Spring Complex. See Section 2.2.1.1.
122.	OWHO/ CAES	BLM has stated in other issues (such as not needing to report to Congress a resource no longer utilizing an area designated for its use) that the Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA) does not apply to wild horses. Therefore, stating that FLPMA applies here in this decision, and the RMP/LRMP that decided forage and water allocations, to the degree that it overrules the mandate for principle management, as stated in the WHBA,	BLM questions the validity of the statement made in the comment that “BLM has ever stated that FLPMA doesn’t apply to wild horses” The Federal Land Management and Policy Act (FLPMA) mandates that BLM-administered land be managed for multiple uses. Livestock grazing and wild horses are both uses authorized to occur on BLM administered land in the Blawn Wash HMA and Bible Spring complex under

		would be incorrect, arbitrary and capricious.	the WFRHBA and Taylor Grazing Act. The WFRHBA specifically directs BLM to manage wild horses as one of the multiple uses of public lands, rather than as the primary use of those lands.
123.	OWHO/CAES	A 10-year plan removes much of the due process allowed to the public for each gather. It also removes the BLM's regulatory obligation to allow the public to review and comment on each method or product used for fertility control. There are no dates for gathers, no plan for how the public will be allowed to participate or observe these gathers.	It is common to analysis actions for a period of 10 years to accomplish management objectives. This is done in mining, lands, livestock grazing, recreation and other programs. Please see Section 2.2.1 and Chapter 3 of the EA and the response to Comment 47.
124.	OWHO/CAES	The plan for 10 years also doesn't include anything about environmental changes. How will this plan be changed in years of more drought, how are you addressing the continued drought to make sure you are following your mandate to provide habitat for this herd.	The Proposed Action and Alternative 2 address this comment by removing and reducing excess wild horses on these HMAs. This would allow recovery of vegetation and water resources while providing the habitat needs for health wild horse and healthy rangelands in the area.
125.	OWHO/CAES	You state: "The Iron County RMP (2017) states, "excess wild horses that exceed appropriate management levels must be removed to keep the fragile balance with other uses." This statement needs to be amended because it is in direct opposition to the WFRHBA in that the Act mandates the entire area where the horses were in 1971 be managed principally for the wild horses, which is not balancing them with other uses. And this statement goes against the ruling by the court that AML in and off itself is not enough to gather and remove horses.	This is a county plan, not a BLM plan. We are simply stating how the proposed action conforms to local plans.
126.	The Cloud Foundation	The BLM is proposing a government action based on a nearly 40-year-old management plan (MFP) which is clearly an outdated planning document. Despite that, the EA states that agency has eliminated from consideration any actions that would allow a health population of wild horses to remain in the HMAs – such as reduce or eliminate	Amending the land use plan is outside of the scope of this document. BLM is proposing a government action based on the most current studies, data and management plans available at this time.

		livestock grazing, adjust AML, adjust livestock use, etc. The BLM assertion that the agency cannot take such actions is wholly unsupported. When the agency receives information that throws into question the existing planning documents validity, the agency is required to take a hard look at proposals and take an Adaptive Management approach to ensure all actions included in the Proposed Action are in compliance with the intent of existing laws.	
127.	The Cloud Foundation	The BLM has policy to incorporate Adaptive Management into agency management programs. Attachments 5-6) Under this policy, land use decisions can be adjusted in order to meet environmental, social and economic goals; to increase scientific knowledge; and to decrease tensions among stakeholders. There are numerous reasons why the BLM should apply its adaptive management policy to the management of these HMAs.	The Adaptive Management policy “Attachment N” that the Cloud Foundation provided refers to Land Use Plan policies which are much different than NEPA or environmental Assessment policies and procedures.
128.	The Cloud Foundation	The EA fails to adequately analyze the 1971 WHA mandates for the BLM management of wild horses/burros on public lands. Congressional Intent Is Clear: The Designated “Range” Is “Devoted Principally” for Wild Horse and Burro Use.	See response to Comment 83.
129.	The Cloud Foundation	The EA, corresponding land use plans, and grazing permits fail to address that “Wild horses and burros shall be considered comparably [similar] with other resource values in the formulation of land use plans.” (43 CFR § 4700.0-6) The EA cites the land use plans which failed to consider, analyze and authorize the AUM resources “principally” or “comparably” for wild horses and therefore they are not in conformance with existing laws and statutes. The Final EA cannot implement the Proposed Action because it is not in	See Appendix 3 of the EA. See response to Comment 83. The "principally but not necessarily exclusively" language applies to specific Wild Horse Ranges which are designated by the Secretary of the Interior, not to HMAs in general. The Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR, Subpart 4710.3-2) states: "Herd management areas may also be designated as wild horse or burro ranges to be managed principally, but

		compliance with existing laws and statutes.	not necessarily exclusively, for wild horse or burro herds."
130.	The Cloud Foundation	FLPMA requires that BLM "balance" wild horse and burro use with other uses which equates at minimum to a 50-50 allocation of available forage between horses and livestock in the HMAs. The EA fails to address this. By allowing livestock to continue to graze and instead of reducing or eliminating livestock, which is far more pervasive across BLM-managed public lands, the agency has instead chosen to target wild horses for elimination and removal on the meager 11% of public lands authorized for their use and as their habitat.	<p>See response to Comment 83. The WFRHBA specifically directs BLM to manage wild horses as one of the multiple uses of public lands, rather than as the primary use of those lands.</p> <p>The current number of animals in the Blawn Wash HMA and Bible Spring Complex is resulting in resource degradation, even in the absence of livestock, as evidenced in areas where no livestock grazing is occurring. The AML is supposed to reflect a TNEB, and clearly the current number of horses is too high for what the range can sustain – even where no livestock are grazing.</p>
131.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The BLM-commissioned 2013 NAS report states that horse and burro management and control strategies cannot be based on biological or cost considerations alone; management should engage interested and affected parties and also be responsive to public attitudes and preferences.</p> <p>The EA fails to consider the interests of those who cherish the opportunity to observe, photograph, and otherwise enjoy wild horses and their natural behaviors ... these are the very horses which Congress declared to be "national esthetic treasure[s]" when it enacted the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971.</p>	<p>The NAS Report (Page 242) states that "decisions regarding the management of free-ranging horses and burros should draw on the best available scientific information," which is contained in the EA.</p> <p>Please refer to Section 3.3.7 of the updated EA in reference to the No Action Alternative. The removal of horses from the Blawn Wash HMA and Bible Spring Complex helps ensure that healthy horses will remain in the HMA and Complex following the gather(s), within the established AML range, for those who enjoy observing and photographing healthy wild horses on healthy rangelands.</p>
132.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The NAS determined "preserving natural behaviors is an important criterion" for wild horse management. Therefore, the following should be precluded from management actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any fertility control (e.g., Gonacon) or surgery that alters the production of natural hormones or destroys the ovaries or testes; 	<p>Commenter appears to have misinterpreted the NAS report.</p> <p>The NAS report did not conclude that PZP was the only available, proven form of fertility control. That report reviewed a number of potential fertility control methods, and additional peer-reviewed information on the topic has</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sex ratio skewing which causes stallion aggression due to the unnatural ratio of males to females. <p>In 1971, Congress unanimously passed the Wild, Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. The word "Wild" has distinct meaning, especially when it comes to wild horses. Wild behaviors are the basis for the rich and complex natural social structure of wild horses.</p> <p>“Wild animal means any animal which is now or historically has been found in the wild, or in the wild state, within the boundaries of the United States, its territories, or possessions... Wild state means living in its original, natural condition; not domesticated”</p> <p>“Original, natural condition” implies unaltered by sterilization or fertility control that would change the animals’ natural, wild behaviors.</p> <p>The BLM contention that, “BLM is not required to manage populations of wild horses in a manner that ensures that any given individual maintains its social standing within any given harem or band” is in direct violation of the WHA and Congress’ intent to preserve and protect America’s wild horses.</p>	<p>become available since 2013. The NAS Report (2013) states “No method has yet been developed that does not have some effect on physiology or behavior. However, the effects of not intervening to control or manage population numbers are potentially harsher than contraception.... “Three methods (PZP-22 and SpayVac, GonaCon, and chemical vasectomy) are considered the most promising for managing fertility in free-ranging horses and burros because they have the fewest and least serious effects on those parameters. In addition, although their application requires handling the animals’ gathering- that process is no more disruptive than the current method for controlling numbers, and it lacks the further disruption of removal and relocation to long-term holding facilities. Considering all the current options, the three methods, either alone or in combination, offer the most acceptable alternative for managing population numbers.” Since 2013, additional studies have shown that chemical sterilization was ineffective (Scully et al. 2015), and that flexible IUDs are also effective and safe (See Appendix O).</p> <p>Contrary to the commenter’s suggestion, the WFRHBA includes no such language specifying that BLM ensure that individual wild horses maintain their social standing within any given harem or band. The wording of the act makes clear which animals are to be considered wild horses and burros; behavioral tests are not part of that prescription.</p>
133.	The Cloud Foundation	According to the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), under NEPA, “agencies are required to determine if their actions have	Comments on the off-range facilities, budget of the national wild horse and burro program and personal attitudes and values of BLM are outside the

		<p>significant environmental effects and to consider the environmental and related social and economic effects of their proposed actions.”</p> <p>The agency is facing an escalating fiscal crisis off-the-range as a result of the mass removal of wild horses and burros from the range and the stockpiling of captured mustangs and burros in government holding facilities.</p> <p>Biologically, the area may be able to support 500 cattle and 500 horses and may be carrying them. But if the weight of public opinion calls for 1,000 horses, the area can be said in this context to have an excess of 500 cattle. For these reasons, the term excess has both biological and social components.</p> <p>An otherwise satisfactory population level may be controversial or unacceptable if the strategy for achieving it is not appropriately responsive to public attitudes and values.</p>	<p>scope of this EA, which is focused on agency action (refer to Purpose and Need).</p>
134.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The EA must acknowledge and consider the interests of those who cherish the opportunity to observe, photograph, and otherwise enjoy wild horses and their natural behaviors in the Cedar Mountain HMA...these are the very horses which Congress declared to be “national esthetic treasure[s]” when it enacted the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971.</p>	<p>This EA addresses the Blawn Wash HMA and Bible Spring Complex, not the Cedar Mountain HMA. However, In Appendix 2 ID Checklist under Recreation, it explains: Opportunities for wild horse viewing does occur in the gather area, but to what extent is not known. There would still be opportunities for wild horse viewing, after the gather, in the area both in the Bible Spring Complex and the other HMAs in the CCFO.</p>
135.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The EA fails to consider the modern understanding of the important role that wild horses play as a flagship species. Our results suggest that equids, even those that are introduced or feral, are able to buffer water availability, which</p>	<p>Please see response to Comment 117.</p>

		<p>may increase resilience to ongoing human-caused aridification.”</p> <p>The EA fails to consider this modern understanding of the important contributions of burros and wild horses in the desert environment.</p>	
136.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The EA fails to outline definitive, year-by-year plans without delineating out specific actions for each of the 10 years. By issuing a 10-year Decision Record, the public’s ability to take legal action may be constrained.</p> <p>The Proposed Action uses vague and expansive terminology to include and implement currently untested fertility control methods.</p> <p>The final EA must fully disclose, describe and analyze specific and current range data, water availability, range usage (differentiating usage by livestock and horses), and the agency’s intended actions. It must also allow the public ample opportunity to review the data and comment on the proposed action, as required by NEPA.</p>	<p>Please refer to Section 2.2.1 and Chapter 3 of the EA, which includes analyses of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of alternatives.</p> <p>BLM will continue updating the information at its disposal through ongoing monitoring of rangeland resources and herd populations, as appropriate and as funding allows (Section 2.2.1.1).</p> <p>Gathers would be scheduled by the BLM National Wild Horse and Burro Program Office. Several factors such as animal condition, herd health, weather conditions, or other considerations could result in adjustments in the schedule.</p> <p>Updated population inventories will not change the need to achieve AML but will inform the need and scale of future operations, such as by helping identify where horses may be concentrated prior to a gather, or how many horses above AML remain to be gathered.</p>
137.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The Proposed Action seeks to eliminate, or zero out, all wild horses from the 62,787 acres in Blawn Wash HMA. The BLM arbitrarily decided to give to the State of Utah the highest forage producing lands within the HMA. Now, the BLM claims due to that land giveaway, the agency will zero-out all wild horses from the HMA claiming that fencing cannot keep wild horses off the lands given to SITLA. In fact, BLM statute 43 CFR 4700.0-67 clearly establishes the policies for the agency’s</p>	<p>See responses to comments 62, 78, 108 and 109.</p>

		<p>management of wild horses. The EA fails to adhere to these policies by proposing to zero-out all horses from Blawn Wash. If any user must go from these public lands, it is clearly livestock which as no legal right to graze here. Continuing to allow livestock grazing in Blawn Wash is a violation of BLM's CFRs.</p> <p>The EA fails to disclose or analyze the cumulative impact of the Proposed Action in relation to other federally designated wild horse habitats in Utah which the agency has previous zeroed-out. The BLM has zeroed-out wild horses and burros from one-third of the original federal wild horse habitat on public lands in the state. Yet, the BLM continues to permit livestock grazing in the vast majority, if not all, of these same areas.</p>	
138.	The Cloud Foundation	<p>The BLM's "Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program (CAWP)" is woefully inadequate in establishing humane standards for the treatment of wild horses and burros during a roundup. It must go further in its protection of these animals.</p> <p>The EA must consider the following information to minimize trauma and injury to wild horses during a roundup:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Limit the distance wild horses may be chased by a helicopter to no more than five (5) miles. b) Require that the helicopter not chase/move wild horses at a pace that exceeds the natural rate of movement of the slowest animal. This means that if an animal begins to lag behind, the helicopter must lift pressure off the band so as to bring them in together. Keep older, sick and young animals together with their companions, bands or mothers as they are moved to the trap. The helicopter should not move or 	<p>Refer to section 3.3.7 and the CAWP as adjusted or amended through the National and State wild horse and burro program direction. This document can be found on the BLM's ePlanning website: https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2018159/510</p> <p>While BLM primarily locates trap sites on public lands, there are situation where locating trap sites on private lands is necessary, such as when wild horses have strayed onto private lands.</p> <p>The BLM supports meaningful observation for gather operations. Refer to Section 2.2.1.8. The BLM also follows current policy and guidelines pertaining to Observation Day [BLM IM No. 2013-058].</p> <p>The comment supporting cameras on aircrafts has been noted, but falls</p>

		<p>capture compromised, old, weak or young animals.</p> <p>c) Establish strict requirements for suspending helicopter roundup operations in temperatures below 32 degrees F (freezing) or over 90 degrees F.</p> <p>The EA must consider and implement the following issues and specific alternatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve public observation of all agency actions in order to provide meaningful observation of these proposed government actions. • All removal operations must be located on public lands to provide meaningful public observation of all activities. <p>BLM Must Install Cameras on Helicopter, at Trap Sites and Temporary Holding Pens to Provide Meaningful Public Observation.</p>	<p>outside the scope of this EA. In accordance with WO IM 2013-058: “The public/media are prohibited from riding or placing equipment in the helicopters contracted for a gather.”</p> <p>The National Gather Contract §3.1.i specifies that “No cameras, including video cameras will be placed on the Contractor’s drive trapping equipment. ”</p> <p>The BLM and the helicopter pilot must also comply with 14 CFR Part 91 of the Federal Aviation Regulations, which determines the minimum safe altitudes and distance people must be from the aircraft.</p> <p>See also “Public and Media Interaction” under Appendix 7 of the EA.</p>
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