



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Winnemucca District Office
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In Reply Refer To:
4700/1792 (NV030.07)

Dear Reader,

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Winnemucca District, Black Rock Field Office is proposing to conduct a wild horse and burro gather to remove excess wild horses and burros from the Buffalo Hills Herd Management Area (HMA) and adjacent private and public lands outside the HMA boundaries. The BLM has determined that the wild horses over the low Appropriate Management Level (AML) of 188 and all burros are in excess. The BLM has determined there are excess wild horses and burros that must be removed because of many factors. The most urgent factor is the 2024 Stockade Fire that burned 18,088 acres, or 14 percent, of the HMA and caused a loss of forage. Additionally, the HMA is not designated for the management of any burros, as the burro AML is set at zero.

Based on the current inventory of wild horses and burros, the BLM proposes to remove all the excess wild burros (estimated to be 33 animals) and up to 32 excess wild horses from the gather area. The BLM also proposes to gather wild horses, apply fertility treatments, and release those treated horses back to the HMA to assist with maintaining population levels. The BLM proposes to take these actions in order to preserve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship in the area.

The BLM has prepared a draft Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) that outlines how the proposed actions were analyzed in the Smoke Creek Complex Gather Plan EA (DOI-BLM-NV-W030-2015-0001-EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) dated April 18, 2018. The BLM is now providing a 30-day review and comment period for the DNA in accordance with BLM WHB Manual 4720. The BLM is also complying with Section 1333(b)(1) of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (WFRHBA) and BLM WHB Manual 4710 by consulting with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, wildlife agencies of the State of Nevada, individuals independent of Federal and State government as have been recommended by the National Academy of Sciences, and other individuals who have scientific expertise and special knowledge of wild horse and burro protection, wildlife management and animal husbandry as related to rangeland management.

The draft DNA for the proposed actions in and around the Buffalo Hills HMA is now available and can be viewed online by following the links from the Winnemucca District's NEPA website at eplanning.blm.gov. Please submit substantive comments by close of business (17:30), October 31, 2024. Questions and written comments should be directed to:
Garrett Swisher, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist
BLM Black Rock Field Office

5100 E. Winnemucca BLVD.
Winnemucca, NV 89445

Comments can also be submitted by email to BLM_NV_WDO_WHB@blm.gov. Email messages should include “Buffalo Hills Gather” in the subject line.

Commenters should be aware before including their address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in their comment, that their entire comment – including identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While they can ask BLM in their comment to withhold personal identifying information from public review, BLM cannot guarantee that it will be able to do so. Anonymity is not allowed for submissions from organizations or businesses and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses.

After the public review period has concluded (October 31, 2024), the BLM will review and consider the public’s comments as well as the information provided through the consultation outlined by the WFRHBA.

Sincerely,

Bradlee Matthews
Deputy District Manager