

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**Bureau of Land Management**

Lakeview District  
1301 South G Street  
Lakeview, OR 97630

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

DOI-BLM-ORWA-L000-2025-0001-CE

**A. BACKGROUND**

**Proposed Action Title/Type:** Removal of Wild Horses from Pinehurst Community / School

**Location of Proposed Action:** Pinehurst, Oregon

**Lease/Serial/Case File No (if any):** N/A

**Applicant:** N/A

**B. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION:**

On September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025, the Lakeview District, Klamath Falls field office was notified by private individuals that there were horses on the fields of an elementary school near Ashland, OR on Highway 66. Pinehurst School is a small elementary school located approximately 2 miles outside the Pokegama Herd Management Area (HMA) to the West on Hwy 66. BLM Wild Horse and Burrow specialist had reached out to the school to gain more information. At that time the horses had left the area. However, the horses continued to come to the school during the evenings and be present in the morning as school children arrived. Continued reports of the horses came in over the weekend and on September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2025, it was reported that horses were in front of the school during the drop off of children. The entire property is fenced; horses are slipping through holes or are breaking down the fences on school property and school ball fields. They are damaging school properties and facilities, and the school staff are concerned about the safety of the children on school grounds. The Pinehurst school has submitted a removal request for the 6 animals.

There are numerous public safety concerns with these horses at the school. There is also a concern with potential damage to vehicles at the school. The horses have destroyed the ball fields and have broken through fences of the school. These animals are outside of the HMA boundary. The appropriate management level for the Pokegama HMA is 30-50 wild horses and the current population is estimated to be well over 250 adult wild horses. As the wild horse population continues to increase on the HMA, animals will continue straying outside the HMA boundary in search of additional habitat.

BLM proposes to conduct an in-house bait trap gather and permanent removal of these horses as soon as possible. The BLM has obtained written agreement from a private landowner to place traps on their private land. Traps will be placed in previously disturbed areas and avoid noxious weeds.

All removed horses would be transported to the Burns Corrals for adoption preparation and holding.

### **C. LAND USE PLAN CONFORMANCE**

Land Use Plan Name: Southwestern Oregon Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision

Date Approved: August 2016, as maintained

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP because it is specifically provided for in the following LUP decision(s):

#### Management Goals and Objectives

Manage and maintain a healthy population of wild and free-roaming horses in the Pokegama Herd Management Area of the Klamath Falls Field Office.

#### Management Direction

The BLM will remove horses from private land per private landowner request. Horses straying outside the herd management area will be removed or returned to the herd management area.

#### Conformance

The proposal is consistent with The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195) directs BLM to remove wild horses and burros from private lands. The Act reads, "If wild free-roaming horses or burros stray from public lands onto privately owned land, the owners of such land may inform the nearest Federal marshal or agent of the Secretary, who shall arrange to have the animals removed". Additionally, 43 CFR 4720.2-1 states "Upon written request from the private landowner to a representative of the Bureau of Land Management, the authorized officer shall remove stray wild horses and burros from private lands as soon as practicable ...."

### **D. COMPLIANCE WITH NEPA**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with:

516 DM 1, Appendix 2, Section 11.9 (D)(4) - *Removal of wild horses or burros from private lands at the request of the landowner.*

### **E. EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES REVIEW**

**The proposed action will not:**

**(a) Have significant impacts on public health or safety.**

*Rationale:* Due to the remote location of the proposed horse gathering on private land, the proposed action of gathering horses, has no potential for significant impacts to public health and safety.

**(b) Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.**

*Rationale:* There are no special management areas located at these trapping sites because they are located on private lands.

**(c) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.**

*Rationale:* There would be no highly uncertain or potentially significant effects because the gathers would occur on non-Federal land and be authorized by the private landowner, be limited in size and duration, and would follow established BLM policies. The environmental effects of setting up temporary traps on previously disturbed, privately owned areas would be negligible. No unique or unknown environmental risks are anticipated.

**(d) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.**

*Rationale:* The proposed action is in response to a private landowner's request to remove nuisance wild horses. The placement of temporary traps on private land is not precedent setting and is consistent with BLM policy regarding removal of wild horses from private lands at the landowner's request. This action would not prompt future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant effects.

**(e) Have a direct relationship to other actions that implicate potentially significant environmental effects.**

*Rationale:* The impacts of the proposed horse gather on private lands would not contribute to cumulatively significant effects now or in the near future as there are no direct relationships to other actions of potential environmental effect.

**(f) Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau.**

*Rationale:* The proposed horse gathering on private lands would not have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places (NHPA) because historic properties would be avoided. This project is an undertaking as defined under Section 106 of the NHPA. The Area of Potential Effects (APE) is defined as the trap locations.

**(g) Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.**

*Rationale:* The project area overlaps with northern spotted owl (NSO) Habitat. However, the proposed horse gather would have no effect to NSOs or NSO Critical Habitat because there is no potential to impact NSOs directly (disturbance or physical harm) or indirectly through habitat modification. Therefore, would be "No Effect" to NSO and no need to perform surveys for NSO.

The Gray Wolf is known to occasionally be present within and adjacent to the Pokegama HMA, but there are no known or suspected dens, and no critical habitat within the HMA. The proposed action does not have potential to impact the Gray Wolf directly (disturbance or physical harm) or indirectly through habitat modification. Therefore, there would be “No Effect” to Gray Wolf and no need to perform surveys for Gray Wolf.

There are no other listed or proposed wildlife species or designated critical habitat under the endangered species act (as amended 1973) within the project area.

There would be no effects on special status botanical species as there are no known populations in the project area and the area has been heavily disturbed.

**(h) Significantly limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.**

*Rationale:* There are no known Indian sacred sites within the project area.

**(i) Contribute to potentially significant effects resulting from the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or from other actions that promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act).**

*Rationale:* Trap sites would be located on heavily disturbed private lands. The BLM will avoid using sites that are infested with noxious weeds to minimize the spread of these species due to these actions.

## **F. CONCLUSION**

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR Part 46.215 apply.

I considered all the information listed above and given the limited size of the project area and urgency to resolve this situation, I find no potential for significant impacts.

## **G. SIGNATURE**

Responsible Official: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
James T. Forbes, District Manager