



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
White River Field Office
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Memorandum

To: Kent E. Walter, Field Office Manager *Kent E. Walter 05/13/16*
Lauren P. Brown, Assistant Field Office Manager

From: Melissa Kindall, Range Technician
Tyrell Turner, Rangeland Management Specialist

Subject: Wild Horse Aerial Inventory
February 22 and 25, 2016

Attached please find the report including maps of wild horses aerially inventoried by helicopter on the dates identified above. This information will be placed on the BLM, White River Field Office's website for access by the public.

Melissa Kindall
Tyrell Turner

Attachment

Aerial Inventory of Wild Horses in the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area and the West Douglas Herd Area, February 22 – 25, 2016 (17 Pages)

**Aerial Inventory of Wild Horses in the
Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area
and the West Douglas Herd Area
February 22 - 25, 2016**

Executive Summary

This report provides information on the wild horse inventory conducted February 2016. The current locations and numbers of wild horses were observed in the Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Area (PEDHMA), the West Douglas Herd Area (WDHA) and a few locations beyond the boundaries of these two areas. The inventory method used was direct count by the occupants of the helicopter over a consecutive four day period (February 22 – 25, 2016). The participants of the inventory GPS'd every location of wild horse bands and photographed all but 12 bands due to temporary reduction in the number of participants involved on the inventory on the third day (see daily detailed information below). The results are within the expected locations and population of wild horses for the areas inventoried. No wild horse inventory work was conducted in other areas where wild horses are known to be located within the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) White River Field Office (WRFO) jurisdiction (refer to Map 6).

During the inventory flights within and adjacent to the WDHA, observers documented a considerable number of wild horses remaining within this area. BLM/WRFO needs to continue to develop budget and planning in order to fully implement the decision from #DOI-BLM-CO-N05-2015-0023-EA in a timely fashion. For the wild horses inventoried within or adjacent to the PEDHMA, the results indicate that the area is over the Appropriate Management Level (AML) of 135 to 235 wild horses. BLM/WRFO needs to continue to develop budget and planning in order to reach a population within the AML inside the PEDHMA as well as remove or relocate wild horses located outside of the HMA.

This inventory report is limited in that the number and locations of wild horses were seen by participants within the helicopter at a given time of day, and may not accurately represent the exact number or locations of all the wild horses in a given area. It is common that such inventories undercount the actual numbers of wild horses on the range, as the ability to see every wild horse on the range is not likely. The results for this survey are known to be undercounted as no inventory work was conducted for the areas referenced in Map 6, which shows areas that were not inventoried in 2016 but are areas where wild horses have on the ground accounts and/or WRFO has received reports of wild horses.

This inventory report includes the following: general notes; separate daily inventory reports including a summary of each day; Table 1: Inventory Dates, Area including Waypoints, and Wild Horses Counted; an inventory summary; inventory recommendations; inventory conclusion; and Maps 1 – 6 as follows: 1: 2016 Wild Horse Inventory Daily Flight Zones; 2: 2016 West Douglas Herd Area Wild Horse Inventory; 3: 2016 West Douglas Herd Area Wild Horse Inventory Waypoints; 4: 2016 Piceance East Douglas HMA Wild Horse Inventory; 5: 2016 Piceance East Douglas HMA Wild Horse Inventory Waypoints; and 6: Aerial Inventory and Potential Range Expansion Extent.

General Notes

The contracted aircraft used was a Bell 206 L1 helicopter by Sky Aviation Corp. out of Worland, WY. Helicopter trip time to Rangely (with tail wind) was 2.1 hours and return trip to Worland, WY (with head wind) was 2.3 hours. Arrangements were made to centralize the inventory out of the Rangely, CO airport with the necessary personnel allowed per diem for their stay. The BLM Rangeland Specialists from the WRFO, Melissa Kindall (Kindall) and Tyrell Turner (Turner), drove the approximate 1 hour travel time to and from the Rangely Airport for this inventory. The WRFO budget was approved as recent as February 15, 2016 in order to allow the inventory to take place and provided funds for 20 hours of flight time plus allowed 4.5 hours of ferry flight time from Worland, WY to Rangely, CO and back to Worland. The aircraft was scheduled to be in Rangely, CO at 10:00 a.m. but due to radio concerns was delayed and arrived at 10:42. After introductions of the pilot, the fuel vehicle driver, Matthew Ringer (Ringer), Aviation Manager, and inventory participants Kindall and Turner, a plan was made for the day's flight and reviewed for where the fuel truck and Ringer would meet the helicopter for refueling. The inspection of the aircraft was performed by Ringer and then a safety briefing for all participants took place prior to boarding the aircraft. All flight following was conducted by the Craig Interagency Dispatch at 30 minute intervals to report operation status.

Wild horses were inventoried both inside and outside of the WDHA and the PEDHMA. Our inventory patterns consisted of both grid (0.4 mile spacing between flight lines) and a topographical pattern depending on the terrain. Open areas were inventoried using a grid pattern, while steep terrain with dense over story (pinyon-juniper canopy cover) are more conducive to a drainage-by-drainage pattern. This report details areas flown and areas that were not inventoried (see Map 6). During the inventory, when wild horses were seen, the pilot would circle and get in the general location of the band(s) so that we could obtain a GPS point, in some cases there may have been more than 1 band at the same Waypoint location (see notes where bands were combined). We'd take a picture, and confirm the number of wild horses counted. Most of the wild horse bands would be moving or begin to move when the aircraft flew over. However, a few wild horses did remain undisturbed by the fly over activities. When flying the grid pattern the pilot used GPS in the helicopter to keep spacing between passes consistent in the areas that would be considered open at approximately 0.4 mile pattern (or different spacing where noted). When terrain necessitated the helicopter would match the topography, flying either up or down the drainage, and along the tops of ridgelines. Refer to attached map for the areas inventoried with each day's coverage delineated (Map 1). For the locations and numbers of wild horses observed reference Maps 2 and 3 for WDHA; and Maps 4 and 5 for PEDHMA. Photographs of each band were taken unless otherwise noted.

Regarding the condition of the wild horses observed, as indicated by the notes, only five wild horses were noted as "thin" and all five were wild horses located in the PEDHMA (refer to Waypoints #813, #816, and #839 for two horses, and #864), all other wild horses were observed to be in good body condition, some mares were noted as "heavy" or with foal, and one 2016 foal was observed in the PEDHMA (reference Waypoint #848).

In general, the lighting conditions on all of the inventory days were favorable. Day 1 had the latest ending time, which ended the inventory prior to the lack of good evening light becoming a factor when sighting wild horses. For Days 2 through 4, the light was favorable with clear days and early evening ending times. A slight snow occurred over night from Day 1 into Day 2; the fresh snow neither aided or hindered sightings of wild horses and melted off by mid-day. The south facing slopes were beginning to melt off or the snow had become patchy but we were still able to see wild horses well. In the mornings several wild horse bands would be out warming themselves in the sun and were highly visible.

Day 1 - February 22, 2016: We left the airport at 12:59 p.m. to start the inventory with Turner in the front and Kindall seated behind the pilot. We flew direct to East Evacuation Creek drainage in close proximity to the location of the last trap that was utilized during the 2015 WDHA gather operation and began the inventory in this drainage working north. For this area our pattern consisted of both grid and topographical pattern due to the varying landscapes. The local area conditions were partly cloudy with little to no wind and temperatures near 25 degrees Fahrenheit. At 3:23 we refueled at a location off Rio Blanco County (RBC) Road 109 and BLM Road 1064. We departed again at 4:07 p.m.

Survey work was continued from where we left off utilizing RBC Road 116 (Little Horse Draw) as the delineation line for the day's survey stopping line working south. At the end of the day our flight pattern finished in West Creek which included a comment that it appeared some of the meadows (pasture and hay) appeared to be in "green up". The last 6 bands (2 on private and 4 on BLM) or 18 wild horses were located in this drainage. We flew direct back to the Rangely, Colorado airport skirting State Highway 139 with shut down at approximately 5:25 p.m.

Summary for Day 1 (WDHA): We photographed and GPS'd 38 bands of wild horses with band sizes ranging from 1 horse to 6 wild horses per band (nearly 25% of the bands were single horses) for an inventory total of 117 wild horses.

Total for Day 1: 4.1 hours flight time logged.

Day 2 – February 23, 2016: We left the airport at 10:23 a.m. to start the inventory with Turner in the front and Kindall seated behind the pilot. We flew adjacent to State Highway 139 and directly to Little Horse Draw (RBC Road 116) to start the inventory in this drainage working north. Our pattern consisted of both grid and drainage flying depending on the terrain with open areas being grid pattern, while steep/over story terrain more conducive to a drainage- by-drainage pattern. The light snow that fell overnight was not sufficient enough to make a difference in the overall on-the-ground conditions to effect the inventory. The morning had cleared off and the local area was experiencing some wind conditions, but not enough to change the inventory plans for the day. The temperatures were between 20 and 30 degrees Fahrenheit. Before the flight, Turner and Kindall due to limited flight time, made a judgment call not to fly the Cottonwood or the Upper Horse Draw pastures because of the history of limited sightings of wild horses or wild horse sign, no observed utilization of vegetation by wild horses,

fencing, and limited available waters in the areas. Finishing WDHA around 1:00 p.m., we flew to refuel at Philadelphia Creek (RBC Road 128) and State Highway 139.

We ended the first leg of Day 2 flying 2.6 hours. This concluded the inventory work in the WDHA.

We began the inventory in the PEDHMA when we took off again at 1:30 p.m. flying north adjacent to State Highway 139 where we continued surveying at Coal Draw working south utilizing drainages due to topography and the over-story or canopy of pinion/juniper trees. We located 3 bands of wild horses (Waypoints #777, #778 and #779) in this portion of the PEDHMA utilizing the Philadelphia drainage as the delineation line for the day's survey stopping point. We flew direct back to the Rangely, Colorado airport following State Highway 139 with shut down at approximately 4:45 p.m.

We ended the second leg of Day 2 flying 2.9 hours.

Summary for Day 2 (WDHA): We photographed and GPS'd 19 bands of wild horses with band sizes ranging from 1 wild horse to 6 wild horses per band for an inventory total of 60 wild horses in the WDHA. The population of wild horses inventoried within and adjacent to the WDHA was 177 wild horses. This concluded the inventory for the WDHA and adjacent areas all located west of State Highway 139.

Summary for Day 2 (PEDHMA): This is when we started the inventory in the PEDHMA. We photographed and GPS'd 3 bands of wild horses with band sizes ranging from 1 wild horse to 11 wild horses per band for 19 wild horses.

Total for Day 2: 5.5 hours flight time logged.

Day 3 – February 24, 2016: Overnight the skies had cleared and the morning temperatures were near 8 degrees Fahrenheit, so the aircraft needed additional time to defrost. We left the airport at 10:13 a.m. to start the inventory with Turner in the front and Kindall seated behind the pilot. We flew adjacent to State Highway 139 directly to East Douglas Creek (RBC Road 28) to start the inventory after deciding we only had enough flight time to do a cursory look in the drainages southwest of RBC Road 27 between State Highway 139 and the Lake and Soldier Creeks area (outside of the PEDHMA boundary). We located 1 band of 4 wild horses (reference Waypoint #780). This band is so far the most southern inventoried location of wild horses outside of the PEDHMA boundary for any inventory ever conducted. Our pattern consisted of both grid (at closer intervals of 0.2 mile pattern) just below the Cathedral Bluffs, and then we switched to fly the drainages starting around Tommys Draw. We ended this portion of our inventory by working back north between State Highway 139 and the Cathedral Bluffs until we reached the Philadelphia Creek drainage and at that time refueled (approximately 12:30). During this 1st leg of the day we counted 17 bands of wild horses for 68 head of wild horses, with 9 of those bands located outside of the PEDHMA. This included one domestic mare that had wild horses come onto the private lands in Cathedral Creek at the Bobcat Ranch. That mare then joined a wild horse band which can be

found both coming onto and off that ranch, as was reported to Turner in 2014 (reference Waypoint #784). This completed the inventory on the East Douglas portion of the PEDHMA with an inventory total of 87 wild horses.

After refueling we flew direct to the top of the Cathedral Bluffs at the intersection of RBC Road 80 (Dead Horse Ridge) to fly the drainages to the north to RBC Road 24X (84 Mesa) used as the delineation line for stopping the afternoon's survey and flew east to the Stake Springs Draw which is part of RBC Road 91 to intersection of RBC Road 70, then followed the fence line south as the delineation line. Due to snow conditions at elevations around 7,000 feet we utilized the fence that was constructed by Shell Exploration in 2007/08 as the southern delineation line.

It was necessary to let Turner out of the aircraft at approximately 2:55 p.m. For the area covered with Turner we located 9 bands (34 wild horses) ranging in size from 1 to 8 head per band. Once Turner departed, it was determined that 1 hour of fuel remained, so we could finish out the area. Kindall moved to the front left seat and we were back in the air at approximately 3:10 p.m. No photographs of wild horses were obtained for Waypoints #805 – #812 due to Kindall taking notes versus photographs. We located 9 additional bands without Turner (48 wild horses). Bands ranging in size from 2 to 9 head per band for an inventory total in the area of 82 wild horses. It was decided on the flight out to skirt the upper elevations en route back to the Rangely Airport to make sure no wild horses were located above the approximately 7,000 ft. delineation line. Please note that the last band of 5 wild horses were located near the Dillon Monument (reference Waypoint #812) on top of the Cathedral Bluffs at nearly 8,500 feet in elevation.

We flew back to the Rangely Airport but noted seeing 3 (sorrel, dark and bay) wild horses in Gilliam Draw. No information was taken for these wild horses because we were not able to conduct inventory work in the North Piceance Herd Area (NPHA) due to limited flight time. We ended up shutting down for the day at approximately 4:06 p.m.

Summary for Day 3 (PEDHMA): We photographed 26 bands, due to Turner being no longer available for the inventory, and GPS'd 36 bands of wild horses. Band sizes ranged from 1 to 9 wild horses per band, for an inventory total of 145 wild horses.

Note: We did not inventory any wild horses located within the Doughnut or NPHA at this time due to the limited flight time. Project work consisted of conducting a wild horse inventory in the WDHA and PEDHMA and select areas just outside of the WDHA and PEDHMA.

Total for Day 3: 4.9 hours flight time logged.

Day 4 – February 25, 2016: The skies were clear blue with temperatures near 20 degrees Fahrenheit in the morning but got as warm as 40+ by the end of the day. We left the airport about 9:35 a.m. to start the inventory with Turner in the front and Kindall seated behind the pilot. We flew through the area

known as the Doughnut Hole to the intersection of RBC Road 24 and RBC Road 91 and completed a grid pattern on 84 Mesa using Duck Creek as a delineation line, then we flew a grid pattern on Pinto Mesa using Duck Creek, Barcus Creek, and Yellow Creek as the delineation lines. Refer to Waypoint #822 for where we located approximately 100 antelope. During the first leg of Day 4, within the areas of 84 Mesa and Pinto Mesa we located 13 bands of wild horses ranging in size from 1 to 9 wild horses for an inventory total of 42 wild horses. Our grid ended at the Yellow Creek Corrals at approximately noon, when we went for fuel. The fueling was located at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife kiosk adjacent to RBC Road 5 at approximately Mile Marker 38 only skirting that corner of the PEDHMA. In that location we located one band of wild horses that we GPS'd (reference Waypoint #827), with two bay, one dark, and one cremello.

We departed the fuel site at approximately 12:30 p.m. and flew directly to the Yellow Creek and Barcus Creek intersection in order to fly a grid pattern over what is locally called the "Greasewood Burns" and the Greasewood Gulch drainages ending this area at the intersection of Yellow Creek and RBC Road 89. We located 31 different bands in the "burns" for 116 wild horses, and 8 additional bands for 27 wild horses in the Greasewood Gulch drainages for an inventory total of 143 wild horses for this area. We noted that the snow in this area was still covering the open areas well, with some south facing slopes open. It was also noted that wild horses had to paw through snow to forage.

To finish out the inventory, we only had approximately 40 minutes left on the contract for us to fly so we did two grid passes on the south side of Rocky Ridge. We located a band of 7 including 1 buckskin colored wild horse (reference Waypoint #861), and the band of 3 at Waypoint #862 which we also noted seeing between Waypoint #827 and #828 en route back to the intersection of Yellow and Barcus Creeks. After these two passes we only had enough time left to cover a portion of the north side of Rocky Ridge with one sweeping (zigzag) pass between the toe of the slope and State Highway 64. We noted that snow cover on the north side still required that wild horses paw through the snow to forage, similar to the Greasewood Burns. Within this area we saw 5 bands of wild horses ranging in size from 2 to 7 wild horses per band for an inventory total of 17 wild horses. The inventory total on Rocky Ridge was 33 wild horses (reference Waypoints #827, #861 - #868).

We landed at the refueling site located at the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Kiosk adjacent to RBC Road 5 at approximately 3:14 p.m. with the aircraft released at 3:30 to return to Worland, WY.

Summary for Day 4 (PEDHMA): We photographed and GPS'd 59 bands of wild horses with band sizes ranging from 1 to 9 wild horses per band for an inventory total of 218 wild horses. We needed approximately 2.5 to 3.0 hours additional flight time in order to completely cover the Greasewood Gulch area and the Rocky Ridge section of the PEDHMA. We ran out of time and had to make the remaining flight time cover portions of those areas as well as possible.

Total for Day 4: 5.1 hours flight time logged.

Total inventory flight time used was 19.6 hours. Total flight time used for the project including ferry time to and from Worland, WY was 24 hours.

Table 1: Inventory Dates, Area including Waypoints, and Wild Horses Counted

| DAY | AREA | Count |
|--------------|---|--------------|
| 1 Afternoon | WDHA – South of Little Horse Draw Waypoints #725 to #756 | 117 |
| 2 Morning | WDHA – North of Little Horse Draw Waypoints #758 to #776 | 60 |
| Total | WDHA | 177 |
| 2 Afternoon | PEDHMA – East Douglas Portion: Rocky Ford Draw to Philadelphia Creek Waypoints #777 to #779 | 19 |
| 3 Morning | PEDHMA – East Douglas Portion: South of RBC Road 27, Lake/Soldier Creeks, North of Cathedral Creek to Philadelphia Creek Waypoints #780 to #795 | *68 |
| 3 Afternoon | PEDHMA – 24X South to top Cathedral Bluffs Waypoints #796 to #812 | 77 |
| 4 Morning | 84 and Pinto Mesas Waypoints #813 to #826 | 42 |
| 4 Afternoon | Greasewood Burns/Greasewood Gulch Waypoints #828 to #860 | 116/27 |
| 4 Afternoon | Rocky Ridge Waypoints #827 and #861 to #868 | 33 |
| Total | PEDHMA* | 382 |

*Includes one domestic mare counted on Day 3 in the morning (see Waypoint #784).

Inventory Summary

For the WDHA day 1, this is a representative count in that we expected to see most of the wild horses south of Little Horse Draw, as they have transitioned to that area over the years. No wild horses were counted on Texas Mountain. Wild horses counted on February 22 were primarily concentrated within West Creek, West Douglas Creek, and South Fork of Texas Creek. It is expected these wild horses will move up towards Texas and Oil Springs Mountains as snow cover melts and forage becomes available at higher elevations.

For the morning of day 2, this is a representative count in that we expected to inventory fewer wild horses north of Little Horse Draw, as overall, the population has shifted south and west toward the limited summer range centered around Texas Mountain. During the time of the inventory, wild horses primarily rely on snow cover as their water source. The snow cover and spring/summer rains serve to refill ponds in the area. Typically wild horses can be observed in areas north of Little Horse Draw of the

HA throughout the summer and fall. Although fewer wild horses utilize the area north of Little Horse Draw during this time, as most are concentrated on the higher elevation ranges to the south, there are on the ground accounts of wild horses in areas north of Little Horse Draw when water is sufficiently available to support them.

For the afternoon of day 2, this is a representative count of the expected population within the northern part of the East Douglas portion of the HMA. The bands observed in this area will likely continue to occupy this area through the year while there is a reliable water supply (depending on spring/summer rain events) and forage availability/production.

For the morning of day 3, this is a representative count of the population that was expected for the area. A larger portion of the population in this area of the HMA was expected to be found in this area as the south facing slopes are continually kept open during the winter months due to the snow melting just below the Cathedral Bluffs south of Tommys Draw drainage, and the easy access to quality forage and year round quality water sources generally located on private. There is concern that wild horses will continue to migrate to the south into areas that have never previously been occupied by wild horses until recently.

For the afternoon of day 3, this is a representative count for the area and is similar to the count in the 2012 inventory. Along with 2012, there are a number of wild horses located in Pasture C, of the Square S Allotment.

For the morning of day 4, this is a representative count for the area. The area was fairly open with wild horses having easy access to forage, cover, and perennial waters, but continues to be an area with human activity associated with energy related facilities, however the activity is less than previous years.

For the afternoon of day 4, in the Greasewood Burns/Greasewood Gulch area, the count was expected to be high due to historic use of the burns during winter months. Snow levels in the area were such that wild horses were documented pawing through the snow to forage. The area also has a limited amount of pinyon-juniper trees to provide thermal cover during winter. Also it was noted that several bands of wild horses were in close proximity to each other.

For the remaining time in the afternoon of day 4, on the Rocky Ridge area this count was representative for the area, and the same as in 2012. Mortality in this area with wild horses being hit by vehicles on either State Highway 64 or RBC Road 5 over the past several years has reduced the overall population growth. The inventory for this area was limited due to the time that was remaining on the helicopter contract. The number of wild horses expected to be hit by vehicles on either State Highway 64 or Rio Blanco County Road 5 is expected to be reduced and potentially eliminated due to fencing projects that are being completed adjacent to both roadways by summer 2016.

Overall, the direct count of the wild horse population from this inventory is a reasonable estimate of the population of wild horses within the WRFO. The direct count inventory however, is likely lower than the actual population within the field office as there is no correction for wild horses not seen during the

inventory flights and, as shown on Map 6, there are areas that were not inventoried due to the amount of flight time available.

Inventory Recommendations

The following are recommendations on wild horse inventory work in the WRFO:

- If an inventory is needed for where all wild horses can be found in our area; PEDHMA, NPHA, WDHA, and locations outside of those boundaries it is necessary for additional hours of flight time from what was allocated in 2016. It is suggested that the 36 hours over 6 days (a pilot flight time restriction), and ferry time of the helicopter, be what WRFO budget for future inventory work. The need for additional flight time will be reduced when all wild horses have been gathered/removed from WDHA and NPHA, as the need to inventory those areas would no longer be necessary.
- Use of a helicopter is the best/effective way to inventory our area. A fixed wing inventory is not as reliable or effective for this area due to flight elevation and speed required for fixed wing aircraft. Fixed wing has been used in past inventories; see previous reports from 2010 with fixed wing and 2011 with helicopter.
- If you are taking pictures you need at least 2 inventory personnel; 1) one to take the pictures and help with spotting, and 2) the other to record the information of wild horse numbers, yearlings, colors, special markings, and horse condition, and help with spotting.
- It is a necessity that inventory participants be knowledgeable and extremely familiar with the areas. If able to fly all areas where wild horses are currently found in WRFO the size is approximately 500,000 acres to inventory. Further, participants need to be knowledgeable and extremely familiar with historical locations as well as any potential new areas that may need to be inventoried for wild horses. Because participants are knowledgeable and extremely familiar with the areas and historical locations, etc. judgment calls can be made on where to inventory thoroughly versus where to inventory less thoroughly if running out of flight time can be made.
- There are limitations of the fuel vehicle on roads that are saturated and/or frozen in morning but thawed by mid-day. Av fuel is available in Meeker but not in Rangely, which involves additional logistics if/when Av fuel is needed during the inventory.
- Participants need to make sure that flights to and from refueling, and to and from the airport are done over areas that have been previously inventoried to reduce a helicopter fly over of an area that has not yet been inventoried to reduce wild horse movement in/out of areas not inventoried.
- Daily flight areas cannot be delineated out in advance because the daily inventory is dependent upon the number of wild horses to GPS/photographed/recorded, etc. However, when you finish with the day's inventory flight it needs to make sense where you break off for that day so that double coverage/double counting is reduced and/or nonexistent during the inventory.
- Winter snow and good lighting conditions prove helpful in spotting of wild horses for the inventory.

- A pilot with excellent wildlife spotting skills aids in the success of the inventory. Most pilots that are carded for such work have extensive experience in wildlife inventories.
- Financial needs from the NW District WH&B Specialist; is to have an on-the-shelf process (at PTA time) to know if funds are available for inventory. Can BLM hold budget money from the previous fiscal year so that when the time is right for inventory work the funds are available.
- Have an on-the-shelf Aircraft Safety Plan annually updated so that it's ready to go when needed.
- If someone on the inventory team could be a qualified Helicopter Manager that would aid in this project work by reducing additional logistics and cost.

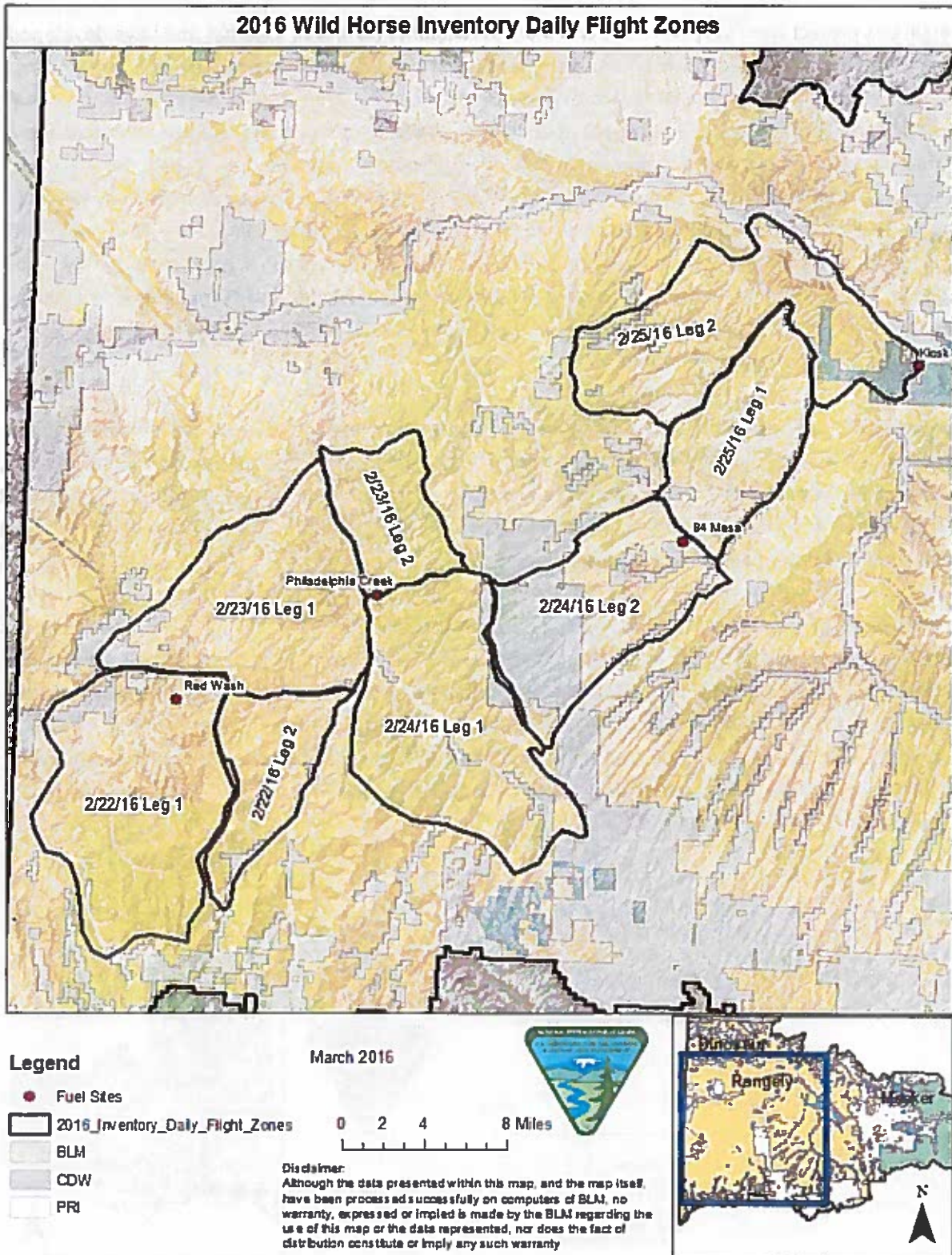
Inventory Conclusion

Overall, this project went very well. The two main participants work well together and have developed a system of taking pictures and documenting the wild horses. At the beginning of the flight it only takes a few passes to begin to have a seamless process with the pilot. The drive time in the morning to Rangely for Kindall and Turner resulted in time spent discussing where we'd fly for the day and also consisted of possible backup plans so that flight time was utilized wisely and successfully accomplished the day's mission. The drive back to Meeker at the end of the day resulted in discussion of how the day went, if the refueling locations worked for all concerned, and a quick review of the inventory sightings and wild horse numbers, as well as locations. In short, having the helicopter, fuel truck, and helicopter manager staged in Rangely worked well enough because the travel time by Kindall and Turner was spent making decisions each day as to how we'd progress through the inventory with the helicopter time that was utilized and how each day progressed.

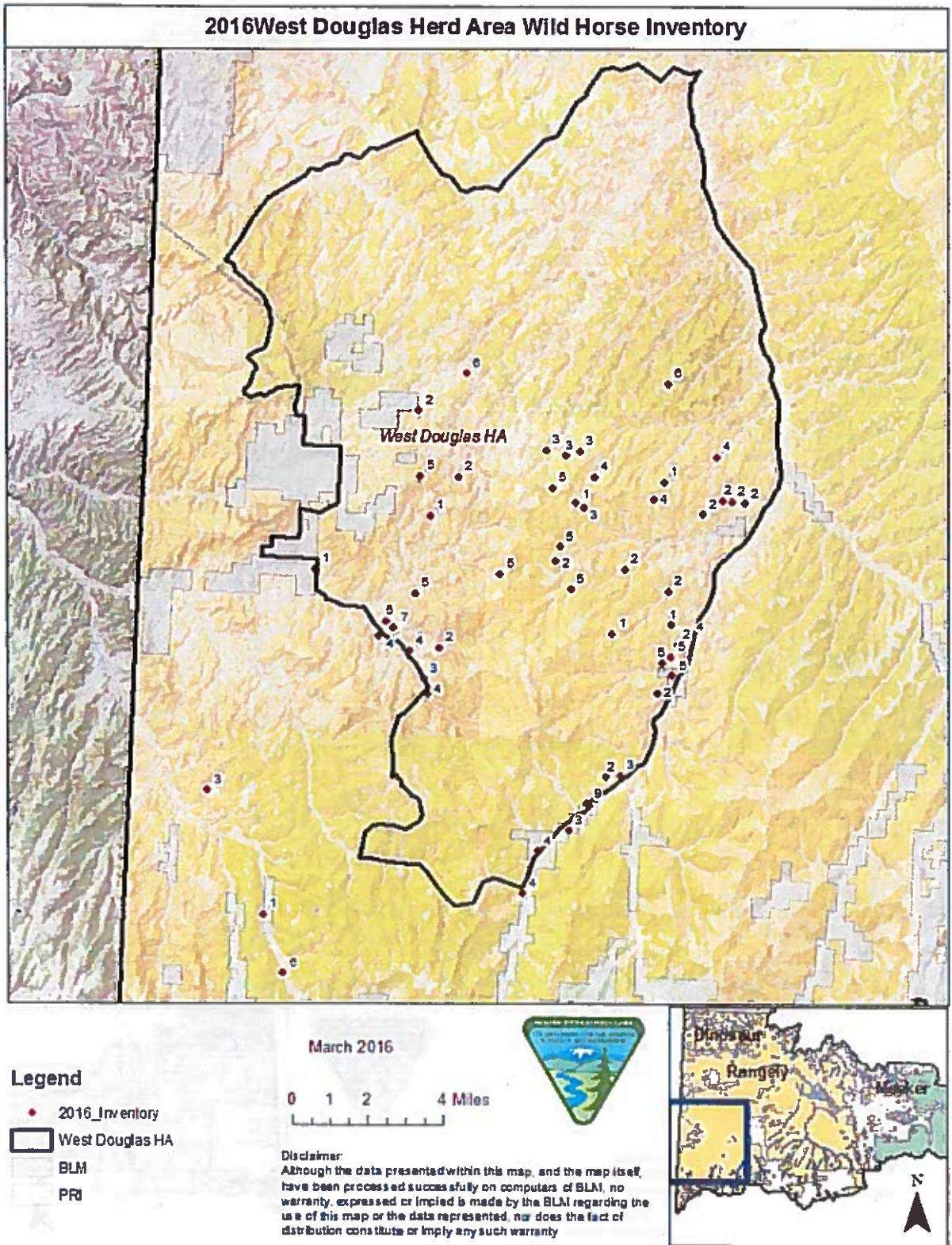
The weather cooperated all four days so that there was no delay or gap between the start and finish of the inventory. As previously noted, based on where inventoried the participants found wild horses in representative numbers and in representative locations. As a reminder, this area is technically the most difficult area to inventory and technically the most difficult area to gather and remove wild horses in all of Colorado and potentially all of BLM's wild horse areas.

The budget process does not allow the appropriate advanced planning for such projects because budget numbers are generally unknown until around mid-March of each year. There needs to be a process of having the funds in hand prior to making the flight requests through the fire program, as well as having an on the shelf Aviation Safety Plan (ASP) ready to go. These two functions (budget and ASP) involved several moving parts and depending on the time of year and who may be on leave, training, or travel can back up the project to where it may have to be dropped for the year because the flights need to be conducted while snow is on the ground.

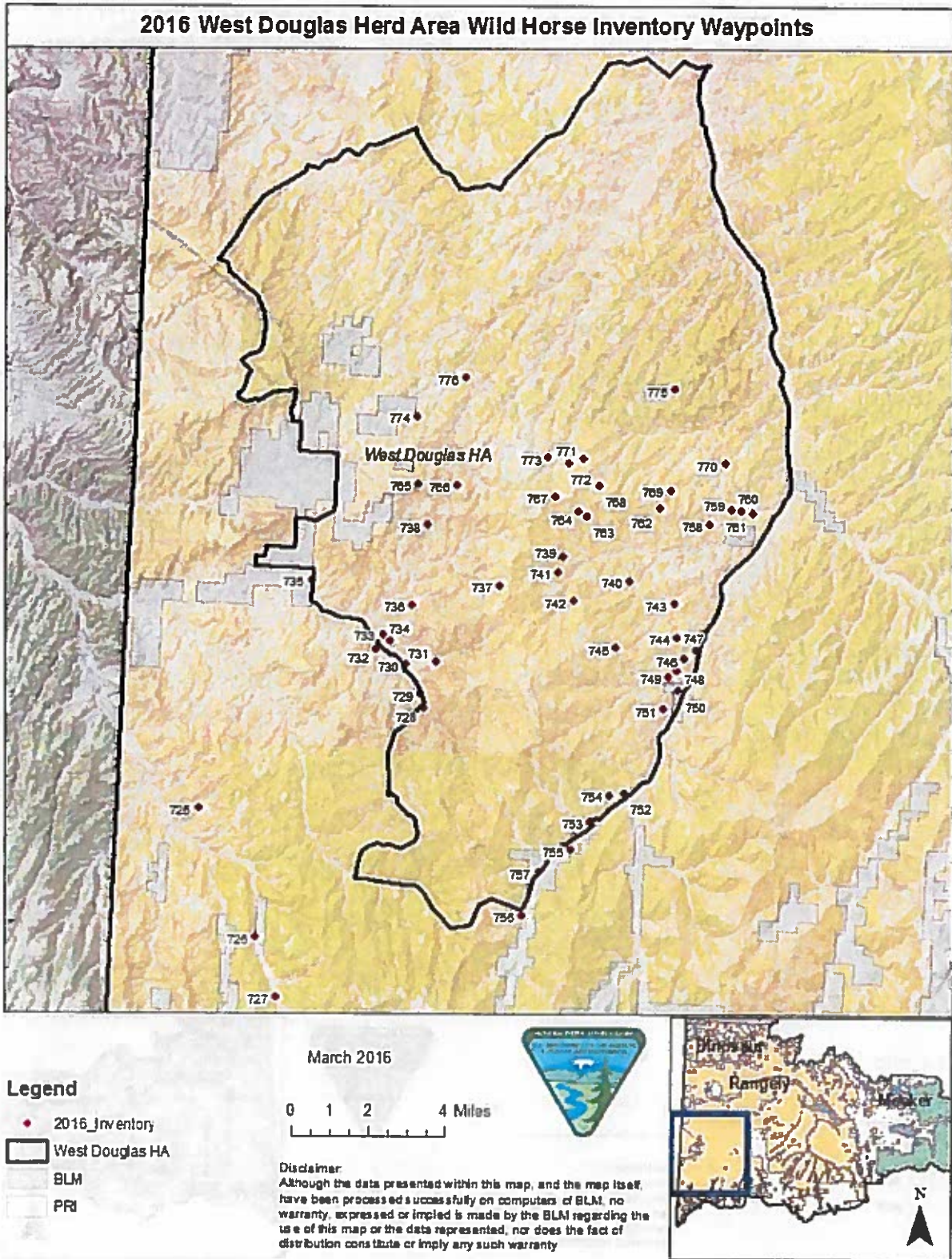
Map 1



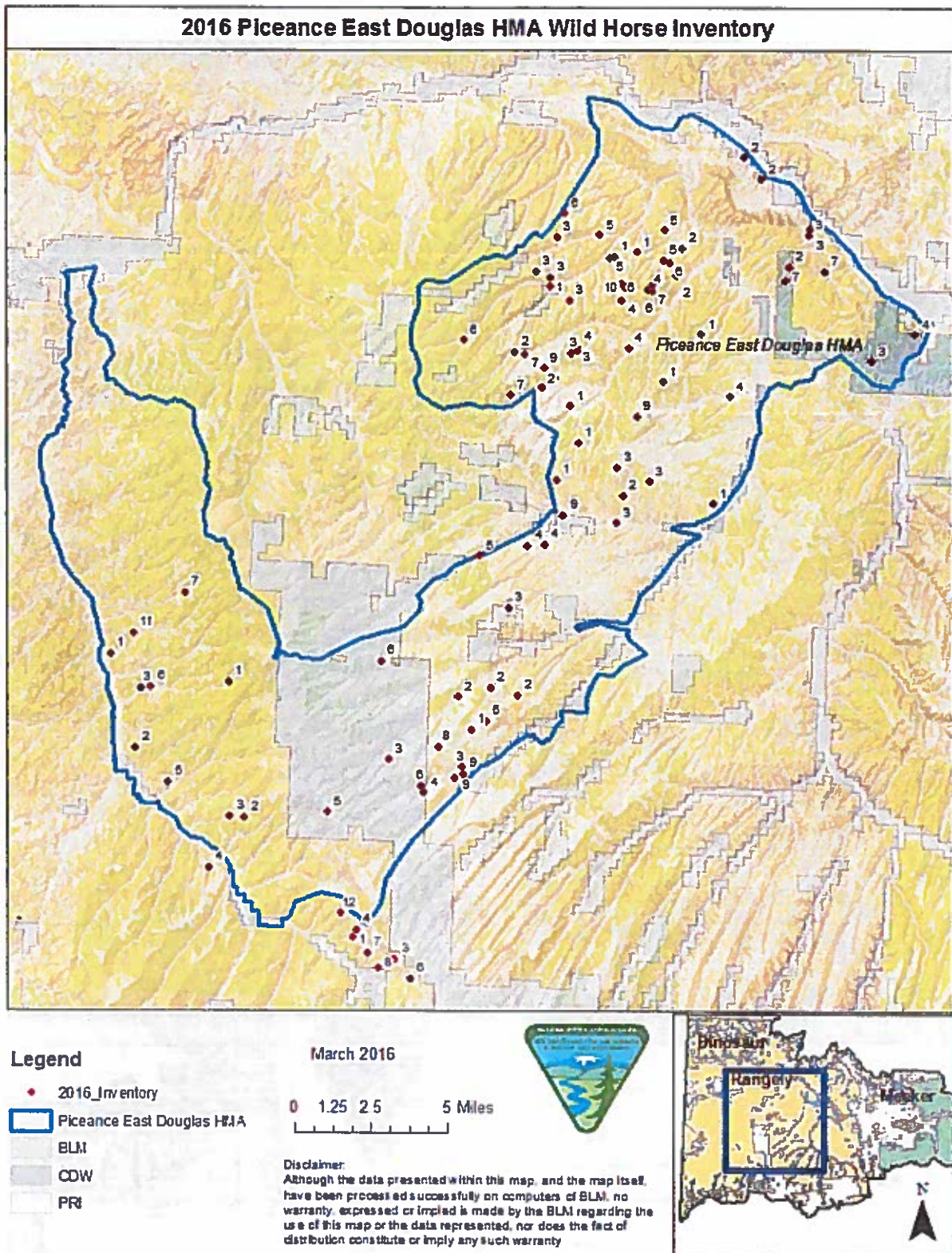
Map 2



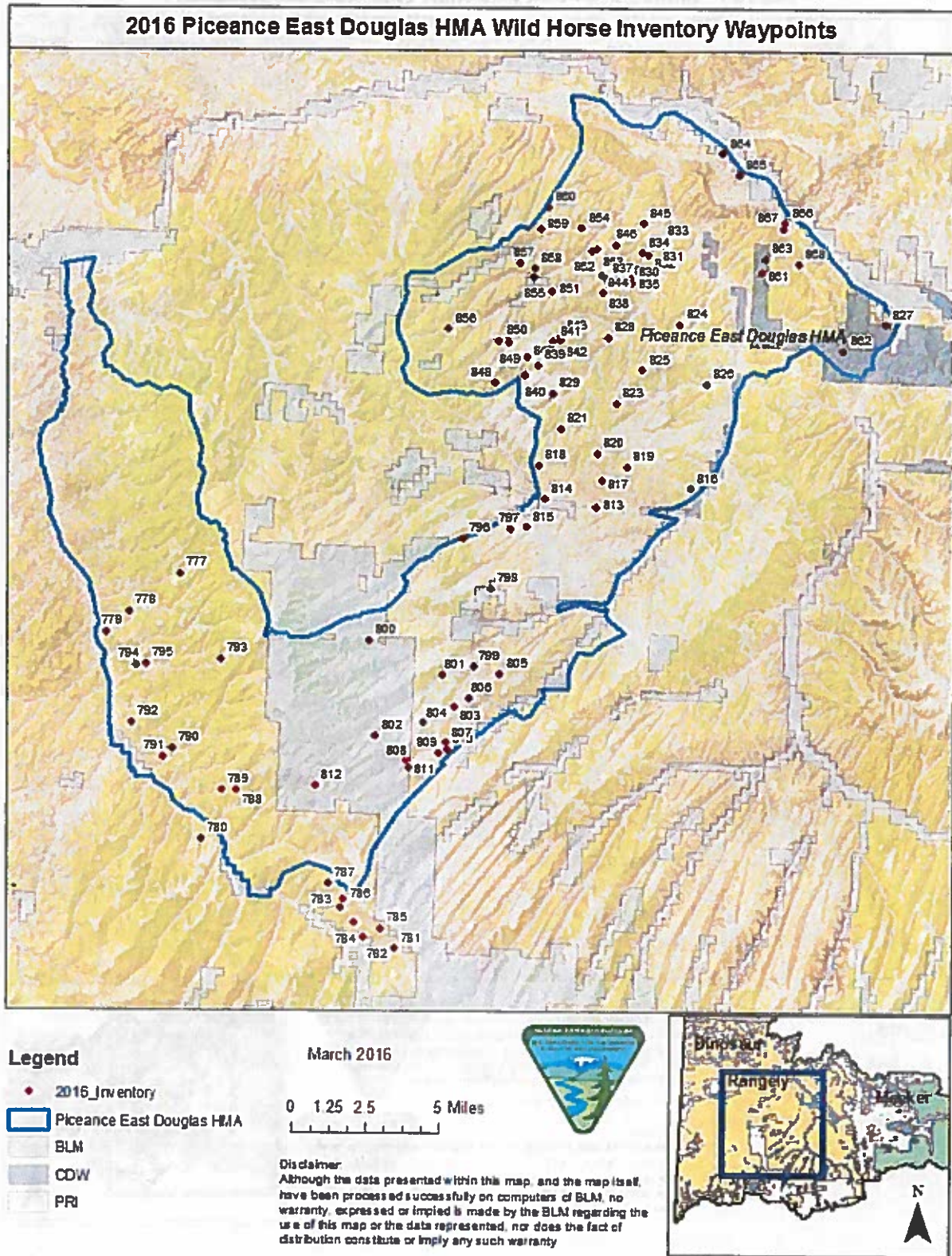
Map 3



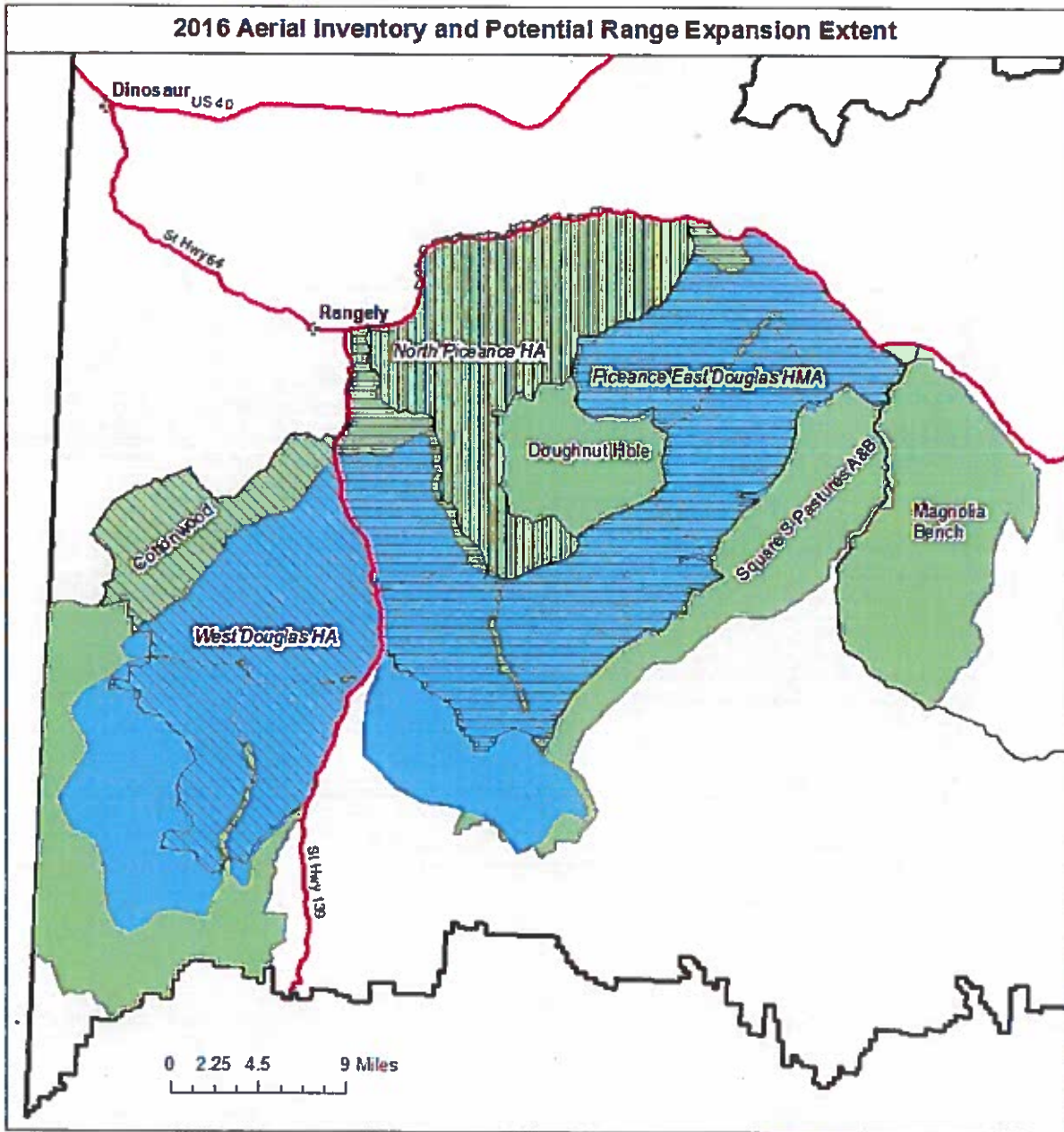
Map 4



Map 5



Map 6



Legend

- State
- County
- North Piceance HA
- Piceance East Douglas HMA
- West Douglas HA
- 2016 Aerial Inventory Area
- Expansion Extent

April 2016

Disclaimer:
Although the data presented within this map, and the map itself, have been processed successfully on computers of BLM, no warranty, expressed or implied is made by the BLM regarding the use of this map or the data represented, nor does the fact of distribution constitute or imply any such warranty.

