

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
CALIENTE FIELD OFFICE

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
FOR  
Caliente Herd Areas Complex Wild Horse Gather

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) DOI-BLM-NV-L030-2017-0031-EA, dated April 2018. After consideration of the environmental effects as described in the EA, and incorporated herein, I have determined that the proposed action with the project design specifications, including the project design features identified in the EA would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required to be prepared.

Reasons for this finding are based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) with regard to the context and intensity of impacts.

Context: The affected region is limited to Lincoln County (Nevada), where the project area is located. The gather has been planned with input from the interested public and users of public lands.

Intensity: Based on my review of the EA against CEQ's factors for intensity, there is no evidence that the impacts are significant:

1. *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.* The Proposed Action (Alternative A) for the Caliente Herd Area Complex Wild Horse Gather Plan would be consistent with the Ely District Approved Resource Management Plan (August 2008), and the standards for rangeland health, and would maintain a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple use relationship consistent with other resource needs as required under the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act of 1971 (WFRHBA). Although the gather and removal of excess wild horses could have some short-term impacts on individual animals, over the long-term, it is expected to benefit wild horse health by removing them from herd areas that have been determined to be missing important wild horse habitat needs and would be beneficial for rangeland resources such as vegetative communities, riparian resources, and wildlife habitat that are being adversely impacted by the overpopulation of wild horses.
2. *The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.* The Standard Gather Operating Procedures (EA, Appendix II and Appendix III) would be used to conduct the gather and are designed to ensure protection of human health and safety, as well as the health and safety of the wild horses and burros. The Proposed Action (Alternative A) would improve public health or safety for motorists traveling on major highways within the Caliente Field Office where there is a risk of collision with excess wild horses.
3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.* The proposed action has no potential to affect unique characteristics such as historic or cultural resources or properties of concern to Native Americans. There are no wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas present in the areas.

4. *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.* Effects of wild horse gather operations are well known and understood. No unresolved issues were raised through consultation or public comments.
5. *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.* Possible effects on the human environment are not highly uncertain and do not involve unique or unknown risks. The Proposed Action (Alternative A) would have no known effects on the human environment which are considered highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. This is demonstrated through the effects analysis in the EA.
6. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.* The action is compatible with future consideration of actions required to improve wild horse management. The Proposed Action (Alternative A) does not set a precedent for future actions outside the 10-year gather plan. Future actions would be subject to evaluation through the appropriate level of NEPA documentation
7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.* The Proposed Action (Alternative A) is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. The cumulative impacts analysis in the EA shows that the 10-year gather plan would not have significant synergistic effects with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions.
8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historic resources.* The Proposed Action (Alternative A) has no potential to adversely affect significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.* The Proposed Action (Alternative A) is not likely to adversely affect any listed species, and the action area does not include any habitat determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act.
10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.* The Proposed Action (Alternative A) is in compliance with the 2008 Ely District Record of Decision and the Approved Resource Management Plan, and is consistent with other Federal, State, local and tribal requirements for protection of the environment to the maximum extent possible.



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Caliente Field Office

4.27.18

Date