

National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting
Washington, DC

November 7, 2005

Board Members Present: Robin Lohnes, Renee Taylor, Larry Johnson, Dr. Boyd Spratling, Dr. Vernon Dooley and Hilleary Bogley. Board Members Absent: Gary Zakotnik, Dr. Wayne Burkhardt and Bill Higham. Former Board Member Jay Merriam also attended the meeting. In addition, Washington Office Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Staff: Jeff Rawson, Acting Deputy Associate Director, Renewable Resources and Planning, Don Glenn, Sally Spencer, Sharon Kipping, Dean Bolstad, Jenny Lesieutre and Ramona DeLorme. Eastern States: Steve Gobat and Karen Malloy. USDA, Forest Service Representative: Toni Strauss and Barry Imler.

Robin Lohnes opened the meeting at 8:20 a.m., November 7, 2005. She introduced the Advisory Board members to the public.

Jeff Rawson presented Jay Merriam with a letter of appreciation and a commemorative plaque for his participation on the Board (from 2002 to 2005).

Jeff Rawson noted that the wild horse and burro program was on track and he re-iterated his appreciation for Board input. He also noted that the Energy Program is a high priority for BLM.

Steve Gobat, Acting Eastern States Associate State Director, welcomed the Board to the Eastern States. He discussed challenges facing the Eastern States Wild Horse and Burro Program and improvements the State Office has made. He also noted that the Internet adopt-a-horse program has been reconnected and Eastern States is proposing a national symposium of interested parties to discuss adoption best practices.

Karen Malloy gave an overview of the Eastern States program. She noted that their adoptions were down last year due in part to the confusion surrounding sale authority animals. Eastern States is planning to incorporate the California-based Volunteer Pilot Program within their program. Also, in an effort to increase adoptions, Eastern States will post pictures of the animals at the Ewing Facility online.

August 2005 Minutes

The Board approved the August 2005 minutes.

Update Pending Litigation

Don Glenn provided an update on pending litigation: The Fund for Animals appeal, which is pending in the U.S. District Court of Appeals in DC; the PZP use in Montana's Pryor Herd Management Area (HMA) in which a request for a stay was denied and

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which is also pending; and a Nevada Department of Wildlife IBLA Appeal of a Decision setting appropriate management level in the Silver Peak HMA involving Bighorn Sheep.

Program Updates

Dean Bolstad gave a summary of the Fiscal Year 2005 program accomplishments. A discussion followed and a question was asked about which HMAs do not have initial Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) set. Arizona's Cerbat HMA and Nevada's Johnnie, Muddy, Wheeler Pass and Montgomery Pass HMAs do not have AMLs established, but should be finished during fiscal year (FY) 2006.

Facility Report

Dean Bolstad provided the facility report for the short-term and long-term holding facilities. On October 24, 2005, there were 8,238 animals in short-term preparation and maintenance facilities and 16,806 in long-term holding for a total of 25,044.

2006 Gather Schedule

Dean Bolstad presented the 2006 Gather Schedule which is in a new format that will be used at future meetings. In response to a question, Dean indicated that BLM continues to gather to the low end of AML.

2006 Adoptions and Marketing

Sally Spencer said that in FY06 BLM plans to adopt 5,790 animals. To date there are 92 adoptions planned and BLM is looking at adding a few more events. As of October 31, 2005, there have been 358 animals adopted. The National Wild Horse and Burro website and Adopt-A-Horse website have been reconnected. BLM expects this will help increase the number of animals adopted through Internet adoptions and the promotion of adoption events. The states have started submitting post adoption reports formatted as summary event evaluations. The reports are being sent directly to the Washington Office. The information available is timely and can be acted on immediately. The FY06 advertising will focus on adopters with their gentled animals and information about the animals' HMA. To help focus on what promotions are working, the toll free number (866 4MUSTANGS) will continue to track basic information of where callers heard about the program or the event. Also, if states are having special events or have special information available, it can be sent to callers from that area. The Bureau will be meeting with a small group of adoption leads and public affairs specialists, from the three leading adoption states, to discuss how to increase adoptions.

Dean Bolstad mentioned that the Palomino Valley Corrals (PVC) is working with the Nevada Department of Agriculture to have the manager and assistant manager deputized as Brand Inspectors to provide for same day load outs for walk up adopters. He also talked about a new adoption process proposal from Palomino Valley personnel. The concept involves posting pictures of PVC horses available for adoption and processing

applications and adoption agreements through the mail prior to animal shipment to predetermined destination points for pickup by the adopters. Shipments would occur when a full load of animals have been adopted.

The Board requested an update on the National Wild Horse and Burro Foundation activities. Sally Spencer explained that the name has been changed to the Mustang Heritage Foundation and that Janet Greenlee is now the chairperson of the Foundation. The State of Nevada and the BLM Nevada State Office have agreed to disperse the remainder of the money that was committed for the startup of the Foundation. In its business plan, the Foundation is focusing on the California volunteer pilot project, increased adoptions in Eastern States, and fundraising.

There was a discussion of the budget devoted to adoption program. It was noted that \$4.8M is directly dedicated to the adoption program. It was also noted that there is additional budget which supports the program including funds from preparation, holding, transportation and compliance. Hilleary Bogley gave the BLM credit for adoption efforts but she noted that more animals are being removed than are being adopted. BLM's goal is to achieve AML and in doing so the numbers removed will be in balance with numbers that can be adopted. Dr. Spratling asked how many adoptable age horses are currently in holding facilities. Dean Bolstad committed to provide the information based on age breakdown for the next Board meeting.

Robin stated that she had extended an invitation to Janet Greenlee to attend the next Board meeting.

U.S. Forest Service

Toni Strauss introduced Barry Imler, of the Washington Office Range staff, and distributed a list of territories, AMLs, acreages, and current estimated populations. The goal for populated territories is to have all AMLs set by end of fiscal year 2007. The Board requested on-going updates. The Board inquired as to how often the Forest Service (FS) does census and it was stated that they coordinate their censusing with BLM. The Board also asked about the status of updating FS regulations to reflect sale authority. Toni Straus responded that the update has been postponed due to a delay in updating range directives and no new projects will be started until the range directives are complete. The Board also asked about pending litigation concerning a gather on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona. In Defense of Animals et. al., has protested Forest Service plans to capture and transport unauthorized horses located in the vicinity of the Heber Wild Horse Territory. The Forest Service has a record of zero wild horse population on the Heber Territory; however, In Defense of Animals is contesting that the unauthorized horses targeted for capture are protected under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. The litigation is pending.

Sale Authority

Don Glenn gave an update on the Sale Authority. He reported that 1,573 animals (27 of which were burros) have been sold to date. He asked if the Board had any new ideas for marketing the sale animals. Hilleary Bogley asked why people can not select their sale animals. Don explained that they can select their animals that are located in short-term holding facilities. There was a discussion on the number of burros sold. It was noted that there is a demand for burros for both sale and adoption, and all sale burros were sold.

Euthanasia and Gelding Policy

Dean Bolstad said that the draft policy, coordinated with the Board at their last meeting, has been signed and implemented. The new policy Instruction Memorandum was provided to the Board. The Board noted that there was an attachment to the memorandum entitled HMA Gather and Removal Report. They requested an end-of-year summary of this information. The draft Gelding Policy discussed at the last Board meeting is being routed for signature and implementation.

Fertility Control

Dean Bolstad summarized the fertility control research update provided by Linda Coates-Markle, who was unable to attend the meeting. BLM utilizes porcine zona pellucida (PZP) under the Humane Society of the United States Investigational New Animal Drug Exemption for PZP and applies it under research protocols. He reviewed the status of and details of two levels of research that are ongoing; individual-based trials and population based trials. The results of the adjuvant study will be published in December, 2005 in the Journal of Zoo Biology and Wildlife Medicine. The study found that Freund's complete and Freund's modified adjuvants are equally effective. Refresher training for BLM's fertility control applicators was held in September 2005, and taught by Dr. Turner. Regarding the 3 to 4 year PZP agent study, BLM initiated captive wild mare studies in Canon City, Colorado, in March 2005, and the Science and Conservation Center is preparing to run titer analysis on the first 7 months of blood samples. BLM was invited to and will participate in a meeting being sponsored by the Thaw Charitable Trust and hosted by the Humane Society of the United States at Santa Fe, New Mexico on November 29-30, 2005. The meeting's objective is to identify barriers to broad scale use of fertility control in wild horse herds and discuss ways to overcome the obstacles.

Robin Lohnes commented that she would be attending the meeting of the Humane Society of the United States in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She also suggested that Dr. Spratling attend.

Census Research

Jason Ransom gave a status report on census research. He reviewed the five methods being investigated (Mark-Resight, Simultaneous Double-Count, Sightability Bias, Distance Sampling, and Forward Looking Infrared) and discussed the advantages and limitations of each. The current hypothesis is that a technique combining simultaneous double-count, sightability bias and double-count will provide the best population estimates for horses. The final report on all horse trials will be completed in 2007 along with a user's manual. Research for burro population estimation is planned from 2007 to 2010. Robin Lohnes suggested that burro census research be coordinated with the upcoming FY06 burro gathers. Jason said that the December 13, 2005, meeting with the U.S. Geological Survey-Biological Resources Discipline (USGS-BRD), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and BLM would be a good time to discuss this.

Selective Removal

Dean Bolstad presented the analysis of BLM's Selective Removal Policy that the Board requested at their last meeting in Denver, CO. He reviewed the numbers of horses by age groups that were removed and released in 14 HMAs that have been gathered since implementation of the revised selective removal policy.

The Board requested that the BLM provide the ages for the animals removed from three Utah HMAs that had not been aged at the time the table was prepared. Larry Johnson asked how BLM considered fertility control when there is a gather. The BLM explained its policy, process and coordination with the Humane Society of the United States. During the discussion, the idea emerged that there is potential for more utilization of fertility control during the gathers. Robin Lohnes said BLM should consider allocation of gather monies for gathers that include fertility control.

Take Pride in America

Sally Spencer noted the Save the Mustangs fund is being used as an incentive to the sales program to find good homes for the animals. To date there has been \$19,395 donated by individuals to the fund. Ford Motor Company is proposing to donate an additional \$180,000 to the Fund. In total, there could be around \$200,000. This money will probably be distributed in grants to those who purchase animals. A meeting with the Treasury Department is scheduled to discuss distribution of the money via debit cards. Take Pride in America will coordinate the distribution of the money. Adoption events are now listed on the Take Pride in America calendar. The Board requested an update of the distribution of the funds at the next meeting. The Board asked if Take Pride in America has considered contacting horse events and be listed as a charitable organization that horse events can donate proceeds to.

FY06 Program Funding and Planned Accomplishments

Don Glenn presented an update on the FY06 budget and planned accomplishments. The FY06 budget is \$36.9M along with \$2M available from the Forest Service for past work that the BLM conducted for them. He commented that it looks like we can remain on track to achieve AML in 2007. Robin Lohnes asked if there was any possibility to use the Forest Service funds as a contingency fund. Don Glenn responded that funding was too tight. If an emergency occurs, the state will have to shift their priorities for allocated funds. During the discussion of allocations for gathers, the Board suggested tying in the allocation of funds for gathering with the decision to participate in fertility control.

The deadline for nominations of the three Board positions has been extended to November 30, 2005. The positions include Humane Advocate, Livestock and Wildlife.

No recommendations were made.

Meetings for the next year have been scheduled as follows:

April 10, 2006 – Sacramento, CA

July 17, 2006 – Salt Lake City

November 6, 2006 – Las Vegas, NV

Public comments began at 2:36 p.m.

The Meeting adjourned – 3:08 p.m.

Meeting was reconvened at 4:00 p.m. to hear additional public comments, of which there were none.

Meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.