

The Facts about the Interior Department's Wild Horse and Burro Program

WILD HORSE AND BURRO PROGRAM IS FISCALLY UNSUSTAINABLE

- October 2008 GAO Report found: "The number of animals removed [by the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management - BLM] from the range is far greater than the number adopted or sold, which has resulted in the need for increased short-term and long-term holding. . . *If not controlled, off-the-range holding costs will continue to overwhelm the program.*"



- The BLM now stockpiles more wild horses in holding facilities (41,500+) than are left free on the range (<33,000). BLM is proposing to remove 32,800 more mustangs from public lands in the West between Fiscal Years (FY) 2011-2014, after removing over 10,000 wild horses and burros in FY 2010.
- The agency focuses the majority of its budget on roundups, removal and warehousing of horses, while less than 16 percent is spent on programs to maintain horses on the range. BLM is requesting more than \$75 million for its wild horse budget in FY 2012.
- BLM speaks of reform, yet plans to continue the unsustainable cycle of mass removal and warehousing of wild horses in perpetuity.

BLM IS MISLEADING THE PUBLIC WITH CLAIMS OF WILD HORSE OVERPOPULATION

- Fewer than 33,000 horses live on 26 million acres of BLM lands.
- BLM's arbitrary and artificially low Appropriate Management Levels for wild horses are based on a disproportionate allocation of resources to livestock and other commercial uses.
- BLM has reduced designated wild horse habitat by over 20 million acres since 1971, including a 2.4 million acre loss between 2005 and 2009 alone.

LIVESTOCK VASTLY OUTNUMBER WILD HORSES IN BLM HERD AREAS

- Of 245 million acres of public land managed by the BLM, livestock grazing is allowed on 160 million acres, but wild horses and burros are restricted to 26 million acres.
- On the 11 percent of BLM lands that are designated wild horse and burro areas, BLM allocates the majority of resources to privately-owned livestock. Examples:
 - Calico Complex, Nevada - Forage allocation: 50% livestock; wild horses 25%.
 - Adobe Town and Salt Wells Creek, Wyo. - 13 times more livestock than wild horses.
 - Twin Peaks, Calif. - 4 times more cattle than horses; 7 times more sheep than burros.
- BLM consistently declines to utilize its authority to close or limit livestock grazing "if necessary to provide habitat for wild horses or burros, to implement herd management actions, or to protect wild horses or burros, to implement herd management actions, or to protect wild horses or burros from disease, harassment or injury" (43 C.F.R. 4710.5(a)).
- The BLM's multiple use management mandate does not require livestock grazing.
- Livestock grazing on public lands costs taxpayers in excess of \$122 million annually, yet cattle grazed on public lands provide just 3% of the nation's beef supply.

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BLM ROUNDUPS: INHUMANE AND COSTLY GOVERNMENT POLICY



- BLM helicopter stampedes drive horses over miles of treacherous terrain, causing trauma, injury and death. Over 130 horses died and dozens more were injured in the controversial 2010 Calico Mountains (NV) roundup and over 40 pregnant mares spontaneously aborted. The July 2010 Tuscarora roundup, in the heat of summer in the Nevada desert, caused at least 35 deaths - many from dehydration-related complications.

- The roundups destroy the fabric of wild horse society, shattering the family bands that provide behavioral and reproductive stability to wild horse herds.
- By rounding up wild horses and warehousing them in zoo-like conditions in the Midwest, BLM deprives these iconic animals of what is most important: family and freedom.
- Horses are left on the range in such small numbers that the genetic viability of many herds, including genetically and historically unique populations, are threatened.

CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN OVER WILD HORSE MISMANAGEMENT

- In July 2010, 55 House members who have called for a halt to roundups by sending a personalized version of the Rep. Rahall & Grijalva's [sign on letter](#) to Secretary Salazar.
- In February, 2011, House of Representatives passed a 2011 budget bill that rejected the Interior Department's request for a \$12 million increase for the wild horse budget. The House also voted to dock the agency \$2 million to send "a very strong message" about the need to reform the Wild Horse and Burro program.

WE RESPECTFULLY URGE OUR REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATORS TO:

- Support Appropriations language that:
 - Rejects BLM's \$12 million wild horse budget increase request.
 - Suspends wild horse and burro roundups in all but verifiable emergency situations while the National Academy of Sciences conducts a scientific review of the program.
 - Prohibits the use of any funds to euthanize healthy horses or sell horses directly or indirectly for slaughter.
 - Funds public/private partnerships offering solutions to the wild horse dilemma, particularly through conversion of livestock grazing allotments to wild horse use.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE WWW.WILDHORSEPRESERVATION.ORG