



# NATIONAL HORSE & BURRO RANGELAND MANAGEMENT COALITION

Advocating for commonsense, ecologically-sound approaches to managing horses and burros to promote healthy wildlife and rangelands for future generations

## MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

### Wild Horse and Burro Facts

- BLM rangelands can support <27,000 horses and burros.
- There are currently >72,000 horses and burros on BLM ranges.
- Horse populations double every 4 years.
- There are >46,000 horses and burros in BLM off-range holding facilities.
- Taxpayers pay about \$50 million per year to care for horses and burros in holding.

### Increase Adoptions into Private Care

**Pro** - Fewer horses would be in holding & more horses could be removed from rangelands.

**Con** - There is a lack of public demand for horse and burro adoptions and high costs associated with BLM's off-range holding facilities and adoption program. In fiscal year 2016, BLM spent **\$56.8 million** on adoptions and off-range holding but adopted **< 3,000 animals**.

BLM would need to more than double current adoption rates, just to keep pace with on-range population growth.

### BLM Adoption Statistics: Adoptions and Expenses

Fiscal Year	Number of Adoptions	BLM Adoption Expenses	BLM Off-range Horse & Burro Holding Costs
2012	2,583	\$4.6 mil.	\$43.0 mil.
2013	2,311	\$7.5 mil.	\$46.2 mil.
2014	2,135	\$7.1 mil.	\$43.2 mil.
2015	2,631	\$6.3 mil.	\$49.4 mil.
2016	2,912	\$7.4 mil.	\$49.4 mil.

Current **horse and burro management actions** are proving to be insufficient in maintaining the number of horses and burros on public lands at appropriate levels.

### Status Quo – Leave Excess Horses and Burros on the Rangelands

**Pro** - Leaving the horses and burros on the range would reduce some of BLM's financial burdens—for now—and would allow the horses to roam free.

Some may also view this as an opportunity to remove livestock and other uses from public lands.

**Con** - Horse numbers **double every 4-5 years**. Significant and concentrated population increases lead to range degradation and desertification. Animals would eventually suffer from starvation and dehydration.



(Credit: BLM Nevada)

## Implement Current Fertility Control

**Sterilization:** Surgically rendering an individual reproductively inviable.

**PZP** (*procine zona pellucida*): A fertility control vaccine that is hand-administered to animals.

**Pro** - Lower reproductive rate means fewer gathers, horses in holdings, and taxpayer money spent on holding.

If Herd Management Areas (HMA) are maintained at Appropriate Management Levels (AML) with sufficient fertility control, horses may remain on the range where the public can visit and view them as free-roaming. Also, fewer gathers will occur, leading to less stress on the horses.

**Con** - PZP has limited use because it must be administered every year, but effective administration is nearly impossible within a larger HMA. **Furthermore, current 2 year or longer vaccines are not working.**

Fertility control alone will not reduce herd sizes to a sustainable level in a timeframe that would save the ecosystem from severe degradation.



## Gather, Remove, and Hold Excess Horses for Remainder of Their Life

**Pro** - Provides a thriving natural ecological balance so the remaining horses, wildlife, livestock, and other multiple uses can thrive.

Once numbers are within AML, fertility control actions can be implemented to keep numbers at that level and reduce the need for further gathers.

**Con** - Taxpayers fund the care of each horse in holding, which is approximately \$50,000 per horse over its lifetime. The cost of caring for those horses already in off-range holding (~46,000 animals) is expected to exceed **\$1 billion** over the next 20 years.

## Sell Horses without Restrictions

**Pro** - Significantly reduces the cost of holding facilities and allows for the removal of excess horses from rangelands. Once numbers are within AML, fertility control actions can be implemented to keep numbers at that level.

Excess horses are not left on the range to degrade the range, starve to death, or held in captivity at the taxpayer's expense.

Individuals/groups wishing to protect the horses could purchase and care for them. Entrepreneurial opportunity would exist for those with large land holdings to care for privately owned "wild" horses.

Horses that are not purchased by those wanting to "protect" them could provide protein for those in need or those who choose to use it.

**Con** - Emotional issue for some individuals, as they consider horses and burros as pets and fear they would be sold for slaughter or treated inhumanely.

(See generally) United States Department of the Interior. Bureau of Land Management. Wild Horse and Burro Quick Facts. 2016. <[http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/whbprogram/history\\_and\\_facts/quick\\_facts.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/whbprogram/history_and_facts/quick_facts.html)> Accessed 28 March 2016.

American Farm Bureau Federation • American Sheep Industry Association • Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
Masters of Foxhounds Association • Mule Deer Foundation • National Association of Conservation Districts  
National Association of Counties • National Association of State Departments of Agriculture  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association • National Rifle Association • National Wildlife Refuge Association  
Public Lands Council • Public Lands Foundation • Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation • Safari Club International  
Society for Range Management • The Wildlife Society • Wild Sheep Foundation

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