



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 >67,000 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.

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.

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.

Furthermore, at the apex of annual BLM horse and burro adoptions, only ~8,000 were adopted. Even if BLM can replicate that number, it would not be enough to keep pace with current population growth rates.

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.

Current trends show a decrease in annual adoption demand and rising off-range holding costs.



(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. **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.

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> Accessed 28 March 2016.

American Farm Bureau Federation • American Sheep Industry Association • Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation • National Association of Conservation Districts • 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

www.facebook.com/wildhorserange

www.wildhorserange.org

horseandrange@gmail.com

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