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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER
WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADVISORY BOARD

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>> Okay everybody. I just want to say we're about to get started. We are about to get started. So, I'm going to invite you all to stop your private conversations, all of you -- even you two. Okay. And let's get settled in and let's turn it over to our Chairman.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you, Kathie. I appreciate you. If you all would, I'd like to

recognize any current active
military or past Veterans and
stand with me and be
recognized. So if you're a
Veteran or have been in the
army or currently in the army,
would you please stand?

[Applause] Now, I'm going to ask
everyone else to stand. We're
going to have the Pledge of
Allegiance.

>> ALL: I pledge allegiance,
to the flag of the United
States of America and to the
Republic for which it stands
one nation under God,
indivisible, with liberty and
justice for all.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you all
very much. You can be seated.
Thank you all for coming this
afternoon to our Wild Horse and
Burro Advisory Board meeting.
We are very fortunate and lucky
to be here in a state where
there is more wild horses than
any place else in the state

of Nevada. I have been
counseled council instantly on
how to say the state Nevada. I
have called it Nevaida. And I
also -- but I have now learned
how to say it the correct way.
So we're going to do that. So
every start out this morning,
or this afternoon, we're going
to have the Board introduce
themselves starting with Mr.
Steven Over there. press your
-- press your button.

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: Sorry. I'm
Steven Yardley. I'm here
representing the livestock
industry.

>> And my name is Robert Cope
from Salmon, Idaho representing
resource natural -- Natural
Resource Management.

>> BEN MASTERS: I'm Ben
Masters from Montana
representing Wildlife
Management.

>> DR. SUE MCDONNELL: Hi, I'm
Sue McDonnell from Pennsylvania.

And representing the research position.

>> [Away from mic] I'm from Oregon, Veterinarian.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Hi, I'm Ginger Kathrens and I'm from Colorado. And I'm the Humane Advocacy on the Board.

>> MS. JUNE SEWING: June Sewing from Cedar City, Utah. And I'm a Wild horse and Burro Advocate.

>> FRED WOEHL: And I'm Fred Woehl, and I'm the Board Chair. And I also represent Equine Behavior. Now I'm going to turn the microphone over to my good friend Mr. Dean Bolstad, who will introduce the Bureau of Land Management staff.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Thank you, Fred. I'm the division chief for the wild horse and burro program stationed in Washington, DC. Welcome to all the visitors and member to the public. The Board wanted to

come whether hear wild horse management challenges, so we are in the heart of north central Nevada. And we do indeed have challenges in the wild horse and burro program. So thank you for coming. And I hope you all participate in the public comment period. So to introduce BLM staff, John Ruhs, state Director of Nevada. John, thank you for you and your team for hosting a tour for the Board and some members of the public came along around. It was a great tour. We got to see what challenges you all face. Alan Shepard, Nevada state lead, stand, please. Thank you. And Jill Silvey, District Manager of Elko. Mike Herder, district manager of Ely. Melanie Mitchell, are you out and about? I hope I'm not missing any Nevada staff. Other agency personnel, Hope Woodward, United

States forest service. I hope
Dr. Al Kane is here, but not
in the room. There he is.
APHIS Veterinarian. Assistant
BLM. Our off range branch
chief in Oklahoma, Holle
Hooks. Jared Bybee, acting on
range branch chief in Reno.
Our production crew back in the
corner that live streams this
meeting across the world. And
thank you, guys
for being here. And our
facilitator, Ms. Kathie Libby.
Dr. Paul Griffin, BLM research
coordinator, thanks, Paul.
Jason Lutterman, our public
affairs specialist. And Debbie
Collins, outreach and adoption
and marketing. Michael
Reiland, budget analyst in the
the back. And Gordon Toevs
will be presenting remotely
tomorrow, not here in the room.
And Dorothea Boothe who is
coordinating and facilitating
and putting this meeting on in

the back of the room also. So if I miss somebody, stand up and we'll be recognizing you. Thank you very much. Fred, back to you.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you, Dean. We would also like to recognize Dr. Braid and he's been on the Board for nine years. So if you will stand up, please. You're a tough act to follow, my friend. Let's give him a round of applause, because there's a whole bunch of folks trying to herd a bunch of cats and he upside down that.

[Applause] Now I'd like to recognize and turn the microphone over to another one of my good friends, someone that has just recently been permanent in this job, and this is my good friend Kristin Bail.

>> KRISTIN BAIL: So I'm having to learn that as well. And I do think that we do want to

have an agenda overview. Do we need to have that with you? So we'll make sure that is happening, but I'm Kristin Bail and yes, as Fred discussed, I am now permanently the assistant director for resource and planning. And Wild Horse and Burro is one of a portfolio programs that I have. And I'm personally very gratified by being able to continue my involvement with this program. I have been struck by the amount of passion, the amount of engagement, the amount of commitment that you all represent. Because as you will hear today, there are so many important parts of this program that require thoughtful dialogue, they require action, they require all of us working together, you know, on behalf of having healthy horses on healthy range lands. So I want to thank you and acknowledge

you for being here today, and for those of you who continue to be our partners in whatever capacity you are here on today. And thank you for that. And we appreciate you taking time to share your thoughts with us and continuing to work with us.

So I'm going to keep my remarks short, because we have a lot of important things that we want to discuss here today and to share information about.

And with that, I'm going to hand it over to Kathie Libby who is going to help us lead us through the agenda and maybe give a few other overview remarks. Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Perfect.

Thank you. So, first of all, welcome everybody. Both to our new people and our returning friends. It is just always a pleasure to show up and see how many people care enough to come to these sessions. And we do

recognize that we have a number of people watching us on webcam. And when I do the rules of the room, in part, those rules are designed to make sure that the folks watching on the webcam can actually see something and that we're not getting in the way of their ability to do that. So just briefly, because the agendas are available at the table. Help yourself to one if you have not already. But we'll spend the first several minutes today, you know, getting ourselves set up. And then getting a welcome introduction and some very useful information from the Nevada state office in terms of the Wild Horse and Burro Program here. And after that, Bill Wolf has been kind enough to join us and he's going to speak with us about the Resource Advisory Council in

Northeast Great Basin. We'll then go through some administrative stuff where we've got some minutes that need to be approved. And the Board in each instance, in each meeting makes recommendations to the BLM. And then the BLM responds. You know, studies them and responds to those recommendations. So we'll go through the BLM responses to the recommendations that were made at the last session. And Dean Bolstad will give us a brief, but not the only update we'll be getting this session. But we'll have a brief update. Most importantly, obviously, is that this afternoon, from 3:15 to 5:15, we are scheduled to have a public comment period. You may sign up if you have not already. Sign up at the welcome desk to speak. And we do have two hours set aside. So it tends to work out so that

folks have about 3 minutes to speak. But it all depends on the numbers. So if 10 people want to speak in two hours, you've got a little bit more time. If 50 people want to speak, then you have a little less. But we'll have that worked out for you by 3:15 when we get started. And I'll go over later some of the more specifics on that. That two hours is really, really important to the BLM and to the Board. So please, if you have some things you want to share, please do so. So that's today and we will end at the end of that comment period. I'll just do tomorrow briefly. Because it's a little long. A lot of updates. It's really, really informative. So, hopefully, you can be here with us as well. We will have updates from the forest service, both our off range and on range

program from BLM. And a budget update. And the folks, the wonderful folks who do great work at the Mustang Heritage Foundation will also give us an update on their work. And a research update from Paul. Research in this program is terribly important, as you may know. It also takes forever, as you may know. So important to keep up with that. We just before lunch, Jason will be sharing with us the stakeholder engagement partnership toolkit we're developing. And just after lunch, something really, really critical for the BLM in the overall. Not just the horses. Gordon Toevs will be joining us to go over by phone land health fundamentals, and a lot of this has to do with the extraordinary amount of effort going into saving sage-grouse habitat. And horses and cows and just about everything else

is an important part of that.
So I hope you will be here for
that. It will be quite
informative. The afternoon is
really dedicated for the Board
to share what their working
groups are coming up with, make
some recommendations, and we do
have a few people before we
leave tomorrow that we want to
recognize particularly. So,
now, as you know, we are all
here to listen, to learn, and
to speak our minds. But we
want to do that gently. And we
want to spend a lot of time
listening. So I'm going to go
over some rules that help us do
that. And I apologize for
that, but we're terribly
interested in the public's
statements, the kinds of things
you do want to share, and
because we are also webcam, we
also want to make sure anybody
and everybody who wants to can
hear you as well. So the

session is, most of it is basically designed as a meeting of the board. And, so, except for the public comment period, you are really listening. And to help us all do that, we ask a few things. There will be enough chairs for you to sit in. If you really want to stand, there's room in the back. Feel free to do that. Very important that no one at anytime approach the desk where the Board sits. You just want to stay -- there's a red tape right here. And that's where you want to stay back from. Okay? So if you get real excited and you want to really kind of want to get in somebody's face, you just do it from here. The media, if there are any with us, will check in at the door, and we'll help them get set up. There is spots -- there are spots for microphones and cameras and

other kinds of equipment. If you have a short camera and you want to sit down with it, there's a space right upfront here. Camera spaces are designated by pink tape. Okay? And we can help you with any of that. Very important though, it is a board meeting, if you are anybody that is disruptive in an intentional way, we will ask you, we will ensure you are escorted out of the room so the board can do its business and you can all hear each other's comments. I've already mentioned there's a sign up at the door that will be available to you until 3:15. We would like you to get signed up before 3:15 so we can figure out how much time you have. But technically, you have until 3:15. If you do speak, and we hope you do, this is where you're going to sit. Okay? If you have handouts

that you want to share with the Board, you're going to leave them at the front table. You're not going to bring them to this table. You're not going to bring them up to the board. We're going to just stay a little bit more organized than that. But you will use that table. And, again, we'll tell you beforehand how much time you have. Hopefully up to 3 minutes, but we'll see. No signs. No placards. No other items that are going to obscure the view the people need of the board. So we really are here for conversation. And let's use that opportunity to listen and learn. The Board will not respond to comments that you make. That doesn't mean that they agree with you. It doesn't mean they disagree with you. It just means that this is your time to speak and

they're going to be doing some listening. If at the end of this session, somebody on the Board or the bureau wants to correct an actual factual error, they may take the opportunity to do so. I will tell you it doesn't happen very often, because that's mostly because you're very right. But we do reserve the right to do that to just keep things accurate. And largely, the BLM is really committed. We didn't write these things down for nothing. So we are very committed to working with you and using these rule as our guide. Other than that, thanks again for coming. I hope you have a great day and a half. And I'm going to turn it back to Fred.

>> FRED WOEHLE: Thank you Ms. Kathie. I appreciate it. Based on what I've seen since I've been here, we're not going

to have any trouble at all.

This is a great bunch of folks.

They really have made us feel

welcomed. And in doing that,

we're going to have the state

director of the state of

Nevada, Mr. John Ruhs come up

and talk with us at this time.

>> And I think coming with him

is Mr. Alan Shepard who's the

wild horse state lead for the

state of Nevada.

>> JOHN RUHS: Good afternoon,

everyone. This is John Ruhs,

the BLM state director for

Nevada. I want to welcome

the advisory board here to

Nevada. We're very thankful

that you're able to make the

trip here. Also, for the ones

that were able to participate

in the tour yesterday, I

thought it was a great tour.

So thank you very much for

that. Also, I want to thank

the national Wild Horse and

Burro team for being here.

Kristin, it's good to have you here as well. Members of the public, we're very thankful to have you and the audience as well also. So, appreciate that. Again, it's very exciting for to us have you here in Nevada. So thank you for making the request and being able to make the trip here. Yeah, that might work better. [Chuckles] Thank you. So, BLM's mission is to manage the public lands to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. So what I wanted to do is to follow in this mission, I want to kind of give you an overview of the Nevada BLM. And then we'll turn it over to Alan and he will talk to us about specifically the Nevada Wild Horse and Burro Program. So

Nevada BLM is the largest landlord of lands in the state of Nevada. We have 63% of the land area. We manage 48 million surface acres. 59 million subsurface acres. And we have three of the largest programs in the Bureau; the Wild Horse Program, the Mining Program, and the Livestock Grazing Program. Again, one thing about public land is that it's owned by the American people and managed by the BLM, so that's important for us to remember. For 2016, BLM Nevada performs its complex and challenging work on the ground. We have a lot of statewide priorities that we'll kind of get to, some of the highlights of those. And we'll talk about things like wild horse and burro gathers. And another thing that we won't spend a lot of time on, but one of the things that happens to us in

this state is, we have a lot of wildfires. And as a result, the wildfires, we have to do a lot of emergency stabilization and rehabilitation. And that sometimes help us make a move to restore some of our range lands back to where we want them. Compared to other states, again, BLM Nevada has the most wild horses and the largest wild horse program. We have the largest mining program in the bureau. And, really, when you talk BLM, everything that BLM manages, we have here in Nevada. So that's one of the things about this state and the programs here is that they're very complex and we cover the whole gamut of programs. So BLM is given lots of laws to help us manage these public lands. They go back to the 1876 mining law. 1934 Taylor Grazing Act. 1964 Wilderness Act. 1970 National

Environmental Policy Act. The
1971 Wild Horse and Burro Act.
The 1993 Endangered Species
Act. 1976 Federal Land Policy
and Land Management Act. FLPMA.

That is our organic Act.

And then the 1978 Public Range
Lands and Improvement Act. As

a federal agency, our purpose
is to implement these various
federal laws. So everything

that we do is either mandated
by law or authorized as a
discretionary activity aimed at
carrying out the act of

Congress. So that's our
purpose. So some of the things
that BLM regulates. Renewable
energy. Solar. Geothermal.

Wind. Nevada BLM has all of
those. Non-renewable energy,
oil and gas. We have some of

that. Mining, grazing. So
going back to solar, we have
one of the largest solar

programs in the United States.

Geothermal, we have roughly a

million acres under lease in Nevada for oil and gas since 2014. We've had over four million acres of potential oil and gas leasing parcels that we deferred for sage-grouse habitat. So that's a pretty significant chunk of ground that we've decided to set aside at least for now in order to ensure sage-grouse have the right kind of habitat. I've mentioned mining. Mining is the third largest industry in Nevada. It's Nevada, the world's fourth largest gold producer. And produces about 76% of the U.S. gold is produced here in Nevada. Our grazing program is a fairly large one as well. We administer 677 grazing permits and leases. We have the most public land that has authorized grazing on it in the BLM. Nearly two million AUMs are permitted for livestock grazing

in this state. But because of our drought conditions and other issues, working with our permittees and oftentimes as much as 25% of that is in non-use because of the conditions on the ground. So some of the services that BLM Nevada provides, again, wild horse and burro management, wildland fire, national landscape conservation system, areas of special designation, recreation. So I talked about the wild horse and burro program and you're going to hear a lot about that from Alan. But our current population is over 34,000 wild horses and burros on the range, that's half the wild horses in the United States. We have 83 herd management areas in Nevada. And 87% of those are over AML. Our fire management program, as of August 30th this year, BLM had a total of

240 fires that burned 219,936 acres. Statewide on lands other than BLM, we had 355 fires consuming 257,000 acres. So, again, this was as great a spring as we had with all the forage we have on the ground, we've actually had a fairly mild fire season compared to some of those historic fire seasons we've had in the past, but it still a pretty huge number when you think about a quarter million acres that burned in the state of Nevada this year. Again, I've mentioned our national landscape conservation system. Lands in our wilderness program, Nevada BLM in itself has three national historic trails. The California trail. The Pony Express trail. And the Old Spanish trail. We have three national conservation areas. The Sloan Canyon, Red Rock Canyon, and Black Rock

Desert-High Rock Canyon. We have 45 wilderness areas in Nevada on just over two million acres. We have 63 wilderness study areas. And we have 54 areas of critical environmental concern. And before I go on, I want to just make a little plug since you're all new to Elko. On the West side of town, we have a place called The California Trail Center. Please take the time to go visit. Sign the little register book. Leave a little donation. It'd just be good, it's a good facility and we're pretty proud of that. On the recreation front, annually, Nevada has approximately eight million visitors that recreate on the BLM land. And we authorize over 300 special recreation permits each year. That includes Burning Man which is permitted for a maximum attendance of 70,000

people. That makes it, when that event occurs, which just finished last weekend, when that occurs, it's the 6th largest city in the state of Nevada. In addition, we have 47 million acres open to recreation use which includes equestrian trails and other uses. Some of the BLM Nevada's priorities -- go ahead.

Include our resource management plans. I can't really read that which is probably good, because I recognize some of the dates are wrong, but in our Ely District, we have six districts in the state of Nevada. The Ely District RMP was signed back in 2008. So it's a pretty fresh resource management plan.

The Winnemucca plan was signed in 2015. We have a plan that we're working on right now for the basin range national monument. We hope to have that completed sometime in fiscal year

'17. Our Carson City District, we have a proposed final RMP that we hope to have out in fiscal year '17. Our Las Vegas, our Southern Nevada District RMP is somewhere between draft and final. And, so, I don't want to really give a projection on that date. And then we have our Battle Mountain District and the Elko District where we have resource management planning that needs to start. Battle Mountain has actually started and stopped a couple of times and we need to get that back on track. And the Elko plan, we need to get it in shape to start moving that. Sage-grouse plan implementation, so in 2015, the Assistant Secretary signed our land use plan amendment for sage-grouse for the West United States. We are just in the process of completing a scoping process for the sage brush

focal areas which are drawn on the northern part of the state. And there was a scoping report that was released on that in April of 2016. But we're moving forward with that process. A big event for us this last year in 2016 has been in April. The United States Forest Service, BLM Nevada, and the state of Nevada's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources signed a memorandum of understanding to where we agreed to work together to implement the State of Nevada conservation credit system as a tool for mitigation. And, so, we're in the process of implementing that. We've signed the MOU, but as the Agency, we're starting to work together on getting that actually accomplished. Some of the external outreach that we've had, we had some meetings to

engage our stakeholders and partners on the implementation process earlier this year. The highlight for us so far this year has been in June. We had a round of meetings, workshops, if you will, that were basically funded, if you will, or supported by the Nevada Cattlemen's and the Nevada Department of Agriculture in conjunction with BLM, and we went out and had four or five of these sessions across the state where we met with permittees and we talked about the implementation of the sage-grouse plan and the impacts and how we're going to move forward. We have some of those meetings that will be held later on this year or first of next year. So we have a lot of work to do on that front yet, but we are making progress on some of our bigger projects. One of the things

that we're behind on in Nevada with the BLM is our grazing permit renewals. In late 2015, early 2016, we actually hired a team of six technical professionals to work together as a grazing permit renewal team. That team will be working on our high priority permits. Our permit renewal team lead is Jake Vialpando. And right now, this year and next year, they're working on the first set of permit renewals that they're focused on are Arjana Mountain complex allotments. And then we have a list of other allotments that they will be working on as well. So -- go ahead. And this is my one slide on horses. Again, I've mentioned before, we have 83 herd management areas. Our appropriate management level is 12,811. Our March 1 population estimate was 34,500. With a population

increase of 20%. That could be projected out to be 41,000.

And one of our major issues is that we are facing a lack of water, and in some cases forage and it's impacting some of our HMAs pretty heavily right now.

And as a final note, of our 83 herd management areas, 72 of those are at or over AML. So with that, questions from the Board? Yes.

>> Quick question. You said you have 677 permits, how many permittees does that represent?

>> JOHN RUHS: You know, I did not bring that number.

>> Sorry. But --

>> JOHN RUHS: I will get that sent to you.

>> Do you think it's about --
I mean, you know you've got a bunch of people with multiple permits. So do you think you've got 450 permittees?

>> JOHN RUHS: You know --

>> 600?

>> JOHN RUHS: You know, I'm thinking somewhere around 450.

>> Okay.

>> JOHN RUHS: That's a guess.

But I've got it written down actually in my brief case.

>> Thanks, John.

>> JOHN RUHS: I'll get you the number.

>> All right.

>> FRED WOHL: Go ahead, Cope.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: John, I know you had several of the districts that are in the planning process or preparing to. How many of those that are revising RMPs or doing it under the new BLM rules under 2.0?

>> JOHN RUHS: Well, since the planning 2.0 hasn't been implemented yet, we don't have any of them. The two that will be forthcoming, Battle Mountain and Elko certainly, if the rule is finalized, they will fall under that and the other

planning process. They should marry up pretty well, if the rule gets passed.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: There was a recommendation from this board I think two years ago that the BLM should encourage the development of collaboratives similar to the forest collaboratives that are going on to bring all advocates and representatives to the table. As planning 2.0 comes into effect, which I believe it will, it would seem like a wonderful opportunity to develop these and have more public outreach, more public involvement and help to get agreement from different facets and factions on just exactly how the resources and horses come under that. The management techniques that are acceptable to everybody, and I would hope that that happens throughout Nevada and through

other states as 2.0 comes into effect. I think the more public engagement and involvement and collaboration we get, the better the plans will be and the more defensible they will be in litigation.

>> JOHN RUHS: I definitely concur with the importance of that collaboration.

>> FRED WOEHL: Judy.

>> JUDY: One more quick question, I believe I heard you say you have about two million AUMs in Nevada and at most times, recently, about 25% of those have been in the state of non-use. Would you kindly show us a reason for that non-use?

What percentage of them are the ranges of degenerated? What percentage of them are voluntary at the request of the permittees for reasons you don't know? Or could you kind of help us understand why those aren't getting used?

>> JOHN RUHS: So, I would say that -- I don't want to take a stab at percentage, obviously. But several reasons. One, we were coming out of the drought, so I think during the drought period, we had a lot of voluntary non-use and in some, directed non-use. So I think that's part of it. I think in some cases, we have rangelands that are degraded to the point to where they don't sustain the numbers they should. So that's part of it. In other areas, I think we have some producers that are obviously very good. And, so, they know what the range needs to hold and so they, again, take voluntary non-use on their own.

>> In a situation where there has been range degradation that you're talking about, what's been the primary cause of that?

>> JOHN RUHS: I would say that in many cases, it's going to be wild horses and burros. Other cases, it may just be straight drought.

>> FRED WOEHL: Anybody else have any questions for John?

John, thank you very much.

>> JOHN RUHS: You bet. Thank you.

>> FRED WOEHL: Alan? You've got a tough act to follow.

[Chuckles]

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: It's always tough following John. I'm Alan Shepard, I'm the state program lead here in Nevada. I've been here in this position for seven years now. And started my career in Nevada, in Southern Nevada. And, really, really have enjoyed my time here. For my talk, I'm going to cover a couple of little points, some highlights of what our program is trying to do. Some problems we're having, and

then kind of end the presentation with some information about some of our adoption partnerships that we really are keen on right now and going forward and doing positive things for our adoption program here in the state. It's just not working.

Some basic information about the horse program here in Nevada. We've got nine horse specialists spread across the state in our six districts.

When I started my career in 1990 in the Horse Program, we had 17. So we're half of what we used to be. So we've got eight or nine folks doing a lot of work for our program and trying to spread their time as much as possible across 83 herd management areas. We've got 83 that were managing for horses and burros, or combinations thereof. But we also have a large number of herd areas that

still have horses and burros on them that we have to also manage. So 83 is a big number, but the workload is even bigger when you add in the areas where we're managing or taking care of horses that aren't supposed to be in those locations or were not planning for management due to our changes from HMA to HA status. As John said, we've got over 34,000 horses here in our state right now. With projections in excess of 40,000. In fiscal year '15, we removed over 1,600 excess wild horses and burros, primarily due to water issues, forage issues, various things like that. No large herd scale management operations in the direction to get to AML. We conducted 43 population inventories. That's surveying entire herd management areas to get our accurate information as much as possible. We tried to

average about half of our HMAs every year. We monitored resources, water, forage, animals distribution, and things like that on 59 of our 83 HMA last year and we were successful in adopting 111 animals to the public, other agencies across the program. Some targets that we're working through and trying to accomplish this year, we're on track to remove roughly 830 wild horses and burros across the state. Again, tied to mostly resource conditions, escalating issues we have across the state. We should finish here soon, a roughly 42 inventories. We'll cover about 50. I think we'll probably hit 60, actually, on our monitoring goals. And our goal this year is to adopt 110 animals. We're on pace to achieve that. We're actually at about 100 right now, including some work with

other federal agencies. Okay.

Ooh, that map. That thing washed out bad. This is a map of all of it across the state in Nevada of where our HMAs are located. We've got horse and burros in every district here in the state. And if you can really see this map better, I apologize for that. It shows our neighboring border states as well. And we've got HMAs across the state that really -- that are bordering our neighbors. We've got -- we work with our Utah folks, we work with California, Oregon, California, we've got HMAs that border U.S. forest service territories. So it's not just 83 HMAs that we deal with in the state of Nevada. We're actually closer to 100 when you include the California ones that are in Nevada, but administered in California. And then our forest service

territories that we also work closely with. Okay. Some of our significant challenges in the state. The biggest definitely is the fact that we're in excess of two and a half times appropriate management level for our state. Horses are going anywhere and everywhere they want to at this point in time looking for food and water. So extended drought periods here. Though the drought map show that we're out of drought here in most of the state, we're still being heavily impacted, because we're coming out of four years of drought. So we're really closely monitoring water and forage and movement of horses in and out of our HMAs. So it's definitely something that we're tracking as much as possible here. Shortage of water is impacting many HMAs right now as we speak here.

We've got multiple operations that we've had to do that I'll talk about in a second.

Because of shortage water, where horse and burros were short on water, and we needed to do something right for them to protect their health.

Program budget limitation -- wide budget limitation and other program priorities is limiting our ability to achieve AML. We have program priorities that we have to achieve. And we need to do that, but we're doing a lot of work here just trying to bandage our program together and manage the horses. I think we're trying to -- I think we're doing a good job doing it, but we still need to look for other avenues, other tools to use to help us with the management. Wild horse population and burro populations are expanding daily

across our state. They're looking for food and water. As the populations expand, as I've talked to you about yesterday on the tour, the population, as they're building, they're building outside. They're moving, they're looking for new homes, new territories. So we're constantly monitoring and trying to figure out where these horse and burros are going. The result of that movement is increasing private property concerns, public safety on our highways. Into private property, hay fields and urban areas, they're just -- they're going about, like I said, about anywhere they want.

Okay. This is a set of drought maps. The one on the left is one year ago. And the one on the right is the one from last week. You can see that we've, for a third of the state, 40% of the state

roughly, the drought map shows we're out of drought. But, you know, I truly don't believe we are. I still think we're in the 5th year of consecutive drought here in state. It takes a lot longer than some nice rainfall in the winter that grew the grass that we got this year. And the a little bit of water that we retained to take us out of it. But we've got a long ways to go to guarantee that the range is healthy for these horse and burros and all the other resource and users. Okay.

These are four pictures of some problem areas that we have going on right now here in the state. And if we didn't have water problems and issues that we have, we wouldn't have animals stacked up like this.

We've got pot springs which is in the Ely District. On any given, we use trail cameras a

lot to monitor our horses to document use on different areas. And any time of the day, could you have 40 to had head of horses standing wait to go get a drink. We've got Woodhill Springs, which is a private -- it's on public land. It's a little tiny mud hole in checkerboard lands here in Elko County. Horses are not supposed to be there. It's a non-HMA area. But we've got horses that have moved out of HMAs on to this area. And they're impacting the spring and getting stuck in the mud where we've had to do -- we're actually working on removal as of today, right now, to remove the animals that have there roughly 50 or 60 that are there. Cherry Spring in here, also in the Elko District, down under Maverick Madison HMA. Again, it's another little spring that these horses rely

on that they're not willing to leave even though that the water is down. We've got Howes Lit Spring in Pine Nuts in Carson City. These horses are standing there and wait to go get a drink. They're drinking out of horse hoofs. So they're spending a lot of time trying to get a drink. As I've said earlier, Nevada was for the approved for any large scale management gather in fiscal year '16. Our national priority was our greater sage-grouse, sage brush focal areas and research projects. So any large management gathers toward AML, we weren't successful in getting. This year, we requested gathers in our sage-grouse focal areas which is in Owyhee Complex between, spread between the Winnemucca district and the Elko district. We also requested a large gather in

what we call the Antelope HMA Complex in the Maverick Madison HMA to relief horse pressure on the range lands there, and to where we were drastically over AML by over four and five times. And then the other one is revel HMA which is a court ordered gather that we need to do to maintain AML according to a court order. Some of the gathers in management projects that we're working on this year throughout the course of the year, and most of these gathers are, again, related to escalating conditions. Water, forage, public safety, and things like that. So we've got a number of them. They're, most of these events with less than 100 animals each. Just to take some of the pressure off, solve some of the little itty bitty problems until we can get something bigger and better in the future to get us towards

AML. John went over the sage-grouse stuff. I won't touch on that much. But it is going to impact the horse program in the sense of the SFA areas being priority. Okay.

And, again, this map washed out too. Sorry. But this is a map of all the sage brush, or great great sage-grouse area habitat across the West. And in the Northern Nevada, I've mentioned the Owyhee Complex. That's our only area of SFA sage-grouse focal area here in the state.

That is our number-one priority for management gathers here in the state of Nevada. For this year as well as next year should we be approved. Okay.

So let's talk about something better, I guess. Our adoption program is one of the smallest, really, in the nation. I've always looked at it as we're the producer, not the user, if you want to look at it that

way. It's supply versus the demand. But one of our partners that we've got here in the state is the northern Nevada Correctional Center. It's a state agency with the Department of Corrections. It's a program that I think is second to none in what we do. It's our second largest prison training program here in the nation. We've got roughly 1400 head of horses there right now in various stages from three to four-year-olds to 20-year-olds. We're holding some horses until we put long-term holding as space holders. They do a wonderful job maintaining our animals there. The inmate training program there, we train between 75 and 100 horses a year through that program. And it was extremely successful. We're averaging on most of our events about \$1800 a horse when we train these

horses. And they go out to everybody. We're training for horses that are going to go to work ranches, to trail horses, to backyard pets. They're going to be at all avenues. And we're shipping them all over the West to adopters. They're coming from great distances to pick up these horses when we hold our events. And through our partnership with them, we're about 12 years into it now. We've trained almost 1100 head of horses to that program and placed them with the public, and then state and federal agencies. Okay. This is just a couple of pictures from the prison. The upper left corner is just the interaction between the inmate trainers and the public looking at the animals they have trained. The picture on the upper right is one of our trainers. He just loves

working with burros, so he taught this little burro to jump things and pull a cart and all that. And that little burro was adopted for \$2,300. And then every catalog we do, we a lineup of all of our horses. We do a really nice line up so the adopters can see what these horses like like almost a month ahead of time. So we always do a lineup of our horses where they're welcoming them to come visit. So, okay. Through our training program there, we've developed some outlier training -- or adoption program that we're really building on heavily. We've got outside partners now with the U.S. Border Patrol in several states in training programs. But ours is doing really well. We're training horses for the U.S. Marine Corp to help our service men in their training effort. Recently, we adopted

horses, the Washoe County Sheriff Department to use crowd control and public interactions and things like that. We've sent horses to the U.S. forest service in Montana and Oregon within this last year. So we're building an outside base as much as we can to work with this. We've got an individual with a California Game and Fish Department. That's an extremely successful -- I wish I could hire him as a spokesman. He talks to more people than any other of us could ever could. And he's promoting Nevada horses in California doing his warden work in the back country of California. And it's pretty cool. So we're -- we're always looking for new partners of how to spread our trained horses around and get that benefit. So we're going to continue that into the future as much as we

can. This is a few picture of
some of those guys at work.
U.S. Border Patrol on the upper
right-hand corner of we've sent
a number of horses to
California. We've got horse
that is patrol the Mexican
border in San Diego on the
beach. So they get to go to
the ocean every day. The upper
right picture is two horses,
the gray horse and the beige
horse. Those were trained at
the prison. They're just coming
back from hauling dynamite to a
trailhead to do some trail
work. So they're being used by
the federal government to do
good work. The bottom left
corner is the Washoe County
Sheriff's troop. This is from
the Reno Rodeo. This sorrel
horse in the middle, this gray
on the outside are both
northern Nevada correctional
trained horses. And the young
officer here, the young lady

officer, she actually just recently adopted a second horse to put in so she can use a second one. So they're really helping us promote our training program. And the individual on the bottom right, that's Jerry Carnelle. He's our game warden in California, and that's just on patrol out in the middle of the California back country. So very positive program there. And it got really good partners being developed. Okay. And our last one that we're going to talk about a little bit. In the last two years, Nevada has joined further with the Mustang Heritage Foundation and promotion of the Extreme Mustang Makeover here in Nevada. And our other partner in it is the Reno Rodeo group. And we've had two extremely successful EMMs at Reno. We've adopted 45 horses there. We're

averaging well over \$1,300 a horse. We've had 1,000 people in the stand come watch these events. So I think it's going to be a really good thing. I'm hoping we can continue that partnership. Because it's bringing in a whole different clientele into our training program and looking for what we can do. So. You know, this is a picture a little bit from the EMM. The upper right corner, or left corner is our winner. She's actually a trainer from Arizona. Kingman, Arizona. She did really well in the event on the Nevada Mustang. Our fan favorite, another Nevada horse this year, and you know, these guys just do crazy things with these horses. It's just what they can do in 100 days is really phenomenal. And I think the public and the fans are really appreciative. So I think that's it. Any

questions? Cope.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: Alan, it's really good to see your adoption program. I think those successes are really gratifying. If my memory serves me correctly, I believe you said there are roughly 34,000 horses on the Nevada range. And last year, you collected 1,600.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yes, sir.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: And adopted 111 of those.

>>

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yes, sir.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: My math says that's less than one-half of 1% going out of adoptions when you've got an annual increase of 15% to 20% in population. So apparently, adoption is more than likely not the pan over panacea here. As you go ahead and revise your RMPs, how are you addressing that disparity?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Well, I

think a lot of it is just we're just going to have to take serious looks at where we're managing horses further. We have to. You know, forage condition, habitat availability, and make the calls that need to be made.

Look at the tools we can get in and incorporate into the management plans. Whether if it's increase fertility control or, you know, if it's non-reproducing herds. Looking at just how we're going to look at management options for adjusting AMLs, and looking at AMLs that we have currently based on resources available and habitat conditions. So we've got to take a good look at them. We can't just assume everything is cool.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: Well, the problem with that is if you hit zero population growth today,

you've still got two and a half
times the number of horses out
there that you need to have.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: You bet.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: And BLM
is already made it clear for
the next three years, they're
only requesting Congressional
funding to remove 3,500 annually
nationwide.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Right.

>> DR. RICHARD COPE: That's
not good.

>> FRED WOHL: So I've
wondered, how do would I
address this? Because it looks
to me like we've got a problem.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: We do. You
know, we're -- we've got a lot
of horses. We've got a lot of
concerns with the management of
our horses. But we've just got
to keep looking for the tools.
We have to be open to try
things and show success. We
can't sit back and just expect
something to be fixed for us.

John and I have had numbers of discussions on what we're going to propose to the Washington program into the future to try to help with some of the stuff.

You know, and support the program itself. We have to.

We're the biggest player in this thing. We have more horses than anybody else combined. So we have to look at the -- at all the tools and be willing to use the tools once they become available.

>> Alan, I was wondering, when you talked about the two and a half percent, and then you said on 72 HMAs, or three year or 10 times the amount of horses that are supposed to be there. If these 20% increase trends continue on in repeated year after year, you know, the numbers get pretty astronomical pretty quick. With a do you see as the end result for the horses, for the wildlife that

utilize those ranges, and
ultimately for the arrangements
if that occurs?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Well, as
these populations keep
building, the more pressure is
going to be put on the
resources that they live in and
they're reliant on. We're
going to impact wildlife
habitat, watery sources, water
quality, soil, the soil
component is going to be
impacted. Because we're going
to be removing the valuable
perennial forage and replacing
it with invasive species and
you know that aren't beneficial
to wildlife, aren't beneficial
to other grazers, you know,.
It's going to impact the horses
and burro's health in
themselves. They're not going
to get the forage that they
need, the water they need.
They're going to be bulging out
into the other areas impacting

those. So it's going to be a continuous building problem until we find a solution to the problem to slow that growth and, hopefully, protect the habitat.

>> And as those areas get over grazed and over used, how is that going to affect the rate into the future for those ranges and herd management where the horses currently are?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: You know, as the bigger populations get, they're going to record more resources which is going to take those needed resources away from the other users.

It's going to happen. It's happening now. We talked about yesterday a little bit about the -- just in the area of the tour where, you know, the allocated AUMs in that area was roughly 7,000 AUMs for livestock and horses combined in the initial settings. And

we've got 1,100 head of horses there using 13,000 AUMs. We're using almost twice the AUMs in that area. And it shows the impact. We showed you that yesterday in the invasive species in some of that area building and expanding and degrading that habitat. So it's going to continue until we find the solution to solve the problem.

>> Alan, so last year Cold Creek herd management area, where there was dozen of horses at, you know, at a body square area of one and two and were starving to death and there was an emergency gathered. Some horses were put down, but it was a manageable size herd management area. You know, hopefully, this won't happen, but say next year, you have a terrible drought. You have two inches of precip, and you have a situation that happened at

Cold Creek, except for with couple of hundred horses, now we have 10,000 horse that are in terrible body condition.

And you know, we have to enact an emergency plan on a scale of not hundreds of horses but thousands. Do you have any type of emergency program for that kind of situation? And is that situation possible? Could that happen within the next few years?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: To answer the first part, we do not have a plan to that scale by any means. I would say the program-wide, we're probably not prepared for a catastrophe at that size to that proportion of thousands of animals. You know, I think we can handle, you know, hundreds of animals or maybe less than a thousand animals, but anything bigger than that is going to be such a grandiose scale that it's

something that we need to start really thinking hard about and getting into place to have a thought process and a plan to about to forward with. Because I think it's going to happen at some point if we continue on the pace we're going with the populations building the way they do. You know, earlier in my career, I dealt with the NELIS, Nevada Wild Horse Range, NELIS, as it's commonly known. When we had 10,000 animals there and lost water, where we had hundreds of animals dying and we had to remove lots of animals in very, very poor conditions. I don't ever want to see that again. It's just wrong for the habitat and it's wrong for the animals themselves. But if we don't find the solution to these building populations, and protect the habitat, we're going to have a catastrophe

that we're not going to be able to manage. And I think everybody realizes that. We just have to come up with a plan to at least help alleviate some of the problem.

>> FRED WOEHL: Ginger.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Yes, Alan and John, thanks for yesterday and your team. I think it was a great tour. We really appreciate it. You mentioned in the area where we were there were 7,000 total AUMs? That is what you were saying?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: There's roughly that, yeah.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: How do those breakdown between the users?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: It was a little over 4,000 for livestock and a little over 3,000 for horses at the high AML and the permitted use.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Okay. And

you also said that in most of those cases, there hasn't been any livestock use for how long?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: In part of it, it was for the last eight years I think it was, or seven for sure. That there was livestock grazing at all. And that was the most heavily impacted area we were on.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Thank you.

>> FRED WOEHL: I'd like to thank you both for yesterday. That was very good to see that contrast of what invasive species will do compared to what it was. And the thing that stuck in my mind throughout the whole thing was all the water sources that we saw were private. And I appreciate those owners of water sources allowing the horses to use them. But it's still stuck in my mind all night, what if they wake up one morning and say, I'm tired of

them horses drinking my water.

I want it and they go and -- I

mean, that would be

devastating.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yes, sir.

It would. If we lose a lot of

the sources that our horses are

reliant on, to control that

elimination access to those

waters, because in most cases,

it is private property, it

would be -- it could be that an

event Ben is talking about. We

could find a project, or an

area that the horse population

is decimated, because they have

lost their principal water

source. Where we were at

yesterday, that landowner, that

water certificate holder fenced

that property and secured it,

we would lose access for

700-800 head of horses to water

or more. And there's nowhere

else for them horse to see go.

>> the little tiny springs on

the mountain will not support

that volume of horses.

>> FRED WOEHL: No. No.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: No, they
would not.

>> FRED WOEHL: No, it
wouldn't. Julie?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Just a
quick question. On your first
map, the one that is so
difficult to read on the slide.

Is that online? Because I
believe --

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: There's
variations of it. That one, I
just had made the other day
because I wanted my neighbors
on there to show that.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: So I
could go online and see what
those color-codings mean?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yes.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Enough.
Thanks.

>> FRED WOEHL: Anybody else
have any questions?

>> I just have one more quick
question. You know,

representing the interest of wildlife, obviously, sage-grouse is a huge concern, you know, to both wild horse situation and also the grazing allotments. What other wildlife species do wild horses have a big impact on? Or are there any key issues going on in Nevada right now between the wildlife species and wild horse and burros?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: I think depending on the situation, wild horses and burros can have an impact on every native species that's in the state.

Burros will compete with big horn sheep for water. Horses will compete with elk and mule deer and Antelope for water, forage and it will go all the way down on to the little guys, all the way down to losing seed sources for rodents and birds and soil crusts and things like that.

So it's not just the big animals that are going to be impacted if these populations keep building and the threats occur. It's going to be all species. It's regardless.

>> FRED WOEHL: You know, we hear all the time, member of the boards receive e-mails and letters about all the cattle and the stock, how they're taken over and all this and HMA we saw yesterday was what? A million acres? Antelope?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yeah, a little over million.

>> FRED WOEHL: And they hadn't had cattle or livestock or sheep or anything on it for eight or nine years, and the problem is just as bad or worse. I mean, no change.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Yeah, it just keeps building. It keeps changing, you know? It increases by the year as the population increases the

impacts to the lands there.

Correct.

>> Alan, could you give us kind of a longer range perspective in history of the use of this area? Because I know that a lot of lands were degraded by massive numbers of cattle and sheep in the past.

So can you kind of give us a longer picture of it other than just the seven or eight years?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: You know, I don't have a, you know, not being from the district all the time, you know, associated with it all, but I mean, it's had historic grazing for sure in all those areas. The area that we were principally in, for the bulk of the tour yesterday was an area that has not been grazed for eight years. But it does have a history of cattle and some level of sheep grazing across that whole complex. It's 11 different grazing

allotment. We were primarily in just two of those involved in the Antelope Valley HMA. But it's livestock industry is, you know, very historic here in the state. So it's been there. It's, you know, -- it was an important area, I believe. But to give a long history of it would be tough, I think. Other than the fact that, you know, it did have grazing, you know, since the area was -- has been settled and then forward to now but at different levels and degrees.

>> I want to follow-up on that. How long has BLM managing that habitat to protect it from being degraded?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: [Chuckles]

We've been trying since 1971.

>> Thank you.

>> Chairperson Woehl, I just wanted to point out at our last stop on the tour yesterday, as a reminder going back to the

area we had no livestock of grazing, and then where we ended up, we had cattle use, we had wild horse use, and we had elk use. And to remember that in a more balanced environment and in a more managed situation, the range can look a whole lot different than where we're completely out-of-balance.

>> FRED WOEHLE: That's a good point. Because it was different as day and night, the overall whole thing was -- I mean, that was -- and that contrast that you all was very eye-opening to the Board. And on behalf of the board, we really appreciate that. That was one of the best field trips that I've been on. And I've been on several. And that was really, really good.

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: Thank you, I appreciate it.

>> FRED WOEHLE: Okay. Anyone

else have any questions? We need to move on. We're getting kind of up -- kind of behind and Kathie is giving me the skunk eye. [Laughter]

>> Just really quick, Alan.

With a kind of cost and time constraints would it take to rehabilitate that range where it has been decimated? Can we get it back to the right condition that you like it to be in that type of situation?

>> ALAN SHEPHERD: If we can get it to rehab or restore, I think naturally, it's going to take decades upon decades upon decades without anybody being there. You know, anymore significant damage. You know, a lot of those vegetative communities that are there aren't easily reestablished by man in the sense of re-seeding and things like that. A lot, I would believe those would have to -- you would have to do

your best to let them naturally re-vegetate, and I think some of them are probably to the point now that it would be almost impossible.

>> Thank you.

>> FRED WOEHL: All right.

Dean, did you have something to say?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Maybe I just

I'll add a little bit to the answer to the question that Steven asked. And the question was how much would it cost to rehabilitate? Tremendously intensive practices would need to be employed. Naturally, it's decades or hundreds of years before it would come back, and probably not, as Alan said. But if we employ mechanical procedures and I'm driving on some cost estimates to rehabilitate fire areas that have been burned over and damaged, aerial seeding cost are generally \$20 an acre,

depending on the seed mixture.
Drilling, depending on the seed mixture. And also, in these areas you saw yesterday probably require a \$35 an acre treatment to knock down the cheap grass to prepare it to drill seed which is probably \$100-\$125 an acre, depending on the to your rain and the circumstances. But very, very, very expensive. So it's almost irretrievable, which really makes the point where we still have good habitat, we have to pull out the stops and take care of it. Because that's really what's important at the end, the very well-being of the horses are threatened if we don't care of the habitat they depend on.

>> Chairperson Woehl, I guess, again, I want to add as well. Remember we're talking about range sites in the 5 to 8 precip zones. So mechanical

treatments and rehabilitation
that way probably aren't going
to do a lot of good anyway. So
it's going to have to be either
a targeted grazing kind of
scenario where we've had, we've
seen some success in some of
our areas where we've gone out
with those kinds of experiments
and done some targeted grazing
on cheap grass. But beyond
that, I don't know there's any
other solution but time.

>> FRED WOHL: Okay. Thank
you both very much. And,
again, I really appreciate you.
On behalf of the board for the
time and effort it took to put
that field trip together.

John, you've got some of the
best people working with these
horses that I've seen. And I
appreciate it.

>> JOHN RUHS: Thank you.

>> FRED WOHL: All right.
Moving it along, we're going to
have Mr. Bill Wolf from the

Nevada Northeast Great Basin Resource. And he's the Chair and he's got his co-Chair with him. And I am so sorry. I'm not very good with names, but I know your first name is Julie.

>> [Away from mic].

>> FRED WOHL: Okay, thank you. Thank you. And this is the first time that the Board has engaged with the RAC at all. We think this is a good way forward, because they're on the ground. They represent local interests, and their input and their comments to this board means an awful, awful lot. Bill was with us yesterday, and he showed us where all the bodies are buried. So we have lots of information now. So, Bill, I'll hand it over to you. And just feel free to tell us what's on your heart and RAC's mind.

>> BILL WOLF: Thank you very

much, Chairman Woehl. Again,
my name is Bill Wolf, Chairman
of the Northeast Great Basin
Resource Advisory Council.
Council with me is Julie
Hughes, the Vice Chair. And I
would again like to express my
deep appreciation for myself
and for the RAC on the
invitation for us to meet with
the board and offer our
opinions and little
information. Our presentation
is basically going to be a
little bit about the RACs. One
example of how we're working
with the bureau. And then some
of our concerns moving forward.
I'm hoping that people could
read and see our map little
better than Alan's. Sorry,
Alan. But what this map shows
and is something that Julie
will be talking about in our
presentation, it shows the HMAs
in Nevada. The red on the map
is the priority habitat

management area for
sage-grouse. The kind of a
orange or brown, I guess, is
going to be general habitat
management area. And then the
green is other habitat
management areas. And, so,
like I said, it overlays the
HMAs over sage-grouse habitat.
So with that, I'm going to do
everybody a favor and turn this
over to Julie. Thank you very
much. Julie.

>> JULIE HUGHES: I don't know
how big of a favor it's going
to be because I've got to read.
[Chuckles] But we have several
opinions, but to save you all
from all of them, we just put
together a presentation with a
bunch of suggestions. And some
of our opinions and how we
really encourage you folks to
carry on with the Wild Horse
and Burro Management. Our RAC
is one of three RACs in the
state. Mojave Southern Great

Basin and Sierra front
Northwestern great basin are the
other two. Each RAC consists,
just like you guys, of
individuals representing
different interests on uses for
public land from wildlife to
mining, to wild horse, to
political and more. Bill
represents public at large and
I remember dispersed
recreation. our RAC has a
history of reconvening four
times a year. Although others
might meet less regularly. One
of those meetings is a
gathering of all three Nevada
RACs known as a Tri-RAC. And
generally occurs in the winter
when field trips can be
problematic. As with the
individual RAC meetings, the
Tri-RAC members may decide to
work on specific issues to
provide the BLM advice on those
issues. At the most recent
Tri-RAC, three statewide

subgroups were formed. One, two address concerns regarding the wild horse management program. One, to look at some issues surrounding livestock term permit renewals. And another to provide advice on issues pertaining to the Nevada Northeastern California greater sage-grouse approved resource management plan amendment. Policy, as you know, is set statutorily through Congressional acts such as the Federal Land Management Policy Act. Or the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act as well as by the executive branch of the federal government. The best we can do to provide the Agency input on how it meets the demands of policy and procedure. We do this through consensus building within the RAC to come to a course of action we would recommend to the Agency. For

example, the recommendation from our RAC to implement the water canyon wild horse growth suppression pilot program, a wild horse advocate on our RAC would bring a proposal to the council and convince the council that this was a good alternative technique to help manage population growth in wild horse herds. The RAC forwarded the proposal to the secretary of the interior, and we were very pleased to see her endorse the proposal. With your indulgence, we're going to give a little bit more information on the water canyon wild horse growth suppression pilot program. Originally, the program presented to use the RAC using PZP, but following the approval of the pilot program, the volunteer project coordinator, Jeannie Nations, working with agency wild horse specialist decided to use

GonaCon. They felt this drug would be a better choice, because the recommended application rate is only approximately two years. PZP would require the annual gathering of the animals to treat them. The goal of the 10 year pilot program is to stabilize and maintain a wild horse population of 25 to 30 animals within the project area. The test area is about 60 miles north of Ely, and on the east side of U.S. 93. The management number is based on range conditions, water availability, and acreage comparisons as well as seasonal movement of the band during the summer and dryer winter months. Between October of 2015 and December of 2015, BLM gathered 53 wild horses using a feed and water trap. The BLM released 22 horses back into the project area after holding them for

three days. Mares were selected for release -- 30 days, sorry. The mares were selected for release, were treated with fertility control vaccine GonaCon equine, which has an expected efficacy of about two years. On November 12 of 2015, each mare was given a shot of GonaCon in the hip area. On December 12 of 2015, a second shot was administered as a booster. There was no noticeable swelling or abscess in the injection area. The side effect had been noted as a concern in other studies. Ms. Nations reported that the bait and trap method was done in a very humane way and that the horses were treated well during the 30 days of holding. The released horses were freeze branded with the FC brand to differentiate them from other horses that might wander into the area. Whether they join

the band or they with wander to another. DNA samples were taken from both mares and the Stallions so the project may determine the genetics of the herd and possibly determine some of the history of this band. The BLM monitors the treated mares and applies a booster every 20 to 24 months to maintain the vaccine's effectiveness. The BLM will remove a small number of horses when the population exceeds 40 animals. Horses selected for removal, approximately 5 to 10 primarily young horses born within the project area will be offered to the public through a trap site adoption. All 14 yearling and yearlings available from the original trap site were successfully adopted. The volunteer coordinator has stated that it was no easy task, but it was accomplished with the help of

wonderful people through some staff at Palomino Valley that could have been, although, some staff at Palomino Valley could have been a little more proactive in getting the horses adopted. All 15 treated mares have continued to maintain good health. Using the Henneke I-9, horse body conditioning scoring system, the mares going into the program in October 2015 scored at about 4. The GonaCon did not cause any birth defects or abortions in the treated mares. Some were in the early stages of pregnancy at the time of the treatment. Going into fall of 2016, most of the mares seem to be in condition level 6 or better. This is only the first phase of the study. The next foaling season will tell just how well GonaCon is working. If it is working as it should, there should be no foals born next season to

treated mares. They can be mainly, there can be many variables to consider over the course of the next foaling season, but we would consider even in 80% success rate to be successful. The volunteer coordinator is very encouraged by the early finding of the study. She and the RAC see this as a positive way forward and a solution for managing over population in wild horse herds. And we hope that might be implemented in other areas of the state. Battle Mountain District is implementing a similar project with a ban in the Rocky Hills area. They're using the PZP and darting the animals as they gather at water instead of bait and trapping and holding the animals. However, we feel these measures are a small step to resolving a problem that requires much greater action.

These current measures will do nothing towards bringing wild horse populations to appropriate AML. Current population levels are demonstratively damaging both the resource and the health of and longevity of the horses themselves. the Northeast Great Basin Resource RAC members wants to see healthy wild horse herds. Our mandate, as is the secretary's is for managing healthy ecosystems. This is Congressionally mandated under the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act. The RAC is routinely shown projects put forward by the Agency and cooperators whose purpose is to improve habitat. Additionally, we are briefed on agency post fire emergency stabilization and rehabilitation work. As part of ESR action, cattle use is restricted until adequate forage demands are met.

However, we rarely see the same actions taken with wild horses.

The recent drought through Nevada has had huge impact on the resources as well as the animals that depend on it.

Nevada BLM was a leader in managing drought impacts with livestock permittees. Most permittees were asked to take voluntary non-use or adjusted season or length of use in greater sage-grouse priority habitat areas. It is the understanding of our RAC that little to no actions have been taken in regards to wild horses and their management under the same circumstances. In response to these conditions, the Nevada Department of Wildlife implemented special hunts. Like The California desert big horn U hunts, mule deer doe hunts, as well as prong horn Antelope doe hunts. And I'll receive much criticism

for implementing these hunts, but they were a crucial management tool to keep wildlife populations in check with the current habitat capabilities. Wild horses are the only large animals on the range that is not actively managed to keep populations to appropriate levels. This RAC has written to the Secretary previously encouraging the Agency take actions to reach AML. The purpose of this is to ensure healthy herds as well as success of greater sage-grouse action management plans. As all the public land cooperators move progressively towards actions that will not only restore habitats, specifically to improve greater sage-grouse populations, we also believe these actions are showing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the public land managers are paying

attention and are seriously --
serious about implementing
changes to prevent listing.

The Northeast Great Basin
Resource RAC fully supports the
current determination of
listing a sage-grouse as not
warranted. However, the USFWS
has been mandated to revisit
the current sage-grouse listing
in less than four years. We
feel strongly the BLM national
office needs to take immediate
action in herd management areas
that are over population AML.
To ensure that all managed to
benefit the range or -- or kept
at permitted stocking rates.
23% of the priority habitat
management area for sage-grouse
is found in HMAs. Currently,
only wild horse populations are
allowed to exceed the
recognized or appropriate
stocking levels. This
imbalance poses a real danger
to undo all the work being done

to meet the requirements upon between the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service -- Forest and Fish and Wildlife. This state to prevent the listing of the sage-grouse and a TNE species. With that in mind. We want to extend our support to you to go a step further and utilize all fertility control methods in the toolbox on horses in the field. We encourage any type of PZP application, and applaud your persistence on your own going field studies. We also encourage you to utilize and prioritize approved fertility controlled methods including PZP and GonaCon in HMA areas where appropriate management levels are at, under, or close to target levels, or where applications have been applied in recent years. We feel those areas should be a priority for darting as application should not be allowed to lapse. We

more specifically ask you to prioritize areas such as the Rocky Hills HMA and the Battle Mountain district which has received several applications of PZP to date. We, again, encourage rigorous collection of scientific data of the results. We encourage the fall gather plans for the Elko area. These horses are at risk and numbers need to come down to AML before we have more dead horses. The longer horses are left on the range unmanaged and over AML, the fewer horses the range can support in the future due to the degradation of the range and damage to the habitat that supports them and other wildlife. We want to see the overall AML remain where it is and a habitat that can support those numbers. The Northeast Great Basin RAC recognizes that one of the more difficult management problems

facing the BLM in Nevada is that of the wild horses and burros. All the herd management objectives must continue for the long-term in order to improve management of horses and burros, improve range land health, and foster cooperative alliances among agencies, interest groups, and land users. We want to encourage the BLM to look at spending money on range restoration. There is a very small percentage of the money within the horse program that goes back to the range. During one of our more recent field tours, we visited the area of receding with forage acacias, [Laughter] As well as native seeds and protecting spring sources by fencing animals out of the spring source and piping water to troughs in order to improve the water flow and water production for all

animals on the range. We encourage BLM to take steps in this direction. If one never made improvement or repair to the house they lived in, it would not stay standing forever. With this analogy in mind, please encourage the BLM to reinvest in the resource as this is the house for all users of the public land. Since holding fitters are adding maximum and short- and long-term holding is expensive, we should encourage the BLM to continue to work with the Mustang Heritage Foundation and other groups to enhance adoptions. The Mustang Heritage Foundation opened adoptions back east by providing general horses through the Extreme Mustang Events. Please continue this partnership with the Mustang Heritage Foundation to encourage the growth of the tip

trainer program, enhancement of adoptions, east of the Mississippi. We encourage the Board to seek out other partnerships to develop programs like the one with the Nevada Department of Corrections which has a successful history of gentling, training, and helping with wild horse adoptions. The Board might consider encouraging similar programs in other areas by seeking out partnerships through the country. It might find the Nevada Department of Corrections willing to lend its expertise in developing these partnerships. The RAC has not given up on the idea that there might yet be suitable designs for sanctuaries. And we would encourage the Nevada Tri-RAC wild horse subgroup to explore what has worked, what hasn't, and other suggestions to the Agency. There are numerous

examples of eco-sanctuaries
that may offer a way forward.

We encourage BLM to look at the
education of the public
regarding the horse program.

And public lands overall is a
multi use. MHF has hosted
speakers at some of their
events to discuss the
sustainability of the land and
what it means to have a healthy
ecosystem. We suggest BLM look
at other partnerships to share
their messages such as the
Safari Club and teacher
workshops. For example,
Safari Club has a summer
program in place which teaches
youth about conservation.

Would it be possible to partner
with them to have their
workshop include a few hours of
Horse Management 101? Also
with the teacher education
workshops, such as the one
hosted by the Ely District, it
is possible to incorporate a

little information regarding horse management within those programs. We ask the Board to explore all these options at a national level while we work at the local level. I believe I can safely say, we can safely say that the Northeast Great Basin RAC members indeed, all three Nevada RACs are willing to work more closely with the board to reach solutions.

Thank you.

>> FRED WOEHLE: Thank you very much for that. Is there anybody on the Board have any comments? Julie.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I have a quick question. Is your supporting forage kochia or the Acacia family of plants? Which?

>> BILL WOLF: My apologies, that was a spellcheck that is correctly spelled wrong word.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: So you are supporting --

>> BILL WOLF: It should be
forage kochia.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Forage
kochia which is a very
different plant than Acacias.

>> BILL WOLF: It certainly is.
And, again, my apologies for
that quickly spelled wrong
word.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Thank
you.

>> FRED WOHL: Well, whatever
that was, we ain't got it in
Arkansas. I don't know what it
was anyway. [Laughter] So.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: It's a
big difference.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Thank you
so for that report. I mean,
I'm -- I just absolutely loved
so many of your suggestions.
And what I would suggest that
we all have a copy of it? And
it is in the book? Okay.
Wonderful. Thank you. So nice
to meet you and spend time with
you too, Bill. Thank you very

much.

>> FRED WOEHL: Anybody else?

>> BILL WOLF: Before I go though, Mr. Chairman, if you don't mind, in the discussions we've had, over the last two days have been absolutely wonderful and I've been really impressed with the individuals on the Board and really pleased with the direction of some of your conversations. One of the issues that's kind of been coming up just within the last several hours that I've been having discussions with other folks is the one regarding freeze branding. And I understand there's going to be -- there is some contention on freeze branding the animals and there's some conflict with Nevada branding laws and those kind of things. And, so, for these programs to move forward, I would hope that the Board

would become more well-versed in what those conflicts might be with the state branding inspector and work with the state office on helping push forward resolution on these difficulties. Because as part of these fertility programs go forward, one of the things they're talking about is branding the animals with specific numbers so that you can treat it and it's much easier to track animals. And if so, there's going to be a conflict between the Agency and the state regarding the branding itself, then that is going to be a key thing to overcome as we move forward with these projects.

>> FRED WOEHL: Bill, I promise you that we will look into it and I will give you an answer or get back to you. And like you said, you just heard about it within the last couple of

hours. This is the first time we've heard bit. But I promise you that we will look into it, because that's major. I mean, we have to have some way to I.D. these horses.

>> BILL WOLF: Thank you, sir.

>> FRED WOHL: Anybody else?

All right. Bill, Julie, thank you very much. Your hospitality is just great. I spent all day with that man in a cab, a truck yesterday. So I'm a little bit hard-of-hearing today, but I'm sure it will come back.

[Laughter]

>> JULIE HUGHES: Well, I apologize for making it worse.

[Laughter]

>> FRED WOHL: Thank you all very much. Thank you. All right. Kathie, we're getting back on time.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: We have 20 minutes left. We'll get done as much as we can.

>> FRED WOEHL: All right. All right.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: [Away from mic]

>> FRED WOEHL: Okay. Dean. Yeah, we absolutely have to break at 3. I promise you.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So do you want to deal with your minutes as on the agenda or have me go forth?

>> FRED WOEHL: Oh, I forgot. Well, let's go ahead and -- yeah, let's go ahead and do the minutes.

>> Move approvals from the minutes from the meeting in April?

>> FRED WOEHL: And in doing that, Dean, there's a follow-up on some of the minutes on recommendation 8 and recommendation 10. If you would, those were minutes that you said that you would look into and get back with us on? And I know I'm hitting you

between the eyes with these. I didn't brief you on this, but one was to present to the Board three to four draft alternatives to achieve HML -- AML and all HMAs, and you set you would duet back to that? And No. 10 was to develop strategy to train and use more qualified volunteers to support wild horse burro activities off range and on range. And your answer to that was you had limited staffing and you were looking into that and would report back to us. And, so, --

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So, let's take the volunteer one. You made a similar recommendation that I'm going to go over if we had enough time.

>> FRED WOEHL: Okay.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: And in part, the answer is the same.

>> FRED WOEHL: Okay.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: My answer is a little bit more expansive for

the interest. And also in regards to the No. 8 asking for an evaluation of various alternatives, I believe it involved how much money is it going to cost to conduct some different management scenarios.

We had worked on those and have completed some. And they're not available at -- today, but we are going to be getting those to the Board.

Kristin, do you want to comment further on that?

>> KRISTIN BAIL: We have looked at different combinations, you know, gather fertility control and one of the things that has taken some time is there's a lot of number crunching. I'm learning a lot about this. And truly, economic analysis, because we were looking well into the future, because, you know, long-term health and stability of the horses and of the

program was involved. So, that's what we wanted to bring to you is not just a one year snapshot, but a look into the future and, again, because when animals can live up to 30 years, we make a long-term commitment to them if and when they're gathered and not adopted. So we've done that homework and want to bring that in, that information to you.

>> FRED WOEHL: Well, good.

Thank you. It's, you know, as a board, we feel like that when we make these recommendations, there's no sense of making any other future recommendations until we resolve these in such a way. And that's been the emphasis that we have worked on and we appreciate BLM answering. Anybody else have anything on the minutes?

>> I moved an approval a while ago. We haven't had a second.

>> FRED WOEHL: Okay.

>> I second.

>> FRED WOEHL: We have an approval and a --

>> Second.

>> FRED WOEHL: Yeah, all those in favor say aye. Or I or something. All right. It's done.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So, Fred, Kathie has informed me that we are going to break at 3 o'clock. So there is a 15-minute break before public comment. With that exception, I cannot get through the recommendations in 15 minutes. We have some options here. Maybe you read what has been submitted to you, and we deal with it tomorrow afternoon with further discussion? Or I can go through what we get through in 15 minutes? Or I could do some opening remarks and comments deferring the recommendations until tomorrow. But I'm at your pleasure.

Whatever you prefer. I guarantee you, if I read these things like I have in the past, it's going to get to about No. 3 of 8 and our 15 minutes has expired.

>> FRED WOHL: Well, I'll tell you what. Let's allow the Board an opportunity to look at them tonight, and then you -- we can, that way we can grill you pretty heavily tomorrow.

[Laughter]

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: I expect it. Feel free and ask some things. So that's good.

>> Mr. Chair, may I suggest that if we jump to Dean's wild horse and burro program update, we are exactly on time?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So, let's --

>> Can I have a handout?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So for my program update, no. I have some verbal remarks here prepared and they're not extensive. They're going to be

rather brief. If that's the pleasure of the board, I'll jump right into that.

>> FRED WOHL: Cope, it's a very good recommendation. It gets us back on line and it keeps Ms. Kathie off my back. And that's always a positive thing to be. So Dean, would you please give us an update from the wild Wild and Wild Horse and Burro Program on the national level.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So my goal here and what I intend to do within the next 15 minutes is kind of outline the major challenges and issues this program faces. None of them are new to you, but just kind of a reminder and a status update on where we're at on some of those. And then I'm going to outline the program priorities, and what we can and what we cannot do with our

existing resources. There will be many more details presented in the off range and on range report tomorrow. And then finally, I'd like to make some general remarks in conclusion. So the challenges and issues facing the program, it's pretty doggone obvious from what Nevada presented and presentations in the past that we have populations that continue to grow beyond appropriate management level. In 2015 on a national level, we reported 58,000 animals and last April, we hadn't compiled the 2016 March statistics, but those have been done. And that number is 67,000 nationally. And we need to keep in mind that this spring, since March, there's probably been another 10,000 foals born bringing the on range population to over 75,000. So, that's three times appropriate management level of

27,000. Our next challenge and issue is -- and this is a quote from the National Academy of Sciences 2013 report. There is no highly effective affordable easily administered fertility control method available to BLM. So our third issue and challenge is adoptions, even though they have increased. It looks like we're going to exceed last year's accomplishments in 2016. But they still have around 26,000 encouraging their up a bit, but 26,000. I should have said 2,600.

>> I was going to say.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Oh, my goodness. [Laughter] I wish they were 26,000. So that's a limiting factor that we're only able to place 2,600 in good homes through adoption or sales. Our holding cost still are hovering around 60% to 65%. That of our total budget last

year, you remember, that there were 49 million, 64% of our budget. And that still holds true. We are still constrained to 3500 removals per year, about the same number that leave the system via adoptions, sales to good homes and then a natural mortality of those that are on pastures and then holding. We cannot remove significantly more than that, because we will immediately become financially insolvent because of the cost to maintain unadopted animals. I think I reported last time, if we bring in 1,000 more than leave the system in any one year, if we bring 1,000, that's about \$1.8 million that we take on in an additional cost of holding on unadopted animals. The program does not have the money to proceed, and we have absolutely no authority to exceed our budget. So those are the

challenges and the issues.

Program priorities, what we can do and are doing within our existing financial resources, we're continuing research to develop new management tools and more effective contraceptive methods. You recall we've invested \$11 million to be expended over the next five years on 21 proposed research projects. Some of them underway, some of them proposed to be underway.

That's the first program priority. Our second priority is to reduce holding cost by a inquiring a more less expensive pasture and moving animals our corrals that are old and not desired for adoption, move them out of pastures at about \$5 a day into -- move them out of corrals and move them into pastures \$5 a day versus \$2 a day and in an attempt to save money, creating money to divert

to on range activities and operations to manage horses. You recommended in the past, we have a program set up that we have turned into our procurement staff to launch a pilot that involves an adoption incentive, a financial stipend that's outlined. Holle is going to get into more of the details, but it's aimed at adopting some of these animals that are just beyond the age of people desiring them, but not really too old too train. So an adoption incentive program is still a priority through the program. That stems from a recommendation that you made in the past. So, also, we're striving to increase the number of horses and burros available to adopters in the east. That's through the storefront programs that we've been talking about. If we're going to increase adoptions back

there, we've got to make the horses more available to the people. We intend and plan to increase the use of Internet adoptions. Holle is going to talk about a revamp of the software that serves in adoptions that will be an improvement, and also some more expansive use of that new software. This is a new and different thing that I don't think we briefed you on before. With the limited amount of removals at 3500, we are at risk and on the cusp of not having enough suitable and desirable animals to fuel our adoption program. So where we can, we are targeting and aiming of the limited amount of removals to select a removal of animals that are five years and younger and that are a much more desirable to adopt than many of the older animals in our system. We have to fuel

the adoption program if we expect to expand it. I think Ben spoke last time about having saddle ready animals more available. So finally, as far as the program priority, we need to embrace and encourage new and different management approaches, including contributions and assistance from community groups. We've talked about that before, and it remains a priority. So in general, and in summary here, my final comments are there is great urgency for resolution and determination of a path forward. You've seen and heard about the issues in Nevada, and they are continuing to escalate. I'm encouraged, because there's an increasing awareness and conversation in Congress. We've been called to the hill frequently. It seems like weekly to deliver

briefings to various
Congressional representatives.
You're aware that there was a
Congressional hearing. And
I've heard there may be another
hearing scheduled. So that
conversation and that awareness
is occurring. And I believe
Congress is going to be the
key to the future here. I'm
somewhat cautiously optimistic
that we will have greater
funding in the future. I'm
hopeful for that. And that
greater funding will allow
implementation of new tools
that we hope to gain out of
research. These are extremely
difficult times. And it is
imperative that everyone come
to the table and begin to work
together for solutions.

Success and a sense of --
success and a sustainable Wild
Horse and Burro Program is
going to be composed of
multiple management approaches.

Not any one thing is going to solve this. It's going to have to involve many things, many approaches, and the use of many tools in regards to both on range and off range. So if we remain polarized and can't come to an agreement, then the courts are going to decide where we go, and others are going to make these decisions for all of us. And they may not be very satisfactory. So that's the conclusion of my comments. And I'm glad to answer questions. I know there's going to be a lot of discussion when we go through some of these recommendations. And just finally, I guess, we're aware of all your recommendation. We take them to heart. And as our funding allows, we're pursuing the priorities that you have recommended. They are our priorities as well. And we're

going to move as fast as we can. But it's not an easy trail to negotiate. There's a lot of bumps in it, and there's a lot of two tracks, and when it rains, things slip and slide, and you know, we are making progress, but it just seems so slow.

>> FRED WOEHL: I think we are.

I -- a lot of those initiatives that you talked about have been things that the Board has talked with you about, have recommended to you, and, you know, that -- a unified board is always better than one that's split. And we've been unified to try to help BLM manage this program on down to a field level. And on behalf of the board, I appreciate BLM's work that they have done, because I know it's not easy. Because it's not easy for us a lot of times. And I appreciate it very much.

Anybody have any questions or comments for Dean?

>> I just just wanted to say thank you for taking our recommendations seriously.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Thank you, Ben.

>> I have a question.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: The Board is kind of our conscience, I think. And you're good reminders and good encouragement to work in the priority areas.

>> As you've stated that decisions may be made for you. If they are, how would they be funded?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Well, we have no authority to go yon the boundaries of our funding. What I meant about decisions being made, when we can't agree on a path forward, sometimes court decisions are made that aren't very suitable or acceptable to anyone. That's

one thing I meant.

>> I know, but I mean, say for example, you know, you plan on removing so many horses in your budget. And if there's so many horses and the court decision says you have to remove more than that, then who's going to pay for that?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: The BLM is going to have to figure out how to rise to that challenge. And it could be the Agency might try to make more resources available beyond those that are allocated for horse and burro management. But those are going to be very difficult decisions and we'll have to cross that privilege when we get to it. Kristin, would you like to add anything to that?

>> KRISTIN BAIL: I'll put it in two contexts. I mean, we want to continue to have dialogue with all y'all. We're going to continue to have

dialogue with Congress. And we also are, we have an election coming up if anyone didn't notice. But what that means is that there's a transition. We are in a process of doing a lot of gathering information and we're going to have new people coming in that we're going to be able to tell our story to. We're going to be able to talk about the Wild Horse and Burro Program and our challenges, and our opportunities. Things that we want to do together for the benefit of the animals in the range. So that's an opportunity to talk about, hey, these are some things that are needed, these are some things we'd like to do. So we're going to take that at one point as new individuals come into the administration and to leadership to talk about what the program needs, what we want for the program. And I think

that's a real opportunity.

Transitions are never easy.

But I think that the more people are hearing our story and are with us, that gives me even more hope for what you're talking about, June, which would be maybe your willingness to invest in moving forward in some areas.

>> FRED WOEHL: Ginger.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: And we do have to break at 3 o'clock.

It is now 3 o'clock. So. If it's something quickly then that's lovely.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: I don't know if there's a short answer to this, but did BLM request less money from Congress this time around? And if so, why?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Kristin, you want to try that question?

>> KRISTIN BAIL: One of the strange things about making the budget is that you do that several years in advance.

We're actually talking about 2018 even though we aren't even close to 2018 yet and we'll also have a new administration. There are often really, really difficult decisions to make when we do budget requests. We are given from the administration and from our department the amount that we are allowed to request. And that amount is informed by kind of an overall cap for the entire agency and for the entire department. So I think y'all have heard about sage-grouse and, you know, some of the west wide work that we are trying to do and to accomplish. That's another very important effort. And those are some of the trade-offs. And sometimes you have to make room in one program by squeezing another one. I don't -- another thing is that, the President's budget

is an articulation and a starting point for conversation with Congress as to what the needs and programs are and we continually -- that's why Congress has hearings on the budget. We are continually able to provide updates and information. And also, you know, make sure that the current information, since these budgets are often done well in advance of the actual year what you're talking about, so we want to make sure everything is up-to-date. And as you say, we now have a much larger number to deal with than we were talking about in that budget. So never an easy thing. We never like having to ask for less or not -- or ask for less than what we think we are. But bigger pictures in mind, a lot of tough decisions, and at the end of the day, we have fiscal responsibility and

expectation to see meet.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Okay. So

Dean is with us for another day

, as well as Kristin and

everything, and, so, we put

more time in the morning to

talk about those things. I

would like to invite you to

take a short break. We will

very clearly try to -- I'm just

going to say 3:20. Because I

don't want to be silly about

it. These are very small

restrooms. It does appear that

we have about 26 people signed

up. If that doesn't change in

the next 10 minutes, you may

have up to 4 minutes. Whoa! To

do your public comments. So

come on back. [Break] Horses

and burro over the time period.

The state of Utah recommends

the advisory board urge the BLM

to manage wild horse and burros

at the minimum AML in all 23

herd amount areas in the state

of Utah. The BLM should

fulfill its statutory response by the time by removing at a minimum 3,884 excess horses in Utah and return the horse to the burro population to the HMAs appropriate AML. The state urges the Board to recommend the BLM to remove at a minimum additional 500 horses throughout the state to ensure we have a thriving ecological balance in our landscape on our state's range land. The state of Utah request the Advisory Board to acknowledge the BLM to identify the cost and ask those necessary funds in their next annual budget to address and throughout the West without the increase in rate of removal of horse and burro in Utah. The wild horse and burro population in the state and throughout the West will continue to expand thus harming our livestock produces, wildlife, our healthy land, and resources. The state

of Utah will submit a letter to
you and that letter will
reflect and support the
comments that are made today.

Thank you very much.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: And I thank
each of you very much. And our
next three commenters include
Dr. Gerald Huff, Betsy
McFarland, and Tom Bernes.

When you're perfectly settled
and you're ready to start,
that's when it starts.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's a bit
of a challenge to solve all of
your problems in three and a
half minutes. But I'm going to
give it my best shot. I'm a
Veterinarian equine
practitioner from Nevada,
raised in Utah, the heart of
Mustang country. Let's cut to
the heart of the chase. We
need to find the funding to
remove excess horses in as much
as possible. When we're
removing those horses, we need

to get all the Stallions. And the best fertility control is removal of semen donors and we should make every attempt to get the horse population to a zero population growth.

Castrating Stallions is the optimum form. We can return to the bands the following year and guild those young Stallions, and over a period of few years, we can get the reproductive rates down to where we have manageable levels in these herds. Numbers that are acceptable to both horse enthusiast and cattlemen. Users of the range, as Dr.

Sprattlingly eloquently quoted, if you're concerned about genetic pooling, once those numbers are reached, we can reduce Stallions into select situations where those populations can be maintained, and monitored, and managed. We have nibbled around the edge of

the population quagmire for the entire course of the so-called wild horse and burro issue.

These are feral animals. They have to be managed like any other livestock. I'm the ultimate horse lover. I've spent my entire career caring for them and caring about them.

We do no service by allowing them to starve to death, die of thirst, if then gather and corral. I might make one suggestion, there's a bit of additional technology on the horizon. We have viral vector GNRH vaccine which is shown to be successful in neutering both male and female laboratory cats. It shows every evidence of being successful in horses as well. It would be a very good task to do a trial on that particular piece of technology. And some already gathered adolescent horses. Its efficacy is particularly in

prepubescent animals and monitored over the next year or two and then make the whole fertility situation much more manageable in our hands. I appreciate your kind attention. If there's any way that I can be of any value to you in your attempts to rectify this situation, I'm at your service.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good afternoon. My name is Betsy McFarland, and I'm the Director of Eastern Landscape Coalition. We were established 15 years ago to facilitate landscape restoration such as BLM forage service private to state land. Our mission is to restore the dynamic and diverse resilient landscape of the arid and semi-arid land through education, research, advocacy, partnership, and the implementation of on the ground projects. We envision a future where the ecosystem of the arid

thrives. If this will be achieved and maintained with natural occurring services such as fire in combination with other management services. To this end, we're extremely concerned about the negative impact the current excessive numbers of wild numbers wild horses are having in sage-grouse habitat. With the majority of herds, exceeding the appropriate management level one to two to three times, we're reaching a threshold. If we lose these native landscapes, it would have a direct impact on the sage-grouse. Nevada and much of the West is affected, and as a result of the number of wild number of horses is unacceptable. With the current horse population, it is not unusual to see large number of horses outside the management area throughout Nevada.

Therefore, it is no longer the herd management area being impacted. They're being driven away. And as you guys heard this morning, not some of them haven't used certain areas in years. NLC is many of our affiliates that are reluctant to work with restoration projects. These restoration project range from removing stage step communities to wildfire restoration. We also spend considerable amount of time obnoxiously used control and vegetative and species. We advise to work with Congress and allow the BLM to exercise sale authority in order to move excess forces off the range land and get the population down below AML. The current birth control program is a tool, but in order for it to work properly, the herd management area need to be at or below AML. With the HMA high

population, this is desk end to fail. If this happens, not only the horses lose out, but so do the wildlife and other users and ecosystem as a whole. Thank you for this opportunity to comment. And my comments have been submitted at the back of the table.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Tom Bernes. I'm a cattle producer, horse producer, and a sportsman. I also serve as a first Vice President for the Cattlemen. and I believe the Board has our letter on the position of sterilization. This has become an insurmountable problem. We need to get the horse numbers down to appropriate level for many reasons. Range degradation is one thing why I think it's important. The health of horse and wildlife depend on healthy range land.

Range will flourish under
proper grazing systems. The
high number of mustangs roaming
our range land, we've seen
abusive staging by horses as
they're on the the same range
year long, year after year.

The certain soil types, this
will cause trampling damage.

Bunch of communities are not
tolerant to abuse of grazing.

And in these cases, the
ecological slide will
transition allowing the
invasion of early annual grasses
low sage brush. And this will
bear the spaces where
underground grasses are sparse.

At this stage, grazing could
not be maintained to provide
health. These ranges provide
nothing for horse life or
wildlife. This is the path of
management wildlife horses are
headed down. I think we can
all agree that sick
undernourished animals are

something we don't want to have. It is selfish and cruel to allow these animals to suffer and starve. The explosion of the wild horse population has occurred because of sentiment. And the horses have become the victim of those who want to help them.

Domestic livestock are managed or Magdalene for health.

Wildlife is managed for heard and range health. Where is horse management? Through resolution through this problem, it may be painful in the short-term, but something must be done to ensure long-term success sustainability for all range land for all who depend upon them. Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much. Next we're going to have Megan Dixon, Wild burro. You can correct me when I get up here.

>> [Away from mic]

>> KATHIE LIBBY: And Julie
Hughes.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hi, there,
everyone. My name is Megan
Dixon. I also go by the name
Wild Mustang Megan. Horses
saved my life. So now I
dedicate my life to help save
them. You see, I have a very
misunderstood disability that
is invisible. It is
characterized by inability to
understand how to interact
socially. This makes me almost
impossible to make friends and
keep friends. It also made me
a target for my bullying. The
name of this disability is
autism spectrum disorder known
as Asperger syndrome. I'm
often asked how it feels to
have Asperger syndrome? and it
feels like I am in a huge water
and everyone is playing in the
water and I'm underneath the
water struggling with all my
might to struggle to reach the

top. People refuse to or choose to see me. Some prefer to laugh and make jokes, or even push me back down as I'm about to reach the top. No matter what I try, I can't reach the top. I just want to reach the top. I try with all my might. However, I fail. I since fell into a deep depression and thought about ending my life. When the pressure and bullying escalated, I started to self-harm. Being thrown into an unknown world with strangers unwilling to understand me was terrifying. The mental and physical abuse became too much and led to post-traumatic stress disorder. So at the age of 15, the doctors removed me from the school system. My dad had -- the reason why I'm here today is because my dad had gotten me a rescue horse that was saved from going to Mexico

to get slaughtered. He was
very -- the horse had been
through very tremendous amount
of abuse. And he took me to
meet this horse. And as soon
as I looked into the eyes of
this horse, I could see and
feel the healing hands of God.
And this horse led me on this
fight. And it is now my
mission to do all I can to
educate others on the plot of
the wild horses and to stop the
slaughter of all of our equine.
I really would suggest to -- I
really suggest my friend's
solution that is caught and
reserved through this design.
I believe right now, this is
the answer. We need to
promote, reserve the sign and
we need to get this out there.
The PZP, the sterilization,
they're not the answer. And I
don't believe it is in the
horse's best interest. Thank
you and God bless. Thank you.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is

Wilde Brupt, better known as

Wild Burro. And I live in

Nevada. You guys have a hard

job ahead of you. All I have

is my opinion, I guess. I

don't have a lot of statistics

and stuff. But since you put

the wild horse on the welfare

role, he's lost his freedom

anyway. And you canny Kuwait

it to some indigenou people we

have in this country. I was in

Carson in 1961 when wild horse

Annie was there. I don't

think this is anything close to

what she was shooting for, but

people are saying they want to

save the horse. In my opinion,

they are not. They're the

worst thing that could have

happened to that wild horse.

And I call them wild horses

because that's what they are.

They're not mustangs. Anybody

who thinks they are, they're

crazy. They're wild horses.

Those horses are run and used and predecessors to a lot of work horses. And now they're interbred and some of them have some pretty tough genetics. If those folks that want to save those horses would put up and come up with the money, and buy a ranch and put them horses on, it seems like all they want to do is get into the government's pockets. I don't understand that. They have got all those people that say they want to save the horse, but they don't have any solutions to it. All you want to do is starve them to death and put them out in some middle of Nevada where there's nothing to eat anywhere and watch them starve to death and call them mustangs. It's just , in my opinion, idiotic. and the main reason I came today, you need to do something with the horses. I had a dream the other night. And I had

this thundering herd running by me. And I woke up. And they were running into this lush alpha field and it looked like heaven, animal heaven. And I realized that my need in life is to save the wild and noble ground squirrel. And I've come today to ask if you can share a little bit of your money with me for that ground squirrel.

Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: So I think I misspoke and Julie Hughes did not sign up to speak.

>> [Away from mic]

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Yes, you would like to? Okay.

>> JULIE HUGHES: I expected to be back here. But I'm the Vice President for Northeast Great Basin Resource. In my opinion, I'm a horse woman, I'm a sports woman, and an avid outdoorsman. And I spend a lot of time outside. First of all, I need to reiterate. I'm going to

reiterate what probably has been said a dozen times. We need to deal with what's best for the resources for all at use for this land. Whether it would be wildlife, grazing, whatever it is out there. If the land only has habitat to support 10 animals, and it's not just two or three that's going to starve, it's all of them. Whether it be horses, elk, or cattle, they're all going to starve. They may not starve to death, but they're going to starve. We need to remove the protection of the horses and we need to start conversations. Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much. The next three commenters are Jake Tidbits, Maggie Ore.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good evening, I'm Jake from the Natural Resource Manager from Eureka County, Nevada. There's

a letter that's been provided
to you through the e-mail and
both physically here today.
You're copied on there as one
of the C C's on the letter.
That is from the Eureka County
Board of Commissioners. So I
would like to step through some
of the main points that are of
concern to Eureka County. What
you saw yesterday on your tour
is the rule more than the
exception in Nevada. You could
block out the next 30 days and
I can take you somewhere else
that looks that bad or worse.
There truly are emergency
conditions in this state
because of the over population
of wild horses. We hear a lot
of acknowledgement of these
issues at these meetings by
BLM. But there's never been a
formal acknowledgement of that.
We believe there needs to be,
through the Board, a
recommendation of formal

acknowledgement of emergency condition and emergency declaration to allow to move forward to gather the appropriate resources to tackle this issue head on. The letter that we provided to you also goes through and specifically highlights herd management areas within affecting areas of Eureka County. Many of the herds in Eureka County expanded, well, out of their HMAs. They're on private lands. We have informed BLM multiple times about this issue. One of the complex we highlight in that letter is the diamond complex. We heard earlier about the conversations about positive working groups and bringing the stakeholders to the table. I do want to point out that AML's and Diamond Complex were set through a course management type group of process. There were wild horse advocacy groups

involved in the Department of
Wildlife And stakeholders, and
anybody wanted -- who wanted a
seat at the table. The
ranchers in that situation,
every one of them took a
reduction in grazing numbers
for their new allocation. And
that came out in the early
2000s. That also set the AMLs
for the Diamond Complex. The
only entity that came to the
table that has not been able to
uphold their part of the
coordinated resource management
plan to develop that process
has been the BLM. Every
rancher has a reduced number
from what they have allocated,
and that is one of the working
group policies. So that works
within everybody, works to the
table and holds up their end of
the bargain. We stepped
through all the HMAs in Eureka
County. I would ask you to
please take a look at that.

And look at the individual HMA issue. Last thing I want to talk about here is the BLM running a foul of state laws. Particularly related to water law is the state law and the Brown law. But I want to focus on the water law. There's water hauling taking place as you sit here. There's water sources. They're being controlled by BLM where there is no legal water right held for those uses. And we ask you to look at that. Please look at the letter and the specific recommendations there. Thank you very much.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hello. My name is Maggie Ore. Nevada conservation district. And this came out of the strategy of dust bowl. They're state government governed by elected residents founded on the philosophy that conservation decision should be made at the

local level. Federal government owns 85% of CDC and service a vital role to pursue proper management of range land resources. The Nevada conservation commission and district supplements these following statements. It is essential that all established solutions to excess number must be allowed and followed. Long-term holding is not a solution but a misuse of public funds. The 1971 Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act should be enforced as well as enacted. The Lincoln County District sees unacceptable habitat of wild horse and burro and try to file solutions in our areas. In May 2015, we request our BLM RAC which states, remove wild horse and drop herd management area for those areas that do not provide sufficient habitat resources as listed in table 13. Table 13

of the RMP herd management area. The 2016 census found 1952 horses almost double the number in less than five years. Not obtaining five in contractual agreement with the American people committed through the process and ERENP. Many cities in Nevada are working hard on the sage-grouse habitat and melding over \$80,000 from three state agencies. The wildlife group from an important corridor area. The results of these projects are in jeopardy by overuse. I have looked at previous minutes of your meetings. Mr. Harvey stated that letters are real value and positive solutions. Dr. McDonald wanted to courage BLM to keep their eye on the goal with minimal interference. I wish those statements could be true and applied. But it's hard to be positive in the face

of such difficult situations.

With only one real solution.

get to AML by all means allowed

from the 1971 Act, including

sales without limitation. Here

in Nevada, you are the

epicenter of the wild horse and

burro problem. I cannot ignore

what can be observed by anybody

who looks at Nevada range lands

where wild horses and burros

are present. Conservation

district stand ready today to

assist by overcoming our range

land while our horse numbers

are above AML. We cannot come

to a solution until we deal

with the problem. Please tell

the secretary in Congress

what you saw on the tour today

And I did submit my

comments in the back. Thank

you.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good

afternoon. Sheila from the

Pine Nuts Volunteer Group in

the Pine Nuts HMA with the PZP.

I'd like to recommend you reverse prior recommendation. Prior to what the other Veterinarian said, it's ludicrous to spray out in the field. We also would like to urge the BLM to implement large scale PZP programs utilizing remote darting like we do. Bait and water trapping. And helicopter as a last resort and only when keeping the horse's social structure intact at all times. This can be done with humane standards and eliminating per head fee for each horse brought in and instead modify to a daily helicopter rate which might save you money also. BLM has told us that PZP can't be implemented on a large scale. We think that is not true. In fact, the only thing that stops BLM from implementing the large PZP program is the BLM. So if BLM doesn't understand how to

implement this, ask the advocates. We're happy to help you to make it a success on the range. We also hope that the advisory board can steer the BLM in the right direction. But please start by withdrawing the gelding of the horses and recommended a large scale PZP program that can work with the advocacy group. Along those lines, they also might think about compensating ranchers who want to voluntarily retire their grazing permit and give the AML to horses. One last note. Dean alluded to the mention of additional land being added to HMAs. I would like him and the advisory council to please recommend Pine Nuts HMA land, and things are changed out there. The current major land owners are not opposed to that. Neither are the tribal allotment land holders. And that's a way to

increase AML which I know is a no-no today, but in an area which you sustain horses healthily, in a healthy fashion. It will allow BLM to have more horses on the land, safe money in the long-term, and it's a win-win for everybody. Thank you.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you very much. Our next three speakers are Devon Blister, Kim Earhart, and Marie Milimum.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you, Committee members. For the record, my name is Devon. And I sit on the Federal Advisory Council for the farm view Federation. Where to start? Nevada Farm Bureau would like to say thank you for coming to Elko to hold this meeting. Given the degree to which Nevada range lands are severely impacted by the overpopulation of wild horses, we think it's warranted that

you come to see us. Thank you.

Nevada Farmland Bureau policy developed by our members and adopted through the annual policy process has called for proper management. We believe it's essential that the number of wild horses and burros be kept at or below AML and statewide level. Our policy also encouraged the actions that we have taken in conjunction with the Nevada Social County to seek legal action for the failure of the federal agency to follow the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act. We support the proposal for the state of Nevada to enter legal action.

It is extremely frustrating that the Agencies have no problem in requiring others to follow the regulations but aren't held accountable for their actions. Other multiple users of federal lens will

carry out the extra burden for
the conservation of
sage-grouse. We're told this
will apply to the wild horse
and burro. But, frankly, given
the track record of federal
agencies following the
requirement of the wild horse
and burro, we remain skeptical.
We don't know what positive
solutions can be brought
forward. You've heard the
facts. You've been on the
ground and seeing what's really
happening. The BLM is giving
you the science. You know
where the true position is.
You've also heard a lot of
emotional rhetoric about all of
the -- all of the wonders that
those that sit in a city
cubical can fantasize about
what the wonderful wild horse
is. A feral animal that
admittedly, the ranching
community knows managing really
well for well over 100 years,

to the point that when the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act in 1971, there were 17,000 of them on the range in the state of Nevada. And it didn't cost the BLM or the public a penny. How many millions of dollars have been spent since then? How many horses have been gathered and against the law relocated and transferred and now in this current situation, Stafford to deaf or thirsting to death? It's kind of hard for somebody simple like me to get my head around it. Nevada supports a healthy thriving population, but we need sound resource management. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to you. My name is Kim Earhart from Pennsylvania. I am deeply concerned about the uncertain future of the wild horses and burros of America.

I am a 30 year public servant
as a letter carrier. Formally
known as the Pony Express. As
I continue to learn the
challenges and concerns
relating to wild horse and
burro management from the HMAs
and other open range lands, two
concerns have emerged. Number
one, that the humane BLM policy
always be given precedence in
implementation over immediate
quick fixes such as the
helicopter gathers and wild
mare experiments.

Overpopulation numbers in
Nevada is not a new problem.
Nor did it happen suddenly as
if overnight. But as a result
of allowing a problem to slowly
unbalance out of control, we
allowed this. The horses are
paying the price. But we have
allowed this. And together, we
must fix it. We are strong
together and we can do this.
From wise and thought out

suggestions have been offered here today. This is a multifaceted problem. And it must have been multifaceted and enforced solution. Number two, that the BLM budget maximum funds to a heavy PZP, GonaCon campaign. Make use of Nevada's limited water resources or HMAs in general. If starters are constantly demanding water resources, the horses will be naturally forced without water from the drought. Then vaccinate, vaccinate, vaccinate. Zero birth equals a bench full of long-term sustainable AMLs and healthier range. As number of decreases as the HMA range improves, the wild horse burro may not be singled out as the only range villain and other factors will be exposed. And I also wanted to, if I have time, since I have been here in Elko, I've driven over 600 miles all the

way down to 28, all the way
down to Eureka and all the way
up to 93 to Wells. I've
encountered from the road small
vans, small vans of 7 to 8
adults. I observed one with a
definitely Stallion. And they
looked amazing. And I know
what a horse should look like.
And the range condition, I saw
no animals on the range. And
it looked the same as we saw
yesterday.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Thank you
for the opportunity to speak
today. I'm a little nervous,
so my voice gets really [Away
from mic] And I talk fast
because I have so much that I'd
like to go through. But just
on my initial statement, I
strongly opposed, am opposed to
field spay or fertilization.
Appropriate follow-up care
would not be possible on the
range or any holding facility.
I vehemently oppose. And these

are necessary if PZP is used as recommended by the 2013 NSA report adds an intermediary data that is comprised, this proposed fertility control will be continued to be challenged in court and will become a waste of taxpayers dollars in defense of it. Those can be utilized towards PZP instead of some sort of, say, sterilization process.

Management process are facilitating high population growth. That's high population growth rate that could be increased by removal by compensatory growth from decreased forage. As a result, number of animals through holding facilities is probably increased by the management of the horses. That's in the 2013 NAS report. Please accept moving forward in my recommendation everyone referenced to the BLM or DOI's

and undue challenges. And wild horse and burro finding page 10 and 11, the wild horse and burro lacks the specificity to guide managers and establish an appropriate management level. The handbook does not clarify the vague definitions relating to implementing for strategies for free roaming-roaming horse range equines. How they're monitored and established are not transparent to stakeholders, supplemented scientific information, and amendable to adoption with new information and environmental and social change. So that's the report that came out in 2013. I'm not trying to be accuse to, and maybe there's been progress in that. I recommend BLM adopt any stand off of wild horse or based off of for minimum of five year basis moving forward and justification of any horses or

burro remove. And they should utilize the body condition scoring for horses as a priority for any of the removals. Initially, NAS and on one HMA, and five year monitoring program. Data that were used in actual use range condition and trends.

Utilization, precipitation, range sites, observation. I'm not going to continue to read that, but basically, based on the scientific information, based upon these scientific determination, I recommend for the health of our entire ecological system and the BLM's responsibility to the citizens of the United States, any grazing permit object issuance of removals should be modified accordingly.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Debbie, you're going to tell me we have one more person remaining. If we'll go on this order. Craig

Downer. Tammy Pearson. And

Ramona Morrison. One more?

That's it. Okay.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: I was on

the tour yesterday. My name is

Craig Downer and I appreciate

that on being able to give a

few comments and allowing me to

be there. I would like to say

that I think one thing is being

overlooked, and that's the

water tables and how they

influence the ecosystem. And

in many areas throughout the

West, where the water tables

are greatly drawn down by

ranchers and golf courses and

mines, and I've flown quite a

few of these herd areas on

behalf of the wild horses, as

wild horse advocate. And I

know how dry they look. And

you can see a rancher with big

pools and lush pastures and

alpha field in town. And you

can set up these little Islands

for habitat and that would be

for all the wildlife species.

So anyway, my testimony, I just want to get that in about water tables. That should not be overlooked. And especially if the horses are set up in that way and not allowed to set up for failure. Sincere greeting to all the advisory board and those present. I'm still a faithful believer in fulfilling the noble and true Wild Horse and Burg Act. I implore each of you to seriously weigh the following. We live in a world that is rampantly overrun by our own species. And our machines and chemicals that alter the ecosystem. Present population rates have been increased. They're increasingly globalized and in homogenized society. And new technology aimed at exploiting what remain to the natural world to the maximum. All in order to increase our

population in the comfort and convenience of our modern lifestyle. But left out of the equation has been the welfare for the rest of the life that we surely depend on. The great majority of human activities today come at the expense of well functioning, healthy and balanced ecosystem. These activities are increasingly compounded with our increase in numbers and cast of a poll over the earth. We must question the many livestock and eating habits that's inflicting the community about who's health and vitality we depend on the future of our well-being. We should learn to eat lower on the food chain such as picking pine nuts which has been done to provide nutritious staples to the Native Americans for thousands of years. We must recognize that it has taken millions of years to life to

become established on earth.

First on the sea and then upon
the land, this is established,
but it's made by the
interrelationships of many
different creatures.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: I want to
apologize to Ken Jones. But
you will be our final provider
of final comments.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good
afternoon. I appreciate the
opportunity to testify today.
I'm Tammy Pearson from Utah,
and I'm the owner of Pearson
Ranch and BLM grazing owner.
And also the owner of the Rocky
Mountain Elk foundation and
Daughters of the pioneers. And
I've served for 30 years as a
conservation district manager.
And I've lived in the Southwest
Utah my entire life. I've been
active in agriculture in
farming, hunting, and private
state, and BLM permit holder.
I've had an agriculture

education from Utah State University. And the School of Hard Knocks. I've seen the population of explosion of the feral horses. When the horses exceeded AML over 450% on average on our area, my family's property, our culture, and our livelihood is at risk.

As an avid hunter and sportsman, I see water habitats described due to feral horses in our area. The wildlife, the mule, deer, and sage-grouse and elk are all suffering because of this damage caused by overpopulation of horses. As a district manager of the Twin M Conservation District, I'm concerned about this damage that our natural resources in this fragile range is expansive that it's beyond repair. Our district board is aware and looking for avenues to improve these situations.

As a citizen of the United

States, the selfish interest groups far out weigh. If these groups don't understand the management or the impact of the overgrazing can do. As a county commissioner, I am worn to protect the health and safety and welfare of my county and citizens who live there. In a small rural county that is 87% that is federally managed land, we're affected by the overgrazing.. This will continue to be an economic hardship, and this will continue to be paid that grazing fees on pastures they're unable to utilize. My recommendation to this advisory board is to use common sense for solutions. As a county commissioner, I pledge we are going to do everything we can on a Congressional level to make and bring them out on the ground education. Bring some actual awareness. I'm not sure

that the word, that we're trying to make, the statements we're making is getting to Congress. And, so, we are having a Congressional horse tour a year from now in August. And it's going to be on the ground in Nevada and Utah and I'm hoping to pledge that Utah does not end up like Nevada in of their horse population. Thank you.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Good afternoon. Ramona Morrison. Protecting the Harvest. It's been a long day and we've heard a lot of comments, many of which I would like to reiterate. Jake Tibit and several others said. But I do want to touch on couple of things that we have not touched on, the protect the heart vest has been for a long time documenting some of the travesties we've talked about today and I just received a

call yesterday from Eureka County and J.J. talked about it. A number of young horses dead in the spring as a result of choking down for lack of water. And this is going to continue. We have a problem in the West. With regard to this, one animal in that is the only unmanaged animal out there. Every other large animals, even small animals from foxes on up to elk are managed by the Fishing Game, or local Game department or in the case of livestock, strictly managed by the regulating agencies in the point in my own family's case where they show up at gunpoint on allegation of overgrazing. so I think that what we have seen in the West and particularly in Nevada, we are about a quarter of our permitted livestock number roughly, because it's hard to get accurate numbers out of the

federal agency in terms of permitted range stocks in Nevada in them. However, it is the ranchers in Nevada who have the ownership of the vested water rights that are watering these horses. So horses that are dying and it's being watered based upon the fact that ranchers are maintaining those waters for their own livestock as well as the horses. In the case of Austin Valley when our ranch was shutdown in 1991, all the water was shutdown. So this is the problem for the horses in terms of water, the water is coming from the ranchers. One of the things we hear quite often, whether you're in Congress or in Nevada legislative hearing or a public setting is that the western federal lands could not possibly be well-managed if it weren't for the federal agencies here managing these

lands. And what we have today is the gross mismanagement of this one animal. In addition to that, we have everything from forest where you drive from New Mexico to Montana to Sierra of California through Utah, wherever you go, dead dying forest, or if you drive up I-80 from Reno to Nevada, you see grass, as I can see. And to follow their own laws and manage these courses according to law written by Congress and remove the horse to see where you want to take them as set by Congress in 1971. Thank you. And we'll go from there.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: My name is Ken Jones. And I came up here at 11 hoping to catch you folks while you were fresh. I appreciate the opportunity to give you a synopsis of my interaction and association with the Wild and Free-Roaming

Horse and Burros Act. After purchasing and in the Robinson sheep and cattle operation in 1973, my wife and I moved with our young children to Elko County. And we established our own livestock operation. Our share of the Sorenson Jones Partnership permitted a BLM permit for 1472 on the allotment. Our newly designated use and we sold our interest in the sheep and we began to process converting our permit from sheep to cattle. In 1992, the conversion was completed. The BLM concluded our allotment was better from sheep to cattle, our permit was reduced from 1432 to 432 active AUM. From that reduction from 1437 to 4543 represented a cut of 66%. And loss of 895 AUMs. Those AUMs were fully purchased through substantial effort. They were not a gift from the U.S. government as some people

seem to think. One of the reasons for such a draconian cut in the livestock, those two management horse areas were included within the boundaries of our mountain allotment. And there had to be sufficient forage for the hit of horses for those two levels. In 1998, the BLM issued their final multiple use of allotments. Which management and cattle horses were outlined. This past year, 2015 and 2016, you need to move rapidly increasing horse number and we reduced the cattle usage to AUMs to less than 3,000. At the same time, according to the BLM census, they're currently approximately 1800 to 2000 horses present on these two HMAs that include our allotment. Those are above 700% determined by the preliminary to be appropriate for those areas. Under the final multiple use addition,

the BLM has mandated to maintain the horses within a range of plus or minus 15% of AML. Some areas of allotment have become unusable for cattle because of excessive horse use. Some locations experience from 70% to 80% forage utilization by horses by the time our cattle got in the fall. It must be remembered that our livestock are only on the range six months. Mid-November to mid-May each year. Am I out of time? Okay.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Sorry.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can I just make one closing statement?

>> KATHIE LIBBY: If it's brief.

>> AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

Simply following the growth of the wild horse herd will not solve this problem. Horse numbers have got to be reduced to the appropriate management level, and then managed to

maintain their numbers within those levels as spelled out in the Wild and Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you so much, Mr. Jones. Fred, before I turn the microphone over back to you, board members, please stay seated. If you're in part of this -- part of this room, please stand up for a moment. Just for a moment. Oh, I know you want to. Come on. So you've done an amazing job this afternoon. You really have. And I would like you to give yourselves a standing ovation. [Applause] And we hope to see you back at 8 o'clock. [Meeting in recess until Friday.]

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BLM NTC

WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADVISORY BOARD

SEPTEMBER 9, 2016

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The September 9th 2016 wild horse and burro advisory board meeting will begin at 8:00 a.m. PDT.

>> Good morning, welcome back.

I'm Kathie Libby, we had a great session yesterday afternoon particularly with the comment period where folks expressed a lot of very heartfelt views and opinions. And today we have a day loaded with information.

It's always good to ground our opinions in information so we're looking forward to some of the information that will be provided today.

I would like to first of all say welcome back to those of you who are watching us on webcam.

Before I turn it over to Fred and the board, I just want to briefly review the agenda. The forest service update which we'll given with but we won't begin exactly at 8:05.

We will have updates from the forest service, an off range update with Holle Hooks. A mustang foundation update and a budget update with Michael Reiland and we'll take a break.

We'll have an on-range update and research update.

So you're going to get updated all day.

And just before lunch, Jason will be sharing with us the stakeholder partnership toolkit which you'll find very interesting.

We will take lunch hopefully at noon and the one slight change on the agenda is the recognition ceremony scheduled is going to be held immediately after lunch so 1 o'clock that will occur for about fifteen minutes.

We'll then have a call in by Gordon and that is related to land health fundamentals. Something we heard a lot about yesterday.

Again, a break and before the board goes into its working groups Dean will pick up on what we didn't get to yesterday which is BLM's response to the board's recommendations at their last meeting.

So we'll do the BLM responses to the recommendations and then the advisory board will propagate their current new recommendations.

Then, sadly, we will adjourn?

Okay?

Fred.

>> Fred Woehl: Thank you.

We appreciate it much.

We appreciate everyone coming back today and appreciate again the opportunity to be here.

As a result of all the public comments that we got yesterday and the comments that we got in the mail, I've asked my co-chair, Dr. Sue McDonald to address some of these first thing this morning and she's going to -- I'm going to turn it over to her at this point.

>> Sue: Thanks, Fred.

I want to thank everybody for their comments yesterday.

They're very helpful in this particular round of comment was quite outstanding in terms of the positive suggestions and for the most part the misinformation that is always difficult to handle when we know people are very upset about things and it's based on misinformation that we understand gets out there and with the internet gets spread.

I also wanted to mention the large number of public comments that came to us in

writing either through the BLM address or directly.

We read them all.

We often get together and talk about them a couple of us at a time and so we take them all to heart and those also I thought, maybe others have comments.

But my impression was they're much more positive in tone in terms of suggestions and many more personal rather than form letter type suggestions.

So I would also like to give a shout-out to Debbie Collins and others who worked on the website.

I just checked into that yesterday and if you Google BLM myths and facts you can go right to a page that will help with getting the truth on many of the issues that continue to be spread, inaccuracies about the program.

About our role, about what the BLM can and can't do.

So -- I'll leave it at that unless anyone has anything to add about the feedback we've had.

>> I'd like to add something in that set.

There's a volunteer organization that came to the subcommittees yesterday.

And said, you know, we're here to help.

We want to help and provided lots of good information packets.

Thank ya'll for coming and offering up your assistance for the BLM.

>> Julie: I would like to call everyone's attention to the editorial in the Elko paper yesterday with respect to this program.

Actually the headline is it says the horse program at epic low.

But when you read the just of the editorial it's actually kind of positive and wishes us good luck in our problem solving efforts and I'd like to -- if it's at all appropriate, introduce this editorial as one of our public comments because it certainly reflect s this community.

>> I don't see any problem with that.

>> It was very gratifying for me since the first time I've been on this board I heard almost consensus where people now realize we got a problem and we need to do something about it.

There's still considerable disagreement about what we do and how we do it.

But at least for the first time I see everybody recognizing that there's trouble.

And it's no longer just brewing on the horizon, it's here.

I'm really happy to see that people are coming to that conclusion as we sit down and actually have proper progressive discussion about how to handle the problem and quit arguing about whether the problem exists.

>> Do you have any comments.

>> Ginger: Well I would echo what Cope has said.

I think almost every comment that I heard had value, I think.

And I also, again, the tour was very enlightening.

And there are real serious issues with the numbers of horses in Nevada.

But I think we have some pretty exciting new volunteer efforts that could get people out in the field in a very proactive way to help and I know that's what I'm all about trying to help.

So thanks to everybody.

>> Fred Woehl: June?

>> June: I'd also like to tag onto what Cope said.

I -- I felt so often in the past people have said that there's a problem but they haven't -- that haven't done thing and we should do things but offered no solutions.

I noticed yesterday that many of the problems with that were addressed also had

some substantive way to address those problems so we really appreciate that.

>> Fred Woehl: Thank you.

One thing that was interesting to me and I'm going to bring up this morning is the fact that there were several folks asked about an emergency declaration and that.

My background for 36 years I worked with the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the loan area and we had lots of emergencies and that helps with low interest loans and things of this but I'm not well acquainted with what that means to the bureau of ad management.

I'm going to ask Dean this morning if he has any idea or if held get back with the board within thirty days on what that would entail.

What it would do and if it's something that we, as a board, need to look into.

I know it has to come from a ground level but like the local rec.

But if we as the board it would help and is something realistic the board would entertain making that a recommendation or a letter or something like that.

>> So I'm not familiar with the details of declaring an emergency for reasons of wild horse overpopulations.

I'm more familiar with the process for drought and moneys that come to local counties and how that process works so we'll commit to looking into that and I don't know the answers today but it's been suggested three times in the audience so there may be something out there.

>> Fred Woehl: If you would research that and get back to us I would appreciate it. I would be more included to do and I am just thinking out loud now and the board members feel free to jump in.

We have a unique situation here where we not only have too many horses but rain degradation due to drought and things of this nature and not necessarily do this emergency as strictly a wild horse emergency.

But maybe let the wild horse situation tag team on the drought and the range and things of that nature.

Does that make sense.

>> Dean: It does, it's about the health of the land and the future and all that. And sustainability.

All the things that were talked about yesterday.

>> Fred Woehl: All right, thank you, board, for your thoughts this morning.

Kathie, I'm sorry for taking your time this morning but these things like this need to be said and expressed and Sue told me this morning when I talked to her, she said it is our board meeting so if you have any problems take it up with her I'm sorry, I got wrapped up in that.

Hope, we're glad you're here from the Department of Agriculture and I know you got some good stuff to share so please, feel free to just jump in.

>> Hope Woodward: I'd like to thank for you for being able to give the update.

I'll give an overview and give updates on forest level activities and discuss greater and bistate sage-grouse conservation as related to forest service and what came out of the decision in September last year.

So first of all just an overview of the territories.

This isn't the best map here.

This is also on our website right now.

You can go to the forest service website and see where the territories are.

Overall there are 34 active wild horse and burro territories.

Two million plus acres and 53 total with 19 inactive.

Overall current population is about 6,000 wild horses and 900 wild burros.

As far as Nevada goes there's approximately 2300 wild horse and burros in the territories and that is about two and a half times over AML and about 20 active territories and 9 inactive territories and approximately 1.5 million acres.

About 307,000 are inactive.

As far as staffing goes for the wild horse and burro program and service we have one new manager, myself that took over some of the duties of Barry I. and based in the Washington office as of May and the interregional coordinator Tom's former position.

There hasn't been an outreach in Utah but that's expected and expect someone to hire in early 2017 and as far as region three which is the southwest region in Arizona and New Mexico currently wild horse and burro specialist is being outreached for and will go on for about a week or more.

And that position will be based in the Albuquerque office and the duties will be part wild horse and burro.

And just a brief overview on the wild horse and burro and the lands and more information as far as the funding base when I discuss cooperation with BLM.

Right now we're main focus is completing an NEPA on management territory plans to improve the management level and to review management plans that perhaps didn't go there NEPA recently and work on implementing the management actions. The management actions that we're looking at basically is working on gathers and helicopters, adoptions or sales.

And then adopting forest horses off of territory and out of BLM long-term holding and then certainly really key about anything -- about being able to do anything is the need to partner with local communities.

As well as external outside of local area and the state government and other nonprofits and supporters.

In terms of the cooperation with BLM since 2013 we kind of shifted past in terms of forest service branching off and not having engaging as actively with the BLM in terms of the BLM doing adoptions and doing gathers and doing management for forest service.

And so our focus then has been on, main funding is about 1.1 million dollars this fiscal FY 16 is down from 1.3.

And that goes towards long-term holding costs.

For BLM or we keep forest service horses managed in long-term corrals that's about 266 in the end of FY 15 and in long-term pastures are about 771.

As of nine, the end of September 2015 and actually that number's a little bit -- has dropped or includes 49 horses that were taken out of long-term holding by the national forest at the end of this August, July that have been adopted, sold to gentling contracts.

So we want to remove these horses from long-term holding it's a very large number but anything that we can do.

The activities have been very helpful.

In terms of working with BLM, one of the goals that we have is to increase the use of the population control methods.

The BLM and forest service have been signing an overview with The Humane Society of the United States with the respect and use of immuno contraceptives as a key component with the national forest and with BLM.

Another key point is increasing coordination in joint management areas. And so we've been working on BLM forest service on cooperative management on joint management areas that we're hoping will get signed in early fiscal year 17.

And that we see as a path that will help to increase coordination and use of service first agreements with BLM forest service although there are limitations working together right now due to appropriations that limits the BLM in terms of sale authority.

And that we are not putting any further funds into long-term holding of wild horse and burro but there are pathways that we can move ahead for and I feel optimistic about that and feel the forest when they see in BLM field offices when they see that the MOU is signed I think that will open up a little more flexibility.

And see the ability to move ahead and work together.

Moving onto updates in first activities.

I'm going to be discussing some of the areas where we do have management plans.

We're working on where there are gathers going on and just an update here.

It's 8:24.

What time do I have?

What time do I end and when's the next person on, please?

>> (Speaker far from mic).

>> Hope Woodward: So, I'm going to leave this on here I could send you back to the next one.

The next slides are on sage-grouse conservation so they'll mainly discuss that so I'm going to be just talking now and these are also, my notes are available, I can send them digitally to the board.

So starting up in the north, there's a big summit, wild horse and burro territory in Oregon in region six.

About 27,000 acres.

This wild horse territory is about two times of AML and the herd is genetically viable. They're working with a central Oregon government council to get the plan revision and setting AML and expecting the need for process will be completed at the end of fiscal year 2018.

They're starting to administer PZP and there also have been partnering with the wild horse coalition.

And prior to 2013 that coalition helped with adoptions.

>> Another territory is Murderers Creek and this is kind of a joint management area. They're working on revising the management plan and they're expected to scope in early 2017.

And the population is about two times over AML.

The forest itself is needing to develop technical capacity and to build public support but they are slowly moving ahead.

And we have actually teams we funded to help with the AML.

Issues there certainly are with court order to reduce wild horse and burro related to the endangered salmon and also the court order with a permit.

They have removed wild horses off of private land and they're working about developing technical capacity and they've been turning those horses back onto the territory.

So that's an area that has issues I think within signing of the BLM forest service MOU on JMA I think that will encourage them to work a little faster on that.

Devil's garden in the Modoc National Forest.

Modoc had the greatest number of excess horses in any territory.

2016 population were six times over AML and the management plan has been completed.

Wild horse gather by helicopters planned for removal off of private and tribal lands

sometime in mid-September.

Contract hasn't yet been awarded.

We don't have a firm date on that.

I expect they'll be treated with PZP.

This as I noted is a working as service first agreement with the BLM and the BLM is going to be conducting adoptions out of Litchfield corrals and also the CRL for the helicopter gather.

There's a Facebook site where you can look at the horses available for adoption. Eventually have those up.

But there's also information about adoption success stories of the Modoc wild horse which is generally a sturdier draft type horse confirmation.

They've also been working on a collaborative group.

And they're expanding long-term solutions with ecological concerns.

I'll be discussing about seven or eight of these brief snapshots on wild horse territories.

There's another in region three at about 24,000 acres.

There's the national forest of the territory managed using PZP and they have gentling contracts out.

They remove horses using the VLM contracts and they have successfully conducted adoption to good homes.

There's also a cost share agreement to help with gentling and adoption.

As I noted earlier they removed horses and sent them out for gentling.

Moving on, into region four, north hills, wild horse territory which is also a jointly managed area with BLM BLM.

Region four about 23, 365 forest service.

There's new plan to work together with BLM to do NEPA together with the wild horse complex.

This has an been area where having that BLM forest service joint management plan will encourage more activity, action on getting that done.

We've had ongoing issue of wild horses on an active allotment and since 2014 the horses are there to date.

They have plans to do like a capture objective of the 15-30 horses and remove half of those in 2016-17 with a similar number of horse removals in 2017-18.

Then another -- into Nevada.

The spring mountains wild horse and herd management project EA is currently being worked on.

That is here in Nevada and about 164,000 acres.

Don't have a good number.

I think it's really approximate.

75-80 are on national service forest lands.

And this is about the horses from cold creek.

They are working on a joint area managed project.

The public outreach is expected to commence in mid-October and run through mid-November and signature isn't expected until June 2017.

Other management plans are the wild burro and the monticris to wild horse and to have them, again start up in 2017.

Fiscal year '17.

Then moving on into region three, again, back, discussing the Heber allotment.

In Arizona at 14,000 acres.

These issues were trespassed horses from White River Apache and others migrated

after two large fires post-2000 and those contribute to removing barriers and also realizationalists.

They want to reach the fence barriers.

The territory was believed to be vacant prior to the fires and then there were 250 horses in the forest, plus twenty on the Heber territory and 122 horses on the Apache National Forest.

There's a management plan revision for the forest was appealed and the demands have been met.

And that's cleared the way now for work on the management plan and the forest is developing a communication plan and collaboration process to determine management plan actions.

With expected scoping at the end of 2017.

Just reviewing some non-wild horse, just stray or abandoned horses and these are horses that are not protected by the Wild Horse and Burro Act and considered trespass animals.

The herd that house bill 2013 was signed in May 2016 which makes it illegal to shoot, kill or slaughter a horse that is part of the Salt River horse herd.

The assumption is that there are at least 100 horses on forest service land only. With 300 on other lands.

Management is dependent on signing an MOU with the state of Arizona and the forest service and region three has submitted the MOU to the state for them to complete and the horses are not yet the forest service or Arizona responsibility.

Management is currently limited to forest service, State Department of Agriculture and local sheriff convening when there's an issue and the Salt River management group is taking horses to the vet when there is an issue after administering PZP.

That's the end of my summary on some of the management actions right now for the forest service.

>> Question, are these new management plans being done on the project level, plan revision or plan amendment

>> Hope Woodward: Yeah, that's a good question.

I think that came up the last time.

I think it varies.

I think the one on the Humbolt, the spring mown town is 2019 and I think these are being done.

Since this is project level then they're the -- they're the 2-18 objection.

My understanding is that.

An amendment three to a plan which is amending the forest service plans then that's under the 219 but the others are the 2-18 objection process because they're project level.

>> It's been a big issue since the Tongass did a forest plan that drew a lot of attention.

We're still trying to straighten out the difference between amendments.

That's why I'm asking are these management plan changes done at the forest level or the project level?

It's a huge difference.

>> Hope Woodward: Yeah I can address that and I can look into that issue.

I don't think that that's -- and I can get that information to you.

It's fairly clearcut.

There are some things that come up when things get appealed if they start out let's say on a 2012 and then they have to go into the 218 process, the objection process

and then they have to go into 2019 so there have been different questions related to that and I can certainly begin to document that or look into each of the plans and understand what processes there are.

>> You're talking the objection process and then doing this under the 2012 planning rule because we got objections rather than appeals.

>> Hope Woodward: It may vary by the forest which rule they're using.

The complex is under the 2019 rule and I don't know about the other management plans and what rules they're following.

>> I know there are early adopters on the 2012 rule.

The Apache was not.

It'll be interesting to see how that goes because they're trying to move away from the old planning rule and onto the 2012 because you have the objections process there rather than going to the appeals and litigation.

It'd be interesting to see what rule they're working under and how they're managing it.

>> Hope Woodward: And I think it'll be interesting at the project level to see if it's the 218 project process as opposed to the plan revision.

It's maybe rare that you have forests that are starting those now that are not following the 2012 or the 219 but I'll certainly begin to document that and gather that information.

And we can have further discussion if there's certain questions that might arise depending on what authority is being followed.

Thank you. Any other questions before I go into the sage-grouse PowerPoint?

So it was signed in 9, 2015 and then in 5, 2015.

So standard guidelines have been set for wild horse and burro management.

And as discussed get by BLM there are certain areas identified as sage-grouse focal areas and that's as Kristin noted yesterday that that's the best of the best and I think that's a fish and wildlife service more designation and that's likely, well, it's the best of the best where you have lex, where you have the best habitat.

And then there's the PHMA the priority habitat and some state have other areas.

Actually other habitat areas there are other designations and then general habitat management area and I believe there's also a different designation to discuss for bistate.

And here in Nevada, we have both bistate and then we also have greater sage-grouse and I believe a majority is under greater sage-grouse with a bistate in California and Nevada.

So just following BLM's lead to get an understanding of how many acres, how many territories we have that are in wild horse, in sage-grouse habitat.

By the way this map in particular is, oh, there, so this map in particular shows the coloration.

Here it's -- this -- variations of this map are available on the internet.

This one particularly though outlines these circles here which is actually the territories wild horse and burro territories in this area and you can see their overlay with where their colored areas of different habitats.

So most of the area, wild horse and burro territories is in general habitat.

It looks like Modoc could call in but it's outside.

It's included to show that it actually doesn't have wild -- sage-grouse habitat.

So looking at that, you found that we had 12 wild horse territories and one in greater sage-grouse habitat in in bistate there are three wild horse territories.

Just looking at the number of acres there's about 93 and a half thousand and in

greater.

The general habitat about 352 and a half thousand.

And then in bistate about 70,000.

But there weren't any of the sage-grouse focal areas in wild horse and burro territories.

There wasn't any intersection of that.

Let me go back.

I did this exercise of prior to actually engaging with the forest to determine, well, what are you doing now?

Some of the first exercises that are required is that plots have been set up, five plots. In allotments so most of it has been focused.

My understanding, thought, it may have been focused on grazing, where there's livestock grazing.

I'm still working on gathering that information.

I don't think that that's necessarily true, but I want to look and see where we have habitat and then work with the forest and understanding do you also set up plots where you don't have live stock grazing?

So that they're also our monitoring points.

This year five next year ten.

This year the forest and BLM have a different process and working through management for greater sage-grouse and this next slide is very busy.

But it actually shows, I'm not sure if I can enlarge this but it shows that there's standards, two standards in fact for greater sage-grouse and then the bistate sage-grouse has somewhat looser, I shouldn't say looser.

But they have different types of, it's not standards and guides.

But there are within the standards, recommendations for removing wild horses and burros outside the territory.

If it's outside the priority those horses should be removed and that's the standard.

I believe the top one, oh, I actually have this one here so I can read this for you better.

But basically the idea is that there could be, given requirements for monitoring and reporting back in five years with Fish and Wildlife Service, there could be a need for greater activity and managing wild horses and burros depending on where the activity lies and I don't have anything to report back on what they're planning to do.

This is an exercise to find out what is being done and beginning to do some mapping exercise.

And so just regarding to some of those points that I mentioned is to verify as I said earlier that the appropriate monitoring assessment per the greater sage-grouse amendment, guidelines, that they are conducted in wild horse and burro territories and these are suggestions for research.

I've done PowerPoint and was done recently.

A suggestion that you could establish plots -- well, this is part of the decision.

And one of the things that is going to be monitored is four inch residual stubble height at the end of season and Nevada to get to the four inch stubble.

That may not be possible.

In a lot of places it is impossible there are different monitoring standards that will be followed for that.

It looks like, that's the end of that slide here.

So that's just a basic overview on the greater sage-grouse and that is, concludes the presentation I have to the board.

Summary of what I've been working on the last four months and continuation of what's been previous and I'd be happy to entertain any questions.

>> Fred Woehl: Thank you, Hope, I know this is a brand new role for you with a brand new job and you've done a very good job of catching up on everything and I appreciate it.

Does anybody on the board?

Go ahead, Cope.

>> Cope: Back to the principles of the 2012 rule the basis is to establish desired conditions and use adaptive management so if they're not meeting your standards within your monitoring you have a backup plan as to where you go next.

Can you tell me if you've not get four inch stubble height on HMAs if there are horses bringing that below the standards and if it could be a four inch, what's your plan to use adaptive management in order to reach the standards of the desired conditions.

>> Hope Woodward: That's still being worked out team is based out of the interregional office in Ogden, Utah. So there's a team of specialists in wildlife, range, other areas, watershed recreation that has also lead up to the signing of the rod. And so they're involved now in how to unfold this.

We have the amendments that came out of the record decision and now how do we answer some questions like you said?

So this is the first year of monitoring that they've set up the five plots of monitoring. I don't have that information yet.

Fortunately doing this poster helped me to engage with the experts and others working out of that team.

I don't have that information and I don't know yet if that has been determined.

And when you're asking about the 219, this is a process that is separate.

I mean, I should have made that distinction clear.

This about the sage-grouse monitoring and conservation is entirely separate at this point from my understanding of the previous information I presented about the management plans.

That are being worked on wild horse and burro territory.

I don't know, that is a question though within that, those -- any territories that are doing management plans that have greater sage-grouse is the one of the southern that is going through that 219 process and they do have some points that I reviewed their draft EIS.

So the answer is that it's not known yet.

But that's also something that I'm working on getting to understand and will understand that working with the forest where there is greater sage-grouse and bistate sage-grouse.

>> Word coming down from region four is that almost all the forests in region four will be doing major forest plan revisions in the next decade.

This is something that is going to come out.

>> Hope: That's a good point.

That's another area, I mean, certainly, I'm focusing on management plans and I have reviewed the plan, management plan that is just public comment period just ended on the DIS.

So that's another point then to engage with the region four and ensure that that will be considered in the plan revisions and understand how they go about that.

>> Thank you, Cope, dean?

>> Hope's decision is devoted to horses and burros whereas previously there wasn't a full-time position for that in DC.

She said something that is very significant.

She referred to a second memorandum of understanding that BLM and the forest service have drafted that's in the final stages of review and that provides better guidance about how our field offices about herds that cross territory boundaries and BLM HMAs and that's pretty darn significant because we have to work together. All of this will be done through local service first agreement.

That's an interesting development as well and past boards have emphasized the importance and I now you all feel that it's important that we work together and I want to work with that, and Hope, I appreciate working with you

>> Hope Woodward: Thank you, I have enjoyed working with you and your staff. It's been a really positive and productive really.

>> I have a quick question.

This is just for my knowledge.

Are there wild horses and burros on designated areas?

>> It's a really good question, Ben, I know there's a researcher who I engaged with related to wilderness and also talked to a wilderness coordinator out of region two and that's something that I haven't -- I posed those questions early on when I came on in May but I haven't delved into them.

I can review the e-mails and see the recent inquiry by research.

I don't remember if the name of the guy is Alan.

It's almost something like Shepherd.

But we have an Alan Shepherd here.

In terms of would the management be different?

It's some of the things that we've raised and discussed.

The brief discussions I've had about that is would it increase to the natural quality of the wilderness given the act.

I believe in the 1964, the wilderness act, one of the factors that we're considering when we review wilderness and doing management plans is there any violation or does it contribute to what is, you know, the tests, I forget what that's called right now is naturalness so that might be a contributor to naturalness.

There are other questions that you have is well, is that degradation to wilderness?

One, I don't know how many, if there are acres within wilderness wild horse and burro territories and if there were any kind of project or review of that area or forest plan revision and you're reviewing wild horse and burro in wilderness what language would go into that.

Thanks for reminding me and it was just this week that Alan's e-mail came about can we work on this.

>> Thank you, Ben, anybody else?

Thank you very much for a very good report and we look forward to working with you in the future.

>> Hope Woodward: Equally.

Thank you.

>> Fred Woehl: While we change speakers at this time is there anybody else cold out there. It's cold enough to hang meat up here.

Debbie, can we get something done?

I can hardly hear the speaker between Kristin and Sue's teeth chattering in my ears.

All right our next speaker we will have will be Ms. Holle Hooks who is the off range director or head.

She has threatened me several times this morning and so -- I deserved it.

So I'm just going to hand it over to her and let her just have at it.

Good to see I'm not only the one that has trouble with technology.

>> Holle: I'm not going to pride an update not only for the April meeting but other accomplishments and things that have been happening.

So this first slide just basically shows you an off range space update between our off range pastures about 31,000 off range corrals at 9300 which is down from our capacity.

And also wild horses and burros that are at sanctuaries.

Currently the capacity of the off range corrals is about (inaudible) animals.

We're relocating those animals to new off range pastures.

That have been acquired from our 2015 off range pastures solicitation.

Those are new awards.

From the off range pasture solicitation that we sent out in 2016, we're looking at making about a total between that and the FY 2015 solicitation, we're planning to make about 7 awards.

Two of those will be in Missouri and Oklahoma.

We figure there'll be about 600 new spaces by October of 2016 and then five awards between Kansas and Oklahoma for a potential space of about 5400 animals so this is all new off range pasture space that we're very excited about.

So that will take our existing ORPs, capacity from about the 31,000.

It'll bring us up to pretty close to 37,000.

One off range pasture facility that we're still looking at.

We're waiting to complete NEPA is one in Iowa.

We're still looking at that.

We hope to have all seven of them online and operating by April of 2017.

Eco sanctuaries.

We have some good things happening with them.

Currently they're holding about 580 animals and we have two in Wyoming and one in Oklahoma.

We're looking at those goals that I discussed with you all a couple types before about developing more educational and placement opportunities, holdings, adoption events and tours at the eco sanctuary.

This year, the Wind River eco sanctuary in Lander, Wyoming they held an open house and it was part of the Americans campaign and one in Oklahoma held their second Mustang mare than on June 11th.

In 2016 BLM did coordinate both of those events with eco sanctuaries and we have recently transferred the program officers duties from the states over to the Washington office.

And Scott is acting as the program officer at this time.

So this is just a couple of pictures of the actual open house that took place and the Wind River eco sanctuary in Lander, Wyoming.

It was attended by some BLM staff.

Scott and Debbie Collins were in attendance.

You'll see a picture here of the visitor's information center.

They opened it up and offered free wagon rides to the public so they could see the wild horses up close.

The event was scheduled until 2 o'clock but lasted until 4 because the public kept coming in.

We had some staff from the BLM Wyoming office as well asking questions about the program overall and the local tribal leadership attended the preview the evening before at the eco sanctuary so it was well-attended definitely coordinated between

the Washington office and the state.

I definitely appreciate that.

The ranch in Oklahoma, as I stated had their second annual Mustang marathon or Mustang run and it was -- it had barely 400 runners this year.

Last year maybe they had close to 200.

But they doubled it this year.

There were a lot of people there.

We got a lot of feedback regarding the excitement that the runners had about being able to run with the horses and being able to feel the hoof beat of the horses as they ran past them and it energized a lot of the runners so it was a really good event.

We continue with the ranch with the other activities they're looking at doing so we're hoping to have something coming up here pretty soon.

The comprehensive welfare program.

The off range corrals and adoption are drafting an IM to begin the implementation of the SOPs for that particular section.

This will be included in the development and the refinement of the training materials and we hope to be drafting the assessment tool as well.

The off range pastures and eco sanctuary's current status is also still drafting the plan itself of the standard operating procedures and the team is still working on the development of the assessment tool and training materials.

In the future, we would really like to start considering some type of standards for animals that are outside of the BLM in some of the training programs we have with our partners which would include the store fronts of the BIP trainers but also some additional compliance standards.

Marketing firm.

This was also a recommendation and something we identified a huge need for and did a lot of work with developing the statement of work of exactly what we were looking for.

We know that we have a very controversial issue and we also know that we have a product that we really want to be able to market well and find out ways that we can place more animals into private care as well as educate and aware the public about what some of the challenges, issues and mission of the BLM is.

So with that, we developed the statement of work and the solicitation actually opened on August 26 and closes on September 16 so we're right in the middle of it. In fact Debbie and Jason I think were answering questions late into the evening yesterday with some potential contractors.

Because they get to ask questions just for clarification and just to make sure they understand while they develop their proposal.

So ideas the solicitation will look at seeking the professional consistent marketing of some of the communication products so that goes from the animals while on-range and being able to communicate that as well as all the way into placing them into private care and titling.

We'd like to look at marketing strategies and hopefully they'll be able to get all the proposals in.

And they'll be able to review them and make an award all by September 26th so we're looking at working a lot in the next couple of years.

Of course the fiscal year is ending so we're moving and shaking to get this award in.

The adoption pilot program.

This also was something we really wanted to get accomplished this fiscal year.

So we did create what's called the statement of programmatic involvement and that

is a document.

It's much like the statement of work where you identify exactly what the need is. And it's related to an assistance agreement.

And we did send that paperwork over to procurement but as I said it's the end of the year and so there are a lot of things that, you know, maybe don't make it all the way through so we're hoping to be able to move it forward at the first of next fiscal year. One of the goals that we have is to at least have 100 animals moving out of these off range corrals into private care through this program and the incentive that will be offered will be looking at halter adopters adopting an animal.

Horse or burro and either halter training it or saddle training it and if the horse is seven years or older they receive title and they train it themselves is the incentive. Adopt an older animal.

Yes.

>> This is something that the board has made several recommendations on and part of the thing that the board really was interested in is making this for all animals not just seven or nine-year-old animals what is the major reason for doing the older animals.

>> We wanted to look at qualifications.

It's a little more difficult because we don't have challenges adopting younger animals.

We look at where the adoptions begin to decline and we did analysis on this and this is how we came up with horses seven years or older have fewer adoptions.

We looked at a five year trend.

And I actually think we have a graph or chart that I can get to you guys so you guys can take a look at it.

I shared it with Ben yesterday.

Horses that were seven years or older were less adopted.

>> I remember looking at the internet adoption that we just had and all the adoption events that I've done to the oldest horse has been six.

I mean, the purpose for the board making these incentive programs is to adopt more horses.

Not just targeted horses.

Because generally speaking, six-year-old and older horses don't go into the adoption program.

They go into corrals.

And I know for a fact that we have horses that's been in holding corrals for three or four years that have not been offered for adoption and the reason why I was told is well, we just have a certain amount of horses that we can send out.

They can't send out every horse in a short-term holding.

You know, we just don't have the trucking ability and all that.

So the board's emphasis was to make this program available for all horses.

Not just older horses, and I'm just asking why that was not considered more so.

>> I would like to add a comment here, Fred.

It has to do with having the income resources.

I think the board suggested that a 1500 dollar incentive would be appropriate.

You have to do this to get horses adopted.

They have to have them under saddle and here you go, adopter, 1500 bucks at the end of the year.

I think we think that's a good idea.

However when you calculate the math just consider the existing number we adopt.

2600 times 1500 dollars.

If I did the quick back of the envelope correct that's a 3.9 million dollar commitment that we do not currently have the resources.

>> The reason, any short-term holding corrals were paying over five dollars per head per day.

If you take that times 365 dollars that's a lot more than 1500 dollars so I don't see the affect on the overall budget.

We either pay it in short-term holding or for someone to take this horse into private ownership.

>> So if we could double the numbers of adopted animals then all of a sudden we free up the money to pay this incentive and I don't think we were that optimistic that we could do that as a result of an incentive being available and we have to take money from other things in order to pay out the incentive and that would be a commitment in the next fiscal year and we don't necessarily, aren't guaranteed assured to having that funding.

So that was our hesitation.

It's not that we disagree with the board's thought and when you look at the out year consequences of not having to need horses it works out.

>> The other thing I'm concerned about and I should probably keep my mouth shut because this is something very personal to me on this.

The skill set to train a seven or nine-year-old horse is a lot different than a three-year-old horse and the board has been adamant that we get these horses into private hands and get them off the system.

And if I was just looking at this and, believe me, I know the people involved and I have a lot of confidence in them.

But this is a ripe recipe to fail.

You know, I mean, I'm just being honest.

I mean, if I'm wanting to get involved with training horses and I get out and I have a seven-year-old horse, you know, a seven-year-old gelding that been running as a stud for three or four years and a -- you understand what I'm saying.

>> Absolutely.

>> Is there an evaluation process?

Because sometimes a seven-year-old is easier than a two-year-old.

It just depend on the horse and if there's some kind of evaluation process where you get in with the horses and you really kind of evaluate who seems to respond, who has a stronger flight instinct.

You know what I'm saying?

So -- an older horse can be worked with but, you're right, the young ones are generally easier.

But is there some kind of an evaluation process.

>> Our hope was with this assistance agreement that there would be an organization that would definitely be working one-on-one with that adopter and the animal that they adopted.

We identified an acceptable definition for both the halter training and saddle training that is also included in that particular solicitation that we would run so the organization would be clear about what the expectations are.

But would BLM evaluate the animal prior to adoption?

No.

That wasn't originally part of the plan.

That doesn't mean it's not something that can be incorporated but it is not right now

part of that plan.

So, Fred, I hear what you're saying.

We went back and forth a lot about this.

In fact, I think we've been on this adoption incentive pilot program for about eight months or so.

With a lot of back and forth between leadership and kind of their expectation and also assurance that the animals won't be adopted and then once they received the incentive check they, you know, sell them or the person runs off but that there's an investment made from that adopter but that doesn't mean it has between the ages of 7-9 as I indicated.

There maybe a conversation that we can have, Dean, if that's flexible.

>> As chairman of the adoption committee and wild horse trainer, I've trained about seven of them and off bunch of friends that train wild horses.

I don't know anybody that goes to an adoption facility and looks for a seven-year-old horse to train.

I mean, nobody.

So I have to back up what Fred was saying there in that if we reduce that age down to one day.

I mean the younger that you can get these wild horses and start working with them the typically easier it is.

I agree with Fred if we can low their down or just eliminate the age class I think we'll see adoption numbers rise and I understand there's also other circumstances but just my opinion.

>> We also follow an analysis from New Mexico where they had a pilot program.

They were offering mares that were six years and older and they were offering an incentive of five hundred dollars when you adopted them.

What they saw was it didn't increase the number of animals they adopted, but kept them from adopting the two-year-old stud or gelding.

The two-year-old animal here to adopt a six-year-old animal.

What we'd like to increase is increase the number of animals that we actually place into private care and maybe someone would make the decision, okay, well I'm going to adopt the two-year-old and I'll adopt the seven-year-old part of the adoption incentive program.

Of course we don't know but that was an analysis that was done about a previous pilot that was going on the last four years.

>> I am well aware of that pilot but there wasn't any training component to it.

And so, I mean, if, and that's a big part of this, is this training component as we've seen in must take Heritage Foundation horses.

This training point is a big thing about it what the approach was was not something that big.

But have them come back and demonstrate this training and that's when they got the check.

They didn't get it upfront or when titling.

They had to come back and show that this horse could do this.

And that was all part of it.

And you said you've been working on this eight months.

I've been on the board three years and this has been something that has been talked about at every board meeting that we've had.

Every board meeting that we've had.

And I appreciate greatly the steps that have been made but it's just like when you're

training a horse you set your horse up to succeed not to fail.

And using seven-year-old horses and nine-year-old burros in my humble opinion is a recipe for failure and I want this program to work.

I want it to go on.

I want it to be hand and hand in other programs that you and your staff have done and, you know, and maybe I'm too personally involved in this because this has been something I have beat the drum on ever since I have been on the board but I feel pretty strongly about this.

And so that's all I'm going to say.

>> I appreciate that, Fred.

>> I have a quick question because recently coming into this position permanently.

Was there a discussion?

Because I'm looking for an "and" solution not an "or".

Did the team talk about or do we have experience with a scaled incentive, some incentive for younger animal but a higher level incentive for an older animal knowing that getting the funding upfront to be able to provide the incentive we have to work that out but was there discussion of that?

>> Holle: We did have discussion about offering the incentive to all animals and I honestly don't recall because we had a lot of discussion between the solicitor and what would be allowable and how we would actually execute this program.

But I don't recall exactly besides the fact that we compared the New Mexico, the most recent pilot incentive program that we had and compared it and said, okay, we want to push more.

And more adoptions not just the 2700 basic, you know, animals between 0-6 years old but how do we get the older ones placed?

And that, I'm sorry, but that adoption analysis that, trend that I was referring to is what lead us down that path.

>> Part of what the board's plan was was different if you could bring the horse in and it was halter train you could pick up the need and you got X amount of dollars.

If you could ride the horse you got X amount of dollars.

It was kind of like that and part of it was, you know, I've been involved with this program for a long time and I have gone out and horses that had been adopted and I have done compliance checks for BLM.

I will go out there and look at this horse and it's been in the same halter with a little old lead attached for a year.

They've not touched it or anything and part of this is to keep from having that done.

And it gives them an incentive to do it and I'm not saying that we're going to pay them to take these horses.

A lot of these people that have adopted need horses are very passionate about this.

>> I was responding to the numbers where we have so many of the older animals in the corrals and long-term pastures.

You know, maybe having a little bit more incentive more folks to want to put into work on those animals and also responding to Ben's point that in general, given folks' choice they'll go for the younger animal but perhaps in addition, you know, as pilot, you know, does it work?

Does it work to offer maybe an additional incentive to, for someone to work with an older animal?

So I was just inquiring and curious about that.

>> Okay.

>> I don't want to interrupt but I just -- it's long enough to say that Holle's about

halfway through her presentation so at some point you may want to pull the rest of this conversation into the afternoon.

I'm not sure.

Just be conscience of it.

>> Dean: A little more math on this subject.

I do not disagree with this.

In fact it goes hand in hand with some things the director has talked about as far as a tax rebate.

That's probably pretty complicated to get legislation to support that.

But the whole point is to get people to adopt here.

The whole financial point is a 1500 dollar incentive for the existing 2600 getting adopted is 3.9.

I figured how much savings you have to have and how much additional animals to get them out of the corrals so you don't have to need them.

This means adoptions would have to rides to 4600 in the first year in order to save money to pay out the incentives on the first 2600 and the second 2,000.

That's a total of 7 million dollars and I just wasn't comfortable in advancing this and risking insolvency and now I think we should get more aggressive in asking for funding to support this kind of thing.

Because I think there would be interest in.

>> I'm sorry to be so dim on this but is this a pilot program?

Is this currently being done somewhere?

Or, Holle?

>> This is not currently being done anywhere.

This would be a pilot.

>> Would the pilot be done at some specific facility?

>> Holle: I think we would, not any one facility.

We would run the pilot for a year is -- was the original plan.

Because it's an assistance agreement we would be funding the agreement for a year and determining what worked and what didn't, making changes accordingly which would mean we would have to either modify the agreement from the grants management officer and if it wasn't a large modification it would be fine otherwise we would have to do another solicitation, an award, a second agreement for the future years.

>> Okay, because there's a wide disparity between holding centers and the BLM staff.

In my personal experience and that's mostly with Kansas City those past managers there were really good at evaluating behavior.

That would have been an ideal situation for something like this because I think they understood the individuals animals when they got in the pens with them and so forth.

That's why I asked that question.

>> Okay.

Go ahead, Holle.

Move on.

>> Holle: Just to wrap it up.

I don't know, Dean, if it is allowable to provide the SBI to the board.

If that's a document we could offer them some feedback on.

The team of course will be meeting.

The private care placement team will be meeting over the next couple of months and that's one of the things that we will be discussing.

>> I think certainly we can provide that when it's published.

We can check that out.

I don't know at print.

>> I'm sorry, Fred, but do I have one question.

Could there be some coordination and lowering the incentive to more conformed to the cost?

>> The cost saved?

>> Yes.

>> Yes.

>> And this would be more of a question from Michael because I'm not 100% sure what our average is for a year now.

But my guess would be that as long as we were offering an incentive that was less than whatever we're spending in a year then we'll see a cost savings.

>> So five dollars a day is 1825 dollars.

There was some alignment on that both in your part and my part as we discussed this.

>> It's very clear that I'm passionate about because I think it's something that we need to address it a little bit more.

We have seen proven example with Mustang Heritage of these horses when they are adopted they find good homes and they bring pretty good money.

Even though that don't finish in the top 25 or the top 10.

And, you know, I see -- I feel very strongly that this is not a complete answer and is probably just a small part of the answer.

But it is a good part of the answer.

Because of the public positive press and outlook and all that.

I take my horses to rodeos and shows and they got that brand on them and it is just incredible the amount of people that ask me and talk with me and all this about that.

>> As I said yesterday I think the path forward is a whole array of solutions.

It's not any one thing.

No way.

No how.

So maybe we can look at this, at piloting it in a certain state or in a certain facility to reduce the financial risk and liability.

Maybe we can consider that, Fred, obviously you want us to go back to the drawing board so, thank you.

>> Fred Woehl: Yes.

Back to her.

>> Holle: Thank you.

The internet adoption website is going through a little bit of a change.

We're looking at rebranding the adopt a horse website and modernizing it to the adoption programs overall.

A request for the proposals has been closed out and the it's already been identified and is planning to review proposals and recommend an award in the next 48 hours. I'm very excited about this.

This has been something that's been worked on for quite some time.

They've done a really good job with communicating with the NOC and the existing contractor and also the program administrator.

They worked together and done a lot of good work with the need to redesign the website as well as identifying what it should look like in the future.

They've also engaged the Washington office with some feedback and will be

reaching out to the states.

One other thing before I move on about that, a really good point about this is that adopters will have the ability to apply, put in applications online and this new website will also talk to our current wild horse and burro program system which is really nice. I'll just through that in.

So training opportunities.

We have the states leading the effort.

They are beginning to review the proposals that have been submitted and will coordinate site visits in the early part of the year.

So we're looking forward to that.

Family of Horses is another partnership where they are focusing on the burro incentive program.

They have placed over 150 trained burros since November of 2015 and some program assistance I was sharing with Ben and June yesterday that this particular partner has also assisted with some of the internet adoptions by going out to some of the facilities and taking videos as well as photos and uploading them to the internet website which has been extremely helpful to some of the facilities to the places that are overworked.

Don't have a lot of horses and don't have the skill sets of doing the videos and photos so that's nice.

Currently there's about 26 burros that remain in training.

So we're looking at possibly 176 placed burros for the year for a Family of Horses.

The Mustang Heritage foundation is another partnership regarding the animals in private care they place over 1100 trained animals and kicked off the program full blast this year which Kali will get into a little more detail about that.

They also ran the American Mustang campaign with the bureau management and provides educational and training and marketing assistance to BLM as well.

They have about 325 animals I believe that remain in training.

That will be potentially place this fiscal year.

So they are rocking and rolling.

We also have the correctional facilities that are partners, those are assistance agreement and some of them hold animals as well as train animals and offer them for adoption.

They place over 300 trained horse and have open houses.

This is a contract and there is trainings and place those into private care as well.

He also hosts adoption events with trained animals.

The adoption -- oh, sorry.

The adoption demand study, we spoke about this in previous advisor board meetings and you all met Lori Dickson who was a part of great lakes marketing who was doing this adoption demand study. Her findings will be submitted to BLM this month.

Great lakes will continue to be available to us for any findings on the report she submitted until about October 31st which is nice.

We will also be engaging with her over the next couple of weeks with the private care placement team as they move through these findings and reports.

The private care placement team which I mentioned to you all in April has met and has planned a larger meeting where they'll be able to take a look at not only the consolidated document that I provided to you at the last meeting but also the great lakes marketing adoption demand study findings and recommendations.

The goal is to submit a final report from this team within six months.

To leadership.

And to look at ways of moving forward and develop some type of implementation plan to have more consistency throughout the program and either update existing policies or create new ones that will take us out of the golden age of 40 years ago and place animals into private care and bring us up-to-date.

>> I'd like to let you know how much we appreciate you letting us have a board member seat on this.

On private care.

That's something we're really very interested in and we appreciate you working and including us.

>> Holle: This is not just one solution.

We have more -- people at the table who are willing to not just keep saying there's a problem, there's a problem, but they say there's problem, and I'm at the table.

I'd like to try to help you find a solution.

And lastly I wanted to take a quick look as of August 18th, 2016 we took an analysis of where we were in FY 14 and I'm not sure how well people can see it on your screen but you all have it in your books of where we were in 14, 15 and 16 at about the same time and you notice the increase of animals placed in private care.

We do have an increasing trend and we want to keep the trend going upwards.

>> Anybody have any questions for Holle.

>> Just in closing.

I want to state that dealing with multiple partners that we have advising board members that we've been able to successfully work together to increase working with the animals that are in placement into private care and that's just a really good thing overall. The American mustang campaign has been extremely successful this year and last year.

We also had a Livestream which I believe that Kali is going to give more detail in.

But we did a Facebook live of the American Mustang expo.

We had these educational workshops and they were well-attended.

We had BLM staff that was alongside definitely giving some information on not just how you adopt but what are the challenges.

We had some things on what is helpful and publicly I would like to thank that BLM staff so, thank you. Any questions for me?

>> I have one, Holle, would we check the numbers on your second slide, please.

It shows about 41,000 horses in holding and I think probably the number is about 45. So, anyway, could we check that, please?

>> Holle: We can but these numbers were taken from the most recent directory deputy department.

>> Maybe that's where the typo is. Anyway.

Let's check it, please anybody else have any questions for Holle.

>> Yes, I have a question.

How do you plan on using the extra space that has been provided by the increase in the number of offerings of pastures.

Will those horses be transferred from the short-term and made more available for new animals from gathers and how does that coordinate with the amount of funds that are made available for gathers?

>> The 5400 potential spaces that we're looking at acquiring by April 2017, as well as the 600 spaces I mentioned from our solicitation that's a total of 6,000 spaces and the plan is to start moving animals from off range corrals into these off range pastures because they are most cost-effective but there's no plan at this time and Jared will get more into that but there's no plan at this time to increase the number of

animals that we're removing in any one year.

The hope is to continue to remove the number of animals that are placed into private care and that's the balance that we're looking at main taping right now.

>> Thank you.

>> So if I could add to that, the animals being moved out of corrals are they elderly animals?

Those seven or older and we have a whole bunch in corrals that probably don't have a chance of being adopted.

>> I have a question, Holle, how do the finances work with the eco sanctuary and how does that compare to the off range corral.

>> These are assistance agreements and the off range corrals are all contract. So there's a per head per day cost associated with off range corrals and the eco sanctuary is not.

They operate with different educational components as well as the animals there it's not a per head per day basis.

>> Thank you, and huge are the contracts typically for for the off range pasture?

>> Well, there has been authority given in appropriations where wild horse program can go up to ten years in contract.

But some of the off range corrals.

I believe we only have one that is a ten-year contract.

I'll have to check that.

And as off range pastures we have several of them with five and ten year contracts. You're welcome.

>> Fred Woehl: Anybody else.

I want to make this clear, just because Holle and I are friends.

When her and I have these little things it's not personal.

It's not like that.

Is it, Holle.

This is not the first time we have had something like that.

I love this woman.

She's really passionate about what she does.

So, and I appreciate you a lot.

>> Holle: No problem.

Thank you.

>> Fred Woehl: Now to the other one that's dear to me.

Herding is fine.

We have made some changes.

So after we hear from Mustang Heritage we're going to take a break and move the discussions up to after the break and move everybody else down because we have people that are not going to be here that want to take a part and I think we need to accommodate them.

And so we will, I'll talk with you further about that but I just wanted you to know and we're not going to cut anybody short if we have to go longer than the break, we're going to do that.

Okay?

>> Okay, you still hope to take a break at 10:05?

>> Fred Woehl: We'll take a break as soon as we hear from Mustang heritage, their full report and answer any questions.

>> I'm going to go over a couple of slides with you.

Thanks again for inviting us, I've been to a few of these over the past ten years and

it's always an honor to come back, thank you.

The Mustang heritage foundation has been in partnership for ten years.

This will be our ten year anniversary with BLM.

Our mission is to increase the placement of excess horses and burros which we mean in holding.

We have over the past ten years placed over 7,000 animals, horses and burros into private care.

Mostly through our training and gentling programs as Holle stated we have started an educational program as well which we'll talk about in a minute.

But most of our focus is training and gentling and getting the horses adopted or sold through those avenues.

History, real briefly here in 2002 and bylaws were created.

2001-05 not a lot was done in all honesty.

Just putting together board.

Going over some research that had been done for BLM and then in 2006 entered into the first assistance agreement and we are on our second five year assistance agreement with BLM and hope to continue that in 2018.

2007 was our first event make over following that with the trainer incentive program.

2013 came mustang millions and then 15 America's mustang and then '16, the store front program was created in 2016 but in 2008 but wasn't a public program that people could vote on it.

We have a board of trustees here.

Paula, and Randall who work to keep me on task and help me to keep staff on task.

We have a relatively small staff or to some maybe a large staff.

There's ten of us between full-time and contract.

Everybody on our staff is very passionate about what we're doing and I think has a lot of fun doing what we're doing and working on these programs.

So very thankful for all of them.

Again, BLM partnership, like I said, has gone on ten years.

I have a little note in there about Nevada.

We have been to Nevada with two extreme mustang makeovers and in 2008 we had a youth Mustang event which is very exciting.

As you can see here we're serving our ten years this year.

So it was ten years, ten cities ten times the extreme.

So we visited ten cities this year with your mustang make over event.

This is probably what we're most recognized for.

It's not where we get our big adoption numbers but it is where we get a lot of our media support and things like that which I think brings awareness to our other programs obviously.

Next slide we're going to talk about a couple of numbers.

2007-16 you see on the left went through where we've been over the past ten years with extreme mustang make over so we went to 22 states, 1500 unique trainers so that means people who have continued or competed once or twice and 3,000 of those are through the extreme mustang make over.

We have 33 animals sold.

Ten events and there were 400,000 annual YouTube views.

I'm going to go through each of those individually.

271 are adoptions.

So mostly mares and geldings five to seven years of age is what we focused on this year.

And the breakdown of that I know we talked about earlier.

When we started in 2007 our agreement was focused on three-year-old geldings from Nevada.

So we focused on as Nevada horses only.

Since then we made strides in our programs and this program is especially open to really anything.

Anything that is adoptable or still eligible can be put into the program.

But what we did starting 2016 is working with the sales program which is, I was explaining to Ben yesterday.

It is -- it's a benefit to mustang heritage foundation but not -- to us, a horse is horse as far as that's concerned.

We're getting a horse placed either way but the program for us is a cost savings more than anything.

It doesn't have to do with any of the training components.

It's more of a dollars and cents thing as far as getting those animals sold where the people can come and they leave with a bill of sale from the mustang heritage foundation essentially taking that horse off of the need bill saving taxpayers.

Hopefully we can use the sales program even more with the extreme mustang make over.

Of our ten events we did use eligible mares so that's where the 33 animals came from there. The 400,000 YouTube views is a combination of videos we do throughout the event.

We'll do one or two throughout and then a nice follow up YouTube video.

One thing that's not on here is that most of the extreme mustang makeovers where possible we do try to invite BLM to come out and bring some wild horses so we try to make a space that's suitable for them to come out and hopefully take advantage of the public and the people that we're bringing out.

So that they can either advertise a local facility in some cases like in Reno they can advertise the valley and get the most bang for all of our buck as far as getting the people there and learning about what we are all trying to do.

I'm not sure, Debbie may have those numbers.

I'm not sure how many were adopted.

Typically they bring a load, you know, of mixed animals and try to get those adopted. Horses and burros.

Our natural attendance, during the day Friday and Saturday we typically have two or three hundred kind of in or out.

Our Saturday night attendance is about two thousand which is really good.

The first five or six years we were probably at 800 to a 1000 and over the last two years really all of our numbers have started to increase.

Adoption averages, attendance.

Adoption numbers, etc. Our adoption averages right here.

I have this at 1300.

Some of you may keep in mind is our Florida event that we had in May.

We had 24 mares that averaged 3150 which is amazing.

Usually our average was around 5-800.

Where we had some that were a little higher.

We're seeing upward of 7,000, 8,000 being our high adoptions and not a lot of 200 or less.

Seeing a lot of 3-800 dollars but it goes to the intent of increasing the value of mustangs and of the trainers and the work that they're doing.

Getting these horses prepared for adoption.

I put under there our sale averages and that's the average of about a thousand dollars.

The question that June had yesterday and there's been question about where does the adoption money go?

The trainers do receive 50% of that and the other 50% goes back towards the program, so it would just go to offset money that BLM will be putting towards the program.

And that includes T-shirts, tickets, adoption, etc.

So any program goes back to pay for the program to lesson our draw from BLM.

Just some little stats under there what we've seen in 2016.

We seen an increase in first time trainer participation so the word is definitely getting out there.

I think a lot of sit mouth to mouth so trainer to trainer also increased outreach.

That's really referring to America's mustang campaign.

Some of those were held in conjunction with the makeover so we're able to add those demonstrations and seminars.

Increased spectator involvement.

Why try to improve the time and Byron does that at the events where he will facilitate a question and answer between potential adopters and the trainers will bring them out and have them in there for about an hour where they make them available to the public to answer questions about the horses that they'll be adopting out.

2017 you'll see in a minute that we're going to have fewer events but focus on more trainers at those events and try to do some increased education.

The next one is our tentative schedule and this is our tentative schedule events pending that budget approval.

We've got the first one will be in January and that's one that we put on mustang heritage foundation independently of BLM funding and it's really important to us to continue to try to do some of those events that we can do on our own without relying on BLM to cover some of those costs.

So this will be on with your website probably October 1st.

I'm going to turn it over to Byron.

Byron spends time doing a lot of things that spends a lot of time on the trainer and program.

.

>> Questions on the make over thing?

>> Thank you Kali and thank you for allowing us to present today.

Again, we'll talk about the trainer incentive program created almost ten years ago now.

Really excited about this program we're seeing exponential growth in every area of it. Currently this year we placed 861 animals.

Those are both horses and burros of all ages, all sex, which do include a few sale of horses.

This is about a 40% increase from last year so apparently we placed 514 horses.

You'll see 155 horses through youth programs.

Specifically horses 18-24 months of age.

124 of those horses were through our tip store front program which we'll cover next.

Again, 41 burros.

We did add a new interactive map on our mustang heritage foundation website that's interactive where potential adopters can go on there and find trainers that are in their

area.

And this has been really nice, these trainers are really kind of our boots on the ground little marketing machines out there in each, you know, location.

They're creating relationships with feed stores and with riding clubs.

So that's been a really nice piece for what we do as far as gaining exposure for wild horse and burro adoption programs.

Right now through our new and renewed signups we have 440 approved trainers.

This is nearly a 100% increase since last year.

Right now, the map that was on this slide's not fully updated.

But in the continental United States there are three states that don't have the assigned trainers.

Florida is currently where we are seeing the most adoptions.

Part of that is due to a successful store front.

California hosts the largest number of trainers.

That's 60 trainers.

And a few things that we did see increased which part of -- partly was due to our store front agreement created in Colorado were tipping horses in the state of Colorado and there's currently about 25 horses in that program as well.

Just a quick overview on tip.

It is a trainer incentive program.

These trainers are inquiring at their own cost.

At the time of adoption they're incentivized per animal.

They are required to achieve some minimal gentling requirements which we do have some parameters in place to guarantee that the trainers are doing that.

We are also communicating with the new potential adopters.

We do have a new Facebook page for the trainer incentive program for the trainers to be able to advertise these gentled animals and all this is at a cost of 125 dollars to the adopters so very, very successful program.

>> I've been a TIP trainer for almost ten years and this is really one of the best programs that there is out there because it's really good.

I keep up with every TIP horse I've ever had.

I can show you pictures of them with kids on them.

It's really cool.

So I encourage everybody that is a trainer or is interested this is a program where you can help BLM and help mustang heritage get these horses into private hands and a homes.

You know, someone asked me, well, just one or two horses.

My comment is, how do you eat an elephant?

One bite at a time and get a bite and get it done.

All right.

I'm sorry.

I just had to say that.

>> Byron: It's absolutely true.

We do have the store front program that we're fixing to talk about but a lot of these trainers are adopting one or two animals a year.

When you multiply that by 440 trainers that's a big piece of the adoption program and we are on track to adopt out over one thousand horses in fiscal 2016-17 through the TIP program alone.

We're really excited about it and trying to find innovative ways to make it successful.

With all of the programs we're seeing these trainers getting lots of exposure through

either extreme makeover or the training program and actually become part of the industry, become activated in the horse industry and specifically mustangs in this case.

>> Byron, real quick.

With the trainer incentive program I see that there was some sale authority horses that were also in that.

Can you explain how the process works for the sale authority horse for the program?

>> So sale authority typically, you know, it operates the same way through the TIP program.

They pick up the horse, they meet the gentling requirements.

The adopter at the time of adoption has the option to adopt that animal and go through the twelve month title process or they can get a bill of sale for that animal and receive a title at the time of adoption when they sign the PMACA or, in this case it wouldn't be a PMACA or a bill of sale.

Really the only difference is the adopter is getting the title.

>> Have you gotten feedback from the trainers on whether they prefer that adoption or would they prefer sale of authority horses.

>> We do have a storefront.

In general I haven't heard a lot just within some of those -- just one or two time trainers.

We do have a store front trainer in Florida who does -- has found some success with this sale of authority horses and has requested some and I think it's just the adopters are just catching on the fact that they can and like.

Most of the comments are just people are hesitant to know that BLM could come on their property for some reason.

I don't know whether they think BLM are going to do but that's okay.

They're just a little bit hesitant and also to, you know, any other, you know, in the equine industry you go to purchase an animal you leave with a title.

At sales or any kind of purchase, you leave with a title.

It's just customary and sits well with people.

They're familiar with that process.

>> And I do think that there is potential to see, like an increase value in the sale authority animals especially through extreme make over but at this time we haven't seen any real difference as far as training or desirability.

We'll move on the store front.

The TIP store front program was created in 2008.

This year we did a big push on this for various reasons.

One was to increase the number of animal to TIP trainers in the United States where there are fewer holding facilities.

Also increase the availability of wild mustangs in the eastern states anywhere.

So with the store front agreement, trainers sign up through the TIP program, they go through a BLM compliance check to make sure the facilities can handle large numbers of horses.

Typically they start with ten, a minimum of ten animals and what this does, again, it gives us another injection point for the animals.

It gives us another place to provide animal to other TIP trainers and just increase the visibility of live animals in eastern states.

We also saw an increase in store front facilities in the west as well.

But our goal is to spread the store front program in the eastern states specifically.

So currently through store front we have 124 adoptions created through fiscal 16.

We have 11 approved and active facilities currently and five facilities waiting for approval through this agreement.

This is the reason for the increase.

If you get the monthly adoption reports from mustang heritage this was the main increase for adoptions in Colorado.

So the process for becoming, again, a store front trainer, a store front facility, you do have to sign up as a TIP trainer.

We'll read you the TIP store front program guidelines, make sure it's a good fit.

They do need to submit a form to us.

That goes through a second review.

BLM will do a site visit and then we will coordinate between the new facility, mustang heritage and BLM as far as getting logistics.

I do think we have a video from one of our new store fronts in Colorado.

If that will load hopefully.

And, again, store fronts are not been great just for adoption numbers and availability of horses but provide another educational format and greatest scape has been really, really passionate about educating the general public about wild horse and burro adoption program and are facilitating a lot of adoptions in a short amount of time.

>> (Video).

>> Byron: Are there any questions about TIP or store front.

>> This is something we talked about in the past and we encouraged BLM last year to increase the number of store fronts and we -- Kali and I had this talk and on behalf of the board we appreciate BLM being and Holle and Debbie Collins, and you, Kali make thing happen because this is the way to make it forward.

>> Kali: If you are watching and would like to get involved.

Let us know.

>> Byron: Next is an effort taken on by mustang heritage.

It's currently run by private donations.

It's an eight week program where military veterans come out three days a week and do become adopters and adopt wild untrained mustangs and we facilitate a program for them at our facility in Georgetown, Texas, it's at no cost to the veterans and no cost to the BLM.

And currently we started this program in 2013.

As a pilot program.

And wanted to just see, you know, what the potential was there for a long time.

It's been known the effects or value of pairing at risk groups or underserved populations with horses and it's been seen as an organic thing like Roy Rogers said it's good for the inside of a man is outside of a horse.

But my focus over the last three years is to be able to have this organic program that's scientifically based.

Primarily most of your programs out there involve therapeutic riding and as we know wild horses do not lend.

Through therapeutic riding on untrained horses.

What we found is really -- it is a therapy program that's experiential veterans from all war areas are allowed to engage in this program and it's about building connections with the horse.

Building relationships.

Most of the veterans that were seen come through the program.

You know, they're not looking for better balance or better use of a prosthetic or

anything like that.

They're just looking for peace, comfort and increased value in their relationships whether it's intimate relationships, perpetual relationships, or just friendships in general.

And it's been really neat for us.

It's quite an intimate program for the mustang heritage staff.

We actually get to have wild horses onsite and get to be a part of this adoption process.

And, for me, you know, personally it's very rewarding.

We have basically a government managed horse.

And a government managed human.

And both are in need of a new skill set in order to be productive.

And what I found is that there's a huge difference between being a citizen and having citizenship.

That's what this program does for the veteran.

That's what the adoption program does for these wild horses is gives them citizenship.

They're American citizens already but without these new skill sets, they don't -- they're not productive.

They're not adding value so that's what we're seeing out of our program that it sound like I'm tooting our horn a little bit but I am.

Because our value -- or our veterans are coming out of this program with increased productivity.

So whether you believe in therapy or not they are -- they have increased productivity.

I mean, by is that, the we have veterans that have actually gone out and bought small ranches after this program that were not part of the horse industry in any form in the sense of the word that are now involved in the adoption program.

Some of them have boarding facilities.

Some of them now just offer their services in backgrounding mustangs and that's really neat for us to see and be part of and they are continuing to come back and help with this program.

Currently we serviced 30 veterans on the adoption side of our program so we have 30 veterans that have adopted horses in this program but then we have lots of residual effects through our partnerships with other groups where they come out and have a one or two day experiential event there onsite.

That's something we're excited about.

As far as the future of this program, if you just address PTSD alone we currently have three hundred thousand vets just from Iraq and Afghanistan wars that have been diagnosed with PTSD.

We can offer hopefully a true solution.

Not a treatment.

>> Okay, I'm going to take it back over.

As Holle mentioned in 2015 we did start the Americans mustang campaign.

For us it's really exciting to be able to do this.

We spent the last before that eight years really just focusing on training and gentle ing mustang for adoption.

We got to really dive into kind of making information available for America so they can realize why we are doing even what we're doing.

Not only, you know, the situation and what BLM's facing but also what is the point in a purpose even for the extreme mustang make over or the trainer incentive program

and why is there an emphasis on training.

So hopefully that's what we're doing and what people are taking away from these American Mustang events.

The other thing that I, you'll see at the bottom some of the activities that we've done through America's mustang and Holle mentioned a couple mustang marathons in the eco sanctuary.

Really what I hope is we're providing an opportunity for BLM to even engage the public more and to even engage some of these partnerships that they have beyond MHF so they have the eco sanctuary partnerships and things like that.

Given an avenue and an opportunity to have a different type of relationship with them where they are invited and they come out and able to provide information and hopefully we've set that up for success for them and for us as well.

So it benefits us through extreme mustang make over and TIP.

The more team that learn about everything that is going on is really a benefit to all of us so the main focus again is, education.

Allowing people to come out, gather information, and then make up their minds on where they want to go from there.

And how they can get involved.

This year we had three, what we call America's mustang expos.

Arizona and Missouri.

In Missouri we were fortunate enough to have the team that's here doing the Livestream come out to Missouri and Livestream some of your arena classes and the demonstrations as well.

We had over 1100 Livestream views.

Just over those two days which may not sound like a lot.

We were really happy about it.

It took us awhile to get everything approved and up and going so we really didn't have a lot of time to advertise.

We were really excited about those numbers and I know those will just continue to grow if we can do some Livestream next year.

13,000 website page views and that was just those expo page views.

I didn't do overall the whole website.

And then the national events which include the expos.

Above all else just hoping to engage the public more in what we're doing and trying to accomplish.

The next slide here.

Not to be confused with the Livestream we also did some Facebook live.

That really launched kind of couple of weeks before we went out to Missouri so that was our first attempt at Facebook live so between the three events and probably five to ten different live sessions we had 7,000 plus views which is huge.

And what most of those were we did some adoption how-tos.

We had BLM there talking about the adoption process and talking about the wild horse adoption or things of that nature so the other exciting thing that we did in Missouri which was really well received was the demonstration to show the process.

It's a misconception and people don't understand what is all involved so we had BLM staff on there who were qualified and able to do a really good demonstration for us.

Which the public seemed to really enjoy.

So part of our goal for 2017 is just to include a lot more of that kind of educational opportunity for the public that may not be able to attend an event or adoption and learn what it's all about.

2016 in review.

We're looking at 1200 adoptions as through the incentive program.

57 million dollar annual savings to be BLM and taxpayers and that's when compared to the FY 2015 cost of 48,000 dollars.

In that, again, is just for 2016 so if we took that 7,000, I'm not a mathematician.

I'm not sure how much that would be but it's a lot of money and we're really proud of that fact and we're proud that we can facilitate programs that are not only what we considered successful but also very cost-effective and we're excited about the next ten years.

We really enjoyed the past ten years and getting ahead of myself.

I have a 2017 slide.

125,000 Facebook fans as of today and 600 active and passionate trainers so you saw on a previous slide we're at 1500 so this 600 is really a true twelve month active, I say passion.

I think anybody that does it is passionate.

I take liberty in saying they're passionate.

But 600 trainers that are passionate.

Looking ahead.

You know, obviously, you know, looking to increase adoptions.

This year, we have increased adoptions at about Byron said 40%.

30% overall so in review, I guess, for us, it's working.

I think, you know, looking at having done this for ten years and having these programs for ten years is very encouraging that it is growing and increasing a lot of times you would see the opposite so we're really excited about the future and the possibilities that we have through the partnership with BLM and other organizations. Like we saw with greatest scape and other groups that are really passionate about trying to find a solution to what we've got going on here and I understand personally and we at mustang heritage foundation really understand that we're really just working in one part of this big problem that you have and but it's fun.

We enjoy it and we like to see progress and we feel like we're doing something that's very, you know, successful in getting horses placed, so we're humbled and honored we're able to do it.

We're excited about the next ten years and really look forward to it.

>> Questions?

>> I notice on your schedule you do not appear to have an event in Nevada next year I attended the one in Reno you had in June.

It seemed to me it was very successful according to your figures you more than doubled the amount that you did last year.

I was just wondering what your reason for that was.

>> We're still in negotiations with them.

We just don't have an agreement with the one in Nevada or California yet.

In Nevada we're working on dates whether it's the same weekend or next week.

I'm hopeful that we can make it work.

It's not off the table.

It's just not confirmed.

>> Thank you.

>> I had a quick information question for my own sake.

Do you have professionals with the veterans?

>> Byron: Your program started as train the trainer type deal.

We're currently trying to form a partnership with a group near Austin that can provide

the professional therapy.

>> Great.

I think they would find it great material to work with.

Yeah.

>> I just want to say thank you for putting all the passion and hard work and creating this big beacon of, like, hope.

And, you know, the BLM and the program there's so many sad stories and there's so many, you know, it's kind of a gloomy situation and, you know, to see these wonderful success stories and this positive branding that you're doing for wild horse and burro program just doing wonders for everything.

So thank you for that.

What can we do as an advisory board or as the BLM to help you facilitate your adoptions and raise these numbers from one to two thousand and make it bigger and better and get more horses adopted.

>> Thank you and thanks for some of your beautiful photography that we've been able to use for a lot of our marketing.

Yeah, as far as moving forward, I put a note on here just, you know, we're working with BLM to improve the course selection.

I talked about that a little bit at the last board meeting.

But just continuing to work together and I say continue because we are and we do have a successful and positive working relationship but we all realize that it is important that if we are going to put all this time and effort into, you know, putting these horses into training, having these trainers literally do it for free, that we want to set everybody up for success so it is important for us and BLM to use our best and brightest as we should for any adoption event or any program.

But, you know, there are some very quality, you know, highly adoptable animals out there.

And we want to make sure that we're using those for this kind of high profile event.

Above and beyond that it's just continued support and that goes from the top down. Support at the corral.

Support at the national level and also at the corral to support with, you know, helping TIP trainers and adopting and encouraging them.

Just that customer support and ensuring we continue to improve that on both ends. And funding.

Not so fun to talk about but we'll do as much as we can with what we have and try to make it as cost-effective as we can.

>> Fred Woehl: Thank you both very much.

It's been a good report and it's a positive report and sometimes in these meetings we don't have a lot of positive stuff but this was one.

>> Kali: And thank you for your support.

Debbie did bring me a note real quick and I really I work for Debbie so I need to make sure I say it.

Whenever I was explaining how the adoption income all evens out at the end, whenever we have an extreme listing make over event and the horses are adopted if it's an adoptable horse we take 125 dollars off the top and that's paid back to BLM for the adoption fee and the 50% comes after that.

The 50% to the trainer.

I want to make sure that is clear because we have had questions about that.

>> I got to say one more thing before we break is the fact that Byron's a tough old cowboy but he talked about that horse and he kind of broke down a bit.

It's tough, isn't it, buddy.

>> It's just a testament to how passionate we all are no matter what our vision is when it comes to horses it involves passion.

Thank you, guys for being passionate about it as well.

>> Thank you.

Kathie, let's reconvene at 10:30.

Give us a ten minute break because we're behind but we don't want to stop anything. All right?

(Break).

>> Thank you all very much, the meeting will now come back to order.

At this time there's a change in the agenda.

We're going to have our working group report and we're going to talk about some of our proposed recommendation.

We have some folks that have to leave early.

I'm trying to get this out of the way it's one of those things to where -- even though you have a schedule, we need to be able to adjust and adapt and go from there, what we're going to do next is have the working groups get a report from them.

Their proposed recommendations.

Going to have board discussion on them and then we're going to vote and see what recommendations we put forth.

Now we have an hour and a half for this and if we don't get through we will break at lunch and then pick this back up at the end of the meeting in the regularly scheduled time or past that.

We'll -- everybody out there in Livestreaming land this meeting may go to 6:30 or 7:00 and part of that you won't be able to hear because we have set time but I'm sure it'll be in some place in internet land you can find if you have to.

I'm trying to spend a little bit of time because the co-chair is supposed to be the one chairing this and she's not here.

And so -- if I have someone who is capable of using a dart gun we might see if we can go get her.

Dart her and get her back in here.

But you -- I'll share a poem with you all while we're waiting.

All right?

There's nothing like a mustang between your knees, one that's light to the rain and willing to please.

Together as one until the day is done on a mustang you'll find your way home.

The world is brighter when I'm up on this throne that's strapped to the topside of muscle and bone.

Beneath me a friend on whom I depend.

On a mustang I find my way home.

You know luck is fickle and the day is long danger is quick.

Purpose and song on a mustang I'll find my way home.

When my trail has ended on this plain and the angels carry me away.

Please carry me home on a good honest gray, on a mustang I'll find my way home.

Thank ya'll very much and we still don't have Sue.

So we'll just go ahead and start.

The first working group we're going to hear from will be the resource group which is chaired by Cope.

Cope, what I ask you to do is introduce the ones on your working group and the floor is yours.

>> Cope: Although I chair it we do open the doors.

This is one of those things.

This is such an important working group that we certainly don't want to disallow or shut out anyone with valuable input.

>> Fred Woehl: Let me ask this, do you have Steve on the line?

On the phone?

>> Would you call him, please?

>> What's his number?

>> Three.

I have no idea.

Small town.

>> Fred Woehl: Steve is our board member who can't be here so we're trying to get him on the phone so he can have a part of it.

>> You can just put him on speaker.

>> Okay.

>> Cope: We had an interesting discussion and several topics came up that we discussed in depth that we haven't really hit that far before.

Largely due to the impressions we had and what we learned on the field trip on Wednesday.

Where it became so obvious that it was quite incredible crisis situation out there affecting the resource.

It opened the conversational doors to where as we said yesterday, when we heard the consensus overall from the people in public content it has become highly apparent that we're past the time to be talking about, thinking about and we're into the time that something's got to be done.

We're -- the emergency is real, the degradation and loss of resources are all too occurring, all too evident.

And although some of our recommendations may not be popular and may be controversial, we want to put everything out there because we definitely feel that there are no options we can totally ignore at this time.

The crisis point is to where anything can be done needs to be done.

So from a resource standpoint, you want me to go into recommendations from here Mr. Chair?

Our first one, here we go, guys.

BLM should follow the stipulations of wild horse and burro act of all long-term and short-term holding deemed unadoptable or for sale with youth phase is a.

These animals should be held in the most humane way possible.

BLM is totally unable to clear the excess animals off the range.

They have nowhere to go with them.

We can't take care of the ones that we have and there's the recommendation impossible to implement at this time.

But if you read the intent, the letter and the spirit of the wild horse and burro act it states clearly that the secretary is achieving a thriving natural ecological balance on the public lands and to protect the natural balance of all wildlife species that inhabit such lands particularly wildlife species.

It goes onto state specifically that excess animals shall immediately remove excess animals from the range such as to achieve levels.

Such action will be taken in order of priority until all excess animals have been removed so as to restore the balance with overpopulation.

It goes onto say that the secretary shall cause additional excess wild free roaming

horses and burros for which an adoption demand by qualified individuals does not exist to be destroyed in the most humane and cost efficient manner possible. In states of an excess animal that meets criteria in paragraph one shall be made for sale without limitation including auction to the highest bidder to livestock selling facilities until all time excess animals are offered.

This isn't going to happen.

We know that.

But we also think that the secretary, the director and Congress should be made aware of the severity of the problem and the resource degradation and how bad things are getting on the range.

At this point we're getting off of that as recommendation.

Knowing full well that it can't be fulfilled as long as the rider remains on the interior appropriations bill.

It's an option at least that really needs to be protect and considered sometime in the future.

I open the floor for comments at this point.

>> Cope: Can you clarify that again?

Exactly what -- at the beginning, before you started reading what the act said.

What did you say?

I'm not sure everyone was even --

>> You mean the recommendation itself.

>> Do it slow so she can get it.

>> We have an extra copy too somewhere.

It stays that the BLM should follow the stipulations of the wild horse and burro act. Those are what I read there. By offering all suitable animals in long-term and short-term holding which are deemed unadoptable for sale without limitation or utilizing humane euthanasia.

Those animals should then be destroyed in the most humane manner possible that is the letter and the intent of the original wild horse and burro act.

>> I certainly -- Hope helped create the wild horse and burro act and I know that wasn't her intent and she was one of the creators of it.

I understand exactly where you're coming from but I don't believe that that's what they ambioned when they helped congressionally work through the wording of the act.

>> One of our purposes in this is hopefully gain enough attention where congress will do something to allow some sort of solution to be reached.

But at the moment with the rider in place, I don't think the BLM has I options other than keeping horses in long-term holding that are now consuming two-thirds of the budget and creating a bottleneck.

We have the scheduled amount of horses round up and removal for the next three years is while we're increase somewhere from 10-20,000 a year.

That's not going to work, guys.

Somewhere along the line you got to make room to pull them off the ranch.

>> I don't know whether it'd be appropriate to add this at this time but since horse space has been made available for long-term holding, could we ask that they put more pressure to increase the budget for -- because I think that's what has been holding up the number of animals that they can gather is because they don't have the funds to do that.

But I realize it would be an additional cost as far as putting them in long-term holding.

But it would also relieve pressure on the land which is what our number one priority is and so if they could remove more horses, you know, from the wild, it would put less pressure on the land.

>> Absolutely.

The problem is right now we're roughly 40,000 horses over.

We're talking 1.6 billion dollars.

>> I don't know if you want to add that to the recommendation or make that as a recommendation but I would like to see them put some more pressure to get more funds to do more.

>> The thing that we've heard today is that the length of time it takes to do these solicitations per off range pastures takes a year or more.

I mean, I would be okay with putting in here BLM should do what they said or provide adequate off range facility to care for these horses or something along those lines but the length of time it would take to get that done, I mean, it wouldn't --

>> Well, it's going to take some time to get congress to approve the money too.

But I don't know, maybe, Holle, maybe she could tell us again how many spaces, I think that she indicated that there were some areas that would be available soon with some later.

>> Steve: Should I intervene here?

This is Steve on the conference.

I think just with the sheer number and volume of horses that our in need of being gathered in the dire circumstances that are facing starvation and death by thirst on these ranges.

We've got to do something with the animals that are currently in long-term holding facilities.

To do nothing it may possibly be the cruellest thing we could do to the horses indefinitely.

Because of the effects it will have on the horses and on the range and what they call their homes.

And so I think that we should move forward with this motion and at least perhaps at this point in time it's not a recommendation they can act on but hopefully we can get enough of Congress's attention that they don't that either and at some point in time they can utilize this recommendation.

>> In response to June's comment I think she's absolutely right.

I'm not even sure we need a separate recommendation on those lines because we've said before you got to do more with them but the very fact that we're coming up to say you got to get rid of them.

They will stimulate Congress to say that's not acceptable so what else can we do and at that point I think they'd be much more amenable to possibly appropriating more dollars.

If you start with that I think they just blow you off and don't worry about it.

But if you say, well, what do you want to do then?

Maybe there's a chance of getting some dollars out of them.

>> Well, and I think the main purpose of that is since it seems to be the focus of not only what the public has proposed but what we have as well is this -- the viability of the land.

And just -- (no audio).

>> Bedrock upon which our wild horses and burros depend.

Our wildlife depends and our rural communities depend.

We've got to unplug the pipeline.

>> Well, and that's true.

But, you know, I mean, that's not going to -- it's not a lot of horses but, you know, you got to start somewhere and, you know, and even though it may not be enough supposedly to make a difference but it would be a start at least.

And since, you know, when you talked about the budget and the time and what, you know, Fred had said, you know, it would take awhile to do that so maybe it would be coordinated in time as far as when it could be budgeted as well as the space be available.

>> The big conclusion we've reached after a lot of discussion is that the situation has become sufficiently dire.

We decided that, you know what?

We can't afford to throw away any option.

Distasteful as it may be.

We really came to the conclusion that we had to at least be able to consider any possible solution.

This is probably the least socially palatable of any of the options we have come up with but it is an option.

>> Do you think, I'm just thinking out loud, that something like this, being put forward. Might stimulate June, private entities that would think -- I mean, won't agree with this but would stimulate them to maybe take on more of these houses to keep them from something like this?

>> June: Well, and I don't know how that would work but, you know, I -- would be open to anything that would help any way that it could be used and I don't mean to disregard anything that the committee -- I'm not on that committee.

As said, I know they worked really hard on that but it just occurred to me when Holle had reported that they had that extra space which you may not been aware of at that time.

>> So, June's suggestion is we have pasture space and the number Holle talked about was 5500.

So that's 6,000 spaces and, yes, if you move old horses out of corrals like we intend to the pastures then you save some money so 6,000 animals from corrals to pastures.

You don't save that whole amount of money.

It's probably about two bucks per feed day so two dollars times six thousand horses times 365 days is a savings of 4.3 million dollars and I think I eluded to in my opening remarks we're going to move that to on-range activities.

Let's say we're going to do removals.

Let's remove more than 3500 like June said we could.

Let's take that savings and ignore the removal cost.

It's going to cost BLM for every thousand animals not adopted, so let's say we can adopt 3500 or those that go out of the system by natural mortality.

Let's add another thousand horse to that.

That don't get adopted.

That's a 1.8 million dollar equipment on corrals so the bottom line here is the 4.3 million dollar savings would need about 2300 more horses removed not adopted in corrals so it goes a little way to removing a few more but considering the 40,000 in AML.

>> Proposed resolution says that all the horses in long-term holding, and if I looked ahead at the budget correctly, that budget -- that share of the budget is 17 million dollars.

So it's not four million dollars.

It's 17 million dollars saved.

>> Yes.

Your proposal would be but I'm talking about the savings accumulated by BLM by acquiring 6,000 spaces that Holle talked about.

Moving 6,000 horses.

>> Yes.

It's not quite as much as what we need, is it?

>> Just to add to that we didn't say all of them.

We said all suitable animals.

Those that couldn't be sold or that were unadoptable.

>> And I think you need to be able to recognize, too, that the sales without limitation, really gives an opportunity for wild horse advocacy groups to put their money where their mouth is when it comes to taking care of the horses.

It's their horses that would be deemed unadoptable.

But see continued on.

What an idea to have them acquire pasture spaces themselves to put on the ground towards taking care of those animals that at least said they wanted to protect.

To do so with their own funding.

And enable the BLM to take care of the land and the range resource and the horses that utilize that resource in way that is in line with the duty that's been given them.

So I think that's something we need to consider too.

>> Two points.

Going on with what Fred said, even though you may think that 2300 horses or whatever may not make that much of an impact but at least it would say BLM's trying to do something to alleviate it.

And also I don't have my calculator but maybe Dean can help me.

We are, our association actually purchased 20 horses in from short-term holding.

So I don't know what kind of a savings that would be if you calculate that.

Every little bit helps.

That's 36,500 dollars per year.

And those horses were all 11 years or older.

>> And you're only the workgroup member we haven't heard from.

Do you have anything to add to the conversation?

>> Thanks for putting me on the spot, Cope.

>> You haven't answered yet.

>> I'm -- you know, I'm 27.

And I'm going to be dealing with public lands and land management for hopefully the next 50-60 years of my life.

And it kind of pisses me off that I've been inherited or I've been given a bunch of messes.

And what I saw, you know, on that range then that we went and visited and other range lands that I've gone to see is one of the biggest, you know, ecological disasters that I think we're going to face.

You know, in my generation, which is invasive species coming over and taking over native range lands.

Diminishing biodiversity and making it really difficult for native plants and animals to make a living.

I really want to think that we can adopt our way out of this.

I have adopted seven horses.

I've gotten hundreds of them adopted.

But, you know, it's just not realistic.

You know, for me, my ultimate goal with the wild horse and burro program is to have a target population that is controlled by birth control to slow the population growth so that whenever gathers are necessary they equal the adoption demand and to get to that point, I don't think that we can get there without euthanizing or selling horses. And, like, it kills me to say that but if you really want me to know how I feel, that's how I feel.

And I wish it was -- I wish that wasn't the case but, you know, I've seen PZP, I've adopted horses and I've just, you know, that's the end goal that I don't think we can get to that end goal whenever we're spending two-thirds of our budget on hay and if we can cut off that hay bill and spend that money on on-range management and, you know, habitat improvements then I think that 20, 30, 40 years down the line my kids and my grandkids will greatly appreciate us passing along a better rangeland than what I foresee in the future if we do nothing.

>> Thank you, Ben, as ya'll can see we did not jump to this quickly.

This took a lot of serious discussion and heart rending decision making and finally reached the conclusion that this is what we were going to offer as a recommendation and throw it out there for the powers that be to look at.

>> I want to bring up one more thing.

Knowing that this can't be done, is there a lot of benefit in making a recommend like this.

>> There could be.

Remember, there's already been talking in Congress of descending a rider in the interior appropriations bill.

This may be something if it gets enough attention may sway some congressional members whether it's to act or change the policy.

Our ultimate objective here is to let people know in positions of the secretary of interior from congress down there's a huge problem and a disaster already upon us that's being ignored and we can't ignore it any longer.

>> Fred, I think this recommendation is a way of taking the public and congress on our field tour.

It's a way of telling them that what we saw is truly, truly serious.

It's an emergency.

It can't wait.

And I view this resolution as way of taking them on that field true.

>> Steve: One other thing I think that needs brought up too is we talked about the cost savings and incorporated with the horses off to the range.

How -- I don't think discussed as much as it ought to.

I know it's been touched upon on some of the meetings is the cost incurred by the range degradation that has already and continues to occur and I don't care how much money you throw at that problem, money alone can't fix it.

Even the regions, the best you're going to do is to get an introduced grass to grow in those and we have several ranges where we tried that three times by drilling it.

Unsuccessfully.

On our own ground and so your native grasses such as Indian grass and your shrubs, salt brush, those things are next to impossible to get to seed even if you can and when you take upon when you consider the grass and all the other introduced annuals that are out there will crowd those young seedlings out before there is ever an opportunity for them to get started.

You're talking about a resource that when it's gone it's gone.
And you can throw a billion dollars at it at that point in time.
It's not coming back and it won't in the lifetime of my children or my grandchildren or Ben's grandchildren.

It's something that we need to consider not only for the wild horses but also for the livestock, also for the wildlife.

The sage-grouse and everything else that utilizes that range in its pristine condition.

>> Madam Chair, I leave it to you if you want to talk about this or move onto the other three on the block.

>> We'll take a vote.

A voice vote.

Starting with Ben and we'll come down.

>> Ben: I vote in favor of this recommendation.

>> Aye from me.

>> Aye from me.

>> Steven?

Steven we're taking a vote.

>> Yes, from me.

>> Can you repeat that, sorry?

>> Yes.

>> Absolutely not.

No.

>> June?

>> Yes.

>> Yes.

And I'll vote yes.

The motion is passed.

>> Second recommendation we have would that be permissible to move on.

They're a little less controversial from here on.

BLM should prioritize sage-grouse habitat.

BLM should also use degree of range degradation as a criterion for excess animals and those should be given to those lands most amenable to rehabilitation.

That one I think is pretty straightforward as it addresses prioritization for sage-grouse habitat.

>> Could I explain the reason for that?

We all know that BLM has a clear mandate to protect and deal with horse conflict in the sagebrush focal areas. This language changes it to all the designated sage-grouse habitat.

Not just sagebrush focal areas. That's the primary intent of this.

We already have recommendations with respect to compatibility with the sage-grouse law but specifically BLM has limited wild horse and burro protections to sage-grouse focal areas this is an effort to expand that and what you saw with the various maps, lots of the degraded ranges that we're talking about here in Nevada are designated primary and general habitat for sage-grouse.

But they're not sagebrush focal areas.

>> Any other discussion?

>> I would like to see it a little bit better.

I mean --

>> Oh okay.

>> I just sent it over.

>> Okay.

>> Can you just read it again, Cope?

>> Cope: BLM should prioritize sage-grouse habitat for removal of excess animals. BLM should also use degree of range degradation as a criterion for prioritization of that removal and consideration should be given to those range lands that are most amenable to this.

>> Based on what we heard I'm talking about this Bureau of Land Management, BLM has until I think 2020 to have that is their goal and if we don't do something like this they will be -- I'm always of the opinion and if we can do it our own self or if board meeting can do it it's better than having somebody force them to do it. Does that make sense?

>> Absolutely.

What it amount to is if we don't get it squared away we'll be forced to list it.

>> Based on that part right there -- I'm through.

>> There's a sad acknowledgment in that recommendation.

That last sentence, consideration should be given to those ranges that are most amenable to rehabilitation recognizes that some of the range lands are beyond recovery.

And I know you've heard that and maybe question whether that's true but it -- this is an attempt to ask BLM let's save what we can because it's already past time for some of those places.

>> Are you ready for a vote?

>> No.

No.

Hold on.

Do we have any idea what this looks like?

I mean, we're -- how many acres?

How many herds?

How many animals this might impact?

Are any of the herds you're talking about genetically on the borderline or not?

They're not very many animals in there of historic or genetic irreplaceable quality?

Do we really know any of that.

>> I'd like to address the genetic viability if I could.

We heard a lot of that in the public comment yesterday.

I did a little research and talked with Alan on that is we talked about raising those AMLs from double digits from 100 to 150 to ensure genetic variability.

I've seen cattle that didn't bring in new breeding stock and expanded their population using the existing stock.

You didn't increase the herd size with the genetic base.

How high do you have to ensure those numbers?

And according to what I heard that magic number is not 100 it's closer to 5,000.

At that point the word we got yesterday is if you want genetic variability you bring in outside breeding stock and that seems to be the only logical workable solution.

>> Cope, I'm just going by many years of working with Dr. Kathrens since 1994 and if you look at his reports and his conclusions, I would certainly go with the science from him.

I understand you're talking about like IUCN recommendations when they're talking about huge populations.

I'm talking about the minimal recommendation from the foremost equine geneticist in the United States.

>> I have also done extensive interviews with Dr. Kathrens and according to Dr. Kathrens there's been no signs of genetic breeding depression of horses in the last --

>> Ginger: That's certainly not correct if you look -- that is certainly not correct and I respectfully would disagree with you on this if you look at -- I have in my office boxes of vials on the genetic reports.

He warned it on the priors.

He expressed significant concerns over our burro populations so I certainly respectfully don't agree with what you just said.

>> Cope: Just setting back and thinking about what's going on it's very clear that horses are not an endangered species because the sage-grouse is and the sage-grouse takes priority over everything else and few understand that right as far as getting the habitat back to where it needs to be to keep the sage-grouse from being an endangered species is that correct?

>> There has been a movement ahead of some groups who want to have the sage-grouse listed as an endangered species due to lack of habitat.

We can go to the ins and outs of West Nile infection and predation and all the other parts but habitat's what they're concentrating on what an official wildlife standpoint. So the lack of preservation on the habitat will count very seriously in litigation as to what needs to be done to protect the bird.

>> May I say one more thing?

>> I'm trying to get this in my mind.

Decision has already been made that the sage-grouse, for lack of better way of putting it.

Just putting it in good old Arkansas terms the sage-grouse is more important than the horses right now.

>> That's not what it means at all.

The sage-grouse represents the habitat that supports it and this is an act aimed at preserving the sagebrush step and the hundreds of species that depend on that system.

It's not about birds versus horses that's way too simplistic.

>> If I can put it in terms that this old Arkansas boy can understand.

The canaries in the mind are the sage-grouse.

>> Pretty much the focal species rather than the bird itself we're concentrating on the bird's habitat.

That's the real focus.

>> So if we had a healthy range we would have more sage-grouse.

>> Maybe.

There are variables that aren't addressed but what is true is the BLM is mandated under the recovery plans to reclaim the sage-grouse habitat.

Right, Dean?

>> Dean: That's our goal and we placed our marker down and that's our commitment and we prioritized the habitat and to the sage-grouse focal areas as the highest priority habitat where the most birds are and the next priority of habitat and then the general, we are committed to taking care of those habitats.

>> Cope, I'm wondering if the recommendation can be more nuanced.

Simply to vote on something here without seeing maps and knowing what we're talking about.

I'm thinking about the Adobe town conflicts in Wyoming.

And also the people that manage those areas and wild earth guardians that are

located south of that and western watersheds and the conversations I've had with them and I've talked to them about wild horse population in specifically that area and they said, you know wild horses really aren't a consideration.

It isn't -- compared to livestock raising and a disruption from mining, at least in that area, that is more of a concern than wild horses.

Whereas the populations are much smaller than they are on what we're seeing in Nevada, so I'm just wondering if we might be a little more nuanced in our approach.

>> If you're using western watersheds as your standard for what you're going to do I will assure you that will raise livestock raising more important.

>> Was it wild earth gardens you specifically singled out there?

>> No, western watersheds.

>> My latest conversation was with wild earth guardians and disease --

>> Okay.

>> Knowing that it's certainly not in a state from our tour the other day.

>> Can I try to clarify something?

This recommendation is not meant to -- I'm going to use the word usurp, it's probably a bit strong.

Usurp BLM's current priorities where it's a priority first, court order is second.

No, health and safety is second.

Anyway, it's not meant to replace any of these items in that lineup.

It's just trying to add this one onto the lineup.

>> Get it down at the bottom of the list.

>> Well, and correct me, Cope, if that's not exactly the intention here.

>> The intention here was to give BLM some guidance in their development of their policy for habitat restoration and preservation for sage-grouse, does that make sense to you, Dean, as far as what we're trying to say if and the way we're going at it?

>> Yeah, clearly sage-grouse habitat management conservation is our priority and the encouragement to have work in the accomplishment of that is right in line with where we're trying to go?

Kristin, any other comments?

>> You said it well.

Thank you.

>> Would you be able to say whether this would impact, you know, the areas I was just talking about?

I mean, I really don't know.

>> I think the issue you're referring to is genetic diversity and there are recommendations in the report that aim at managing not at individual herd management area basis but because of the concern for lower numbers and genetic diversity conservation they recommended that we manage for meta populations or I'll use my words larger groups of HMAs as aggregate.

And they even said where HMAs were isolated that BLM could introduce genetics from other herds.

So their aim as genetic conservation and they called attention that you don't have a lot of burros and they called attention to the other herds like the Pryors and those known for their Spanish mustang.

Es.

What I'm trying to say NAS was trying to push us away from the genetic conservation and saying to measure bigger groups which sets aside the concern for genetic diversity.

>> I actually was looking at specifically the wording of this when it says BLM should use degree of range degradation as a criterion.

I wasn't talking about genetics.

I was really talking about areas that certainly don't look like what we saw on our tour.

>> So I think that could be clarified a bit too because it implies to me that those have been -- those habitats that have been degraded and maybe pass passed restoration you can read that.

You were saying are the habitats intact and we have desirable ecological condition that haven't crossed a threshold to annual plant in an irretrievable states I think you're aiming to take actions in those areas first and I think you can clarify and make that a little more clear.

>> I think if you add the degree of range degradation on designated sage-grouse habitat.

And then as the priority?

>> What it says at the end there, most amenable to rehabilitation.

That means to me that they already kind of have been significantly degraded.

I get what you mean but I think the wording could be a little more clear.

>> What if we added this kind of language?

Consideration should be given to those range lands that can be maintained in a healthy status and/or are amenable to believe restoration.

>> I would suggest we say restored and maintained.

And the degree of range degradation can go both ways.

If it's degraded to the point of not recovery there's no point in pumping effort into it.

If it is degraded and it has a chance of coming back and making the restoration work effective that's where we talk about concentrating.

>> And that fits because I think Kristin, also an element of sage-grouse management is restoration.

>> As well as fire and invasive species.

>> So, Cope, your two words really do nail it.

>> I'm wondering do you want to say i.e. priority consideration should be given or just simply consideration?

>> I want to leave the scientists to help make these decisions because I don't know that that's really up to this board.

I mean, I think our job is to get the intent out there.

>> I would agree.

At this point it's redundant.

>> Anything else?

Discussion?

Are we ready for a vote?

We'll start at this side this time, June.

>> I think, can I abstain?

Because I just don't feel like I'm knowledgeable enough on what this would entail to make a determination one way or the other.

>> Perfectly acceptable.

>> Yes.

>> Yes.

>> Yes.

>> Yes.

>> And I'll vote yes.

>> Steven.

>> Yes.

>> I'm sorry, Steven.

Ha, Steven.

>> Yes.

Sorry.

Yes.

>> The third one that we developed dealt a whole lot with the effects of the overpopulation on communities in the west and range health as it apply to community health.

And the bottom line we came up with was, BLM should develop partnerships with economic agencies and/or department to conduct an analysis of socioeconomic effects on communities with -- it should be with in there reduced AUMs on herd management areas due to range degradation resulting in burros.

Further analysis can be conducted by the potential removal from all livestock from all HLMAs.

I think this would fit well with the universities or the local economical development associations to find out what the effects on these western communities really are and how badly they're being hurt at the moment and what would happen if you took all the livestock off of the HLMAs.

What would be the socioeconomic results?

We're not asking BLM to do this but to develop this with the economic associations and things of that.

>> This would just be for information purposes?

>> Absolutely.

When we do this, I said this before, NEPA and all the EIS requirements absolutely mandate socioeconomic analysis.

My experience is they tend to be pretty long on the socio and pretty short on the economic and I think this would be an effort to really look at some actual influence not only the social effects although they're important but the economic effects as well.

>> Just to kind of share I know a common frustration for all of us, as we, the board, sometimes feels trapped in this argument about cows eating the grass versus horses eating the grass and quite frankly it gets very tempting to kind of want to separate those.

They're out on the playground so we can look at just how exactly it works when it's just cows and when it's just horses, so I would kind of share with you that this is part of trying to deal with that frustration because those two issues are so very difficult to separate.

And I think looking at this stuff -- behooves us to say let's get all of the horses out of the way and the cows and vice versa.

That's not the proposal at this time but I think we want to look at what is the really socioeconomic situation with those interactions?

>> Didn't I say that --

>> My comment is that I remember a passport member, Kelly Hendrickson encouraged and desired the very same thing that this recommendation aims at.

And my response and answer at the time was that will occur when we do the programmatic environmental impact statement but that's been set aside.

So this is an alternative means perhaps to achieve an understanding of the economic effects of some of the things at stake here.

>> The board is on record as far as supporting programmatic EIS.

We did that a couple of meetings ago so what you're saying then to me is that this would actually effectively do about the same thing.

>> In the absence of the programmatic statement yes, it aims at that and if we pursue that maybe an analysis can be absorbed into it.

I don't know about that but if that or a symbol potentially could.

>> I think this is something that state departments of commerce might be interested in.

I see absolutely no reason to say that the land grant universities wouldn't be interested in and it I assure you that economic development associations definitely should be.

It's something the BLM could do at very little expense.

>> I don't know how much it would cost but some alternative suggestions to get to that information.

>> Cope, are we presupposing that if all livestock were removed from all herd management areas and we know that's a pretty small percentage of BLM managed lands.

There wouldn't be any kind of alternative plan for -- we've -- I haven't talked about it as a board member.

I've talked about it elsewhere.

Some compensation.

Some alternative not thinking very clearly right now after the first recommendation.

Excuse me.

But there wouldn't be some alternative things that would be compensated for and I know others have made comments on this.

>> We talked about that in the past but I don't think anyone's ever done the economic analysis because obviously compensation without production lowers the economic multiplier.

We know that.

If the guy that's raising cattle still gets paid the same amount as he would for raising them no longer has the cattle all the people he's paying don't get paid.

The other part that we need to look at is if we got just retiring the permit.

That's a one time payment.

If you do it on an annual basis now you're depending on appropriations and I think all of these things should be analyzed with those variabilities in mind.

That's what we're talking about.

>> Thank you.

>> You ready?

Anymore discussion?

You have something to say Ben or Steven, are you still there?

>> Yes, I'm still here.

I think it's just enough.

>> Do you have any other comments?

>> No.

I just -- would vote in favor of the proposal.

I think it's really good one and I think it gives us some real objective information to work with that right now we don't have.

And I think going forward with the all the decisions that are made with the BLM it would be an opportunity to have that information ahead of time.

For the various NEPA and IES studies that will be conducted in the future.

>> Thank you.

>> One thing I'd like to ask.

I don't know if this is the right place to do this or not.

But BLM should have partnerships with others for socioeconomic effects.

I wonder if we can also do a similar partnership other agency study to conduct environmental effects.

You know, how much water is being produced for the hay in short and long-term holding pens.

You know?

What are the costs of restoring range lands back to their former state.

Do you think that could be incorporated.

>> I have no problem adding that after socioeconomic and/or environmental.

Does that suit what you're trying to say?

>> Yes.

>> That still work for you, Steven?

>> I think that's next in point.

You know, we've talked a lot about the range on resource and I think that that would give an opportunity to delve into that as well because there's -- I think the socioeconomic impact is made when the range deteriorates past the point of restoration and also with the cost that is incurred when you do have a restoration program for keeping range in the state and the condition where you want it to be to begin with.

>> Anyone else.

>> I don't know whether this belongs in any kind of recommendation.

I know there's little to be done in the areas I know of in the poor economic driver of communities as well as horses and specifically the ones in Wyoming and obviously the ones with Pryor Wisconsin and I don't know whether that will be in here or something that's separate and apart.

That would be an interesting point as well.

>> I think those data are inherent with what we're trying to do.

>> Yeah.

Either way.

>> I'm a little bit familiar with engaging agencies to do this kind of analysis and their job is not to presuppose where you want to go with this information.

So they should look at both ends of the spectrum and they will look to see the benefits and the pros and cons of these different scenarios.

>> I appreciate that, Julia, so you say potential removal of all livestock and or all wild horses or not.

>> Hey, look don't you think we stuck our neck out enough here?

Because that is not where we're going to go today.

>> Well you said our objective.

>> That's in excess.

We're not even talking about removing all wild horses.

That is not the place the board has ever wanted to go because the AMLs are established and all we want to do is reach that to where we have the sustainable number of horses in those allotments that we can work with.

We don't want to eliminate them.

>> Okay.

Okay.

>> I see what Ginger is trying to say is you could incorporate that into the study by deleting resulting from overpopulation of wild horses and or burros and leave it at

reduced ALMs so that the scientists when doing the research aren't predisposed to think that that degradation came from wild horses or burros.

>> The trouble with that is now you're confusing the wild horse issue with the fire issue because we're certainly going to have range degradation in a lot of places in the upper snake river valley where there's no horses but severe degradation due to fire and that's where we're going to stop over and lose our focus of the committee which is the wild horse population.

>> Well I might be a little slow.

You know, I've been told that before but isn't a horse livestock?

To me, I didn't know they were separate.

You know, so you could just take out overpopulation of livestock and --

>> Replace that with sheep and cattle?

>> Well --

>> Or domestic livestock.

>> Well livestock is basically anything with four legs, isn't it?

That's raised.

>> Wildlife doesn't count.

>> We're not talking about wildlife, there's no way.

What I'm saying is where it says that HMA due to range of the degradation of livestock.

And potential removal of all livestock a horse is livestock.

>> Fred, Fred, you're showing your age because that very -- it was very true where we came from and the times we came from.

But that is not true today.

In society.

Horses have moved from livestock to pets.

Socially in the United States.

>> It's already pretty explicitly states in the wild horse and burro act it's not livestock and burro act.

It's --

>> Burro is livestock too.

I'm an EIA verifier and I am certified by the live stock and poultry commission.

>> Fred, would it help if we put domestic in front of livestock in the last sentence?

>> Yes.

>> Correct.

>> Yeah.

That helps.

>> According to the wild horse and burro Act wild horses are not livestock.

>> I agree.

>> So I would not put that in there.

I mean, livestock clearly are cattle.

They're not wild horses.

And I suppose there could be domestic horses that might be doing range degradation.

So according to the wild horse and burro act they're wildlife.

>> I'm not even going to go there.

I'm sorry.

If wild horses are wildlife you'd have hunting season.

>> Not necessarily.

We have a lot of wildlife -- I think the intent here is the name.

And, Dean, does that give BLM the intent?

That's all we're looking at.

>> I think I understand it.

I think you're saying if we have overpopulations of wild horses and burros and that affects domestic livestock grazing on public lands what are the economic effects of that and the environmental effects.

That's what I think you're saying.

>> That's where we're going.

>> Yes.

>> Dr. Cope, are we ready?

>> Absolutely.

>> Any other discussion?

I think we're starting with you, Ben.

>> Recommendations made of the committee?

>> Voting on this recommendation.

>> Good morning.

>> But that's after this.

>> Yeah.

Yes, I think this information would be very beneficial to have.

>> Cope?

>> Yes.

>> Julie?

>> Yes.

>> Yes.

>> Steven?

>> Yes.

>> Ginger?

>> Yes.

>> June?

>> And I'll vote yes.

>> It's unanimous.

>> We have one more and I'm going --

>> Whoa.

Whoa.

Whoa.

>> Before we move onto the next one I would like to clarify my vote on the first recommendation.

So that I'm not misunderstood.

I certainly do not agree with euthanasia in a random not undocumented way.

In looking at the health or welfare of the horse itself, there seems to be to me to be a difference in whether you want to see a horse die on the range from lack of water or forage which is a very, very tragic death in relation to a, what's that word is that we use?

A more humane way of euthanasia.

>> I think we all agree with that, June.

We do have one more but I'm going to turn this one over to Dr. Weikel to go over that one.

It's pretty much hers.

>> Kathie, I don't have this one on a piece of paper so I'll try to go kind of slow.

BLM should encourage state agencies and BLM racks to develop and submit for

consideration their plans for herd management and range rehabilitation tailored to their specific areas and HMAs based on local knowledge and expertise.

>> Why state agencies?

They don't answer to BLM or anything like that.

>> Oh, we may want to wordsmith that a little bit.

What we meant was the state wild horse and burro collective group.

So because we all know and recognize that the on the ground people have a lot of expertise that maybe doesn't make its way certainly to us.

We saw lots of it on our tour.

And we also saw that racks, some racks are willing to get involved in this issue.

If you look at the way racks are supposed to be set up, they're supposed to respond to an issue when BLM asks them to and so this is a way of asking for participation from these other advisors and we all know that Dean's in very good and close contact with his field people in the different states but there's a lot of variability from state to state in how the local wild horse and burro team perceives the solution to their problem.

So we would just like to empower them a little bit to be willing to speak up.

>> State agencies can include the state fish and wildlife.

Conservation districts.

Water districts.

There are a lot of agencies and entities out there that could contribute to the potential solutions that aren't just the BLM racks.

>> Again, I might be a little slow but submit to who for consideration for what?

>> I think we're talking about ideas that the BLM could implement to help range rehabilitation and herd management.

>> So submit ideas or to develop and submit ideas for range --

>> They're plans.

They're submit for consideration their plans for herd management and range rehabilitation.

>> To the national BLM.

Is that right?

>> Yeah.

To the BLM.

Sure.

That'd be fine.

>> Okay.

All right.

>> And I think so long as what Cope said, I think with those other agencies we incorporate there's a lot of expertise that can be found upon by including the agents that work at the various agencies.

Incorporated by some of the states and the counties that they represent, I think there's a vast amount of knowledge that can be utilized in doing program like this.

>> Now actually I'm not trying to pick anything apart but I'm trying to get this in my mind now.

The local BLM rack, do they submit stuff to the state director of the BLM for their state?

>> I don't know if they are right now.

They certainly could.

>> Well then so what I'm trying to do is make this where it will actually be feasible and realistic.

The way this works and I understand it's a chain of command that the local racks need to do this and submit their plans to their state director or whoever they answer to for consideration and forwarding or something to the national funding or something.

You know, guys, honestly, I have problems with doing recommendations that can't be done.

Just for the fact of doing recommendations.

I personally have a problem with that.

And it kind of bogs down the system.

>> You feel like this is a recommendation that can be done because I certainly do.

>> I do and I think it's one that needs to be done but we have to word it in such a way where it can be done.

I mean, you know, we need to word it very specifically I think.

That's just me.

>> Well --

>> Fred, could I share some experience along these lines?

So I've been for a few years on a rack that had submitted some recommendation to BLM at the national level.

The rack by definition cannot give their advice to anyone but BLM.

I mine, they are BLM advisory committees.

And I faced a huge swell of support for submitting the Oregon plan to state legislatures, governors, etc. and had to resist that because by definition it's already defined who a rack is offering their recommendations to so I don't think there's a problem about where this goes.

Very clearly it's meant to be empowering these people at this level to be sure and talk to the bigger picture.

But specifically about their piece of the pie because it's different from state to state.

>> Well, again, I'm from the east and we don't have -- we don't have racks back east.

The only racks we have back east are on DOL.

That's why I mean, someone back east when they get this -- and they look at it, I mean, they're going to -- submit their plans to who?

You know what I'm say something we have to make this where the -- everybody can understand these recommendations.

If they're going to be -- maybe I'm wrong.

>> Dean, do you think the BLM would benefit from this recommendation?

>> Kind of.

I want clarity in your recommendations if you follow through on this.

I think what you're talking about are local groups, the racks and agencies.

We're already required this consultant with wildlife management agencies but local groups.

You want them to submit their ideas for herd management and range rehabilitation strategies.

I think that might be clarified rather than saying plans.

Plan means you got a plan and you're going to implement it.

I think we're talking about strategy ideas.

We're talking about a concept.

>> Could we also include into this recommendation that not only state agencies and BLM racks can develop and submit for consideration their ideas but at NGOs?

>> I had that thought too.

Everybody in the audience, everybody has ideas for strategies and when they come

into play is when we have land use plans and when we get more site specific herd management plans so it is not like everybody doesn't already have an idea. An opportunity to input through those processes.

That's the formal official process.

People give input but what I understand this to be is Washington office, you ought to be thinking of a national strategy to get a handle on why would horse and burro management and here's, we would like more local input and your consideration in developing policies for strategies.

That's what I understand you to mean.

>> This is kind of an extension of the phrase to think globally and act locally.

>> Exactly.

And notice that the word says encourage.

There's no requirement that any of these groups have an idea of submit it.

>> No, but accept this recommendation if you propagate it is BLM will reach out to racks and state agencies.

There are multiple state agencies.

So, I don't know, this is pretty global, Kristin, do you have any thoughts?

I'm not objecting to this but --

>> What's running through my mind is what do we want to do that improves on the current land management planning process?

Which it does allow for that local input when we're talking about wild horse and burro management.

Is there a desire to have a supplemental planning effort happen?

Which then I would wonder if -- how would people respond if, let's say, their ideas and their desires require more money and we didn't get the money do they feel they can't respond.

I want to make it something people feel like they're going to get something out of it that they're not getting now.

>> Aren't they already doing this?

I know I visited with Bill, the chairman of the local rack and he told me that they meet and they do this.

They developed and gave us their ideas.

So they are already doing this.

So why are we making a recommendation for something they're already doing?

>> Because it's kind of unusual for racks to have done what the Oregon rack did and what Bill's rack did and this is just kind of a way -- but if you look carefully at the law that creates racks, racks are to respond to issues that BLM asks them to respond to. So a rack on its own, although they kind of have a history of making their own little issues that they want to deal with.

I looked carefully at that language and we asked designated officials to bring us problems they want to work on.

We don't over -- originate these ideas in a rack because the law says that.

>> For my clarification because I've heard both state agencies and then racks.

We -- you very well articulated the rack process.

And a recommendation could be that BLM continue to outreach to get output on the burro issues and we also continue with state agencies as part of our business.

So, again, other than reaching out to racks, and enhancing maybe what we do with state agencies, do you envision something in addition to that?

>> You're looking at me because -- no, but what I have -- it was, no, I just had rack. You're the one who added state agency.

>> Take out state agencies.
>> Because that really was the idea was to try to encourage those areas that have wild horse and burro issues to ask their BLM, their rack to get involved if appropriate.
>> Should it include BLM?
>> Is there anything and this is for my own information is there anything gained from making the recommendation that already isn't being -- currently being done or do you think that there is a lot of this already taking place.
>> Please correct me if I'm not speaking well on what you're trying to do. People found it positive that we had the rack representative here and the engagement and the intent could be to encourage and expand upon that.
>> Exactly.
And remembering that racks, by definition, are created to represent the interests of that local area and they're not all the same some have a mine or timber or a wild horse and burro rep.
They don't all have a potential interest to public lands on their rack.
They have the ones that are significant for that area.
>> Are you ready for a vote?
>> Okay.
Which direction are we going, Ben?
>> Yes, I approve.
>> Yes.
>> Yes.
>> Yes.
>> Yes.
>> Steven?
>> Yes.
>> Thank you.
And I'll vote yes.
>> I believe that is the end of the work sources regroup.
Thanks goodnd goodness.
>> Did you want to say something.
>> Time to go to lunch.
>> So we won't start another workgroup discussion until after lunch.
Back to you, Fred.
>> Very interesting.
What we're going to do is break for lunch and then we're going to take back up and we're going to finish up these discussions after we get through with our --
>> -- presentations.
>> Presentations.
They'll go to the end.
And board members, if we're here until 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock we'll be here until 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock.
I just want ya'll to know that.
>> And the other thing you want them to know is we will start at one.
>> We will start promptly at one and, Cope, you have to be here promptly at 1:00.
We stand adjourned until 1 p.m.

ROUGHLY EDITED TRANSCRIPT

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 9, 2016
1:00 P.M.

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>> KATHIE LIBBY: Board members, it's after 1:00.

>> FRED WOEHL: All right.

Can all the board members please take their seat and we'll come back to order.

Move 'em out!

All right.

Ms. Kathie, do you want to go over the changes that we have got?

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Thank you, Fred.

>> FRED WOEHL: And then as soon as you get through, I will turn it back over to -- no, I won't.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: No, you won't.

I think we'll turn it over to you and Kristin or Kristin, yes.

Welcome back, all of you.

It's quite a momentous last hour that we just had.

So we are going to do a brief recognition ceremony.

We are going to have the land health fundamentals presentation by Gordon Toevs.

And then we are going to have two updates, one on on-range and one on research.

We will get a break in between there.

And so following that.

At about 3:15, 3:30ish, the board will go back to their working group reports and recommendations.

Okay?

Dean still has an opportunity to provide the BLM response to earlier recommendations which he will do just before that.

So if you are not totally confused, just hang in there and we'll let you know what is happening.

So Kristin, am I right?

>> KRISTIN BAIL: I'm figuring out how to do this logistically.

[Chuckles]

It's my very, very great pleasure to recognize the service of several of our board members.

What we are providing today is not nearly an adequate representation of our gratitude and acknowledgment of the work, the sacrifice, all of these folks are very busy people, with full-time other work and for them to take so much of their time, their caring, and their intellect to help us on these issues, provide us with their advice, is very appreciated.

But this is a token of that appreciation for your service and what I will do in -- because I'm tethered to a microphone is -- Dean, can you help -- either help hand out or announce.

That way -- yeah, I'm trying to figure out how to do both.

So you are seeing realtime coordination here.

Yes.

The first member we would like to recognize, our chair, Fred.

Hey, Fred, you promised me an autograph.

Now you have mine.

(Laughter)

That's from a dinner conversation last night.

So -- it is our pleasure to thank and congratulate you for your service on the board.

My thanks.

(Applause)

The next person I would like to recognize is Dr. Sue.

And if y'all are wondering, this is a very narrow stage.

So I'm very mindful of that and I don't want to be on record as falling, you know, tipping down.

So that's why I'm staying in place.

Yeah.

Yes, and so, Sue thank you for your service and for your work on the board.

(Applause)

Yes, the ultimately desirable autograph of Kristin Bail, yes.

No Christian Bail jokes now.

>> FRED WOEHL: Oh, I'm sorry.

>> KRISTIN BAIL: And Cope, our thanks and congratulations to you.

Oh, come on.

(Applause)

No, I want your hand thank you.

And Kathie, can you take this back?

I didn't think you wanted it left up here.

>> FRED WOEHL: And I think we are waiting for a phone call?

>> KATHIE LIBBY: We are.

We should have -- do we have Gordon on yet?

>> GORDON TOEVES: Yes, I'm on the line.

>> FRED WOEHL: Well, Kathie, why don't we go ahead and while we are waiting for him, let me go ahead and explain what we are going to do for those of you that have been trying to follow our agenda as we act like a -- a -- well, I can't say a Chinese fire drill because that wouldn't be politically correct.

>> Hey, Fred, just ask for Gordon.

>> FRED WOEHL: Gordon?

>> GORDON TOEVES: I am on the line.

>> FRED WOEHL: All right.

Thank you very much for taking the time out to talk to us.

They are putting up some visuals as we speak.

All right.

You are on, Gordon!

>> GORDON TOEVES: Okay.

So is the first slide up?

>> KATHIE LIBBY: The cover slide is up, with the title and the date.

>> GORDON TOEVES: All right.

So I apologize that I'm not there in person to join you folks, but I am in Boise, and I will do what I can to hopefully facilitate this presentation at a distance.

So I appreciate the opportunity to be able to -- to address you folks.

I think that there has been a lot of interest in understanding land, land health fundamentals, what the impact is with the recent signing of the sage-grouse plan and as a connection to future management of the wild horse and burro and HMAs.

Dean had approached me and said could I put together a presentation that would cover a number of these topics?

If you go to the next slide, and I will just pause here for a moment to make sure that we are in sync.

So now are we on the slide that says outline?

>> FRED WOEHL: Yes.

>> GORDON TOEVS: Okay.

If we get out of sync, let me know and we will sync up again.

The outline of this presentation, I wanted to set the stage for what does it mean to understand land health and what is the regulatory and the science that goes behind us establishing land health?

One of the foundations of land health is ecological processes and so I just wanted to briefly meet the ecological -- discuss ecological processes and then the processes that the BLM and the NRCS have undertaken over the last few years to gather range-wide data sets.

And so when I say range-wide, I'm talking about the extent of rangelands in the western United States, those that are managed by the BLM.

The next thing I wanted to discuss, it's great to collect data, but if you can't turn that data into useful information, it really is not -- it does not mean its intended purpose and for that, we are going to talk a little bit about assessment and evaluation, and then one of the topics that I think that is really ripe for us to discuss, not only as a community of people who really enjoy and appreciate and use the public land, but what are those desired future conditions for these public lands?

And when those -- when these public lands are not meeting that desired future condition, how do we get to a determination?

What's causing us to not meet those -- that desired future condition and ultimately is there a decision that we can make or an action that we can take to move us toward meeting those desired conditions?

So the next slide has three questions that I'm hoping by the end of this presentation, that you will have more information about them than you do now and I would encourage you to ask questions, not only during the presentation but after the presentation.

And so help me understand if I've been effective in communicating this information to you.

So these three questions that I have set up for this presentation, what is the condition of the land relative to the desired and/or referenced condition?

So we have a number of legislative -- of legislative areas that have directed us to do so.

One of those is FLPMA, which is the Public Management Act, one is PREA and one is the Taylor Grazing Act and then another question is, so what is the condition of the land relative to the desired condition or the referenced conditions for sage-grouse?

And this is nothing that has come along with the recent land use plan.

That's part of FLPMA.

Part of FLPMA is that we recognize all of the uses of the public land, and one of those uses is wildlife and habitat.

So that's one of the bases for us needing to understand if we are meeting those desired conditions and now we have the land health fundamentals that also speak to those and the recent records of decision.

So then the third question on this slide is: So what is the condition of the land relative to the desire or to referenced condition in wild horse and burro management areas?

So here we can go back to the Wild Horse and Burro Management Act and we can also talk about the land health fundamentals.

And so this is just kind of setting the stage.

These are the types of questions that I'm hoping are informative to you and will hopefully help you understand our intentions of moving forward as we assess the land and understand whether it is meeting the land health fundamentals.

So the next slide is just the header slide for the section about legislation, science, and regulation.

So going on to the next slide, that is titled with legislation.

So here's just a snippet from the Wild and Free Roaming Horses Act of 1971.

Some of the bullet points that we want to touch on today are one of the -- the objectives of this is to maintain thriving natural ecological balance and multiple use relationships.

One of the bullets is to protect natural ecological balance of all wildlife species.

Another one is to have a current inventory of the wild horse and burros.

And another one is to determine if overpopulation exists and achieve AML.

So these are legislative directions.

The next slide is the legislation about FLPMA.

So the wild horse and burro '71.

FLPMA comes along in '76 and FLPMA again directs us to have a periodic and systemic inventory.

That the goals and the objectives we place on the lands or that we have for the lands that we manage are based upon multiple uses and sustained yield.

We need to manage and manage to protect the values and provide services.

We need to prepare and maintain an inventory and we need to prevent undo and unnecessary degradation.

The next slide in this picture is a slide that has a copy of rangeland health, the cover of "Rangeland Health" and this was a study that was commissioned in the early '90s.

The National Research Council took this study on.

And between '76 and when this commission was studied, the Bureau and our partners were trying to understand what that meant how to systemic inventory and understand what the health of the land was -- what the health of the land meant.

One of the underlying drivers in this study was this first quote.

We are hampered in the ability to make decisions because of the inability to answer questions about the condition or quality of our rangelands.

I would contend that that quote is probably still quite accurate today.

And -- but it did precipitate this study and this study has precipitated an entire body of science that now has been embraced with indicators of sustainability and they are recognized across numerous agencies and partners.

And so this is a great foundational study for us to understand what is the -- what does it mean about the quality of these rangelands?

And this -- one of the conclusions from this report was to establish these criteria.

For what does it mean -- what are these processes that are essential.

And they came up with these three processes of soil stability and watershed function, nutrient cycle and energy flow and the presence of recovery mechanisms.

So we know we manage dynamic landscapes.

We are going to have fire.

We are going to have floods.

We are going to have various disease incidences.

So when those occur, are there processes that are robust enough within that system so that it can cover -- recover without being -- without undergoing degradation?

And so that's where this study ended up and this next slide is a quote about cooperation, and I just think it's a great slide that closes the conclusion of this book.

The committee offers -- it's this book.

To the profession of rangeland management and to society as a whole with this challenge: Test it and change it, but do it in the same cooperative manner that this committee used to produce this strategy recommended in this report.

And so the chair of this report was Frank "Fee" Busby who many of you know and recognize the name.

This was very much a collaborative effort and, again, the charge is that we continue to collaborate and try to understand what does it mean to sustain the health of our public rangelands.

So the next slide begins to talk about some of the regulations.

So out of that book and with that underpinning of those ecological processes that were determined to be essential to sustained rangeland.

This is the regulatory driver that we follow.

That includes these four principles.

So water shed uplands, riparian and aquatic are in properly functioning physical condition.

And ecological processes supporting healthy biota.

Water quality complies with state standards and habitats are maintained for threatened and endangered species.

Again, these are the fundamentals, four fundamentals that led to the development of the land health standards.

So these fundamentals were handed off to the rangeland advisory councils and from these, they developed standards that pointed to the uniqueness of the standard.

But they have to meet these four fundamental regulatory drivers.

And so there are many indicators that we can choose to look at these particular fundamentals, and many of those were selected by the RACs, where we have also had an interaction group that has been working on this.

So that as -- as agencies, we can come to some consensus on what is the best indicator to describe these processes.

I will stop there for just a minute and number one, make sure that we are on the slide that says ecological processes, indicators, measures and number two to make sure that people can hear me okay and number three to make sure that I'm moving at a speed that's appropriate for the audience.

Could I have a little bit of feedback to make sure that I haven't put everybody to sleep already?

>> FRED WOEHLE: Well, yeah.

You're doing good.

(Laughter).

>> GORDON TOEVS: I'm putting people to sleep?

I hope not.

>> FRED WOEHL: Oh, no, no, no.

>> GORDON TOEVS: Okay.

We will continue on.

The next slide is about ecological processes.

These ecological processes that are driven out of that study talk about soil and site stability and hydrological function and biotic integrity and one that's more recent than that publication is landscape pattern.

And our understanding of the importance that species needs no move from place to place, to -- whether it's a migratory pattern for a mule deer, antelope, the sage-grouse.

So all kinds of species move from place to place.

That landscape pattern has become more and more important as we have permitted more and more activities and we had more and more development across public land.

And so that is another one of those upland ecological processes that we are monitoring.

When we get to the aquatic side of things, then we have this geomorphic function, the hydrological function, the biological integrity and the connectivity.

So all of these things that are within stream processes that are going on.

So are we violating water quality standards?

Are we removing the vegetation are that when a flood event comes down, we are having a major entrenchment of these streams.

Can the streams reach the floodplain when there are flood events?

So these are all of those processes that are really important for us to end up with vital aquatic systems and vital upland systems.

The next slide talks to -- the next couple ever slides are going to talk about the indicators now that have been selected to the -- did we collect information on that tell us, to indicate or tell us if those ecological processes are functioning in a manner that will sustain those landscapes and so the first indicator is bare ground and we know it varies between Southern Nevada and northern Montana.

But regardless of where you are in the system, bare ground is an important indicator.

And as we have more bare ground, many things happen.

And so a key indicator of are we sustaining those ecosystems.

Another one is vegetation composition.

Are we maintain a variety of plants in a community out there that can meet the various habitat needs and is that composition something that is natural to that area?

Nonnative invasive plant species, what is happening?

Plant species of management concerns.

So here we get to those rare plants and are those -- are we in the -- threatening those plants or are we allowing them their place in the landscape as well?

Vegetation height.

Very major factor for species cover and for thermal cover and all kinds of benefits to the plants but also to the composition of the vegetation community.

And then the proportion of the soil surface in large intercanopy gaps.

This is an indicator that tells us about the erodibility of soil.

It also tells us about the amount of space where potential invaders can come in.

And so these large intercanopy gaps is another large indicator of rangeland health.

And then soil aggregate stability.

Are we breaking down the soil crust or the organic -- or are we maintaining enough organic matter in those surfaces so we don't have massive erosion, excuse me, at the point when we have rainfall events?

The next slide is about aquatic indicators.

So, again, both of these slides, these were collaboratively developed with our partners, and one of the criteria for these indicators was that it does need to be a part of a national survey.

So we want these indicators to be important in describing these processes, but we don't

want people -- or we didn't want the BLM starting over.

And so are these indicators part of a national survey was one of the questions.

And then how appropriate are they to tell us about the sustainability of these processes?

So then when we get to the aquatic side, we are looking at acidity, salinity, temperature, residual pools, particle size, bank stability and cover, floodplain connectivity, and large woody debris, and micro-invertebrates, riparian vegetation and canopy cover.

So these are all critical components for a particular system.

Now, it doesn't make any difference whether you are in a terrestrial system or in an aquatic system.

You need to know where you are.

So for us to suggest that in a rock entrenched system, that we are going to have some of these indicators doesn't make any sense at all.

And you are right.

And so you have to know something about the location where you are taking your sample so that you know the information that you are collecting, the data that you are collecting and when you turn it into information that, indeed, it is appropriate for the site where you are collecting the data.

So in the uplands, we use soils and in the aquatic world, we use are these entrenched?

Is this part of the flood plain?

Is this part of the meandering stream?

So again, the way that you interpret the data is dependent upon the site where you collect it.

What you get is dependent upon some of the site characteristics.

So the next -- the next slide is about indicators riparian wetland and this is an area where we are currently developing those core indicators and methods that we are going to be using to describe these riparian wetlands and springs.

This is an area that's in development.

The next area after this one will be the one that I have already introduced which is about

the landscape pattern.

And so what is the information that appropriately describes the pattern of vegetation across the landscape so that we can meet the needs of many species.

So the next slide, again, is a -- is a slide to introduce the next series of slides about the assessment inventory and monitoring strategy.

So once we have -- we have determined what those ecological processes are, what the indicators are that you are going to inform us about those ecological processes, now we begin -- we need to begin to collect that data.

And this is a very structured systemic approach that the bureau has been -- has embraced over ten years ago and we now have pretty significant data sets that begin to describe the rangelands across the BLM managed lands.

I will stop and I will pause for just a minute.

I'm not sure if there are any questions.

Obviously, I can't see if there are hands coming up in the room, but if there are some questions, I would be happy to take a minute and answer some.

If not, I will go ahead and continue on.

>> FRED WOEHL: Gordon, at this time, I don't think there's any question.

I just want to make you aware that you have about 30 minutes left.

>> GORDON TOEVS: Okay.

I'm going to make this so exciting that the time is just not going to matter you to folks, okay?

So I will try to stay within that 30 minutes, but hopefully we can -- we can cut this off at any time.

So please be aware at a fair point that we need to come back to, that is great.

So that introduces the AIM strategy.

That's the slide we should be on now.

So the goal of the AIM strategy is to report on the status and trends of public rangeland at multiple scales of inquiry to report on the effectiveness of management actions and to

provide the information necessary to implement adaptive management.

The next slide talks about the principles of AIM.

We already introduced some of them.

What are the indicators?

The next one I will introduce is about the sample design.

We will also talk about remote imagery, electronic capture, and then timely data.

So the next slide is, again, we have selected the indicators and now how do you measure them?

If the indicators are going to be valid across the range means that we need to be measuring them the same way.

We do extensive training.

We have calibration throughout the year and each is calculated to the soil.

We then, again, do calibrations when you change vegetation community.

So you have a really robust QA/QC process as we collect this data.

>> FRED WOEHL: Gordon?

>> GORDON TOEVS: Yes.

>> FRED WOEHL: This will be the same approach you would take in, say, Oregon as you would in Nevada?

>> GORDON TOEVS: That is exactly right.

And I want to make -- and the reason I haven't answered -- or addressed -- addressed any uses at this point is because we don't, at this point, it's not about the uses that are occurring.

It's about the condition of the land.

And so as we move further on, we will get to where we introduce the uses.

But this is one of those foundational principles is what is the -- what is the condition of the land?

And then the next question is: If it's not meeting those desired conditions, why not?

And can we answer that?

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you.

>> GORDON TOEVES: This is West wide, a consistent data collection efforts.

So just again, the scope of this effort, this is all BLM land.

All private, all state, all tribal, lands are collected using the same indicators and the same methods.

So this that cooperative effort with NRCS to where we are collecting data that is consistent across the rangeland.

So one of the things that if you -- once you collect the data the same way, if you are going to want to use it across large landscapes and infer what the condition of the landscape is, you need to have a sample design.

And so now we should be on the slide that has the various -- the large arrows starting at the left-hand side of the graph.

We have a sample point that is drawn for about every 80 acres.

One sample point for every 80 acres across all BLM managed land.

Now we will never sample all of those samples but the draw is there.

And so if you want to get down to a really narrow question and a very small area, the sample points are there.

But when we are doing a sample draw, we do an iteration.

We draw an iteration based upon the area that we are wanting to sample in and then we take those sample points and we draw a subset of them, on the vegetation site, the elevation and the slope aspect and all kinds of criteria that you can add into that sample draw.

But we all come from that underlying fabric so that when you go to add them together, or to -- or to analyze them across various scales, you can do so.

The call out box in the upper left-hand side corner, that's just an indication that we have also done this on the aquatic.

We have sample draws for every one ephemeral of active streams within the United States.

So we have this underlying sample set, these sample sets are compatible with the five-year status streams review, that the EPA puts together in coordination with the states and also compatible with the sample point that the natural -- that the NRCF collects and develops their five-year or ten-year reports.

So the next slide is about integration with remote imagery.

We are never going to be able to collect as much data on the ground as we want.

So how do we take that ground truth data and use it to train remote imagery and then improve the quality of information that's coming from the remote inventory?

The next slide is about data management, again, if you collect data, you put it in a file cabinet, it won't be of much use to folks.

So we have a very active and large data management process.

This is just an indication of the data that is collected.

You can go to any point on this map.

You can then -- you and I, when I say anyone, this is available to the public on the BLM landscape data portal.

You can find a point that's near or of interest to you, and it will return to you all kinds of values that -- that describe the status of that particular data point.

So the next slide, again, is a slide to mark the next section, where we are going to turn this data into information.

Again we have determined the -- the processes, the indicators, the methods and now we have data that's in a data management system.

>> DR. ROBERT COPE: Pardon me, Gordon, are you familiar with Matt Reese's rangeland vegetation simulator that he worked on with Land Fire Data.

>> GORDON TOEVS: I am not.

Land Fire is certainly a key component of the data sets that we use, and we -- and it becomes part of our foundation, but I'm not aware of the particular product that -- or tool that you are talking about.

So I would certainly be interested to learn about it, though.

>> DR. ROBERT COPE: Yes, I just gave some information to John Rizz this week.

He will probably to see if there's any applicability to the rangeland management.

>> GORDON TOEVES: Fantastic.

It's an exciting time to not only be collecting data but taking that data and turning it into information.

So that's great and if you would like to share that with Kristin or myself, that would also be great.

So this section is about turning that -- turning the data into information.

And so here is the slide about the western US rangeland and this slide is about nonnative invasive species.

So this is not about how many data points.

This is about the percent of the rangeland.

And so since we had that underlying sample design, we can infer -- and we know the soil types.

We can infer the condition of broad areas.

And so here's just an example of what do we know about nonnative species.

We know, because we know, because we have been on the ground, but here's the data that supports those decisions or those observations.

So if you look at that very first bar on the graph, central basin range, some place between 35 and over 50% of the land has the presence of nonnative invasive species.

You know, we know that because we have been out and we have walked those lands.

We see it all the time.

But here we have a data set and the power of this data set is now we can say, all right.

In five years, two years, you pick the number of years.

How has that changed?

And so this is the idea of having quantitative information that we can begin to understand.

What changes are occurring on the landscape?

Are those changes that are occurring, are they specific to a particular soil type?

Are they particular to an elevation?

Are they unique to a use?

And so, again, this gets to us being able to make a decision, a determination and then a decision about causality and then what are the next steps.

So the next slide goes on to another way that we interpret the data.

So you take those same data points, and this is one of the first questions that I posed at the beginning of the presentation.

What is the condition of resources relative to desired or future -- or sorry, desired or referenced conditions.

So these data points, every one of these data points was -- was assessed, based upon the soils and those -- the potential of those sites.

And so when you look at this across these data points, you come one a graph like this.

When you look at the hydrologic function and you add that are the non-to slight, slight to modern -- sorry, slight no modern, over 80% of the data marks within this watershed really have not been impacted.

This is a watershed I would love to be working in because there is great hydrologic function.

And I would say that this is probably the -- one of the best that we are ever going to see because, again, we develop -- we work with dynamic systems.

We are never going to have things at 100%.

So what is the departure that we should expect?

And I suspect that 20% is a great benchmark.

And so hydrologic function is within this watershed is just a great shape.

Biotic integrity, not quite so good.

But one of the things is probably the presence of invasive species.

This is an example out of Nevada, out of the central basin range, and so we know that that is potentially a problem.

Another one could be that we just don't have the composition of that community that we should have.

But, you know, in my mind, there's still plenty to work with here.

We have great hydrologic function, the biotic integrity is a bit off so what are the treatments or the management actions in this particular area to help that biotic integrity not be so moderately departed, and end up moving some of those slight to moderate back into not moderate.

Again, a watershed I would be pleased to say, gosh, there are some folks out there on the ground that are doing some great management.

You have very little departure from what we would expect.

And, again, every one of these data points is based upon the potential of that particular site.

They are not compared to each other.

They are compared to what the potential on that site is based upon the NRCS state and transition model.

So the next bit of turning data into information.

So what's the condition of the resources relative to sage-grouse?

So here we take the data point.

We have a lot of data points spread across this landscape.

The next thing you do is you overlay that with the sage-grouse habitat areas.

So this happens to be early broad rearing.

In this example, we have taken those data points and now we have analyzed them

against the objectives that are in the recent land use plan.

And so here you see within this particular area of study, 100% of the sample point met the four availability criteria.

Over 80% of it, that's the perennial form.

It met the perennial grass cut.

The perennial height 60%.

Maybe that's -- maybe that's good enough and I would suggest it was -- it is, since those other measures are so great.

And so you take all of these.

None of these are a decision in and of themselves.

This is where we begin to talk about the preponderance of evidence.

And so you weigh all of these measures against the population and what is happening to the population and then you come up with the grass like on the top of what is suitable, marginal and unsuitable.

So this is another one of those examples of taking that quantitative data, extracting values from that, so that we can turn it into information.

And now that top graph can begin to drive management decisions.

Are there management decisions that need to be made here?

That's up for that local ID team to make.

So that's where the ID team, the arc of this comes in and the local communication and collaboration with the permittees and the BLM staff.

So the next -- doing the same thing, but at a different season.

And so in this particular seasonal habitat, there were 36 data points, that lands within that seasonal habitat.

Again, you can see from this data that it's really in great availability.

But the sagebrush height is really pretty marginal.

Why is that?

That's part of the ID team decision.

If this was an actual example, the ID team would need to say this is unsuitable.

Now is there something we can do about that?

And that -- as that becomes, again, the process of developing the treatment or the management actions, and then move that to a more desired condition.

It could be that the sagebrush height, it just doesn't have the potential to be any higher than this.

And that's all that we are going to get and this is as good as we are going to get.

If that's the case, that is the explanation that needs to be accompanied with these results.

So the next -- the next couple of slides are about remote imagery and then -- or -- actually, just this one slide and then we will get into a wild horse and burro management area.

So here one of the objectives in the plan is what percent of the area is classified as sagebrush.

So we use it to improve algorithms to interpret the remote data and then we can understand what percent of the area is classified as sagebrush.

In this example, 70%.

74% of this example is classified as sagebrush.

So it meets that objective.

There are a number of indicators that we have using remote imagery, whether it's the percent covered, whether it's the spread of annual invasive species and then we get to this, what is the pattern, patch and connectivity of sagebrush.

And so all of this stuff, all of these indicators are coming from analyzing remote imagery.

So the next slide gets to the third question that we have.

We get to the land health and the sage-grouse and now it's the wild horse and burro.

So here's the wild horse and burro area, the data points.

So each one of those triangles are a data point.

They are grouped into relationship to soil and site potential.

And they are grouped in relationship to their desired condition.

What is the condition of the resources relative to the desired thriving, unnatural, ecological conditions for herd management areas.

And so the next slide talks about perennial grass cover.

So here we have taken one of those core indicators that I mention to you at the beginning, the perennial grass cover.

How are we doing here?

You see in that perennial grass cover, the yellow, 0 to 10% perennial grass cover.

I would suggest that that is a problem.

But why?

That's another question.

But you can see in the darker blue areas, there's parts of this that is 30 to 40% perennial grass cover.

I think the next question is why?

And what makes the differences between these two areas.

So this is the opportunity for us to take data, turn it into information, and then begin to ask questions about it, as what is driving this system.

And maybe the -- the yellow areas that they are not suitable for perennial grasses.

I don't know that.

But those are the questions that the local resource specialists need to begin to answer, but this is the data that is provided to them to interpret.

So the next one is about invasive plant cover and here you can see in the darkest blue areas, over 60% of that area has invasive plant cover.

And so if you look at, at the area that was yellow in the last slide, here you see that is maced between 15 and 30%, that has invasive fuller coverage 15 to 30%.

So fairly ubiquitous across this area, the invasive plant -- the species and some of it appears to be very much of a mono culture when you get up to the 60 to 75%.

Again, these are data points from an HMA.

And so that is just giving you a -- a taste of what the data -- what we can do as far as turning the data into information and beginning to set the stage for a discussion with those local land managers and -- and permittees or in this case, the wild horse and burro folks, what is the condition of those areas?

And is it acceptable?

And so that brings us to this desired future condition.

So what do we want these landscapes to look like?

And so the desired future condition, the next slide talks about land, health and core measurements.

And so here we have an example of some standards, some indicators, some benchmark and the allowed deviation from that benchmark.

So, again in a wild horse and burro area for you folks specifically, these are things you would want to be asking yourselves, within this wile horse and burro area, what is an acceptable bare ground amount?

That is based on site and the setting of that site.

But in this one, we said the benchmark is less than 10%.

And so what percent -- then the next thing is, how much of the -- how much deviations are you going to allow before you say it's a problem?

And so here we said, 10%.

So we don't want that bare ground at the point that that bare ground is more than -- more than 20% of it, is bare ground, we say, now we have hit a benchmark.

We need to make a management decision.

But some place in between that 10 and 20% is a natural variation.

So you need to set them when you have the allowable departure or the allowable deviation, what is the natural deviation within that.

These are very much localized and they have to be developed at these local levels.

The next one is biodiversity and here this one, this particular objective would be completely unrealistic for this particular area.

The percent of invasive species is none and the allowable deviation is 5%.

Excuse me.

And so as you are setting these benchmarks and the deviation, they have to be realistic.

Now it doesn't mean that we don't want to always be moving toward improving the condition, but they do need to be realistic.

They need to be time sensitive and they need to be measurable.

You can see the percent of sagebrush cover and we have the height here and we have fine sediment and then there's a whole laundry list of additional terrestrial and core aquatic indicators and benchmark and departure that can be developed, depending upon what those resources within the area are that are sensitive to change.

And so, again, we can't monitor or -- or establish this for every resource.

We want to be focusing on those resources that are most sensitive to change so that we can make sure that we are managing for that resource if it is a significant part of area.

We don't want to manage this for 10% of what the area is.

If it's a significant component of the landscape and they are sensitive, that's where we need to be -- be focusing our management action.

So the next slide is the determination and the management action and it's just the next step.

And so that next step is looking at the preponderance of evidence.

Natural systems are complex and I don't want to let anybody think that I don't understand that and I don't appreciate that but there are a lot of things that end up going into this decision of making a determination.

So this preponderance of evidence idea, it's not just any one thing.

It's complex.

And so that could be season of use.

It could be authorized use.

It could be trends and resources.

It could be appropriate management levels.

There's all kinds of things that are going to go in as we begin to overlay these areas that are not meeting those desired conditions with the uses and then trying to tease out is there a use that is causing this area not to meet the desired condition and then subsequently, is there a management action that we can take to reverse that particular trend?

And so in summary, the last slide here, land health is not only regulatory, but it's essential to sustain productivity.

We need to understand what the condition of the lands that we manage are.

We need to understand what the trends are and we need to make management decisions when we are not meeting those sustainability guidelines.

Areas not meeting land health must develop an action plan to make progress towards the desired condition.

This is part of our policy within the BLM.

It is one that we really need to take a hard look at across all programs and say, how are we going to move landscapes or areas that are not meeting the desired condition toward making progress towards those.

Land health provides the BLM and the public a process to adaptively manage and sustain productivity.

And consistent, high quality data provide the framework to determine changes over time and the opportunity to adjust management in a timely manner.

That's my last slide.

I think that I probably made it through in your 30 minutes and I'm not sure how much time there is for questions.

But if there are some, I would be really happy to engage in a discussion.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you, Gordon.

Of the board does have a few questions.

I will turn you over to Dr. Cope.

>> DR. ROBERT COPE: Working with the Forest Service, with the adaptive management, of course the foundation of the new planning rule and we haven't seen BLM 2.0 come out, but one the things we found in reviewing the new draft plans from the Francis and the sierra and the flathead is all of them have work towards desired conditions and developed a management plan to reach it.

What I haven't seen anywhere is a plan b.

How do you get -- what do you do when your desired conditions aren't being reached by your management?

And I have advocated for sometime that I think that any of the land management plans should include more than one alternative to reach those desired conditions, so you can test one against the other, and then therefore determine that -- maybe it's not just a weather situation or maybe it is.

It would be nice to compare management strategies during -- or simultaneously so you don't have the variabilities of weather conditions.

>> GORDON TOEVS: I'm not sure that I understand exactly what the -- so let me just recap what I heard you say, and that in the Forest Service plans you have reviewed, the adaptive management, the adjustments to management decisions at the adaptive management decision point are limited, and so there is not an opportunity to understand if the adaptive management is actually addressing the cause.

Is that -- is that kind of a summary of what you were asking?

>> DR. ROBERT COPE: Not quite.

We can obviously establish conditions and we can monitor those to see if we are reaching them.

My question is, if we've got an action plan in place for management to reach those desired conditions and it's not working now, what do we do, unless you have another strategy in praise and ready to go and hopefully being conducted at the same time so you have simultaneous assessment processes.

>> KRISTIN BAIL: Gordon being maybe you can talk about incorporating in our environmental analysis documents, several different options that are analyzed and then can be implemented without further NEPA having been done and waiting forever.

So if you want to amplify on that briefly.

>> GORDON TOEVS: So, yeah, I think that's a great segue to one of the IMs that just came out and that each one of the land use plans did recognize health.

Now in our adaptive management and from a BLM perspective, we have these soft and hard triggers.

So at the point that it looks like that your trend is not headed the direction that you want to we have a whole variety of management -- of best management practices that we can begin to implement, that become part of the permit process.

They are not part of the -- you know, they are understood that we will begin to implement.

Different requirements in order to help stem -- or to turn that trend around.

At the point that we get to an adaptive -- we meet an adaptive management trigger, in many respects, that means that the previous actions did not work and so now we are going to take a more dramatic change and try to understand what is and still continues to be the problem.

I would also say that adaptive management and the decision to do so really cannot be based upon annual events, unless they are catastrophic events like wildfire and such.

But if we have long-term vegetation trends, that are typical of the landscape, those don't become adaptive management decision points.

So we do have to understand, again, that we are developing and we are working with dynamic landscapes.

But to further elaborate on having multiple ideas or simultaneous processes going, when we get to these triggers, in that soft trigger stage, we do have a variety of tools that are available to us to see if we can change the trend of the particular resource.

Hopefully that will work, but that's why this is a science, and it's an art and that's why we act and we learn and then we make another decision.

And so this is a loop.

>> DR. ROBERT COPE: Thank you.

I was hoping there were alternatives in place so you had somewhere to go when the desired conditions weren't being met and it sounds like they are.

Thank you.

>> GORDON TOEVS: Mm-hmm.

>> FRED WOEHL: Anybody else?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: When do we expect 2.0.

>> KRISTIN BAIL: We are working on finalizing the final regulations.

We are opening within months but there's a clearance process and so it's not completely up to me, but very much wanting to continue that and get that -- get those final regs out.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Thanks.

>> FRED WOEHL: Steve?

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: One of the reasons that I wanted Gordon to present, was not only how this relates to sage-grouse management and multiple use in general and to land health, but National Academy of Sciences report had a chapter and had some recommendations about BLM's process of reviewing and adjusting appropriate management levels and setting them.

And they found that we should have a more robust process.

So the AIM strategy that the second half of Gordon's presentation focused on, is a significant piece of that and you can see that there's some real science behind this and all the things that Gordon talked about makes me warm and fuzzy, because that's my background and interest area.

And it relates to the land health that we have talked about so extensively.

So I just wanted to point that out to the board.

>> FRED WOEHL: Anybody else?

Gordon, thank you very much.

That was a very informative and impressive presentation.

I'm like -- I echo Dean.

Any time we can become a whole lot more accurate and scientific in our assessment of things, it does help us to help us explain that to everybody how it's done and it can erase some of the misconceptions that's out there and how AUMs and AMLs are set.

And research like this is very, very good.

>> GORDON TOEVES: Well, I appreciate the opportunity and please, interact or, you know, get questions to Dean or to Kristin and I will certainly try to find somebody to answer them if I can't.

I, again, appreciate the opportunity to present and for your attention.

>> FRED WOEHLE: Thank you again.

>> GORDON TOEVES: Thank you.

And I will be signing off.

>> FRED WOEHLE: All right.

Folks, on the agenda, it says 2:00 break.

Let's go ahead and take a ten-minute break and when I say ten minutes, Ben being I mean ten minutes!

Thank you.

(Break)

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Okay.

Board, let's get settled.

Okay, everybody.

We are going to reconvene beginning with an on range update by Jared Bybee.

But I wanted to introduce -- Michael, would you stand up for a second?

This is Michael Reiland.

He came out to do a budget update, which we won't be doing at this session.

But Michael in part wanted to talk through some things with the board members.

So if you are at all interested when things are said and done this afternoon, he's happy to sit and chat through a few things prior to the next month's call.

Okay?

Great.

And thank you for that, Michael.

>> FRED WOEHL: And Kathie and Michael and Jason.

We humbly apologize, because we know the effort that y'all spent to do this.

It's not that we don't think that your information is important.

It's just that we are not going to be able to here past 6:00.

Thank you.

There's a couple of people in the room that we need to thank 100%.

The first one is our audio/visual people they have been with us forever and they do such a good job.

You need to give them a big round of applause for that.

(Applause)

Two more that I need to bring back is Debbie Collins who has worked behind the scenes and done an outstanding job.

She's done this a lot.

And there's a newbie in the house that has done such an outstanding job and she's such a sweetheart and I think she needs to keep this job permanently.

That is Dorothea Bothe.

Please stand up.

And honestly on behalf of the Board, we appreciate you all more than you will ever know.

Thank you.

And now we'll talk about on range.

>> JARED BYBEE: Thank you, chairman Woehl.

Today the on range will cover the fiscal year 2016, gather, removals and fertility control schedule, escalating problems, sage-grouse, litigation, Freedom of Information Act requests.

If there's time, we will have a short discussion about marking and future of possibly microchipping animals and a shored up date regarding the Sinbad burros.

Paul Griffin will give the information on inventory and research update.

I think as everybody is aware, we currently have a population of 67,000 wild horses and burros on the range as of March 1st.

This number excludes the full crop that is on the ground right now.

The appropriate management level for all of 177 herd management areas is 26,715.

That is the high AML.

The number of animals removed from the range thus far in fiscal year '16 at the time this slide was put together was approximately 2500 animals and the projected number of treatments with contraception vaccines is projected to be 715 this fiscal year.

Okay?

This is nothing that's new to the board.

In order to remain fiscally solvent, removal numbers are based upon the number of animals that remove from the adoption, sales and mortality.

This translates to approximately 3500 animals per year.

This is fiscal year '16 and '17.

If more animals go out, that number can be adjusted.

The public health and safety, the private property conflicts, court orders, animal health, greater sage-grouse, sagebrush focal areas, research, contraceptive retreatments and collective removal for adoptable animals which also falls in line with the bait trap minimums that we are also pursuing.

Okay.

The remaining fiscal year gather schedule, the gathers, Three Fingers has already occurred.

That was a wildfire emergency.

Approximately 150 animals were removed.

Wood Hills is completed.

60 -- I believe 62 is what came off of there.

Stone Cabin is ongoing as we speak.

Devils Garden is going to begin on the 16th instead of the 8th.

Reveille is probably pushed back to '17.

Cold Springs is in the process of starting.

Arizona, that's various places for burros on the highways.

That's an ongoing project.

Lake Pleasant, it's three research projects.

Paul will discuss more in-depth what those research projects are but they are collaring the burros and how they cross the highways and where they cross the highways and the Arizona Department of Transportation, the partners involved with that, and Sand Wash, Colorado, this will probably happen the end of this fiscal year and probably most of it next year.

And that's three California burro gathers that are not on this chart right here and they are public safety removals as well.

Okay.

For the tentative fiscal year '17 gather schedule, Sand Wash is up there again, just because it's overlapping.

We are looking at a bait trap operation where animals that come on will be darted by volunteer group and they are hoping to treat 200 animals.

The Checker Board, that's sagebrush focal area and consent decree gather.

Nevada will be doing a sagebrush focal area, gathering the Owyhee Rock Creek.

We have Little Colorado and White Mountain.

In Utah, we have Bible Springs.

That is a court order settlement with the state lands of Utah.

We loss have Frisco we'll be returning to.

That gather was suspended primarily because the horses were staying on the top of the mountain and it was deemed that it was a lot wiser to indicate until the snowfalls and those horses come off themselves in order no gather them and the research project itself is not going to be happening until wintertime anyways, and there's no effect on the research and it was a lot safer for the animals and a lot safer on the people conducting the gather.

Mighty Creek Utah, that's also part of the court order and the stateland settlement.

And then what are is not part of the gathering but in addition to Sand Wash, approximately 230 field darting operations gathered throughout these HMAs, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, possibly Onaqui.

This far in fiscal year '16, almost doses of Zona stat h, and 400 doses of PZP 2, and we briefed you on the 12 doses of GonaCon.

For fiscal year '17, we are projecting 800 applications of contraception vaccine.

Okay.

We are monitoring escalating problems.

This is -- we do get a monthly report in from the field that we collate and we use that to help prioritize any escalating issues and requests for imperiled animals.

This is water hauling in Utah that is currently going on right now.

Okay.

The definition of escalating problems is situations that increase over time and these are situations which result in negative impacts to animal condition and rangeland health.

This is the end of Three Fingers, in Wyoming.

And this is where the spring was at.

This is where all of these horses ended up after the wildfire.

And so this range was already in a deteriorated state prior to the wildfire that brought all of these wild horses in.

Okay.

We are currently monitoring 72 escalating problems in Oregon, California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and Montana, and Idaho.

They range from lack of water.

This is Wood Hills.

I think Alan Shepherd discussed Cherry Springs and this is the California removal.

You can see this little fence post right here.

These are burros stacked up on the highway, and this is a removal request for actually motor vehicle accidents that have been occurring there.

>> Jared, where are the burros?

>> JARED BYBEE: They are?

Slate Range and Molly Core and a NASA test site.

>> That's all California?

>> JARED BYBEE: This is outside of the Arizona, 250 in Arizona, and the 70 at Lake Pleasant.

>> GINGER: Okay thank you.

>> JARED BYBEE: We have been disusing sage-grouse.

This shows the overlay of herd management areas with the different habitat classifications for sage-grouse.

Within all sage-grouse types and the priority habitat management areas and general habitat management areas.

105 HMAs within these 15 million acres and this is the breakdown, 22 HMAs in SFA which is we are focusing our efforts with our capacity to gather and manage animals.

65 within priority habitat management areas.

6.5 million and 18 HMAs in general habitat management areas.

I don't really need to go over too much.

I think everybody is aware of the numbers of the animals that are needed to reach AML and that is based upon the March 1st projections for the population.

Okay.

Okay.

This is by -- we had the discussion earlier today that by 2020 and reevaluation of where we are at with the greater sage-grouse.

As you can see, we are projecting that we will be at AML within sagebrush focal areas, as that is our priority.

We will not have any capability to address priority habitat management areas until 2020, and that is in addition to addressing the sagebrush focal areas.

Those will still continue to be addressed, so we are projecting that we will have roughly 60,000 horses outside of SFAs by 2020.

This is our sage-grouse gather schedule through 2020.

Beatty Butte is completed.

We do have a fairly aggressive sage-grouse gather scheduled this next fiscal year that is Wyoming and Nevada, additional sage-grouse funding became available to move into Owyhee earlier.

We were looking at fiscal '15 for all of Owyhee, but we can take some action now and be back into Wyoming for Red Desert in fiscal year '18, and then at this time, we will go back into Owyhee in Nevada to capture the rest of those around malls and get Owyhee into two AML and then we will be addressing these smaller HMAs in fiscal year '20 in Wyoming, California, and Idaho, that are also within SFA.

Okay.

Litigation update.

Pretty straightforward.

You have that in your packets.

There's one case for the use of prescribed fire in herd management area.

One case of non-reproducing herd segments to control population growth.

Three cases regarding research.

Three cases regarding the use of contraception.

Four cases for failure to remove excess wild horses and burros and nine cases for violations of the Wild Horse and Burro Act or National Environmental Policy Act and/or Administrative Procedures Act.

We have quite the work -- quite the challenge with FOIA.

When this slide was put to go, we had 21 current FOIAs in the Wild Horse and Burro Program.

We received two this week.

So now we have 23 FOIAs which would make the first bullet requests for pastures that would make that six.

I can see research, financial accounting, sales, inventory, filming, the database, virtually everything, really that we have in the program.

It is quite the workload.

It probably takes as much work to address a FOIA as it does to put together an administration record together for a litigation case.

Okay.

It will probably have where we are going before we get to questions.

I still have time.

Moving right along.

We will be moving into providing some guidance for marking animals and beginning to look at microchipping wild horses and burros.

What we would -- that would be occurring both once they are removed from the range as

well as we would be looking at microchipping and having a marking protocol on the range for any type of project work or -- or contraception or any type of fertility control type actions.

I think the biggest challenge that we have is that each state brand law is different and separate.

So marking the horses on the range can get a little bit from a program-wide area, can get a little complex with the different western states and their own laws and their own ways that they grant their brands.

However, we think that moving forward in the future that we will very much be microchipping virtually everything that comes in to supplement our freeze marking and modernize tracking of these animals that goes forward.

Other than that, with the situation with the Sinbad burros, there are some questions that we discussed with that.

It was part of a -- a research project, not only to get to AML, but also the special use of habitat by burros and the reliability of burros and Paul can give a greater update on that.

There was -- when those animals came in, there started to be some death.

And there was 25 burros within the corrals that died and during the research project, six additional burros were located on the range that had also died and the preliminary results of those findings for those burros is that it was viral pneumonia, brought on by -- I have to get AI to give me the -- the equine -- equine herpes.

That's really what was determining those burros.

>> FRED WOEHL: Does the word have any questions?

Ginger.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Is this something that has been noted before, and -- or is this a pretty unusual situation?

>> It's fairly unusual, and just to clarify.

We are identifying that this is an asinine variant of herpes equine.

It's not the common domestic horse herpes viruses.

We think it's probably HV4 or 5, we have done some genetic sequencing.

We are trying to do more to nail that down.

This virus has been identified for over 20 years in horses and donkeys and in domestic populations not very much is known about the disease ecology or how, when or why it causes illness sometimes.

So it was a little bit of a surprise to find it, but we have known that donkeys and burros have some relationship to herpes virus that may be a little different than horses do.

It's a fairly characteristic, unusual type of pneumonia that you see in these things.

The changes in the lungs are fibrotic, and it takes months, if not years to develop.

There was absolutely no relation between the mortality that occurred, any of the mortality and the research project.

So no relationship to the collars that were used on the animals or that sort of thing.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: So additional stress wouldn't have been a factor at all?

>> I think the elements that occur during any gather is a factor.

Stress is one of those elements.

Dehydration, dust, those sorts of things affect pulmonary clearance and this virus is known to modulate immune function and act like a typical herpes virus.

So all of those things play into -- come into play, but I don't think the stress related to the handling in the research project had that much to do with it.

It's more of the bigger picture of being gathered and removed.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Thank you.

>> FRED WOEHL: Anybody else?

Thank you both very much.

Appreciate it.

We will now hear from Paul Griffin.

He's going to talk to us about research and update us on this.

BLM over the last several years have really ramped up research.

Paul had the tough job with all the research trials that are going on, but he does an excellent job of keeping up with everything.

Dr. McDonnell is our research person on the board.

Her and Paul visit quite regularly, and so in this aspect, I'm going to let her be the moderator with the board.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Thank you, Fred.

Go ahead.

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: Thank you, Dr. Chairwoman.

So good afternoon.

Thank you for making the time to listen to me but I want to preface this by saying we all know that this is your meeting and, you know, we're here to serve you guys and your needs.

So we can make this as brief or as long as you would like.

Mostly what I would like to talk with you today is somewhat covered already in the table which summarizes the current status and recent developments in the 32 research projects that we are -- we are supporting financially or have approved or both.

I want to preface this by thanking you all for your service and also to just reiterate that the Department of Interior and the BLM's goal in this program, particularly is to support and participate in research of the highest possible caliber so that we can get the best possible information and direct it as solving the wild horse and burro management challenges that we face.

>> Paul, could you talk a little closer into the microphone for us, please?

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: Sure.

So in your folders, tab number 12 is where you will find those -- the table summarizing recent developments in each research project and I think this presentation also.

Like I said, in this -- the slide that I prepared, they are mostly focused on the 21 research projects that were part of the BLM's research initiative for wild horses and burros.

But there are also 11 additional projects that had been approved since then in 2015 and so we can talk about any of those at length.

Again, whatever -- whatever topics the board wants to dwell on.

So why does the BLM support wild horse and burro research?

Well, of course, the bureau has a long commitment to this but it really ramped up starting in 2014.

We need tools, especially for on range management.

People have already noted the current population size and as Dean said yesterday, that means that by next year, we'll be looking at about 75,000 horses.

And because of the impacts that come from all of that year round grazing, like we saw on Wednesday, BLM needs especially reliable, long-term contraceptive methods that can slow population growth.

But we know that contraception alone cannot bring the populations down to AML fast enough to avoid really horrific rangeland degradation.

But it could be used with gathers to stabilize herd sizes.

So because it is a central and controversial question, I just want to dwell for a minute on the question, why is the Wild Horse and Burro Program pursuing research into spaying and neutering of horses.

First, it's in keeping with the will of Congress which is the best expression of the will of the American people as demonstrated by the language in the 1971 act.

And then second, because it's in keeping with guidance that we have received from this board, consistently over the years.

Congress clearly plans forced sterilization as a tool to manage wild horse and burro populations.

I wanted to note that in 1971, spaying and neutering were certainly tools for sterilization that Congress may have had in mind as they wrote that.

There are, of course, other reasons that BLM supports wild horse and burro research in general.

We always need to be looking for more accurate survey methods.

We need modern planning tools to help us project population sizes.

So, again, a plan on the -- project the effects of management actions.

In some areas, we need to mitigate the -- the -- and understand the causes of highway mortality and the dangers that those pose.

And we also need to improve our understanding of wild horse and burro demography movements, genetics and behavior.

New tools such as GPS radio collars and remote cameras can really provide information at the scale that would have been unimaginable ten years ago.

I had planned to kind of digress and talk a little bit more about genetics, but it has already come up today in your previous discussions.

But I do want to at least mention the view from, you know, a wildlife ecologist, a trained wildlife ecologist and that is feral horses are very different from endemic, native species that may exist in isolated populations.

I'm talking about wild horses but biological, they are feral and they come from a number of genetic stocks and they have much higher genetic diversity, than the native species that have been isolated for thousands of years.

I think it's a completely different category of animal.

I don't have a specific update on the one project that we do support on population genetics with Dr. Cawthon at Texas A & M.

One of the projects that we will expect is the research of the analysis of the different existing populations, based on patterns of -- of genetic diversity within each population.

And so a tool like that, or an analysis like that can help us to answer a pressing question about genetics like how many genetic wild horse populations exist now?

And how can that play into management planning?

We certainly know that each HMA is not its own genetic population.

There are some populations that are isolated and have previous, you know, unique alleles that are valuable.

So that's a bridge that has yet to be crossed.

Now, one more thing that I wanted to point out for the board, in particular, is that the numbered projects in this table are the 21 projects as a result of this research initiative from 2015.

There are some.

Non-numbered projects in particular are very much in keeping with guidance that we heard from you, who seek collaboration and cooperation with other entities.

And in particular, there are several of these where BLM has made an effort to leverage our research funding to try to increase the amount of research and knowledge that can be gained, and specifically those include on page 5 of this table, the proposed PZP darting project for burros which is in collaboration with the Humane Society which is providing the vast bulk of that funding.

On page 7, the University of Wyoming study to look at wild horse movements in Wyoming.

That's funded mostly by the state of Wyoming.

On page 8, the Purdue, to test a new water soluble PZP adjunct to create new PZP vaccines that could be stable over time, in heat, not require so much mixing and just be more -- and also have a longer term effectiveness.

That's mostly funded by donors to the Humane Society.

And a little bit by BLM.

And also on page 8, the Arizona game and fish department project that will be proposed to study burro movements on roadways.

This is in response to a real increase and rash of burro/vehicle collisions in the area near Phoenix.

So I don't have slides about any of those projects specifically or any of the non-numbered projects but we can come back to them at any point.

Again, please interrupt if there's something compelling that I'm leaving out.

In that case then, I want to move ahead to -- oops.

I want to move back.

I want to move, anyway, to the eight research projects that were funded through a request for applications and then a national academies of science review of applications and eventually funded last September.

These are university projects all focused on contraception in one way or another.

The first of these is are three studies at -- which have been proposed for Oregon State University, that would assess three different methods for spaying and the study plan there was approved by the university's institutional animal care and use committee, and BLM Oregon issued a record of decision to move forward with those studies.

But for now, those studies are not going to take place until pending lawsuits and appeals have been resolved.

So that is under litigation and appeal.

The university -- second -- or study number four in your list, but it's by university of Kentucky which began a separate study to spay mares using domestic mares in their campus.

And this study also involved colpotomy, a form of surgery, but in this case it was for the placement of a nylon ligature around the ovary and oviduct and it's my unfortunate duty that the results from that study are not promising.

The researcher indicated that they are going to seek to public the results to date.

The good news is that the conduct of the surgeries was uneventful and positive.

The device that placed that ligature around the oviduct worked well.

The study so far, it conducted -- or surgeries on five mares that were then monitored postoperatively and there were a couple of problems.

One is that there was more evidence of postoperative pain than the veterinary surgeons would have liked to see on that.

So after the first couple of those surgeries, they -- they rewrote their animal care and use protocol, and got that approved through their animal care and use committee.

And so what they did was they changed the level of analgesic pain medication postoperatively to include a long lasting opioid, a narcotic.

That's in addition to the local anesthesia during the surgery and the nonsteroidal inflammatory that had been given in the original plan.

They changed their pain protocol.

>> FRED WOEHL: Paul, in what operating type theater were those trials done?

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: These were done at a veterinary -- a college of veterinary medicine

at the University of Kentucky in operating rooms.

Yeah.

So very controlled situations.

But the larger problem was that the researchers saw evidence of -- I'm not a veterinarian and I will try to make this sound good, parovarian adhesions which I think means after the surgery was done the surrounding tissue was trying to revascularize, there was postoperative growth around the ovary, instead of the ovary shriveling up and becoming quiescent, that was led to fever and weight loss.

All five of those mares they were monitoring for the postoperative in effects were euthanized and necropsy so they could have an understanding of what was the cause of the problems for those surgeries.

So where we stand now, there's no further surgeries that will be conducted until the researchers can investigate the cause of the adhesions and come to a complete understanding of what was going on.

They will get back to us.

After we hear from them, we the BLM will confer and Dr. McDonnell will be involved in this.

We will confer with the researchers about whether or not the study should proceed any further.

I imagine you have some follow-up questions about this disappointing news.

If I could make some comments.

I think the conduct of this study to me is really an example of why we need to encourage this type of research that it be done by reputable universities with really accomplished veterinary surgeons, who have highly conscious animal care and use committees that provide oversight.

And so to me, this study really demonstrates the actions of -- of very conscientious veterinary university where they took every step with caution and they communicated with us along the way and where the researcher had the independence to ultimately publish what they found, even though it was disappointing and not what we were hoping to see.

So I just want to emphasize that I think we need this type of research under this format, this process, so that we, the BLM can get reliable and independent results, you know,

if -- so that we can figure out.

We have these questions.

We want to know, is pain appropriate?

Well, if we don't do the study, we can't make that answer and it remains a guest.

If the answer is no, fine!

Then we have the answer.

But we don't have the answer unless we do the studies.

>> FRED WOEHL: Paul, I think that the vast majority of this board agrees with that.

We try really hard to put tools in the tool box and it's like you said, sometimes something that we think might work won't work, but unless we try you know, and unless we try, we won't know whether we did or not.

As a horse person, I'm very saddened by the -- you know, that we had to put down five horses.

But when you are thinking about 50,000 horses, the sacrifice, even though the loss of any horse life is not something that I take lightly, or members of the board take lightly, but trying to -- trying to save all of these horses in a humane way is going to take some sacrifice from some.

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: I feel the same way.

I think that we are just trying to fulfill the direction from the board and from Congress that seems apparent.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you.

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: Okay.

Well, if I could --

>> Paul, did you say that the five mares had to be euthanized in this study?

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: A total of seven that were euthanized.

There were two that were planned for euthanasia that were part of the study plan.

Those two were euthanized, before the -- as the first -- kind of the first two surgeries.

And then five additional were euthanized, yes, ma'am.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Okay.

Thank you.

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: I want to emphasize these are all domestic horses with a high level of oversight and care from veterinarians on site.

Well, more promising -- moving right along, the more promising results come from the Colorado State University study which looks at the reboosting or the boosting with the GonaCon, at the Teddy Roosevelt National Park.

And the photos on this slide are from there.

I have been told that these researchers are preparing a publication on the success of how.

Their darting and then another publication on behavioral effects of GonaCon administration, and the results to date are very promising.

The mares that were boosted with GonaCon four years after their first dose had zero out of 25 foal in the first year, where that GonaCon would become active, and three -- I'm sorry, only three of 25 in the second year afterwards.

So there may be a long-term effect of boosting with GonaCon.

That's the hypothesis.

They are testing and looking to see which timing of boosting those doses works best.

>> BEN MASTERS: And that was GonaCon being applied annually.

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: Those were for horses that were dosed, I think in -- I forget the year.

Those horses were given the primer dose and then they were given a boost four years later.

And then I think they had had a foal the first year after.

The first year years is where the GonaCon would be expected to work.

And then they will try boosting horses at six months, one year, and two years

post -- after the first dose.

So that's a pretty good range of dates and -- the water canyon project that you heard here in Nevada, they held them for a month.

That's with the use of GonaCon or something like it, a GnRH vaccine that's developed for Europe and I think South Africa.

There they redose after a month.

If you redose them after one year, or two years.

Kind of like you wouldn't expect to get a great tetanus shot if you got your second tetanus shot one week later.

You get a better immune response.

Thank you.

So the next -- the second CSU study then is looking -- aiming to test the effectiveness of a completely new kind of vaccine that would cause an immune reaction to either of two proteins that are hypothesized to, in a nut shell make the legs in an ovary develop.

Make a whole lot of eggs develop all at once and ultimately the thought is that it would then lead the mare to be sterile.

Because of losing all of her eggs.

And the photos in this slide are from that study.

The hypothesis was that inoculating the mares with these proteins would cause an immune reaction that would make those follicles develop prematurely in.

This study, there's one control group and two experimental groups because they are testing two different proteins.

The researchers themselves don't know the identity of who got what treatment.

I have a list of that and so does a different administrator at CSU.

So it's a blind experiment.

What they are finding in a nut shell is about one-third of the animals do seem to have this -- this effect where a lot of -- a lot of ovarian follicles are developing in the ovary all at once, all the time.

They are seeing this on ultrasounds which take place every week and they have -- they also do a weekly blood draw so that they can look at hormone levels and antibody titers when they do that analysis.

And three times a week they can test the behavioral response to the stallion to look at how receptive are those mares.

So if a third of the animals are having this result, then that's promising.

It means that this hypothesis, there seems to be some support for this hypothesis maybe in -- at least one of those two proteins they tested.

The next thing is the Ohio State University project where they are trying to develop in essence a new PZP delivery system for long-term PZP delivery.

It would be like a capsule inside a polymer and the capsules get injected subcutaneously and in a nutshell, they are in testing mode still.

They are testing the rate of capsule degradation in vitro, in test tubes and they will start with putting those capsules in rabbits soon.

A couple of months ago, we talked on the phone about this research group testing the use of silicon oil and its safety in geldings.

Which physiologically should have the same response as mares.

The last one on this list is the Louisiana state university.

I don't have a whole lot of update to them.

On the date of our last scheduled call, there was major flooding in Baton Rouge and I was out of the office for the previous two weeks before this meeting today.

No great update there.

As far as I know they are proceeding.

They have made their proteins.

They are testing their proteins in vitro but I don't know more details right now.

Okay.

So there's a number of USGS led projects here.

I think that in the interest of time and to make sure that there's time for discussion, I probably won't really go into each one of these, especially as they are on your table.

But I want to point a couple of them out.

Last year we visited the -- the corrals at Oklahoma City -- I mean in Pauls Valley in Oklahoma.

The radio collar study there led to designs for radio collars that are very promising.

They seem to be safe.

Every BLM project that you will hear from us that has to do with radio collars, mares or Jennies will use a design that's coming out of that study and will have two dropoff mechanisms.

One which would be a timed release.

So they set a date, it should fall off on that date.

And the second mechanism, which would be a drop off at will.

So if there's a problem, for any reason, a local manager, volunteer, researcher, can go in and say, drop off.

So we -- that is built in redundancy to ensure health and safety as much as possible of any animal getting radio collar.

The studies in Wyoming that have been proposed, including behavioral effects of spaying some mares in take population study are not going to happen until at least there's an environmental assessment out that is in progress -- I mean in preparation.

The effects of having some geldings in a breeding herd study in Utah.

Jared mentioned that the -- the initial gather for that has happened.

Animals have -- some animals have radio collars now.

They have been deployed.

The gelding for that study would take place next year.

Oh, thank you.

You are a step ahead of me, Kathie.

On the burros, Jared mentioned the work in Sinbad HMA and so did AI.

The demography study is ongoing with weekly radio checks and it's ten-day intervals.

They go check on them more weekly.

And for every -- so they are frequently checking on the burros.

They have radio colors and also recording what other animals they are with.

All the animals that got returned to the HMA have hip brands, unique identifiers.

So that really helps the researchers know who is who is and what they are doing.

On the aerial survey techniques, we have flown a couple of aerial surveys in helicopters in the area, and have contracted for two infrared surveys and we are waiting on the results from those infrared surveys.

Oh, that's all right.

We will stay here.

So here in Sinbad, this is just an example of the kind of detailed data that you can get from a GPS radio collar.

This is -- you know, this isn't breathtaking to people who watch the Discovery Channel but for those of us who cut our teeth tracking wildlife in big areas to get one location a day this is really revolutionary, you know to get this level of detail on the movements.

You can get a lot about habitat use by an individual.

But before I leave burros, I wanted to just mention, we want to replicate this study in Lake Pleasant HMA in Arizona but that EA is still under preparation.

And that would be also the place where the study of burro movements across roadways would take place.

Yeah, thank you.

These studies are mentioned in the table, but I want to skip these in the interest of time, but I do want to say -- I want to talk -- actually if we go back.

There's one study that I neglected to put on here, but I actually have an important

update.

And that is the IUD study.

It's not listed by mistake.

It is in your list here.

I think it's number 19 maybe.

Yes, number 19.

Intrauterine devices in mares at Oklahoma state this year BLM funded a trial year, kind of a pilot year for that project.

They are trying -- in mid-July, they inserted six different models of IUDs into domestic mares that are attended by stallions.

So they are breeding.

There's a lot of monitoring to assess the uterine health of those mares.

I think it's weekly ultrasounding.

The critical question is: How long and how well and which models of IUDs will stay in?

The initial evaluation period is this through this summer and fall.

A lot of those IUDs have already fallen out.

We will look forward to the ultimate results from the USGS and the University of Oklahoma to see what models stay in and then we'll evaluate what are the next best steps to take for this project.

Last thing I wanted to mention was inventories.

We are continuing to do a lot of inventories as Alan Shepherd mentioned yesterday.

The go-to method is helicopter or fixed wing using a double observer type method.

And those allow -- the way we collect the data, it allows us to estimate the number of animals that were not seen by any observer but were in the area that got surveyed.

And that's in keeping with the national academies of science recommendations.

Yes, so this calendar year, 53 surveys, 53HMAs surveyed as a couple of weeks ago and that will be 66 by the end of this month.

So we are on pace agency-wide so meet our internal goals of visiting and surveying approximately a third of all HMAs every year so that we have this rotating schedule.

And now that we have done it for three years, and Nevada is doing it apparently every two years, we will be able to start to say what's the apparent growth rate for each HMA that gets surveyed well with these methods.

And over time, we should be able to, you know, look at growth rates, those growth rates correlated to things like, the land health indicators possibly that we heard about earlier today.

USCS is going to hire a new trainer to -- to fulfill the function as an advisor.

That's how I initially started with wild horses and burros a few years ago.

And I have -- but I have been continuing to do the work as a -- to -- to set up surveys and work with local offices to prepare their surveys and get them analyzed for the last year as well.

So I will look forward to training the new person that they hire.

They offered it and it was accepted last week.

They are still doing HR paperwork, but -- that's good news.

So, are there questions?

I think blazed through that fast.

At least it felt like that to me, by the number of people nodding off in the audience, I don't know.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Ginger, did you have a question?

>> GINGER KATHRENS: I do.

You talked about chipping and what is the purpose of that?

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: The general purpose is -- and we're going to -- I think unless -- correct me if I'm wrong but the purpose initially would be to facilitate identifying individuals in captive -- in captivity.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: So it's short range.

It's not long distance?

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: If you look at, it there are long range RFID chips.

They exist but they require battery.

And so they don't have a long-term life span.

And they don't have a really fantastic range either.

It's -- it's really different from a radio telemetry device, like a radio collar where you can be 2 miles away.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: That's what I was getting at.

That technology in the offing where you could chip and then you could --

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: Tell from a distance.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Know where the animal is when you are in some distance away?

>> Not really, not until you were close enough to read that chip.

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: There are some ranches that they are in an enclosed space.

They chip every animal and then they have an array of towers all through their property and so they can triangulate on the location of each of those animals but each tower has to be within a couple of hundred meters of those animals.

It's not realistic in a large HMA.

>> BEN MASTERS: I have a question regarding the chips.

So say there was a herd management area that was going to use, you know, volunteer field darting to help control population growth.

Would it be possible to -- are there chips out there that say the horses were gathered.

They were given the primer.

They were given a chip and then released back out and then volunteers could have some type of chip reader and whatever they got within 100 yards of mares be able to

identify which mare that was?

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: If there is, we would like to know.

>> BEN MASTERS: So there's not?

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: To my knowledge, I have think -- there's something about the arrangement of the RFID has to be a certain polarity relative to the reading device.

Often the reading device Sens out a signal and then the signal bounces back and so are -- yeah.

But we don't pretend to know everything.

We think that there's probably a lot of people in the ranching community and livestock community who could inform us better about this.

>> The concept is that we will have more positive identification on these animals both the use on the range for any type of fertility treatment that is done, or any type of research that is done, that more often than not, we will have to be close to that animal or recapture that animal.

We will be able to know from that chip when this animal was captured when that dose was applied.

We are reapplying that dose as opposed to having a mark on this animal.

Okay, well, this was AD.

Okay, let's go through our papers.

What year was this animal caught?

And does anybody remember what freeze mark we used back in those days?

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: I don't know it was 15 years.

>> And then move to chipping the horses when they come off the range.

It will eliminate the difficulties with freeze mark reading and how well they turn out and a lot of times that is the person applying it, the demeanor of the horse in the chute, the color of the animal, whether it will show up well or not.

And just at time -- the time of year, as the care growth on that animal and being able to read that mark and, it's going to be eliminate these common mistakes that just happen

simply because it is hair growth on an animal.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Any other questions?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: This is not exactly a question.

I thought maybe I could provide a little bit about the chip situation.

In the Sheldon, we used chips from 2007 at least and 2014, and as you know, if you had your small animals chipped, there's a migration problem and chips are notorious for migrating, which is why some humane shelters make you do whole body scans looking for them.

But in horses if you place the ligament nuchal, it's very reliably found again but it does require, sorry, that you be very close with your reader.

But when no known cases of lost chips from 2007 to 2014 span.

Now, obviously if a horse came through that had lost his chip and we no way of knowing who they were, we have no way of knowing that we lost the chip.

But since -- but mostly since these horses were leaving the premises and the only ones who spayed were the spayed and the vasectomized, because they had a secondary procedure.

There is a history about how effective it is.

Why it's better or why it's useful with record keeping is because it's electronic and the minute you put that electronic into your ID, your system, it pulls up all the information on that horse over a really long span of time and you don't have to go through notebooks.

It's all right there, linked to that ID.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: And where does it go in, for those of us who didn't understand?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: They have a big, heavy neck.

This is a -- this is a four to five inch tissue, and it's very thick.

And it's very metabolic, quietens, meaning not a lot of activity goes in there, which is one of the reasons that the chips just sit and do nothing.

They don't create a lot of irritation like -- like the tubal ligations did the research project.

It's just a very quiescent area.

You wouldn't find these chips if you didn't have the electronic reader after the fact.

We have gone looking for them and there's no tissue irritation and granuloma afterwards.

>> I had a quick question, Paul, in your surveys.

The National Academy of Sciences, if I recall, pointed out that if any populations were being underestimated, can you comment on what you know about -- now that you are doing more sophisticated methods, how much that underestimation might have been?

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: No.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: No?

Okay.

All right.

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: What I can say is that, you know -- and the reason I say no is because we aren't remeasuring the populations at the same time as they were initially getting biased measures.

What we get out of the surveys is we get an estimate of population size, relative to the actual number of horses seen.

And from those estimates, you can look at what's the -- the estimated percentage of animals that were missed in each survey.

And so that ranges, it depends from a very, very small percentage in some case, to, you know, in others particularly for burros up to 30%.

But -- and I could talk about this all day.

So just cut me off.

But the -- even those estimates.

Percentage missed that come from these methods that we currently have, we recognize for statistical and theoretically underestimates of the percentages missed.

But without something like radio collars, we cannot estimate what that extra percentage is, that's missed.

So that's what's cool about Sinbad and what we think will be cool about Lake Pleasant, if and when we do that is we will have an independent measure of the percentage of animals that were missed by aerial surveys and which weren't correctly accounted for even when you do the analysis.

So how much more even were we off?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Thank you.

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: Thank you for the question.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Did you have something, Dean?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: I was just going to comment that the NAS report cited that on any one herd management area, we could be under counting as much as 10 to 50% depending on topography and tree cover and that sort of thing.

On a national basis, their finding was we were under counting 20 to 35%.

So I'm very pleased that we have completed the third year of using these more sophisticated methods and that we should have much, much better accounting of the estimation on the range and I don't know if we have inventoried every single HMA.

But we nearly have.

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: Almost.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: We have accomplished our goal and I think we are going to start over again.

I think Paul, you would agree that as time goes on, we will have better and better estimates.

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: Yes, the crews will that much more practice.

We can use the previous data sets to estimate the percentage missed.

I think when you compare the way that the surveys were done previously to how they are done now, there's this thing where you can now do the statistical comparison and estimate the fraction missed, but I think a bigger factor is that now that there's national attention on doing these surveys, we use a method for planning our flight lines that's very thorough and meticulous.

You know, we are probably using more money on our surveys than we need to because

we want to be complete.

We want to certainly cover the entirety of the HMA and then we work ahead of time to figure out how much beyond that HMA boundary do we need to survey to get other animals within the population.

So when the NAS was saying we were under counting by 20 to 30%, now on average, I think some of that came from just not having a very systemic and thorough survey of all the area.

A lot of them did do this previously, don't get me wrong but by having the flight lines planned ahead of time into the pilot's GPS unit, it takes out the ambiguity and, well, let's check that out.

We already know that we will check that out and we will check everything in a methodical way.

That probably increased the subs.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Anybody else?

Thank you very much, Paul.

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: Thank you.

It was a pleasure to work with you, Sue.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: I will get it some day.

>> BEN MASTERS: Actually, Paul, what is the status of the research at Oregon State on the spay methods?

>> PAUL GRIFFIN: I will have to punt on that because I haven't been involved -- you know, there's three appeals and three lawsuits.

So I don't know if, Dean, have you any update that you know?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: I guess I would say that we don't comment on ongoing litigation.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you.

Thank you both very much.

I always enjoy Paul talking to us.

He's a very smart man but he explains things at a level that I can understand.

And that's a -- that's a plus.

All right, we will move right along.

We don't want to keep everybody here until midnight, and so the first order of business is something that we have put off from this morning and that's dean's going over the BLM response to our eight recommendations that we made at the last meeting.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Okay.

So yesterday you were given a copy of the recommendations and our response, but I found an oversight last night when I was looking on this -- looking at these.

So you have a new version that was handed out today.

So please use the version that was on your -- at your chair this morning.

So let me --

>> That's not it.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: That's not it.

So the other one.

And that would be the right one.

If you have two of them, it's the one with the smaller font.

They are almost exactly the same, except for one sentence.

The difference is the response to number one.

The wild horse and burro board to continue to work towards full implementation of previously accepted recommendations of the board and prioritize according to BLM's matrix of meeting AML.

So before I read the response, I just wanted to tell you that removing horses is not in BLM's view the only thing that contributed towards accomplishing AML.

In other words we feel the adoption program and enhancing and increasing that is important also.

So off range activities contribute to our ability to do on range work.

So our response is this: The BLM accepts this recommendation and will conduct work within the limitations of available resources that contributes to the achievement of AML in the highest priority areas.

Priority work includes continuing to conduct gathers to achieve AML and all sage-grouse habitat, sagebrush focal areas by 2020.

Continuing research to develop more effective contraception methods and implementing them as they become available, and the third thing, reducing off range holding costs by acquiring more pastures to reduce corrals, corral numbers, freeing up funds for on range management, a fourth thing, increasing the number of trained animals offered for adoption.

The fifth thing, piloting and adoption incentive program.

The sixth thing, increasing animal availability to doctors through new storefronts with emphasis in the east.

Developing and implementing new Internet adoption capability and the last and final procuring the services of a professional marketing firm.

You have recommended all of those things and those are the priorities that we're going to pursue within our capability and financial resources.

I will entertain any questions or commentary, although Kathie told me, Dean, you keep on track.

But that doesn't apply you to guys if you have questions.

>> FRED WOEHL: It never has.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: All right.

Recommendation number two, the board recommends BLM create a crisis emergency plan in the case of severe drought or natural disaster, that necessities removal of either over 1,000 horses or over the amount BLM can hold in short term holding facilities.

The situation would be triggered by BLM determination that animals are imperiled.

The BLM response is BLM accepts this recommendation.

In fiscal year 2016, \$500,000 was held in reserve for the removal of imperiled around malls.

In addition, fire -- animals.

In addition, fire for wildfire areas, to date -- and this is already dated, by the way.

To date, about 200 animals -- imperiled animals have been or are being removed.

Large scale removals will begin compromising the ability to conduct priority removals to achieve AML in sage-grouse sagebrush focal habitat and conduct court orders and remove from private lands outside of HMAs and initiate field research.

So I said this was dated.

To date, we have -- as the recommendation, a response, says either are or removing 200 imperiled animals.

About an hour ago, Kristin requested approval from the deputy director and it was gained, to react to an emergency situation that's developed in last two days in Nevada for another 300 imperiled animals and perhaps more.

We have that many animals congregated around two springs that are not dry, or drying up.

We have 200 horses at one spring, waiting to go get a drink and waiting for the spring to recharge and there's no place anywhere for them to go and we are hauling water to keep them going until we can set up water traps to capture and remove those animals that are at high risk.

Recommendation number three, the board recommends BLM makes it easier for trusted trainers or Mustang Heritage Foundation or other organizations to acquire sale eligible and riding desirable, based on age and adoptability, horses.

BLM accepts the recommendation in part due to the board's suggestion during the development of the recommendations to reduce or eliminate paperwork requirements for reliable or trusted trainers who purchase horses.

The requirements for purchasing an animal involve the commotion of an application to purchase and a significance on a bill of sale that commit the buyer to provide humane care.

BLM doesn't anticipate reducing these requirements, but greater efforts will be made to increase the availability of your term riding, desirable, sales eligible animals administered into the BLM's two partnership organizations, the Mustang Heritage Foundation, and family of horses, who utilize reliable trainers for training and placement into private care.

So I don't know if you intended as part of your recommendation that we reduce the paperwork, but you guys certainly, in your discussion, it seemed like that was the intent.

So we don't anticipate doing that.

So your recommendation didn't say to do that, but we interpreted that that's what you meant.

We will increase the number of sale eligible animals to make more available and there was some discussion and questions from Ben to the Mustang Heritage Foundation as to whether that was beneficial or not.

We will not change the paperwork requirements for a purchaser.

Recommendation number four.

The board supports efforts by BLM to engage professional marketers to identify and attract appropriate demographic segments in order to increase mustang adoptions.

BLM's response, the BLM accepts this recommendation and recognizes the need for a comprehensive and consistent marketing strategy that effectively supports the placement of animals into private care and it raises awareness of wild horse and burro on range management.

The BLM has issued the solicitation to procure the services of a marketing firm and plans to issue a contract by October 1st, 2016.

The contractor will assist BLM to build on the existing brand, developing -- develop a marketing strategy, create marketing and communication products and provide professional guidance based on a recent market research required by BLM under a different contract.

No response.

I will go on to recommendation number five.

I always expect Fred to say something.

>> FRED WOEHL: You are doing a good job.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: The board recommends that BLM create, a two-week on site training conducted by qualified trainer at a short-term holding facility for up to 10 horses and 10 adopters.

BLM accepts the recommendation and would like to develop this concept through additional work with the board.

And before you conclude today, I hope you will identify someone to assist us to engineer a little pilot.

>> FRED WOEHL: I volunteer.

I volunteer to be the trainer.

I just let me know when and where.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: All right.

Well, we have a volunteer and a response.

So thank you, Fred.

>> FRED WOEHL: You are welcome.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So we'll engage you in that discussion further.

Recommendation number 6.

The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board urges BLM to institute the volunteer strategy as soon as possible September 15th, 2016, recommendation number 10, which states develop strategy to train and use more qualified volunteers to support Wild Horse and Burro activities off range and on range.

So recommendation from 2015 is almost the same as the one in -- from last meeting, the one I just read.

BLM's response, BLM accepts the recommendation.

A formalized process and strategy for a volunteer program has been discussed and will be developed when personnel are hired to lead this initiative.

In the interim, field offices will be encouraged to continue using and expand the use of volunteers for both on range and off range management activities.

The Washington office will consider offering financial incentives through a division chief challenge to encourage and support field offices who initiate new programs to engage community groups or volunteers to advance on range population management endeavors such as those recommended in the following recommendation which is number seven.

So my idea is this.

The implementation of these things is in the hands of the authorized officers, the field manager.

So we're going to set aside a little pot of money.

That's my intent if Kristin approved, and it will be offered up and we'll ask for proposals to engage -- it might be ground darting programs.

I don't know what but that's my idea of getting this start.

I asked a few times for where can we do some more of this and I haven't gotten too many responses.

So we will have a pot of money.

If you have a good idea, you win the prize and we'll start it financially, even if it means hiring some personnel on the ground to oversee some new starts.

So we are kind of serious about it and I recognize we are not making the progress that you would desire in a national volunteer strategy.

But it's a hard thing for us to get going with, but I understand how serious you are Fred, and the other members in us pursuing and accomplishing this.

Are.

>> FRED WOEHL: Trying to work with people.

I mean, it's hard.

I did it with lots of BLM staff about this.

And one of the things is somebody will come in and they say they know how to do, ABC and they don't even know -- begin to do A.

It takes more time to train these people and then watch over them.

And it takes away from them doing their job.

So along with this strategy that you are doing, I would ask anybody out this that wants to volunteer, be sure that you are capable and able to do what you say you do or if -- if you are not -- I mean, I have been a volunteer for a long time and at the last BLM adoption I

was at, there was a young lady that came up and offered to volunteer.

And the staff that was there let her and her job was to -- and they were very clear.

When they come, in you help them fill out their application.

You -- and they spent an hour and a half showing her how and answered every questions.

I watched this.

The first person would came up there and set down, they started filling out.

Oh, what does this mean?

Oh, I don't know.

Just don't worry about it.

And that's what she told them.

So, you know, I'm serious.

I'm serious as a heart attack.

(Laughter)

So I can't get too upset with the BLM employee that does not want to take the time and effort to try to use a volunteer, but having said that, there are some awful good, awful reliable, awful qualified people out there that want to help, that would be great help and I don't want to see them not given the opportunity to help.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Thank you, Fred.

So having said that, there is some progress going on here.

The presentation that you didn't hear from Jason Lutterman is an assessment of the successful on ground darting programs and our contractor kind of a stakeholder's toolkit.

So there's some information that we have got to help us figure out what it takes to make successful programs.

Sandra Sells is working on something that to help the ground darting program.

I'm hopeful that we can develop something that's very simple, but yet useful to

volunteers who might want to get involved but it would help them understand what they are getting into and that BLM and the Cloud Foundation.

>> FRED WOEHL: I would like to appoint Ben for the contract person for the darting for the board.

So if there is somebody that needs to talk with somebody or all of that, I'm going to nominate Ben to be that contact from the board.

If that's okay.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Did you ask his position.

>> BEN MASTERS: I nominate Fred if we need any people learning to dart for target practice.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Thank you.

I will move on before Kathie gets the big stick out.

We will embrace volunteers to document wild horses with photography, work with the local offices to create a suitable -- a sustainable management plan, and enable qualified and the implementation in the sustainable plan including the use of reversible contraceptives.

It's along the same line of the previous one.

BLM accepts this as per BLM's response to the preceding recommendation number 6.

BLM retains its authority and is responsible for the development of herd management plans.

Volunteers and other members of the public can contract to the development of the plans through the NEPA process.

Once management plans and implementation actions are determined local officers -- offices can engage volunteers and community groups to assist in their implementation.

And the final one is recommendation number eight, the board would encourage aggressive use of all tools in the box as addressed in the board's September 2015 recommendation number 16 which reads prioritize use of currently available tools in the field to reduce population growth right now as in bold letters and implement promising new tools as quickly as they become available.

BLM's response.

BLM accepts the recommendation and recognizes the need to implement an aggressive fertility control program utilizing available tools and new methods as they become available.

Not stated here, but I guess it's worth noting.

As much as we are able within our financial resources.

So ground darting is not expensive.

Bait and water trapping, if we use contractors can be quite expensive.

Helicopter capture to do fertility control applications can be very expensive as well.

It takes resources to do these things.

>> FRED WOEHL: We do.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: And all of these things in BLM's view is an important part of our future management on the range.

>> FRED WOEHL: Okay.

Anybody have any questions for Dean before we move on?

Does anybody up here need a comfort break?

If not, we will go straight into our recommendations and our working group report, and I will hand the podium over to my co-chair Dr. Sue McDonnell.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Thanks, Fred.

We are up to the adoptions working group.

Ben, can you give us a report on the adoptions and any recommendations you would like us to consider?

>> BEN MASTERS: Yes.

Thank you.

As we get the excellent presentation from Kali earlier today, you know, adoption numbers are increasing, and hopefully we'll continue to increase mustang

management -- or Mustang Makeover events are, you know, increasing and hopefully the publicity and the awareness of wild horse adoptions will increase along with them.

I'm also really excited to get the results back from the Great Lakes research study to see what they suggest would be a good advertising branding, marketing, type of tools to get more horses adopted and I'm also excited to get the new website up and going for the Internet adoptions because, you know, more and more people do stuff online.

So, you know, there are some exciting things going on.

You know, the amount of horses being adopted are not really the amount of horses being born on the range, but hopefully we can increase it from, you know, 2500 a year to maybe 3,000, maybe 4,000, who knows.

The only recommendation that I had, which is something that we talked about, is -- oh, dang it.

I grabbed the wrong piece of paper.

No, I didn't.

When I talked to Kali earlier, to get sale eligible horses for the mustang foundation.

The majority of the sale eligible horses are older horses.

So a recommendation that we have is to advertise and conduct frequent adoption events at off range corrals to make more sale eligible horses that are riding desirable age.

>> FRED WOEHL: And one of our thoughts behind this is that there are several off range corrals that people go to and they have regular adoptions but they are not advertised very well, and there's a problem with counting them as an adoption event.

>> BEN MASTERS: Correct.

>> FRED WOEHL: And so what the working group did is to come up with this idea to -- it's not that we -- and I don't want anyone to understand this -- Ben jump in.

We don't want people to think that we are rushing horses through this.

We are actually not but we want to -- I mean, there are horses in these off range corrals that's been there two years and nobody had a chance to look at or anything.

So if we have more frequent adoption events where people can walk up and walk out there, these horses will have more exposure.

These horses will have more opportunity to be adopted, and if they are not, then organizations like Mustang Heritage Foundation have that the opportunity to use those horses and get them into good homes.

That's the crux behind this, correct?

>> BEN MASTERS: Yes.

>> FRED WOEHL: Okay.

Ms. June.

June, you served on this committee with Ben and I.

What do you think?

>> JUNE SEWING: Sounds good to me.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Are we good with the vote.

Any discussion from the folks not on that particular working group?

>> I would just like to, is just before you take a vote, each instance if you would just confirm that the language that you are looking at is the language that you want, because -- I'm doing best we can.

>> FRED WOEHL: Madam chair, one other thing I would like to address that is that before they left, both Steven and Cope gave me their voting proxy.

So I'm going to vote for both of them too.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Are you okay with the language?

>> BEN MASTERS: Yes, I'm looking at it.

The only concern I have is the word "riding desirable," because they have kid programs where they are foals.

Dean, do you -- from the BLM standpoint would it be best to have the words "riding desirable" or should we put a period after horses?

>> FRED WOEHL: I think all horses.

You didn't ask me, but I think it's all horses not age or size or color or anything.

Just all horses.

>> BEN MASTERS: Okay.

>> FRED WOEHL: And burros.

Burros, yes.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Everybody comfortable with the wording.

We'll take a voice vote on this recommendation.

>> JUNE SEWING: Well, I was wondering if it actually addresses what we were talking about, as far as -- I know what Fred said about not wanting to speed through, but should there be some reference to the fact that it would increase the availability of these horses through more frequent adoption events?

>> FRED WOEHL: I think -- I hear what you are saying, and one of the things that the -- the purpose of this is not necessarily, I don't think, to make -- make available more sale eligible horses.

It's to make them exposed more.

Is that what you are trying to say, June?

>> JUNE SEWING: I guess.

I don't know what I'm trying to say.

>> FRED WOEHL: But I understand.

I mean, the purpose of this is not to rush them through where they can be sold for \$25.

That's not the purpose of this.

The purpose of this is to be sure that they have an equal or an enhanced opportunity to be placed in private ownership.

>> BEN MASTERS: Actually, the purpose is to create more sale eligible horses and burros.

Because --

>> JUNE SEWING: Yes.

>> BEN MASTERS: When we talked to Kali from my understanding if a burro or a horse is trained or adopted, then it becomes much more marketable and less paperwork is involved.

So that that horse has more of a likely chance to be placed into private care.

So the purpose of this is to have more sale eligible horses and burros that are riding desirable age so that the Mustang Heritage Foundation, the TIP trainers and the other trusted training programs can take the sale eligible horses and have a more marketable product to take and try to sell.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Should we remove the word available?

To make more?

>> BEN MASTERS: I don't think the word available changes that much.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: To allow more desirable horses to reach sale eligible status.

Is that the point?

>> BEN MASTERS: Yes.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: More horses and burros to reach sale eligible status.

Dean, I didn't mean to cut you off.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: You were in the middle of voting and here I am participating in your discussion.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Go ahead.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Thank you.

Whether BLM sells horses or adopts them, they are going to good homes as far as our policy.

I don't want anybody thinking -- I just want to add that you are not speeding them through and they are not heading off to slaughter.

That's not what's going on here at all.

But I wanted to add this.

Some of the entrepreneurs who are very good trainers who can add a lot of value to the horse, participating in the TIP program, they are saying, oh, my gosh, I can create a \$2,500 horse.

So TIP offers me \$800, but, gosh, I would rather be able to buy a nice saddle prospect and get the thing trained in three or four months and I will reap the benefits of having purchased it for \$125 and \$25.

So you are not just accommodating people who prefer to buy and train them.

There's another aspect of this then and I think you brought this up last meeting.

I have just wanted to though that in.

>> FRED WOEHL: Added value.

>> BEN MASTERS: Yes, it makes it easier for trainers.

>> JUNE SEWING: I guess maybe I would suggest that conduct more frequent adoption events, because they already do --

>> FRED WOEHL: Well, I think for them to count, they have to be advertised.

Oh, okay.

>> JUNE SEWING: Does it need to say?

>> FRED WOEHL: No, that's good right there.

I see what you are doing.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: All set.

Are we ready to vote, June?

>> JUNE SEWING: Yes.

>> FRED WOEHL: Yes, yes, yes.

Are.

>> BEN MASTERS: Yes.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: It's unanimous.

>> BEN MASTERS: And that is all from the adoption committee, unless anybody else that's on the adoption committee has something else that they would like to bring up.

>> FRED WOEHL: Well, one thing that -- and we will probably do this in an overall thing but I still like the -- our very first recommendation from the last board meeting needs to be included in this board meeting, is that we encourage BLM to continue to work on past recommendations to get them done.

Oh.

Along with this is that our very first recommendation we made in our last board meeting in April, was this we encouraged BLM to continue to work and -- and accomplish the recommendation they agreed to, and they are doing that.

But I don't want to let -- because see, there's some that they haven't got to yet, or they haven't gotten to all the way, but just let them -- I mean we have lots of recommendations out there that BLM has accepted in the past, that nothing has been done.

They said, yes, we will do that, but nothing has been done.

I don't want to let them die.

We want them worked on too, as well as new ones.

But that -- this is not the place for it.

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Do you want to back up and repeat recommendation number one.

Can you do that, Kathie.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Are you ready to go on with the next working group in the next one we will talk about is population growth suppression.

I chair that and serve with Julie, Cope, and Ginger.

And the good news is we had no recommendations as of yesterday, but as we get more information and things come up, we have -- I believe we have -- we would like now to discuss possibly another recommendation from Julie's initiative, but we are all on board.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: We would request that the BLM would extend an invitation to the board members are to attend spay trials when they might occur.

Yes, let's put in all board members.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Any discussion?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: We have been talking about this issue for a long, long time.

I think being as open as possible is the best practice, and we talked from the very beginning when I first came on the board about making sure that board members have an option to attend these trials, if they wanted to.

And, of course, there's an issue about cost and so Dean said we might have to limit it somewhat because maybe they couldn't afford to have us all go and so that kind of just hung out there.

And so it's certainly a -- you know, it's not a mandatory thing.

It's just if they would like to they are certainly welcome to because I think openness is -- has a lot of value.

I have always felt that if people could witness.

If they could witness this, a lot of information that's out there in public media could be quelled.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Ginger did you have any comments on this?

>> GINGER KATHRENS: No, I think Julie is absolutely correct.

If things move forward like this, I think it's important that we're there, or that some of us are there and I totally agree with her.

>> FRED WOEHLE: The only question I have is it tends -- all spay trials, like the one that they had at Kentucky, isn't that up to the school or the organization that's doing this?

I mean, BLM doesn't have any -- I mean, that's private property per se.

Dean?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Well, I think every university has its own protocols and many of the things that you are talking about are embodied in the institutional investigational animal care and use.

It's not a permit but Sue --

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: We call it a protocol, institutional use and animal protocol.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: And I think some of those things very well may outline the

university's position about observation or not.

And it may not be entirely be BLM's call to make here, if indeed we are working with a university.

>> FRED WOEHL: Well, could we add something to that, that if -- if allowed by the organization conducting the trials, something like that?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Julie?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Certainly that could work or we miss -- since our recommendations are to BLM, we just might say BLM would attempt to facilitate an invitation, something along those lines.

>> JUNE: I guess my question is when the BLM does -- don't they do this by a grant.

Don't you give a university a grant to perform the research and how at that point, what is the BLM's participation in that research?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So the university makes a proposal to BLM with all the outlines of how the research would be conducted and along with that comes an animal care and use protocol, and we, through an assistance agreement.

If we accept that research proposal, then we fund it and then we turn it over to the university to conduct the research.

Now, many of the projects Paul reported on today are being done and conducted on university campuses.

They promote stories in Oregon are in a BLM facility.

So --

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: It's not at all unusual to have site visits by the funding agency.

And we like to demonstrate allowing them to watch what we are doing and inspect the facilities.

We try to accommodate that.

There probably are situations where it wouldn't -- just for space, you know, surgical suite or whatever, they may not be able.

But in many of our situations, we have observation rooms for the public to view in a

space that's not going to in any way interfere and we have staff who Shepherd those people, look after them, clients or visitors who might want to see.

It's becoming more common at the vet schools and the large vet clinics.

So I don't think it's an unreasonable -- but it would need to be politely requested and we would want to behave.

(Laughter)

Did you talk to Cope about this or were you aware of this potential recommendation?

>> FRED WOEHL: Yes.

Yes.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: As a veterinarian, what did he say?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Actually, he said, I've seen it.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: What do you want to do?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I recommend we vote.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: To attend spay trials when they might occur, if allowed by protocols governing the trial?

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: I'm okay with that.

Everybody else?

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Everybody?

We'll start with you Ben, are you comfortable with that?

>> BEN MASTERS: Yes.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: Yes.

>> FRED WOEHL: Yes, yes, yes.

>> JUNE SEWING: Yes.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Yes.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Yes.

Is that everything?

That's everything.

We thought needed to be addressed at this time.

Okay.

Volunteers.

And Jen is our head for that, but in her absence, I believe Fred, did you chair that group?

>> FRED WOEHL: Yes, I did.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Can you take it over?

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you.

On this volunteer working group, we had -- we had June and we had Ben in there too and we had a lot of -- we had two folks come in and talk to us.

We had Mrs. Sell, would is -- Mrs. Lee who is sitting here and the other Mrs. Lee who isn't here.

Both of them came to talk to us about darting.

They are not sisters but they are both very passionate about horses in.

This, we want to encourage the use of volunteers in all aspects of BLM, including darting, because that's where we feel like they have a -- a big use, but in the past, we have made several recommendations along those same lines.

So we don't want to make anything new at this time, because there's still some out there that will work.

So what I want to say, and I will let the other two say something too, but we had a very good visit.

After the meeting was over, we went out in the hall and we set down with several -- several advocates and interested folks and we had a sound table talk and I think we did pretty well.

It was very, very good.

>> BEN MASTERS: Thank you all for coming and preparing your notes too!

>> FRED WOEHLE: Yeah, it was really, really good.

I learned a lot.

I hope they learned a lot.

It was a good learning for everybody to get to know each other a little bit better to build some bridges, make some friends and I was energized by it.

I feel very good about it.

And I appreciate that.

>> BEN MASTERS: So following up on what Fred said, one of the biggest frustrations that I see with passionate volunteers who want to donate their time, and have, you know, done considerably research, have gotten trained with fertility control, and have the resources and the time to go out and volunteer, is that whenever they try to go out and do it, they feel unwelcomed by the district offices or they get a lot of pushback and it's not only discouraging, but they can't go out and implement PZP fertility control.

And it is, you know, without a doubt that there are some very, very successful herds whose population growth is being managed successfully by PZP.

So I don't know what the best way is to encourage the state and local or district offices to embrace these volunteers and to begin these -- these PZP volunteer working groups, but I think that -- and I would like some help with this on a recommendation, but from the national office, I think it would be good -- okay, are you ready, Kathie?

To create a guide for district offices to work with volunteers who want to apply fertility control.

And then that way, we don't have to reinvent the wheel district office to district office.

>> FRED WOEHLE: Well, again, Ben, we have done something like that.

I mean, I -- I don't like licking the same calf over and over again.

You know, number seven last year, the national wild horse and advisory board encourages state and local BLM offices embrace -- embrace volunteers to document wild horses and work with local offices to create a marketing -- a management plan, and to enable qualified volunteers to participate in the implementation of the plan, including the use of PZP.

I mean, we -- we have already done that.

>> BEN MASTERS: Yes, it definitely recommends that but it doesn't have a recommendation of creating a guideline for district offices for them to be able -- so that if a volunteer organization came to them, they would have something to begin working with.

A sample MOU or however that would work.

>> FRED WOEHL: Okay.

Number six, up above that deals with that too and this is their answer, BLM's.

A formalized process and strategy for a volunteer program has been discussed, and will be developed when personnel are hired to -- to lead this.

In the interim, field offices will be encouraged to use volunteers for on range and off range management activities.

The Washington office will offer financial incentives to a division chief challenge to encourage and support field offices would initiate new programs to engage community groups or volunteers to advance on range population management endeavors such as those recommended in number seven.

>> BEN MASTERS: If you believe we don't need to make a new recommendation, then I'm totally cool with that.

>> FRED WOEHL: Like I said -- Dean, have you covered all of this?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: I think.

So I think we totally get the message that you folks want us to develop a better framework for volunteers to plug into and I guess this would be maybe the third or the fourth recommendation that's the same thing in different words.

That's kind of my take on it.

We do understand what your desire is.

>> KRISTIN BAIL: Two thoughts come to my mind and this is building on Dean's.

How much is it a willingness issue and how much of it is an ability issue and how to have a dialogue about that.

Because having worked with lots and lots of volunteers in a line officer setting sometimes you are having to say no because you don't have the NEPA ready, and you need to have a couple of years to do that.

Or there's some other logistical challenge.

Or it may be the best thing is to have a volunteer coordinator for the volunteers so you don't have 15 different people trying to come and do their own thing with BLM.

So not to solve that but I think also just having a further -- a further dialogue and exploration of what some of those underlying issues are and then if what Dean suggested is incentivizing our field offices to -- to be more open by providing some financial support for what they can do so they can feel like they are being funded for it.

>> FRED WOEHL: Along those same lines.

I have been a volunteer for the Park Service for probably over 30 years and at one time for a ten-year period, I was the volunteer coordinator.

In other words if someone wanted to volunteer for the park service, I was the one that signed them up.

I had proven myself to the people that I could handle that and then I would ask, you know, Ben, do you want to clean that trail.

This is the trail from point A to point B.

I was the one who did that as a volunteer.

That might be something that we might look at, but the thing is, we can ask DC to recommend something like, that but until that is done and the field office can say, boy, it's a good idea but we ain't going to do it.

There's not too much we can -- there's not too much we can do about that.

That depends on the person that goes in and sets down and talks and convinces to them and proves to them that they can do something like that.

I think like Kristin said, a volunteer coordinator, that's a pretty good idea like I used to do.

And so that's just an idea I -- I did that for almost 15 years and then we got a brand new parks superintendent and he wasn't pumped on volunteers.

And so it just kind of -- so it just depends on your relationship and all of that.

He had -- in one of his parks he had a volunteer go out and get hurt and they ended up suing and even though you can't sue the government -- he said it was a mess and it's wasn't worth going through that anymore.

You know, it's -- management of people is hard, isn't it, Kristin?

Yeah.

That's enough said.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: I think what we are hearing is we will not have a recommendation, we will go with previous recommendations and Dean's understanding that we are really -- it's on our mind.

>> FRED WOEHL: I don't want to cut him off.

>> BEN MASTERS: Dean definitely understands what I'm trying to get across.

There's not a reason to make another recommendation that has been covered in the last advisory board meeting, and I will probably bring it up next advisory board meeting too.

>> FRED WOEHL: You can see we made recommendations about the same stuff.

Don't feel about.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Are we go to go on volunteers?

Thank you very much.

I know you had an interesting meeting.

Those of us who were in the other group were having a hard time concentrating in our group because we would have loved to be in on it.

The last working group then is herd area repopulation issues, and the chair of that is Ginger.

And the other members are June, Steven and myself.

>> JUNE SEWING: And everyone in our group was jealous that they couldn't attend the wonderful presentations on the volunteers portion of that.

We do not -- I'm going to be really popular.

We don't have any recommendations from our committee.

I think it was really a good educational experience that we had.

And kind of a way forward, because Jared Bybee set in on our meeting and has such vast knowledge of where something like this light work and where it would not.

Both herd area and herd management areas we would explore areas that no longer contain horses to see if horses from holding, short-term holding may be put out as a nonproducing herd on areas that were previously zeroed out.

And so we're going to continue to I think work with BLM.

Something on BLM and it might be good to have a go-to person that BLM might recommend to us or just someone who is knowledgeable enough so we don't spin our wheels and make, you know, efforts on an area that's totally inappropriate because of the -- because maybe there are remnant populations in the area that -- where we put some mares out and all of a sudden, you know, we are repopulating when the idea is for it to be a non-reproducing group of animals or where it's a sage-grouse area and it would be totally inappropriate.

I think we need more guidance.

And from somebody like Jared who can kind of give us some instruction on where we might begin and try to find an area like that.

>> I think he gave us information on the areas that were zeroed out and why they were zeroed out and pointed out the ones that we could look at.

He mentioned that some areas, like the -- have been actually changed from one agency to the other because of the endangered species like the tortoise and that kind of thing.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Mm-hmm.

>> JUNE SEWING: And also then, of course is the private property.

There's another area that we couldn't do anything about.

It was zeroed out because of private property problems.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Right.

Well, he's not in the room so we can -- we can say yeah.

He really -- oh, is he in the room?

Oh.

Where is he?

Oh.

(Laughter).

>> JUNE SEWING: Was that right, Jared?

Did you say that you could do that?

>> JARED BYBEE: I didn't hear that, June.

>> JUNE SEWING: That you would give us some information about areas that had been zeroed out and the reasons why, that way we could access that, I think.

>> JARED BYBEE: Yes, we have that.

That's easy to provide the detailed information on that.

It's real easy to pass that along.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Okay.

So how are you going to do that?

>> JARED BYBEE: Well, do you want hard copies or email?

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Okay.

(Laughter).

>> JUNE SEWING: Well being Ginger is the chair of this committee.

Maybe you better contact her.

>> JARED BYBEE: Let me know how you want the information.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Okay.

We'll decide how we want to receive the information, but thank you very much for agreeing to help with that and to be as well.

Thank you.

>> JARED BYBEE: Thank you.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Good to go, Ginger?

Great.

Fred?

>> FRED WOEHL: Madam chair, before you leave, I want you to be here because I want to say something about the meeting that Ben and June and I had with everybody.

We felt like that was really, really good.

And so we wanted to talk about this.

Would the board be all right if we make the working groups available to anybody that wants to come and here.

I mean, if we have them scheduled -- I think we can put something in the federal register, Dean?

Shake your head this way.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Yes.

>> FRED WOEHL: And if we put it in the federal register, we can have the working groups open?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Correct.

>> FRED WOEHL: And people could come and set in and that meeting was really, really good.

I felt really good about that.

>> But I would think that they would have to make those arrangements beforehand.

>> FRED WOEHL: For the working groups?

>> Yes, if they wanted to make a presentation to the working group.

>> FRED WOEHL: If they wanted to make a presentation, they would have to schedule it, but they could come and sit and take -- and if we ask them to take part or had a question or something.

>> JUNE SEWING: But if they wanted to make a presentation, they would have to do it in advance.

Fred right.

Right.

So if -- could we make that as a recommendation or do you think we just need to -- I will degree and then --

>> It's covered in the FACA, the BLM FACAA.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: And I would also caution us, some of these working group sessions are a lot of hard work in a very short period of time.

So I don't think that we want to create the illusion that there's going to be a lot of time for participation from the audience.

They are certainly welcome to be there, but there's a job to get done.

And we never have enough time.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So the protocol is just like this meeting.

The work group meetings are work group meetings and they are for the board.

It's not a public participation time period.

That's what public comment is all about.

If you want to engage somebody, you can, but the audience is there to have the opportunity to observe and listen to your discussions and your work groups, but -- yeah, you are right, Julie.

>> JUNE SEWING: I would like to add to what Fred has said before.

When we have done these working groups in the past, they have been like really kind of helter-skelter and Sue did a great job of organizing these so that they really worked and we could really get some work done.

Thanks, Sue.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Thanks for that, June.

>> Thanks, June.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: Fred, I think we're done and I think deserve a pat on the back for getting don't before -- you said we would be here until 6:00?

I think we are almost through the recommendations.

>> Wait.

This is -- [Overlapping speakers]

>> STEVEN YARDLEY: This is Steven.

Can you hear me.

>> FRED WOEHL: We are ahead of schedule by 40 minutes and Michael made this trip up here.

I thought I would let him, if he wanted to, go ahead and finish with his proposal, but before you do that, my good friend and the one that is setting to my right would like to -- do you want to do it before him, after him?

At the end?

Do you want to do it now?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Let's do the budget presentation and Holle' has a response on the numbers.

>> FRED WOEHL: All right, Michael and thank you for patient waiting and all of this.

We -- see, they actually thought they were going to get through early, you know, but we will stay here until 5:00.

>> MICHAEL REILAND: The last thing that people want to deal with is money in the last part of the meeting.

What I will talk about right here is going to be relatively quick and the reason for that being is I want -- I want to give time for you all to have questions for me because we are at a pretty strategic point in the program in a lot of ways not just operationally, but budget-wise as well.

We have some opportunity here that -- that we may not have had a couple of years ago, even just because of a lot more discussion has happened, both in Congress, as well as here in this forum.

So maybe there's some things the way we can structure things go into the future that will help everyone get to where we want to go.

I will highlight a few of the things which happens this year.

And then talk just a little bit about how the near future is going to look and then I will open it up to questions from this, how -- how maybe I can help you all get information.

My big passion is numbers and writing.

Those two things.

And so I like to put together projections and trends and things like that of how things are going, and we are trying to get things straightened out within our internal budget and our expenditure process so that we can look at those things from an accurate picture.

First, let's go to the first slide here and talk about the pieces of puzzle here and I think you have this in your package.

It might be difficult to read up on the big screen, but not much has changed here.

Holding costs are still holding at about the same, but the good news in that is that we probably are going to end one a couple of percentages decreased down from what we have been the last few years.

That number has been incrementing.

But that's a big deal when we are talking about the money that we are talking.

A lot of that has to do with the new pasture space that has already come on and in the near future that will be happened more.

So that percentage next year will probably go down a little bit more, depending on operationally what we do.

But -- so that's part of the good news of this picture, is that percentage of those two pieces have gone down just a little bit.

And so from here, we look at that.

The other thing that's good news, especially what we heard from the public here is that the amount of money for fertility control application has gone up over the last three years and relatively significantly.

It was about 80 some thousand a couple of years ago, about 100,000 last year, and it went up to 171 this year and we are projecting even higher next year.

So while that is far from what I'm sure a high from what people would like to see.

We are using more volunteers and keeping those costs lower can always help out that as well.

But that is a good piece of the puzzle from my perspective, as well, that we have increased that a little bit every year the last few years and we are looking at doing even a little bit more than that.

A lot of the unit costs have gone up fairly significantly and this is one of the negative effects.

It's not incredibly negatives but getting pastures.

The amount of money we spend per feed day, so per horse, per day at corral is going to go up.

Our unit costs for that is going to go up significantly in 2016, from previous years.

And the reason being is we have a few federal facilities that have fixed costs related to them, no matter how many horses you have there.

If you have 50, if you have 10,000, you have a fixed cost of labor and things like that.

Those facilities are -- that cost per animal is going to kick up a little bit which causes the overall unit cost for animal costs are going down.

We have moved them out of relative high cost corrals into pastures but it's temporarily when you move those horses way down in those facilities the unit costs in those facilities go up significantly and next year they will probably go up a little bit more if we move 6,000 head from corrals into pastures and we only gather the -- the amount that we are currently planned to gather.

So I just wanted to point that out.

Like we said, it's a negative from an individual perspective, but overall perspective of the budget it's a good thing.

It's actually a good thing.

So if people start looking at that, don't look at it as such a bad thing.

It actually helps.

That's all I pretty much wanted to say on this.

The overall budget.

Just a reminder that this is expenditures and not obligations and government parlances are two different things.

Obligating the money is a promise to pay it.

An expenditure, it actually went out the door.

So these are expenditures.

It includes the sage-grouse money that we got.

The wildlife program money that we got, the sage-grouse money to do gathers and to go in and feed some of the horses that were gathered that includes Beatty Butte and some money going to Nevada and Hawaii.

So this expenditure includes those.

This is not just our Wild Horse and Burro Program funds.

This is also funds from that as well.

Okay.

>> FRED WOEHL: Anybody have any questions?

Thank you very much.

>> MICHAEL REILAND: And then this slide is our accomplishments in 2016 so far.

And costs related to them.

And so from this perspective, you can see these are all what are in our MIS system right now.

So these don't necessarily reflect what actually happened on the ground.

Take some time to enter them into the systems and get transferred over, but -- but some of these numbers will match up exactly with what you heard before.

Some might be a little bit lower because of that.

But we do -- at the end of the day, September 30th, we all of these numbers into the system so we can accurately reflect what did we do this year accomplish-wise, and that's what gets us to the unit costs.

At the end of the year, I do view a unit cost both by state and the national program as a whole, and that helps us going forward in budgeting for the future, in all of these different aspects of program.

So that's it.

>> FRED WOEHL: Now, I don't see any salaries in this part of the budget.

Is that something separate or --

>>> MICHAEL REILAND: Yes so there is a line item there, program support overhead, uncontrollables at the very bottom, that's where all of that is.

It's not salaries that are directly attributable to one of these actions.

So those are general salaries that don't go directly to one of the others.

>> FRED WOEHL: Okay.

>> MICHAEL REILAND: So any questions on those two slides?

All right.

Well, that's good.

I'm always open, as I said, I'm always open to present whatever you all want to know in terms of where we are at with the budget, different reports, different things.

I love creating that kind of stuff.

So if any of you have some ideas on what you would like to see and how you would like to see it, just let me know.

I can make just about anything happen with numbers.

So just let me know, and we can put something together for you for any of your calls or any of the meetings.

Okay?

>> FRED WOEHL: Okay.

Thanks.

Thank you, Michael.

Before we go on, I would like to go over our recommendations again to be sure that they are exactly like we want them and to give everybody a chance to look at them one more time.

If that's okay.

All right.

Ben, I want you -- we'll just start.

You will read one and then Julie will read one and I will read one and on down.

>> BEN MASTERS: Thanks for giving me the fun one.

The BLM should follow stipulations of the Wild Horse and Burro Act by offering all suitable animals and long and short-term holding deemed unadoptable for sale.

Those deemed unsuitable for sale should be destroyed in the most effective manner possible.

Approved.

>> FRED WOEHL: That's what I -- is that what everybody remembered?

I just want to be sure that we go over these.

>> BEN MASTERS: Are you going to email these to us, Kathie?

>> KATHIE LIBBY: Ultimately, I think Dean will.

Is that right?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Yes.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: BLM should prioritize -- you moved it on me, Kathie.

I lost it.

BLM should prioritize designated sage-grouse habitat for removal of excess around malls and use range degradation for prioritization of excess animals.

Those rangelands that can be restored and maintained in a healthy status.

Approved.

A.

>> FRED WOEHL: BLM should develop partnerships with economic agencies and or departments -- the environmental effects to reduce AUM on HMAs due to range degradation of wild horses and/or burros of the further analysis should be conducted regarding the effects of potential removal of all domestic livestock all HMAs.

Approved.

Are.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: BLM should encourage BLM RACs to develop and submit for consideration their ideas for herd management and range rehabilitation strategy tailored to their specific areas and HMAs based on local knowledge and expertise.

Approved.

>> GINGER KATHRENS: I get to read?

BLM should advertise and conduct more frequent adoption events at off-range corrals to enable more horses and burros to reach sale eligible status.

Approved.

>> JUNE SEWING: Repeat number one from last meeting.

(Laughter)

>> GINGER KATHRENS: You get to do another one, don't you think?

(Laughter)

>> JUNE SEWING: BLM facilities should send invitations to all board members to attend spay trials when they might occur if allowed by protocols governing the trial.

Approved.

>> FRED WOEHL: Is that what everybody remembers?

Is that what everybody remembers?

All right.

Very good.

Thank you very much for those recommendations.

We don't -- we didn't give you 20 dean but we gave you a few.

All right.

At in time, I will turn the podium or the speaking over to Ms. Kristin.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: Fred, can we have Holle' clarify those numbers first?

>> FRED WOEHL: Oh, I'm sorry?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: That's going to be very brief.

>> FRED WOEHL: We will have Holle' clarify these numbers.

>> HOLLE' HOOKS: Sure.

It was actually on slide two.

So if you look at your -- or slide number one that has off range pastures and eco-sanctuary numbers.

That off range corral number should be 13,552.

The 13552.

I apologize for that.

>> FRED WOEHL: Instead of the 9,000 and something number that was there?

>> HOLLE' HOOKS: Yes.

I thought B had shipped all the animals to other facilities or adopted them all.

Thanks.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you, Holle'.

>> I have bifocals and I still can't read my phone.

So Dean and I wanted to take this opportunity to share the information from the board because it's now coming out more widely and we just thought that you would want to hear this information from us first, and where he just recently issued a press release saying that the Bureau of Land Management has decided not to move ahead at this time with the proposed research efforts at the Heinz corrals due to complications from litigation.

We remain committed to finding new tools that will help us ensure that we have healthy horses on healthy rangelands.

So that decision was extremely recently made and we wanted to share that with you, so you would find out from us.

>> FRED WOHL: Thank you.

I really -- we had a very good meeting.

I will go around the room like I always do and let everybody have a final say.

I will -- June, I will start with you.

Ben, I will start with you.

(Laughter)

She gave me a skunk eye and I -- I don't want her mad at me.

I can handle you.

>> BEN MASTERS: I just want to leave on the note that, you know, at dinner last night, I had a guy ask me, like, why are you sitting on this board?

Because there's no easy solution.

I'm not getting paid.

It's like really stressful.

I get bad press from it.

It's really not that much fun.

(Laughter)

And it sucks really hard!

Like, to try to make these decisions and, you know, what we have is the opportunity and the ability to influence 30 million acres of land.

And to pass that on to future generations and if that landscape is better than whenever we inherited, you know, we did our job.

And if we screw it up, it's on us.

And if we have the ability to create more of a change than the biggest landowner in the United States.

We are more powerful as far as land management and conservation goes than Ted Turner.

I think that's an important thing to remember, that, you know, the decisions that we make, they are not for this year.

They are not for this administration.

They are going to reach out, you know, five, ten, 100, 500 years and we are so crucial for the future of conservation efforts in the United States.

So I just want to end on that note.

>> DR. JULIE WEIKEL: What a setup and act to follow.

I always enjoyed big picture events.

One -- one piddly case at a time never really interested me.

I like affecting big change, productive change.

I like things to be measured and monitored and not to be just opinion good what works and what doesn't.

Certainly service on this board is frustrating, but what we do here has a whole lot to do with all of our obligations in life, which is about taking good care of the place that supports us and sustains us.

And actually the wild horse and burro thing and healthy rangelands is pretty simple, compared to managing the planet with 7 billion people on it, and so it's all part of the

same big picture.

And it would be nice to just stay down there in the weeds but the big picture stuff really is pretty important and we can't -- we can't really do a good job unless we are willing to try to take that long view.

>> FRED WOEHL: June?

>> JUNE SEWING: You are next in line.

>> FRED WOEHL: But I have the final word.

>> JUNE SEWING: Well, since I have been here the longest, I'm not going to say I'm the oldest, which I really am, but I have seen such a change in not only what is happening as far as the board is concerned, about the BLM response to our requests, our recommendations and also to the public comments and how they have become more helpful and just pointing fingers.

And I just really appreciate that and I do appreciate those who have stayed to listen until the very end.

And I'm just glad to be here.

>> FRED WOEHL: Ginger?

>> GINGER KATHRENS: Well, it's pretty clear that on some issues, you know, we -- I have vastly different points of -- point of view, but I think despite, that I think it's -- I think it speaks well of all of us that we can still speak coherently and intelligently and kindly to each other.

I think it reflects well on this board.

I wish our presidential election was as civil as our discourse.

And I'm very proud to be here.

The wild horses and burros belong to the American public and I think we can't lose sight of that.

Thanks.

>> DR. SUE McDONNELL: I think it's all been said.

I don't have -- you know, I don't have profound statements on it.

I would add one thing, I know we made some very difficult decisions this time, and I'm actually -- I know it will be difficult for some of us to answer to everybody but I want everyone to know that it's very thoughtful and that we all deliberated very carefully and -- and I think it was -- I admire all of my colleagues here for the courage that it takes to sometimes make these -- these reasons -- or decisions for reasons that may not always be understood right away.

>> FRED WOEHL: Thank you.

Dean?

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: So thank you, Fred.

I want to thank you, Fred, Sue, and Dr. Cope for your years of service here, and that I hope we see your applications again to compete with other interested parties, but -- so I'm so thankful for your service and also all members of the board.

I have 41 years of service in, celebrated August 3rd, federal service, all of it with Bureau of Land Management.

(Applause)

So along the line -- thank you.

That's not why I said that.

But along the lines of what Ben said, I faced a decision about a year ago, about whether or not to retire and I just didn't want to go there.

I'm still here.

I remain committed to the American public and our mustangs and burros and I'm very thankful for the guidance that you guys give us.

Because just like our decision on the incentive thing, we didn't get it right and as I think about it, what we were about to do, it wasn't going to make any difference at all.

So there's just another example of how the board helps guide us in a good direction in a positive manner.

So I'm very thankful to you all.

Thank you so much.

>> JUNE SEWING: We are grateful that you made the decision to stay.

>> FRED WOEHL: Yes, we are.

Kristin.

>> KRISTIN BAIL: And Dean, your retirement papers will never get signed by me.

I do believe at the bottom of my heart, you can't say thanks enough.

Thank you all for your participation and the board's caring, commitment, thoughtful conversation, you know that -- you all embody the best of public involvement and engagement and we are very fortunate to have folks like you and the folks in the audience who continue to care for our public lands and resources.

Thank you.

>> DEAN BOLSTAD: I forgot one very important thing and I don't like to second up on my boss, and she was about to have the last word, but --

(Laughter)

You can but I want to acknowledge the staffs, not only on the Washington office for all they have done to be here at this meet, but the work that they do, and it's very difficult time for the BLM employees working in the wild horse and burro program out on the ground.

And you can see the difficulties they are dealing with right here in Nevada.

So I just want to acknowledge -- you know, I might be the figure head for the wild horse and burro program but I can't do anything without the staffs in the Washington office and the field.

So much appreciation to them.

>> FRED WOEHL: And along that same line, we could not hold these meetings without Kathie keeping us in line and giving me the skunk eye when I'm not doing what I'm supposed to do and all of this.

You know, this is -- if we aren't reappointed, this will be my last meeting and it's -- it's been a ride!

I generally don't get emotional, but I am.

I'm just having a good time.

That's all there is to it.

I'm a grandpa.

And as we close up, I'm going to say -- I'm going to say a poem about being a grandpa and just kind of share that with you.

But it's been fun.

It's been real.

I have been enjoyed every minute of it, when I first took on this, like I said, I have worked with the Eastern States for a long time and I told them, when I was there, Karen Malloy was the wild horse lead.

I said, hey, I think I'm going to apply for that -- that national board, because I said, I think I can make a change.

She said, you are stupid!

You are crazy!

Why would you want to do that?

Stay here and help us where you can do something.

But the people that I work with, the people that have been on this board, the BLM leadership has really been good and I appreciate that.

Boy, this is stuff!

For an old cowboy.

Anyway, grandpas, they have a special job.

They have had since days of yore to teach their children's children things their parents may ignore, like how to whistle.

Or how to spit.

Carve initials in a tree, the value of an empty can and why some things aren't tree.

How do birds fly?

Why do dogs run together?

Why grandma's always right.

How to tie a square knot and when to stand and fight, but if grandpa is a cowboy and that kid is so inclined, the horn of wisdom empties out to fill his little mind.

He has him on a horse, as soon as momma will allow and he fills his head with stories of the old days of punching cows and how when he was just his age, he rode those rough strings snide.

Never hesitate, grandpa said, that's how I learned to ride.

So when the horse the kid was riding tossed him to the ground, grandpa said, get up from there.

Don't let him keep you down.

See, grandpa new the lesson to be learned.

One of us must ride that horse, he said, his voice real stern.

Well, wisdom passed from old to young.

You're right, that kid said true.

You want me to let these stirrups out, grandpa, one hole or two?

Listen thank you all very much.

We've had a very good meeting.

It's been a tough meeting.

Sue was absolutely correct when she told you that some of the -- of the stuff that we did today we did not take lightly.

It was hard.

It was emotional on us.

But the thing I like with this board is we vote our conscious and what we feel like is the best for the overall program and I really appreciate that.

I would go anywhere with any of these people at any time.

Thank you very much.

If all minds are clear, we are adjourned.

(End of meeting)