

FACT SHEET

White Mountain/Little Colorado Herd Management Areas

KEY STATISTICS AND FACTS

The White Mountain/Little Colorado HMAs encompasses 1,014,557 acres of public, private, and state land.

The AML for the jointly-managed WMLC HMAs has an identified management range of 205-300 horses for White Mountain and 69-100 for Little Colorado.

The current population for both HMAs is nearly 1,000 horses. The estimated current wild horse population within the WMLC HMAs is based on the April 2010 flights.

The BLM will use a contractor to remove sufficient animals to bring the populations to the low end of the AML ranges.

Animals will be offered for adoption through the BLM's wild horse and burro adoption program, or placed in long-term holding pastures.

Interested members of the public and the news media will be afforded multiple opportunities to attend gather operations and to observe the animals prior to shipping to short-term holding.

The White Mountain/Little Colorado HMAs contain nine livestock grazing allotments with authorization to graze cattle and sheep each year. During the past five years, the average livestock use has been 41% of the authorized use. The number of livestock authorized to graze varies year to year depending upon what the individual livestock operator applies for within their permits.

Wild horse AMLs were based on direct observation of range condition completed by a multi-disciplinary team of rangeland management and wildlife experts. These populations are supported by the Green River RMP developed with full public participation during the RMP planning process.

The White Mountain/Little Colorado HMAs support wild horses, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, elk, sage-grouse and numerous other wildlife species.

Not gathering the excess wild horses would result in an annual population increase of approximately 20% causing overpopulation and damage to the resources. It would also be out of conformance with the RMP

Consequences of Postponing/Not Removing Wild Horses

Not removing excess wild horses would put BLM at the risk of being non-compliant with the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, with the 2003 Consent Decree with the State of Wyoming, and with the Court Order with private land owners, and applicable regulations and Bureau policy.

Removing the excess wild horses will help prevent deterioration of the range, and achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship.



Leaving the excess wild horses in the HMAs will strain the existing partnerships with other public land users.

No Action Not an Option

Not gathering the excess wild horses would result in an annual population increase of approximately 20% causing increasing numbers of wild horses to move outside the White Mountain/Little Colorado HMAs in search of food and water.

The No Action Alternative is not in conformance with the RMP.

The No Action Alternative does not comply with the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, with the 2003 Consent Decree with the State of Wyoming, and the Court Order with private land owners, or with applicable regulations and Bureau policy.

Wild Horse Overpopulations Impact Wildlife and Plants

There is a wide variety of wildlife species common to the ecosystem within the White Mountain/Little Colorado HMAs, including pronghorn antelope, mule deer and Rocky Mountain Elk. Other wildlife species common to the environment include mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats and black-tailed jackrabbits.

There is abundant habitat within the HMAs for a variety of raptors including: Prairie Falcon, American Kestrel, Red-Tailed Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, Northern Harrier, Burrowing Owl, Golden Eagle, and Great-Horned Owl.

BLM threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate animal and plant species potentially inhabiting the White Mountain/Little Colorado HMAs include: Ute Ladies'-Tresses, Black-Footed Ferret, Greater Sage-Grouse, and Gray Wolf.

BLM sensitive species inhabiting the White Mountain/Little Colorado HMAs include: Idaho Pocket Gopher, Pygmy Rabbit, Swift Fox, Dwarf Shrew, Spotted Bat, Long-Eared Myotis, Fringed Myotis, Townsend's Big-Eared Bat, and White-Tailed Prairie Dog.

Sensitive bird species that may occur in the area include: Ferruginous Hawk, Mountain Plover, Peregrine Falcon, Greater Sage-Grouse, Long-Billed Curlew, Burrowing Owl, Sage Thrasher, Loggerhead Shrike, Brewer's Sparrow, Sage Sparrow, Yellow-Billed Cuckoo, and Bald Eagle. The Mountain Plover have been recorded in the project area and potential breeding/nesting habit exists.

Because wild horses often repeatedly graze in the same area year-round, forage plants in the affected area(s) receive little rest from grazing pressures. The result is a reduction in plant health, vigor, reproduction and loss of native forage species, which diminishes habitat quality.

Livestock Grazing Within the Project Area

Livestock use is at approximately 60%, below the level of permitted use. Livestock use is in compliance with the grazing systems outlined in the final multiple use decisions, agreements and term permit conditions providing for periodic rest and deferment of key range sites.

The proposed action is in conformance with the BLM Wyoming "Standards for Healthy Rangelands and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing Management" (1997). The proposed action will assist in maintaining the health of the public lands within the HMAs.