



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

NATIONAL WILD  
HORSE & BURRO  
ADVISORY BOARD

December 13-14, 2023

Volume 2

Day 2 Meeting Minutes

U. S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management

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# Thursday, December 14, 2023

## Advisory Board Subcommittee Reports and Draft Recommendations Session

The board broke into small groups and discussed draft recommendations.

### Welcome and Call to Order

**Bryant Kuechle, Facilitator, The Langdon Group**

Mr. Kuechle welcomed attendees to the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board meeting. He then went over the Rules of the Room.

**Ms. Celeste Carlisle, Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Chair**

Ms. Carlisle welcomed all attending, both in person and by live stream. She then began the meeting with Advisory Board Subcommittee Discussions and Draft Recommendations.

TABLE 1 - NATIONAL WILD HORSE & BURRO ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS	
Board Member	Representing
<b>Dr. Ursula Bechert, DVM, PhD</b>	Wild Horse & Burro Research
<b>Ms. Celeste Carlisle</b>	Wild Horse & Burro Advocacy
<b>Commissioner James French</b>	Natural Resource Management
<b>Commissioner Varlin Higbee</b>	Livestock Management
<b>Dr. Gwenllian Iacona, PhD</b>	Wildlife Management
<b>Dr. Tom Lenz, DVM</b>	Veterinary Medicine
<b>Ms. Susan McAlpine</b>	Humane Advocacy
<b>Commissioner Tammy Pearson</b>	Public Interest (Equine Behavior)
<b>Dr. Barry Perryman, PhD</b>	Public Interest (NRM Special Knowledge)

### Public Comment Period (2)

*Virtual Comments Provided over Zoom*

**Janet Fitch**

All right, thank you so much. Good afternoon. My name is Janet Fitch and I'm a resident of Contra Costa County in Pinole, California just north of San Francisco. First, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to join you and share with you my thoughts and concerns about wild horse and burro management on US government land. I'm here today as a concerned citizen and a volunteer with the American Wild Horse Campaign. As a concerned citizen with a passion for protection of all animals, I believe that the Bureau of Land Management can improve the way it manages its funding and resources to protect these wild horses and burros. There are better ways to help preserve these beautiful and wild animals than with the predominant usage of helicopter roundups. This practice is incredibly severe on the welfare of these animals and have proven to be deadly on many occasions again this year. I was disappointed to learn that less than 1% of the Bureau of Land Management annual budget for another year was spent on humane wild fertility control with the vast majority of its budget spent on feeding horses and holding and on these helicopter roundups.

I would urge you to reconsider this and increase the usage of humane fertility control. I understand that wild herd management is a huge job. To this end it's promising to see the new notice of funding opportunity and I hope this will be utilized to develop more collaborative partnerships with nonprofit organizations and significantly increased the use of

fertility control vaccines. With nearly 60,000 wild horses and burros and holding facilities, it's clear that a systematic change is needed, and I would ask that you make this your top priority. The current processes are not only detrimental to the wellbeing of these beautiful animals, they're also not sustainable for all Americans who ultimately pay for their care while in holding facilities. In addition, I'm very concerned about the cash incentive that is provided via the Adoption Incentive Program. There's a clear link to slaughter pipelines and the unanticipated consequences of people profiting off the US government through this program.

I ask that you seriously reconsider the cash incentive and move to a different type of incentive that will not attract profiteers. In light of these concerns, I ask that you, one, stop using helicopters for roundups altogether. Two, invest more in the wild management using humane fertility control vaccines. Three, take advantage of collaborative partnerships to improve the management of local herds. And four, please reconsider the cash incentive of the Adoption Incentive program. The vast majority of Americans value wild horses and burros on our public lands. They deserve to be protected and preserved as part of the western landscape.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share my opinion with you. I appreciate all that you do and are doing to consider the humane and respectful treatment of these magnificent beings. Thank you again for your time and attention this afternoon.

### **Lori Ford**

Okay. Good afternoon. In 2022, I did comment on the Ohio trade and how the ensuing increased burro values at kill pens has contributed to AIP applicants adopting the maximum number of burros year after year. At the last meeting, I also provided data on burro deaths related to capture stress and hyperlipidemia from the blue wing complex in 2022 and can now add data from the 2022 Sinbad Roundup where 24 died shortly afterwards in holding including 18% of the jennies captured who died from falling complications. During both roundups burros were driven by helicopters and wranglers. While waiting on the death data from the 2022 Black Mountain gathers, I have also inquired as to why since 57% of the black mountain burros had been removed between 3/1/2022 and 3/1/2023. Another aerial survey was not being conducted prior to the January roundup of 900 more. In short, this means that in less than two years the black mountain herd will have been reduced by 74% to 87% in four gather operations with no intermediate aerial survey having been conducted.

Relying on population modeling that has no input parameters for burros, the Black Mountain EA claims after reaching AML there would be 91 fertile females, which should result in approximately 27 foals per year, assuming all survive on over 1 million acres. The only research pertaining to wild burro fertility control that I can find has been the noted HSUS PCP field trial [in Black Mountain with a brief status update stating some burros had abscesses at injection sites and transient lameness which resolved apparent foaling rates were unknown.

In 2018, a proposal by USGS to test the PCP and vaccine in burros was not approved. Meanwhile, the BLM spends millions not to develop reversible fertility control as the board requested in 2017, but a vaccine that causes permanent sterility perhaps in response to continual pressure from numerous national and state partners and organizations. Where is the research about the cumulative impact on herds after being reduced to genetically and viable numbers? Their unique to genetics were destroyed up to 75% of the females infertile for unknown durations and then displaced by growing multiple uses such as the exploding outdoor recreation and big game hunting that is predominant in burro areas, decades of rubber stamp grazing, allotment renewals and invasive renewable energy projects and their related mining activities.

### **Larry Johnson**

My name is Larry Johnson. I'm president of the Coalition for Nevada's Wildlife whose mission is to protect and enhance the state's wildlife resources. I served on your advisory board for a decade in the early 2000's as a wildlife representative. I'm here today to testify to the devastating effects that wild horse overpopulation has on our native wildlife species and to urge BLM through this advisory board to reduce wild horse and burro numbers down to appropriate management levels. While horses are big, strong animals that simply out compete our native wildlife or forage and water resources and intimidate the smaller species, imparting stress and reducing herd health of these animals. Dozens of scientific range management studies document this statement, and by the way, fertility control simply is not effective in large herd management areas and helicopters are by far the most efficient and most humane method of gathers.

The effects, the devastating effects of overpopulation of our wild horse herds are even more serious in drought years is evidenced by population declines of wildlife while horse and burro populations continue to escalate. Current BLM management falls far short of the law, which mandates wild horse numbers be held in ecological balance with all other uses. Instead, wild horses are given priority over our wildlife. I fully realize that BLM is limited by budget and lobbying ability. However, the advisory board are private citizens, I strongly recommend that the board contact and educate national legislators to increase the program's budget to allow proper population management. Thank you for your consideration.

### **Marie Millman**

All right. Marie Millman with Wild Horse Education and I thank you the opportunity to speak today. My first subject matter is rulemaking. In regard to any rulemaking, COP should have created public participation in its creation. BLM has not ever put this out to comment for an enforceable law. This rule should not be controversial. We should all agree that there must be an enforceable welfare policy. Transparency is also an issue on all levels. I think that the public will agree that BLM is a trust problem with the public and that by increasing transparency it would also increase the public trust. Couple of comments on the advisory board recommendations that were in writing and in the handout. Number one, they had suggested that removals coupled with meaningful impactful fertility control would improve the health and welfare of free roaming horses and burros as well as rangeland house that would foster diverse bipartisan broad support. Number two, Due to protracted drought and other climate related issues in the West, the board recommended that the BLM and USFS begin determining the process of analysis that would enable locally relevant short and long-term range health considerations to guide decisions towards determining AML.

So, what I am interpreting from this is that you are stated that at or near AML is preferred for] fertility control and in other words, the non-specified forms and methods of fertility control are agreed to by you and the grantees. Where is the consideration of loss of habitat and mitigation? Example, Bald Mountain mine loss of 146,000 habitat acres for the wild horses and any other uses.

I believe that we can agree that by upland rangeland assessments with the creation of herd management area plans would be beneficial in regard to equalizing the other uses of our public lands. 84% of lands in the lower 48 states are dedicated for livestock only 11% for horses. I would suggest that livestock permit renewals have rangeland health assessments as you are renewing the permits without rangeland health assessments while extraction is accelerating as our three mines were just approved in Nevada yesterday. I would also like to state that updates to COP in any year since its inception would be appreciated to be shared and I did have some experiences on the adoption websites, but I will submit that in writing since I'm already out of time.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

### **Nancy Carter**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Nancy Carter. I'm a brand ambassador for the American Wild Forest campaign and I echo my cohort's comments in the opening of the meeting. We all know millions and millions, and millions of dollars have spent trying to solve this problem. How often is it that we can, number one, do the morally correct and humane thing and number two, save millions and millions of taxpayer dollars? I fondly recall seeing the wild horses when I lived in Arizona and up here in Colorado. We know that the BLM is at a tipping point. We know that the AIP is routinely defrauded, including statistics that we have of certain individuals that have made over \$80,000 in this program. The current system is physically unsustainable, irresponsible, and inhumane. We have been able to manage a herd with PCP control in Nevada of 3000 horses.

It is possible, it is cost-effective, and it is something that as an animal lover, as an animal advocate and many, many people in our groundswell are now supporting. I'm not going to go over my time. I simply want to say thank you for your consideration and remembering that there's so many of us that you're not able to see on a day-to-day basis that care deeply for the wild horses, organizations that tame them, adopt them out to good homes. And I know this is a heavy burden, but please, please think about all the points that have been given to you.

Thank you so much.

## **Tom Klein**

Hi everyone. My name is Tom Klein and I'm a government affairs associate at the Wildlife Society, which I'm currently speaking on behalf of today. First, I'd like to thank the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board for the opportunity to provide testimony. Founded in 1937, the Wildlife Society and its network of affiliated chapters and sections represents over 15,000 wildlife professionals dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our primary concern continues to be with the overpopulation of horses and burros on public lands. This overpopulation negatively impacts native wildlife and their habitat and restricts the ability of wildlife professionals to do their work of conserving native wildlife for the benefit of the American public. The Wildlife Society encourages the use of roundups as a practical and humane means to remove horses and burros from public lands. Removing animals from the rangeland is the only way to immediately and aggressively reduce on range populations to prevent further degradation of the ecosystem.

We urge federal agencies to take decisive action by completely removing these animals from all refuges, parks, and all other natural areas where free roaming horses and burros are not legally permitted under federal law.

Removal of feral horses in these natural areas will help restore ecological balance, preserve native habitats, and allow for more effective conservation efforts focused on native species and their ecosystems. Failing to undertake sufficient efforts to remove feral horses constrain the relationships between wildlife professionals and landowners or managers which can compromise collaborative conservation endeavors critical to native species of wildlife and plants.

Lastly, we discourage the conversion of currently viable un-grazed native or converted grasslands into pasture lands for the housing of horses and burros, whether privately or publicly owned. Regarding fertility control, the Wildlife Society is concerned that the current emphasis on short-term fertility control may not lead to a meaningful reduction in on-range population within an appropriate timeframe and is a tool better utilized when the population is floating around the AML?

Short-term fertility control, which is ineffective at the current population level, is diverting resources away from the implementation of more impactful strategies to reduce populations. Therefore, prioritizing the removal of animals from the range becomes more crucial for achieving meaningful and timely reductions in on range population. Regarding adoptions, the Wildlife Society commends the BLM's effort to increase public interest and adopting animals. However, the pool of potential adopters is limited and not able to meet the current need rendering adoption alone, an unsustainable long-term solution to horse and burro overpopulation. We acknowledge euthanasia as a humane method for the removal of old ailing and unadoptable horses and burros. We recommend the advisory board express the need for the option of euthanasia as directed in the wild free roaming Horses and Burros Act to the secretaries and relevant congressional committees.

Overcrowded facilities strain available resources, and hinder effective management of these ecologically feral populations while limiting available for on the ground conservation work. For example, the BLM has requested a \$5.6 million increase to the Horse and Burro Program and FY24 justified by an increased need for off range holding for horses and burros. With horse populations doubling every four to five years, the Wildlife Society strongly encourages the board to acknowledge the urgent nature of the ecological overpopulation of horses and burros and its impacts in the ecosystem and native wildlife populations that wildlife professionals work to maintain. And thanks again for allowing me to provide comment and listening to the views of wildlife professionals.

## **Yenny Martin**

Thank you. My name is Yenny Martin. I'm with the American Wild Horse Campaign. Thanks so much for letting me speak today. Every year the Bureau of Land Management and US Forest Service rounds up thousands of wild horses and burros from public lands in remote areas that often aren't accessible by the general public. In the last three years, 39,194, horses and burros were captured.

To many of these roundups, AWHC sends observers to ensure the BLM and Forest Service adhere to the standards of the comprehensive animal welfare program or COP and to document the operations for the public. However, the federal government and its contractors placing strict limitations on the public, so observation make it nearly impossible for the

public to see crucial aspects of the operation. The trap site where most injuries and fatalities occur is often either blocked from view or too far away to make out.

If the public cannot see what's going on, the BLM and Forest Service simply have no oversight during these captures in which wild equines are exceptionally vulnerable. As an example of a recent incident that highlights how crucial transparency is, the Clan Alpine Roundup several weeks ago resulted in four out of eight Mustangs limping severely into the trap site. We can only guess at what happened during the chase until they came into view of the observer. There's nothing to verify or enforce humane treatment.

We have serious concerns about transparency and to address this issue, we propose a solution, the installation of cameras on every helicopter and Wrangler involved in a roundup and the accessibility of these recordings to the public. This will ensure that federal agencies are held accountable to the COP standards and provide a safeguard for the horses and burros at the center of these traumatic events. That is why I asked this board to recommend that the BLM mandate the installation of cameras on all helicopters and wranglers and that at the end of each roundup, the agency make those recordings publicly available. Thank you so much for your consideration.

### **Charlotte Rue**

Greeting to all. Besides adopting several wild horses and burros, I've spent many years learning from their brethren in the field, plus two and a half decades working as a federal government official. I appreciate the BLM field staffers, but I've growing concerns about the headquarters policies of the Bureau. What we're seeing is the BLM unable to fulfill its mandate to protect wild horses and burros and the health of our public lands. The present very opaque system of capture and renewal, building the largest most accelerated roundup in history, leaving traumatic injuries and genetically unviable herds while the bureau continues to flood already stressed range lands with taxpayers subsidized livestock. The BLM well knows that cattle grazing is the principal reason that the majority of HMAs do not meet basic health standards and it's a key driver of global warming. Yet we keep hearing this false narrative including from a couple of commenters today with no shred of scientific evidence that wild equine, which compose a fraction of the AUMs are the cause of rangeland damage and that they compete with wildlife, et cetera. Quite the opposite.

So, I call on the advisory board to take notice and press to reverse course. Among other issues this means practice accountability. The BLM's 10-year management plans are based on archaic range management plans, outdated, unreliable, census data, and flawed population modeling as we heard from Larry Ford. No funding should be allowed for removals without up-to-date HAMS and tenure removal plans which allow no public input must be off the table. Fix the historic flaws in AMLs and forge allocations. Stating that wild horses and burros are overpopulating based on unscientific non-viable AMLs is an absurd and quite harmful game. The majority of HMAs have population quotas that are way under the 150 to 200 level that scientists deem necessary for sustaining genetic health. The 1971 Wild Horse Act sets forth wild equine as the foremost principal users of the land were presently found. You have the tools to correct these wrongs, change the low feeder AMLs, and reduce overgrazing and unfair forge allocations. Stop the helicopter roundups and above all, call off anyone gathers.

### **Tina Nappe**

My name is Tina Nappe. I am a longtime conservationist focused on the preservation of Nevada's wildlife, water sources, native plants and pollinators. From my childhood to the present, I have appreciated the special relationship we have shared with horses over thousands of years. However, as horse and burro populations mushroom on our public lands, I have become increasingly concerned about their impact on our desert habitat, scarce water sources, our wildlife, native plants and pollinators. From yesterday's presentations, I know you are well aware of the costs and difficulties BLM and the Forest Service face in both stabilizing, expanding free roaming horse and burro populations and meeting agency responsibilities to our ranges and forests. I think we all appreciate some horses and burros on the range, but not so many. They destroy the wildlife and pollinators around them and ultimately of course themselves. Our ignorance about their impact may partly arise from so much literature that ignores the fact that horses eat a lot impacting the range as cattle do.

In the world most of us live in our pets are spayed or neutered otherwise, we would be buried in cats and dogs. So I ask, why do we not give mares more respect? Why do we treat mares as a form of chattel forced to reproduce for our satisfaction? Why do we in effect force mares to reproduce every year even when they're hungry and thirsty or ill and old?

The result on public lands is horse populations doubling every four years. If more effective fertility treatment were available for mares, gathers now almost necessary every few years would be far less.

The kind of deaths that we have experienced of horses when gathered this past summer would be far less because horses would be healthier when gathered and there would be fewer gathers. In fact, without effective fertility inhibitors, horse and burro populations will continue to increase and cost skyrocket and there will be more tragedies. Unfortunately, we do not have effective fertility treatments currently and therefore horses will continue to have to be gathered and will continue to increase. We do not want to wait until the range and our wildlife is destroyed or the horses themselves. So please focus on longer term fertility treatments.

Thank you very much and thank you BLM for all that you do.

### **Amelia Perrin**

Hi, and this is Amelia by the way.

So hello, my name is Amelia Perrin, and I am the American Wild Birth Campaigns Investigations Manager. I'm here for the fourth time in a row to discuss the very same issue, the BLM's Adoption and Sales program and still despite irrefutable evidence of fraud and abuse, the BLM has failed to reform this program, which is sending hundreds if not thousands of AIP animals into the slaughter pipeline. The BLM has a legally mandated responsibility to ensure a humane outcome for all captured wild horses and burros. And as my work has demonstrated year after year whether the BLM is inclined to face the facts or not, this program is violating that responsibility. We've documented over 1700 wild horses and burros and self-described kill pens and even worse than that, we've identified groups of related individuals defrauding and cheating the American public out of hundreds of thousands of taxpayer funds and commercially exploiting wild horses and burros, all while the agency sits idly by turning a blind eye and turning its back on the very animals it's supposed to be protect.

Let me be very clear, this program is a black mark on the BLM, and it'll be looked back on with the same level of distaste and embarrassment as the slaughter scandals of the 1980s, the 1990s, and the 2010s. These adopters abusing this program are not just a few bad actors. They are not people who have fallen on hard times their animals. The BLM's own records show that many of these adopters receive titles to their animals within days and within days adopt their next round, setting them up to receive yet another \$1,000 per animal in federal payouts. Our investigators have found these very animals and kill pens sent there right after the title was awarded.

Tomorrow marks the 52nd anniversary of Congress passing the monumental Free-Roaming Wild Horses and Burros Act. This means tomorrow marks 52 years of mismanagement, slaughter scandals and inhumane treatment. It's passed time to change.

As I've said, this is my fourth time speaking to this board. I participated in countless public comment periods. I participated in the BLM workshops on the AIP. I've spoken to BLM ex-special investigators and the conclusion that everyone has come to including this board's recommendations is that the cash needs to come out of the equation and yet the BLM continues to deny and mislead the public about the true consequences of its adoption and incentive program. It's absolutely unacceptable.

Given this I ask once again this board to recommend the BLM abandon his cash incentives and instead provide veterinary vouchers as a non-cash incentive. Thank you so much for your consideration.

### ***In Person Comments***

#### **Kathy Jenkins**

Hi, my name's Kathy Jenkins and I run the Oatman Burros Rehab and Recovery Sanctuary out of Mojave Valley, Arizona. I'm not going to go over fertility control and everything else with you. I'm going to go over your local agents. We've worked over the past eight years to form a very strong bond with our local agents in our area and I think that's something that the board can utilize to further bring out the adoptions and everything else in the areas where we don't have that right now. Our local agents are woken up at three o'clock in the morning with a burro that's being hit in our area. We don't



always have an agent available because Chad is the only agent who covers our area. There are many times that we received the phone call prior to him. We notify him and we respond on scene. I cannot tell you how many countless burros that I have moved out of the middle of the road who have been hit and killed just to make sure that the public doesn't have to see this on a daily basis.

I think one of the biggest things that the board needs to consider is looking at a volunteer outreach program like we are utilizing in Mohave County to help our agents and to spread the word that there is actually an issue with overpopulation. I do reside in the Black Mountain HMA, and I can tell you over the past year I have moved more burros off of the road than I have in my sanctuary that have been hit and killed. This is something that we're working with the local Bullhead City community and the city offices to try to get those roads fenced properly so that we don't have this issue and it's something that right now our local agent feels that his hands are tied on because he can't go to those agencies without outside help. So we stepped up and made a presentation to the city to have those areas fenced for them and it's finally in the works for that area.

I think if you guys were able to form local groups that will work with your local agents to try to do a little bit of the outreach for them and to actually help with your hands and feet on the ground, you guys are going to see more out of your agents. I can tell you that in my area, Chad is so overworked that it's not even funny, but we never hesitate to get up and help him, whether it be a baby that we have to go collect because the mom was hit and killed. We had one set that we had four burros hit and killed at the same time. One mother gave birth after she was hit that we had to move off of the roadway in Bullhead City. Unfortunately, it was a holiday weekend. We didn't have a specialist, so us and our volunteers went out and did that.

We have zero qualms doing that and I know you have more people across the state and probably across the nation that do the same thing. If BLM could lift the constraints off of their local agents to be able to have that availability. Every time we get notified of an incident, I text our local agent and let him know we have it. If he's not there, we have no problem going. The one thing that is always said is I can't ask you to go. BLM and the board needs to look at a way that he can ask us to go so that he doesn't feel that we need to offer. If he needs the help, they need to be able to ask and that's going to come from you guys and his supervisors.

You guys have a great day. Thank you.

**Mr. Kuechle announced a 15-minute break.**

### **Advisory Board Discussion and Finalize Recommendations (Board Vote)**

***Ms. Celeste Carlisle, Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Chair***

Ms. Carlisle: Thank you and welcome back everybody and for members of the public and for folks that are on Zoom, Commissioner Pearson, and Deputy Director Branham. We had a really wonderful field trip this morning out to the Florence training facility and saw some really incredible things. So, thank you to the agencies for organizing that and for parenting us through getting on and off the buses and getting back in time. It Took us a little bit to get our ducks in a row after quickly returning from a field trip but thank you for being with us. Thank you to our public commenters.

It is a little frustrating, I think to be someone who offers public comment and then we are immediately at the end of our meeting. Your comments are taken into regards. It might not feel like that's occurring right in the moment, but it certainly is.

There is a lot of note-taking that occurs at these meetings and a lot of considerations for next meetings down the line. It's sort of how we thought of these recommendations this time around. Some of them are setting us up to be able to sort of continue on with conversations we've been having here at this board meeting this time. So, we just appreciate your patience and your comments towards our development of these recommendations.

Again, everything is always a work in progress, and I think all of us on the board appreciate that and our game to be on for that ride. So, thank you to everybody.

We are going to go ahead and go recommendation by recommendation and make sure that we are all on the same page here and if anyone has any other comments, I'll just start in.

All good. Recommendation number one, the board recommends that the BLM prioritize and complete the rulemaking/regulations updates and involve board members in the draft review process so that meaningful policy adjustments can be made. Any comments? Go ahead.

Ms. McAlpine: I move that recommendation number one, be accepted as read and written.

Ms. Carlisle: All approved. Anyone opposed? All right. Recommendation number one is approved and accepted as written.

Recommendation number two, in an effort to determine the effectiveness of BLM's sales and adoption programs and indicate changes in placement programs where needed, the board recommends that the BLM follow up on a statistically significant percentage of wild horses and burros that have been placed or sold into private care over the last five years. The follow-up should identify year the horses or burros were adopted or purchased if the original adopter or owner still possesses the animal, if the animals were returned to the BLM transferred, sold, died, and the current use of the animal, for example, pasture only, companion animal, riding, driving, pack animal, or in a state or federal service.

Actually, do we have any comments?

Dr. Iacona: I think it needs a comma.

Ms. Carlisle: We think it needs a comma.

Dr. Iacona: After driving.

Ms. Carlisle: Driving pack animal. Yep.

Mr. Kuechle: For all the board members make sure your microphones are on.

Ms. Carlisle: Oh yeah.

Ms. Carlisle: All right. Well, do we have a motion to approve?

Ms. McAlpine: I move that draft recommendation number two, be accepted as written and read.

Ms. Carlisle: Do we have a second?

Commissioner French: I'll second it.

Ms. Carlisle: I was going to say, all opposed. Any discussion? All right. All approved.

All approving say aye.

Ms. Carlisle: Any opposed?

Ms. Carlisle: All right, the motion carries. We approve recommendation number two. All right.

Recommendation number three. The board recommends that the BLM and the U.S. Forest Service present at the next board meeting plans to determine ecosystem health and population stabilization by choosing two HMAs or territories and demonstrating how the PopEquus model can be utilized to attain desired management outcomes as well as what those outcomes would be.

Do I hear a motion to approve?

Dr. Perryman: I'll move that we accept the recommendation as printed in red.

Commissioner French: I'll second.

Ms. Carlisle: All in approval. Opposed? Okay, the motion carries. We approve recommendation number three and let's move on to number four.

To take advantage of opportunities currently available to the Forest Service, the board recommends that the chief of the Forest Service must advocate for a funded multi-year budget line item to support the U.S. Forest Service Wild Horse and Burro Program. That should also include funds currently owed to the BLM for management or holding of United States Forest Service horses.

Do I hear a motion to approve?

Commissioner Higbee: So, moved.

Ms. Carlisle: All approved. Anyone opposing? All right.

Number four is approved as written in red.

Final recommendation number five. I believe this might be a record. So that resources can be freed up for on range management options, the board recommends that the BLM request as appropriate that the BLM Foundation serve as a funding source/mechanism.

Do I hear a motion to approve?

Commissioner French: So, moved.

Ms. Carlisle: Second?

Ms. McAlpine: Second.

Dr. Perryman: Point of discussion,

Ms. Carlisle: Point of discussion. Let's hear it.

Dr. Perryman: I think we should have on the tail end of that, serve as a funding source mechanism for off range holding costs. Something along those lines.

Ms. Carlisle: Commissioner Pearson, did you have something?

Commissioner Pearson: Yeah, I agree with Barry. I think it was on there originally, wasn't it?

Ms. Carlisle: It was. Off-range has a hyphen. All right. Do I need to read it again or we can all see?

Dr. Perryman: Yes, please read it into the record one more time.

Ms. Carlisle: Number five, so that resources can be freed up for on range management options, the board recommends that the BLM request as appropriate that the BLM Foundation serve as a funding source/mechanism for off range holding costs.

Ms. Carlisle: Yes. Okay. Do I need to read it again with the commas? So that resources can be freed up for on range management options, the board recommends that the BLM request, as appropriate, that the BLM Foundation serve as a funding source/mechanism for off range holding costs. How are we liking this?

Commissioner French: I move to approve.

Ms. Carlisle: Approve. Okay. Do we have a second?

Ms. McAlpine: Second.

Ms. Carlisle: All approved.

Mr. French: Aye.

Commissioner Pearson: Aye.

Ms. Carlisle: Any opposed? Final and last recommendation approved, and we are done with our recommendations at this December advisory board meeting.

### **Wrap up and Adjourn**

Ms. Carlisle: I would like to recognize that we have a few folks who are rotating off the board at this point and that would be Dr. Bechert, Commissioner French and Commissioner Pearson. I'd like to offer the opportunity for any of you to hand us off some final remarks into our work or hear your thoughts or anything else you'd like to say Dr. Bechert.

Dr. Bechert: Sure. Thank you. I just want to say it's been my pleasure to serve these past three years. I feel it's been a real learning experience and I've enjoyed the relationships that we've developed and hope that the contributions that I've made over the three years made a little bit of difference. Thank you.

Commissioner French: Thanks Madam Chair. I also echo that this has been a true privilege to work on a board such as this one. I work on a lot of boards as a commissioner and this is by far one of the most consequential boards I've worked on and it has had a great deal of frustration involved in it, but a great deal of wins as well, I think. And in the six years that I've been on this board, I believe that we've made some significant strides and we've moved the management of horses in the right direction for sure. We're far from over, but it is a darn good start. And as I said earlier, it's humbling and it's been a privilege to work with people caliber, you folks.

Thanks. It's been a good run.

Ms. Carlisle: Commissioner Pearson.

Commissioner Pearson: First of all, I want to tell Jim thanks for his service. I've been coming to these meetings for 10, 15 years and I know most everybody there, his knowledge and base of understanding and me as a fellow commissioner, I understand how many hats we wear and trying to juggle that and balance the needs of the people at home and the conservation resources and that. I think Jim's done a wonderful job and I really appreciate his input on all of this. He's very wise and does good guidance. Keeps me a little leveled sometimes. He doesn't get near as excited as I do - wound up.

Anyway, and the same with Dr. Bechert. Appreciate her help on there. We've served the same three years together and it seems like it's kind of flown by. We're kind of short on meetings in the three years, but there's still plenty of work behind the scenes. But I appreciate all of you and the work and the input that you have, the knowledge and the strengths that you bring from your own lives and it's been a very good working relationship. And the same with our BLM folks and our friends there. We'll see what happens with the new appointments. Hopefully they're sooner than later and maybe we'll settle up again. But in the meantime, thank you.

Ms. Carlisle: Thanks to all of you. Really, really enjoy working with you. I'm going to go ahead and pass it to Deputy Director Branham for closing out our meeting officially as the DFO and then I'll close this out here locally.

Mr. Branham: Thank you Celeste and thank you board for participating in three days of healthy discussion about the management of wild horses and burros and for your meaningful recommendations. I also want to thank the BLM and U.S. Forest Service staff for putting this meeting together for the work to pull it off in such a short timeframe.

A big thank you also to the BLM National Training Center for hosting the meeting. I know it took a lot, a great deal of staff and support to make this meeting happen. I also want to acknowledge those board members who are, their terms ending on January 11th. Dr. Becker, Commissioner Pearson, Commissioner French, we appreciate your service.

Thank you all for serving on this board. The work you do is important and so appreciate it. I personally enjoyed watching you work over the last couple of days discussing the issues facing America's Wild Horses and Burros and appreciate the board's efforts to find practical solutions. Again, thank you very much for your dedication and service.

Celeste, I hand it back to you.

Ms. Carlisle: Thank you. And it is Assistant Director Branham. I have my titles mixed up. I also want to say thank you to United States Forest Service, BLM. Your staff that have been here through this have hosted us, have guided us, have been kind to us, patient with us, the Langdon Group for facilitation and keeping us on track and keeping our meetings civil and respectful. And there's a lot of counseling that goes on behind the scenes you may not get to see.

Also, to the tech support that we have had along with us for this. Thank you, thank you, thank you. They are seamless and silent, but they're pretty, they make us look certainly better than we make ourselves look and certainly to the training facility here and the folks that have been involved in helping this meeting here to be smooth and where we need to be and when and how to get in and out of this very complicated building. The security staff, everybody that has been along for the ride, and most especially to the public for participating virtually and in-person, the programs that you're involved in, the collaboration that you're doing, the pushing that you're giving to us to help us mull things over time. We really need it all and we really do utilize it all.

So, thank you. And without further ado, meeting adjourned.

**[Adjourn]**