



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

# News Release

## BLM Northern California District

Applegate Field Office and Black Rock Field Office

Media Contact: Jeff Fontana, [jfontana@blm.gov](mailto:jfontana@blm.gov), 530-260-0189 (Applegate Field Office)

Media Contact: Heather O'Hanlon, [hohanlon@blm.gov](mailto:hohanlon@blm.gov), 775-623-1567 (Black Rock Field Office)

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## Bureau of Land Management to begin Surprise/Calico Complex wild horse gather

**GERLACH, Nev.** – On or about September 18, the Bureau of Land Management's Applegate and Black Rock field offices will begin a wild horse gather in and around the Surprise and Calico wild horse and burro management complexes on BLM-managed public lands in northwest Nevada, using the helicopter-assisted method.

The purpose of the gather is to prevent undue or unnecessary degradation of the public lands associated with excess wild horses and burros and to restore a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationship on public lands, consistent with the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. The action is also necessary to reduce overpopulation of wild horses within and outside the area, and to prevent further degradation of public lands by balancing herd size with other land users and available resources.

The complexes include High Rock, Fox Hog, Wall Canyon, Black Rock Range, Calico Mountains, Granite Range and Warm Springs Canyon Herd Management Areas (HMAs).

Gather operations will begin with the Surprise Complex near Cedarville, Calif., and then shift to the Calico Complex near Gerlach, Nev.

"The BLM's priority is to conduct safe, efficient, and successful wild horse and burro gather operations while ensuring humane care and treatment of all animals gathered," said Craig Drake, manager of the BLM Applegate Field Office.

The BLM plans to gather approximately 1,200 wild horses, remove approximately 780 excess wild horses from the range, and treat up to 217 mares with GonaCon Equine, a population suppression fertility control vaccine, before releasing them back to the range to maintain herd viability.

By balancing herd size with what the land can support, the agency aims to protect habitat for other wildlife species such as sage grouse, pronghorn antelope, and mule deer. Removing excess wild horses and burros supports significant progress toward achieving the BLM's Standards for Rangeland Health.

The agency and its contractors are committed to using the best available science and handling practices for wild horses and burros, while meeting overall gather goals and objectives in accordance with the BLM Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program.

All animals removed from the Surprise Complex will be transported to the Litchfield Off-Range Corrals in Litchfield, Calif. All animals removed from the Calico Complex will be transported to the Palomino Valley

Center, near Reno, Nev. Upon arrival at the facilities, all animals will be checked by a veterinarian and readied for placement in private ownership through the BLM's wild horse and burro Adoption and Sales Program.

Members of the public are welcome to view the gather operations, provided that doing so does not jeopardize the safety of the animals, staff and observers, or disrupt gather operations. The BLM will escort the public to gather observation sites located on public lands.

Those wishing to view the gather in the Surprise Complex out of Cedarville, Calif. should call 530-252-5332 to get information on viewing and to reserve space for each day.

When operations shift to the Calico Complex, interested observers must call 775-623-1567 to receive specific instructions on each day's meeting location and time.

The staff is conducting the Surprise Complex portion on the gather under the DOI-BLM-CA-N020-2021-0009-EA Surprise Complex Wild Horse Gather Plan Environmental Assessment decision signed on July 12, 2021. The environmental assessment documents can be found at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2011428/510>.

The staff is conducting the Calico Complex portion of the gather under the DOI-BLM-NV-W030-2019-0019-EA Calico Complex Wild Horse Gather Plan Environmental Assessment decision signed on July 28, 2021. The environmental assessment documents can be found at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2010516/570>.

Gather reports and additional information for the Surprise Complex portion of the gather will be posted on the agency website at <https://www.blm.gov/programs/wild-horse-and-burro/herd-management/gathers-and-removals/california>.

Technical information is available from Wild Horse and Burro Specialist Pat Farris at 530-257-0456.

Gather reports and additional information for the Calico Complex portion of the gather will be posted on the agency website at <https://www.blm.gov/programs/wild-horse-and-burro/herd-management/gathers-and-removals/nevada/2023-calico-complex-wild>.

For technical information contact Wild Horse and Burro Specialist Garrett Swisher at (775) 623-1500.

For information on how to adopt or purchase a wild horse or burro, visit [www.blm.gov/whb](http://www.blm.gov/whb).

*The BLM manages approximately 245 million acres of public land in the Nation, primarily in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The agency's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.*

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Applegate Field Office, 708 West 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Alturas, CA 96101  
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