



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

Management Options for a Sustainable Wild Horse and Burro Program

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Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting
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Wild Horse and Burro Program

- Approximately 82,000 animals are currently on the range, 55,300 of which are excess (Appropriate Management Level (AML) is 26,700).
- The current overpopulation threatens the health of the western rangelands, degrading ecosystem functions and limiting the forage and water available for domestic and wildlife species.
- Emergency gathers are becoming more common to save impacted animals.



Upper North Fork Spring that has nearly run dry.
Antelope Valley HMA, Nevada



Wild horses in poor condition near Deer Spring
due to lack of water.
Antelope Valley HMA, Nevada



Wild Horse and Burro Program

- The BLM cannot gather and treat enough animals to reduce herd sizes through fertility control vaccines alone.
- Low adoptions and sales have resulted an additional 46,000 excess, unadopted and unsold animals in off-range facilities.
- The BLM spends almost 60% of its appropriated funding on holding/care of animals removed from the range - increased removals to achieve AML would increase these funding needs.



Enacted Program Budget

FY2017: \$80,550,000

FY2018: \$75,000,000

Wild horses often must leave their designated ranges when food and water becomes depleted



Report to Congress

- Congress in 2017 requested a report from the BLM containing options for humanely achieving appropriate management level.
- BLM team of managers and specialists developed the report “Management Options for a Sustainable Wild Horse and Burro Program.”
- The report was submitted to Congress in March of 2018.



Assumptions

- Sales without limitation and euthanasia (option 1 only)
- Acquiring funding from external sources for gathers, adoptions and holding
- Availability of long-term holding space, including through partnerships
- Authority to transfer animals to non-profits, other federal agencies and state and local governments.





Assumptions, continued

- Categorical exclusions under NEPA
- Availability of trained veterinarians
- Effective fertility control vaccines
- Additional legislative options and changes





Option 1:

Achieve AML in Eight Years, Using All the Authorities within the Act, while Substantially Decreasing Off-Range Holding Costs

- Remove 156,000 animals over a 10-year period
- Treat 38,000 mares w/fertility control over 10-year period
- 40,000 adoptions; 110,000 sales without restriction; 24,000 animals euthanized - over a 10-year period
- Off-range population reduced to 6,000 by year 10
- Costs would exceed current average annual appropriations by about \$200 million over the 10 years
- AML would be achieved within 8 years





Option 2:

Achieve AML in 10 Years Using Existing Authorities, By Substantially Increasing Program Funding

- Remove 151,200 animals over 10-year period
- Treat 52,400 mares w/fertility control over a 10-year period
- 40,000 adoptions and 2,000 sales with current restrictions over a 10-year period
- Off-range population increased to 110,000 by year 10
- Costs would exceed current average annual budget by about \$1.12 billion over the 10 years
- AML would be achieved within 10 years





Option 3:

Achieve AML in Six Years Using Existing Authorities and Create an Adoption Incentive Program

- Remove 129,000 animals over a 10-year period
- Treat 26,000 mares w/fertility control over a 10-year period
- 84,000 adoptions over a 10-year period, increasing adoptions through a financial incentive program; 2,000 sales with current restrictions
- Off-range population increased to 71,000 by year 10
- Costs would exceed current average annual appropriations by about \$1.43 billion over the 10 years
- Appropriate Management Levels would be achieved within 6 years





Option 4:

Achieve AML in 12 Years Using Existing Authorities, Creating an Adoption Incentive Program, and Increasing Permanent Sterilization

- Remove 36,600 animals over a 10-year period
- Treat 103,000 mares with fertility control methods (focusing on permanent sterilization) over a 10-year period
- 40,000 adoptions over a 10-year period, developing a financial adoption incentive program; 2,000 sales with current restrictions
- Off-range population decreased to 36,800 by year 10
- Costs would exceed current average annual appropriations by about \$320 million over the 10 years
- Appropriate Management Levels would be achieved within 12 years