

DISTRICT

5/29/09



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Ely District Office  
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[http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely\\_field\\_office.html](http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/ely_field_office.html)

Seaman  
HMA



In Reply Refer to:  
8560 (NVL0000)

MAY 29 2009

**NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION**  
**LANDS IN WILDERNESS STUDY AREA**

- STATE:** Nevada
- COUNTY:** Nye & Lincoln
- DISTRICT OFFICE:** Ely District Office  
HC 33 Box 33500  
702 North Industrial Way.  
Ely, Nevada 89301
- WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS:** Riordans Well and Blue Eagle
- WILDERNESS AREA:** Weepah Spring, Mormon Mountains,  
Meadow Valley Range and Clover Mountains
- PROPOSED ACTION:** Conduct two wild horse gathers within 11 Herd Areas

**Background**

The 2008 Approved Ely District Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Record of Decision (ROD) have returned the following Herd Management Areas back to Herd Areas (HA): Seaman, White River, Meadow Valley Mountain, Blue Nose Peak, Delamar Mountains, Clover Mountains, Clover Creek, Applewhite, Mormon Mountains, Little mountain, and Miller Flat. Action WH-5 from the Approved RMP states: "Remove wild horses and drop herd management area status for those areas that do not provide sufficient habitat resources to sustain healthy populations as listed in table 13." Removal of all wild horses from the above HAs is currently needed in order to implement this management direction and to prevent further damage to the range resulting from the current overpopulation. The determination to conduct wild horse gathers is based on in-depth analysis of habitat suitability and monitoring data which indicates insufficient forage and water is available to maintain healthy wild horses and rangelands over the long-term

***Seaman and White River Horse Gather (Riordans Well and Blue Eagle WSA)***

The Seaman and White River HAs are located approximately 80 miles Southwest of Ely, Nevada, in portions of Nye and Lincoln Counties. These HAs encompass approximately 475,100 acres.

The last gather on the Seaman HA was an emergency gather in 1996; 266 horses were gathered and removed. The Seaman HA was also gathered in 1985. A census was completed in November 2008 and 152 wild horses were counted. The current population estimate of 182 animals includes recruitment following the 2009 foaling season.

The White River HA was gathered in 2004/2005 and 406 wild horses were removed. Prior to the 2004/2005 gather, an emergency gather was completed in 1996 and 277 wild horses were removed. Census completed in November 2008 counted 140 wild horses. The current population estimate of 168 animals includes expected recruitment (2009 foaling season).

Monitoring data collected during 2007, 2008, and 2009 highlights that utilization by wild horses is heavy to severe use in established key areas. Trampling damage by wild horses is also evident at most locations, including riparian areas. Excess utilization and trampling in key areas is currently impacting range conditions and preventing recovery of key range ecological sites.

### ***Caliente Complex Horse Gather (Mormon Mountains, Clover Mountains and Meadow Valley Range Wilderness)***

The Caliente HA complex is comprised of the Meadow Valley Mountain, Blue Nose Peak, Delamar Mountains, Clover Mountains, Clover Creek, Applewhite, Mormon Mountains, Little mountain, and Miller Flat HAs. The Caliente Complex is located approximately 5 miles outside the town of Caliente, Nevada, in Lincoln County and extends south to the Lincoln/Clark line. These HAs encompass approximately 911,892 acres.

Many gathers have taken place at different times across the Caliente Complex from 1985-2008 to remove wild horses due to emergency drought conditions, fire and nuisance animals. Since then 1,122 wild horses have been removed from the Caliente complex. A census has been completed across the complex in 2008-2009 where 270 wild horses were counted.

### **Description of the Proposed Action**

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to remove the excess animals in order to prevent further deterioration of the range associated with the overpopulation of wild horses as authorized under Section 3(b) (2) of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (WFRHBA) and Section 302(b) of the Federal Land Management and Policy Act of 1976.

All capture and handling activities would be conducted outside wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas (including capture site selections) and would also be conducted in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) described in Appendix I of both EA's. Multiple capture sites (traps) may be used to capture wild horses from the HAs. Whenever possible, capture sites would be located in previously disturbed areas. Capture techniques would be the helicopter-drive trapping method and/or helicopter-roping from horseback.

All of the animals gathered would be removed and shipped to BLM holding facilities where they will be prepared for adoption and/or sale to qualified individuals or long term holding. The estimated population remaining in the HA's following the gather would be about 0 wild horses. Each gather will last between 15-20 days.

### *Seaman and White River Horse Gather*

The BLM Egan Field Office proposes to capture approximately 100% of the current population of wild horses or about 300-350 including any horses outside the HA boundaries in August 2009.

### *Caliente Complex Horse Gather*

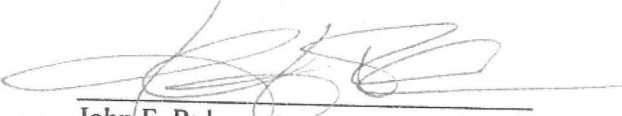
The BLM Caliente Field Office proposed to capture 100% of the current population of wild horses or about 270 wild horses including any horses outside the HA boundaries in October of 2009.

### Public Comment

The public comment period for these actions will begin on June 1, 2009. Two different EAs have been prepared for these horse gathers and will be available on the BLM Ely District Website within the next two weeks. For questions or for a copy of the Seaman and White River wild horse gather EA contact Ruth Thompson, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist at 775-289-1826 or [ruth\\_thompson@blm.gov](mailto:ruth_thompson@blm.gov). For question or for a copy of the Caliente Complex wild horse gather EA contact Ben Noyes, Wild Horse and Burro Specialist at 775-289-1836 or [benjamin\\_noyes@blm.gov](mailto:benjamin_noyes@blm.gov).

All comments are to be sent directly to the District Manager for consideration and use in evaluating and processing the proposed action at the address above within the 30 day comment period ending

JUL 06 2009

  
John F. Ruhs,  
District Manager  
Ely District Office

27 May 2009  
Date