

05/04/00

ELY FIELD OFFICE
WILD HORSE POTENTIAL EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

ANTELOPE HMA:

AML is mostly established at 233 wild horses with an estimate of 311 when totally established. After this spring's foaling season, the estimated current population will be about 440 animals. Approximately 200 horses need to be removed because of seriously degrading resource conditions. We are losing white sage in large areas due to overgrazing by wild horses. The animals are highly concentrated in some areas (150 to 200 head noted on 5/3/00 in an area where there should be 20-30 animals). This removal would cost approximately \$80,000 (200 head x \$400 per horse for removal and transportation to PVC). Additional costs would occur for adoption, processing at PVC, and/or sanctuary fees for older horses. This HMA is part of a complex with the Elko District and is scheduled for a removal this summer. But due to limited funding for this gather, we anticipate the funding will run out in removing Elko's horses even before they reach their removal goals. This will leave Ely without a removal of any horses and our resources will continue to degrade. Current forage is not sufficient for the existing population and the horses will be in serious trouble come winter. We are currently monitoring for drought conditions and are okay to this point. But, if spring moisture shuts off in May and drought conditions occur, the current situation will only be compounded.

WHITE RIVER HMA:

AML is totally established at 90 wild horses year long. The population estimate at the end of the current foaling season will be about 250 animals (March 2000 census of 201). We estimate that about 150 animals need to be removed, at \$400 per animal for removal and transportation to PVC, for a total cost of about \$60,000. Processing, adoption, and/or sanctuary costs would be in addition to the capture costs. The herd has expanded outside the HMA into the Grant Range and is causing irreversible damage to numerous springs and riparian areas there (non HMA in the Battle Mountain District). There were 20-30 head observed this week on these areas. All of these horses were in very poor body condition and we may start losing horses soon as a result of lack of forage. Those horses already in poor condition will never survive next winter, and if drought occurs, will die sooner. The forage is already depleted in the Grant Range.

JAKES WASH HMA:

AML is only established (6 head) on one grazing allotment. The total AML is estimated at 35-50 head for the entire HMA. A census was completed this March - 118 animals were counted. At the completion of the current foaling season, the population is anticipated to be about 140 animals. The entire herd has been camped on a large white sage area all winter and spring, seriously degrading the area. The vegetation damage to this area may already be irreversible, if drought occurs, the situation intensifies. We estimate that approximately 100 head will need to be removed before this turns into a

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JAKES WASH HMA - CONTINUED:

real emergency to the wild horses from lack of forage. The animals are currently in fair to good condition, but would change quickly with drought conditions. The cost estimate for the removal is \$40,000 for capture and transportation to PVC (\$400 per head for 100 horses). Processing, adoption, and/or sanctuary costs would be in addition to the capture costs.

BUTTE HMA:

AML is mostly established at 74 with an estimate of 114 when fully established. The estimated population at the end of the current foaling season is about 150 animals. These animals mostly concentrate in a small area of the HMA due to lack of waters in the HMA. Currently about half of the herd is using an area called Hunter Point and Nine Mile Summit, causing serious degradation to the forage resource. If drought occurs there, the vegetation damage could become irreversible due to the heavy concentration of horses in this small area. We need to remove approximately 50 wild horses in this area to avoid a potential crisis to the range and the horses. At \$400 per animal, this removal would cost about \$20,000. Processing, adoption, and/or sanctuary costs would be in addition to the capture costs.