



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Elko Field Office
3900 East Idaho Street
Elko, Nevada 89801-4611
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>



In Reply Refer To:
4700 (NV-22.42)

September 1, 2006

Dear Interested Party:

This letter is to inform you that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Elko and Winnemucca Field Offices will be conducting an emergency wild horse gather on public lands affected by the Winters Fire.

During the emergency gather operation, approximately 450 wild horses would be gathered. Of these, about 100 wild horses would be transported to unburned portions of the Herd Management Areas (HMAs) and released. The remainder (about 350 wild horses) would be transported to BLM facilities for placement into the Adopt A Horse Program.

The Winters Fire was located near the town of Midas in Elko County and burned within portions of the following HMAs: Rock Creek, Little Humboldt, Owyhee, Little Owyhee, and Snowstorm Mountains. The fire started on July 25, 2006 and was caused by lightning. The fire burned a total of approximately 240,000 acres, which encompasses approximately 207,200 acres of public lands administered by the BLM and 32,800 acres of private land. Remaining vegetation within the burn is restricted to unburned pockets or islands. Additional information about the affected HMAs is provided in the table below.

Herd Management Area	AML	Gathered Last	HMA Acreage	% of HMA Burned
Little Humboldt	48-80	2004	17,151	90
Rock Creek	150-250	2004	126,753	63
Owyhee	139-231	2004	336,262	17
Snowstorm Mountains	90-140	2004	117,147	22

On August 9 and 11, 2006, census flights were conducted to determine the numbers and locations of the animals within the affected HMAs following the fire. Approximately 450 animals were located within the burn boundary. Removal of approximately 330-350 wild horses would eliminate potential for starvation from lack of forage. The emergency gather will be conducted under a BLM contract which is scheduled to start on or after September 10, 2006, pending funding. The performance time for the gather is estimated at 7 days.

RECEIVED

SEP 07 2006

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
BUDGET AND PLANNING DIVISION

For additional information on the Winters Fire emergency wild horse gather, please refer to the Decision Record and Environmental Assessment (BLM/EK/PL-2006/026) at <http://www.nv.blm.gov/elko/planning.htm>. Copies of the referenced documents may also be obtained by calling (775)753-0314.

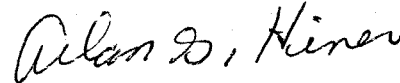
In making this decision, the authorized officer has determined that removal of about 350 wild horses from the Winters Fire area is necessary to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple use relationship. The decision to conduct an emergency gather as outlined above is effective upon issuance in accordance with 43 CFR 4770.3 (c).

More information is available by contacting Heidi Hopkins at (775) 623-1575 or Bryan Fuell at (775) 753-0314.

Sincerely,



Shane DeForest
Assistant Field Manager
Renewable Resources
Elko Field Office



Arlan G. Hiner
Assistant Field Manager
Renewable Resources
Winnemucca Field Office