



**WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADVISORY BOARD**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

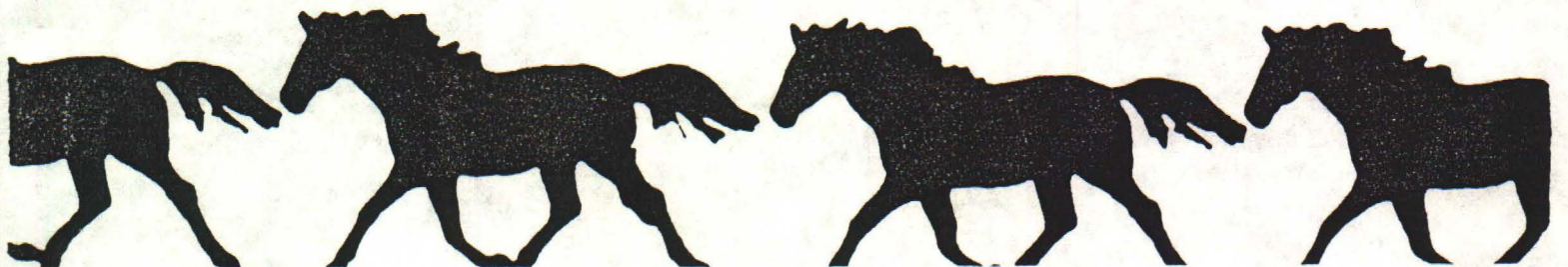
**TO**

**THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE**

**AND**

**THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR**

**JANUARY 30, 1992**



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## INTRODUCTION

It is ironic that the Wild Horse and Burro Act was passed in 1971 with virtually no congressional dissent. Yet in the 20 years since passage of Public Law 92-195, the wild horse and burro management program has become mired in nearly continuous controversy. The program has largely been characterized by bad press, legal entanglements, humane and ecological disasters, and growing public disillusionment and polarization. This becomes even more remarkable considering that the wild horse and burro program has the potential to be the Bureau's "show case" program. It could generate a more positive public image and wider public recognition than any of the Bureau's other activities will ever accomplish.

Affinity for the wild horse and burro is pervasive throughout the American public. This interest in wild horses and burros cuts across virtually all segments of our society; urban and rural or eastern and western folks all share this interest. No other Bureau activity has the potential for such a positive public identity and appeal. The mythical wild horse is inexorably interwoven into the fantasy and fascination the American society has for the "Ole West" and "Cowboys." Wild horses and burros are a symbol of our roots. Adding to this special identity is the unique opportunity for people through adoption and volunteerism to be a part of the wild horse program. As an imagemaker, the wild horse and burro program should have exceeded Smokey Bear.

In the absence of a common philosophical foundation on how free-roaming, large grazing animals should be managed, the wild horse and burro program has instead been tugged to and fro by conflicting special interest agendas to no one's satisfaction. The wild horses and burros have literally been used to create conflict over public rangeland use.

In 1971 the President signed into law the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act which provided for the protection, management, and control of wild free-roaming horses and burros on public lands.

The Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act was amended in 1976 and again in 1978 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the program and address the expansion of wild horse and burro numbers. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) (P.L. 94-579) amended the Act by authorizing use of helicopters or, for the purpose of transporting captured animals, motor vehicles. It brought the Act under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield and the planning process and reconfirmed the National Environmental Policy Act's (NEPA) (P.L. 91-190) process of public participation and monitoring and inventorying.

In 1978, the Act was further amended through the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) (P.L. 95-514). The monitoring and inventorying process of FLPMA was reconfirmed. It also provided directives and restrictions for determining and removing excess wild horses and burros. Finally, it gave the Secretary authority to contract for a research study through the National Academy of Science (Phase I, NAS).



The Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act authorized and directed the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture "to appoint a joint advisory board of not more than nine members to advise them on any matter relating to wild free-roaming horses and burros and their management and protection."

The first advisory board convened in 1973 through 1976. No formal report was presented to the Secretaries.

In February 1986, the second advisory board was chartered. This board focused on two major issues as follows:

1. Large numbers of unadopted horses being maintained in corrals.
2. The presence on public lands of an estimated 15,000-20,000 wild horses in excess of appropriate management levels.

The board made 21 recommendations under the following four categories:

1. Disposition of excess wild horses and burros
2. Management
3. Research
4. Legislation

The Committee on Appropriations, in making appropriations for the Department of the Interior for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1990, directed the BLM to report to Congress no later than December 1, 1989, on its plans to reactivate the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Committee to provide oversight of the overall wild horse and burro program as called for in the conference report on the appropriations bill.

On May 11, 1990, the present Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board charter was filed and a nine member board was appointed to advise and develop recommendations from a national, public-interest perspective in accordance with P.L. 92-195, as amended, for the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture and the Director of the BLM and Chief of the Forest Service.

The nine members appointed to the Board and the interests they represent are listed as follows:

Dr. James C. Heird, Fort Collins, Colorado  
Chairman, Wild Horse and Burro Research

Fred Burke, Wickenburg, Arizona  
Public at Large



Dr. J. Wayne Burkhardt, Reno, Nevada  
Rangeland Management

Robert Grieve, Savery, Wyoming  
Livestock Management

Robert Hillman, Sacramento, California  
Humane Organizations

Dr. Edward S. Murray, Spur, Texas  
Veterinary Medicine

Mary Ann C. Simonds, Walnut Creek, California  
Wildlife Management

Karen Ann Sussman, Scottsdale, Arizona  
Wild Horse and Burro Management

Lonnie L. Williamson, Chester, Maryland  
Conservation

Director Jamison raised two issues of fundamental importance to the BLM for the Board's consideration.

1. Management of free-roaming animals on the range.
  - a. What kind of management?
  - b. What level of management?
  - c. Are resources--both staff and dollars--available to manage and protect the free-roaming herds properly?
  - d. What role do selective removals play?
  - e. How do we demonstrate the presence or absence of a thriving ecological balance?
2. Placement of excess animals.
  - a. What are the disposal options possible under the Act?
  - b. Which options are feasible financially and politically?
  - c. Are there desirable disposal options not currently available under the Act?



The final issue raised by the Director was that the program was out of balance for the budget available.

- a. How much emphasis should be given to surveillance to protect free-roaming horses and burros on the range; to fertility control; to age-sex manipulations.
- b. Once excess animals are removed, what aspects of the program deserve priority: improvements to BLM preparation facilities; prison training; sanctuaries; adoptions in the East; marketing; compliance?

Public meetings were held in Reno, Nevada; Las Vegas, Nevada; Pueblo, Colorado; Denver, Colorado; and Washington, D.C. The Board focused their discussion on protection, management, and control of wild horses and burros and program accountability of wild horses and burros and their recommendations related to these areas are included in this report to the Secretaries.



## WILD HORSE AND BURRO MANAGEMENT (A CONCEPTUAL MODEL)

### BACKGROUND

Large populations of grazers compete for food, water, and space on western rangelands. The well-being of each of these grazer populations is dependent upon some form of population check on all herbivores. The wild horse and burro have no effective natural predators. Population control on the various herbivores must be maintained so that there is a reasonable balance with the capacity of the land.

In natural herbivory systems, predation is directed primarily at the young and the old portions of the herbivore population. This maintains a breeding herd of largely mature animals which possess the collective herd behavior knowledge so necessary to survival in a natural system. It would seem prudent for wild horse and burro management to emulate, so far as possible, this natural population control function. Breeding herds should be maintained on the range, and population checks should be directed at the young and old.

Reasonable and perceptive management avoids disaster. Remedial action should be taken before there is a feed shortage and subsequent range damage. The wild horse and burro program is in need of reasonable and prudent on-the-ground management.

### RECOMMENDATION

Whereas: the 1971 Wild Horse and Burro Act directs the Secretaries to protect and manage wild horses and burros on public lands as an integral part of the natural system and in a thriving natural ecological balance with the range and other multiple uses; and whereas the management of wild horses and burros has been largely characterized by conflicts, public and agency disillusionment, and ecological crises; therefore, the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends the wild horse and burro program be restructured on the following conceptual model:

To protect free-roaming wild horses and burros, the program should be designed to:

1. Reduce public and agency disillusionment, distrust, and conflict regarding wild horses and burros by implementing responsible on-the-ground management of wild horses and burros.
2. Enhance public and agency awareness and appreciation of wild horses and burros.



To responsibly manage free-roaming wild horses and burros within herd management areas on public lands, the program should:

1. Identify and manage wild horse and burro habitats in a manner that:
  - a) Considers the natural behavior and biological needs of wild horses and burros.
  - b) Considers the ecosystem's other diverse components and their relationships.
2. Implement optimum herd population levels (appropriate management levels) which are in harmony with the range ecosystem by:
  - a) Integrating the impacts of wild horse and burro herds and all other major forage consumers so that the combined demand is within the range capacity and represents a thriving natural ecological balance.
  - b) Setting initial appropriate management levels in terms of minimum and maximum herd size so that the minimum level is sufficient to maintain herd integrity\* and maximum level is in harmony with the range system.
  - c) Balancing the total population of wild horses and burros so that the annual production of excess young is within the outlet capacity for these excess animals.
3. Maintain herd integrity and stability while assessing long-term impacts to the rangeland ecosystem by:
  - a) Maintaining on the range aged animals and allowing recruitment of sufficient young animals into the base herds to offset mortality, without regard to economic value or population aesthetic criteria.
  - b) Stabilizing and maintaining herd population levels within the minimum/maximum herd size through periodic removal of excess young animals.

\*Herd integrity is the unique genetic characteristics and collective herd behavioral wisdom that contributes to the herd's adaptability.



4. Appropriate management levels for wild horse and burro herds along with other major forage consumers should be established through the respective agencies' planning processes. Levels should be based on and continually verified by habitat monitoring. Monitor habitat impacts of the established base herds and the other major forage consumers to assure that the combined habitat impacts are within the rangeland capacity and represent a thriving natural ecological balance. When environmental analysis of monitoring information suggests that herbivore impacts are leading to an ecological imbalance, appropriate adjustments in herbivore grazing and browsing pressures should be implemented in a manner that averts or prevents a crisis situation for the habitat and/or the herbivores.

#### RATIONALE

The wild horse and burro program, from the beginning, has been mired in controversy. The Board believes these problems stem largely from the lack of acceptance of a common management philosophy. The wild horse and burro program has lacked focus and direction.



## WILD HORSE AND BURRO PROGRAM: FOCUS AND GOALS

### BACKGROUND

The Board is strongly of the opinion that the wild horse and burro program is in need of refocusing. The Board believes the wild horse and burro program should focus on management of free-roaming herds on public lands. Management should assure that these herds and other herbivores exist within the capacity of their ranges and that production of excess animals (annual increase) is within the outlet capacity. Large-scale warehousing of unadoptable or excess horses and burros is symptomatic of a management program out of balance ecologically, socially, politically, and economically. Such management is also outside the intent of the Wild Horse and Burro Act.

### RECOMMENDATION

Whereas the Wild Horse and Burro Act directs the Secretaries to protect, manage, and control wild horses and burros on public lands, the Advisory Board believes that the need for prison programs and sanctuaries is not integral to a quality management program for wild horses and burros; therefore, this Board recommends that future program emphasis and funding be directed toward management of the animals on the public range.

### RATIONALE

Wild horse and burro management should primarily be focused on maintaining these free-roaming breeding herds on public lands, within the ecological constraints of the rangeland system, and in a matter such that their natural increase does not become a liability ecologically, politically or economically. The management program as it now functions does not achieve these goals and should be redirected.



## PLANNING, MONITORING, AND INVENTORYING POPULATIONS AND HABITAT

### BACKGROUND

The Board reviewed current program guidance and procedures to determine if they are effective for implementing program policy. In order for the program to succeed, a focus must be placed on management on the range that includes monitoring and inventorying of both the populations and habitat.

### RECOMMENDATION

We recommend to the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior that the BLM and Forest Service implement consistent inventorying and monitoring procedures that will provide information to determine wild horse and burro populations and herbivore impacts to achieve habitat objectives and desired plant communities as described in the following guidelines.

#### Planning and Monitoring Populations

That wild horses and burros are an integral part of public lands and must be managed under the principle of multiple use with integrated, coordinated decisionmaking.

That multiple-use, sustained yield management objectives must be stated in Resource Management Plans (RMP's) and focus on achieving, maintaining or restoring a thriving range condition that contributes to species diversity.

Objectives must be based on public input, existing resource conditions and issues, and must be measurable, attainable, and realistic.

That population and habitat are so intertwined that planning and monitoring must include the following:

- a. Behavioral observations of wild horses, burros, and other herbivores.
- b. Map spatial overlap information for the purpose of showing where competition occurs in juxtaposition to damaged areas; map 1 to include seasonal movement and distribution of wild horses and burros; map 2 to include distribution of livestock; map 3 to include the use pattern map of vegetation; map 4 to include seasonal movements and distribution of major wildlife species.



- c. Collection of consistent census data on a regular basis, using the most appropriate wildlife censusing methods for the habitat and situation.
- d. Determination of minimum population levels to serve as a threshold (based on viable gene pools, herd integrity, and population dynamics information) below which the population in a given area cannot be removed.
- e. Age structure and sex ratio information which would assist in making determinations for population adjustments. The information should not only determine what to take off but, more importantly, what should be left behind.
- f. Update land-use plans as needed based on current monitoring data.

#### Monitoring and Inventorying Habitat

That the purpose of monitoring is to measure the impacts of wild horses and burros and other grazers on rangelands in order to provide information that allows sound management decisions.

That habitat must be managed as an ecosystem which takes into account all components, and the vegetation is to be managed not only for its forage value but its values as watershed protection and fish-and-wildlife habitat.

That BLM field manuals and program guidances be reviewed for compliance with actions set forth by IBLA.

That habitat monitoring must include the following:

- a. Assess utilization by each herbivore species in terms of area of use and seasons of use.
- b. Collect quantifiable data which will determine where and when competition occurs.
- c. Collect technical data which will identify range conflicts and areas of actual competition and initiate a coordinated, integrated management approach.
- d. Establish timeframes for evaluating monitoring data that results in multiple-use decision making, planning, and management.



- e. Categorize objectives, moving from broad objectives (goals) to quantifiable objectives. Monitoring requires sound objectives and management constraints, which must be expressed in the RMP, quantified objectives in the AMP, and all management practices in the field manual.
- f. Develop species-specific habitat evaluation standards and practices handbook agency-wide.

#### RATIONALE

We recognize that the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service can manage the range ecosystem with all its unique and diverse forms of plants, animals, terrain, and climate, given proper methodology and adequate qualified staff. With that recognition comes the need for improved and formative management of wild horses and burros and its resulting contribution to the animal diversity of the public lands within the established Wild Horse and Burro Management Areas.

Proper management plans for a given area require a strong information base. Monitoring should focus on the overall impact of grazing pressures on the many components of the watershed. The utilization levels obtained should be used as one of the tools to achieve established goals and objectives in the agencies' desired plant community. There is a need for the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service to apply established methods with a consistency that can be recognized, understood, and defended.

It is assumed that the increased expenditures for on-the-ground data and information will reduce the verbal and legal conflicts.



## HORSE HANDLING

### BACKGROUND

Wild horse and burro removals from public lands vary not only from state to state, but in some cases, from district to district. The absence of standardized procedures to minimize stress in the animals, combined with the lack of professional expertise, has contributed to undue stress, inhumane treatment, and death. Although the Bureau has improved their handling of wild horses and burros, animals are still injured during roundups, shipping, processing, and adoptions. Many options are available for reducing and minimizing stress in wild horses and burros including handling procedures, facility design, and improved nutrition.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture that the BLM and the Forest Service further investigate and implement the safest, cost-effective, and least stressful horse and burro handling methods that will meet each herd management area's goals and objectives.

### RATIONALE

The purpose of this recommendation is to encourage the agencies to develop procedures to minimize stress in wild horses and burros during handling.



## FERTILITY CONTROL

### BACKGROUND

Fertility control is one option for population management of wild horses and burros. Currently hormone implants and immune-contraceptive vaccine seem the most favorable. Hormone implants require surgery and confinement of horses while healing, which in some cases may be very stressful for the animal, but effective. The immune-contraceptive method, which appears the least stressful for the animal, still requires that they be confined for two weeks and receive two injections. Research indicates that this method should be available in a single time-released injection within the next twelve months. Both methods have merit, although the social and behavioral implications of these methods have not been well documented in the field and need monitoring.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture that the BLM and the Forest Service develop criteria and methods for fertility control.

### RATIONALE

Fertility control may be an effective and humane management tool.



## ADOPTION FEE FOR BURROS

### BACKGROUND

For many years the adoption fee for wild horses has been set at \$125 and for burros at \$75. The number of wild burros on the public lands is small compared to wild horses. Demand is much higher than supply. The Advisory Board is also concerned that burros be given full recognition as equal to wild horses under the 1971 Act.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture that they increase the adoption fee for wild burros from \$75 to \$125 to match the fee for wild horses.

### RATIONALE

Increasing burro fees will standardize adoption fees.



## NEVADA WILD HORSE CENTER

### BACKGROUND

With hundreds of thousands of people every year seeking new opportunities to experience "nature," nature-based tourism is the fastest growing area of the travel market. The market demand for "living" interpretation centers is increasing throughout the world. Currently, very few opportunities exist for viewing and learning about wild horses and burros. Nevada's history is intimately connected with wild horses and burros. Nevada is seeking new areas to attract tourists to their State. A national wild horse and burro center, properly and professionally developed in cooperation with the local tourist board and business community, could be mutually beneficial to all parties. Although a draft proposal for the National Wild Horse and Burro Center has been submitted by the Nevada BLM office, an indepth market and feasibility study needs to be conducted to ensure the project's success. The agencies should investigate the possibility of some form of collaborative relationship with private industry and make sure that efforts are not being duplicated.

The Palomino Valley Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Center appears to need improvements and/or expansion. Although it serves many visitors and potential adopters each year, it was not designed for visitation.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends to the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture that they investigate the need to develop a National Wild Horse and Burro Center in Nevada.

### RATIONALE

The development of a living interpretation center for wild horses and burros would offer visitors a meaningful educational experience. The center would meet several of the agencies' goals, such as:

- a. Offer the public the opportunity to view and learn about wild horses and burros, range ecology, and resource management through environmental education programs.
- b. Provide a field training center for wild horse and burro contractors and BLM and Forest Service personnel.
- c. Provide an adoption center with educational programs for adopters (this would increase successful adoptions).
- d. Create a revenue to offset wild horse and burro program expenses.



## PRISON TRAINING PROGRAMS

### BACKGROUND

At present there are 5 prison in four states training wild horses in cooperation with the BLM. Each State operates its program independently without guidelines for consistent operating procedures and training techniques. For 5 years, there were no national guidelines for gentling and halter training wild horses. Prison program costs vary from State to State.

The Board does not disagree with the general philosophy behind the prison training programs. However, it questions the cost and quality of the present programs and wonders if there is a benefit befitting program costs.

Oklahoma's Crabtree Correctional Facility has requested the opportunity to train horses. The Board believes that this program may be uniquely different from the prison programs now in existence. The program can list the following differences: (1) a vocational program to train inmates for jobs, (2) veterinary care supplied by the Oklahoma State University, College of Veterinary Medicine at cost, (3) willingness to work with older horses previously thought to be untrainable, (4) psychological evaluation of all inmate participants, and (5) a low cost per horse per day charge. In addition, they have expressed a willingness to incorporate resistance-free training techniques and to establish an Oklahoma adoption center.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior that the BLM give consideration to the Crabtree Correctional Facility wild horse training program. Furthermore, it recommends that criteria and guidelines be established for all prison horse programs and a quality assurance program be implemented with oversight, direction, and review.

### RATIONALE

By developing a quality assurance program with oversight, direction, and review, the BLM can reduce costs and make the prison training program more efficient and humane and can increase adoptability of older horses. A quality, cost effective program, such as proposed by the Crabtree Correctional Facility, will give credibility to prison training programs.



## DISPERSAL OF EXCESS WILD HORSES, INCLUDING SANCTUARIES

### BACKGROUND

In 1988, the Bureau of Land Management entered into a cooperative agreement with the Institute of Range and the American Mustang (IRAM) to take the old and unadoptable horses which had been held in BLM holding facilities since the large-scale roundups began in 1985. The plan was that the BLM would pay a set daily feed amount for 3 years at which time IRAM was to be financially self-sufficient and continue solely on public and corporate donations.

In the spring of 1991 it became evident to BLM that IRAM would not be financially able to assume full responsibility in August 1991, when the 3-year agreement expired. With the potential problem facing BLM of taking back approximately 2,000 horses from IRAM in the near future, this subject became a topic of discussion by the Advisory Board.

In 1991, the BLM divided the IRAM agreement into two portions and signed a 1-year extension of the agreement. The first portion covered 300 horses being held at a Hell's Canyon ranch in South Dakota, and the second related to the remaining 1,700 horses at the Mustang Meadows ranch, also in South Dakota.

The second sanctuary agreement that BLM established in Oklahoma will also expire in 1992. If this sanctuary closes, the BLM will have to reclaim these horses also.

In addition, other dispersal programs of excess animals have been self-limiting due to several reasons, such as inadequate public relations/advertising, location of adoptions, and the lack of matching of horses to particular adoption needs.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture that BLM and the Forest Service implement a responsible dispersal plan for excess wild horses, including sanctuary horses, that engages cooperative marketing assistance from interest groups.

### RATIONALE

The Board supports closing the sanctuaries at the end of the agreement period. Horses should be removed from the sanctuaries with a minimum amount of stress. The BLM has also looked into the possibility of returning horses to public lands where they can live out the remainder of their lives without human intervention. Horses returned to public lands must be isolated from other wild horse herds. In addition, using cooperative marketing assistance can prove to be an effective tool in humane and successful dispersal of wild horses.



## PROFESSIONALISM IN THE WILD HORSE AND BURRO PROGRAM

### BACKGROUND

Although there are qualified professional Wild Horse and Burro Specialists in these agencies, all specialists and contractors have not been required to have appropriate professional expertise. As resource managers, they may have been limited in their ability to positively manage wild horses and burros. Furthermore, the agencies have been unable to convince the public that they have the professional expertise to manage the resource. Other resource managers within the agencies have specific degrees in the appropriate resource science, e.g., range, wildlife, or they have the opportunity to gain the expertise through the Bureau's Training Center programs. Managers of wild horses and burros, like those of other more conventionally accepted wildlife, require knowledge of the species' behavior, biology, social dynamics, and ecology both in a free and captive state in order for the Bureau to properly and humanely manage the species.

The wild horse and burro program has more components than any other resource management program in the Bureau and requires a comprehensive understanding of all components of the program from field management to adoption. All persons associated with the program, including contractors, need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the program's vision, goals, and objectives.

At times, the program has lacked coordination in the attempt to maintain independent State functions. The Bureau has provided little or no opportunity for Wild Horse and Burro Specialists to share information with each other to gain new information. In most cases, they have not seen the need to encourage or support professional development of Wild Horse and Burro Specialists. Often guidelines or even manuals written by one district or State in an attempt to coordinate wild horse and burro management procedures were never reviewed or shared with Wild Horse and Burro Specialists in other States.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture that they:

- a. Strengthen the internal training, orientation, leadership, and career programs within the BLM and the Forest Service for wild horse and burro personnel.
- b. Petition the Office of Personnel Management to develop a Technical Series and Professional Series for wild horse and burro personnel.



- c. Require all contractors operating in the wild horse and burro program to have appropriate certification demonstrating professional expertise in performing their wild horse and burro function.

#### RATIONALE

Program competency and efficiency will be improved by educating BLM and Forest Service personnel and contractors associated with the wild horse and burro program in matters related to their area of responsibility, such as wild horse and burro biology, ecology, behavior, management, humane handling, and adoption.



## PUBLIC EDUCATION AND MARKETING

### BACKGROUND

Public education and marketing are needed for all phases of the wild horse and burro program. The agencies should inform the people of the United States concerning their management of the resources. Little effort has been directed toward educating the public concerning the management and dispersal of wild horses and burros other than through the adoption program. The public should have the opportunity to understand, experience, and learn about wild horses and burros.

Currently, it is up to the personnel in public affairs to assemble public educational material concerning wild horses and burros, and up to the individual managing the adoption to give adopters any information. Marketing and public education varies widely in the BLM from State to State. This may be one reason why certain States have better long-term and humane adoptions than other States.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture that public education and marketing be implemented as a part of the wild horse and burro program and that wild horse and burro protection and management become an integral part of any environmental education program. Also, the Board recommends there be a full-time Public Affairs staff person in the BLM for the wild horse and burro program.

### RATIONALE

This recommendation encourages the agencies to integrate wild horse and burro resources as part of all environmental education programs. This would inform and educate the public about the value of wild horses and burros, such as biological, cultural, historical, recreational, and scenic values. A full-time Public Affairs staff person could develop a strong marketing program.



## RESEARCH

### BACKGROUND

The National Academy of Sciences' report identified areas of research needs for the wild horse and burro program, some of which have been addressed. Ongoing research to address management questions or needs is critical to the success of the wild horse and burro program. Fertility control has been the focus of the research efforts with little or no studies on herd behavior, social dynamics, herd integrity, or genetics. Social research regarding public perception, marketing for dispersing excess horses, or the success of the adoption program have not been addressed.

### RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the agencies evaluate research priorities with concern for addressing critical management issues.

### RATIONALE

By focusing research on answering management questions, useful information will be generated to assist managers in decisions.



## AGENCY ACCOUNTABILITY

### BACKGROUND

The wild horse and burro program has evolved without a strategic plan. Consequently, the program and associated resources are administered poorly in many places.

### RECOMMENDATION

The Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board recommends to the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture that they direct the Director of the Bureau of Land Management and the Chief of the Forest Service to:

- a. Adopt a strategic plan.
- b. Review existing wild horse and burro program policies and procedures with regard to their improvement.
- c. Hold appropriate managers accountable for achieving established wild horse and burro program goals and objectives.

### RATIONALE

Without a plan containing a mission statement, goals and strategies for attaining those goals, any program may be considered successful, regardless of obvious failure. By the same rationale, it is unfair to condemn program managers for perceived shortcomings or interest groups for dissatisfactions when quantifiable goals and specific strategies are not available against which to compare their deeds and suppositions.



1) need better marketing approach

2) the program lacked focus + direction  
objectives

BOARD: Recommendations

- 1) program emphasis + funding be directed toward  
mgt of the animals on the public lands.
- 2) implement a sound inventorying + monitoring program  
that will determine populations + impacts
- 3) fertility control
- 4) <sup>WH</sup> Center in Nev.
- 5) marketing - better marketing approach  
"SMOKEY THE BEAR"