

Gold Butte

G 5-2698

United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

LAKE MEAD NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
601 NEVADA HIGHWAY
BOULDER CITY, NEVADA 89005

LAS VEGAS
Gold Butte

IN REPLY REFER TO:

N1615 (LAME-RM)

May 26, 1998

Dawn Lappin, Director
Wild Horse Organized Assistance
P.O. Box 555
Reno, Nevada 89504

Dear Ms. Chontos:

We plan to conduct a netgunning operation in early June to remove burros from the Eldorado Mountains, the southern portion of the Gold Butte, Nevada, and around Temple Bar and Kingman Wash, Arizona. These areas have been designated as zero burro use areas in the Lake Mead National Recreation Area Burro Management Plan. As stipulated in our burro management plan, we use netgunning only as a last resort, where other capture methods have failed, in remote areas with limited access, or in areas where burro densities and populations are low. Previous attempts to remove burros in these areas have been made using corral traps, helicopter/trap, wranglers, and helicopter/netgun. We estimate that we will capture and remove 20 to 30 burros from these areas.

We have enclosed, for your information, the capture plan which includes standard operating procedures for netgunning. We are very concerned that burros receive the most humane treatment possible during this operation. Therefore, we have consulted with the Bureau of Land Management and believe we have developed capture techniques that ensure humane treatment of burros.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Resource Specialist Nancy Hendricks at (702) 293-8949.

Sincerely,

Alan O'Neill
Superintendent

Enclosure

REMOVAL PLAN

FOR BURROS

GOLD BUTTE AND ELDORADO CANYON, NEVADA
TEMPLE BAR AND KINGMAN WASH, ARIZONA

LAKE MEAD NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

Prepared by
Lake Mead National Recreation Area
National Park Service
United States Department of the Interior
May 1998

PURPOSE

The purpose of the removal is to reduce populations of burros to zero or near zero in the southern portion of the Gold Butte, and in the Eldorado Mountains, Nevada; and, in the Temple Bar and Kingman Wash areas, Arizona, in Lake Mead National Recreation Area (Lake Mead NRA). This action is consistent with National Park Service (NPS) management policies, the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for Burro Management, Lake Mead NRA, the Interagency Agreement between the National Park Service, Lake Mead NRA and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Arizona Strip Districts, and the Black Mountain Ecosystem Management Plan, 1996.

AREA OF CONCERN

The areas from which burros will be captured and removed are: 1) from Lakeside Bay area southeast to Devil's Cove, on the southern portion of the Gold Butte Plateau; 2) in the Temple Bar area; 3) in the Kingman Wash area, from Indian Canyon to Horsethief Canyon; and, 4) in the Eldorado Mountains area, from Lonesome Wash south to Cottonwood Cove. All portions of the removal operation will take place within Lake Mead NRA.

NUMBER OF BURROS TO BE CAPTURED AND REMOVED

All burros located in these areas will be captured and removed. The total population in the combined areas is estimated at 20 to 40 burros.

TIME AND METHOD OF CAPTURE

An experienced private contractor will conduct the capture and removal operation for approximately four days. The NPS Project Manager (PM) will be Resource Management Specialist Nancy Hendricks. The removal will take place during May and/or early June 1998. Capture activity will be restricted to occur between 6 a.m. and 4 p.m., unless temperatures are determined to cause heat stress on the burros. If such a determination is made, then the capture activity will be further restricted to occur between 5 a.m. and 12 noon.

Because burros are highly mobile and traverse a wide area, specific capture sites will not be identified. The operations will be based out the Temple Bar area and Kingman Wash, Arizona, and Eldorado Landing, Nevada.

The main method of capture will helicopter/netgun, as described in detail in the FEIS. The method depends upon burro densities and accessibility to the area. Helicopter/netgun is employed as a last resort when burro densities in the area are low, and burros are scattered across large areas. Previous attempts have been made in these areas using the helicopter/netgun, helicopter/trap, and helicopter/wrangler methods.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE OPERATION

The contractor will be responsible for capture of approximately 40 burros. The NPS will provide personnel to assist with the on-ground portion of this operation. No NPS personnel will assist with the aerial netgunning operation. The NPS will be responsible for the care, temporary holding, and transport of all captured burros to the adoption facility. If available, BLM personnel will assist with the operation.

The contractor comes equipped with a OAS certified helicopter and crew.

The burros will be transported to the Bureau of Land Management Kingman Distribution Center within one day of their capture. If they will be at a holding facility overnight, the NPS will provide sufficient feed, water, labor and equipment to capture and care for burros. The NPS will transport the captured burros, with assistance from contract and BLM personnel as needed, from the temporary holding facility at the capture site to the Kingman Distribution Center.

All work will be accomplished in a safe and humane manner and be in accordance with the provisions of 43 CFR Part 4700 and this removal plan, and the guidance outlined in the FEIS for Burro Management, Lake Mead NRA.

Within 2 weeks prior to the start of the capture period, Lake Mead NRA personnel will evaluate existing conditions, including animal conditions, prevailing temperatures, soil conditions, topography, road conditions, flight hazards, location of fences and other physical barriers, and animal distribution. The evaluation will include the likelihood of undue stress to the burros and whether such stress would be acceptable, or whether a delay in the capture activity is warranted. If it is determined that the capture requires a veterinarian, the services of one will be obtained before the capture.

The PM and/or contractor will be authorized to cancel the operation at any time for safety reasons, or if agency regulations, cooperative agreements, or terms of this capture plan have been violated to an unacceptable degree.

All publicity, formal public contact, and inquiries will be handled through the NPS Public Information Officer at Lake Mead NRA.

A Nevada State Brand Inspector will be on site to inspect brands. Branded burros with offspring will be retained in custody of the BLM pending notification of the owner or claimant. The animals will remain in BLM custody until settlement, in full, is made for impoundment and trespass charges, as determined appropriate by the Kingman Area Manager in accordance with Title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations (43 CFR) Subpart 4710.6 and provisions in 43 CFR Subpart 4150. In the event settlement is not made, the burros will be placed in the BLM adoption program.

DESTRUCTION OF INJURED AND SICK ANIMALS

Any severely injured or seriously sick animal will be destroyed in accordance with 43 CFR Subpart 4730.1. Animals will be destroyed only when a definite act of mercy is needed to alleviate pain and suffering. When the PM is unsure as to the severity of an injury or sickness, a veterinarian will be called to make a final determination. Destruction shall be done in the most humane method available.

The carcasses of burros that die or must be destroyed as a result of any infectious, contagious or parasitic disease will be disposed of by burial to a depth of at least 3 feet.

The carcasses of burros that must be destroyed as a result of age, injury, lameness or noncontagious disease or illness will be placed in an inconspicuous location to minimize the visual impacts.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Trapping and Care of Burros:

Capture attempts will typically be accomplished by the utilization of a helicopter. Roping shall be done as determined by the contractor. Under no circumstances will animals be tied down for more than 1 hour. It is the responsibility of the contractor to prevent injury or death of burros during the netgunning operation.

The contractor and PM will supervise the use of the project helicopter during the operations.

Temporary corral sites will be selected by the PM and contractor after determining the animal's habits and the topography of the area. The temporary corral sites will be located on or near existing roads, in previously disturbed areas or in washes and will receive cultural and threatened and endangered plant and animal clearances prior to construction. Additional corral sites may be required to relieve stress to pregnant jennies, foals, or for other conditions at the time of the removal (i.e., dust, rocky terrain, temperatures, etc.). It is estimated that no more than three corral locations will be required to accomplish the work.

The temporary corrals will be constructed from portable pipe panels. Barbed wire or other harmful materials will not be allowed.

Alternate pens within the holding facility will be furnished by the NPS to separate jennies with small foals, and sick and injured animals from other burros. Animals will be sorted within the holding facility, as determined by the contractor, to minimize injury due to fighting and trampling. At a minimum, jacks will be separated from the jennies and foals when the animals are held overnight.

The PM will insure animals held in the traps and/or holding facilities are provided with a continuous supply of fresh clean water at a minimum rate of 10 gallons per animal per day. Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps or holding facilities will be provided good quality hay at the rate of not less than 2 pounds of hay per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day.

When dust conditions occur within or adjacent to the trap or holding facility, the NPS will arrange for local crews to wet down the ground with water.

Animals will be transported to the final destination within 24 hours after capture unless unusual circumstances occur. Animals will not be held in traps and/or temporary holding facilities on days when there is no work being conducted. Every effort will be made to ensure that the time burros are standing on the trucks prior to off-loading is minimized.

It is the responsibility of the NPS to provide security to prevent loss, injury or death of captured animals while they are held in temporary holding facilities and during transport to the adoption facilities.

The capture operation will be carried out to minimize stress to animals. When netting burros, the best available site, with short runs, will be used. The burros will be loaded quickly, and single burros will not be kept in the trailer longer than necessary. If trailer space permits, foals and jennies will be loaded together and given extra space. If the space is not available, foals will be placed in a separate compartment.

Vehicle Use and Transport:

All motorized equipment used in the transportation of captured animals will comply with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to humane transportation of animals. Vehicles will be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and operated to insure that captured animals are transported without undue risk or injury.

Sixteen-foot stock trailers or larger will be used for transporting animals from traps to temporary holding facilities and to the final destination. These stock trailers have a middle gate that will allow the load to be spaced out, reducing crowding and at least one combination sliding/swing rear door. Stock trailers will have good ventilation. The use of double deck trailers is unacceptable and will not be allowed.

Floors of stock trailers and the loading chute will be covered and maintained with a nonskid surface such as sand, mineral soil or wood shavings, to prevent the animals from slipping. This will be confirmed by the PM prior to loading each load.

Animal loading will be directed by the PM and may include limitations on numbers according to age, size, sex, temperament and animal conditions. A minimum of 1 linear foot per adult animal and .5 linear foot per foal will be allowed per standard 8-foot-wide stock trailer/truck. The PM and contractor shall consider the conditions of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, distance to be transported or other factors when planning for the movement of captured animals.

All burros will be shipped to the Kingman Resource Area Distribution Center. Personnel involved in off-loading the burros will provide feedback to the contractor and PM on the conditions of shipped burros. Should problems arise, shipping methods and/or separation of the burros will be changed in an attempt to alleviate the problems.

If the PM determines that dust conditions are such that the animals could be endangered during transportation, the speed will be adjusted. The maximum distance over which animals may have to be transported on dirt roads is approximately 10 miles per load. Periodic checks by contractor employees will be made as the burros are transported along dirt roads.

Helicopter, Pilot and Communications:

All operations of helicopters must be in compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 91, and NPS regulations and policies. Pilots shall comply with the Contractors Federal Aviation Certificates and applicable regulations of the State of Arizona and shall follow what are recognized as safe flying practices.

When refueling, the helicopter shall remain a distance of at least 300 feet or more from animals, vehicles (other than fuel truck) and personnel not involved in refueling. Refueling will occur at the airport at local runways or airstrips, or adjacent to the recreation area.

The contractor shall have the means to communicate with the pilot and be able to direct the use of the helicopter at all times. The proper operation, service and maintenance of all contractor-furnished helicopters is the responsibility of the contractor. The NPS reserves the right to remove from service pilots and helicopters that violate contract rules, are unsafe or otherwise unsatisfactory.

Reviewed by:

Kent Turner

Kent Turner
Chief of Resource Management
Lake Mead NRA

5/27/98

Date

Approved by:

Alan O'Neill
Alan O'Neill
Superintendent
Lake Mead NRA

5/27/98

Date