

HOW POLICY HAS SHAPED WILD HORSE MANAGEMENT

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U.S. Historical Horse Population

Year	1900	1915	1930	1945	1960	2017
Wild H&B	2M ¹					116,110 ³
Total ²	21.5M	26.5M	18.9M	11.6M	3M	9.9M ⁴

¹ Congressional Research Services Report for Congress (2005), Wild Horse and Burro Issues

² Ensminger, M.E. (1969) Horses and Horsemanship, 4th Edition

³ BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program, Wild Horse and Burro Program Status (2017),
https://www.blm.gov/sites/blm.gov/files/wildhorse_2017AdvisoryBoard_Bolstad.pdf

⁴ American Horse Council, Economic Impact of the United States Horse Industry (2005)



1897 – Nevada state legislature passes act authorizing the killing of wild horses running at large on public lands.

1901 – Law repealed due to complaints by ranchers that their horses were being shot.

Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 & U.S. Grazing Service

The Act establishes grazing districts and the use of permits for grazing livestock on public lands.

- To stop injury to public grazing lands by preventing over grazing and soil deterioration.
- To provide for orderly improvement and development.
- To stabilize the livestock industry.

Societal Shifts for the American Horse

1900 – 1960s

- 2nd Industrial Revolution
- Mass Immigration into the U.S.
- World War I
- Henry Ford's Model T
- Return to horse power in the south
- The Great Depression
- World War II and Its Aftermath
- The idolization of the "American West" and the wild "Mustang"
- The Environmental Movement and Conservation

Velma B. Johnston “Wild Horse Annie”

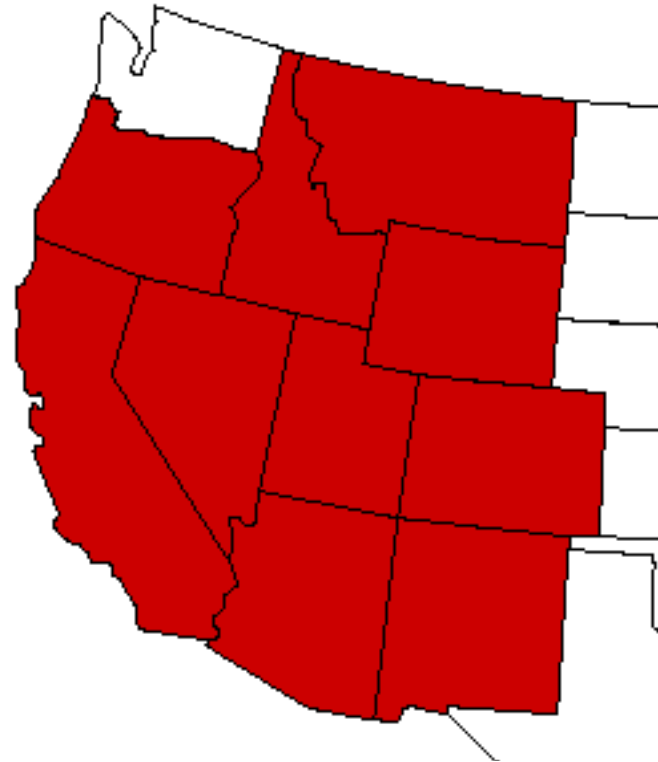
“Seldom has an issue touched such a responsive cord.” July 15, 1959, AP News

1959 – Wild Horse Annie Act: Prohibiting the use of aircraft or motorized vehicles to hunt wild horses or burros on public lands; Prohibits the pollution of watering holes for the purpose of trapping, killing, wounding, or maiming.



The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act 1971

- Places the protection of wild horses and burros on federal lands under the Jurisdiction of the BLM and USFS.
- Manage where found in 1971 (no relocation)
- Maintain a thriving natural ecological balance in support of multiple use.
- Creation of the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board



States where wild horses and burros
are managed on public lands.

Kleppe v. New Mexico

- In February 1974, the New Mexico Livestock Board rounded up and sold 19 unbranded burros from BLM lands.
- New Mexico filed suit claiming the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act was unconstitutional.
- In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled unanimously that, “the Property Clause also gives Congress the power to protect wildlife on the public lands, state law notwithstanding.”

1976 – Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA)

- Authorized the use of helicopters for capture, and motorized vehicles for transport.
- Initiation of the Adopt-O-Horse or Burro Program under BLM.

1978 – Public Rangeland Improvement Act (PRIA)

- Authorized the removal of animals exceeding the range's carrying capacity.
 - Destroy old, sick or lame animals by the most humane means available.
 - Remove Healthy animals for private adoption.
 - If adoption demand is insufficient, the remaining healthy animals are to be destroyed.
- Creates the titling of adopted horses or burros.

1982 – Burford Policy enacted: moratorium on the destruction of excess, un-adopted horses.

1983 – Adoption fees set at \$125 plus transportation.

1984 – BLM approved the sale of wild horses on the “fee-waiver” program allowing for mass adoptions.

- Approximately 20,000 horses were adopted that eventually were sold for slaughter.
- A lawsuit against the BLM halted the mass adoptions and forced the agency to develop alternatives such as the prison training programs and sanctuaries.

1985 – In the Omnibus bill, a rider was included to allow slaughtering of wild horses and burros removed from public lands. The bill failed.

1985 – Congress directed BLM to triple removals. Standard adoption fee set at \$125.

1987 – Congress passed an amendment stating no funds can be expended on the destruction of healthy, unadoptable horses. This continued in appropriations bills until FY2005.

1989 - Animal Protection Institute successfully challenged BLM's decisions for removal of wild horses and burros from public lands.

- The Interior Board of Land Appeals (IBLA) ruled that BLM must monitor and inventory the habitat to determine excess.
- Required BLM and USFS to regularly inventory horses and burros on public lands to determine Appropriate Management Levels (AML).

2004 – Senator Conrad Burns (R-MT) Introduces a rider amending the WFRHBA to require BLM to:

- Sell excess animals older than 10 years, or
- Have been offered for adoption three times.
- Required excess, un-adoptable horses to be made available for sale without limit.

2005 – Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) introduces an amendment to limit the implementation of the Burns amendment by preventing appropriated funds to be used for the sale and slaughter of wild horses and burros.

2009 – Reps. Rahall and Grijalva introduced HR 1018, the "Restore Our American Mustangs Act". Would have amended the 1971 Act to:

- Increase available acreage for wild horses and burros
- Develop additional sanctuaries,
- Forbid the killing of healthy animals, and
- Allow greater public participation in herd management decisions.

FY2018 Budget & WFRHBA Amendment

In July of 2017, Rep. Chris Stewart (R-UT) proposed an amendment to the Interior Appropriations bill altering the WFRHBA. This amendment would allow:

- Nonprofits: The secretary of the interior would be allowed to enter into long-term agreements with nonprofits for the care of excess wild horses and burros.
- Work horses: The bill allows for the transfer of excess equines to government agencies for use as work animals.
- Euthanasia limits: A wild horse or burro must be at least 10 years old and have been put up for adoption but not adopted three times before it can be destroyed.
- No slaughter: The ban on selling wild horses and burros to slaughterhouses remains.

OUT ON THE RANGE

BLM & USFS

Wild Horse and Burro
Populations

- **10** Western states with wild horses and burros
- **177** Herd Management Areas (HMAs)
- **26.9** Million acres of public rangelands

- **26,715** Animals is the Appropriate Management Level (AML)
- **72,674** Animals on the range (as of March 2017) ½ in Nevada
- **43,436** Animals in holding (July 2017)
 - 11,624 in 26 corrals (\$4.99 per day; \$28.4 million total in FY16)
 - 32,771 in 28 pastures (\$1.82 per day; \$21 million total in FY16)

- **3,116** Adopted/sold in 2016 (\$2,367/animal adopted)
Adoptions have declined from 7,800 in 2002

- **3,038** Removed from the range in 2016 (\$1,007/animal removed)

BLM Herd Management Areas



USFS Wild Horse and Burro Numbers

7100 wild horses, 900 wild burros

19 national forests, 8 western states

34 active territories on 2.1 million acres

27 wild horse / 4 wild burro territories

3 wild horse & burro territories

24 managed with BLM (JMAs)

19 inactive territories on ~500K acres

16 wild horse / 3 wild burro territories



Program Management Challenges

Low adoption and sales – 3,116 horses/burros in 2016

High cost of care of un-adopted animals - \$49.5M / 63% (2016)

Overpopulated Rangeland – 26,715 AML / 72,674 current / 45,959 over

Ecological Degradation

Herd Health

Herd Integration/overlapping with regional development and traffic increases

Litigation

Moving Forward

Research is Key – BLM has a continued partnership with the USGS Fort Collins Science Center. Current and future studies include:

Non-invasive genetic sampling of free-roaming horses to estimate population size, genetic diversity, and consumption of invasive species.

Developing a suitable radio collar or radio tag for feral horses and burros.

Development of a population model and cost analysis for managing wild horses (“WinEquus II”).

Developing and testing aerial survey techniques for wild burros.

Effect of spaying females on the demography, behavior and ecology of a wild horse population.

Testing efficacy of contraceptives for female burros in a captive trial.

Moving Forward

Partnerships can improve program efficiency and help reduce costs.

Training Programs

Mustang Heritage Foundation

Inmate Training Programs

Tribal Contracts

4-H/FFA Training Certifications

Local Contractors

Adoption Marketing & PR

Local Governments

Ag / Trade Associations

Community Service Orgs

Public Education

National Advocacy Groups

University Cooperative Extension

Fact Checkers

Moving Forward

Congressional Action

FY2018 Budget & WFRHBA Amendment

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Future WH&B Management

Population Estimate

• On Range HMA Pop.	72,674
• 20% Foal Crop	14,530
• 2018 On Range Pop.	87,204
• Off Range Holding Pop.	43,436
• Total WH&B Pop. 2018	130,640

Total WH&B Pop. 2018	130,640
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Subtract AML (26,715)	103,925	42 years to adopt out
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Optimal AML	26,715
20% Foal Crop	5,345
5 Year Adoption Mean	2,514
Contraception Success Rate	2,831