



The Wyoming Department of Agriculture is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources and quality of life.

September 7, 2016

Jay D'Ewart
Wild Horse and Burro Specialist
BLM Rock Springs Field Office
280 Highway 191 North
Rock Springs, Wyoming 82901

Dear Mr. D'Ewart

Following are the Wyoming Department of Agriculture's (WDA) comments pertaining to the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the 2016 Removal of Wild Horses from Checkerboard within the Great Divide Basin, Salt Wells Creek and Adobe Town Herd Management Areas (Project).

Our comments are specific to our mission: dedication to the promotion and enhancement of Wyoming's agriculture, natural resources, and quality of life. As wild horses have the potential to significantly affect our agriculture industry and our natural resources, it's important you continue to inform us of proposed actions and decisions and continue to provide us the opportunity to express pertinent issues and concerns.

The WDA strongly supports the U.S. District Court ordered Consent Decree (dated April 3, 2013) with the Rock Springs Grazing Association (RSGA) to remove all wild horses located on RSGA's private lands and Wyoming's Checkerboard lands.

We support Alternative 2: Proposed Action, to remove all wild horses from the Checkerboard lands within the three Herd Management Areas (HMAs). We also strongly support the removal of all wild horses located outside the HMAs on adjacent lands as identified in Alternative 2.

However, we would encourage the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to consider addressing these HMAs fully by reducing the Appropriate Management Level (AML) to a level associated with just the block federal lands. It does not make any sense ecologically or for management to only remove wild horses from the Checkerboard while still allowing excess wild horses to impact block federal lands and associated surface. The BLM is not gathering wild horses on block federal lands and their population growth goes unchecked. In addition, the block federal lands will continue to be the source of wild horses back onto the Checkerboard, creating a vicious cycle, and preventing active management of HMAs and gathers from occurring.

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We insist the Rock Springs Field Office fully consider amending the Resource Management Plan (RMP) to change the HMA boundaries and adjust the AML to fully align with the Court Ordered Consent Decree. This would provide long-term guidance and solutions to wild horse management in southwest Wyoming.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this EA to remove wild horses.

Sincerely,

Stacia Berry
for Doug Miyamoto

Doug Miyamoto

Director

DM/cw

CC: Governor's Policy Office
Wyoming Association of Conservation Districts
Wyoming Game and Fish Department
Wyoming State Grazing Board
Wyoming Stock Growers
Wyoming Wool Growers
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