

WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES

RESOLUTION



MANAGEMENT OF WILD FREE-ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS

WHEREAS, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages wild horses and burros under the authority of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act and continues to face a number of difficult challenges in the Wild Horse and Burro Program: and

WHEREAS, there are about 33,000 wild horses and burros roaming on BLM-managed lands in 10 western states - a population that exceeds the appropriate management level by some 5,700 animals and there are over 29,500 wild horses and burros that have been removed from the public rangelands that are being fed and cared for at both short-term (corral) and long-term (pasture) holding facilities; and

WHEREAS, in the current fiscal year (2008), holding costs will exceed \$26 million, accounting for three-fourths of the fiscal year appropriation to the BLM of about \$37 million – a level of funding not sufficient to support summer removals from the range while maintaining lifetime holding for older unadopted animals; and

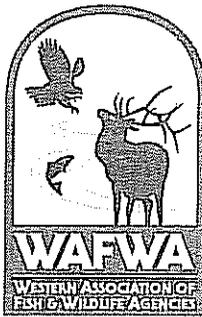
WHEREAS, the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, (Public Law 92-195) §1333 states that where the Secretary of the Interior determines that an overpopulation exists on a given area of the public lands and that action is necessary to remove excess animals, he shall immediately remove excess animals from the range so as to achieve appropriate management levels; and such action shall be taken until all excess animals have been removed so as to restore a thriving natural ecological balance to the range, and protect the range from the deterioration associated with overpopulation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies requests that the Secretary of the Interior direct the BLM to follow the legal authority set forth in Section 1333(2)(iv)(C) of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, (Public Law 92-195) and that the Congress support this direction.

DENBY S. LLOYD, (AK)
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January 27, 2010

The Honorable Jeff Bingaman, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Opposition to H.R. 1018 and S. 1579, *Restoring Our American Mustangs (ROAM) Act*

Sent via FAX
Original via USPS

Dear Chairman Bingaman and Senator Murkowski:

The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association), founded in 1922, is an organization of 23 public agencies charged with the protection and management of fish and wildlife resources in the western part of the United States and Canada. The Association has been a key organization in the promotion of sound resource management principles and the strengthening of federal, state and private cooperation in protecting and managing fish and wildlife and their habitats in the public interest. The Association is very concerned that H.R. 1018 and S. 1579 would have devastating impacts to the long-term sustainability of the public's wildlife resources and habitats throughout the West.

Wild horse and burro populations on public lands can double in four to five years and will quickly exceed the carrying capacity of the range if animals are not regularly removed. The current Wild Horse and Burro Program is underfunded and much of the range is now overpopulated. Overpopulation of wild horses and burros results in significant damage to vegetation, soils, and watersheds. These impacts have deleterious effects on native wildlife species.

H.R. 1018 and S. 1579 would lift the restriction to manage wild horse and burro herds to areas where they were found when the original Wild Horse and Burro Act was passed, potentially opening up all public lands to the impacts of wild horses and burros. With insufficient and irregular funding, the present program cannot keep up with the management of these animals in their current restricted distribution. If their distribution was allowed to expand, wild horse and burro populations, costs, and resource damage would quickly spiral out of control. This would lead to catastrophic impacts to native species and their habitats.

H.R. 1018/S. 1579 directs that the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service exhaust all practicable options before capturing and removing wild horses and burros from the range. This would delay necessary removal operations, slowing down an already cumbersome removal approving process. With a population growth rate of 20% per year, delaying removals is a dangerous proposition for the health of our dry, fragile western habitats and the native species that occupy them.

Adoption demand for wild horses and burros is far less than the population growth rate. Even so, H.R. 1018/S. 1579 requires that an adoption demand exists prior to capturing wild horses and burros. Currently the adoption demand for wild horses and burros is approximately 3,000 animals per year. There are approximately 37,000 wild horses and burros on public lands. With a population growth rate of 20% per year, 7,400 additional wild horses and burros would be produced on the range next year.

H.R. 1018 and S. 1579 also requires that new rangelands and sanctuaries, or "exclusive use areas", be established on public lands for wild horses and burros. This would elevate the importance that one introduced exotic species has over the variety of native species that occupy public lands. This would severely impact the ability of state wildlife agencies to manage native wildlife populations. Also, it is inconsistent with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 that directs multiple use management on public lands.

H.R. 1018 and S. 1579 would lead to an ever-increasing wild horse and burro distribution, population size and associated resource damage. This would have drastic negative implications for vegetation, watersheds and native wildlife species. The Association requests that no action be taken on H.R. 1018 and S. 1579.

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar has presented a plan to the Senate to put the Wild Horse and Burro Program on a more sustainable track. The Association applauds the Secretary's creative efforts to solve the current problems with the management of wild horses and burros. We support all efforts to keep herds on our western rangelands at a sustainable level by reducing numbers of wild horses and burros on overcrowded habitat, and by reducing the population growth rates through fertility control and management of sex ratios. We support any effort that would ensure populations of wild horses and burros are maintained at the appropriate management level (AML) which has been set by the Bureau of Land Management, in consultation with state wildlife agencies. Considering that wild horses and burros have been maintained well above AML in many areas of the West, we believe that any revision to the management of wild horses and burros should include funding to ensure roundups are conducted

Chairman Bingaman and Senator Murkowski
January 27, 2010

at regularly scheduled intervals and to reconcile habitat damage that has occurred due to overpopulation of these animals.

Thank you for your consideration of the Association's comments and perspectives regarding this significant public lands issue.

Sincerely,



Denby S. Lloyd
WAFWA President

DSB/CDC:llk

cc: The Honorable Byron L. Dorgan (ND)
The Honorable Ron Wyden (OR)
The Honorable Tim Johnson (SD)
The Honorable Mary L. Landrieu (LA)
The Honorable Maria Cantwell (WA)
The Honorable Robert Menendez (NJ)
The Honorable Blanche Lincoln (AR)
The Honorable Bernard Sanders (I) (VT)
The Honorable Evan Bayh (IN)
The Honorable Debbie Stabenow (MI)
The Honorable Mark Udall (CO)
The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen (NH)
The Honorable Richard Burr (NC)
The Honorable John Barrasso (WY)
The Honorable Sam Brownback (KS)
The Honorable James E. Risch (ID)
The Honorable John McCain (AZ)
The Honorable Robert Bennett (UT)
The Honorable Jim Bunning (KY)
The Honorable Jeff Sessions (AL)
The Honorable Bob Corker (TN)
WAFWA Directors
Gary Taylor, AFWA

Gary R. Hovatter

Roam

From: Larry Kruckenberg [Larry.Kruckenberg@wgf.state.wy.us]
Sent: Wednesday, January 27, 2010 8:30 AM
To: Cindi Jacobson; Denby Lloyd; Doug Larsen; Kelly Hepler; Lisa B (DFG) Evans; Mary A (DFG) Schlosser; Bob Broscheid; Jim Heffelfinger; Larry Riley; Larry Voyles; Terry Johnson; stiver@cableone.net; A Howe; John McCamman; Kristin Mansfield; Phil Anderson; John Carlson; Dave England; Rod Davis; Tom Ethier; Lyle Saigeon; Rick Ashton; Dan Lindsey; Paul Conry; Cal Groen; Mary Boyer; Virgil Moore; Keith Sexson; Betty Warren; Joe Maurier; Roger Rostvet; Ken Mayer; Rich Haskins; Kirk Nelson; Rex Amack; Jim Edwards; Richard Hatcher; Jeff VerSteeg; Tom Remington; Terry Steinwand; Tod Stevenson; colleen.r.munson@state.or.us; Holly Michael; Ron Anglin; Roy Elicker; Emmett Keyser; Jeff Vonk; Tony Leif; Carter Smith; Clay Brewer; Ross Melinchuk; Ruben Cantu; Alan G. Clark; Jim Karpowitz; John Emmerich; John Kennedy; Kevin Hurley; Steve Ferrell; Stephen Barton
Cc: Gary Taylor; Ron Regan
Subject: WAFWA Letters (Informational)
Attachments: WAFWA ROAM Letter 012710.pdf; Hamilton WildEarth Guardians BFF Letter 012710.pdf

WAFWA Directors, et al:

Attached are two letters going out today from the Association that were subjects of action at the recent mid-winter business meeting. One involves the pending ROAM (wild horses and burros) legislation and the other the WildEarth Guardians petition involving black-footed ferrets. Thanks to everyone who had a hand in drafting these letters and/or provided review/comment.

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