

Bureau of Land Management and Public Lands Council Urge Public Lands Ranchers to Buy Wild Horses

The Bureau of Land Management and the rancher-based Public Lands Council (PLC) are urging public lands ranchers to consider buying older wild horses that must be sold under a recently passed law. The appeal, made in separate letters signed by BLM Director Kathleen Clarke and PLC President Mike Byrne, is going out to more than 15,000 livestock operators across the West who hold BLM-issued grazing permits or leases. The PLC represents the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the American Sheep Industry Association, and the Association of National Grasslands on public land issues affecting ranchers.

In his letter to public lands ranchers, PLC President Byrne writes: "We recognize and appreciate that many of you already provide support to wild horses and burros through water use and grazing on private lands intermingled with the public lands. We are asking you to consider continuing to help by purchasing some of the older horses."

In an accompanying letter, BLM Director Clarke, who notes that the BLM has some 7,000 sale-eligible horses in its pasture holding facilities, calls the PLC's effort "most gracious and welcome." Pointing out to ranchers that the BLM will deliver loads of 20 or more horses to any destination, Clarke writes, "I am committed to wise and responsible use of BLM's fiscal resources. The cost of maintaining horses in holding consumes more than half of our agency's wild horse program budget. Reducing holding costs will enable the BLM to commit greater resources to the accomplishment of rangeland health and wild horse herd management goals."

The BLM-PLC appeal comes as the BLM implements a law enacted by Congress in December 2004 that mandates the sale of certain wild horses and burros – specifically, those more than 10 years old or those that have been passed over for adoption at least three times. In implementing this law, the Bureau has been reaching out to groups and individuals that are interested in buying these animals for long-term care. As of January 2006, the BLM has sold more than 1,500 wild horses and burros of the 8,400 that were immediately affected by the sale-authority law.

Public lands ranchers and all others who are interested in buying wild horses should call the BLM at 1-800-710-7597, send an e-mail to wildhorse@blm.gov, or talk to a local BLM manager.

The BLM manages wild horses and burros as part of its overall mission to manage the public lands for multiple uses. Under the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, the BLM manages, protects, and controls wild horses and burros; this responsibility includes removing excess numbers of animals from the public rangelands to ensure that herd populations are consistent with the land's capacity to support them. According to the BLM's latest figures, there are about 32,000 wild horses and burros roaming BLM-managed lands in 10 Western states, a population that exceeds by some 4,000 the number that can exist in balance with other public land resources and uses.

For further information about the BLM's wild horse and burro sales program, see www.blm.gov. For information about the BLM's wild horse and burro adoption program, which is separate from the sales program, see www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov.

The BLM, an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, manages more land—261 million surface acres—than any other Federal agency. Most of this public land is located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1.8 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on the public lands.

PLC Letter to Ranchers

http://www.blm.gov/nhp/news/releases/pages/2006/pr060221_whb_PLC_Letter.pdf

BLM Director Kathleen Clarke Letter

http://www.blm.gov/nhp/news/releases/pages/2006/pr060221_whb_Clarke_Letter.pdf

Questions and Answers Regarding Sales of Older Wild Horses to Public Lands Ranchers

http://www.blm.gov/nhp/news/releases/pages/2006/pr060221_whb_qa.pdf

“Save the Mustangs” Fund Ready to Distribute \$200,000 to Wild Horse
Organizations for Long-Term Care of Horses

The Bureau of Land Management, Take Pride in America®, and Ford Motor Company announced today that more than \$200,000 raised for the “Save the Mustangs” fund is ready for distribution to eligible wild horse and equine rescue groups to help place thousands of mustangs into private, long-term care.

The Save the Mustangs fund, established in May 2005 by Ford Motor Company in collaboration with the BLM and Take Pride in America, builds public awareness and support for wild horses. In less than a year, the fund has generated more than \$200,000 in contributions, including Ford’s financial support for 2,000 horses, and has educated more than one million visitors through an informational Website, www.savethemustangs.org. The BLM, which manages more than 32,000 free-roaming horses and burros on public lands, places thousands of these animals into good private care each year. Take Pride in America, which administers the Save the Mustangs fund, will distribute money to qualified wild horse and equine rescue groups that purchase horses.

“As we promised last spring, the goal of the Save the Mustangs program was to provide wild horses with a sustainable future, and we’re delivering on that promise as we assist those who are offering loving homes for the mustangs,” said Ziad Ojakli, Ford Group Vice President of Corporate Affairs. “I am very proud of the contributions that Ford and other mustang lovers have been able to make in preserving such a marvelous icon of American freedom.”

BLM Director Kathleen Clarke said, “The growth of the Save the Mustangs fund, and the upcoming distribution of the money raised, is good news for all who care about America’s wild horses and burros. I want to thank all of the donors, especially Ford Motor Company, for supporting our agency’s efforts to ensure good homes for America’s mustangs, which are a living symbol of our nation’s Western

spirit.”

Charged with maintaining public lands and protecting America’s historic and cultural resources, Take Pride in America is committed to supporting wild horses as living legacies of Western history and is encouraged by the initiatives of private corporations, such as Ford, that contribute to natural resource stewardship. “Save the Mustangs is a program that not only protects the legacy of our wild horses and burros, but also exemplifies a creative solution between the American public and a private organization, a true representation of a cooperative effort,” said Michelle L. Cangelosi, Executive Director of Take Pride in America.

Save the Mustangs Funds Ready for Distribution

In letters being sent this week to more than 300 non-profit wild horse and equine rescue organizations, the BLM is urging the groups to buy saleable wild horses and to apply for financial assistance from the Save the Mustangs fund to help them in providing for the horses’ long-term care. To qualify for the funds, groups must verify their non-profit status by documenting their 501(c)3 standing; must show that they have the capability to care for purchased horses; and must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the BLM and Take Pride in America that they will provide for the long-term care of the animals.

The BLM manages wild horses and burros under the authority of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Congress amended this law in December 2004, when it directed the Bureau to sell wild horses and burros that are either more than 10 years old or have been passed over for adoption at least three times. Since that time, the Bureau has sold more than 1,700 wild horses and burros; currently, more than 8,000 are eligible for sale. The BLM’s sales program is separate from its wild horse and burro adoption program, under which the agency has placed more than 208,000 wild horses and burros into private care since 1973. (For further information about the sales program, see www.blm.gov ; for adoption information, see www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov .

The Bureau, which is authorized by the 1971 law to make necessary removals of wild horses and burros from the public lands, seeks to keep herd populations at a level that allows them to thrive in balance with other rangeland resources and uses. In managing the public lands for multiple uses, the BLM has determined that the public rangelands under its jurisdiction can support a free-roaming population of 28,000 wild horses and burros.

Take Pride in America® is a national partnership program that enables individuals, civic groups, corporations, and others to volunteer in caring for the lands shared by all Americans. Take Pride's goal is to instill an active sense of ownership and responsibility in every citizen for the nation's natural, cultural, and historic resources. For more information, visit www.TakePride.gov .