

# Big Creek Wild Horse Territory

The Big Creek Wild Horse Territory (WHT) is administered by the Salt Lake Ranger District, Wasatch-Cache National Forest.

## Location/Habitat

The Big Creek WHT is located in Utah approximately 8 miles west of Grantsville. The territory consists of 10,000 acres of National Forest land in the northwestern portion of the Stansbury Mountain Range.

The topography is mountainous with elevations ranging from 5000 to 10,500 feet. Temperatures range from below zero in the winter to 90°+ F in the summer. Average annual precipitation is 10 inches at the foot of the mountains and 60 inches near Deseret Peak.

Vegetation varies with elevation, slope gradient, aspect, and microclimate. Lower west-facing slopes and south faces are sage-juniper communities rising through mountain mahogany to alpine ridge meadows of bunchgrasses. Lower north faces are cottonwood-chokecherry stream bottoms rising through aspen to white fir, Douglas fir, and limber pine at higher elevations.

Wildlife present include deer, mountain lions, and eagles.

Livestock grazing is not permitted within the wild horse territory.

## History

The Stansbury Mountain area was settled in the mid-1800s. Along with settlement came the introduction of feral horses, as working animals were either released or escaped. The Orr Ranch of Skull Valley reported losing some of their Percheron studs in the area. The Standard Horse and Mule Livestock Company raised large working horses for army remounts and ranch work and lost a number of these horses in the area. Other ranchers also raised horses for army remounts of Arabian, Morgan, and Thoroughbred breeding. These horses also contributed to the feral population. The progeny of these feral horses was consistently gathered off the west face of the Stansburys and in Skull Valley through 1967. Numerous infusions of domestic horses through the years contributed to the gene pool. The horses on the Stansburys were known to be large and refined.

There were 18 wild horses living in the Big Creek Territory in 1976. The horses were bay, sorrel, brown, and one dapple grey.

## Herd Description

The appropriate management level is 13-25 horses.

## **For More Information**

Contact the Salt Lake Ranger District at 801-733-2660.