

Butler Basin Wild Horse Territory

The Butler Basin Wild Horse Territory (WHT) is administered by the Austin/Tonopah Ranger District, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.

Location/Habitat

The Butler Basin WHT is located in Nevada approximately 40 miles southwest of Eureka. The territory consists of 52,500 acres of National Forest land in the northern portion of the Monitor Mountain Range. Wild horses on the Butler Basin WHT typically use this territory as summer range and occupy the Bureau of Land Management administered Seven Mile Herd Management Area (HMA) during the winter.

The topography is mountainous with elevations ranging from 6000 to 9000 feet. The climate is represented by hot, dry summers and cold winters. Temperatures range from below zero in the winter to 90°+ F in the summer. Average annual precipitation is 5-12 inches.

Vegetation consists of pinyon-juniper communities in the higher elevations. Quaking aspen communities are also present in the higher elevations. At the mid and lower elevations, sagebrush, rabbitbrush, serviceberry, snowberry, and winterfat are common along with grasses and forbs.

Wildlife present include pronghorn, mule deer, elk, eagles, sage grouse, coyotes, and rabbits.

Livestock grazing is permitted within the wild horse territory.

History

Although Spaniards brought horses with them to the Nevada area in the 16th and 17th centuries, it is believed that most of the wild horses in Central Nevada are descendants of horses that strayed or were abandoned by their owners during the mining booms and the settlements of homesteads in the late 1800s, early 1900s. Prior to the passing of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, it was common practice for local ranchers to periodically release studs with “good blood” to “upgrade” the herds. Roundups would occasionally be held and suitable animals would either be sold or kept on the ranch, trained, and used as cow ponies.

Herd Description

It has been observed and documented that wild horses migrate freely between the Butler Basin WHT and Seven Mile HMA. The two areas are managed for a combined appropriate management level of 60-100 horses.

For More Information

Contact the Austin Ranger District at 775-964-2671.