

Ellsworth Wild Horse Territory

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

Location/Habitat

The Ellsworth WHT is located in Nevada approximately 50 miles southwest of Austin. The territory consists of 18,000 acres in the northern Paradise Mountain Range.

Elevation of the territory is between 6,000 and 8,650 feet. The area is semi-arid with precipitation estimated at 9 inches per year. The terrain is mountainous.

Much of the vegetation within the territory is pinyon-juniper interspersed with low sagebrush and mountain big sagebrush. Mountain mahogany, aspen, and willow communities associated with springs and drainages are present throughout the area.

Wildlife present in the territory include deer and mountain lion.

Livestock grazing is permitted within the 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.

However, historic accounts claim that “true mustangs” occupied the southern Paradise Mountain Range. These horses may have also been present in the area of the Ellsworth territory.

For More Information

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