

Jarita Wild Horse Territory



The Jarita Mesa Wild Horse Territory (WHT) is administered by the El Rito Ranger District, Carson National Forest.

Location/Habitat

The Jarita Mesa WHT is located in New Mexico approximately 20 miles northeast of El Rito. The herd use area consists of 55,000 acres of National Forest land on the north end of the El Rito Ranger District. Wild horses on the Jarita Mesa WHT use this area year round.

The topography is mountainous with elevations ranging from 7000 to 9700 feet. The climate is represented by cool summers and cold winters. Temperatures range from below zero in the winter to 80°+ F in the summer.

Vegetation consists of pinyon-juniper and sagebrush communities at the lower elevations. Ponderosa Pine and mixed conifer are present in the higher elevations.

Wildlife commonly viewed on the territory include black bear, mule deer, elk, turkey, redbill hawks, ravens, and a host of smaller terrestrial wildlife.

Livestock grazing is permitted within the wild horse territory.

There are a few well traveled National Forest roads within territory and Jarita Mesa wild horses can occasionally be seen during travels through the area.

History

The history of the Jarita Mesa wild horses is tied to the local Hispanic communities that have been present in the area for some 300 years. The foundation blood for the horses is Spanish mustang, but genetic testing and physical appearance indicate that other bloodlines may have influenced the herd as well.

Herd Description

The appropriate management level for the El Rito herd is between 20 and 70 head of horses depending on range conditions. Common horse colors include Red and gray roans along with black, bay and brown.

For More Information

Contact the El Rito Ranger District at 505-581-4554.