

Kelly Creek Wild Horse Territory

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

Location/Habitat

The Kelly Creek WHT is located in Nevada approximately 25 miles west of Eureka. The territory consists of 19,600 acres of Forest Service land and 35,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management land (North Monitor Herd Management Area). Kelly Creek WHT is located on the northern tip of the Monitor Mountain Range.

The territory has five principle watersheds, which radiate like wheel spokes with Antelope Peak and Summit Peak at the hub: Kelly Creek, Pedlar Creek, Willow Creek, Dagget Creek, and Faulkner Creek. Elevation is between 6,500 and 10,500 feet. Precipitation is estimated at 12 to 15 inches per year, mostly as snow, but its occurrence is highly variable. The terrain is mostly mountainous trending into foothill and valley.

Much of the territory's vegetation is pinyon-juniper interspersed with Wyoming and mountain big sagebrush of which some of the valley sagebrush has been converted to stands of crested wheatgrass. Mountain mahogany, aspen, and willow is patchily distributed throughout the area.

The territory is also used by cattle and deer.

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

Wild horses on the Kelly Creek WHT are typically bays, sorrels, and browns.

For More Information

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

