

# McGavin Peak Wild Horse Territory

The McGavin Peak Wild Horse Territory (WHT) is administered by the Goosenest Ranger District, Klamath National Forest.

## Location/Habitat

The McGavin Peak WHT is located in California about 7 miles east of Dorris. The territory consists of 3,860 acres of Forest Service land, 1,860 acres of Bureau of Land Management land, and 10,325 acres of private land. Both the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands are scattered tracts, which cannot support a sustainable herd.

Elevations range from 3,400 – 5,500 feet on the mountains. Average annual precipitation is 12.6 inches, primarily occurring during November through March. Temperatures during the winter may drop well below zero for short periods of time, and temperatures during the summer can reach 100° F.

Vegetation is marginal timber.

Wildlife present within the territory include deer and mountain lions.

## History

Large herds were found near McGavin Peak since at least the early 1900's. The source of the original horses in this area is unknown. However, many horses escaped or were released by ranchers, miners, and soldiers, which mixed with the existing herds. Indications are that in the 1930's some American Standardbreds mixed with the existing herd.

Periodic round-ups occurred in the early history of this herd. Large round-ups occurred in the 1930's and 1940's. The "good" horses were kept for domestic stock, and the "poor" horses were sold for pet food. This herd was also subject to much recreational horse chasing. The horses would be run through fences, and in the process a few horses would be killed or crippled. Another practice consisted of shooting some of the old studs which had become mean.

When the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act was passed in 1971, protecting the horses from harassment, estimated herd numbers in the McGavin Peak territory were around 30 horses. Bays and browns were the dominant colors.

## Herd Description

Due to the limited amount of contiguous federal land in the McGavin Peak WHT, the appropriate management level is 0. Private landowners are not obligated to support wild

horses, and there is not enough federal land in this area to sustain a viable population of wild horses.

## **For More Information**

Contact the Gooseneck Ranger District at 530-398-4391.