

# **Northumberland Wild Horse Territory**

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

## **Location/Habitat**

The Northumberland WHT is located in Nevada approximately 40 miles southeast of Austin. The territory consists of 12,800 acres of National Forest land and is located in the central part of the Toiyama Mountain Range.

The territory lies in the upper portion of four principle watersheds, which radiate like wheel spokes about Wildcat Peak: Northumberland Canyon, Wildcat Canyon, Mill Canyon, and Water Canyon. Elevation is between 7,500 and 10,500 feet. The area is semi-arid. Precipitation is estimated at 12 inches per year, mostly as snow, but its occurrence is highly variable. The terrain is mountainous.

Much of the territory's vegetation is pinyon-juniper interspersed with low sagebrush and mountain big sagebrush. Mountain mahogany, aspen, and very small willow communities associated with springs are patchily distributed throughout the area.

The territory is grazed by cattle and deer.

## **History**

Although Spaniards brought horses with them to the Nevada area in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

## **For More Information**

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