

Powell Mountain Wild Horse Territory

The Powell Mountain Wild Horse Territory (WHT) is administered by the Bridgeport Ranger District, Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest.



Location/Habitat

The Powell Mountain WHT is located in Nevada approximately 10 miles south of Hawthorne. The territory consists of 111,000 acres of National Forest land on the south end of the Wassuk Mountain Range.

The territory is situated between Anchorite Pass and Buller Mountain, and the topography is mountainous. The southern Wassuk Range is a fault block mountain range, faulted and uplifted on the east side and tilted to the west.

The territory is influenced by a southwestern climate pattern. It has a biseasonal pattern characterized by winter and summer precipitation and spring and fall drought. Precipitation amounts vary from 5 to 20 inches per year with approximately 2/3 occurring as snow between November and May. Typically there are large fluctuations in daily temperatures, ranging in the coldest months of December and January as low as -20° F and highs in the 60° 's F. Temperatures during the hottest months of July and August rarely exceed 100° F and are typically in the 80° 's and 90° 's. The low temperatures during these months are typically in the 50° 's.

There are four major vegetation communities within the territory: sagebrush, pinyon-juniper, meadows, and playas. The sagebrush type is dominated by Great Basin sagebrush. Pinyon-juniper type is characterized by the single leaf pinyon pine and Utah juniper. The meadow type is confined to small areas of accessible water or snowmelt accumulation, producing a grass dominated community. The playa type is an alkali sink community consisting of alkali tolerant plants, such as saltbrush, goosefoot, and greasewood.

Wildlife present within the territory include deer, antelope, badgers, jackrabbits, and coyotes.

Livestock grazing is permitted within the territory.

History

According to local accounts, there were no known horses in the Powell Mountain WHT until Amos Green at Tweedy Meadows lost his horses in 1855. Also, Perry Morgan, once owner of the Flying M Ranch, turned out his horses when he joined the Army during WWI. Horses then remained wild in the territory with Mr. Morgan periodically turning out studs and gathering horses until the 1930's. The type of horses originally turned out is not documented. There were approximately 23 horses in the territory when the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act was passed in 1971.

Herd Description

The Powell Mountain WHT is managed for an appropriate management level of 29 horses. Bay is the dominant color in the herd. Genetic testing of the herd reveals similarity with the North American Gaited breeds.

For More Information

Contact the Bridgeport Ranger District at 760-932-7070.