



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Eagle Lake Field Office

2950 Riverside Drive  
Susanville, CA 96130  
[www.ca.blm.gov/eaglelake](http://www.ca.blm.gov/eaglelake)



In reply refer to:  
8300 (P)  
CA 350

June 15, 2006

Dear Interested Party:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Eagle Lake Field Office is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) which will analyze the gather and removal of wild horses from the Twin Peaks Herd Management Area (HMA) with the purpose of returning the population to its appropriate management level (AML).

The following Notification of Proposed Action describes the project in more detail:

<b>Project Name:</b>	<p>Twin Peaks WH&amp;B Gather 2006</p> <p>The Eagle Lake Field Office is proposing to gather and remove an estimated 1000 horses from within the Twin Peaks HMA. The goal is to leave approximately 677 horses within the HMA, achieving a population at mid-range of the AML. An AML for the wild horse and burro population within the Twin Peaks HMA was established at a range of 448-758 horses and 72-116 burros in past EAs (CA-350-2000-16, and CA-350-98-14). An AML range is the minimum and a desired upper level for the population of horses and burros.</p> <p>The Twin Peaks HMA includes portions of the Twin Peaks (CA-020-619A), Buffalo Hills (CA-020-619), Pooodle Mountain (CA-020-618), Five Springs (CA-020-609), Skedaddle (CA-020-612), Dry Valley Rim (CA-020-615), and Bitterbrush ISA (CA-020-604) Wilderness Study Areas (WSA).</p> <p>The gather is scheduled for August, 2006. The gather would be completed using a helicopter to herd horses from the WSAs and other portions of the HMA into gathering facilities, i.e. trap sites. Gathering facilities would be located at previously approved sites within the WSAs and approved sites outside the WSA boundaries where possible (see attached map). The gathering facilities would be located on or near existing roads that are accessible to trucks pulling stock-trailers. At the gather facilities, portable panels would be set-up for as many as 10 days. Surface disturbance could be up to 1 acre at each site.</p> <p>Following the gather, wild horse numbers would be allowed to increase to the upper end of the AML range when additional gathers would be scheduled (approximately 3-4 years) to maintain the population within the AML range.</p> <p>The current estimated population for the Twin Peaks HMA, including foals is 1677 wild horses and 103 burros. National program direction is to reach AML on all HMAs by 2007. In an effort to meet this direction, one large gather encompassing the entire HMA is necessary to return the population to within the AML range.</p>
<b>Need for the Proposed Action:</b>	

<b>Objectives of the Proposed Action:</b>	Manage the Twin Peaks HMA as defined in the above listed EAs to implement a program of integrated wild horse and burro management, including achieving and maintaining wild horse populations within established AMLs. The Twin Peaks HMA straddles the California/Nevada border with slightly more than half within Lassen County, CA and the remainder in Washoe County, NV.
<b>Location of Proposed Action:</b>	The Twin Peaks HMA includes portions of seven WSAs in the area bounded by CA State Highway #395 on the west, Honey Lake to the south, the Smoke Creek Desert to the east, and the Coppersmith Mountains to the north. See attached map.
<b>Public Notification Period begins:</b>	June 15, 2006
<b>Public Notification Period ends:</b>	July 15, 2006
<b>Expected Decision Date:</b>	July, 2006
<b>Expected Implementation Date:</b>	August, 2006

We welcome any comments you may have regarding the proposed action. We will use your comments and those received from other interested parties and affected interests to determine the significant issues to be analyzed in the EA. All comments shall be submitted in writing to the Eagle Lake Field Manager by July 15, 2006 to ensure consideration. If you respond to this letter with comments, you will receive a final EA and BLM decision at the end of this process.

Please send comments to:

Bureau of Land Management  
Eagle Lake Field Office  
2950 Riverside Dr.  
Susanville, CA 96130  
Attention: KC Pasero

Thank you for participating in this environmental analysis process. Please contact KC Pasero, WH&B Program Manager, at (530) 254-6673 if you have questions or comments.

Sincerely,



Dayne Barron  
Field Manager

Enclosure: Project Map

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
AND  
DECISION RECORD

(EA No. CA-350-2006-29)

Finding: Based on the attached Environmental Assessment (EA # CA-350-2006-29), I have determined that Alternative B, Proposed Action, which I have selected, will not have a significant effect on the human environment. For this reason, no environmental impact statement needs to be prepared.

Rationale: My finding of no significant impact is based on the following:

1. The environmental effects of the proposed action do not involve unique or unknown risks.
2. The effects of the proposed action are not highly controversial.
3. The proposed action does not violate federal, state, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.
4. The proposed action would have no adverse effect on the Critical Elements of the Human Environment as outlined in Section 1.6.2 of the EA.
5. The proposed action would have no adverse effect on Cultural Resources.

Decision: It is my decision to authorize the gather of approximately 1000 wild horses from the Twin Peaks HMA as described in the Proposed Action (Alternative B) of EA-CA-350-2006-29. This serves as my final decision for this action and is effective upon issuance, in accordance with 43 CFR 4770.3(c) (Full Force and Effect Decision). The authority for this decision is contained in Sec. 3(a) and (b) and Sec. 4 of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act (P.L. 92-195, as amended), and Title 43 CFR, Part 4700, Subpart 4720.

Summary of the Selected Alternative:

The selected alternative proposes to gather approximately 1000 head of wild horses from the Twin Peaks HMA during August 2006. The objective is to restore the population to within the established AML of 448-758 wild horses.

Gathering will be conducted by a national contract crew using a helicopter to herd the animals to traps constructed of portable pipe panels. Animals will then be transported to a BLM holding facility to be prepared for the adoption program or long-term holding. At all times, gathering will be under the direct supervision of a BLM Contract Officer's

United States  
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Bureau of Land  
Management

Eagle Lake  
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Susanville,  
CA 96130

July 27, 2006

# Environmental Assessment

(CA-350-2006-29)

## TWIN PEAKS HERD MANAGEMENT AREA WILD HORSE & BURRO GATHER

Responsible Official:  
Dayne Barron  
Field Manager  
Eagle Lake Field Office  
2950 Riverside Drive  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 257-0456

For Information Contact:  
Kirsten Pasero  
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2950 Riverside Drive  
Susanville, CA 96130  
(530) 254-6673  
kpasero@ca.blm.gov

### **1.3 Objectives of the Action**

The primary objective of the proposed action is to return the Twin Peaks HMA to established populations levels (AML 448-758) that have been determined to be appropriate for a thriving natural ecological balance with other resources and uses.

### **1.4 Land Use Plan Conformance**

This action is in conformance with the Cal-Neva Management Framework Plan/ Record of Decision, approved 1981.

### **1.5 Relevant Laws, Regulations, EISs, and Other Documents**

**1.5.1** Public Law 92-195 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 as amended by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (Public Law 94-579); the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-514); the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 (Public Law 104-333); Fiscal Year 2005 Omnibus Appropriations Act (Public Law 108-447).

**1.5.2** EAs: CA-350-2000-16, Management of Wild Horses and Burros in the Skedaddle, Dry Valley Rim, and Twin Peaks North Home Ranges of the Twin Peaks Herd Management Area; CA-350-98-14, Attainment and Maintenance of Appropriate Management Levels of Wild Horses and Burros in the Observation South and Observation North Home Ranges of the Twin Peaks Herd Management Area

**1.5.3** TITLE 43-CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS PART 4700-PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT, AND CONTROL OF WILD FREE- ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS 4720.1 Removal of excess animals from public lands.

Upon examination of current information and a determination by the authorized officer that an excess of wild horses or burros exists, the authorized officer shall remove the excess animals immediately in the following order.

- a. Old, sick, or lame animals shall be destroyed in accordance with subpart 4730 of this title;
- b. Additional excess animals for which an adoption demand by qualified individuals exists shall be humanely captured and made available for private maintenance in accordance with subpart 4750 of this title; and
- c. Remaining excess animals for which no adoption demand by qualified individuals exists shall be destroyed in accordance with subpart 4730 of this title.

### 1.6.2 Critical Elements of the Human Environment

The following elements of the Human environment are subject to requirements specified in statute, regulation, or executive order and must be considered in this EA.

**Table 2.** Critical Elements of the Human environment that have been considered for this environmental assessment (EA) are listed below. Elements that may be affected are further described in this EA. Rationale for those elements that will not be affected are listed in the table.

Critical Element	No Impact	May Impact	Not Present	Rationale
Air Quality	X			Minor additional amounts of dust created from the gather operations and vehicle traffic. Limited time periods and short duration.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern			X	None within the concentrated gather areas. The Pine Dunes Special Interest Area is within the HMA, but fenced from wild horse use.
Cultural Resources	X			Vehicular access will be limited to existing roads. Trap locations will be pre-approved and cleared by the BLM Archaeologist prior to set-up.
Environmental Justice			X	
Farmlands, Prime or Unique			X	
Floodplains	X			No impacts
Invasive, Non-native Weed Species		X		See discussion in 3.2.2
Native American Religious Concerns	X			None identified through scoping.
T&E Fauna/Flora	X			No impacts expected.
Waste-Hazardous/Solid			X	
Water Quality: surface/ground	X			Gather operations will not occur where surface/ground water quality will be negatively impacted.
Wetlands/Riparian	X			Removal of excess wild horses will benefit riparian areas within the HMA.
Wild & Scenic Rivers			X	
Wilderness/Wilderness Study Areas		X		See discussion in 3.2.1