

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
and
DECISION RECORD**

**Capture Plan for the
Wall Canyon East, Nut Mountain and
the Bitner Wild Horse Herd Management Areas
Environmental Assessment
CA-370-05-28**

Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in Environmental Assessment #CA-370-05-28, and considering the significance criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27, I have determined that the action will not have a significant effect on the human environment. An environmental impact statement is therefore not required.

Rationale

The Proposed Action and two alternatives were analyzed in Environmental Assessment #CA-370-05-28 (EA) dated September 2005.

I have chosen to implement the Proposed Action because this alternative would maintain wild horse herds at appropriate management levels, and lead to restoration of a thriving natural ecological balance between wild horses and their habitat. Implementation of the Proposed Action is consistent with land use planning goals and objectives, and it is in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

The use of immuno-contraceptives or fertility control (Alternative #2) is not necessary for population control for herd management areas with relatively low Appropriate Management Levels. Consequently, the change in gather frequency or population growth is not expected to significantly differ Alternatives # 1 and #2 for the herds analyzed by the EA.

The No Action Alternative was not selected as it would not restore or maintain a thriving natural ecological balance. Available water would continue to be limited and season-long wild horse use in upland and riparian areas would continue to increase. As the wild horse population grew, damage to the rangeland resources would result. This alternative therefore is not consistent with Land Health Standards, and Land Use Plan objectives.

Discussion

The EA was mailed to interested publics on September 23, 2005, with a comment period through October 14, 2005. One comment letter was received on the EA.

The comments from a private citizen were supportive of the proposed action, but stated that a 3 year gather cycle was necessary to maintain AMLs, instead of the 4-5 year gather cycle as identified in the EA. The letter also stated that a longer gather cycle would result in more horses being placed into long-term holding facilities, and expressed concerns over the wild horse program costs.

Decision

Based on all the information available to me, it is my decision to implement the Proposed Action of Environmental Assessment #CA-370-05-28, the gathering of wild horses in the Wall Canyon East, Bitner, and Nut Mountain Herd Management Areas, and the gathering of feral horses outside of a herd management area in the Mosquito Valley Allotment. No additional mitigation measures were identified as a result of the environmental analysis process.

Steve Surian, Environmental Coordinator

Date of signature

Owen Billingsley, Surprise Field Manager

Date of signature