



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Nevada State Office
P.O. Box 12000 (1340 Financial Blvd)
Reno, Nevada 89520-0006
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>



In Reply Refer To:
4700 (NV-930)

FEB 09 2007

McDonald

Dear . McDonald:

I am writing in response to your e-mail of January 31, 2007 requesting information about the Spring Mountains Complex gather which ended on January 26, 2007. I hope the following information is helpful:

1. You asked how many wild horses were gathered from Cold Creek.

During the gather operation, 289 wild horses and 1 mule were captured within the Wheeler Pass HMA/Spring Mountains WHT. Sixty wild horses and 1 mule remain on the range post-gather.

2. You inquired as to why the Las Vegas Field Office allowed no public access to this gather.

A public viewing day was held on January 17, 2007. Everyone on the interested party list received information regarding the public viewing day in the cover letter that accompanied the final environmental assessment and the Decision Record/Finding of No Significant Impact.

3. You asked what holding facility the horses removed from the Spring Mountains Complex were sent to.

All the wild horses removed from the Spring Mountains were shipped to the Palomino Valley Center near Sparks, Nevada.

4. You inquired about the news footage of Johnnie burro gather and whether or not it is normal treatment of animals by contractors during BLM round-ups. Also, there are reports that burros were run straight into a trailer versus a pen.

Contractors hired by the Bureau of Land Management to gather wild horses and burros from rangelands and move them into trailers for transport are experienced in handling these animals and they must follow humane practices. There are times when methods used to control the animals appear harsh but actually prevent serious injury to that animal and or other animals. If that occurs, the contractor, the BLM and the on-site veterinarian review what happened to determine if it was appropriate.

On Thursday, January 4, 2007 a burro tried to bite one of the wranglers when he was loading the burro into the trailer from the pen. The wrangler put his foot up to push her head around, but the burro continued to try and put her head through the panels. The wrangler made two additional efforts to push her head back, using his boot. The burro then went into the trailer from the pen without further incident. The burro was not injured. There were no injuries requiring veterinarian procedures. While visually shocking, the kicks were not determined to be excessive considering the potential for greater harm if the

burro had lodged his head in the panel. After the incident, the contractor talked to the wrangler about the incident and re-emphasized our responsibility to ensure humane treatment of the animals.

Because wild burros are not herd animals like horses, groups of burros are looser knit and when driving them with a helicopter, tend to break off more readily prior to entering the trap yard than horses do. For this reason, roping burros is a common and necessary method of capturing them. As with any animal when roped they sometimes fall down, but are very seldom injured. The burro in the video was not injured. If a determination was made that a wrangler had been abusive, the contractor would reprimand the wrangler and depending on severity, would terminate their employment. An Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) veterinarian was on site throughout the gather.

The Spring Mountains gather started January 3, 2007. Over 200 burros were gathered successfully from the Johnnie HMA during January 3-6, 2007 without injury.

5. You asked which national gather contractor conducted the Spring Mountains round-up.

The Spring Mountains gather was completed by KG Livestock.

6. You inquired as to how many wild horses were rounded up in the Johnnie HMA.

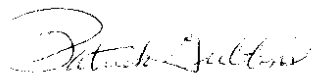
During the gather operation, 79 wild horses were captured within the Johnnie HMA/ WHT. Forty one (41) wild horses remain on the range post-gather.

7. You asked whether BLM ran any horses over 10 miles during the capture operation.

The rate of movement and distance the animals travel is at the discretion of the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) who considers terrain, physical barriers, weather, condition of the animals and other factors. For the Spring Mountains gather, horses were moved in an 8-10 mile radius from each individual trap, which is a comfortable distance for horses to move. Capture operations were carefully monitored by the BLM COR throughout and as discussed above, an APHIS veterinarian was also on site through the gather.

Thank you for your interest in southern Nevada's wild horse and burro program. Again, I hope the above information is helpful.

Sincerely,



Patrick Gubbins,
Acting Deputy State Director,
Natural Resources, Lands and Planning

cc:
Las Vegas Field Office (Attn: Karla Norris, Jerrie Bertola)