

Spring Mountain Junk Facts

The combined total acreage of these two HMAs and adjacent WHTs is 592,988 acres. A temporary, just-recently-issued-due-to-AML-discrepancies between BLM and FS of 130 wild horses is the maximum allowable number of wild horses to maintain a thriving ecological balance.

With all wild horse and burro AML's combined (293), the entire 866,353 acres that comprise the "Spring Mountain Complex" equates to 2,956 acres per animal.

According to this EA (NV-052-2007-50) the new AMLs established in 2005 reduced/eliminated wild horse and burro populations AML's to a new population level for the total Spring Mountain Complex of 147 wild horses and 146 burros.

This AML has just been issued and is temporary due to the failure to coordinate with Forest Service regarding the new AML establishments.

On pg. 22 of this EA, it states that: "...these decisions have led to a discrepancy in AMLs for the SMC, which BLM and the USFS are currently working to resolve."

BLM Herd Statistics for Nevada 2004 indicate that AMLs had been established, including the 26 wild horses of the Cold Creek herd in Forest Service WHT, at a total of 436 head, 201 wild horses and 235 burros.

On pg. 4, an estimate is given of current populations based on census information taken from March 2004, December 2005, May 2006 and October 2006. These are reported at 344 horses and 660 burros totaling 1,004 animals.

The December 2005 Johnnie, Muddy Mountain and Wheeler Pass HMA Environmental Assessment for Establishment of Appropriate Management Levels stated the following: Pg. 20- "The current estimated wild horse population for the Johnnie HMA is 56 wild horses. 298 burros."

"The current estimated wild horse population for the Wheeler Pass HMA is 275 wild horses this includes wild horses that are also found within the boundaries of Forest Service managed lands....the current estimated burro population is 82"

In an article in the Las Vegas Review Journal, dated July 8, 2006 concerning the public scoping period for this proposal, BLM reported a combined population of 1,093 wild horses and burros: 297 in the Spring Mountain Area, 570 Burros and 226 at Cold Creek, respectively.

(Incidentally, Cold Creek is considered part of the Wheeler Pass HMA though it is a FS managed WHT). 17 of those horses belong to the Red Rock HMA which were gathered in February 2006 and are not included in this gather proposal.

The 2007 Gather Schedule is reporting a total of 55 wild horses being scheduled for removal: 8 at Wheeler Pass and 47 in the Johnnie HMA and 266 total burros, 241 from Johnnie HMA and 25 from Wheeler Pass HMA (for sake of inclusion, Red Rock HMA which is part of the Spring Mountain Complex is scheduled to remove 123 burros).

According to these two publications, 275 horses were in Wheeler Pass, 226 of these were in Cold Creek. The LVRJ article states that 523 wild horses are in the Spring Mountain Area, including the 17 horses of Red Rock HMA not currently being considered for gather.

By either account, both these reported wild horse populations are well above the 26 AML for Cold Creek, 66 AML for Wheeler Pass HMA, 0 AML for Johnnie HMA.
So why are they only scheduling the removal of 55 horses?

Check the Burro AMLs with Red Rock-

The burro AML for these two areas (Johnnie/Wheeler Pass) has been issued at 138. This equals 2,212 acres per animal.

-If one were to combine the total maximum number of animals currently residing in the Spring Mountain Herd Area, according to the numbers reported by the LVRJ, the results are 1,093 (combined horses and burros: 297 horses in the Spring Mountain Area, 570 Burros, & 226 at Cold Creek). This does not include any horses within the Red Rock area. The current combined AML stated by BLM of wild horses and burros is 301. If BLM's AML is a reasonably accurate level of sustained animal support, how have 1,093 animals survived during such challenging environmental conditions?

I am appealing the Final Decision of EA CA-370-06-16 by the Surprise Field Office and Field Office Manager, Owen Billingsley issued on August 25 and August 30, 2006.