

Wild horse roundup canceled in central Idaho

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KETCHUM -- Officials with Bureau of Land Management have canceled a wild horse roundup scheduled in August in Boulder Mountains, saying roundups in other areas have a higher priority.

Kevin Lloyd, wild horse specialist for the bureau's Challis Field Office, said bureau officials in the national office canceled this year's Challis roundup because of last year's drought and large wildfires that pushed to the top of the list roundups in Nevada.

"Ours has just been put on hold," he told Idaho Mountain Express. "We're going to try again next year."

The roundup would have taken place in Challis Herd Management Area, bordered on the north by Salmon River, on the west by East Fork of Salmon River and on the south by the ridge line between Herd Creek and Road Creek.

The eastern boundary of the wild horse area is bordered by U.S. Highway 93 and the watershed boundary between Salmon River and Big Lost River drainages.

Officials round up the wild horses, which have no natural predators, to keep the herd at about 185 animals, which officials say is what the area can support.

The herd increases by about 17 percent each year, and the bureau estimates there are now about 330 horses in the management area.

The horses are descendants of domestic horses that escaped or were turned loose on public lands. Many farmers and ranchers in the area released animals in the 1930s during the Great Depression when they couldn't afford to feed them.

Lloyd said the Challis office usually holds the roundups in August because the weather is better.

"We have a narrow window because of the weather and the geography," he said.

As with other wild horses that are rounded up, the bureau makes them available to the public through National Adopt-A-Horse and Burro Program.