

ATTACHMENT 1 - STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

A. Methods for Humane Capture Wild Horses or Burros

Helicopter Removals with or without a Contract

The Helicopter-Drive Trapping method employed for this capture operation requires that horses be herded to a trap of portable panels and on extremely rare occasions to ropers who, after roping the animal, will bring it to the trap. Gathering would be conducted using agency personnel or contractors experienced in the humane capture and handling of wild horses. The same rules apply whether a contractor or BLM personnel are used. The following stipulations and procedures will be followed during the contract period to ensure the welfare, safety and humane treatment of the wild horses in accordance with the provisions of 43 CFR 4700 and (if a contract is used, the Challis Herd Management Area Gather/Capture contract).

1. Capture Methods That May Be Used in the Performance of a Helicopter Gather **a. Helicopter Drive Trapping**

This capture method will involve driving horses into a pre-constructed trap using a helicopter. The trap is constructed of portable steel panels consisting of round pipe. Wings are constructed off the ends of the panel trap to aid in funneling horses into the trap. The wings are constructed of natural jute, (or similar netting which will not injure a horse), which is hung on either trees or long steel posts. This sort of wing forms a very effective visual barrier to the horses that they typically will not run through. When the trap is ready for use, a helicopter will start moving one band of horses at a time toward the trap and into the wings.

In heavily wooded areas, it may be necessary to use wranglers in support of the helicopter to move the horses. The helicopter will act more as a spotter for the ground crew in this situation.

The contractor/BLM shall attempt to keep bands intact except where animal health and safety become considerations which would prevent such procedures. The contractor/BLM shall ensure that foals shall not be left behind.

At least one saddle-horse should be immediately available at the trap site to perform roping if necessary. Roping shall be done as determined by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) or Project Inspector (PI). Under no circumstances shall animals be tied down for more than one hour.

Domestic saddle horses may also be used to assist the helicopter pilot (on the ground) during the gather operation, by having the domestic horse act as a pilot (or "Judas") horse on the ground, leading the wild horses into the trap site. Individual ground hazers and individuals on horseback may also be used to assist in the gather.

b. Helicopter Assisted Roping

Capture attempts may be accomplished by utilizing a helicopter to drive animals to ropers. Under no circumstances shall horses or burros be tied down for more than one hour.

Roping shall be performed in such a manner that bands will remain together. Foals shall not be left behind.

2. Stipulations for Portable Corral Traps/Exclosures

Capture traps would be constructed in a fashion to minimize the potential for injury to wild horses and BLM personnel. Gates would be wired open at all unmanned trap sites, and would be left closed only when needed to hold horses inside. Trapped horses would not be held inside the traps for a period exceeding 10 hours, unless provided with feed (weed free hay) and water.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game would be notified as soon as possible if any wildlife became injured during capture operations. Wildlife caught inside traps would be released immediately.

3. Contract Helicopter, Pilot and Communications

The contractor must operate in compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 91. Pilots provided by the contractor shall comply with the Contractor's Federal Aviation Certificates, applicable regulations of the State in which the gather is located.

When refueling, the helicopter shall remain a distance of at least 1,000 feet or more from animals, vehicles (other than fuel truck), and personnel not involved in refueling.

The COR/PI shall have the means to communicate with the contractor's pilot at all times. If communications cannot be established, the Government will take steps as necessary to protect the welfare of the animals. The frequency(ies) used for this contract will be assigned by the COR/PI when the radio is used. The contractor shall obtain the necessary FCC licenses for the radio system.

The proper operation, service and maintenance of all contractor furnished helicopters is the responsibility of the contractor. The BLM reserves the right to remove from service pilots and helicopters which, in the opinion of the Contracting Officer or COR/PI, violate contract and FAA rules, are unsafe or otherwise unsatisfactory. In this event, the contractor will be notified in writing to furnish replacement pilots or helicopters within 48 hours of notification. All such replacements must be approved in advance of operation by the Contracting Officer or his/her representative.

All incidents/accidents occurring during the performance of any delivery order shall be immediately reported to the COR.

4. Non-Contract Helicopter Operations

An Aircraft Safety Plan and flight hazard analysis will be appropriately approved and filed and copies distributed to the necessary individuals prior to commencing the removal operation. Daily flight plans will also be filed. If a BLM contract helicopter is used, all BLM, Aircraft Safety and Operations standards will be adhered to.

There will be daily briefings with the helicopter pilot, Authorized Officer and all personnel involved in the day's operation. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss in detail all information gathered during the familiarization flight such as hazards, location of horses, potential problems, etc. Discuss any safety hazards anticipated for the coming day's operation or any safety problems observed by the Authorized Officer or anyone else, outline the plan of action, delineate course of actions, specifically position the hazers and their responsibilities, logistics, and timing. After each flight, removal personnel will discuss any problems and suggest solutions. This may be accomplished over the radio or on the ground as the need dictates.

A flight operations plan will be filed with the Salmon Dispatch Center. This plan will describe the area to be flown and the expected time frames of flight operations. A weather forecast will be acquired from the dispatcher. There will be no flights on days of high or gusty, erratic winds or days with poor visibility.

Two-way radio communication between the helicopter and the ground crew will be maintained at all times during the operation.

An operation or contractor's log will be maintained for all phases of the operation. The log will be as detailed as possible and will include names, dates, places and other pertinent information, as well as observations of personnel involved.

5. Animal Handling and Care

Prior to any gathering operations, the COR/PI will provide for a pre-capture evaluation of existing conditions in the gather areas. The evaluation will include animal condition, prevailing temperatures, drought conditions, soil conditions, road conditions, and a topographic map with location of fences, other physical barriers, and acceptable trap locations in relation to animal distribution. The evaluation will determine whether the proposed activities will necessitate the presence of a veterinarian during operations. If it is determined that capture efforts necessitate the services of a veterinarian, one would be obtained before capture would proceed.

The contractor will be apprised of the all conditions and will be given instructions regarding the capture and handling of animals to ensure their health and welfare is protected.

The Authorize Officer and pilot may take a familiarization flight identifying all natural hazards (rims, canyons, winds) and man-made hazards in the area so that helicopter flight crew, ground personnel, and wild horse safety will be maximized. Aerial hazards will be recorded on the project map.

No fence modifications will be made without authorization from the Authorized Officer. The contractor/BLM shall be responsible for restoration of any fence modification that has been made.

If the route the contractor/BLM proposes to herd animals passes through a fence, opening should be large enough to allow free and safe passage. Fence material shall be rolled up and fence posts will be removed or sufficiently marked to ensure safety of the animals. The standing fence on each side of the gap will be well flagged or covered with jute or like material.

Wings shall not be constructed out of materials injurious to animals and must be approved by the Authorized Officer.

It is the responsibility of the contractor/BLM to provide security to prevent loss, injury or death of captured animals until delivery to final destination.

Animals shall not be allowed to remain standing on trucks while not in transport for a combined period of greater than three (3) hours. Animals that are to be released back into the capture area may need to be transported back to the original trap site. This determination will be at the discretion of the COR.

Branded or privately owned animals captured during gather operations will be handled in accordance with state estray laws and existing BLM policy.

Capture methods will be identified prior to issuance of delivery orders. Regardless of which methods are selected, all capture activities shall incorporate the following:

a. Trap Site Selection

The Authorized Officer will make a careful determination of a boundary line to serve as an outer limit within which horses will be herded to a selected trap site. The Authorized Officer will insure that the pilot is fully aware of all natural and man made barriers which might restrict free movement of horses. Topography, distance, and current condition of the horses are factors that will be considered to set limits to minimize stress on horses.

Gather operations will be monitored and restricted (if necessary) to assure the body condition of the horses is compatible with the distances and the terrain over which they must travel. Pregnant

mares, mares with small colts, and other horses would be allowed to drop out of bands which are being gathered if required to protect the safety and health of the animals.

All trap and holding facility locations must be approved by the Authorized Officer prior to construction. The situation may require moving of the trap. All traps and holding facilities not located on public land must have prior written approval of the landowner.

Trap sites will be located to cause as little injury and stress to the animals, and as little damage to the natural resources of the area, as possible. Sites will be located on or near existing roads. Additional trap sites may be required, as determined by the Authorized Officer, to relieve stress to the animals caused by specific conditions at the time of the gather (i.e. dust, rocky terrain, temperatures, etc.).

b. Trap/Facility Requirements

All traps, wings, and holding facilities shall be constructed, maintained and operated to handle the animals in a safe and humane manner and be in accordance with the following:

Traps and holding facilities shall be constructed of portable panels, the top of which shall not be less than 72 inches high for horses and 60 inches for burros, and the bottom rail of which shall not be more than 12 inches from ground level. All traps and holding facilities shall be oval or round in design.

All loading chute sides shall be fully covered with plywood (without holes) or like material. The loading chute shall also be a minimum of 6 feet high.

All runways shall be of sufficient length and height to ensure animal and wrangler safety. and may be covered with plywood, burlap, plastic snow fence or like material a minimum of 1 foot to 5 feet above ground level for burros and 1 foot to 6 feet for horses.

If a government furnished portable chute is used to restrain, age, or to provide additional care for animals, it shall be placed in the runway in a manner as instructed by or in concurrence with the Authorized Officer.

All crowding pens including the gates leading to the runways may, if necessary to prevent injuries or escape attempts, be covered with a material which prevents the animals from seeing out (plywood, burlap, snow fence etc.) and should be covered a minimum of 2 feet to 6 feet.

When holding facilities are used, and alternate pens are necessary to separate mares with small foals, animals which will be released, sick and injured animals, and estrays from the other animals or to facilitate sorting as to age, number, size, temperament, sex, and condition. They will be constructed to minimize injury due to fighting and trampling. In some cases, the Government will require that animals be restrained for determining an animal's age or for other purposes. In these

instances, a portable restraining chute will be provided by the Government. Either segregation or temporary marking and later segregation will be at the discretion of the COR.

If animals are held in the traps and/or holding facilities, a continuous supply of fresh clean water at a minimum rate of 10 gallons per animal per day will be supplied. Animals held for 10 hours or more in the traps or holding facilities shall be provided good quality hay at the rate of not less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day.

Separate water troughs shall be provided at each pen where animals are being held. Water troughs shall be constructed of such material (e.g. rubber, rubber over metal) so as to avoid injury to animals.

When dust conditions occur within or adjacent to the trap or holding facility, the contractor/BLM shall be required to wet down the ground with water.

6. Treatment of Injured or Sick; Disposition of Terminal Animals

The contractor/BLM shall restrain sick or injured animals if treatment is necessary. A veterinarian may be called to make a diagnosis and final determination. Destruction shall be done by the most humane method available. Authority for humane destruction of wild horses is provided by the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, Section 3(b)(2)(A), 43 CFR 4730.1, BLM Manual 4730 - Destruction of Wild Horses and Burros and Disposal of Remains, and is in accordance with BLM policy as expressed in Instructional Memorandum No. 98-141.

Any captured horses that are found to have the following conditions may be humanely destroyed:

- a. The animal shows a hopeless prognosis for life.
- b. Suffers from a chronic disease.
- c. Requires continuous care for acute pain and suffering.
- d. Not capable of maintaining a body condition rating of one or two.
- e. The animal is a danger to itself or others.

The Authorized Officer will determine if injured animals must be destroyed and provide for destruction of such animals. The contractor/BLM may be required to dispose of the carcasses as directed by the Authorized Officer.

The carcasses of the animals that die or must be destroyed as a result of any infectious, contagious, or parasitic disease will be disposed of by burial to a depth of at least 3 feet.

The carcasses of the animals that must be destroyed as a result of age, injury, lameness, or noncontagious disease or illness will be disposed of by removing them from the capture site or holding corral and placing them in an inconspicuous location to minimize visual impacts. Carcasses will not be placed in drainages regardless of drainage size or downstream destination.

7. Motorized Equipment

All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of animals. The contractor shall provide the Authorized Officer with a current safety inspection (less than one year old) of all tractor/stock trailers used to transport animals to final destination.

Vehicles shall be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and operated so as to ensure that captured animals are transported without undue risk or injury.

Only stock trailers with a covered top shall be allowed for transporting animals from trap site(s) to temporary holding facilities. Only stock trailers, or single deck trucks shall be used to haul animals from temporary holding facilities to final destination(s). Sides or stock racks of transporting vehicles shall be a minimum height of 6 feet 6 inches from the vehicle floor. Single deck trucks with trailers 40 feet or longer shall have two (2) partition gates providing three (3) compartments within the trailer to separate animals. The compartments shall be of equal size plus or minus 10 percent. Trailers less than 40 feet shall have at least one partition gate providing two (2) compartments within the trailer to separate animals. The compartments shall be of equal size plus or minus 10 percent. Each partition shall be a minimum of 6 feet high and shall have at the minimum a 5 foot wide swinging gate. The use of double deck trailers is unacceptable and will not be allowed.

All vehicles used to transport animals to the final destination(s) shall be equipped with at least one (1) door at the rear end of the vehicle, which is capable of sliding either horizontally or vertically.

The rear door must be capable of opening the full width of the trailer. All panels facing the inside of all trailers must be free of sharp edges or holes that could cause injury to the animals. The material facing the inside of the trailer must be strong enough, so that the animals cannot push their hooves through the sides. Final approval of vehicles to transport animals shall be held by the Authorized Officer.

Floors of vehicles, trailers, and the loading chute shall be covered and maintained with materials sufficient to prevent the animals from slipping.

Animals to be loaded and transported in any vehicle or trailer shall be as directed by the Authorized Officer and may include limitations on numbers according to age, size, sex, temperament, and animal condition. The minimum square footage per animal is as follows:

- 11 square feet/adult horse (1.4 linear foot in an 8 foot wide trailer)
- 6 square feet/horse foal (0.75 linear foot in an 8 foot trailer)

The Authorized Officer shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, distance to be transported, or other factors when planning for the movement of captured animals. The Authorized Officer shall provide for any brand and/or inspection services required for the captured animals.

Communication lines will be established with personnel involved in off-loading the animals to receive feedback on how the animals arrive (condition/injury etc.). Should problems arise, gathering methods, shipping methods and/or separation of the animals will be changed in an attempt to alleviate the problems.

If the Authorized Officer determines that dust conditions are such that animals could be endangered during transportation, the contractor/BLM will be instructed to adjust speed and/or use alternate routes.

Periodic checks by the Authorized Officer will be made as animals are transported along dirt roads. If speed restrictions are in effect the Authorized Officer will at times follow and/or time trips to ensure compliance.

8. Special Stipulations.

Private landowners or the proper administering agency(s) would be contacted and authorization obtained prior to setting up traps on any lands which are not administered by BLM. Wherever possible, traps would be constructed in such a manner as to not block vehicular access on existing roads.

If possible, traps would be constructed so that no riparian vegetation is contained within them. Impacts to riparian vegetation and/or running water is located within a trap (and available to horses) would be mitigated by removing horses from the trap immediately upon capture. No vehicles would be operated on riparian vegetation or on saturated soils associated with riparian/wetland areas.

Gathering would be conducted when soils are dry or frozen and conditions are optimal for safety and protection of the horses and wranglers. Whenever possible, gather activities will be scheduled to minimize impacts with big game hunting seasons.

Gathers would not be conducted 6 weeks on either side of peak foaling season which for this gather is April 1 to June 15 to reduce the chance of injury or stress to pregnant mares or mares with young foals.

The helicopter would avoid eagles and other raptors, and would not be flown repeatedly over any identified active raptor nests. No unnecessary flying would occur over big game on their winter ranges or active fawning/calving grounds during the period of use.

Standard operating procedures in the selection and construction of traps will avoid adverse impacts from trap selection, construction, or operation to wildlife species, including threatened, endangered, or sensitive species.

9. Herd Health and Viability Data Collection

The following information will be collected from each animal captured: age, sex, color, overall health, pregnancy or nursing status.

In addition, blood or hair samples may be collected from individuals within the herd. Certain other activities including immunocontraceptive research radio collaring, and freeze marking may be conducted.

a. Population Management Plan/Selective Addition or Removal

Blood samples may be taken for the purposes of furthering genetic ancestry studies and incorporation into the Population Management Plans which will be developed for each HMA/complex.

On occasion, it may be necessary to enhance and maintain genetic diversity a few animals with compatible characteristics may be introduced from other HMAs. Introduced animals will be taken from areas with similar habitat.

b. Immunocontraceptive Research

When the immunocontraceptive vaccine is used, trained individuals will conduct delivery of the vaccine, using approved delivery methods. The vaccine will be administered to the large muscle on the hip.

10. Public Participation

The public must adhere to guidance from the agency representative and viewing must be prearranged.

11. Safety

Safety of BLM employees, contractors, members of the public, and the wild horses (or burros) will be given primary consideration. The following safety measures will be used by the Authorized Officer and all others involved in the operation as the basis for evaluating safety performance and for safety discussions during the daily briefings:

A briefing between all parties involved in the gather will be conducted each morning.

All BLM personnel, contractors and volunteers will wear protective clothing suitable for work of this nature. BLM will alert observers of the requirement to dress properly. BLM will assure that members of the public are in safe observation areas.

The handling of hazardous, or potentially hazardous materials such as liquid nitrogen and vaccination needles will be accomplished in a safe and conscientious manner by BLM personnel or the contract veterinarian.

12. Glossary

Appropriate Management Level _ The number of wild horses and burro which can be sustained within a designated herd management area which achieves and maintains a thriving natural ecological balance keeping with the multiple_use management concept for the area.

Authorized Officer - An employee of the BLM to whom has been delegated the authority to perform the duties described in these Standard Operating Procedures. See BLM Manual 1203 for explanation of delegation of authority.

Census _ The primary monitoring technique used to maintain a current inventory of wild horses and burros on given areas of the public lands. Census data are derived through direct visual counts of animals using a helicopter.

Contracting Officer (CO) - Is the individual responsible for an awarded contract who deals with claims, disputes, negotiations, modifications and payments. Appoints CORs and PIs.

Contacting Officers Representative (COR) - Acts as the technical representative for the CO on a contract. Ensures that all specifications and stipulations are met. Reviews the contractor's progress, advises the CO on progress, problems, costs, etc. Is responsible for review, approval, and acceptance of services.

Evaluation _ A determination based on studies and other data that are available as to if habitat and population objectives are or are not being met and where an overpopulation of wild horses and burros exists and whether actions should be taken to remove excess animals.

Excess Wild Horses or Burros - Wild free_roaming horses or burros which have been removed from public lands or which must be removed to preserve and maintain a thriving ecological balance and multiple_use relationship.

Genetically Viable _ Fitness of a population as represented by its ability to maintain the long_term reproductive capacity of healthy, genetically diverse members.

Health Assessment _ Evaluation process based on best available studies data to determine the current condition of resources in relation to potential or desired conditions.

Healthy Resources _ Resources that meet potential or desired conditions or are improving toward meeting those potential or desired conditions.

Herd Area _ The geographical area identified as having been used by wild horse and burro populations in 1971, at the time of passage of the Wild Free_roaming Horse and Burro Act.

Herd Management Area _ The geographical area as identified through the land use planning process established for the long_term management of wild horse and burro populations. The boundaries of the herd management area may not be greater than the area identified as having been used by wild horse and burro populations in 1971, at the time of passage of the Wild Free_roaming Horse and Burro Act.

Invasive Weeds _ Introduced or noxious vegetative species which negatively impact the ecological balance of a geographical area and limit the areas potential to be utilized by authorized uses.

Metapopulation (complex) _ A population of wild horses and burros comprised of two or more smaller, interrelated populations that are linked by movement or distribution within a defined geographical area.

Monitoring _ Inventory of habitat and population data for wild horses and burros and associated resources and other authorized rangeland uses. The purpose of such inventories is to be used during evaluations to make determinations

Multiple Use Management _ A combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long_term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources, including, but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals watershed, domestic livestock, wild horses, wild burros, wildlife, and fish, along with natural, scenic, scientific, and historical values.

Project Inspector - Coordinates with the COR assigned to a contract to support his/her responsibility for review, approval, and acceptance of services.

Research _ Science based inquiry, investigation or experimentation aimed at increasing knowledge about wild horses and burros conducted by accredited universities or federal government research organizations with the active participation of BLM wild horse and burro professionals.

Science Based Decision Making _ Issuance of decisions affecting wild horses and burros, associated resources and other authorized rangeland uses incorporating best available habitat and population data and in consultation with the public.

Studies _ Science based investigation of specific aspects of wild horse and burro habitat or populations in supplement to established monitoring. These investigations would not be established following rigid experimental protocols and could include drawing blood on animals to study genetics, disease and general health issues and population dynamics such as reproduction and mortality rates and general behavior.

Thriving Natural Ecological Balance - An ecological balance requires that wild horses and burros and other associated animals be in good health and reproducing at a rate that sustains the population, the key vegetative species are able to maintain their composition, production and reproduction, the soil resources are being protected, maintained or improved, and a sufficient amount of good quality water is available to the animals.