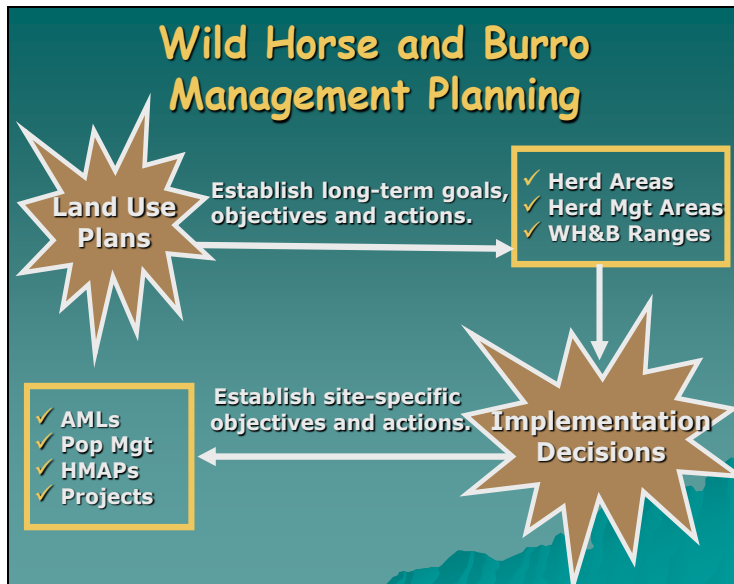


Public Participation in WH&B Planning



Land use plans and implementation decisions are the basis for every on-the-ground action the BLM undertakes. Land use plans ensure public lands are managed under the principles of multiple use and sustained yield (FLPMA, 1976).

The public has an opportunity to participate in the BLM's planning and decision process for wild horses and burros. If you are interested, write to the District or Field Office Manager and ask to be added to the wild horse and burro mailing list. Also ask to be notified of planning actions or decisions that affect the HMAs of special interest to you.

Land Use Plans

- Establish goals and objectives for resource management (desired outcomes)
- Identify the management actions needed to achieve the desired outcomes.
- Identify the allowable uses (including any restricted or prohibited uses).

Herd Areas (HAs) are areas of the public land that were used as habitat by wild horses and burros in 1971. During land use planning, HA boundaries may be changed when areas once listed as HAs were later found to have been used only by privately-owned (claimed) horses or burros, or the boundary does not correctly portray where wild horses and burros were found in 1971.

Herd Management Areas (HMAs) are designated within HAs which have adequate food, water, cover and space (habitat) to manage for healthy wild horses and burros and healthy rangelands over the long-term.

The land use plan may include decisions to remove horses or burros from areas that do not have adequate habitat. Examples include areas of intermingled and unfenced private lands which the landowner does not want to make available for wild horse or burro use, or areas where there isn't enough food or water to sustain healthy animals and rangelands over the long-term.

HMAs with significant public value such as a herd with unique characteristics or an outstanding opportunity for public viewing may be designated as **Wild Horse or Burro Ranges** through land use planning. This designation doesn't necessarily change how the HMA will be managed, but does recognize the special role wild horses or burros have in the area.

Scorched earth and a monoculture of woody plants characterize this herd area. As a result, there is not enough food (forage) and water to support healthy populations of wild horses and burros.



The **Appropriate Management Level (AML)** of wild horses and burros is established following an in-depth evaluation of resource monitoring data collected over several years. Data may include grazing utilization, actual use, climate (weather) data, range ecological condition, population inventory and distribution data, and the results of land health assessments.

Herd Management Area Plans (HMAPs) establish the management and monitoring objectives for wild horse or burro herds and their habitat. HMAPs also identify the actions to be taken to accomplish herd and habitat management objectives over the short and long-term.

Gather Plans are prepared for the capture and removal of wild horses or burros (unless removal is needed in response to an emergency situation). Gather Plans identify capture methods; locations; numbers of animals to be gathered, removed or released back to the range following the gather; procedures to minimize stress to animals during capture operations; removal criteria for individual animals; and whether fertility control would be applied.

Project Plans are prepared when structural or nonstructural habitat improvements are proposed.

Implementation Decisions

- Allow on-the-ground actions to proceed following appropriate site-specific environmental analysis with public input, and issuance of a decision.
- Tier to land use plans.
- Are subject to administrative review (appeal).

Did You Know?

- A proposed **Land Use Plan** and any associated environmental impacts are documented in an **environmental impact statement (EIS)**. The BLM's final decision is documented in a **Record of Decision (ROD)**.
- Proposed **implementation decisions** and any associated environmental impacts are generally documented in an **environmental assessment (EA)**. (Amendments to existing Land Use Plans may also be documented in an EA). Based on the analysis, the authorized officer will determine whether to prepare an EIS or issue a **Decision Record (DR)** and **Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**.
- Certain actions may be **categorically excluded** from environmental analysis (e.g., emergency removals of wild horses or burros when animal or land health is threatened). Other actions may have already been adequately analyzed and a **Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA)** may be prepared.
- WH&B gather decisions** may be made **effective upon issuance** or on a date specified in the decision when removal is court ordered, or is needed to preserve a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple use relationship. For additional information, refer to 43 CFR 4770.3.