

BLM News

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Public Hearing on use of Helicopters/Motorized Vehicles

A hearing to take comments on the use of helicopters and motorized vehicles in managing wild horses and burros in Nevada is set for Thursday, May 18 at 10 a.m. at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1340 Financial Blvd. in Reno.

The BLM is proposing helicopter removals of excess wild horses from several areas in Nevada during the remainder of the 2006 fiscal year and in the 2007 fiscal year, as funding and facility space become available. Removals will be to achieve management levels appropriate to the vegetation and water available in the areas, when considered with other uses of the lands and resources.

The BLM uses helicopters to collect population census information, such as numbers or distribution, and gather excess animals from the range. Also to be discussed is the use of motorized vehicles, such as straight deck semis, which are used for transporting wild horses and burros from the gather sites to the adoption preparation centers.

"The use of helicopters in managing wild horses and burros has become routine since the passage of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, and most people agree that careful and proper helicopter use is efficient and humane," said Meg Jensen, a BLM Deputy State Director. "However, we are always looking for suggestions from the public on how to improve our management of the animals."

Herd Management Areas (HMAs) and complexes where BLM plans to utilize helicopters and motorized vehicles for collecting data or for summer, fall or winter gathers in 2006 and 2007 are the Buck and Bald Complex, Pilot Mountain, Silver Peak, Paymaster, South Shoshone/Bald Mountain Complex, Tobin/North Stillwater/Augustas, Stone Cabin/Saulsbury/Reveille Complex, Spring Mountain Complex, Dry Lake Complex, Roberts Mountain, Whistler Mountain, Jackson Mountains, Wilson/Deer Complex and Buffalo Hills.

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Public Hearing on Use of Helicopters/Motorized Vehicles - 2222

For information concerning wild horse management or the hearing, call Susie Stokke at (775) 861-6469. Either oral or written statements may be presented at the hearing. If a member of the public is unable to attend and wishes to have written comments considered at the hearing, that information should be received by May 17. Mail comments to Stokke at BLM, P.O. Box 12000, Reno, NV 89520-0006.

Section 404 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 states the Secretary of the Interior may use or contract for the use of helicopters or motor vehicles, the latter for the purpose of transporting captured animals. That law also calls for humane procedures and public meetings on the use of helicopters and motor vehicles in wild horse and burro management.