

5.0 Adoption Process

5.1 Description and direction

The creation of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 protected the wild horse and burro populations while placing their management under the BLM's jurisdiction. This is done through periodic 'gatherings,' either when the animals become too sickly to survive on their own, or when the AML (Appropriate Management Levels) for a certain area have been exceeded. In order to keep these removals humane the BLM strives to adopt them out to private citizens or move the animals to long-term holding.

Currently the adoption process is quite bureaucratic. Initially, one wishing to adopt an animal submits an application to the BLM showing the location of the corral that will be used to house the animal (including shelter requirements and watering system), and the type of feed that will be provided,. Once the application is approved by the BLM, the corral is verified it meets the necessary criteria. The applicant then attends an adoption or BLM facility. After payment of appropriate fees, the adopter is able to take the horse home in an approved trailer.

It is the intent of this facility to streamline and simplify the adoption process while making it user-friendly. The opportunity for adoptions on a daily-basis, as well as the 2-4 large adoptions per year, is desired. All staff needed to approve a potential adopter would be located on site (including the possibility of the brand-inspector) and would be available for one-on-one consultation. In addition, should a conflict arise, the adopter would be able to consult personnel at the facility for help in gentling, or return the animal.

Wild Horse and Burro Facility

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5.2 Curriculum Possibilities

Two primary educational audiences will be served by this facility (the education component for the general public will be addressed at the Visitor Center). The first audience is the 5th grade students from the Oliver Ranch School. The second audience is the potential adopter/adopters and their horses/burros. The lists of curriculum possibilities for each group were developed from participation at the workshops as well as additional meetings and interviews:

Curriculum possibilities for potential adopter/adopters and their horses/burros:

- adoption process/requirements
- special needs of wild horses
- gentling workshops
- training workshops
- BLM's management methods (contraception, gathers, adoptions)
- manure management (digester/biogas generator)

Curriculum possibilities for 5th grade students from Oliver Ranch:

- history of the program (Wild Horse Annie and the letter writing campaign by schoolchildren)
- definition of re-introduced species and what that entails, why do they have to be managed?
- impact of wild horses and burros within the Mojave Desert (open rangeland, riparian areas, etc.), and extend that to balancing multiple uses (including animals and humans) on federal lands⁶
- BLM's management methods (contraception, gathers, adoptions)
- how do they survive? what do they eat?
- wild horse genetics (different characteristics among herd populations)
- digester/biogas generator – how waste can create energy

⁶ Per BLM – 7/9/2004

5.3 Interpretive Opportunities

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The interpretive component to the facility will be minimal and addressed specifically to potential adopters and the visiting 5th grade students.

The content of the portion of the exhibits which will be directed towards the potential adopters are described in this excerpt from the Hilferty report:

Interpretive opportunities at the adoption facility itself should be geared toward potential adopters. Interpretive panels might aid in orientation by introducing the program and taking visitors through the steps in the process. A short orientation film might be used to present success stories and help adopters understand the tasks and challenges that they may encounter. Additional interpretive panels, perhaps designed to be movable, might be displayed in the arena during auctions or other special events. Traveling trunk exhibits might also be designed as display and education tools for staff, visiting schools, or groups to generate awareness about the adoption program. Many of the above interpretive elements might draw from materials developed for the Visitor Center exhibits in order to realize some cost savings.

If you wish to read the entire report, it is included in Appendix C of the ORS program.

There is an additional opportunity for interpretive exhibits for the visiting 5th grade students addressing many of the curricula stated above. However, it must be noted that the horses and burros will be the main attraction for the children and every opportunity for interaction with actual animals should be investigated.