

Article- BLM Adoptions
May 19,2007

Commentary from Valerie James Patton

How's this--both of these sentences are in this article:

The BLM gathers about 300 to 400 wild horses and burros each year.

The BLM monitors the number of free roaming wild horses and burros and gathers between 8,000 and 10,000 yearly.

They also state that 28,000 horses are still on the range, with an equal number in long-term or short-term holding facilities. Didn't BLM just recently admit that there were more horses in holding facilities than what were on the range?

Valerie

<http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,660222053,00.html>

Saturday, May 19, 2007

Drag yourself out to meet wild horses
BLM is hosting the adoption festival in South Jordan today

By Catherine Smith

Deseret Morning News

LaVina Bowman had a few doubts when she decided to adopt Vision, a wild mustang. But she grew up on a ranch and knew what she was getting into.



Tom Smart, Deseret Morning News

Wild burros will be at today's ninth annual Utah Wild Horse and Burro Festival at the S.L. County Equestrian Park in South Jordan.

Now, with no more remaining doubts, Bowman drove from Wyoming to show off what Vision has learned and to look over what's available at the ninth annual Utah Wild Horse and Burro Festival. The festival is being held at the Salt Lake County Equestrian Park in South Jordan.

Bowman and her friends all say the same thing: Wild mustangs are some of the best horses.

"Every horse has a personality quirk," Bowman said. "I'm going to adopt another one."

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is hosting the festival today.

"These horses are really versatile," said Lisa Reid, public affairs specialist for the BLM.

"They are really smart. Some of them are smarter than the people that adopt them."

The BLM gathers about 300 to 400 wild horses and burros each year. The Utah office of the BLM sets a yearly goal of 200 adoptions, but every year the adoption rate has exceeded that. The BLM numbers the wild horses and burros roaming on public lands nationwide at 28,000. However, they also have the same number in long-term and short-term holding facilities.

"We don't have the adoption demand," said Gus Warr, wild horse and burro program lead for the Utah BLM.

Because there are more animals than there are people willing to adopt them, the holding facilities are a necessity, Warr said.

In 1971, Congress passed the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, providing protection for the animals on public lands. Prior to the act, people could gather the animals, kill them and sell the meat. The government also instituted euthanization to reduce numbers for better management.



Tom Smart, Deseret Morning News

Ben Fenn looks over the yearlings at the BLM wild horse and burro auction in South Jordan.

The BLM monitors the number of free roaming wild horses and burros and gathers between 8,000 and 10,000 yearly. The selected horses are then auctioned for adoption throughout the United States.

The selection process for which horses are gathered is both scientific and controversial. Criteria include habitat suitability and herd makeup.

"We look at vegetation and water sources and see where there are too many," Warr said. "We look at the age and sex of the horses so we have even ratios. We take blood and test genetics and viability. We test for inbreeding."

They then choose the 20 to 30 best and put them back on the range allowing for genetic development: survival of the fittest.

"Each herd has different characteristics," said Kitty Lauman, a trainer and clinician at this year's festival. "Some herds are known for characteristics that are more desirable."

These characteristics range from the color of the horses to their temperament, Lauman said.

She also said they are better horses than domesticated horses because of their knowledge of terrain and their instincts.

"They still have a survival instinct," Lauman said. "They can think their way out of (bad situations.)"

The BLM hopes to enlighten the public about the good experiences people can have with mustangs.

"You don't have to be a cowboy to adopt," Reid said. "The most important thing is understanding."

Adoptions can also take place at the Salt Lake Wild Horse & Burro Center in Herriman and at the Delta Wild Horse Corrals.

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