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PUBLIC HEARING ON WILD HORSE MANAGEMENT SET FOR DEC. 9

A hearing on the use of helicopters in the management of wild horses and burros in Nevada is set for Thursday, Dec. 9 at 2 p.m. at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), 1340 Financial Boulevard in Reno.

The purpose of the hearing will be to receive information and comments on the use of helicopters to collect population census information, obtain seasonal wild horse and burro 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 Horse and Burro Act, and most people agree that careful and proper helicopter use is efficient and humane," said Meg Jensen, BLM Deputy State Director for Natural Resources, Lands and Planning. "However, we are always looking for suggestions from the public on how to improve our management of the animals."

Jensen says that the BLM proposes helicopter removals of excess wild horses from five herd management areas during the 2000 fiscal year. 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 exact number of areas where gathers are conducted will depend on funding.

For further information concerning wild horse management or the meeting, call Terry Woosley at (775) 861-6474 or Jim Gianola at (775) 885-6140. Either oral or written statements may be presented at the Dec. 9 meeting.

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.

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