


http://www.daily-times.com/news/ci_7613618

Wild horses available at Carson National Forest

By Rhys Saunders The Daily Times

Article Launched: 12/02/2007 12:00:00 AM MST



 FARMINGTON — Twenty-two wild horses soon will be available for adoption from the El Rito District of the Carson National Forest.

The El Rito Ranger District, located off NM 554 between Abiquiu and Ojo Caliente, began accepting applications for pre-adoptions Dec. 1, Carson National Forest Public Affairs Officers Kathy DeLucas said.

The horses, protected under the Wild Horse and burro Act of 1971, were gathered from the Jarita Mesa Wildhorse Territory by Mount Taylor Mustangs using a low-stress baiting method to meet resource guidelines established in 2002.

The environmental analysis determined range conditions can support between 20 to 70 horses for the territory, DeLucas said.

"Last year we gathered about 60, and this year we have 22," she said.

Horses are made available for adoption on a first-come, first-served basis, DeLucas said. The Forest Service reviews the adoption materials with potential adopters and verifies that adopters meet requirements that include the facilities needed to care for a horse.

Once the applications are approved, adopters can take their horses home. The adoption fee for each horse is \$125.

Prospective owners must be at least 18 years old, and have no prior convictions for inhumane treatment of animals or for violations of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. They also must prove they have facilities with adequate food and water, and prove they can care for the horses humanely .

DeLucas believes people like wild horses because they are symbols of the Wild West.

"Some people thought these horses are descendants from the Spanish colonial horses," she said. "We have done DNA testing on them, and it's been determined there is a little Spanish colonial blood in them, but there's everything else in them as well."

The herd that recently was gathered is extremely unique, she added.

"They're kind of short and stocky, and that's the pony influence," she said. "They're real hardy, and they can be really sweet horses, but they are wild."

The equines can be viewed by appointment between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday at the El Rito District. Adoptions will take place Dec. 14 and 15.

For more information, call (505) 758-6303.

