



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Needles Field Office
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Needles, CA 92363
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NOPA-CA690-06-02
CA-690.28

NOTIFICATION OF PROPOSED ACTION ON PUBLIC LANDS DESIGNATED PART OF THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM Stateline Wilderness

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION:

The purpose of the proposed action is to remove wild and free-roaming burros from the Clark Mountain Herd Area (HA). The burro population is presently estimated to total between 100 to 150. Implementation of the proposed action would meet the land management goals outlined in the CDCA Plan (1980) as amended by the 2002 NEMO plan amendment, which eliminated the 75,349 acre Herd Management Area (HMA) and reduced the Animal Management Level (AML) from 44 burros down to zero. The elimination of the Clark Mountain burros was based on two factors:

1. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) listed the Mojave population of the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) as a threatened species in 1990 (55 FR 12178 - 12191). Critical habitat for the desert tortoise was designated by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1994. The NEMO plan amendment (Bureau of Land Management 2002) established Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMA) to aid in the recovery of the desert tortoise. The Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1994) included recommendations that grazing by feral ("wild") burros be prohibited in DWMA's. Thirty-eight percent of the Clark Mountain Herd Management Area is within the Shadow Valley DWMA. In response to the Recovery Plan's recommendation, the NEMO Plan amendment reduced the Appropriate Management Level (AML) for the Clark Mountain Herd Area from 44 to 0 burros. The impacts of substantially removing burros from the Clark Mountain HA and surrounding area, was analyzed in the biological opinion for the California Desert Conservation Area Plan as amended (1-8-04-F-43R). The Biological Opinion noted that the vast majority of adverse effects that burros have on desert tortoises and their critical habitat would be eliminated from this area.
2. The 1994 California Desert Protection Act transferred the Clark Mountain proper (37,000 acres), to the National Park Service in the creation of the Mojave National Preserve. This transferred the only springs which have yearlong surface water in

the HA to the National Park Service. The burros in this area are dependant upon the springs for their survival. The National Park Service's General Management Plan for the area prescribes complete removal of burros from the Mojave National Preserve, and if the BLM is to maintain an HMA, the NPS would fence their boundary to preclude burros from access, and thus their ability to get water.

PROPOSED ACTION:

The Bureau of Land Management, Needles Field Office proposes to capture all wild burros populating the Clark Mountain Herd Area and adjacent areas, (including burros on public land south and east of Mountain Pass), estimated to total 150 burros. Removal activities described in the Bureau of Land Management, Needles Field Office Capture Plan for Wild Burros for the Clark Mountain Herd Area Fiscal Years 2006-2011, may be conducted at any time within the next five years to move towards the management level of zero burros. The removed burros would be transported to BLM's Ridgecrest, California Wild Horse and Burro Holding and Adoption Facility where they would be placed into the BLM's National Adoption Program. The proposed project would be conducted in conjunction with the BLM, Ridgecrest Field Office.

The proposed action would begin in Fiscal Year 2007 and continue until the objectives are met, or there is a change in land use decisions, or new and pertinent information requiring re-evaluation of the capture plan and associated environmental assessment occurs. At the end of fiscal year 2012, the capture plan and environmental assessment would be re-evaluated for adequacy and for any required updates. The first phase of this operation is planned to begin the winter of 2006 or 2007.

STATE: California
DISTRICT: California Desert District
COUNTY: San Bernardino/Riverside
FIELD OFFICE: Needles Field Office
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LOCATION:

Map ID	Township	Range	Section
T1	17N	14E	13
T2	17N	14E	13
T3	17N	14E	14
T4	17N	14E	12
T5	17N	14E	23
T6	17N	14E	35
T7	16N	14E	31
T8	15 1/2N	14E	18
T9	15 1/2N	14E	19
T10	15 1/2N	14E	19
T11	15 1/2N	14E	19
T12	16N	12 1/2E	13