

**United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management, Boise District Office
Sands Basin and Four Mile HMAs Wild Horse Gather
EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**

I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (CEQ) for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686 would not constitute a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment; therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. This finding was made by considering both the context and intensity of the potential effects, as described in the above EA, using the following factors defining significance:

1. *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

The Proposed Action will have beneficial impacts and minimal direct or indirect adverse impacts to wild horses, hazardous waste, soils, water quality, wetlands/riparian zones, wildlife/fisheries, grazing management, cultural resources, and the human environment over the short and long term (Sections 3.3.2.2; 3.4.2.2; 3.5.2.2; 3.6.2.2; 3.7.2.2; 3.8.2.23.9.2.2; and 3.10.2.2 of EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686). The Proposed Action will directly enhance the long-term viability of the herd, and Achieve Healthy Lands and Viable Herds and the Restoration of Threatened Watersheds Initiative, as a strategy first proposed through the President's 2001 budget request. Beneficial impacts will result by reducing pressure on riparian and wetland areas identified in Section 3.5.2.2 of EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686). The action is expected to meet BLM's objectives for wild horse management in maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance consistent with other resource needs and multiple uses.

2. *The degree to which the Proposed Action affects public health or safety.*

No major effects on public health and safety were identified in the EA.

3. *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

No major effects on unique geographic characteristics of the area, cultural or historical resources, parklands, prime farmlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas were identified in the EA (Consideration of Critical Elements), EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686). Cultural resources would not be adversely impacted and any trap sites will be inventoried prior to construction of temporary traps (Section 3.9, and 3.9.1 of EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686). Removal of wild horses is expected to help make progress in meeting objectives for improved

riparian, wetland, aquatic and terrestrial habitat (Sections 3.5; 3.5.2.2; 3.6; and 3.6.2.2 of EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686).

4. *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

The analysis did not identify any controversy or disagreement concerning effects on the quality of the human environment. Public comments did express concerns about effects of management actions on various resource values (Section 1.6, EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686). The effects have been analyzed and discussed in the EA (Sections 1.6, EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686).

5. *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment is highly uncertain or involves unique or unknown risks.*

The analysis did not identify any effects on the human environment, which are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. The Boise District has completed several previous gathers in this area and is well aware of the associated effects.

6. *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

The analysis showed how the alternatives would implement direction in both the Owyhee Resource Management Plan and the Cascade Resource management Plan, statutes, regulations, other requirements, and would not establish precedent for any future actions (Sections 1.4; 3.11 through 3.11.2.5, EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686). The activities are not connected to any other future actions. Implementation of this decision would not trigger other actions, nor is it a part of a larger action in the project area encompassed by this decision.

7. *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

The analysis did not identify any known significant cumulative or secondary effects (Section 3.11 through 3.11.2.5, EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686). Outside this project area, additional Standards and Guidelines assessments, determinations and subsequent decisions have been made, resulting in changes in livestock management actions, stocking levels and seasons of use (Sections 3.11.1.2 and 3.11.2.2, EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686). However, those actions in combination with this decision are not anticipated to result in cumulatively significant impacts.

8. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

The analysis showed that the alternatives would not result in adverse effects to cultural or historical resources (Section 3.9.2, EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686).

9. *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.*

No endangered or threatened species are known in these herd management areas (Sections 3.6.1 and 3.7.1, EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686).

10. *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

The analysis in the EA shows that the alternatives are consistent with Federal, State, and local laws or requirements imposed for protection of the environment and wild horses (Sections 1.4 and 1.5, EA # ID-130-2009-EA-3686).

/s/ Aden L. Seidlitz
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9/11/09
Date