

COMMISSION FOR THE PRESERVATION

OF

WILD HORSES

Minutes of the Open Meeting  
Telephone Conference Call  
Reno, Nevada

June 22, 2007

Commission Members Present:

Commissioner Mike Kirk, Chairman  
Commissioner Sharon Brandsness  
Commissioner Christine Brehm  
Commissioner Jim Evans  
Commissioner Gracian Uhalde  
Cathy Barcomb, Administrator

Others Present:

Allen Biaggi, Director, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Rex Reed, PHD, ASO IV, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Bryan Stockton, Deputy Attorney General

Dr. Mike Kirk opened the phone conference call meeting at 9am with all Commission members present, roll call was taken to verify attendance. Those present by phone were Commissioners Brandsness, Brehm, Evans, Kirk, and Uhalde. Allen Biaggi, Director of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Cathy Barcomb, Administrator for the Commission, Bryan Stockton, Deputy Attorney General, and Rex Reed, PHD, ASO IV for DCNR were present at the above phone location. Patti Colbert, Executive Director of the Mustang Heritage Foundation and Susie Stokke, Wild Horse and Burro State lead for Nevada were also present via phone.

**1)\* Discussion and Decision: An update on the activities of the Mustang Heritage Foundation, Patti Colbert, Director**

Patti Colbert recapped the report she had supplied the Commissioners prior to the meeting. See report below.



**Mustang Heritage Foundation Report  
Nevada Wild Horse and Burro Commission  
June 18, 2007**

1. In 2006 there were and estimated 258 horses and burros adopted in Nevada. These numbers include animals adopted out of Palomino Valley and at Nevada Satellite Adoption Events.
2. The Mustang Heritage Foundation's Extreme Mustang Makeover and the Trainer Incentive Program have been responsible for the placement with trainers of 115 Nevada Mustangs to date. (100 EMM Mustangs and 15 Trainer Incentive Mustangs.) There are 10-15 more trainers waiting to pick up their Incentive Mustangs this month.
3. If through the Foundation's programs, Nevada's adoptions increase to 375 head in fiscal year 2007 **Nevada's adoptions will increase by over 40%.**
4. Another assumption is that because of the age and solid color of the Makeover and Incentive Mustangs, they probably would have gone to Long Term Holding Facilities and would never have been adopted. The future cost to the BLM to feed and maintain these 115 horses would be \$7,000 to \$8,000 per animal for the remainder of their lives at long-term holding facilities. The adoption of these animals through the **Makeover will save BLM an estimated \$800,000 over the next 15 years.**

5. The calculations for item (4) is:
  - Cost at long-term holding is about \$465 per animal per year
  - Each animal on the average will live to age 20 to 25 years old at long-term holding.
  - Total cost for a 5 year old animal at long term holding for 15 years will be \$7,000 over its life time.
  - 115 horses' times' \$7,000 savings equals about \$800,000.**
  
6. The **Trainer Incentive Fund** is a pilot program, focused on the training and adoption of 300 Nevada Mustangs. The response has been extremely positive. Following a meeting of BLM staff on Wednesday, June 20, there will be eight BLM facilities participating with the Foundation as pick up location for Nevada Incentive Horses. (Go to [mustangheritagefoundation.org](http://mustangheritagefoundation.org) for complete rules.)
  
7. The **Nevada Futurity Pilot Program** will be launched this year focused on creating additional financial reward through competition. Plans are to offer restricted Nevada Mustang classes at upcoming Nevada competitive events such as the Western States Expo and the National Wild Horse and Burro's Event. The Foundation plans to expand the program with educational and competitive events produced by the Foundation.
  
8. **Extreme Mustang Makeover Update**
  - a. 100 Trainers selected. 65 Mustangs picked up at Pauls Valley, Oklahoma and 35 Mustangs picked up at Palomino Valley, Nevada.
  - b. RFD TV's Wide World of Horses will host the Extreme Mustang Makeover television programs to be aired August through December (six episodes shown three times for a total of 18 shows).
  - c. Major media push both nationally and locally. BLM Public Relations staff members working with trainers in their areas.
  - d. Schedule for Fort Worth Event:
    - Friday, September 21 – Media Event, National Cowgirl Hall of Fame
    - Saturday, Sept. 22 – Competition – Will Rogers Equestrian Center
    - Sunday, Sept. 23 – Adoption – Will Rogers Equestrian Center
  
9. **Las Vegas Adoption – June 22/23**

The Foundation “sponsored” the upcoming adoption by securing the location of Horseman’s Park for the event. The Foundation also mailed a “mark the date” flyer to all Nevada previous adopters and assisted in the marketing efforts.
  
10. These programs and pilots would not be possible without the partnership and support of Nevada BLM Office and the Washington BLM Office. Susie Stokke and her team have provided the leadership resulting in the success of these pilot programs.

Commissioner Brandsness asked if all the horses referenced were from Nevada and asked what the 40% increase represented and what exactly did the Foundation do to promote the Las Vegas adoption?

Patti Colbert replied that, yes they are all from Nevada and this shows a 40% as a result of the programs the Foundation has started and run. She reported that the Foundation had located the adoption facility and paid for it, the Foundation was a partner in the marketing and promotions for the event both financially and with man hours, that the Foundation had done direct mailing and an email broadcast to over 1,800 members of the Foundation, as well as representation with flyers and promotions at the June prison adoption in Carson City and California Horse Expo in Sacramento.

Commissioner Kirk asked what expectations the Foundation had on outside future funding?

Patti Colbert responded that the Foundation has not budgeted on any further funding from the Commission. She reported they have been working with the BLM and private industry options for future funding assistance.

Commissioner Uhalde stated that he was pleased with all the movement the Foundation has shown since Patti Colbert has been in charge. He stated the 10 items presented were impressive and felt the Foundation was taking shape and that with Patti working with BLM has made a difference. He recalled “how it was before and how happy I am with where it is a going, that its showing the affect of the experience Patti brings to the table.”

Commissioner Kirk also commended the Foundation and Patti for what they were doing.

Patti Colbert interjected that on the adoption days in Oklahoma for the Makeover horses, that the editor and publisher of Western Horseman magazine was in attendance. She reported that he committed 3-4 journalist teams to following the trainers and publishing the stories in the magazine. Patti reported that advertising in Western Horseman magazine was \$5,000 per page. She stated that there is no way to put a measure on the amount of free advertising these stories would bring for mustangs and adoptions and that it is all free exposure.

Commissioner Brehm stated how amazing this event and the work of the Foundation has been and that “seeing this actually unfold is exciting”.

Commissioner Evans stated that he was excited about this program and that he wanted to make sure they were monitoring all the trainers very carefully. Patti Colbert assured him that they would be.

Commissioner Brandsness stated that this all sounds good and expressed that she felt the “Foundation needs to do fundraising to continue and it sounds like they are headed in the right direction.”

Director Biaggi stated that he wanted to “thank Patti Colbert for all the good work and that she has turned this ship around.” He stated that he appreciated her including the numbers and quantifications in the evaluation presented and being responsive to the requests of the past for these projections.

**2)\* Discussion and Decision: An update on gathers and issues in the wild horse program, to include but not limited to water and management on the Nellis wild horse range, maintenance updates at the Palomino Valley Corrals, the Las Vegas adoption, and the status of the funding budget being reviewed in Washington for the wild horse program, Susie Stokke, Nevada BLM**

### **Drought and Potential Emergency Gathers**

Susie Stokke, lead wild horse and burro specialist for Nevada gave a report an update on conditions for Nevada’s wild horse herds and program. She stated the drought was a serious concern and that already areas have dried up that are usually okay. She informed the Commission that they may have emergency gather so are monitoring areas very carefully. She stated that they are already hauling water to the Nellis area and will be intensively watching that area until the anticipated December 07 gather. She stated that is has been discouraging that the water developments on Nellis have not been completed but was encouraged that a new person had been transferred to Nellis and had experience on design and implementation of water developments. She felt this would help the program move forward and get done.

### **Palomino Valley Holding Corrals Work**

Ms. Stokke reported on the work being done at the Palomino Valley Corrals. She stated that they were complying with “feedlot EPA” requirements that were mandated to be done. She stated that this was an old problem but anticipated the start of work to begin right after July 4, 2007. She reported that it was drainage and containment ponds that were being installed to capture any runoff in the event of heavy rains or snow runoff from the holding corrals. She stated this was anticipated work and funding had previously been committed which would not impact Nevada’s wild horse management budget.

### **Las Vegas Adoption**

Susie Stokke reported that they were expecting 4 television stations and 2-3 newspapers covering the Las Vegas special adoption for June 22 and 23, 2007. She stated they were expecting a good turn out and hoping for 100% adoption of all horses there.

### **Federal Wild Horse Budget Planning**

Susie Stokke updated the Commission on previous reports and concerns that the national wild horse and burro budget had been cut by \$4.5 million dollars. She reported that the House had restored not only the original funds but added some extra funding and requested \$4.7 million for the wild horse and burro program. She added that it was currently in front of the Senate and received positive feedback for support.

Commissioner Kirk asked if Ms. Stokke felt a letter from the Commission would help in obtaining support for the funding.

Ms. Stokke replied that it couldn't hurt but that the vote would be within a few days so support would have to come quickly. She suggested writing to not just the Nevada senators but other western senators that had wild horses in their states.

Commissioner Brehm stated that she felt if the Senate was reviewing that writing a letter would probably be good.

Commissioner Evans stated that he felt "they just keep throwing more money at the program and there is not enough emphasis on fertility control." He feels there should be more emphasis on fertility control in the herds to slow down the growth rate and need for removals.

Commissioner Uhalde agreed.

Bryan Stockton, Deputy Attorney General, pointed out that the agenda did not specifically include reference to or action on fertility control but just discussion and action on the budget. He recommended any action or letter on fertility control be discussion at a future meeting.

Commissioner Brehm stated she wanted to keep the focus on funding to maintain necessary gathers and management because she doesn't want to see dead horses all over Nevada.

Cathy Barcomb, Administrator suggested the letter focus on the budget and support to restore BLM's budget dollars. She suggested that fertility control could be a focus for the next Commission meeting with actions taken from there.

Commissioner Uhalde motioned for the Commission to write a letter to our Washington delegates specifically to support restoration of funding. Seconded by Commissioner Brandsness.

Cathy Barcomb, Administrator suggested that she would work with Chairman Kirk and Allen Biaggi, Director, to develop a letter for Dr. Kirk's signature and distribution with a cc to the governor's office.

Unanimously approved by roll call vote, motion passed..  
Patti Colbert and Susie Stokke leave the phone conference call.

### **3)\* Discussion and Decision re: Approval of the Minutes of the Commission Meeting Held on April 13, 2007**

Commissioner Brehm motioned to accept the minutes as written, Commissioner Uhalde seconded the motion, unanimously passed, roll call vote.

#### **4) Public Comment Period**

##### Battle Mountain OHV Project

Commissioner Brehm asked what the status of the Battle Mountain OHV management plan was that was mentioned at the previous meeting.

Cathy Barcomb explained that the Battle Mountain District BLM personnel made a presentation to the DCNR Administrators during a staff meeting and then met with Dawn Lappin from Wild Horse Organized Assistance (WHOA) and herself that afternoon to discuss the plan at length. Ms. Barcomb reported that she was very pleased with the suggested outcome of the meeting to only start with small phases of the project and in the north part of the HMA which only contained approx. 9 horses. She stated that she was told the ranchers and Dept of Wildlife would prefer that area as well. That it was an area for trailing of livestock versus a specified grazing area. She explained that the BLM had not yet put out any environmental planning documents for review of the plan so there was nothing currently to comment on.

##### Commissioner Travel

Commissioners Brehm and Brandsness discussed the upcoming Mustang Makeover in Texas hosted by the Mustang Heritage Foundation. Commissioner Brandsness motioned to have the Commission pay the expenses for Commissioner Brehm to attend the event.

Bryan Stockton informed the Commission that this item that is being discussed is not on the agenda and being discussed under public comment, therefore no motion can be made”.

Allen Biaggi, Director, explained that travel budgets for state agencies are approved two years in advance. That state agencies submit their requests for budget approval, they are reviewed by himself, the budget office, Legislature, and Governors office prior to approval. Mr. Biaggi explained that the budget process takes the first year of a biennium and that creates a “base” year which is what each agency must base their future travel requests on. Anything outside of that is called an “enhancement” and must be justified under the Legislative process. Mr. Biaggi added that the Commission’s budget was not approved for any extra travel other than what was previously approved and cannot absorb this expense.

Commissioner Brandsness requested that Cathy Barcomb ask the Foundation if they would pay the expenses for Commissioner Brehm to attend the Mustang Makeover in Texas in September.

Cathy Barcomb, Administrator updated the Commissioners on the status of the payments to the Foundation, which was previously supplied via email. Commissioner Kirk request a full budget balance spreadsheet so they might be able to track the Heil Trust and the potential end of Heil funds. Rex Reed, ASO IV for the department stated he could provide that for all meetings.

## Nellis

Commissioner Brehm stated that she had toured the Nellis wild horse range two weeks prior and saw approximately 286 horses and “lots” of babies. She stated that BLM was already hauling water and that Cedar was “bone dry” and Rose was full. She stated that she thought the horses looked in good shape but that everybody was watching the water situation to insure the horses were safe.

### **5)\* Set Next Meeting Date**

After discussion, Cathy Barcomb was to look into the potential National Wild Horse and Advisory Board meeting in Eureka, NV, and try to schedule a Commission meeting around that. Ms. Barcomb stated that if that meeting was moved she would look into other options and discuss it with Dr. Kirk and work to set a next meeting.

### **6)\* Adjournment**

Commissioner Uhalde motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Brandsness, unanimously approved via roll call vote.