

**APPENDIX 5: STANDARD BLM OPERATING PROCEDURES
for WILD HORSE REMOVAL and SAFETY 2003**

A. Methods for Humane Capture Wild Horses or Burros

Helicopter Removals with or without a Contract

The Helicopter-Drive Trapping method, primarily employed for this capture operation, requires that horses be herded to a trap of portable panels or the fixed facility at Britton Springs Administrative Site. On extremely rare occasions horses may be herded to ropers who, after roping the animal, will bring it to the trap. Gathering would be conducted by using agency personnel or contractors experienced in the humane capture and handling of wild horses. The same rules apply whether a contractor or BLM personnel are used. The following stipulations and procedures will be followed during the contract period to ensure the welfare, safety and humane treatment of the wild horses in accordance with the provisions of 43 CFR 4700 and the PMWHR Gather/Capture contract.

Additional personnel are being requested through the Wild Horse National Program Office (NPO) in Reno, to assist with field operations and on-the-ground technical assistance. Personnel to be provided will have extensive experience as project CORs, overseeing helicopter gather operations within the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program.

1. Capture Methods That May Be Used in the Performance of a Helicopter Gather

a. Helicopter Drive Trapping

This capture method will involve driving horses into a pre-constructed trap using a helicopter. Any traps will be constructed of portable steel panels consisting of round pipe. Wings are constructed off the ends of the panel trap to aid in funneling horses into the trap. The wings are constructed of natural jute, (or similar netting which will not injure a horse), which is hung on either trees or long steel posts. This sort of wing forms a very effective visual barrier to the horses that they typically will not run through. When the trap is ready for use, a helicopter will start moving one band of horses at a time toward the trap and into the wings.

In heavily wooded areas, it may be necessary to use wranglers in support of the helicopter to move the horses. The helicopter will act more as a spotter for the ground crew in this situation.

The distance that animals must travel shall not exceed limitations set by the COR, who will consider terrain, physical barriers, weather, condition of the animals, as well as other factors. It is understood that the proposed action may cause some stress to the animals, however, the health and well-being of the gathered and captured horses is paramount during this scheduled operation. The responsibility for overseeing this operation lies with the designated COR and PI, as well as the Field Office Manager.

Several methods may be used to monitor the removal operations, including air to ground

communications, observers on horseback or in vehicles, and/or placing stationary observers in strategic locations. Among other aspects, capture operations shall be monitored to ensure foals are not orphaned and left on the range. It will be standard practice to check for wet mares without foals or foals coming into the trap without a mare. This information will be relatively easy to verify due to the existence of a very current identification database for the population.

At least one saddle horse should be immediately available at the trap site to perform roping if necessary. Roping shall be done as determined by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) or Project Inspector (PI). Under no circumstances, unless an absolute emergency, shall animals be tied down.

Domestic saddle horses may also be used to assist the helicopter pilot (on the ground) during the gather operation, by having the domestic horse act as a pilot (or "Judas") horse on the ground, leading the wild horses into the trap site. Individual ground personnel and individuals on horseback may also be used to assist in the gather.

b. Helicopter Assisted Roping

Some capture attempts may be accomplished by utilizing a helicopter to drive animals to ropers. This will only happen if helicopter drive-trapping methods are proving unsuccessful and only under the express permission of the Field Manager.

Only under circumstances of extreme emergency, involving issues of horse safety and as determined by the COR/PI, shall horses be tied down.

Animals to remain on the range will be identified during the roping process and released immediately. Only animals designated for removal from the range will be transported to the Britton Springs Corral facility.

Roping shall be performed in such a manner that bands will remain together. Foals shall not be left behind.

2. Other Non-Helicopter Capture Methods

a. Water Trapping

Although unlikely, water trapping may be used as an additional or alternative method of capture. This will only happen if helicopter drive-trapping methods are proving unsuccessful and only under the express permission of the Field Manager. This method involves setting up a trap around a well-used water source and employing a self-closing gate with a triggering device or finger gates. Finger gates can be used only with the prior approval and under the supervision of the COR/PI. It may be necessary to exclude access to other neighboring water sources to encourage use by the target population at the trap site. Water traps equipped with trip wires would be checked at least every 8 hours for trapped animals.

Animals to remain on the range will be identified at the trap site and released immediately. Only

animals designated for removal from the range will be transported to the Britton Springs Corral facility.

Animals shall be transported to Britton Springs Corral facility from temporary traps within a maximum of 8 hours after capture unless prior approval is granted by the COR/PI for unusual circumstances.

All enclosures constructed for the purpose of the gather would be flagged and highly visible to the horses, wildlife, and the public. The wires, twine, and flagging would be promptly removed following completion of the trapping.

All water traps and enclosures would be constructed (whenever possible) to accommodate wildlife access points. These points would be where wildlife could get to water by going underneath the panels, such as along trails, washes or low spots.

Placement of portable corral panels would be permitted during foaling season to allow wild horses to become accustomed to them.

b. Bait Trapping

Although unlikely, bait trapping using hay or other enticements may be used as an additional or alternative method of capture. This will only happen if helicopter drive-trapping methods are proving unsuccessful and only under the express permission of the Field Manager. This method would involve setting up a panel trap in an area accessible to the horses and feeding of enticements in the trap over a period of time to habituate the target animal to the bait. Once virtually all horses in an area were coming in to the bait, they would be trapped. Animals to remain on the range will be identified at the trap site and released immediately. Only animals designated for removal from the range will be transported to the Britton Springs Corral facility. The principal limitation of this method is that forage must be limited or the bait must be more desirable than the surrounding forage.

3. Stipulations for Capture Efforts and Traps/Holding Facilities

All capture attempts shall be accomplished utilizing either helicopter-drive trapping, helicopter-roping, or bait trapping techniques and shall incorporate the following:

The Britton Springs Trap and Corral facility will act as the main trap site and final destination for this gather effort. This holding facility is constructed of steel portable panels (with extensions to 7 feet in height), and will be covered with burlap (jute) and/or snow fence to enhance the visual barrier to horses. Also at this facility, there is a separate holding facility for domestic horses to alleviate the need for communal housing of wild and domestic horses.

The helicopter shall be used in such a manner that family bands will remain together. Foals shall not be left behind. The rate of movement and distance the animals travel shall not exceed limitations set by the COR/PI who will consider terrain, physical barriers, weather, condition of the animals and other factors. Given the ruggedness of the Pryor terrain, it is recommended that

the horses be given every opportunity to choose both rate and path of movement, down the mountain, in response to helicopter pressure.

Temporary capture traps would be constructed in a fashion to minimize the potential for injury to wild horses and BLM personnel. Gates would be wired open at all unmanned trap sites, and would be left closed only when needed to hold horses inside. Trapped horses would not be held inside the traps for a period exceeding 8 hours, unless provided with feed (weed free hay) and water.

Animals to be released back into the HMA following gather operations must be so released as soon as feasible without interference to on-going gather efforts. In rare situations, animals may be held up to a maximum of 21 days or as directed by the COR/PI. Animals shall not be held in temporary traps and/or satellite holding facilities on days when there is no work being conducted except as specified by the COR/PI.

When releasing animals back onto the HMA, every effort will be made to release individual family groups one at a time. This will facilitate continuity among the remaining group members. If releasing groups from the Britton Springs facility, harems will be allowed to fully clear the corral facility before additional groups are released. Following each release, the immediate area will be monitored, via ground observation, to ensure family groups move directly out behind the Britton Springs facility and back onto the horse range.

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and/or Wyoming Game and Fish would be notified as soon as possible if any wildlife became injured during capture operations. Wildlife caught inside traps would be released immediately.

4. Contract Helicopter, Pilot and Communications

The contractor must operate in compliance with Federal Aviation Regulations, Part 91. Pilots provided by the contractor shall comply with the Contractor's Federal Aviation Certificates, applicable regulations of the States of Montana and Wyoming and shall follow what are recognized as safe flying practices.

When refueling, the helicopter shall remain a distance of at least 1,000 feet or more from animals, vehicles (other than fuel truck), and personnel not involved in refueling.

The COR/PI shall have the means to communicate with the contractor's pilot at all times. If communications cannot be established, the Government will take steps as necessary to protect the welfare of the animals. The frequency (ies) used for this contract will be assigned by the COR/PI when the radio is used. The contractor shall obtain the necessary FCC licenses for the radio system.

The proper operation, service and maintenance of all contractor furnished helicopters is the responsibility of the contractor. The BLM reserves the right to remove from service pilots and helicopters that, in the opinion of the Contracting Officer or COR/PI, violate contract and FAA rules, are unsafe or otherwise unsatisfactory. In this event, the contractor will be notified in

writing to furnish replacement pilots or helicopters within 48 hours of notification. The Contracting Officer or his/her representative must approve all such replacements in advance of operation.

All incidents/accidents occurring during the performance of any delivery order shall be immediately reported to the COR/PI.

5. Non-Contract Related Helicopter Operations

An Aircraft Safety Plan and flight hazard analysis will be appropriately approved and filed and copies distributed to the necessary individuals prior to commencing the removal operation. Daily flight plans will also be filed. If a BLM contract helicopter is used, all BLM, Aircraft Safety and Operations standards will be adhered to.

There will be daily briefings with the helicopter pilot, Authorized Officer and all personnel involved in the day's operation. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss in detail all information gathered during the familiarization flight such as hazards, location of horses, potential problems, etc. Discuss any safety hazards anticipated for the coming day's operation or any safety problems observed by the Authorized Officer or anyone else, outline the plan of action, delineate course of actions, specifically position the wranglers and identify their responsibilities, logistics, and timing. After each flight, removal personnel will discuss any problems and suggest solutions. This may be accomplished over the radio or on the ground as the need dictates.

A flight operations plan will be filed with the Billings and Miles City Dispatch Center. This plan will describe the area to be flown and the expected time frames of flight operations. A weather forecast will be acquired from the dispatcher. There will be no flights on days of high or gusty, erratic winds or days with poor visibility.

Two-way radio communication between the helicopter and the ground crew will be maintained at all times during the operation.

An operation or contractor's log will be maintained for all phases of the operation. The log will be as detailed as possible and will include names, dates, places and other pertinent information, as well as, observations of personnel involved.

6. Animal Handling and Care

Prior to any gathering operations, the COR/PI will provide for a pre-capture evaluation of existing conditions in the gather areas. The evaluation will include animal condition, prevailing temperatures, drought conditions, soil conditions, road conditions, and a topographic map with location of fences, other physical barriers, and acceptable trap locations in relation to animal distribution. The evaluation will determine whether the proposed activities will necessitate the presence of a veterinarian during operations. If it is determined that capture efforts necessitate the services of a veterinarian, one would be obtained before capture would proceed.

The contractor will be apprised of the all conditions and will be given instructions regarding the

capture and handling of animals to ensure their health and welfare is protected.

The Authorized Officer and pilot may take a familiarization flight identifying all natural hazards (rims, canyons, winds) and man-made hazards in the area so that helicopter flight crew, ground personnel, and wild horse safety will be maximized. Aerial hazards will be recorded on the project map.

No fence modifications will be made without authorization from the Authorized Officer. The contractor/BLM shall be responsible for restoration of any fence modification that has been made.

If the route the contractor/BLM proposes to herd animals passes through a fence, an opening should be large enough to allow free and safe passage. Fence material shall be rolled up and fence posts will be removed or sufficiently marked to ensure safety of the animals. The standing fence on each side of the gap will be well flagged or covered with jute or like material.

Wings shall not be constructed out of materials injurious to animals and must be approved by the Authorized Officer.

It is the responsibility of the contractor/BLM to provide security to prevent loss, injury or death of captured animals until delivery to final destination.

Animals shall not be allowed to remain standing on trucks while not in transport for a combined period of greater than three (3) hours. Animals that are to be released back into the capture area may need to be transported back to the original trap site. This determination will be at the discretion of the COR.

Branded or privately owned animals captured during gather operations will be handled in accordance with state estray laws and existing BLM policy. Collection of gather fees and any appropriate trespass charges will be done at the time of change of possession. If animals are not redeemed by payment of trespass and capture fees by their owners, they will be sold at public auction.

Capture methods will be identified prior to issuance of delivery orders. Regardless of which methods are selected, all capture activities shall incorporate the following:

a. Temporary Trap Site Selection

The Authorized Officer will make a careful determination of a boundary line to serve as an outer limit within which horses will be herded to a selected trap site. The Authorized Officer will insure that the pilot is fully aware of all natural and man made barriers which might restrict free movement of horses. Topography, distance, and current condition of the horses are factors that will be considered to set limits to minimize stress on horses.

Gather operations will be monitored and restricted (if necessary) to assure the body condition of the horses is compatible with the distances and the terrain over which they must travel. Pregnant mares, mares with small colts, and other horses would be allowed to drop out of bands which are

being gathered if necessary to protect the safety and health of the animals.

All additional trap and holding facility locations must be approved by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) and/or the Project Inspector (PI) prior to construction. The Contractor may also be required to change or move trap locations as determined by the COR/PI. All traps and holding facilities not located on BLM land must have prior written approval of the agency and/or landowner.

Each general trap site will be selected by the COR/PI after determining the habits of the animals and observing the topography of the area. The Contractor, with the BLM's approval, within this general pre-selected area, may recommend site-specific locations. Trap sites will be located to cause as little damage to the natural resources of the area as possible. Sites will be located on or near existing roads, and will receive cultural, and/or threatened/endangered plant and animal clearances prior to construction.

Trap sites will be located to cause as little injury and stress to the animals. Additional trap sites may be required, as determined by the Authorized Officer, to relieve stress to the animals caused by specific conditions at the time of the gather (i.e. dust, rocky terrain, temperatures, etc.).

b. Trap/Facility Requirements

All traps, wings, and holding facilities shall be constructed, maintained and operated to handle the animals in a safe and humane manner and be in accordance with the following:

Traps and holding facilities shall be constructed of portable panels, the top of which shall not be less than 72 inches high, and the bottom rail of which shall not be more than 12 inches from ground level. All temporary traps and holding facilities shall be oval or round in design.

Temporary wings shall not be constructed out of barbed wire or other materials injurious to animals and must be approved by the COR/PI. Wings may be constructed along existing fence lines, at the discretion of the COR/PI, only if the barbed wire or other wire fencing material is removed from the fence posts and laid on the ground for the length of the wing, or if portable panels are placed along the inside of the fence to protect the animals from injury from fence wire. In this case, the panels must then be covered with either jute or plastic snow fence to facilitate viewing and further reduce possible horse injury.

All loading chute sides shall be fully covered with plywood (without holes) or like material. The loading chute shall also be a minimum of 6 feet high.

All runways shall be of sufficient length and height to ensure animal and wrangler safety. Runways may be covered with plywood, burlap, and plastic snow fence or like material and placed a minimum of 1 foot to 6 feet above ground level for horses.

All pens and runways used for the movement and handling of animals shall be connected with hinged self-locking gates.

If a government furnished portable chute is used to restrain, age, or to provide additional care for animals, it shall be placed in the runway in a manner as instructed by or in concurrence with the Authorized Officer.

All crowding pens including the gates leading to the runways may, if necessary to prevent injuries from escape attempts, be covered with a material which prevents the animals from seeing out (plywood, burlap, snow fence etc.) and should be covered a minimum of 1 foot to 5 feet above ground level for burros and 2 feet to 6 feet for horses.

When holding facilities are used, and alternate pens are necessary to separate mares with small foals, animals which will be released, sick and injured animals, and estrays from the other animals or to facilitate sorting as to age, number, size, temperament, sex, and condition. Animals shall be gathered and sorted preferably by family band or, if this is not possible, by age, number, size, temperament, sex, and condition. This is to minimize, to the extent possible, intrusive activity and injury due to fighting and trampling when in the holding facility.

In some cases, the Government will require that animals be restrained for determining an animal's age or for other purposes. In these instances, a portable restraining chute (permanent chute available at Britton Springs) will be provided by the Government. Either segregation or temporary marking and later segregation will be at the discretion of the COR.

The Contractor may be required to assist BLM personnel in the special handling of some animals before their release or transport. Such special handling may include, but is not limited to, de-worming, inoculations, blood-draws, and freeze branding.

If animals are held in the traps and/or holding facilities, a continuous supply of fresh clean water at a minimum rate of 10 gallons per animal per day will be supplied. Animals held for 8 hours or more in the traps or holding facilities shall be provided good quality hay (preferably grass/alfalfa mix) at the rate of not less than two pounds of hay per 100 pounds of estimated body weight per day. This hay must be certified as weed-free. Due to unnecessarily high protein content, straight alfalfa hay is not acceptable.

Separate water troughs shall be provided at each pen where animals are being held. Water troughs shall be constructed of such material (e.g. rubber, rubber over metal) so as to avoid injury to animals.

When dust conditions occur within or adjacent to the trap or holding facility, the contractor/BLM shall be required to wet down the ground with water to alleviate the problem. When excessively muddy conditions occur within or adjacent to the trap or holding facility, the contractor shall be required to scatter wood shavings or straw to improve footing for reasons of safety. Operations will not take place when conditions are so wet that excessive and irreparable resource damage will occur.

7. Treatment of Injured or Sick Animals; Disposition of Terminal Animals

The contractor/BLM shall restrain sick or injured animals if treatment is necessary. An APHIS or

contract veterinarian may be called to make a diagnosis and final determination. Euthanasia shall be done by the most humane method available. Authority for humane destruction of wild horses (or burros) is provided by the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, Section 3(b)(2) (A), 43 CFR 4730.1, BLM Manual 4730 - Destruction of Wild Horses and Burros and Disposal of Remains, and is in accordance with BLM policy as expressed in appropriate Instructional Memorandum.

Any captured horses that are found to have the following conditions may be humanely destroyed:

- a. The animal shows a hopeless prognosis for life;
- b. Suffers from a chronic or incurable disease or serious congenital defect;
- c. Requires continuous treatment for relief of acute pain and suffering;
- d. Incapable of maintaining a body condition rating above two, in a normal rangeland environment;
- e. The animal is a danger to itself or others.

The Authorized Officer will determine if injured animals must be euthanized and provide for the euthanasia of such animals. The contractor/BLM may be required to dispose of the carcasses as directed by the Authorized Officer. State sanitation laws provide for the disposition of animal carcasses at the local landfill, but it is ecologically more appropriate for the carcasses to be subjected to natural decomposition on the range.

The carcasses of the animals that die or must be destroyed as a result of any infectious, contagious or parasitic disease will be disposed of by burial to a depth of at least 3 feet.

The carcasses of the animals that must be destroyed as a result of age, injury, lameness, or noncontagious disease or illness will be disposed of by removing them from the capture site or holding corral and placing them in an inconspicuous location to minimize visual impacts. Carcasses will not be placed in drainages regardless of drainage size or downstream destination.

8. Motorized Equipment

All motorized equipment employed in the transportation of captured animals shall be in compliance with appropriate State and Federal laws and regulations applicable to the humane transportation of animals. The contractor shall provide the Authorized Officer with a current safety inspection (less than one year old) of all tractor/stock trailers used to transport animals to final destination.

Vehicles shall be in good repair, of adequate rated capacity, and operated so as to ensure that captured animals are transported without undue risk or injury.

Only stock trailers with a covered top shall be allowed for transporting animals from trap site(s) to temporary holding facilities. Only stock trailers, or single deck trucks shall be used to haul animals from temporary holding facilities to final destination(s). Sides or stock racks of transporting vehicles shall be a minimum height of 6 feet 6 inches from the vehicle floor. Single deck trucks with trailers 40 feet or longer shall have two (2) partition gates providing three (3)

compartments within the trailer to separate animals. The compartments shall be of equal size plus or minus 10 percent. Trailers less than 40 feet shall have at least one partition gate providing two (2) compartments within the trailer to separate animals. The compartments shall be of equal size plus or minus 10 percent. Each partition shall be a minimum of 6 feet high and shall have at least a 5-foot wide swinging gate. The use of double deck trailers is unacceptable and will not be allowed.

All vehicles used to transport animals to the final destination(s) shall be equipped with at least one (1) door at the rear end of the vehicle, which is capable of sliding either horizontally or vertically. The rear door must be capable of opening the full width of the trailer. All panels facing the inside of all trailers must be free of sharp edges or holes that could cause injury to the animals. The material facing the inside of the trailer must be strong enough, so that the animals cannot push their hooves through the sides. Final approval of vehicles to transport animals shall be held by the Authorized Officer.

Floors of vehicles, trailers, and the loading chute shall be covered and maintained with materials sufficient to prevent the animals from slipping.

Animals to be loaded and transported in any vehicle or trailer shall be as directed by the Authorized Officer and may include limitations on numbers according to age, size, sex, temperament, and animal condition. The minimum square footage per animal is as follows:

11 square feet/adult horse (1.4 linear foot in an 8 foot wide trailer)
6 square feet/horse foal (0.75 linear foot in an 8 foot trailer)

The Authorized Officer shall consider the condition of the animals, weather conditions, type of vehicles, distance to be transported, or other factors when planning for the movement of captured animals. The Authorized Officer shall provide for any brand and/or inspection services required for the captured animals.

Communication lines will be established with personnel involved in off-loading the animals to receive feedback on how the animals arrive (condition/injury etc.). Should problems arise, gathering methods, shipping methods and/or separation of the animals will be changed in an attempt to alleviate the problems.

If the Authorized Officer determines that dust conditions are such that animals could be endangered during transportation, the contractor/BLM will be instructed to adjust speed and/or use alternate routes.

Periodic checks by the Authorized Officer will be made as animals are transported along dirt roads. If speed restrictions are in effect the Authorized Officer will at times follow and/or time trips to ensure compliance.

9. Special Stipulations.

Private landowners or the proper administering agency(s) would be contacted and authorization

obtained prior to setting up traps on any lands that are not administered by BLM. Wherever possible, traps would be constructed in such a manner as to not block vehicular access on existing roads.

If possible, traps would be constructed so that no riparian vegetation is contained within them. Impacts to riparian vegetation and/or running water is located within a trap (and available to horses) would be mitigated by removing horses from the trap immediately upon capture. No vehicles would be operated on riparian vegetation or on saturated soils associated with riparian/wetland areas.

Gathering would be conducted when soils are dry or frozen and conditions are optimal for safety and protection of the horses and wranglers. Whenever possible, scheduling of gathering activities should happen to minimize impacts with big game hunting seasons.

Gathers would not be conducted 6 weeks on either side of peak foaling season which for the PMWHR gather would include April 1 to June 30 to reduce the chance of injury or stress to pregnant mares or mares with young foals.

The helicopter would avoid eagles and other raptors, and would not be flown repeatedly over any identified active raptor nests. No unnecessary flying would occur over big game on their winter ranges or active fawning/calving grounds during the period of use.

Standard operating procedures in the sighting and construction of traps will avoid adverse impacts from trap sighting, construction, or operation to wildlife species, including threatened, endangered, or sensitive species.

10. Herd Health and Viability Data Collection

The following information will be collected from each animal captured: age, sex, color, overall health, pregnancy or nursing status.

In addition, blood or hair samples may be collected from individuals within the herd. Certain other activities including immunocontraceptive research and freeze marking may be conducted.

a. Population Management Plan/Selective Addition or Removal

Blood samples may be taken for the purposes of furthering genetic ancestry and diversity studies and incorporation into the Population Management Plans that will be developed for each HMA/complex.

On occasion, it may be necessary to enhance and maintain genetic diversity of the herd. In this situation, a few animals with compatible characteristics may be introduced from other neighboring HMAs. Introduced animals will be taken from areas with similar habitat and climate.

b. Immunocontraceptive Research

When the immunocontraceptive vaccine is used, trained individuals will conduct delivery of the vaccine, using approved delivery methods. The vaccine will be administered to the large muscle on the hip.

11. Public Participation

Prior to conducting a gather, a communications plan or similar document summarizing the procedures to follow when media or interested public request information or viewing opportunities during the gather should be prepared.

The public must adhere to guidance from the agency representative and viewing must be prearranged.

12. Safety

Safety of BLM employees, contractors, members of the public, and the wild horses (or burros) will be given primary consideration. The following safety measures will be used by the Authorized Officer and all others involved in the operation as the basis for evaluating safety performance and for safety discussions during the daily briefings:

A briefing between all parties involved in the gather will be conducted each morning.

All BLM personnel, contractors and volunteers will wear protective clothing suitable for work of this nature. BLM will alert observers of the requirement to dress properly. BLM will assure that members of the public are in safe observation areas.

The handling of hazardous, or potentially hazardous materials, such as liquid nitrogen and vaccination needles, will be accomplished in a safe and conscientious manner by BLM personnel and/or the contract veterinarian.

13. Responsibility and Lines of Communication

The Contracting Officer's Representative (from National Program Office) and the Project Inspector from Billings Field Office, have the direct responsibility to ensure the contractor's compliance with the contract stipulations.

The Billings Field Manager will take an active role to ensure the appropriate lines of communication are established between the field, Field Office, State Office, and Britton Springs Administrative Site.

All employees involved in the gathering operations will keep the best interests of the animals at the forefront at all times.

14. Glossary

Appropriate Management Level - The number of wild horses and burro which can be sustained within a designated herd management area which achieves and maintains a thriving natural ecological balance keeping with the multiple-use management concept for the area.

Authorized Officer - An employee of the BLM to who has been delegated the authority to perform the duties described in these Standard Operating Procedures. See BLM Manual 1203 for explanation of delegation of authority.

Census - The primary monitoring technique used to maintain a current inventory of wild horses and burros on given areas of the public lands. Census data are derived through direct visual counts of animals using a helicopter and/or ground monitoring.

Contracting Officer (CO) - Is the individual responsible for an awarded contract that deals with claims, disputes, negotiations, modifications and payments. Appoints CORs and PIs.

Contacting Officers Representative (COR) - Acts as the technical representative for the CO on a contract. Ensures that all specifications and stipulations are met. Reviews the contractor's progress, advises the CO on progress, problems, costs, etc. Is responsible for review, approval, and acceptance of services.

Evaluation - A determination based on studies and other data that are available as to if habitat and population objectives are or are not being met and where an overpopulation of wild horses and burros exists and whether actions should be taken to remove excess animals.

Excess Wild Horses or Burros - Wild free-roaming horses or burros which have been removed from public lands or which must be removed to preserve and maintain a thriving ecological balance and multiple-use relationship.

Genetically Viable - Fitness of a population as represented by its ability to maintain the long-term reproductive capacity of healthy, genetically diverse animals.

Health Assessment - Evaluation process based on best available studies data to determine the current condition of resources in relation to potential or desired conditions.

Healthy Resources - Resources that meet potential or desired conditions or are improving toward meeting those potential or desired conditions.

Herd Area - The geographical area identified as having been used by wild horse and burro populations in 1971, at the time of passage of the Wild Free-roaming Horse and Burro Act.

Herd Management Area - The geographical area as identified through the land use planning process established for the long-term management of wild horse and burro populations. The boundaries of the herd management area may not be greater than the area identified as having been used by wild horse and burro populations in 1971, at the time of passage of the Wild Free-roaming Horse and Burro Act.

Invasive Weeds - Introduced or noxious vegetative species that negatively impact the ecological balance of a geographical area and limit the areas potential to be utilized by authorized uses.

Metapopulation (complex) - A population of wild horses and burros comprised of two or more smaller, interrelated populations that are linked by movement, distribution and breeding within a defined geographical area.

Monitoring - Inventory of habitat and population data for wild horses and burros and associated resources and other authorized rangeland uses. The purpose of such inventories is to be used during evaluations to make determinations as to if habitat and population objectives are or are not being met and where an overpopulation of wild horses and burros exists and whether actions should be taken to remove excess animals.

Multiple Use Management - A combination of balanced and diverse resource uses that takes into account the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources, including, but not limited to, recreation, range, timber, minerals watershed, domestic livestock, wild horses, wild burros, wildlife, and fish, along with natural, scenic, scientific, and historical values.

Project Inspector - Coordinates with the COR assigned to a contract to support his/her responsibility for review, approval, and acceptance of services.

Research - Science based inquiry, investigation or experimentation aimed at increasing knowledge about wild horses and burros conducted by accredited universities or federal government research organizations with the active participation of BLM wild horse and burro professionals.

Science-Based Decision Making - Issuance of decisions affecting wild horses and burros, associated resources and other authorized rangeland uses incorporating best available habitat and population data and in consultation with the public.

Studies – Science-based investigation of specific aspects of wild horse and burro habitat or populations as a supplement to established monitoring. These investigations would not necessarily follow rigid experimental protocols and could include drawing blood on animals to study genetics, disease and general health issues and population dynamics such as reproduction and mortality rates and general behavior.

Thriving Natural Ecological Balance - An ecological balance requires that wild horses and burros and other associated animals be in good health and reproducing at a rate that sustains the population, the key vegetative species are able to maintain their composition, production and reproduction, the soil resources are being protected, maintained or improved, and a sufficient amount of good quality water is available to the animals.