

Feb. 23, 2022

Tracy Stone-Manning  
Director, Bureau of Land Management  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Support for Wild Horse and Burro Management Actions

Dear Director Stone-Manning:

The below-signed hunting and wildlife conservation organizations and professional societies are writing to express our support and appreciation for recent commitments by the Bureau of Land Management to gather 22,000 wild horses and burros across the Western range in 2022. We see the BLM's actions and commitments in 2022 as an important step forward and encourage the BLM to prioritize significant gathers and fertility control in future years. This includes proposing significant funding for these efforts in the President's Fiscal Year 2023 and future budgets.

As you know, despite their legal classification as "wild" on federal land, unbranded and unclaimed free-roaming horses and burros are nonnative, feral livestock that lack natural predators and can have significant detrimental impacts on native ecosystems and wildlife habitat. And while we recognize their symbolic and emotional appeal for some, there are an estimated 86,000 wild horses and burros on BLM and national forest lands, exceeding the agencies' own Appropriate Management Levels by more than 320 percent.

Wildlife habitat is declining in quality across many areas in the West due to the explosion of wild horse and burro populations, impacts that are being exacerbated by warmer and drier conditions as well as nonnative invasive plants. Native species that millions of Americans care about—including bighorn sheep, mule deer, pronghorn, elk, and game birds, plus numerous non-game species—are being negatively impacted across much of their range. Mule deer, for example, have declined in many areas over the past three decades while horse and burro populations have increased annually by 15 to 20 percent.

Fortunately, the BLM is directed by Congress to manage "free-roaming horses and burros in a manner that is designed to achieve and maintain a thriving natural ecological balance on the public lands." To achieve this ecological balance—and to conserve and restore America the Beautiful—wild horses and burros must be managed at Appropriate Management Levels to reduce impacts to native ecosystems.

Thanks again for your recent actions and commitments to restore native wildlife habitat by working to bring wild horse and burro populations back to acceptable numbers. We stand ready and willing to support you in these efforts.

Sincerely,

American Woodcock Society

Archery Trade Association

Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers  
Bear Trust International  
Boone and Crockett Club  
Camp Fire Club of America  
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation  
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports  
Delta Waterfowl  
Ducks Unlimited  
Houston Safari Club  
Izaak Walton League of America  
Masters of Foxhounds Association  
Mule Deer Foundation  
National Deer Association  
National Rifle Association  
National Shooting Sports Foundation  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
North American Grouse Partnership  
Orion: The Hunter's Institute  
Pheasants Forever  
Pope and Young Club  
Public Lands Foundation  
Quail Forever  
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation  
Ruffed Grouse Society  
Safari Club International  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Wild Sheep Foundation  
Wildlife Forever

Wildlife Management Institute

Wildlife Mississippi

The Wildlife Society

Cc:

Laura Daniel Davis, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management,  
Department of the Interior

Kate Kelly, Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, Department of the Interior

Candice Vahlsing, Associate Director for Climate, Energy, Environment, and Science, Office of  
Management and Budget