

## A Chronology of Free-Roaming Equid

### How we got here...

- 50 million years ago – Prior to becoming extirpated, horses evolved on the North American continent prior to the Ice Age. They became extirpated approximately 10,000 years ago, about the same time as their major predators; Sabre Tooth Cats, Dire Wolves, American Lion and the Short Nosed Bear. These predators were much larger than modern day predators.
- 1490's – Columbus's second voyage re-introduced Spanish horses to the North American continent.
- 1600s-1900s – Native Americans and European Americans used horses for transportation, farming, and hunting.
- 1914-1918 – During the First World War, there was a shortage of horses in Europe. The U.S. alone shipped over 1 million horses and burros to the battlefields of France. General Pershing's Expeditionary Force brought another 180,000. Many did not return to the U.S. Over 8 million horses and burros died in WWI.
- 1920-1959 – Free-roaming equids were not protected. The herds were used by ranchers and others as a supplemental source of income. The domestic horse population shrunk from 20 million to 3 million, largely due to the invention of the internal combustion engine and a decline in the dependency on 'horse power'.
- 1959 – "Wild Horse Annie Act" (Public Law 86-234) restricted mustanging and protected wild horses and burros but did not require their management.
- 1971 – Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act provided for the management of wild horses and burros by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service on public lands where they occurred at the time the Act was passed.
- 1975 – Ron Hall (BLM) approached Jay Kirk Patrick about using fertility control to manage wild horses.
- 1976 – Federal Land Policy and Management Act amended the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act to allow the use of helicopters and motorized vehicles to manage wild horses and burros on public lands.
- 1978 – Public Rangelands Improvement Act directed the Secretaries to "maintain a current inventory of wild horses and burros on given areas of public lands [Herd Management Areas]" to determine "whether and where overpopulation exists." It directed the Secretaries to "determine appropriate management levels [AML] ... and determine whether appropriate management levels should be achieved by removal or destruction of excess animals or through other options (such as sterilization or natural controls on population levels)." Additionally, it directed the Secretaries to euthanize or sell without restriction, "additional excess wild free-roaming horses and burros for which an adoption demand by qualified individuals does not exist ... in the most humane and cost-efficient manner possible." It authorized the Secretaries to transfer title of adopted wild horses and burros to individuals that have provided humane conditions, treatment, and care for the animal for a period of one year.
- 1982 – Buford Policy - BLM euthanized 47 excess animals between 1981 and 1982. After a large public outcry, BLM Director Robert Buford placed a ban on the destruction of healthy horses.
- 1984 – Congress tripled wild horse and burro program funding (PL 98-473) and directed BLM to triple removals. BLM removed 18,959 horses in 1985, after removing 6,084 horses in 1984; on-range populations dropped from 60,356 in March 1984 to 44,763 by March 1986.

- 1988-2004 – Appropriations Rider - Congress inserted an Interior Appropriations Rider stating that, “appropriations herein made shall not be available for the destruction of healthy, unadopted, wild horses and burros in the care of the Bureau or its contractors.”
- 1988 – PZP fertility control first used on a small scale to help manage wild horse populations on ASIS Island.
- 1994 – PZP ASIS Island management planned use and environmental documents.
- 2004-Present – BLM began the Fertility Control Program in collaboration with Humane Society of the United States. BLM continues to support the development and implementation of fertility control methods for wild horses; however, significant reductions in the rate of population increase have not yet been apparent and fertility control remains difficult to administer on a population level.
- 2005 – Omnibus Appropriations Bill - Despite their legal requirement to sell excess wild horses and burros without limitation, BLM implemented internal controls intended to prevent slaughter of sold animals. As part of the sale of any wild horse or burro, buyers must agree not to knowingly sell or transfer ownership of the animals to persons or organizations that intend to resell, trade, or give away animals for processing into commercial products.
- 2010-Present – Congress inserted language into the text of Interior Appropriations, prohibiting “the destruction of healthy, unadopted, wild horses and burros in the care of the Bureau or its contractors or for the sale of wild horses and burros that results in their destruction for processing into commercial products.”
- 2013 – National Academy of Science Report found that the “continuation of ‘business as usual’ practices will be expensive and unproductive for BLM. Because compelling evidence exists that there are more horses on public rangelands than reported at the national level and that horse population growth rates are high, unmanaged populations would probably double in about 4 years. If populations were not actively managed for even a short time, the abundance of horses on public rangelands would increase until animals became food-limited. Food-limited horse populations would affect forage and water resources for all other animals on shared rangelands and potentially conflict with the multiple-use policy of public rangelands and the legislative mandate to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance.”
- 2017 – BLM Wild Horse and Advisory Board recommended stipulations of the [1971 Act, as amended,] by offering all suitable animals in long and short term holding deemed unadoptable for sale without limitation or humane euthanasia. Those animals deemed unsuitable for sale should then be destroyed in the most humane manner possible.”
- 2017 – First Equid Summit held in Salt Lake City, Utah, with limited invitation-only attendance.
- 2019 – Second Equid Summit held in Reno, Nevada, with over 90 organizations represented from the United States and Canada with no protests. Summit delegates established three highly diverse working groups to tackle issues facing wild horses and burros.
- 2019 – BLM set a policy to provide a \$500 payment to individuals who adopt an untrained wild horse or burro, with an additional \$500 payment one year later, when the title for the animal is transferred to the new owner.
- 2019 – BLM estimates that there are 88,090 wild horses and burros on range lands. Today, 10,267 horses and burros currently held in feedlot-type short-term holding facilities and over 47,00 horses and burros held in long-term pastures. The 2019 program budget was \$ 81.226 million, of which \$50 million is used to support the off-range operations.