



STEERING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP

DATE: 4/13/22

Attending: Terry Messmer, Angie Jensen, Stephanie Boyles Griffin, Mark Boshell, Scott Fluer, Redge Johnson, Tammy Pearson, and Allison Adams

Next Meeting: May 11, 2022 1:00 PM MTN

Discussion:

- Introductions to Scott Fluer, BLM Acting Branch Chief, National Wild Horse & Burro Program
- Scott presented a PowerPoint highlighting items such as statistics on:
 - BLM gathers; 14,276 gathered, 13,666 removed, and 1,300 emergency removals. Methods for removal were; PZP (dart) 56%, Gonacon 14%, IUD 1%, PZP (catch & release) 15%. As of October 2022, this current year, 9,000 have been removed.
 - The amount of funding that was requested was \$152 million. The amount that was approved was \$132 million, leaving a shortfall. BLM anticipates being able to complete the 2022 gathers within this budget framework
 - The proposals that were submitted under the recent RFP have been reviewed and ranked. The awards will be announced soon with the hope new research projects will be launched this year. The research will focus on new and innovative fertility control and ecology.
 - Helicopter gathers resume in July
 - On April 26 the BLM will host a virtual meeting regarding the use of motor vehicles to manage wild horses – there is time to submit written comments. The 36 2-minute slots for oral comments have been claimed on a first-come-first-serve basis. (FREES will draft a statement to submit.)
 - The Advisory board is scheduled to meet this summer and again in September. There was no new information about appointees.
 - To view, the presentation in its entirety email angie.jensen@usu.edu
- Stephanie reported over 75 have registered so far to the 9th Wildlife Fertility Conference which will be held at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort, Colorado Springs, CO, May 23-25, 2022. They anticipate the final it will be over 120 to this all in-person event.
- Stephanie commented, with recent drought conditions, more opposing opinioned people are willing to come to the table to make compromises to prevent additional equine deaths due to unavoidable drought conditions, in an effort to move forward.

- Terry asked Scott if BLM funds could be leveraged to gain a unification of other organizations such as tribal initiatives, and others in order to strengthen the cause and unify the efforts. Scott’s response was “yes”.
- Terry asked Scott if BLM would consider designating a representative to work with the FREES Steering Committee to plan the 4th FREES Summit. We quickly reviewed the draft Summit proposal. The draft proposes one day of reviewing the free-roaming equid program status of BLM, USFS, Tribes, state, etc, with day 2 devoted to selecting sites for state and tribe-specific demonstration projects that integrate gathers with a range of fertility control options. For this to be successful, we will need program leads from every state representing BLM, USFS, Tribes, Dept of Ag, wildlife agencies, NGOs, etc. to participate. We will also reach out to the USFS and tribes.

Other items: The group reviewed a preliminary draft of a possible program for the 4th FREE Roaming Equid Summit, in St George, Utah, Oct 11-14, 2022.

Action Items:

- Continue preparations for the summit
- Draft comments for BLM public hearing (any volunteers?)
- Virtual meeting with BLM director – April 26, 2022, 3 PM MST – draft a script and confirm participants - Attached is the draft meeting request form that was submitted to BLM
- Invitation to US Forest Service to the May 11th Steering meeting

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Join Zoom Meeting

<https://usu-edu.zoom.us/j/89232940144?pwd=cUhzMmpHeGg0RzlmeWJ4L092SWdzd09>