

SRM Comments on Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting

SRM (April 16, 2014) - The Society for Range Management (SRM) issued the following statement today in regards to the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board meeting which took place in Sacramento, California this week. The meeting, which addressed "matters pertaining to management and protection of wild, free-roaming horses and burros on the Nation's public lands" was held in accordance to the authority issued to the Board in advising the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Director, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Chief of the Forest Service on matters pertaining to the management of the species.

SRM, in conjunction with the National Horse and Burro Rangeland Management Coalition (NHBRMC), submitted both written and verbal comments to the record. As an original member and active participant within the NHBRMC, SRM remains committed to addressing the issue of management of wild, free roaming horses and burros and the rangeland ecosystems which they rely upon for survival.

SRM President Jenny Pluhar commented on the meeting, "SRM remains encouraged by the work being done by the Coalition. We have seen for too many years these issues become dominated by the vocal few. We hope that through this effort we are able to bring science and fact-based research to the forefront of the discussion and as a vehicle for substantial change."

The NHBRMC has brought together a diverse set of organizations all sharing a common goal and vision on this issue, "to identify proactive and comprehensive solutions to increase effective management of horse and burro populations and mitigate the adverse impacts to healthy native fish, wildlife, and plants and the ecosystems on which they depend." The vision of the Coalition aligns with the policy of SRM which states, "The Society believes in the practice and enhancement of multiple use values of rangelands, while maintaining basic soil, water and vegetation resources. The Society also believes that a "thriving natural ecological balance" is essential to the health and maintenance of viable wild horse and burro populations".

SRM President Pluhar stated, "The public must acknowledge that the current status quo cannot be maintained when it comes to the nation's wild, free-roaming horses and burros. Carrying capacities and herd sizes have surpassed any reasonable limits as defined by science. The current management practices will lead to the detriment of both the species and the habitat. Our land management agencies must be given the tools to proactively address this issue; science must lead on this issue moving forward if our country's rangelands and this iconic species are to be maintained."

SRM President Jenny Pluhar concluded, "We applaud the Coalition and our partners for taking on this issue; the comments submitted will serve to direct our efforts in the coming year as we aim to bring about reasonable and science-based change to this issue. The sustainability of our nation's rangelands is at the heart of this debate, without a healthy and robust habitat, these

horses and burros will not survive. The management of both must be addressed in changes moving forward and we look forward to remaining an engaged stakeholder and partner on this issue."

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MISSION: Providing leadership for the Stewardship of Rangelands based on sound ecological principles.

VISION: A well-trained and highly motivated group of professionals and rangeland users working with productive, sustainable rangeland ecosystems.