

COMMISSION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF WILD HORSES
MINUTES OF THE OPEN MEETING
DECEMBER 14, 2002
LAS VEGAS, NV

Commission Members and Staff Present:

Julie Von Tobel Gleason, Commissioner
Mike Kirk, Vice Chairman
Cindy Cherrigan, Commissioner
Jim Evans, Commissioner
Gracian Uhalde, Commissioner
Cathy Barcomb, Administrator
Ronda Moore, DAG

Others Present:

Kirk Shiner
Amy Torres, BLM
Betsy McFarland, Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition
Helen Mortenson, Outside Las Vegas
Jim Voss
Don Means
Kevin Pfiester
Tom Smigel, NV Dept. of Agriculture
Bob Abbey, NV State Director, BLM
Mark Morse, Las Vegas BLM
John Jamrog, Las Vegas, BLM
David Thane, NV Dept of Agriculture
Susie Stokke, BLM
R. Michael Turnipseed, Director, DCNR
John E. Fend, BLM
Maxine Shane, BLM
Gary McFadden, Las Vegas BLM
Billie Young, National Wild Horse Association
David Tattam
Rick Littleton, Kiger Mustang Ranch
Marsha Kamer, Kiger Mustang Ranch

Commissioner Gleason noted an error in the minutes, Commissioner Uhalde motioned to approve the minutes of the September 25, 2001 meeting as amended, seconded by Commissioner Kirk, unanimously approved.

2) Discussion and Decision: Presentation by Dr. Shiner and Dr. Jim Voss on a Fertility/Population Control Method that they developed for use on Wild Stallions and Coordination with the Commission for Consideration for use in the Wild Horse Program

Dr's Shiner and Voss(Dean of the Colorado Veterinary School) presented results of studies they had performed over the years relating to fertility control on stallions. They explained that their procedure was in essence a non surgical vasectomy that doesn't interrupt the testosterone cycle which they felt needed to be maintained for herd dynamics, non reversible procedure, very short, quick, painless, no recovery time, non invasive, and no swelling using a shot which is site specific. They added that horses would need to be immobilized for the procedure as the delivery is quite sensitive but that the horse would be up and moving as soon as the immobilization drug wore off. Dr. Shiner explained that the horse is basically back to normal after getting up, that the testes are intact but no live sperm cells. They felt that by the stallion continuing to "cover" the mares in his band and keeping it intact that this would inhibit other stallions from breeding the mares thus immediate population control using one sterile stallion. Dr. Shiner added that they had conducted semen evaluations 90 days prior to treatment and 90 days following the procedure for volume, PH, and viability. The results showed that within 2 days there was no production of new sperm cells, and within 5-7 days no live sperm cells at all with test results showing 100% effectiveness.

Dr. Voss added that they felt they needed tremendous input from people working in the field for this to work. He felt issues that needed to be evaluated and considered working with the people managing the herds were herd dynamics, numbers to track, how to track, the need for volunteer epidemiologists, predictability, and also establishing an advisory committee to initiate such a program.

Mike Turnipseed questioned "why doesn't anybody know about this procedure or has there been any interest expressed over the years?"

Dr Shiner explained that when they started their research over 20 years about there was no interest in "fertility control", the horse industry was striving for ways to increase fertility, not slow it down. He explained that it was not popular at the time and they had just realized the potential uses for this procedure in the wild horse program and wanted to present the options to

Chairman Gleason stated that she felt instead of tracking hundreds of mares, less stallions needed to be treated to impact fertility. She added that by managing stallions that you would want in the breeding population would help the adoption program.

Bob Abbey added that the BLM strives for healthy horses on public lands, monitoring for herd dynamics, greater use of DNA monitoring for herd dynamics, and the need to access the outcome of this action for healthy viable populations.

Ronda Moore, Deputy Attorney General (DAG), for the Commission inquired as to contract requirements for the Federal Government, demonstration to legal, and what requirements are in place allowing expenditure for such programs.

Bob Abbey stated that Ronda was correct and that this would have to be looked into and insured that it was FDA approved.

Dr. Shiner noted that this drug and procedure was FDA approved however application in this instance has not been approved or approached.

John Fend, Group Manager, BLM, Washington, noted that he felt APHIS and BLM veterinarian teams could work together on this and look into pilot area's for application.

After discussion, Commissioner Uhalde motioned to have Commissioner Kirk, DVM, represent the Commission and work with a group that BLM was going to establish and supported further investigation as to the application of this procedure on wild horses. Commissioner Cherrigan seconded the motion, unanimously approved.

7) *Discussion and Decision: An update on the Status fo the Wild Horse Program in Nevada and Commission Position on Programs and Possible Participation, BLM

Susie Stokke, Association Deputy State Director presented and update on the 1999 BLM Strategic Plan and also the 2001 Tactical Plan update. She noted that one of the first objectives was to set the Appropriate Management Levels (AML's) through the planning process, they anticipated having all AM's established by 2003. She noted that the average gather number by year over the past 3-4 years has been 6,300 horses and with that anticipated for the future gathers she expected to reach AML in Nevada by 2004.

Susie Stokke also noted that there have been concerns expressed for the health and

Commissioner Uhalde asked if she felt her projections were realistic?

Bob Abbey stated that he believes support is there financially and in the field is there. He noted that he is worried about litigation that could have an impact on reaching these goals and that the BLM must maintain a focus on the objectives.

John Fend informed the group that a lawsuit had been filed by the “Fund for Animals” regarding the lack of a programmatic EA on the implementation of the BLM’s Strategic Plan. He noted that the attorney’s for both sides had met yesterday and he felt negotiations may solve the short term problems while still working through issues the Fund has expressed over gathering horses to AML and not below. He stated that he was very optimistic for future funding, even with other concerns outside the program such as the September 11th crisis to our Naiton.

4) *Discussion and Decision: Presentation on the Scope of the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition and Commission Involvement, Betsy McFarland

Betsy McFarland explained that Gene Kolkman, BLM, Ely District Manager, had invited the University of Nevada to help in “what can be done for the resources in the Ely District for rehabilitation on 10 million acres versus remaining status quo.” Some of the issues include pinion juniper (PJ) encroachment, fire problems, removal of selective PJ, restoration of undercanopy, understory not there, flooding, erosion, treatments for cheatgrass as it is not a good food source, etc. She explained that a coalition was formed where a broad base of people, interest groups, government entities, and universities have gotten together to facilitate what objectives BLM is trying to do. She added that every livestock entity in the State have bought into this coalition, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation has been a conduit for funds prior to the non-profit status being obtained by the Coalition, the Dept of Agriculture, Nevada Division of Wildlife, BLM, Red Rock Audubon Society, Nature Conservancy, and the Forest Service have all supported this working concept. Betsy informed the Commission that one large PJ can consume up to 40 acre feet of water per year and that survival of any understory would not have a chance. Betsy finished by inviting the Commission to join in support of the concepts of the coalition and to become an active member on land use planning and restoration issues.

Ronda Moore, DAG, questioned how this would meet the mission of the Commission?

Commissioner Evans, (attorney) asked Betsy if she could provide a copy of the Articles of Incorporation, the By-Laws, and the current list of members to him to review.

Mike Turnipseed, Director, DCNR, noted that he felt this involvement was legitimate

8) *Discussion and Decision: Update on the Oliver Ranch Visitors Center and exhibits to educate the public on the wild horse program. Manner of continued Commission Support.

Billie Young, President, National Wild Horse Association, reported that Outside Las Vegas, Yosemite Institute, BLM, and architects along with interest groups are working together to keep the project moving. She added that a feasibility study is being completed, children have been invited to come to the center to give input from their point of view, there has been tremendous interest expressed in the environmental school and that herself along with Chairman Gleason, and Amy Torres and Gary McFadden from the BLM have been asked to put together a “vision” of what the wild horse and burro exhibit/program should encompass by January 15th, 2002.

Mark Morse, BLM, expressed that there will be an environmental center at the Oliver Ranch Center and there will be a wild horse and burro program there. He noted that they were obtaining aerial photo's of the area to determine various possibilities.

Helen Mortenson, representing Outside Las Vegas and also the wife of Assemblyman Mortenson, expressed that she felt the wild horse and burro program needed more exposure for the needs and where “we” are at in the program. She feels that Las Vegans don't really understand the program but visitors to Red Rock National Conservation area have expressed that they want to see the horses and its very critical to transport education not just to school children but nationally.

The Outside Las Vegas Association was developed over a year and a half ago with the vision of Alan O'Neil bringing together entities to develop a recreational educational center under a non-profit foundation.

Bob Abbey added that all these partnerships are critical, all agenda items have much more commonalities than differences and that if we all work together our potential is endless....the enthusiasm is there.

2) Discussion: Scope of Commission/Commissioner Involvement in Upcoming Wild Horse Programs, Julie Gleason, Chairman

Chairman Gleason expressed to the Commissioners and the audience that the upcoming years were increasing in workload for the horse program with challenges such as urban sprawl, fires, drought, habitat management, education, and herd management. She expressed her

children, taken her horses to earth day celebrations, been involved with the Olilver Ranch Environmental School, the wild horse show both in Reno and Las Vegas, the Ohio adoption that was recently so publicized, field tours, gathers, water projects, etc. She closed by noting that most of the Commissioners were from varying locations around the State and would like to see other projects get started.

LUNCH

5) *Discussion and Decision: Steven Spielberg Movie, Spirit: Wild Horse of the Cimarron and potential for Commission participation in programs to enhance the adoption program through exposure of the wild horse program developed from the movie.

Rick Littleton from Bend, Oregon, showed two video's, one a promo for the Speilberg movie coming out and the other of Kiger horses at his ranch, in particular Kiger and Donner. He informed the Commission that he was the owner of Kiger and Donner among other horses from his Kiger Mustang Ranch in Oregon. Donner, is the horse that was sold to Steven Speilberg and is the model for the upcoming movie, Spirit, Stallion of the Cimarron. He noted that Kiger and Donner together are working to help the horse and other horses in the wild. Littleton added that 4 national magazines had contacted him for stories to be published in May including Western Horseman. Rick noted that he wanted to support his program but it was very important to him to promote the adoption program and help other horses get homes. He stated that he also wanted to promote Kigers with freeze brands, that Kigers have integrity. He suggested that the newly created National Wild Horse and Burro Foundation could use a different horse or burro from different HMA's each year to promote individual area's.

Mr. Littleton expressed that he is not looking for financial gain, he informed the Commissioners "We can sell these horses, my Kigers, but lets work together to help the horse program, to help other horses." Mr. Littleton finished by stating that if the Foundation or the Commission could use his Kigers for publicity or promotions in any way to help other horses he would be more than willing to jump in an help, his big love is for these horses and that they get good quality, loving homes.

Chairman Gleason pointed out that Dreamworks (Speilberg) was a business and she felt would look at any proposals from that light.

Commissioner Uhalde motioned to have Commissioner Gleason as the contact person representing the Commission for promotions involving the Kigers and the movie. Seconded by

“friends” of the wild horses and appreciate them. He noted that he felt the movie would promote keeping the horses in the wild and free.

Chairman Gleason called for a vote on the motion, the vote was unanimous in favor.

9) *Discussion and Decision: Speed limit issues in the Red Rock HMA outside of Las Vegas and also Robinson Summit in the Ely BLM District, where numerous horses, cattle and burro’s have been killed by cars. The Commission will consider requesting the NDOT to consider fencing and reduce the speed limit for public and animal safety.

Commissioner Uhalde reported that Robinson Summit was a dangerous stretch of road that many cows and horses had been hit and either killed or maimed by cars. He added that 10 miles of the roadway is unfenced.

Billie Young, National Wild Horse Association, expressed her concern that the speed limit had been increased on the highway which has increased the number of animals/vehicle accidents. She informed the group that instead of using the interstate for business traffic in and out of Las Vegas from the Pahrump and surrounding area’s, that commuters were coming down this highway therefore creating a fast moving traffic hazard on a road that was never meant to carry such a load of traffic at increased speeds. She questioned why couldn’t the speed limit be lowered to discourage the high speed traffic which would in turn push them back to the interstate travel.

It was noted that all interstate highways in Wyoming are fenced for a total of 460 miles of fencing that is 5-6’ high..

There were discussion of how the fence projects may be completed such as working with the Nevada Department of Prisons for inmate work crews to lower the costs of the fencing. It was noted that the BLM had offered to pay the cost of the fencing. Chairman Gleason offered to contact Assemblyman Collins, who has been working to push this project, to also include the Robinson Summit issues in his work. The Commission will continue to work with interested parties in an attempt to get both of these dangerous sections of highway fenced.

6) Discussion: Update on the Nevada Prison Holding/Training Center, “Nevada Wild Horses and Inmates in Life Development” (Nevada Wild), Presentations by Cathy Barcomb

This item was postponed to another meeting in the future.

Commissioner Evans motioned that the Chairperson of the Commission should be on the Advisory Board. Seconded by Commissioner Cherrigan, unanimously approved.

8) *Discussion and Decision: Update on the Oliver Ranch Visitors Center and exhibits to educate the public on the wild horse program. Manner of Continued Commission support.

Billie Young suggested that they need to get more attention for the Red Rock visitor center project and noted that the new Director for the BLM had expressed interest in the project and was willing to include wild horses and education in there.

Amy Torres, BLM, informed the group that she was putting together a presentation for volunteers and employees to help educate them on wild horses programs to be able to answer questions posed by the public. Especially she noted, why not to feed the animals.

Jim Evans, Commissioner, informed the group that Steve Lewis from the extension service had put together a brochure on urban interface with horses and what to do and not to do.....he suggested that Amy get copies of those brochures to put in the visitors center.

11) PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Commissioner Cherrigan reported on the activities of her organization, the Reno Wild Horse Association. She noted that they were continuing training of the wild horses she had adopted for use in educating the public with school tours and visits. She noted that the Nevada Dept. of Agriculture needed water tanks for the Comstock horses in the Virginia Range and that she had raised \$500 to purchase two tanks. She also stated that she had obtained two wild horses from an adopter that could no long keep them and that the prison was putting them through the training program and would be keeping them and using them on the dairy farm as horses to work the cows.

12) *Set Next Meeting Date

It was recommended to hold the next Commission later in the spring with place and date to be determined as issues arose. The Commission directed Cathy Barcomb to set up a meeting in the future with consultation with the Chairman.

13) *Adjournment

Commissioner Evans motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Kirk, unanimously approved.