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U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Preliminary Environmental Assessment
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Black Mountain and Hardtrigger HMA
Wild Horse Capture, Treat, Release, and Removal Plan

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Boise District Office
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NATIONAL SYSTEM OF PUBLIC LANDS

Under Alternative A, some captured wild horses would be released back to the range to achieve a post-gather sex ratio of 60% studs and 40% mares. Band size would be expected to decrease, competition for mares would be expected to increase, recruitment age for reproduction among mares would be expected to decline, and size and number of bachelor bands would be expected to increase. Fighting between band stallions and surplus stallions could result in the mares and foals not being allowed to feed and water naturally as the herd stallion tries to keep them away from bachelor bands. Though wild horses may breed year round, these behavioral and social conditions would be most evident during breeding season (May –July). Modification of sex ratios for a post-gather population favoring studs or geldings would further reduce growth rates, in combination with fertility control; thus, reducing the number of horses going to short and long term holding from future gathers.

Population levels within HMAs would be reduced moderately over the short term by the removal of approximately 94 excess animals. Based on the expected rate of population growth, total population in the HMAs would be at or above the AMLs by 2024 if immune-contraception is continued every 2 years and 80% of the population is gathered for every retreatment. (Appendix C). However, the percent of population gathered is expected to decrease with every repeat gather. It is expected that horses would get "trap-wise" and become more difficult to catch and, therefore, lower percentage of mares would be treated. Without treatment, populations would continue to increase and would likely put the population at high AML by 2018.

Win Equus population modeling predicts, with implementation of fertility control, a 4.9% annual PGR is expected when the sex ratio is 60% males and 40% females, and a 12.4% PGR at the existing sex ratio (**Error! Reference source not found.**) (Jenkins 1996). The highest success for fertility control has been obtained when applied between November and February.

The number of animals removed in 2012 would increase the number of animals available for adoption/sale or placed in long-term pastures. However, reduction in productivity would result in a greater long-term reduction in animals removed relative to other Alternatives. Slight to moderate utilization levels would be expected to continue over the long term when populations are maintained within the AMLs.

The introduction of individual animals from the Hardtrigger herd into the Black Mountain herd and vice versa would improve genetic variability within both HMAs.

Table 6: Summary of Population Modeling Results for the Black Mountain and Hardtrigger HMAs, Owyhee County, ID.

Alternative	Number Gathered (11 years)*	Number Removed (11 years)*	Number treated	Ave. Growth Rate Next 10 Years (%)	Average population (11 Years)	Maximum population level (11 years)
Proposed Action	684	188	124	4.9%**	155	210
Alternative B	434	344	00	18.7%**	163	228