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First name: Karen

Last name: Thompson

Organization:

Title:

Comments: See attached documents in objecting to the management plan

222.62 36 CFR Ch. II (7-1-16 Edition)

(2) Provide direct administration for the welfare of wild free-roaming horses and burros that are located on the National Forest System by use of the Forest Service organization rather than by the granting of leases and permits for maintenance of these animals to individuals and organizations;

- - Which from my understand mean[squo]s no outside group should be allowed to manage the wild horses. I know SRWHMG is pushing to be allowed to use PZP on the horses in place of removal.

(5) Maintain a current inventory of wild free-roaming horses and burros on each territory to determine whether and where excess animals exists;

- - When the territory was established in 1974, a letter from the forest supervisor to the regional forester indicated the territorial use of the area and included the first recorded census (seven horses). That letter included notations that the stallion may have been sterile because no foals were seen for several years. In 1976, five horses were reported, and the number of horses ranged from five to eight until 1993 when the Heber district ranger reported to the forest supervisor only two mares remained (USDA Forest Service 1993a).

- - Why was there such a stretch between data counts? Was this counting the whole forest service area, or just the management area?

According to a letter from then District Ranger Klein (USDA Forest Service 1993a), until the reservation boundary was first fenced, Reservation horses moved freely back and forth across property boundaries. As livestock production on National Forest System lands became more regulated, free-ranging horses were steadily removed either by herding them back over the reservation boundary or by removing them to auction.

- - What[squo]s saying the wild horse from the forest didn[squo]t migrate to the reservation side? Also, the removal of free-range horses has been an ongoing thing for years (not just in the Heber area), newspaper articles dated the year 1930, it was the goal to remove all wild horses, where the forest service was involved in an effort to preserve the grazing lands for sheep, cattle and game animals. (See attached articles)

The first period encompasses the originally designated herd of seven horses, which more than likely descended from the turned-out Army remount horses or other turned-out horses in the 1930s and then dissipated by c. 1990. The current horse population dating from c. 1990 appears to be a mixture of horses from the Fort Apache Reservation and other unidentified horses with no substantiated link with the originally designated herd.

- - In reading newspaper articles, it was common place for wild horses to be sent to the reservations (to be fattened up) so the natives could then sell them for food. Which means most of the horses coming off the reservation were likely originally from the original wild horse herds. (see attached table)

Attachment: Screenshot of The Coolidge Examiner from 4/24/1931

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Attachment: Screenshot from Arizona republican from 10/26/1919

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Attachment: Screenshot from Arizona republican from 10/26/1919

Attachment: Screenshot from Arizona republican from 01/14/1921

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