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Comments: My Public Comments/Input to the USFS Heber Wild Horse Territory Management Plan are in opposition of the need for the removal of any of the Heber Wild Horses. I've submitted comments in the past on other HMA's and Plans, but nothing seems to change and the Gathers just keep happening. I've witnessed these Gathers first hand and find them to be cruel (causing the injury and death of wild horses). I'm opposed to the Gathers in principle and am skeptical of the USFS assessment of the number of horses residing in the given area and the need for more roundups and removals, etc.

The USFS says the Heber HMA has enough forage, etc. to adequately support 50 to 104 wild horses...and they observed some 272 horses in multiple fly overs of the area which they say that represents an estimated 270-420 horses - seems like an arbitrary way to determine there are too many horses in the HMA (Were horses double counted due to multiple flights and on different dates and times?). I'm not satisfied that the USFS methods of counting wild horses is statistically accurate based on too many potential error factors.

It also seems that the ongoing Gathers are self perpetuating for USFS and its contractors and staff, including the helicopter businesses, roundup/removal personnel, transportation companies, corral/holding/auction businesses, project managers, and other support people involved. This needs to be investigated, as it's become an industry of wild horse elimination from their home ranges on our public lands, where they belong and seem to be generally healthy/strong there. HEBER WILD HORSES SHOULD BE MANAGED ON THEIR HMA! More cattle/livestock and other big money interests seem to show up often after the horses are gone/reduced to non-sustainable populations. Why should we take the USFS' word for the need for these Gathers? I and many others, would argue at this point that an objective audit is required before any further Gathers are implemented.

My first concern is how many cattle/livestock this area also supports, and I'm always concerned if there is adequate enforcement of livestock trespass in the HMA by our government, especially in the Heber area where wild horses appear not to be welcome in the HMA, considering the number of wild horses that have been killed with no consequence or law enforcement. After looking to find the data provided by the USFS and doing the math, the number of cow/calf pairs permitted for livestock grazing in the total HMA was approximately 180, which is way more cattle/livestock in the HMA than the proposed number of horses after the proposed Gather of excess wild horses. In my mind, that's not consistent with the intent of the Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 to give priority to wildlife and wild horses. Plus, the USFS halves the available forage for wild horses, based on supporting wildlife and evidently too many cattle/livestock allowed in the HMA, too.

Alternative Recommendation rather than the Heber Wild Horse Territory Management Plan:

#1 If there is need for more land in the Heber Wild Horse Territory then prudent legal efforts should be made to find more public land for the wild horses first; and/or expand the HMA - right size the land the USFS believes is needed.

#2 Move off the cattle/livestock, especially those in unenforced livestock trespass in the Heber HMA, and the problem is resolved. (I'm tired of paying subsidies for welfare ranchers to get rich on my dime with sweetheart grazing leases...they don't own the land, the American taxpayers do.)

#3 No action/no Gather required as the wild horses are better off where they're at than in an overcrowded and expensive kill pen, somewhere unfamiliar to them.

Some out-of-box, more humane thinking needs to be given before proceeding with the Heber Wild Horses Gather in my humble opinion.

Thank you for your consideration of my public comments/input. These Gathers must stop as there is no

consideration of the trauma inflicted on the iconic mustangs, wild horses, and burros - they are suppose be given the highest priority on the HMA's per the intent of the 1971 law and not be reduced in numbers to the point of extermination.