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Title:
Comments: To: Anthony Madrid, Forest Supervisor
From: Letty Grayson, Retired DoD, DoE
Subject: Summary of Review for Heber Wild Horse Territory Environmental Assessment, Proposed AML, and Draft Management Plan

Summary of Review: The documents provided for public comment are inadequate and do not meet a standard acceptable to the federal government and the public. The analysis within the Proposed AML Determination for the Heber Wild Horse Territory is weak and not based on quantifiable facts. All three documents (below) must be reworked and submitted to the public again for review as they contain: 1) Statements condoning animal cruelty unacceptable to the public-at-large including the use of electrical prods, allowing aggressive animals to attack one another, running horses over long distances in extreme heat etc. 2) These documents are a disjointed, incoherent, inadequate government product that falls far short of meeting standard expectations in the business world; the three product documents are not acceptable to be funded by taxpayer dollars.3) The Forest Service knows that horses have not been and are not consistently utilizing all of the delineated territory; nor is there an accurate head count. How does the Forest Service expect to put forth a plan acceptable to the American taxpayer under these conditions? This is a major flaw that affects all three aspects of the government plan and the overall management of the Heber Wild Horse Territory. The Forest Service needs to go back to the drawing board and implement actions to address this issue. While doing so, hopefully the Forest Service can obtain an accurate headcount (within 10%) of the wild horse population. 4) Throughout the documents, horses are cited as an example of environmental damage -- there are how many more cattle than horses in this territory? This repeated omission appears biased against horses to the public. Where horses contribute to damage of streams and grasslands etc. the Forest Service needs to state such damage as a percentage of the overall damage. 5) The Forest Service solution should be centered about contraceptives when there is a realistic head count of horses determined. 6) Helicopters must not be used for "gathering" horses. Helicopter roundups constitute animal cruelty even for sound, healthy horses in their prime. The weak, the young, mares in foal are especially subject to extreme abuse with helicopter roundups. A helicopter can be more humanely and feasibly used for darting of immunocontraception which is a brief, feasible procedure.

Below please see comments on the three draft documents provided to me that provide the basis for my Summary of Review. These comments articulate my concerns and provide questions where I find that clarification is required.

HEBER WILD HORSE TERRITORY MANAGEMENT PLAN DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
Page 1/Paragraph 2: "A territory management plan is described as an operational plan for managing one or more herd units of wild free-roaming horses and burros ..." QUESTION: Do herd units of other species roam said territory? Is there a corresponding management plan for these other species, if they exist? CONCERN: If other herd species share this territory and their corresponding management plan DOES NOT exist (as appears to be the case), how does the Forest Service expect to conduct a realistic, quality environmental assessment plan focused only on wild horses and burros?
Page 6/Paragraph 2: "The Heber Wild Horse Territory is considered a special area by the Forest Service." Please clarify this statement -- how is this territory "considered special"? CONCERN: Please cite documentation/references that delineate why and how the Forest Service considers this territory special.
Page 6/Paragraph 4: "Desired Conditions for the Wild Horse Management Area" Who established the desired conditions? CONCERN: Where is this documented? Please provide the reference(s).
Page 7/Paragraph 3: "The Heber Wild Horse Territory does not currently have an approved territory management plan . . . " CONCERN: How does the Forest Service expect to develop an environmental assessment without an

approved, existing management plan? CONCERN: It appears that the Forest Service is attempting to develop both efforts in parallel at a potential over-cost to taxpayers resulting from rework and reverse engineering.
Page 7/Paragraph 6: "This includes meeting land management plan standards and guidelines . . ." CONCERN: Standards and guidelines must be referenced and available to the public. Please provide references that delineate these documents.
Page 8/Paragraph 2: "Our analysis has identified that 104 horses is the upper limit . . .". CONCERN: How can this be true when you also state in the same paragraph "In 2017, the most recent census flight, the estimated population was 270 to 420 horses . . ." and you further state in the proposed Appropriate Management Level Determination document on page 23, last paragraph, "These low utilization levels indicate that the use of the territory, by all grazing animals, over the past ten years has been within the forage-producing capability of the area." . . . All three statements can not be true and lead one to believe that your analysis of AML equaling 104 does not have evidence to support it and is not a logical conclusion.
Page 8/Paragraph 3: "Wild Horse Territory WinEquus Population Modeling Analysis" CONCERN: This document does not appear in the list of references. Please provide this important document.
Page 13/Paragraph 1: Concern: Please provide a reference to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality 2020 State of Arizona. You may not simply state ". . . we anticipate no water bodies . . . being impaired" as you do in this paragraph. Your Environmental Assessment must rely on the 2020 document and must provide it as a reference for the public.
Page 13/Last Paragraph: Correction: Replace "Based on this analysis, the Forest Service determined an appropriate management level . . . " with "Based on this analysis, the Forest Service has proposed an appropriate management level in the Proposed Appropriate Management Level Determination document dated January 2021.
Page 14/Paragraph 4: Concern: The Forest Service must address livestock grazing rather than making the following statement "Livestock grazing was authorized in this area before it was identified as a territory and cannot be arbitrarily dismissed" . . . A good analysis, worthy of taxpayer funding, must not arbitrarily dismiss any factors. However the requirements baseline changed when the Heber Wild Horse Territory was established. A good analysis takes into account all changes in the requirements baseline. It is the responsibility of the Forest Service to the public to address livestock grazing here.
Page 14/Paragraph 5: Clarify/Correct: "taking into consideration the management objectives of the area". The public must be told the management objectives of the area. Suggest you build a table of objectives within this document and reference it whenever you use the preceding phrase, as the vague phrase appears in multiple places. In pages 15 to 20 you tangentially address management objectives but you relate them to possible alternatives -- management objectives are independent of proposed alternatives. Perhaps this is a terminology problem. Please correct it.
Page 14/Paragraph 6: Concern: Same as Page 8/Paragraph 2. Again you state that your analysis shows "forage within the territory is well within the established use level".
Page 15/Paragraph 1: Concern: You state that reducing livestock grazing as an alternative was "not brought forward for detailed analysis". I contend that you have provided no analysis in this area. Ignoring livestock grazing is a complete disregard for producing an environmental assessment that passes public scrutiny.
Page 19/Last Paragraph: Concern: This paragraph is just one of many examples within the document that illustrate that not only horses, but all grazing animals -- livestock, elk, deer etc. must be addressed. The environmental assessment is very weak in this area and will not meet public expectations.
Page 22/Paragraph 4: Concern: Again, all other contributing factors are not addressed. This environmental assessment for horses necessarily is affected by very similar animals within the territory -- similar in that they all have water and forage requirements and move about the area. The document as it stands is unsatisfactory as an environmental assessment because it ignores the impact on horses of other similar animals in the environment.
Page 24/Paragraph 1: Concern: Why does this Heber Territory document suddenly propose actions on other Forest System lands?
Page 24/Paragraph 6: Concern/Clarification: Clarify to the public the term "with limitations". Clarify whether these animals can be bought by kill-buyers for slaughter, as this contradicts the spirit of the free roaming wild horses and burros law. In the first sentence on page 25 you state "The Forest Service . . . . prohibits the sale of wild

horses and burros for slaughter."
Page 25/Paragraph 1: Correction: Change ". . . standards of welfare and care will be followed." to " . . . standards of welfare and care shall be followed."
Page 30/"Range-2": Clarification: Do horses and livestock cohabitate on seasonal range? The paragraph seems to imply that horses only have access after livestock are removed. This is a point that the public will want clarification on. Again, the lack of inclusion of other grazing animals (especially livestock) is a huge deficiency of this environmental assessment.
Page 31/"Horse-1": Correction: Change "will" to "shall".
Page 33/ Paragraph 6: Concern: "The horses have not been and are not consistently utilizing all of the delineated territory." This is a major flaw that affects all three aspects of the governments plan and the overall management of the Heber Wild Horse Territory. How has the Forest Service addressed this issue? It appears they have not! The Forest Service needs to go back to the drawing board and implement actions to address this issue. While doing so, hopefully the Forest Service can obtain an accurate headcount (within 10%) of the wild horse population.
Page 34/Table 5: Concern: Disparity in estimated population (270 to 420). The Forest Service must be able to produce a more accurate population count before going forward. The U.S. Geological Survey Fort Collins Science Center (FORT) tested combinations of four techniques for estimating wild horse populations: mark-resight, simultaneous double-count, sightability bias correction modeling, and distance sampling. The combination of multiple sources of information overcomes most of the deficiencies of the single technique used by the Forest Service.
Page 36/ Paragraph 1: Concern: State how horse population growth is reconciled with previous years in this territory; it does not appear to reconcile with your statements.
Page 37/ Paragraph 1: Concern: As stated before, this is a major flaw that affects all three aspects of the governments plan and the overall management of the Heber Wild Horse Territory. How has the Forest Service addressed the issue of horses not utilizing the delineated territory?
Page 38/ Paragraph 2: Concern: Gathering techniques must not be condoned or implemented. The Forest Service must direct its efforts to immunocontraceptives administered aerially or otherwise through darting mares.
Page 42/ Paragraph 3: Concern: "Excess sediment caused by horse activity in stream channels . . .". Why are only horses being used as an example? -- there are how many more cattle than horses. Does the Forest Service expect the public-at-large to ignore such an obvious fact?
Page 44, 45: Concern: Why are only horses being cited as an example? -- there are how many more cattle than horses. This repeated omission appears biased against horses to the public. Where horses contribute to damage of streams and grasslands the Forest Service needs to state such damage as a percentage of the overall damage.
Page 51/Paragraph 2: Concern: "The most recent allotment management plan . . . was implemented in 1998." This is too old. Why are allotment management plans not revisited every 5-10 years?
Page 52/Last Paragraph: Concern: "It is noted horses, as cecal digesters, are considered one of the least selective grazers." Noted by whom? Reference please. Having raised both horses and cattle I can assure you that I have found horses to be very selective grazers.

HEBER WILD HORSE TERRITORY DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN dated March 2021
Page 1/Paragraph 5: Clarification: The following phrase is incomplete and ambiguous. It appears to be a reference. Please reference in a correct/standard format: "(land management plan, page 118)"
Page 2/Paragraph 1: Clarification: It should be stated here for clarification that the 2019 Arizona State University collaboration "to offer suggestions" was a public effort with no more or less weight than the public-at-large suggestions being offered to you at this time. Please convey this in paragraph 1.
Page 3/Paragraph 4: Clarify/Correct: ". . . meeting land management plan standards and guidelines . . ." - Where are they and what are they? Cite the formal documents as a reference here. Secondly, ". . . taking into consideration the management objectives of the area." The public must be told the management objectives of the area. Suggest you build a table of objectives and reference it whenever you use the preceding phrase, as the

vague phrase appears in multiple places. In pages 15 to 20 of the Environmental Assessment you tangentially address management objectives but you relate them to possible alternatives -- management objectives are independent of proposed alternatives. Perhaps this is a terminology problem. Please correct it.
Page 3/Paragraph 4: Clarification/Omission: ". . . other grazing animals in the area". Identify the other grazing animals in the area and provide the head count. Why is such an important data item omitted? Clarify whether these other animals graze the entire territory or part of it. Do they graze year round? Provide the details! Either clearly develop the pounds of forage in this paragraph or provide a reference to where you develop it.
Page 4/Paragraph 6: Clarification: "Wild ungulate, permitted livestock, and horse use does not exceed the estimated grazing capacity." What is the public supposed to think about this vague statement?: Provide the estimated grazing capacity in terms of individual head count of species and provide the current head count of species. Provide the current grazing as a percentage of the total capacity by species.
Page 5/Paragraph 2: Correction: Change ". . . that an overpopulation" to ". . . if an overpopulation", otherwise it appears that you are selecting an outcome and trying to make your analysis fit that outcome (i.e. foregone conclusion versus legitimate analysis).
Page 7/Paragraph 1: Clarification: "Animals will be gathered and removed when the deciding officer makes a determination of an excess population of horses." This statement sounds authoritarian and myopic. Strongly suggest that you state the reasons or justifications that would lead up to any removals and include/state proof and references that any removals would be in compliance with all predetermined approved standards and laws.
Page 7/Paragraph 6: Concern: Helicopters must not be used for "gathering" horses. Helicopter roundups constitute animal cruelty even for sound, healthy horses in their prime. The weak, the young, mares in foal are especially subject to extreme abuse with helicopter roundups. A helicopter can be more humanely and feasibly used for darting of immunocontraception which is a brief, feasible procedure.
Page 8/Paragraph 5: Concern: "Many horses are observed on the forest . . .". Many??? This leads the public reader to conclude that you really don't know how many horses are on the forest. In contrast, several sentences down from this statement you give a "handy" number: "A total of 50 to 70 horses would be anticipated removed." . . . If you don't know the horse population how do you know how many to remove? This paragraph needs to be corrected.
Page 9/Paragraph 4: Concern: This last paragraph that starts with "The overall goal of the territory management plan . . ." illustrates a recurring theme with this document: this document is disjointed and poorly organized. Why would you state (for the first time) the overall goal of the management plan one third of the way through the document buried in the last paragraph on a page? Now, the content of the paragraph needs to be reworked as well as placing the entire paragraph in the beginning of the document. The paragraph reads "The overall goal of the territory management plan is to encourage horses to utilize the designated territory rather than remaining on other areas on the national forest . . ." That is a legitimate goal, but how are you addressing this? Where is the effort spelled out that addresses this? In other words, where is the management in the management plan?
Page 11/Bullets 9 and 10: Clarification: Define "good quality hay" and "weed free hay". Be specific.
Page 11 and 12/All Bullets: Concern: Helicopters must not be used for driving horses. Helicopter use constitutes animal cruelty even for sound, healthy horses in their prime. The weak, the young, mares in foal are especially subject to extreme abuse with helicopter driving. The so-called "pressure and release" phrase in Bullet 11 is still highly stress-producing and uses fear as the basis for moving the horses. This management plan must make the effort to come up with other options (e.g. riders on horseback -- no roping! -- quietly and slowly herding wild horses). The public is incensed that tax payer money is used to produce fear to drive horses by helicopter over miles of terrain. A helicopter can be humanely and feasibly used for darting of immunocontraception which is a brief encounter with the mare and a feasible procedure.
Page 13: Concern: Ninety-five degrees temperature is too high. Reevaluate this limit with a broad range of experts. Note that carriage horses in cities who move at a walk at all times are pulled from the streets at high temperatures because of animal welfare concerns voiced by the public-at-large.
Page 14/Bullet 10: Concern: Devise a method where water will be present at all times throughout the day. There must never be a lack of water.
Page 16/Bullet 3: Concern: Change "Flooring of all transport trailers should not be slick or slippery, if metal, it should be covered with rubber matting to allow for secure footing and minimize slips and falls." to "Flooring of all

transport trailers must not be slick or slippery, if metal, the flooring must be covered with rubber matting to allow for secure footing and minimize slips and falls."
Page 16/Bullet 2: Concern: "Aggressive wild horses causing serious injury to other animals should be identified and relocated into alternate pens when possible." CHANGE this irresponsible statement that is tantamount to the Forest Service allowing/condoning dog fighting or cock fighting. Change it to read as follows: "Aggressive wild horses capable of causing serious injury to other animals shall be identified and relocated into separate pens."
Page 16/Last Section, Willfull Acts of Abuse: For each bullet that identifies an abusive act on the part of Forest Service personnel or contractors, identify that the perpetrator will either 1). Receive a documented written warning 2). Be fired from the Forest Service or relieved of duty in the case of a contractor. Establish a maximum written warning limit before the Forest Service employee or contractor is permanently barred from participating in the handling of wild horses.
Page 18/Electric Prods: Concern: Change this entire section to one simple sentence as follows: "Electric prods shall never be used on wild horses; doing so will result in immediate dismissal of any Forest Service employee or contractor.

HEBER WILD HORSE TERRITORY PROPOSED APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT LEVEL DETERMINATION, dated January 2021
Page 1/Paragraph 4: Clarification: " meets the direction . . .". Explain how and cite your references.
Page1/Paragraph 4: Clarification: "Despite the flaws identified, this analysis method is considered the best available science." By whom? Cite references.
Page 32/Paragraph 3: Concern: ". . . the management objectives of the area." State or reference the management objectives of the area. ". . . standards and guidelines . . ." The Forest Service must reference where these standards and guidelines are documented for the public.
Page 33/ Paragraph 1: Concern: The Forest Service knows that horses have not been and are not consistently utilizing all of the delineated territory; nor do they have an accurate head count. How does the Forest Service expect to put forth a plan acceptable to the American taxpayer under these conditions? This is a major flaw and the overall management of the Heber Wild Horse Territory. The Forest Service needs to go back to the drawing board and implement actions to address this issue. While doing so, hopefully the Forest Service can obtain an accurate headcount (within 10%) of the wild horse population.