

WILD HORSE AND BURRO TRAINING/ADOPTION/EDUCATION CENTER

DESIGN ELEMENTS

1. Concept

Wild horse and burro management can best be served by understanding the integration of on and off-range issues. Fundamental to an effective **on**-range program is the open, fluid dialog between Federal agencies, their partners, and the public they serve, in the context of visible, real-time **off**-range programs. The Wild Horse and Burro Training/Adoption/Education Center (Center) model will help bridge the existing chasm between Agency challenges and public expectations, while increasing the quality and level of training needed to assure successful adoptions.

2. Facility Location and Requirements

Federal agencies are somewhat limited by appropriations law as to development of and expenditures in support of facilities except on agency-owned properties. To eliminate barriers from the outset, sites for the Center should be selected from Agency properties with legal entrance and egress.

Though in some communities the Center might be viewed more positively if constructed in remote, rural locations, the proximity to population centers, partner organizations, State and local governments, and adequate infrastructure is probably of greater concern.

The Center must have sufficient space for truck/trailer access, public parking, and numerous buildings such as covered arena, horse shelters/pens/alleys, accommodations for trainers/program participant trainers, administration and public reception areas, hay/equipment storage/shop, and additional buildings as the program expands. For comfort and training success, site should be sheltered from prevailing winds and excessive heat, and must have adequate power, water, and cell/wireless access. The location should be close enough to population centers to facilitate engagement of public and trainers, but remote enough to ensure privacy of participants and safety of horses.

Note: The most expensive and inefficient way to build a new facility is the traditional Government Facilities Construction Contract Award. Consider utilizing existing blueprints, local materials, re-purposed materials from or relocation of decommissioned or historic structures, local labor, partners, and inter-governmental agency crews.

3. Horse Training

This Center's training approach will differ from conventional means of adding value to adoptable wild horses and burros. Instead of trainer challenges or employment of private horse trainers, this program replicates the human benefits in the spirit of Inmate Wild Horse Training, but offers the same opportunity to at-risk persons in lieu of entering the corrections system. The training program will be equal in intensity and purpose to the prison programs, but will not incur the infrastructure and security costs inherent to the prison system. This will multiply community and donor support; will save State and local governments substantial corrections funds; will create future employment and life skills as well as more adopter resources; will produce a more adoptable horse; and most importantly, will alter life courses. These training precepts can easily be modified for young or older persons, veterans, or disabled persons, and can expand to the development of the trained horse for specific markets.
(Program outline available)

4. Public Interaction

The Center can serve as a wild horse and burro information hub, but this can and should entail much more than the standard pamphlets, posters, and trinkets. Consider an art and photo gallery; kids' area; special event stage; live horse and burro exhibit; fossil and artifact exhibit; library with books, films, and other resources - outside the norm of agency parameters. If the Center chooses to offer tack and gear making, for example, this visitor area can be a storefront. The community should be actively involved in this component.

5. Apprenticeship and Wild Horse and Burro Teams

This Center can also offer housing and education for the development of apprenticeship and intern programs. Horse training and public information can be a module of that experience, or the entire program could be headquartered at the Center. If agencies move toward teams of wild horse and burro specialists to accomplish specific tasks (as mobile units), the Center can similarly provide experience and accommodations for those persons.

6. Funding

The success of a Wild Horse and Burro Training/Adoption/Education Center hinges on partnerships. Its core concept places wild horses and burros in closer contact with the public, and integrates the needs of the human population with the proven healing properties of the wild horse and burro. These fundamentals will translate into much greater financial stability and program sustainability than is currently being realized, with the long-term asset of constructive public understanding of wild horse and burro issues.