



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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Observation Protocol and Information for the Kiger and Riddle Mountain Herd Management Areas Wild Horse Gather

This protocol was created to ensure the safety of both the horses and the personnel at the gather site(s), and to ensure the least distraction to the gather operation.

You and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) are responsible for your safety. The BLM will see that you get the best opportunity to experience the gather afforded by the terrain, conditions, and the discretion of the contractor and Contracting Officer's Representative. Access to and distance from the capture site location will be determined jointly by the Contractor and the BLM's Contracting Officer's Representative prior to gather operations. Safety of the horses, crew and public, is our top priority.

Observation will be held daily during the Kiger Herd Management Area (HMA) portion of the gather, with a maximum number of 15 people attending each day. There is no safe and adequate viewing opportunity for the capture site in the Riddle Mountain HMA. If you are interested in observing the gather, you must contact Tara Thissell at the BLM Burns District Office to have your name added to the viewing list. Observation will be offered to those on the viewing list in order based on the date in which interest was expressed in attending the gather. The earlier you express interest, the higher in the observation order your name will appear. On observation days, you must check in, in person, individually, with the BLM official at the meeting site (Burns District BLM Office – 28910 Hwy 20 W) to be considered.

The estimated gather start date is proposed for the third or fourth week of August. The dates are subject to change depending upon weather and gather operations. Some days of the gather may not provide a viewing opportunity at the capture site, due to variable circumstances such as moving the trap location (not gathering), no safe area to view activity or disguise vehicles, etc. Notice on the days where no viewing opportunity exists will likely be given on short notice -- perhaps the day before or the morning of the gather operation.

Observers will meet at 4:30 a.m. daily at the Burns BLM District Office in Hines (28910 Hwy 20 West, Hines, OR, 97738) for a short briefing and then be led to and from the gather site by BLM employees. Personal, high clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicles are **REQUIRED**. If you do not have adequate transportation to the observation area, you may attempt to carpool with other observers (at their discretion), but this option is not guaranteed. Make sure the gas tank is topped off and that tires, including spares, are properly inflated. Travel time from the BLM to the observation areas varies between 1-2 hours. Road conditions will range from paved highway to rough and rocky primitive roads.

Dress appropriately for field conditions and to reduce your visibility to the horses. Wear sturdy, broken-in field boots/shoes – count on rocky, rugged terrain, with sagebrush and rocks. Do not wear brightly colored clothing – especially hats; earth tones or dark colors are best. We will be walking a distance to the viewing area; the distance could range from a few hundred yards to a mile. Please bring a lunch and water for the day. Binoculars, camera, lenses, a chair to sit in, etc. and all other personal items should be brought at your necessity and portable enough to carry to the observation site in a single trip. There are no amenities – including no restrooms – and little shade at the observation areas. Please plan accordingly with plenty of water, a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, etc. Temperatures will likely be in the 80s, but could reach mid-90s.

The observation area will be marked or designated. Observers are not permitted to leave the observation area unknowingly to or unaccompanied by the BLM representative. Of course, restroom breaks are okay. Trips to personal vehicles will be limited according to how far away the viewing area is from the parking area. At all other times, observers must stay within/behind the designated area – walking around the gather operation/site is not permitted.

Visitors arriving at an observation site without attending the 4:30 a.m. briefing and subsequent caravan shall not participate in the observation day. Visitors not associated with the observation day will be escorted away from the operational area to ensure their safety as well as the safety of gather personnel and the horses.

Observers are prohibited from riding in government and contractor vehicles and equipment.

Observers are also prohibited from climbing/trespassing onto or in the trucks, equipment or corrals used in the gather operation. These items are property of the private contractor.

Observers should direct their questions/comments to one of the designated BLM representatives on site. We prefer to share information with the entire group and limit one on one conversation. Observers shall not engage with other BLM or contractor staff.

Observers will be polite, professional and respectful to BLM managers and staff and the contractor/employees.

The BLM will caravan with observers from the observation area or temporary holding facilities to the BLM no later than 3 p.m., or as soon as gather operations have stopped for the day.

Uncooperative observers will be escorted away from the gather site by BLM Law Enforcement personnel, and will be prohibited in participating in any subsequent observation days if they are available.

I have read, understand and agree to comply with the above protocols.