



United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Washington, D.C. 20240  
<http://www.blm.gov>

OCT - 7 2014



Mr. Dean Riggs, Chair  
Northwest Resource Advisory Council  
Bureau of Land Management  
Northwest Colorado District  
2815 H Road  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81506

Dear Mr. Riggs:

Thank you for your letter to Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell regarding the Northwest Colorado Resource Advisory Council's (RAC) resolution to support a pilot population control program for the Sand Wash Herd Management Area (HMA). Secretary Jewell asked the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to respond to your letter.

The BLM appreciates the RAC's interest in possible methods to control wild horse populations on Colorado's rangelands in order to maintain a thriving natural ecological balance. Population control in HMAs is one of the most complex issues facing the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program. We have been in discussions for several years with Dr. Kirk Shiner regarding his potential population control method and have invited him to submit a proposal for a research project to evaluate the usefulness of this approach. Once the BLM receives Dr. Shiner's research proposal, the Wild Horse and Burro Research Group and National Academy of Sciences will review and consider it for application in the field. If approved, the BLM would work with Dr. Shiner to determine logistics and study design for application. The BLM would complete an environmental analysis as required by the National Environmental Policy Act prior to any field application in an HMA.

The BLM is using contraceptives as a management tool on three of its HMAs, including Sand Wash Basin in Colorado.

If you have additional questions or comments, please contact Ed Roberson, BLM Assistant Director for Resources and Planning, at 202-208-6731.

Sincerely,

Steven A. Ellis  
Deputy Director, Operations

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