



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Burns District Office
28910 Hwy 20 West, Hines, OR 97738



Observation Protocol and Information for the Stinkingwater Herd Management Area 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.

Gather dates are tentatively scheduled for August 15 – 30, 2021. 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.

Observation will be held daily, on a first come, first served basis, with a maximum number of 12 people attending each day. On the first day, only six public vehicles will be permitted so we can evaluate parking near the observation area. Additional vehicles may be permitted after the first day. Carpooling is allowed at your own discretion. You may attend multiple, consecutive observation days as long as you are within the first come, first served maximum.

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 short distance to the viewing area; the distance could range from a few hundred yards to a mile. There are no amenities – including no restrooms – and little to no shade at the gather site. Please plan accordingly and bring plenty of water, food, a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, etc. Binoculars, camera, lenses, a chair to sit in, and all other personal items should be brought at your necessity and portable enough to carry on your own to the observation site in a single trip. Temperatures will likely be in the 90s.

Observers will meet at 5 a.m. daily, beginning August 15, at the Burns BLM District Office in Hines (28910 Hwy 20 West, Hines, OR, 97738) for a short briefing and then caravan to and from the gather site, following BLM representatives. Personal, high clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicles are required. Make sure the gas tank is topped off and that tires, including spares, are properly inflated. Travel time from the BLM to the observation area is approximately 1 to 1.5 hours. Road conditions will range from paved highway to rough and rocky.

Access to and distance from the capture site location will be determined jointly by the contractor and the agency's Contracting Officer's Representative prior to gather operations. Safety of the horses, crew and public is our top priority.

Visitors arriving at observation site without attending the 5 a.m. briefing and subsequent caravan without prior arrangement with the BLM Representative shall not participate in the observation day. BLM Law Enforcement personnel will escort these visitors to a designated free-speech area.

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

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 and ongoing gather operations. At all other times, observers must stay within/behind the designated area – walking around the gather operation/site is not permitted.

Observers are 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. Some capture sites and temporary holding facilities are located on private property. Public access onto private property is at the discretion of the landowner.

Observers should direct their questions/comments to one of the designated BLM representatives on site. Observers shall not engage with other BLM or contractor staff.

When given the signal that the helicopter is close to the gather site, observers should sit or crouch down in the observation area and should not move or talk as the horses are guided into the corral. Movement and other distractions may bring more stress to the horses as they come into the holding pens.

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

The BLM will caravan with observers away from the gather site no later than 3 p.m., or as soon as gather operations have stopped for the day. Observers may, unattended, view gathered horses as they are unloaded at Oregon's Off-Range Wild Horse and Burro Facility in Hines during regular business hours – 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday. Observation after hours or on weekends must be accompanied by a BLM representative.

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