



Know Before You Go

Attending the South Steens Wild Horse Gather - *September 2022*

Thank you for taking the opportunity to observe BLM wild horse gather operations in the South Steens Herd Management Area. We hope you find the day informative and educational. Before you head out to the observation site, there are several things you must know.

Observation Days

- The public is welcome to view the South Steens HMA gather. You must call ahead, by 5 p.m. PST the previous day, to let us know of your planned attendance: 541-573-4519.
- Observers will assemble at the BLM Burns District Office at 28910 Hwy 20 W in Hines. Assembly times will vary. Visitors should be ready for meeting times between 4 and 6 a.m. After a briefing, BLM staff will escort the observers to the capture site.
- The BLM will provide observation opportunities so long as participants do not disrupt operations or create conditions that jeopardize the safety of the animals, observers, contractors, or BLM staff.
- Observation is held on a first come, first served basis. Every effort will be made to accommodate everyone interested each day; however, participation may be limited and/or some days of the gather may not provide a viewing opportunity due to variable circumstances such as moving the trap location (not gathering), no safe area to view activity or disguise vehicles, rainy or windy conditions (not gathering), poor vehicle access, 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. You may attend multiple, consecutive observation days as long as you are within the first come, first served maximum (if one is set).
- The number of media and public in the gather observation site may be limited in order to allow for social distancing. The CDC has offered guidance to help people visiting public lands prevent the spread of infectious diseases. We will continue to monitor all functions to ensure that visitors adhere to CDC guidance for mitigating risks associated with the transmission of COVID-19 and take any additional steps necessary to protect public health.
- 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. Observation areas will be established to provide observation opportunities that will not disrupt round up activities. Observers must stay in areas designated. Terrain and topography will dictate the location of trap sites, and some may provide better viewing than others.
- Visitors may be allowed at the temporary holding corrals at the completion of daily gathering operations.

BLM staff will be on hand to answer questions. Observation areas will be established.

- Horses gathered from the South Steens HMA will be taken to Oregon's Off-Range Wild Horse Corrals in Hines. You may see the animals and the facility unescorted during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Many horses from the South Steens gather will be available for adoption beginning in late December 2022 or early January 2023. Adoption horses have yet to be selected. The method of adoption (online event, in-person event, first come first serve, etc.) is still under consideration as well.

Conditions

- There are no facilities, including restrooms, at the observation sites. There will be restroom opportunities before we head out and when we return. You will be at the observation site most of the day, so plan accordingly.
- Cell service is limited or nonexistent in much of the area. Plan to be out of range for most of the day.
- You must bring your own food and water.
- You must provide your own transportation. Government vehicles cannot be used to transport you or your gear to the trap sites, holding corrals or the Wild Horse Corrals.
- Roads are rugged and rocky. A high clearance four-wheel-drive vehicle is required. Your tires must be in good condition, and you must have a fully inflated spare in good condition and tire changing equipment. A shovel is a good tool to have along. We strongly recommend heavy-duty off-road tires, especially if you plan multiple trips.
- Be prepared for weather extremes. You will need a jacket for the cool mornings, as we will usually depart before sunrise. Afternoon temperatures will climb into the 90s on many days. There is limited shade. Bring a hat, sunscreen, sunglasses and other appropriate protective clothing. You are welcome to bring a lightweight camp-style chair to the observation site. We do not allow pop up shade structures.
- Parking will be limited at many observation locations. Be prepared to hike into some locations. Some hikes could be arduous involving steep and rocky terrain. Please do not park on top of tall vegetation due to wildfire risk.
- Binoculars are strongly recommended. You are welcome to bring cameras and video gear, but you must follow BLM staff instructions regarding placement at the capture site. Drones are not allowed.
- Please do not wear brightly colored clothing or hats.

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