

Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program Team Assessment Report

September 18, 2024

Gather Name: Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Gather

State: Colorado

District/Field Office: Upper Colorado River District/Grand Junction Field Office

Incident Commander: Isaac Pittman

Lead COR: Lynae Rogers

Gather Method: Helicopter Drive Trapping

CAWP Assessment Team Members: Jerrie Bertola, Jake Benson, and John Hall

Assessment Dates: September 14-16, 2024

Total Number of CAWP Gather Standards: 206

Number of Applicable CAWP Gather Standards: 169

Compliance with Applicable CAWP Standards: 153

Compliance with Applicable CAWP Standards: 153/169 = 91%

Understanding Assessments: Assessments serve to provide a comprehensive snapshot of activities at a specific moment in time. This framework helps ensure a clear and unbiased evaluation of events or actions as they occur. The CAWP's comprehensive approach aims to promote the welfare of wild horses and burros during management activities while minimizing stress and ensuring humane care, handling and treatment. Here are some key points:

- **Holistic Approach:** Assessments reflect the entirety of the activity, not targeting individuals or specific groups.
- **Time-Specific:** The evaluation focuses solely on the observed circumstances during the assessment period.
- **Limitations:** Previous or subsequent events are not accounted for, meaning the assessment is a standalone observation.

General Notes from the CAWP Team from the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Gather:

Coordination and Communication

- **Gather Team Collaboration:** There was excellent cooperation among the gather team, which included BLM, APHIS, and contractors.
- **Knowledge of Standards:** The gather team was knowledgeable about the CAWP standards.

Gather Techniques

- **Pressure and Release:** There was effective use of pressure and release techniques while herding wild horses, even in challenging windy conditions.

Decision Making

- **Mare and Foal Considerations:** Discussions were held regarding whether a mare with a young foal should be gathered.

- Outcome: Due to the location of the mare and foal within the management area and the numbers already gather in that specific area, it was decided that the mare and foal could remain on the range.

Additional Challenges

- External Involvement: The Gather Team encountered complexities due to additional individuals outside the gather team being involved.
- Impact on Efficiency: These complexities occasionally interfered with the efficiency of handling the wild horses, though the gather team managed the situations as best as possible.

Conditions found to be in non-compliance with the CAWP Standards for Wild Horse and Burro Gatherers:

Trap Site

Facility Design Standard

I.A.13 All gates and panels in the animal holding and handling pens and alleys of the trap site must be covered with materials such as plywood, snow fence, tarps, burlap, etc. approximately 48” in height to provide a visual barrier for the animals. All materials must be secured in place.

Non-Compliance: No visual barrier on the bow gate in the back of the trap pen leading into the sorting pens. The material used on the outside of the trap was not secured at the bottom, causing the material to flap in the wind.

Temporary Holding

Facility Design Standard

I.A.1 The trap site and temporary holding facility must be constructed of stout materials and must be maintained in proper working condition, including gates that swing freely and latch or tie easily.

Non-Compliance: The gates in the alley were not secure and would open when bumped as the animals were worked through the alley into the chute.

Standard

I.A.5 The temporary holding facility must have a sufficient number of pens available to sort WH&Bs according to gender, age, number, temperament, or physical condition.

Non-Compliance: There were not enough pens to sort wild horses according to gender, age, number, temperament, or physical condition.

Standard

I.A.5.b Alternate pens must be made available for the following:

- 1) WH&Bs that are weak or debilitated
- 2) Mares/jennies with dependent foals

Non-Compliance: Mares with dependent foals were not separated from other mares.

Standard

I.A.5.c WH&Bs in pens at the temporary holding facility should be maintained at a proper stocking density such that when at rest all WH&Bs occupy no more than half the pen area.

Non-Compliance: The stocking density in the mare and weaned foal pens was not stocked to allow for half the pen to be unoccupied when wild horses were at rest.

Standard

I.A.13 All gates and panels in the animal holding and handling pens and alleys of the trap site must be covered with materials such as plywood, snow fence, tarps, burlap, etc. approximately 48" in height to provide a visual barrier for the animals. All materials must be secured in place.

Non-Compliance: Visual barriers were not on gates in the alley. The material used was not secured in place and flapped in the wind.

Standard

I.A.13.b For alleys and small internal handling pens, material covering panels and gates should extend from no more than 12 inches below the top of the panel or gate toward the ground to facilitate visibility of animals and the use of flags and paddles during sorting.

Non-Compliance: Visual barriers were not present on two of the panels in the back of the alley that were part of the internal holding pens.

Standard

I.A.14 Non-essential personnel and equipment must be located to minimize disturbance of WH&Bs.

Non-Compliance: BLM allowed non-gather team personnel to have access and played a hands-on role in selecting and sorting animals at the temporary holding corrals. This caused delays when sorting the wild horses due to disagreements on what wild horses should be removed or

what wild horse was in the chute. This situation led to wild horses being sorted multiple times, therefore increasing the risk of injury to the wild horses and personnel involved.

Wild Horse and Burro Care Feeding and Watering

Standard

III.B.1.b Water must be provided at a minimum rate of ten gallons per 1000 pound animal per day, adjusted accordingly for larger or smaller horses, burros and foals, and environmental conditions, with each trough placed in a separate location of the pen (i.e. troughs at opposite ends of the pen).

Non-Compliance: The troughs provided enough water per day; however, they were not distributed at opposite ends of all pens and were instead placed together in one location.

Standard

III.B.1.c.ii Hay placement must allow all WH&Bs to eat simultaneously.

Non-Compliance: All animals could not eat simultaneously.

Wild Horse and Burro Care

Standard

III.B.4.d Alternate pens must be made available for the following:
1) WH&Bs that are weak or debilitated
2) Mares/jennies with dependent foals

Non-Compliance: A mare with an injured hoof and her dependent foal were not provided a pen as a weak or debilitated animal. Additionally, a pen for just mares and dependent foals was not provided.

Standard

III.B.4.f WH&Bs in pens at the temporary holding facility should be maintained at a proper stocking density such that when at rest all WH&Bs occupy no more than half the pen area.

Non-Compliance: The stocking density of the mare and the weaned foal pens did not allow for half the pen to be unoccupied when wild horses were at rest.

General Handling

Standard

IV.B.2 WH&Bs should be handled to enter runways or chutes in a forward direction.

Non-Compliance: Multiple wild horses were worked through the alley and chute in a backwards direction.

Handling Aids

Standard

IV.C.1 Handling aids such as flags and shaker paddles must be the primary tools for driving and moving WH&Bs during handling and transport procedures. Contact of the flag or paddle end of primary handling aids with a WH&B is allowed. Ropes looped around the hindquarters may be used from horseback or on foot to assist in moving an animal forward or during loading.

Non-Compliance: Contact with the flag or paddle end is allowed, but the handle was repeatedly used as a poking device and should not come into contact with wild horses.

Transportation

General Transportation

Standard

V.A.2 WH&Bs identified for removal should be shipped from the temporary holding facility to a BLM facility within 48 hours.

Non-Compliance: Even though wild horses identified for removal changed over time, individual wild horses identified for removal were not shipped within 48 hours.

Standard

V.A.3 Shipping should occur in the following order of priority; 1) debilitated animals, 2) pairs, 3) weanlings, 4) dry mares and 5) studs.

Non-Compliance: Shipping did not occur in the identified order. Stallions and mares were shipped first leaving newly weaned foals in the temporary holding corral for additional days.

Table 1: Overall Summary Rating Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Gather

	Total Numbers	Percent Compliant	Rating
Trap Site	58/59	98%	Excellent
Temporary Holding	53/66	80%	Complies
Transportation	42/44	95%	Good
Gather Compliance	153/169	91%	Good

Final CAWP Assessment Rating: Good. 91% of applicable CAWP standards were met overall. Possible ratings for CAWP Assessments are 96-100% Excellent, 86-95% Good, 70-85% Complies, and 0-69% Failure to Comply.