

Visitation Protocol and Ground Rules for the 2020 Paisley Desert HMA Emergency Wild Horse Gather

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recognizes and respects the right of interested members of the public and the press to observe the 2020 Paisley Desert HMA Emergency Wild Horse Gather. At the same time, the BLM must ensure the health and safety of the public, BLM's employees and contractors, and America's wild horses and burros. Accordingly, the BLM developed these rules to maximize the opportunity for reasonable public access to the gather while ensuring that the BLM's health and safety responsibilities are fulfilled. Failure to maintain safe distances from operations at the gather and temporary holding sites could result in members of the public inadvertently getting in the path of the wild horses and burros or gather personnel, thereby placing themselves and others at risk, or causing stress and potential injury to the wild horses and burros.

- Public observation opportunities and gather operations may be suspended if bad weather conditions create unsafe conditions. All media and/or visitors wanting to go to the gather site must call Lisa McNee, Public Affairs Specialist, at (541) 947-6811 for daily meeting times as the time to meet is subject to change.
- Observers must provide their own 4-wheel drive high clearance vehicle, appropriate shoes, clothing, food, water, and extra gas.
- Observers are prohibited from riding in government and contractor vehicles and equipment.
- The BLM will establish one observation area, in the immediate area of the gather and possibly holding sites; BLM staff will escort individuals to each location. This area will be placed to maximize the opportunity for public observation while providing for a safe and effective wild horses gather. The utilization of such observation areas is necessary due to the use and presence of heavy equipment and aircraft within the gather operation and the critical need to allow BLM personnel and contractors to fully focus on attending to the needs of the wild horses and burros while maintaining a safe environment for all involved. In addition, observation areas will be sited to protect the wild horses and burros from being spooked, startled, or impacted in a manner that results in increased or unnecessary stress.
- Every effort is made to maximize viewing opportunities while ensuring safe and effective gather operations. Once an observation area is determined, it CANNOT be moved during that day's activities unless otherwise directed by the BLM.
- A BLM representative will escort visitors to and from the gather and/or temporary holding facility during designated observation days.
- Visitors deciding to leave the gather site will not be allowed to return to gather activities for that day.
- Visitors will be assigned to a specific BLM representative and must always stay with that person.
- Individuals will be directed to the designated observation area by BLM personnel and informed of behavioral rules (such as remaining quiet and still to ensure a safe and effective gather operation).

- Visitors are NOT permitted to walk around the gather site and must always be accompanied by their BLM representative.
- Observers are prohibited from climbing on to or trespassing into the BLM or Contractor's vehicles, equipment, or corrals.
- When the BLM is using a helicopter or other heavy equipment in close proximity to a designated observation area, members of the public may be asked to stay by their vehicle for some time before being escorted to an observation area until the use of the helicopter or the heavy machinery is complete.
- When given the signal that the helicopter is close to the gather site bringing wild horses and burros in, visitors must sit down in areas specified by the BLM representatives and must not move or talk as the horses and burros are guided into the corral.
- Visitors must direct their questions and or comments to either their designated BLM representative or the BLM spokesperson on-site. Visitors may not engage other BLM or contract staff disrupting their gather duties and responsibilities - professional and respectful behavior is expected of all.
- The BLM may make other BLM and contractor staff available during down times for a Q&A session.
- Individuals attempting to move outside a designated observation area will be requested to move back to the designated area. Failure to do so may result in being asked to leave the gather operation and/or receive a citation and/or arrest. It is important to stay within the designated observation area to safely observe the wild horse and burro gather.
- Visitors who do not cooperate and follow the rules will be escorted off the gather site by BLM law enforcement personnel and will be prohibited from participating in any subsequent observation days.
- The BLM reserves the right to alter these rules based on changes in circumstances that may pose a risk to health, public safety or the safety of wild horses and burros (such as weather, lightening, wildfire, etc.)
- The health and safety of our visitors, employees, volunteers, and partners continues to be paramount. We continue to work closely with the Department of the Interior and follow CDC guidance to ensure public and employee spaces are safe and clean for visitors, employees, partners, and volunteers.
- 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. During the gather, the observants should follow local area health orders including Governor Sisolak's [standards](#) for individuals, businesses and employers, practice [Leave No Trace](#) principles, practice social distancing and avoid high-risk outdoor activities.
- The BLM reserves the right to limit media/public observers in order to comply with CDC guidance for social distancing. Media/Public will be expected to wear masks in the viewing area and provide their own hand sanitizer.