



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Overview of BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program

**Bruce Rittenhouse, Acting Division Chief, Wild Horse and Burros
Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting
Salt Lake City, Utah | 2018**





Presentation Overview

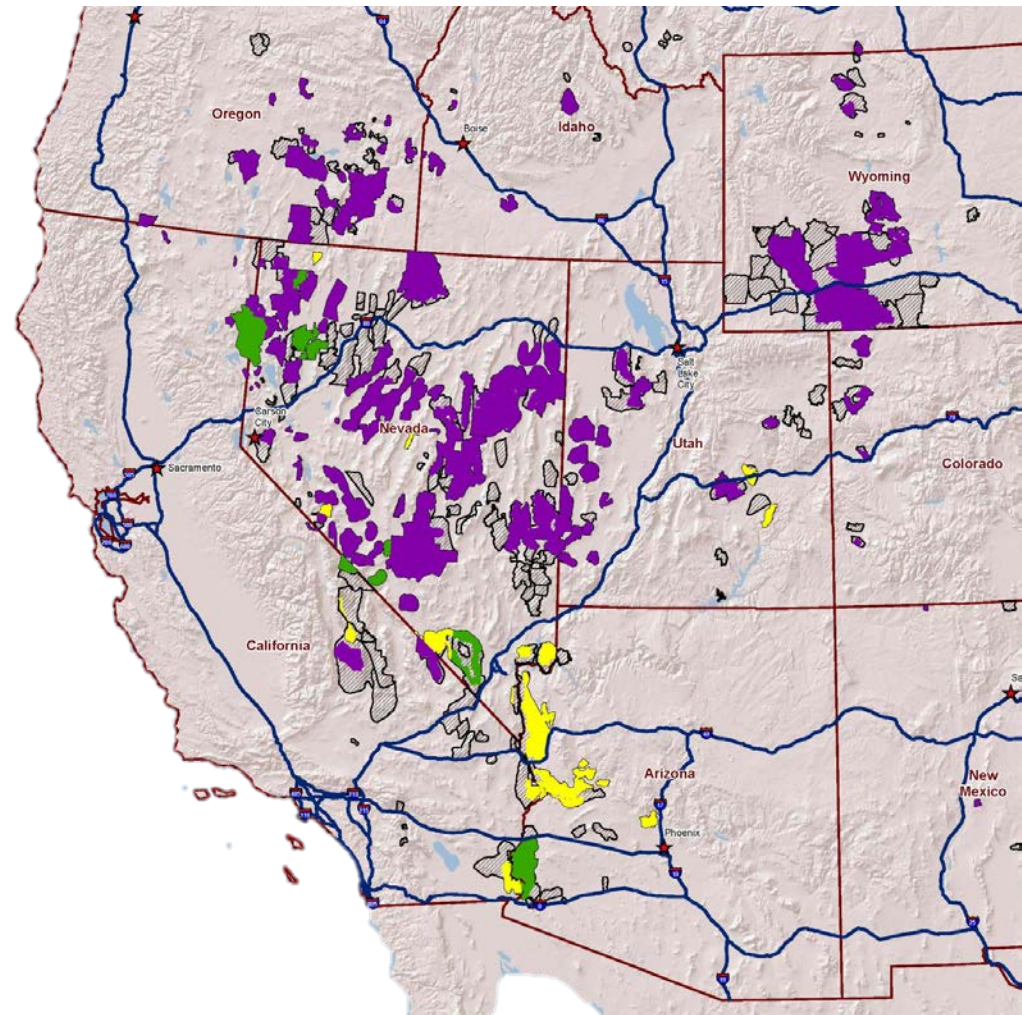
- Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (1971 as amended)
- Status of Wild Horse and Burro Program
- Urgency of the Situation
- Solutions and Management tools





Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971

- Signed into Law (PL 92-195) – December 1971
- *“living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the west . . . enrich the lives of the American people”*
- *“to **protect** and **manage** wild horses and burros as **components** of the public lands” managed in a “manner that is designed to achieve and maintain a **“thriving natural ecological balance”**”*





Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971

- *“Wild horses and burros shall be considered comparably with other resource values”*
- Applies to public lands administered by BLM & USFS
- Manage where found in 1971
- Management at the *“minimum feasible level”*



Wild Horse and Burros – by the numbers

- 10 Western states
- 177 Herd Management Areas
- 26.9 million acres of public rangelands
- 27,000 animals is the Appropriate Management Level
- 82,000 animals on the range (as of March 2018)
 - one-half population in Nevada alone
- 48,028 animals currently in in holding
 - 11,444 in corrals
 - 36,584 in pastures
- 4,647 adopted/sold in 2018
- 11,264 removed from the range in FY2018





Overpopulation on the Range



25,000

wild horses and burros lived on public lands in 1971



27,000

wild horses and burros can live in balance with wildlife and livestock on healthy public lands



82,000

wild horses and burros live on public lands in 2018



The Wild Horse and Burro Program is at a crossroads





Consequences of Inaction

Goshute Herd Management Area

1,162% of
AML

Dead Cedar Spring





Consequences of Inaction

Antelope Valley HMA

678% of AML

2012

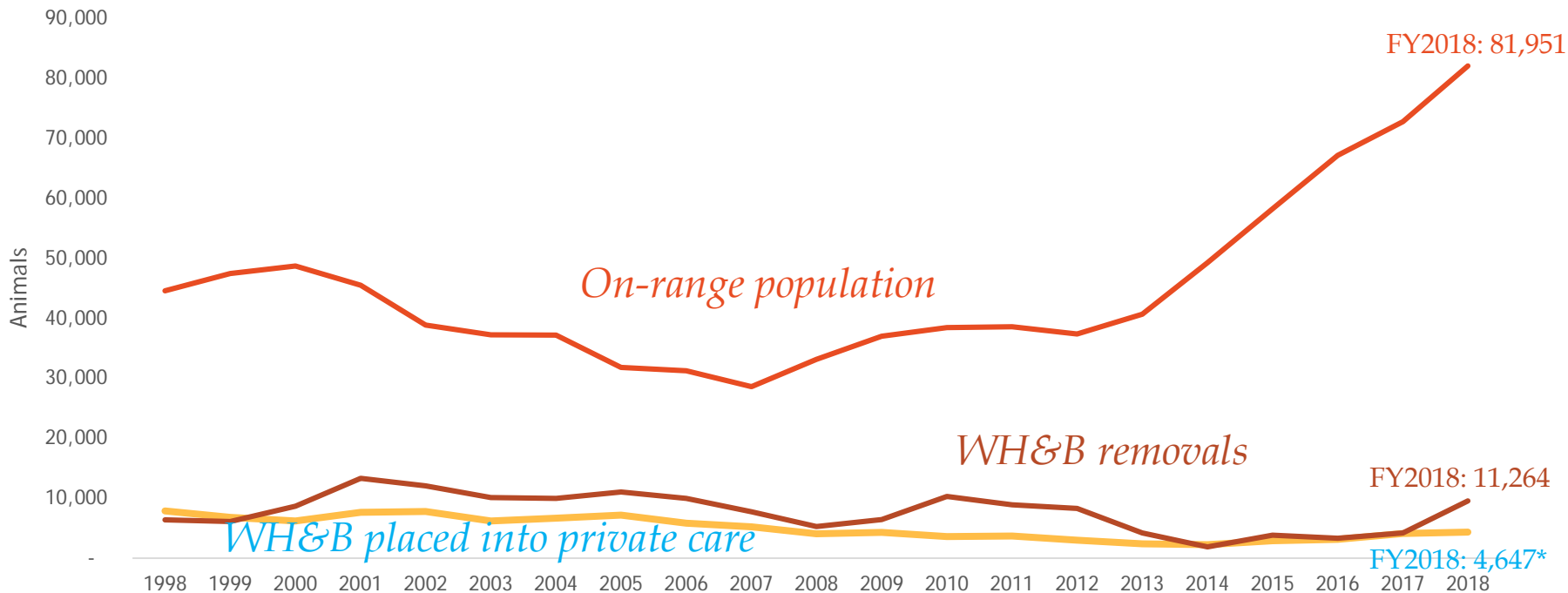
2018





Low rate of private care

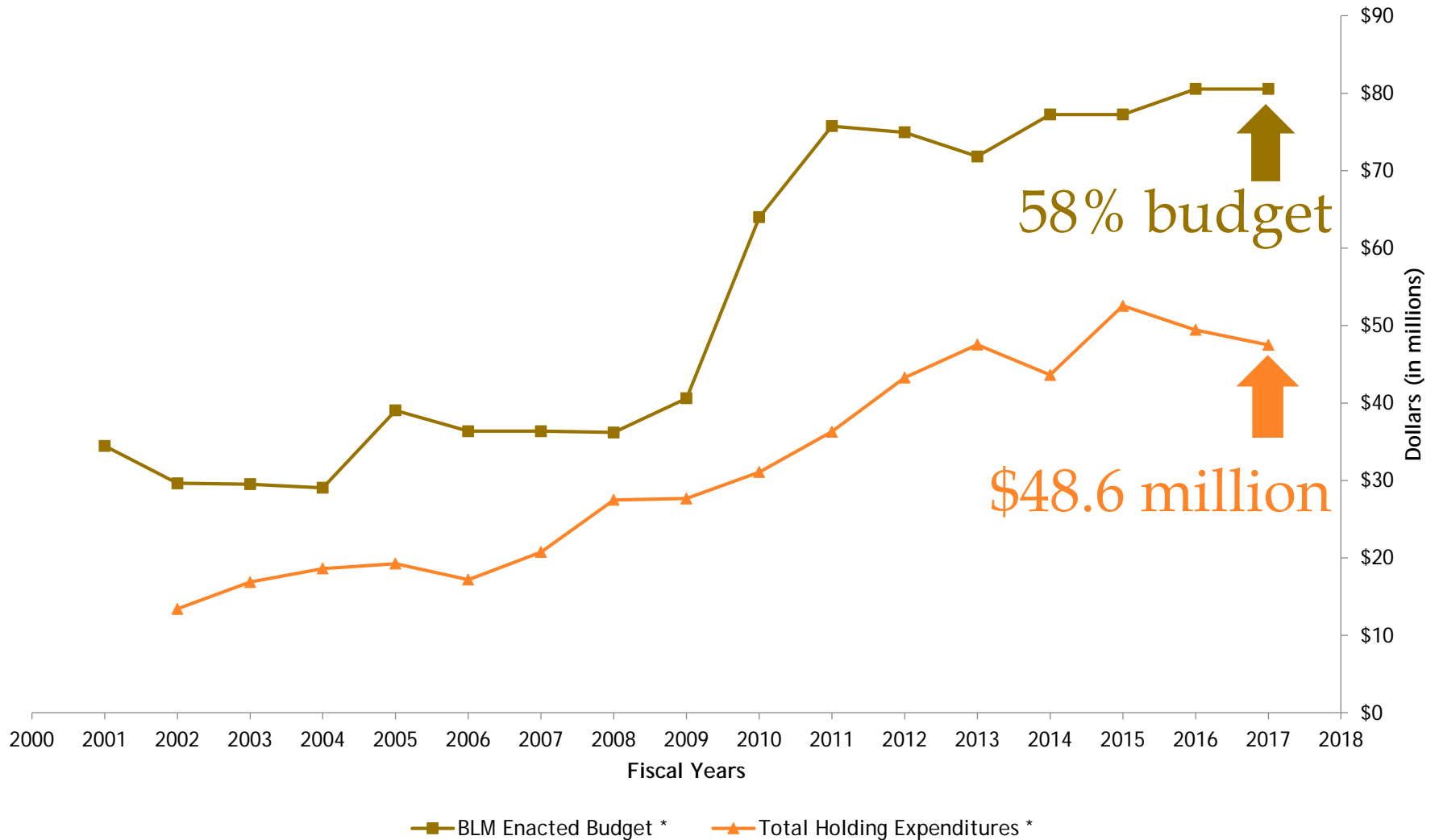
- Too few wild horses and burros are placed into private homes each year.
- At the same time, herds continue to increase rapidly on public lands.



*tentative



High Off-Range Costs





Example of Escalating Holdings Costs

- 36,584 horses in long-term pastures
- Average Cost/Day/Animal = \$2.00

Cost for one day	\$73,168
Cost per Year for 35,000 animals	\$26,706,320
Cost per Average lifetime of horse in holding (15-20 years)	\$400,594,800 to \$534,126,400



Urgency of Situation

- Nearly every HMA is overpopulated
- Degradation of public lands is increasing
- Emergency gathers increasing to save animals from thirst or starvation
- Greater impacts to private property and public safety





Solutions/tools

BLM efforts include:

- Continue to remove excess animals
- Fertility control (temporary and permanent)
- Increase adoptions and sales
- Strengthen and Expand partnerships
- Working with more volunteers
- Transferring animals to public agencies
- Other legislative authorities





Discussion

