

Why Secretary Salazar's Wild Horse Plan Falls Short

While Secretary Salazar is to be commended for acknowledging the need to reform BLM's wild horse and burro program, his proposal fails to address the fundamental flaws in the agency's approach to this issue that have led to decades of mismanagement. The Salazar plan:

- **Is fiscally irresponsible**— American taxpayers and wild horses lose under this plan.
- **Continues business-as-usual roundups** of wild horses and burros taken off of *public* lands to be warehoused at taxpayers' expense on *private* land.
- **Fails to address** failed BLM management strategies, including artificially low Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) for wild horses and burros.
- **Continues inequitable use of public lands**, with livestock grazing given priority over wild horses, burros and other wildlife species.
- **Omits incentives and authorizations for ranchers to retire or convert public grazing allotments** to support wild horses and other wildlife species.

Eastern/Midwestern Preserves Don't Make Sense

Secretary Salazar is requesting an additional \$42.5 million to purchase private land in the Midwest and East to house horses taken from public land in the West. The Secretary's plan to create "preserves" is flawed both from a fiscal and policy perspective. Among the problems:

- **Bad fiscal policy:** The use of tax dollars to purchase *private* lands in the Midwest or East to house horses taken from *Western public* lands, which the taxpayers already own, makes no fiscal sense. Since privately owned livestock are allocated a far greater share of BLM lands than wild horses, why not let ranchers graze their cattle on private lands in the Midwest and free up publicly-owned resources for wild horses to remain on their natural western ranges? This would save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars a year in roundup and maintenance costs.
- **Perpetuating a broken management model:** Nationalized wild horse holding facilities will need to be continually restocked with horses taken from their Western ranges. This provides no incentive for BLM' to change its inhumane and costly policy of mass roundup and removal.
- **No educational or ecotourism value:** Secretary Salazar states these preserves will attract ecotourism dollars, however the educational and tourism value of wild horses held in domestic pasture conditions, with gelded [castrated] stallions, sex-segregated pastures and mares separated from foals, is minimal at best. These conditions permanently destroy the natural social structure of wild herds that is intrinsic to their value as wild horses.

Plan to manage wild horse reproduction on the range not enough

Fertility control has been documented to be effective in controlling wild horse population growth, but it is just one component of an effective on the range management plan. Other components must include:

- Re-evaluation of artificially low Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) for wild horses and burros.
- Increasing AML's by limiting or eliminating livestock grazing within Herd Management Areas through voluntary public grazing allotment buyouts or tax credits for voluntary retirement of grazing allotments.
- Respecting natural herd dynamics and social organization and committing to minimally intrusive management.
- Restoring the natural balance of the land, including restoring and protecting predators.
- Utilizing PZP fertility control in genetically viable herds where necessary.