

# Commission for the Preservation of Wild Horses

COMMISSION MEETING  
November 14, 2003

Commissioners and Staff Present:

Commissioner M. Kirk, DVM, Chairman  
Commissioner Gracian Uhalde, Vice Chairman  
Commissioner Julie Von Tobel Gleason  
Commissioner Christine Brehm  
Commissioner Jim Evans

Others Present:Others Present:Others Present:

David Thane, Dept. of Agriculture, DVM  
Frank Cassas, National Wild Horse Foundation  
Carol Alm, National Wild Horse Foundation  
John Falen, National Wild Horse Foundation  
Bob Abbey, State Director, BLM  
Linda Cardenas, Las Vegas, BLM  
Ron Hall, BLM  
Susie Stokke, BLM  
Sherry O'Mahoney, VRWPA  
John Fallen, Wild Horse and Burro Foundation  
Maxine Shane, BLM  
Cindy Jacobsen, Reno Wild Horse Assn.

The Commission meeting started 10:30am with all Commissioners present. Chairman Kirk started the meeting with a brief public comment period showing a video produced by Mike Kerson, (Video Mike Productions) of the Blue Wing wild horse and burro gather in August 2003, and their subsequent adoption. Mr. Kerson explained that they had adopted 4 mustangs in the past and had arranged with the Commission to attend a gather to document the process. Mr. Kerson showed the video to the meeting.

**3)\*Discussion and Decision re: An update on activities in the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program to include, but not limited to, fertility control programs and results, the current gather schedule, projections for establishment of AML's, and**

**emergency gathers. The Commission will also discuss potential actions that may be taken to encourage BLM to identify and achieve AML's and also program mandates.**

Ron Hall, from the Wild Horse and Burro Program office in Reno and operational arm of the Washington BLM office concentrates mainly on management of wild horses and burros on the land, made a presentation to the Commission. He explained that his involvement w/the program pre-dates the start of the horse program back in 1971, and in all aspects of the program over the years. He explained that approximately 1,500 mares have currently been injected w/PZP, a fertility control drug being tested by the BLM. He noted that horses on Chincoteague Island off the coast of Virginia, have a stabilized population with the use of this drug. Mr. Hall explained that initially this was a two shot method and the need to hold horses 3-4 weeks for booster shots. He added how impractical this method was in that holding the horses wasn't working well for the horses. He explained that currently a one shot method has been developed with a one month and three month pellet which can be effective for one year and that now a two year program has been developed. In 2001, he explained that 96 clan alpine horses were treated w/PZP which was studied and proved to be 94% effective in the first year. In year two it was 82% effective. In year three there was residual effect, not all mares returned to fertility, estimated to be 68% effective.

Mr. Hall expressed that a team had been put together to work on this program. The team consists of one member from BLM, one from the Biological Resources Division under the USDA, and member from APHIS. The team developed a Strategic Research Plan to develop programs in fertility control, health and handling, census techniques, pop modeling, and genetic conservation. He added that the Team has requested proposals for research with other fertility control methods. Mr. Hall added that he felt the most promising was a combination of GNRH, spayvac, PZP and IUD's.

Mr. Hall explained there is ongoing research studies with different fertility control methods using college student monitoring the horses on a daily basis. They are also studying and considering behavioral affects.

Mr. Hall reported that the upcoming Nellis gather was proposing a 2 year time release method on 300 mares, and also 200-250 mares on the Calico's Complex gather. He added that at the present time funding has been primarily for the PZP (16 years of research) management plan (EA) treatment protocol (# you treat, monitoring plan in place to follow up, which treatments to use).

Mr. Hall explained Freuns complete, which is a synthetic (rancid butter), which contains a tuberculin bacteria, which can result in a positive TB test. In wildlife PZP has caused minor abscesses but has not been found to occur in wild horses. Mr. Hall stated that PZP may not be the ultimate fertility control agent out there and BLM is willing to look at anything that may surface and be viable options for the program.

Mr. Hall recognized that Dr.'s Shiner and Voss, from Colorado presented to the Commission their proposal for fertility control for stallions a year ago. Mr. Hall said he followed up with Al Cain and found that the agent in fact was GNRH with work done by Dr's Voss and Shiner injecting into the testes. He explained that no results were published from their work, the effort was dropped, understanding that the technique was not patient friendly, animals needed to be immobilized, Mr. Hall noted that the BLM will follow up on the technique and investigate how it may or may not be used.

Commissioner Evans questioned why BLM criteria dictates that fertility control must be reversible?

Mr. Hall explained that the BLM and interest groups felt that genetic conservation and planning were crucial to management and in the forefront was how to preserve the genetics of small herds. He added there had always been considerable opposition to permanent sterilization

Commissioner Evans asked how BLM was planning to preserve genetic capabilities?

Mr. Hall explained that criteria must first be developed to determine which are permanent characteristics to manage for versus not.

Commissioner Evans stressed good animal husbandry and pointed out that it seems that all work has targeted the mares versus the studs.

Mr. Hall responded that Commissioner Evans had a good point. He added that early on the studies involved stallions but in pop dynamics models, it is found that many times bands are unstable with bachelors breeding and others interchanging relationships that show one stallion is not always covering the same mares. He expressed that limited funding slows down research and that they are trying to get the best agent in the field as soon as possible.

Commissioner Kirk stated that he was under the impression sclerosing agent was proposed by Dr's Voss and Shiner, for use on stallions which is non-reversible and that he didn't think it was GNRH versus a sclerosing agent that was being proposed.

Mr. Hall stated that he would look into it and suggested that Dr. Kirk call him the next week for an update and discussion. Dr. Kirk said he would do so.

Commissioner Brehm noted that it has always been a hard time to get BLM to monitor the Nellis herd and it is somewhat impossible given military operations. She asked how BLM was planning to monitor Nellis for the upcoming proposed fertility control implementation?

Mr. Jamrog responded stating that they would monitor with a helicopter during the second year. The program they are implementing doesn't supply funding to monitor afterwards so they will have to find it somehow.

Commissioner Brehm was asking for some assurances that the BLM will be allowed access to monitor.

Administrator Barcomb discussed the fact that BLM had previously done a fertility control implementation program on Nellis in a year when an emergency gather had been done. That a herd in critical condition on a very unhealthy habitat had been treated with absolutely no follow up monitoring. Ms. Barcomb expressed concern with how much money and time had been previously spent with no follow up and what assurances did BLM have this time that monitoring would be accomplished and not another program forgotten.

Mr. Jamrog explained that it was opportunistic to implement the fertility control with the upcoming gather and explained the Gary McFadden would know more as the gather got closer.

Commissioner Evans questioned, why was Nellis chosen for this study given the access and monitoring problems when others are much more accessible?

Mr. Hall explained that the gather was coming up and processes were in place in addition, they have 1,000 doses that need to be used. He added that this was good timing if you can get permission for access.

Linda Cardenas, Las Vegas BLM, added that the military is very supportive of a fertility control program on this herd to slow down recruitment and felt they would cooperate to the extent possible to help them accomplish the necessary monitoring.

Susie Stokke, Wild Horse and Burro Program Specialist for Nevada presented a briefing on the 2004 gather schedule. She felt that with appropriate funding that a minimum of 5,500 would be removed in FY2004 beginning with the Nellis gather. She added that the Nellis gather was proposed to bring in approximately 1200 horses off the range. Ms. Stokke noted that in FY03 that only 3,934 horses were removed and that with a higher goal for FY04, they anticipated reaching their goal of achieving AML by 2005.

Ms. Stokke reported on current appropriate management level (AML) estimates. She reported that there were still some herd management areas (HMA's) without AML's, with 34 to go. Ms. Stokke believed BLM would have them all done by end of FY05 or sooner. She added that she was working on a field strategy wherein 20 would be established in FY04 and the remainder in FY05. She noted that she had been in the Las Vegas office the previous day to set the schedule for the last 4 down there. Ms. Stokke stated some other nicer to do things won't be accomplished because setting the AML is

the highest priority. Ms. Stokke finished by informing the Commission that she would be in the Battle Mountain and Winnemucca Districts the following week to develop strategies to accomplish BLM's goals.

Commissioner Uhalde asked in there was any one District that was behind the others?

Ms. Stokke explained that the Battle Mountain District was facing the greatest challenges, that they were still trying to use Multiple Use Decision process and sometimes those decisions are controversial and take longer to reach consensus. She expressed that they have a big job ahead of them. She added that the Winnemucca District only had one to finish, and that Ely District would be done by the end of December. She noted that the BLM has been experiencing a lot of turnover of skilled employees and that in many of the outlying remote areas, it was hard to fill positions.

Dr. Thane, Nevada State vet with the Nevada Department of Agriculture presented information on programs they are doing with the Virginia range horses. He explained that in 1998 he became the State Veterinarian and quickly realized that something must be done about the Virginia Range horses. He felt that PZP in the state would not be usable because of funding and delivery issues. He expressed that Dr. Jack Ryan, Dr. Lowell Miller, Dr Gary Killiam, Dr. Allisa Camerons, and Mike Holmes are all working on this project. He noted that they had put together a proposal and presented it to the BLM's Advisory Board but that BLM wasn't interested in their proposal. He added they had tried GNRH by Dr. Miller, a positive antibody which stops cycling in mares and also stops testosterone production in stallions. He noted they had treated 5 mares with the GNRH last year. He added that their testing was positive in white tail deer out to about 40 months and they are still waiting for results long term on horses. Dr. Thane expressed that the Morris Foundation had funded some trials, and that they have added another 14 mares to the study.

Dr. Thane explained that Dr. Killian was using IUD's on ponies at Penn State and that fertility control was permanent until the IUD was removed. He added that Dr Killian has developed a circular IUD and they are very early on in studies. He noted that the inmates assist in the studies and do daily observations relating to behavior. Dr. Thane added that they will be testing a limited number up in the Virginia City Highlands (5-10) and working with the locals to monitor the results. Dr. Thane thought that GNRH has potential long term affects. He explained that Dr. Voss is doing surgical sclerocis which is extremely effective in castrating stallions and that you shouldn't see a lot of difference in herd behavior. He added that not enough research has been done on how this will affect fertility rate, too early to tell and field trials on a fairly limited basis would be good.

Commissioner Uhalde asked if they thought they would get conclusive results soon or is

funding the issue? Dr. Thane explained that they had been “shot down” by BLM and the Morris Foundation had provided some funding in the past but money is always an issue. He explained that they will apply to BLM again for funding grants and has thoughts that the Morris Foundation might offer some options for the future.

Commissioner Uhalde complimented and thanked Dr. Thane and encouraged BLM to work with the State of Nevada and Dr. Thane.

Commissioner Gleason asked what the cost difference was between chemical castration versus gelding? Dr. Thane explained, \$20 dose for GNRH which was less time consuming, less morbidity versus castrating which is \$40-\$50 per horse on the low end for Nevada Dept of Agriculture for an estray.

Bob Abbey, BLM, Nevada State Director, expressed that this was an excellent presentations so far, the information from Dr’Voss and Shiner had been forwarded to the Washington Office and the Research Team and have information that was presented forwarded as well. He added that he would defer to Ron Hall as to how it is being looked at.

Dean Bolstad stated that the AML is the most critical priority to BLM and enhancing the adoption program. He noted that there had been 47,400 wild horses on public lands as of Feb 28, 2000, 32,700 as of gathers in the fall of 2003, and prior to foal crop this next spring, approximately another 10-12,000 were to be removed in 04. He noted that there were approximately 21,000 in captivity. He noted that BLM seems stuck on 7,200 per year average for adoption. He felt BLM’s biggest challenge is to balance the program. The BLM had asked the Advisory Board to develop a plan to bolster the program including cost effectiveness He stated he was optimistic about the new marketing plan that was being developed with the Wild Horse Foundation and BLM.

Mr. Bolstad added that the Advisory Board met the previous week and saw the report from the Foundation and BLM. He noted that the Advisory Board encouraged BLM to consider the recommendations. He noted that the big news from the newspapers was incorrect that the BLM was to stop the adoption program, in reality the suggestions was to ANALYZE what would happen if adoptions were de-emphasized and gather and long tem holding were a priority for a short term. They are currently analyzing the proposal suggested by Larry Johnson, a member of the Advisory Board.

Larry Johnson, Wildlife representative to the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board, Nevadan, Chairman of the Nevada coalition of wildlife and President of Nevada Bighorns explained that he wanted his involvement on the board to hopefully make a difference on public lands. He applauded BLM's goal to achieve AML by 2005. He states that he feels that given budget constraints that more funding is necessary to achieve the goals. That there is a need to look at contingency programs. Mr. Johnson stated that he does not want loss of achievements over the past years and asked BLM to analyze the

financial aspects of de-emphasizing adoptions or curtailing them altogether at the more expensive sites and capitalizing on existing facilities. He stated that when you place animals in long term holding the result is also a long term commitment for the life of the animals. He also asked BLM to consider the economic impacts to leaving excess populations on the range. Once AML is achieved then the program should sustain itself with adoptions exceeding animals removed from the range. He noted that he was encouraging other aggressive alternatives

Commissioner Uhalde asked the Commission to support Mr. Johnson's recommendation of alternative proposals. Mr. Uhalde wanted to motion to support Mr. Johnson's thrust to the fullest by supporting the National Advisory Board on alternatives, after 30 years something has to change, he added.

Commissioner Evans suggested that we work on motion at lunch and present a motion during the afternoon session. Frank Cassas stood up and requested that the Commission delay lunch and hear the presentation that he and Carol Alm were prepared to give because Ms. Alm had a 3pm flight and needed to leave.

Agenda Items #4 and #5 were combined for discussion purposes:

**4) \* Discussion and Decision re: An update by the BLM on the New BLM Marketing Plan to enhance the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Program nationwide, which was presented at the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Meeting in Washington, DC on November 3-4, 2003. The Commission will also discuss potential actions that may be taken to make recommendations to the Plan and also how the Commission may participate in the planning.**

**5) \* Discussion and Decision re: An update on activities of the National Wild Horse and Burro Foundation which was co-sponsored by the Commission and the Bureau of Land Management. The Commission may also discuss potential actions that may be taken to make recommendations to the Foundation on future Foundation planning.**

Frank Cassas reported that the Foundation had hired Ms. Carol Alm in June 2003. He noted that Ms. Alm had a vast background in the equine world, was an Executive with many contacts in the horse program nationally and American equine world. He added that Ms. Alm was hired to develop strategic planning as to how the foundation will fit into the foundation mission solely to assist the BLM with the adoption program. He felt that the Foundation would not fit between private sector and BLM program, which is not working, without serious revision. Mr. Cassas explained that he had meetings with Kathleen Clark and after that she invited the Foundation to come back to Washington to make a full presentation to almost everybody in the BLM that was involved with the horse program. He noted that he felt the horse program as a whole has suffered through a very vicious cycle with not enough horses going into private homes, less gathers, and the range suffering. He felt the BLM needs assistance in more quality adoptions, which is

solving all other problems. He felt that adoptions are being decreased and going down especially in the eastern regions. He added that the program is 12 million over budget and in jeopardy of potential political backlash. He felt the adoption program has always been the weak link to the entire program working, that the BLM needs a successful program, to identify new markets, or this could jeopardize funding. He felt there needed to be a centralized team dedicated to carrying out the marketing plan. He explained they started looking at analyzing the program and how would the foundation fit into BLM's planning. Mr. Cassas stated that Janet Greenlee worked with the group to present/identify strengths and weaknesses both internally and externally in the program. This was done to identify issues and how to fix them. He felt past studies and work products were excellent however were never implemented which he felt seems to be the biggest problem. He felt the BLM adoption program needs major change. He felt the Marketing Study was never received by an audience, that BLM has been fraught with internal turmoil. He added that the Foundation was just forming and if the Foundation were in existence at the time of the plan, that many options are best handled by a foundation, not government. Mr. Cassas reported that the Foundation was up and funded, they have an Executive Director, that BLM can work on internal recommendations, and the Foundation can work on external. He felt that both could work together to improve the adoption program. He added that he felt, basically taken, the Fleishman Hillard report was excellent and they are working to implement it. He felt the BLM needed a critical structural change before the BLM can begin to increase adoption event visibility, logistics, and success. Mr. Cassas added that he feels the Eastern States market is really the key to the success of the program, but that the basic problem is that we have the problem out here in the west, the biggest market is in the east, marketing opportunities exist and are east of the Mississippi river, he feels timing is very different than three years ago, that there is a new director Clark who is very much committed to getting this program fixed, a new program director Jeff Rawson, with a lot of enthusiasm, and the timing is very opportunistic.

Carol Alm reported that she, Gary Zakotnick, Ann Aldrich, Robin Lohnes, Ed Shepard, Bob Abbey, and Jeff Rawson, were put together as a team to present an action plan. Ms. Alm expressed that Kathleen Clark, Director of BLM had demanded that there would be no more studies, no more wasted time, she wanted a plan and wants it implemented now.

The team felt the "success of a national adoption program is key to achieving healthy rangelands and reaching AML", that Goal 1 is marketing and public relations, Goal 2 adoptions, and Goal 3 is personnel. She added that they felt the BLM program is very fragmented with everybody doing their own thing, stating that BLM needed to develop a marketing team with full time dedication to work with the wild horse program. She informed the Commission that Sally Spencer was just hired as the Marketing Director for BLM and that she had already met with the head of public affairs in BLM with a drive towards marketing and public affairs nationally. She felt that marketing must re-brand the wild horse and that currently they were waiting for a master plan acceptance from Kathleen Clark. She felt they weren't going for the pity adoption such as, "please adopt these horses" but certain things that target them as highly sought after, that a media kit

was being developed to maintain continuity, where can you present the animals and how can you reach the largest audiences? She added that public affairs would take the master plan and provide nationwide programs. Ms. Alm reported that Kathleen Clark stated this is a national program, not regional, and must get rid of fiefdoms, it is detrimental to the program, that BLM must bring people together that like horses and want to support consistent structure, all adoptions the same, customer service is the strongest emphasis centralize the adoption process. She stressed that the personnel in the program must be people that want to be in the program, are excited about the horse program, that management oversight is critical and customer service is critical. Ms. Alm felt that some things might be controversial but in the presentation to State Directors everybody felt it could be overcome.

Bob Abbey reported that the Wild Horse and Burro Act mandates long term survivability of horses on the range, that BLM has not always had the success in getting to that goal on the range. He feels this plan will help BLM achieve their goals and the implementation of this plan will be a tool to helping BLM reach their goals long term. Mr. Abbey reported that internally within BLM, he can think of only one other person that is just as frustrated as himself and its Kathleen Clark and that she has mandated that BLM forego other programs to make this Wild Horse and Burro program a success and reaching goals as the main priority. Mr. Abbey noted that the BLM and Kathleen Clark are not taking this lightly and the challenge to the BLM is implementing the plans not just talking about them to achieve the goals they have set for themselves. He added that he felt the public has been shortchanged while the BLM have debated this program for many years. He thought that the partnership with the Foundation was positive and that those in BLM know changes must be made which may not always be popular but must happen to achieve those goals.

Chairman Kirk felt that he heard BLM was going to manage for adoption, what happens to unadoptables, that there has been a lot of opposition to management for adoptability. He noted that many years ago there was much opposition to that.

Mr. Abbey stated that he felt the sanctuaries were created to take care of the unadoptable issue. He feels it really is the only alternative, which is long term holding and is a commitment to caring for them for their lifetime. He added that the Foundation is looking into getting public support for financially supporting and sending money for the sanctuaries.

Dean Bolstad added that BLM feels it is more cost effective to keep horses in the sanctuaries than in holding centers pending adoption.

Commissioner Evans asked if a market study has been developed for the adoption program?

Ms. Alm stated that Fleishman Hillard had done studies years ago, to sell to the current

customer and adjust as program shows existing and new markets.

Commissioner Gleason stated that she feels excited, it was good to see her (Ms. Alm) on board, that the Foundation is the key, the horses are great horses, this could be a tremendous working program, that the best market being other horse owners, and that she agrees that these horses are so smart, because of their survival instinct, these horses have had to learn, they have had to think to survive, they outsmart the amateur. She added that marketing needs to find the different aspects of the individual herds and capitalize on that. Commissioner Gleason asked about fundraising options for the Foundation, she asked if they had identified a chairperson for fundraising?

Frank Cassas responded that “we have not really implemented the strategic plan for the Foundation.” Mr. Cassas noted that he is working with the other trustees as to how they are going to spend funds over the next year. He noted that any rally to launch a Foundation was put on hold, that their vision really depends on how this BLM program comes together. If the plan is implemented then he sees their path as clear, however, if not, the Foundation doesn't have a future. He added that the trustees have really been reluctant to do anything until we see where the BLM is going with all this re-organization. He felt that after the first of the year they will be better able to give us an idea of their direction, after BLM decides on re-organization. He noted they were planning on raising funds but need other things to be going, he wanted a quality website, a big one with the horse organization they were going to form, the US Mustang Federation, but again, the trustees have been reluctant to do anything given the status of the BLM program. He noted that currently there is a website but they need a quality website which is expensive and they need to get funding for that. He added that there is an 800 number to call if somebody wants to give money to the program.

Commissioner Gleason asked what is currently in place and how is it answered?

Carol Alm responded that “If I answer it I can give information on the 501, non profit status, that it comes directly to me and I answer questions.”

Ms. Alm gave the power point presentation she and the BLM had developed for re-organization of the BLM program.

The Commissioners considered a lunch break. John Jamrog requested that the Commission hear their discussion prior to taking a break as he and his staff had an early flight to return to Las Vegas.

**6)\*Discussion and Decision re: The situation with the Red Rock Herd Management Area in Las Vegas, all the horses that are still being held at Oliver Ranch, Range Condition, Consultation with State Agencies (Wild Horse Commission and NDOW) and Accountability for BLM in the planning process for the Red Rock Herd. The Commission will discuss potential actions that may be taken to encourage the BLM**

**in making sound range management decisions for this herd and the habitat.**

John Jamrog, range manager BLM, Las Vegas, that in July 2002 he conducted an emergency gather in the Red Rock HMA and Spring Mountain FS Territory. He noted that with continuing problems w/drought, 3 BLM areas and Forest Service and BLM joint areas were gathered. He noted that the situation on Red Rock with not enough water being present and lack of forage was critical. He added that the contractor had other work to do and they had kept the Red Rock gather going longer than anticipated. Mr. Jamrog reported that they gathered 60 animals and that 29 horses were retained at the Oliver Ranch Center, that temporary corrals had been put up. He added that 25 horses had not been gathered and were still out there. Mr. Jamrog reported that at the time of the gather plan it was intended to put those animals in adoption program, it was not anticipated to keep horses at Oliver Ranch. He referenced a large urban setting and very vocal local wild horse group who has a lot of interest in those animals, that they helped with animals and gather and requested that BLM consider, with their assistance to keep the animals at Oliver ranch. The concept presented was the idea that the wild horse association would assist in funding to keep the animals there until they could be returned back to the range. He added that the Field Manager, Mark Morse, agreed to the arrangement under the conditions proposed. He added that a MOU was developed with the group but that it was never anticipated to be keeping the animals as long as they have been kept. He noted that part of agreement in December 2002 was to continue to access the range conditions on a monthly basis while decisions were made. He felt their position right now was to conduct a critical assessment on the first week of December (2003), to bring in experts in addition to Las Vegas area staff, and they will access if more can be released back on the range in excess of what is on the range right now. Mr. Jamrog noted that conditions are suffering, they are going into the winter season, and that after the assessment, there would be a conference call Mr. Abbey and disposition of the animals will be decided after that call. He noted that the wild horse association will contribute to minimize the cost, which would be less than the cost of long term holding.

Linda Cardenas reported that it would be determined, how many animals should be out on the Red Rock HMA, that the management level would be documented. She noted that they had tried to establish the AML in the summer of 2003, and that they had received 9 comments back on their initial proposals. She noted there were many commonalities in the responses. She expressed that the BLM was up against a deadline to try to get the document out and that they didn't include the last 3 years of range data in their assessments. She noted that after receiving comments and concerns about not including the data that BLM decided they will assess the data and get it into the new documents. She added that juggling the Nellis gather was taking time and that the Red Rock data will be viewed to determine management options, that it was a priority to get this done, and anticipated getting it out to the public around the middle of April with an anticipated final decision by the end of April. She noted that if fertility control is projected that it would be November 2004.

Ms. Cardenas added that currently the horses that were in the original area at Oliver Ranch needed more space. She explained that the wild horse association provided panels and that the BLM did an environmental assessment on the private parcel and the association erected the panels. She added that there were 20 mares out there now and 2 stud horses in Oliver Ranch proper.

Commissioner Gleason noted that she knew they are working very hard to resolve some of the issues with the holding of these horses such as hoof care, flies, veterinary care and that she appreciates it. She expressed her frustration that with all the meetings and discussions of these horses that the Commission had been purposely excluded. That there were meetings with the National Wild Horse Association and the Commission had been excluded. She added that she was offended, and didn't know what has caused this problem because she and Commissioner Brehm have donated their time for adoptions and range work and have done everything to help BLM.

Ms Cardenas stated that there was no intention on BLM's part to exclude anyone, that the meetings with the BLM and the National Wild Horse Association (NWHHA) were at their request to meet with BLM. Ms. Cardenas offered for the Commission to be able to attend future meetings.

Commissioner Gleason expressed that they want to be included in all meetings concerning the management of the Red Rock herd. Mrs. Gleason asked who was responsible for the feed costs of the horses.

Ms. Cardenas replied that in the MOU with the NWHHA, that the NWHHA will provide all the feed and feeding.

Commissioner Gleason asked "who actually paid for that?"

Ms Cardenas replied that when the horses were first brought in, \$229 was initially spent and no funds were spent by BLM until late August 2003 when the NWHHA asked BLM to help with funding of \$10,000 for feed. She added that the BLM Las Vegas office funded that request, that the funds were transferred to the NWHHA.

Commissioner Gleason asked if BLM knew if the money was actually spent for hay?

Ms Cardenas reported that she didn't see any bills but the NWHHA stated that they had paid \$37,000 in expenses and this went to help to offset NWHHA previous funding expended for hay.

Commissioner Gleason asked who was paying for the care of the foals?

Ms. Cardenas reported that she didn't know if the foals are being paid for from NWHHA or not

Commissioner Gleason asked about fly control and who was paying for fly control because the conditions were horrible at the corrals.

Ms. Cardenas reported that she thought it was paid for by the NWA.

Commissioner Gleason questioned the horses foot care, that in almost two years they have been taken care of only twice, and that drugs were used for dropping the horses for trimming, etc. She noted that the Southern Nevada Horseshoers Association had helped out, she asked if all the men that trimmed the horses were qualified farriers or were they just practicing? She also asked about cleaning the corrals as manure was piling up so high.

Ms Cardenas replied that some were experienced men and some were young apprentices that were operating under the more experienced. She added that occasionally the BLM had paid for some of the vet bills, she thought \$2,615 had been paid for the Oliver horses.

She also added that BLM had paid for the maintenance crew for cleaning the corrals. Ms. Cardenas added that legally, the BLM is ultimately responsible for the care of the animals.

Ms Gleason showed some photos and expressed that she and Commissioner Brehm had serious concerns that the animals didn't get the quality of care they needed, their feet were so bad they appeared to be on ski's, there were horrible fly infested conditions to where some of the horses were wearing fly masks. Also other medical attention for eye sores and other various needs.

Bob Abbey responded that he felt Commissioner Gleason was getting too "nit picky" on details and that the BLM strives to work in cooperation with others to assess range to determine the optimum condition which will allow for additional horses to be returned to the range. He reported that they, (the BLM), will make a decision after that assessment as to whether to return additional horses to the range or not. Mr. Abbey explained that it was never BLMs intention to hold horses for such a long time just to determine reintroduction and that this has gone on too long, longer than what I had hoped. He added that he will make the final determination after the assessment.

Cathy Barcomb, Administrator, noted that any process that would impact the range needed to be presented in written documentation and sent out to the public for review, that State agencies such as the Commission or the Nevada Division of Wildlife had been participating in land use planning on these area's for many years and were interested and affected parties. She noted that under NEPA, FLPMA, and BLM regulations, that any impacts must be sent out for public review and comment prior to an action proceeding. Ms. Barcomb asked Mr. Abbey if they would be sending out the range assessment data for review as required by NEPA and BLM Reg's, prior to making a final determination if

horses would be returned to the range.

Mr. Abbey asked if the Commission wanted to be consulted.

Ms Barcomb replied that they did.

Mr. Abbey responded that they would consult the Commission.

Commissioner Brehm expressed her concern about range conditions and that "just because we have a little rain, we don't have a flourishing habitat. She added that the horses in captivity are dog friendly with make it dangerous for them in the wild if they are not afraid of humans. She also expressed her concerns for the financial aspect of holding the horses and subjecting them to flies, lack of manure removal, and inadequate vet care.

Commissioner Gleason motioned to establish a working group comprised of herself and Commissioner Brehm to work with the Las Vegas Field Office to work on Nellis and the Oliver Ranch horses. Seconded by Commissioner Brehm Unanimously approved.

**7) \* Discussion and Decision re: An update on the proposed covered arena and Orphan Foal Emergency Center at the Warm Springs Correctional Center and potential Commission assistance in obtaining funding. The Commission will discuss options that they may take to help in funding efforts.**

Cathy Barcomb, Administrator, reported that she had been working with the prison program in trying to build an indoor training arena at the Warm Springs Correctional Center. She explained that the arena would be sided on the west and south sides and protect the trainers during inclement weather. She explained that during blowing winds, snow, or rain, that the trainers can't do any work with in the winter is a problem. The indoor arena will allow more training days to produce more trained horses.

Ms. Barcomb reported that the total cost of the building would be approximately \$77,000. She noted that to date, all funds were raised except for the remaining balance of \$13,500. She explained that she had sent out many grant requests including the Foundation, who had donated \$8,000, and that the only grant request that was rejected for funding was from the BLM. Ms. Barcomb explained that she was still working on grants to obtain the final funding and asked if the Commission wished to try to commit funds. Ms. Barcomb reminded the Commissioners that the Commission has severely dwindling funds but felt this was a worthwhile project that would be around long after the Commission's is gone.

Ms. Barcomb noted that she would endeavor to obtain funds elsewhere but if the building was within \$2-\$3,000 of being funded and needed that last funding, would the Commission be able to help.

Commissioner Uhalde motioned to give \$2,500 to prison indoor arena from the Heil funds if it was needed. Commissioner Gleason seconded the motion, 4 commissioners voted for the donation, one abstain, motion carried.

**3) Discussion and Decision RE: see above**

Commissioner Uhalde motioned “that the Commission express their support in efforts by the National BLM Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board to develop and explore new innovative alternatives and ideas to effectively achieve and maintain AML in the immediate future.” Seconded by Commissioner Brehm, unanimously approved.

Commissioner Evans expressed his frustration with BLM always reporting and talking about identifying and reaching AML but that it always seems to be getting worse. He added there is always confusion over AML and actual numbers (census) on the range. Commissioner Evans motioned that the Commission send a letter to BLM asking for information on AML’s and numbers on the range and to enhance the fertility control program. Seconded by Commissioner Brehm,

Dean Bolstad, BLM, stated that PZP had not ye been approved by the FDC, that it must be licensed so currently the BLM is only using it by permission of the Humane Society of the United States and there is conditional use restrictions in that license. He stated that is why the BLM is not applying it everywhere they can.

Unanimously approved.

**2)\*Discussion and Decision re: Approval of the Minutes of the Commission meetings held on May 7, 2003 and June 13, 2003.**

Commissioner Brehm motioned to approve the minutes of the meetings on May 7<sup>th</sup> and June 13, 2003 with suggested typographical corrections discussed. Seconded by Commissioner Evans, unanimously approved.

**1) \*Election of Officers**

Commissioner Kirk mentioned that his term was due to expire in June 2004, Commissioner Uhalde motioned to leave the current officers in place until their terms end, Commissioner Kirk as Chairman and Commissioner Evans as Vice Chair. Seconded by Commissioner Evans, unanimously approved.

**8) PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

None

**9) \*Set Next Meeting Date**

The Commissioners recommended that Ms. Barcomb contact all of them around February to set a meeting for later in that month, February, with the location and date to be

announced.

**10) \*Adjournment**

Commissioner Evans motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Uhalde, unanimously approved.