



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Worland Field Office

P. O. Box 119

Worland, Wyoming 82401-0119

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
4710.3 F (010)

July 30, 2004

Dear Reader:

The Bureau of Land Management, Worland Field Office, proposes to gather excess wild horses in the Fifteenmile Wild Horse Herd Management Area (HMA), in August, 2004. The proposal is to reduce the wild horse population from approximately 210 wild horses to the lower range of the Appropriate Management Level (AML), which is 70 wild horses. This action would be implemented under the authority of the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971, and consistent with the Approved Resource Management Plan for the Grass Creek Planning Area (1998).

The Fifteenmile HMA is in the midst of a fifth consecutive year of severe drought. Forage and water availability for wild horses is severely limited, and currently is not adequate to sustain the existing wild horse population until the next growing season. Since the wild horse population in the Fifteenmile HMA is currently over the AML, a removal was scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2004. However, with the current decline in forage and water availability, immediate removal of excess wild horses to the lower range of the AML is necessary to ensure that the wild horses remaining within the HMA have adequate forage and water to survive and maintain satisfactory physical condition. Removal of excess wild horses will also help to sustain the long-term productivity of the rangeland resources on the public lands that wild horses depend on.

The proposed gather and removal of wild horses from the Fifteenmile HMA, and the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives, is analyzed in the environmental assessment "Wild Horse Gathering For The Fifteenmile Wild Horse Herd Management Area" (EA Number WY-010-EA04-83), and Decision Record and Finding of No Significant Impact. **The decision to remove wild horses from the Fifteenmile HMA is being issued under the regulations found at 43 CFR 4770.3(c), and will be effective the date the decision is signed.** These documents are available for public review on the web at the Wyoming BLM homepage ([www.wy.blm.gov/nepa/wfdocs/15mile](http://www.wy.blm.gov/nepa/wfdocs/15mile)). Readers without access to the web may contact Cameron Henrichsen at the Bureau of Land Management, 101 S. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, P.O. Box 119, Worland, Wyoming 82401, or telephone (307) 347-5100, for a copy of the documents.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bill Hill

Bill Hill  
Field Manager