

**Decision Record/Finding of No Significant Impact
For
Wyoming Wild Horse Pilot Project
EA# WY-930-01-001
December 2002**

Proposed Action: The BLM proposes to revise and update the one-time per horse grant amount for each horse that would be permanently pastured with qualified private landowners as described for the Wyoming Wild Horse Pilot Project Environmental Assessment (EA), May 2001. The EA describes the proposed action to include “that the landowner would receive a one-time grant of \$1,000 for each horse over the initial 10 (unadoptable horses to be pastured with a private landowner under this Pilot Project)”. The BLM proposes to revise and update the one-time grant for each horse to \$1,800 per horse, not to exceed 30 horses. The BLM proposes to make a one-time grant to one private landowner that would maximize the number of unadoptable horses that would be pastured and meet the amount of grant funds available.

Background: In May 2001 a Decision Record and Finding of Significant Impact (DR/FONSI) was issued, authorizing the BLM to implement the Proposed Action as described in the Environmental Assessment. In addition to defining the one-time grant rate of \$1,000 per horse, a maximum number of placing 60 unadoptable horses per year was proposed and analyzed. Over the past year the BLM has proceeded with implementing the EA Proposed Action. However economic conditions changed, prolonged drought conditions continued and the BLM had difficulty in finding willing participants for the Pilot Project. To address these changed economic conditions BLM’s grant partners, Wyoming Department of Agriculture and Wyoming State Grazing Board, requested that the BLM develop new Pilot Project incentives for prospective private landowners. These incentives included:

1. Participants would not be required to accept the initial 10 head of horses for free;
2. Participants would be allowed to accept mares and that future foals would become the participant’s personal property; and,
3. Increasing the incentive rate of one-time per horse payment.

After evaluating the proposed incentives, the BLM accepted the above first and third incentives and conducted a new cost-efficiency analysis. By offering the new rate of payment of \$1,800 per horse, several willing participants were found.

Decision: It is my decision to implement the first year of the Wild Horse Pilot Project as proposed, described and analyzed in Environmental Assessment # WY 930-01-001 at the revised rate of \$1,800 per horse. This decision will allow the BLM to explore cost-effective options that provide safe, humane, life-long treatment of unadoptable wild horses, while limiting foal production.

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in EA WY # 930-01-001 and additional economic analysis prepared

within the past 3 months, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and that an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Rationale for Decision: I base my decision on the following rationale.

- After reviewing the issues, alternatives and environmental analysis documented in EA WY# 930-01-001, I am satisfied that the assessments and conclusions made there are still applicable given the revised per horse payment rate.
- To address changes in economic conditions, the BLM prepared a new economic analysis and developed the \$1,800 per horse payment rate. I have reviewed the analysis and am satisfied that it not only reflects the current market and economic conditions, and that the rate still meets the purpose and need of the Pilot Project by providing cost-effective, safe and humane pasture or rangeland for unadoptable wild horses.

Compliance and Monitoring: The Wild Horse Pilot Project will be monitored for compliance and project effectiveness. Compliance will be monitored by a BLM compliance officer who shall make at a minimum four compliance checks a year, for the first three years of this project. Compliance checks shall include an evaluation of horse health and pasture or range condition. In addition the BLM will prepare a monitoring and evaluation report summarizing the effectiveness of the Pilot Project and completed on or before one year from the signature date below.

Appeal Procedures: Under the provisions of 43 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 4770.3 any person who is adversely affected by this decision may file an appeal. Appeals and petitions for stay of this decision must be filed within 30 calendar days of receipt or notification of this decision, in accordance with 43 CFR part 4.

Under the provisions of 43 CFR 4770.3c this decision shall be effective on the signature date of this decision. This project may be implemented any time after the signature date below.

/s/ Alan Kesterke
Acting State Director, Wyoming
Bureau of Land Management

12/20/02
Date