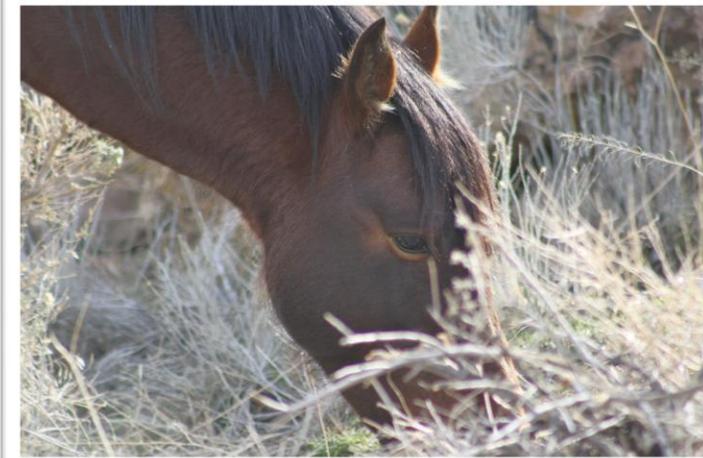


What Agency Issue?

Horses and burros managed on public land are managed under different jurisdictions. The most commonly recognized is the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). But other federal and state agencies can manage populations of horses and burros.

In 1971 the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act was passed by Congress. This act passed with a resounding unanimous vote. Most Americans then assumed that all horses on federal land were protected. This was not the case.

Yes, horses that live on public land do go to auction and then to slaughter. But this is not a single agency that is responsible. There are a few agencies that do



engage in this practice and advocacy efforts need to be focused in the right direction to be effective.

The Forest Service routinely shot burros. Fish and Wildlife continued to eradicate horses claiming they were not held to the act as their mission statements did not recognize

horses and burros as a wildlife species. Bureau of Indian Affairs land was considered “sovereign” and tribes held ownership of horses and burros on those lands. State governments impose feral livestock laws on herds not within the boundaries of federal land.

Yet the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service were supposedly held to the WFRHBA (or the Act), with BLM, under the DOI, with “responsibility.” The “final say” on herds protected under the Act rests with the Secretary of the Interior, head of the Department of Interior.

When you look at the Department of Interior, and some of the key agencies listed under their control, you may begin to ask the question “Was it wise to hand the implementation of the Act to this agency in the first place?” Competitive interests exist within the scope of the Department. What interest would the department have in protection of this National Treasure?

Key Agencies Under the Department of Interior (DOI)

BLM, USFWS, NPS and BIA land all have wild herds. Only BLM is held accountable to the Wild Horse and Burro Act. Note areas that may represent a conflict of interest.

[Bureau of Indian Affairs \(BIA\)](#)

[Bureau of Reclamation](#)

[United States Fish & Wildlife Service\(USFWS\)](#)

[Geological Survey \(USGS\)](#)

[Mineral Management Service](#)

[National Interagency Fire Center](#)

[National Park Service\(NPS\)](#)

[Office of Surface Mining, Reclamation & Enforcement](#)



What the USDA looks like

United States Forest Service is in here and manages horses and burros, supposedly was/is mandated under the act.

[Agricultural Research Service \(ARS\)](#)

[Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service \(APHIS\)](#)

[Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion \(CNPP\)](#)

[Economic Research Service \(ERS\)](#)

[Farm Service Agency \(FSA\)](#)

[Food and Nutrition Service \(FNS\)](#)

[Food Safety and Inspection Service \(FSIS\)](#)

[Foreign Agricultural Service \(FAS\)](#) .

[Forest Service \(USFS\)](#)

[Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration \(GIPSA\)](#)

[National Agricultural Library \(NAL\)](#) .

[National Agricultural Statistics Service \(NASS\)](#)

[National Institute of Food and Agriculture \(NIFA\)](#)

[Natural Resources Conservation Service \(NRCS\)](#)

[Risk Management Agency \(RMA\)](#)

[Rural Development \(RD\)](#)

State agencies, usually under the Department of Agriculture, manage small populations of wild horses, although they refer to them as “feral” livestock and auction is the usual outcome. The horses that were observed initially by Velma Johnson of Nevada, aka “Wild Horse Annie,” were horses from the Virginia Range in Nevada. Those horses, and the ones in the film “The Misfits,” are not protected under the federal legislation that advocates such as Johnson brought to public attention and eventually spurred the Act passed in 1971.

This lack of national protection, unlike an animal listed under the Endangered Species Act, gives rise to some confusion for those new to this issue (and even for some not so new). Even though these animals have an entire Act of Congress in place to protect them, there is no single agency for responsible management of horses and burros on public land.

However that said, the majority of horses on public land do reside within BLM controlled territory.

