CALIFORNIA DESERT WILD BURRO MANAGEMENT
DRAFT FY 2003 ANNUAL OPERATING PLAN

The Strategic Plan for the Management of Wild Burros, signed in January, 1999, established Goals and Objectives to work collaboratively in sharing staff and resources to manage wild burros in the most effective and efficient manner possible. This Annual Operating Plan is the product of the first goal and objective to coordinate the use of staff and resources for all scheduled field activities for the up-coming year.

The second goal to "Manage wild burro populations at current existing Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) as identified in the BLM's California Desert Conservation Area Plan, signed in 1980 (and subsequent Amendments), until land use planning for the various agencies is completed, through aggressively removing existing excess burros to reach AMLs within the next two years." The FY2003 removal target is 550 burros and 70 horses desert-wide, as indicated in the following table:

FY2003 Gather Summary **- Remove 550 Burros and 70 Horses**

Area		Number of Animals (Cooperating Agencies)
Clark Mountain	-	70 burros (BLM, NPS)
Chemehuevi	-	200 burros (BLM)
Centennial	-	70 horses/100 burros (BLM, NAWS, NPS)
Slate Range	-	30 burros (BLM, NAWS)
Picacho	-	50 burros (BLM, State Parks)
Death Valley NP	-	30 burros (BLM, NPS)
Dead Mtn.	-	10 burros (BLM)
Piute Mtn.	-	10 burros (BLM
Outside HMAs	-	50 burros (BLM, NPS, other agencies/land owners)
Total		550 Burros and 70 horses

The third Goal established in the Strategic Plan for the Management of Wild Burros is to "Manage populations of burros where appropriate as an integral part of the natural system of the BLM managed lands; control their numbers where they threaten to alter natural ecosystems, seriously restrict or compete with native flora or fauna, or present a hazard to human health and safety; and achieve zero burro populations on all non-BLM lands." To achieve this goal, three objectives were identified; 1, Determine viable Herd Management Areas (HMAs) from the Herd Areas (HAs) remaining on BLM managed lands within the California Desert District; 2, Identify long-term management objectives and actions, and animal population levels within the remaining viable HMAs. These management objectives will recognize that for agencies managing other than BLM lands, animal prescription levels in excess of zero animals are not appropriate; and 3, Conduct scientific research to better understand wild burro behavior and the magnitude and direction of movement patterns for the remaining viable HMAs. This critical information has significant implications for burro management along shared agency boundaries.

FY2003 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

1. Remove 620 animals from the California desert and placed into the BLM's National Adoption Program. These 620 animals will be removed throughout the year, so not to overflow the adoption system at any one time.

2. BLM and California Fish & Game have radio collared and are tracking burros and deer in the Picacho and Chocolate-Mule Mountain HMAs. The objective of this cooperative effort is to collect data on the migratory patterns of these two animals to better understand their movement patterns and relationship. This is a long-term study, tracking 25 burro's location weekly for 4 years. During this period, BLM and California Fish & Game are collecting vegetation production, composition data, as well as grazing use levels.

3. BLM is working with NPS and California Fish & Game reviewing different animal censussing techniques to use for burros. It is the goal of the DMG to standardize a censussing protocol in which all agencies have ownership in. BLM plans to conduct population census on Chemehuevi, Waucoba-Hunter, Piper Mountain, Lee Flat, and Chicago Valley HMAs this fiscal year.

4. BLM continues to assess and monitor riparian and rangeland health in the remaining HMAs, and along common administrative boundaries where burro management occurs. BLM will monitor Chemehuevi, Waucoba-Hunter, Piper Mountain, Lee Flat, and Chicago Valley this fiscal year.

5. Through these monitoring efforts, specific actions may be identified to reduce animal drift off BLM managed lands and improve animal distribution within the remaining HMAs. These possible recommended actions may include fencing of common boundaries; fencing of springs, riparian areas, and sensitive resources, and developing additional watering sources. BLM will initiate NEPA review of the remaining HMAs that were not addressed in the three recent bio-regional plan amendments. Waucoba-Hunter, Lee Flat, and Piper Mountain will be analyze to determine future management directions.