CALIFORNIA DESERT WILD BURRO MANAGEMENT
DRAFT FY 2005 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 BLMs 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 AML. The FY2005 removal target is 500 burros desert-wide, as indicated in the following table:

***FY2005 Gather Summary* - Remove 500 Burros**

Area		Number of Animals (Cooperating Agencies)
Clark Mountain	-	150 burros (BLM, NPS)
Centennial	-	50 burros (BLM, NAWS, NPS)
Slate Range	-	20 burros (BLM, NAWS)
Chocolate-Mule Mtn	-	20 burros (BLM, State Parks)
Panamints	-	30 burros (BLM, NPS)
Mojave NPS	-	200 burros (BLM, NPS)
Outside HMAs-		30 burros (BLM, NPS, other agencies/land owners)
Total		500 Burros

The third Goal established in the Strategic Plan for the Management of Wild Burros is to Manage populations of burros where appropriate. Presently in the California Desert District, four WH&B Herd Management Areas are identified to be managed for sustainable herds. These include; 121 burros in Chocolate-Mule Mountain; 108 burros in Chemehuevi, 11 horses in Chicago Valley; and 165 horses in Centennial for a total of 129 burros and 176 horses.

FY2005 MANAGEMENT ACTIONS

1. Remove 500 animals from the California desert and placed into the BLM's National Adoption Program and volunteer organizations. These 500 animals will be removed throughout the year, so not to overflow the adoption system at any one time. As burro populations decrease throughout the desert, costs associated with removing the remaining is increasing significantly. In many areas where animals remain, the terrain and remoteness will require removal through the use of a helicopter and net-gunning.

2. BLM and California Fish & Game have radio collared and are tracking burros and deer in the 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 the fourth year of four year study, tracking 25 burro's location weekly. During this period, BLM and California Fish & Game are collecting vegetation production, composition data, as well as grazing use levels.

3. Needles FO is constructing a water trough and storage structure at West Well in Chemehuevi Herd Management Area. The purpose of this improvement is to provide water to burros away from the Colorado River, thereby reducing impacts to riparian vegetation along the river at the spring associated with West Well.

4. BLM continues to assess and monitor riparian and rangeland health in the four remaining HMAs, and along common administrative boundaries where burro management occurs. BLM will monitor Chemehuevi, Chocolate-Mule Mtn, and Chicago Valley this fiscal year.

5. Through these monitoring efforts, specific actions may continue to 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 analyzed to determine future management directions.

FY04 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

435 burros and 2 horses were removed from the California Desert in FY04. BLM removed 229 burros from the Centennial, Slate, Panamint, and Clark Mtn herd management areas. 206 burros were removed from the Mojave National Preserve.

BLM collected vegetative monitoring data from the Chemehuevi, Chocolate-Mule Mtn and Chicago Valley HMAs.

In California, BLM adopted 875 wild horses and burros in FY04. 398 wild horses and burros were adopted within the California Desert District. Of those, 261 were adopted directly from Ridgecrest corrals and 137 animals were adopted through satellite adoptions held within the Southern California region.