

CHARTER

BLM Wild Horse and Burro Research Advisory Team

September 2018

Objective and Purpose

The objective of the National Wild Horse and Burro Research Advisory Team (the Research Team) is to help the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) identify and support legitimate research of the highest possible quality focused on addressing needs of the BLM Wild Horse and Burro Program, while ensuring humane treatment and the responsible use of animals in research.

The legislative mandates given to the BLM in The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 (WFRHBA Public Law 92-195) and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA, Public Law-43, 1701) also direct the BLM to conduct research in the field of wild horse and burro (WHB) management. Scientific research has the potential to improve WHB management in many areas, including conserving western rangelands; reducing population growth rates; improving animal health, care, and handling; and even increasing adoption success. The Bureau's goal is to support and participate in research of the highest possible quality that is primarily directed at solving WHB management challenges. The Research Team will provide guidance so that resources can be most efficiently directed to scientific research that best supports the needs of managing WHB under the WFRHBA.

Background

The National Wild Horse and Burro Research Advisory Team was originally formed in 2002 to: implement the Strategic Research Plan for WHB Management, monitor the progress of research projects supported by the Program, review research proposals and requests for research materials or collaboration with the Program, and provide recommendations to the WHB Division Chief on these topics. The Research Team was originally formed with equal participation by the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), with a member of the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board added as a liaison to the Research Team in 2009. Others from the BLM and USGS have often participated in the Research Team's activities as dictated by the expertise needed and tasks at hand.

Membership Criteria and Process

The Research Team will consist of four to six members. The Research Team will include the following members: BLM WHB Research Coordinator (who serves as the Chair), BLM WHB On-Range Branch Chief (who serves as the Co-Chair), BLM WHB Specialist and an APHIS Veterinarian. Other permanent or *ad hoc* members may be recruited from the BLM, APHIS or other agencies (USFS, USGS etc.), colleges and universities, and research organizations as needed. The National WHB Advisory Board has the option to provide a liaison(s), most likely the Board member representing Research Interests, to the Research Team. Research Team membership is approved by the Division Chief (WO260). Candidates for membership may be recommended by the Research Team.

Team Roles, Responsibilities, and Process

The Research Team will: (1) provide a proposal format and review process aimed at ensuring fair and consistent reviews of proposals submitted to the BLM concerning WHB research; (2) review submitted proposals and provide recommendations to WHB management concerning BLM participation in research and funding of research projects; (3) monitor progress on research in which BLM participates; and (4) monitor emerging science and technologies for new ideas relevant to WHB management. Research Team members may also coordinate or conduct original WHB research on a limited basis as appropriate, subject to the same standards of quality, relevance, and avoidance of

conflict-of-interest as other researchers.

The Division Chief (WO260) will determine the research priorities for each year with input from the Research Team when the Research Team meets with WO260 annually to coordinate with the BLM's annual budget process. Advice and input will continue to come from: the National WHB Advisory Board, the BLM WHB Division Chief's staff, the BLM Director's Science Advisory Committee, Steering Committee, BLM WHB specialists, from any topic-specific advisory panels that may be convened (seven have been convened by USGS to date) and other experts that may be consulted by the BLM. The Division Chief, as the management official, will make all final decisions and set all final research priorities.

It is current BLM policy (IM 2005-204, or latest update) that all requests for research and/or research proposals pertaining to the WHB Program, whether generated from the field, from field-related contacts or from the WO, are to be directed to the Research Team for review.

A competitive call-for-proposals process will be the preferred mechanism for most research, although sole source contracts, financial assistance agreements or interagency agreements may be to the advantage of the government in some situations. The Research Team will provide standard guidelines for the preparation of research proposals and will review proposals in a timely manner. Specialized subject experts may be added for reviews that would benefit from additional expertise or when independent reviews are needed due to potential conflicts of interest. All research involving live animals will be conducted under supervision of an accredited Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee which will approve animal care and use protocols before any funding is transferred to the researchers. Unsolicited proposals will be handled in a manner similar to solicited proposals. Proposals may use outside funds, but if they include WHB Program collaboration, they still need to fit into the general scope of the BLM's needs as identified in the strategic planning process, and the same process will be followed for proposal review.

Relevant Information and Policy

- Strategic Plan for Research, WHB Management (Oct 2003, revised March 2005)
- Instruction Memorandum 2005-204, Implementation of Strategic Research Plan for Wild Horse and Burro Management

Time Frame

The Research Team operates on an ongoing basis.

 27 Sept 2018
Approved/Date

Bruce Rittenhouse, WHB Program Division Chief (acting)

Team Membership Addendum (September, 2018)

Paul Griffin, PhD., WHB Specialist & Research Coordinator, Fort Collins, CO 970-226-9358

Alan Shepherd, WHB Branch Chief (On-Range) Reno, NV 775-861-6611

Lisa Grant, WHB Specialist, Burns, OR 541-573-4453

Albert Kane, DVM, MPVM, PhD. Senior Staff Veterinarian, USDA APHIS; Fort Collins, CO, albert.j.kane@aphis.usda.gov, 970-494-7234

Current Board Liaison: Sue McDonnell, PhD., University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, Philadelphia, PA

Member #6, TBA