

**File Code:** 1900; 2260**Date:** MAY 05 2018**Route To:****Subject:** Emergency Response Decision Memorandum**To:** File: 2260**Emergency Response Decision Memorandum****Spring Mountains National Recreation Area,  
Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest  
Clark County, Nevada****Emergency Wild Horse Gather near Cold Creek, Nevada**

Consistent with 36 CFR 220.4(b), I have determined that it is necessary to take emergency action because of serious concern for the welfare of approximately 200 excess wild horses in the Cold Creek area of the Spring Mountain Wild Horse and Burro Territory (WHBT), approximately 30 miles from Las Vegas, Nevada. Due to prolonged drought and overgrazing by the excess wild horses, range conditions in the Cold Creek area have degraded to the point that the area can no longer sustain wild horses (Attachment 1. Range and Wild Horse Assessment; Attachment 2. Determination of Excess Wild Horses). Utilization transects conducted in April 2018 showed almost no forage available.

Of the approximately 200 horses in the Cold Creek area, the majority have been assessed as having a Henneke Body Condition Score (BCS) of 3 or less by Wild Horse and Burro Specialists. The Henneke system rates horse body condition on a scale of 1 (extremely emaciated) to 9 (obese). The horses with a BCS of 2 or less are emaciated and face imminent death, while horses with a BCS of 3 or less have only a 50/50 chance of recovery and survival if emergency action is taken immediately.

Without emergency action, the condition score of the horses is expected to deteriorate to a BCS of 1 within 10 to 14 days as the weather begins to heat up. Delaying emergency actions will result in the death of wild horses in and around the town of Cold Creek.

In order to control the immediate impacts of the emergency, I authorize the following actions:

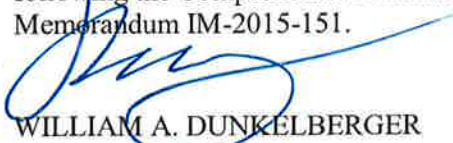
1. Initiate supplemental feeding of the horses to prevent further deterioration of their condition and improve their chances of survival.
2. In cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management, remove all horses from the Cold Creek area. All gathered wild horses will be taken a short distance to a BLM temporary holding facility. Once the horses are strong enough to travel, they will be transported to the BLM's off-range corrals and be made available for adoption, sale, or moved to off-range holding pastures.

My actions are limited to those needed to control the immediate impacts of the emergency. Horses in the higher elevations of the WHBT currently have access to more forage and will not be gathered at this time.

As required by 36 CFR 220.4(b)(1), I have taken into account the probable environmental consequences of the emergency action. Foreseeable adverse environmental effects will be mitigated to the extent



practical. Gather sites and temporary holding facilities will be located on or near existing roads or in previously disturbed areas. Gather personnel will ensure the welfare and safety of the wild horses by following the Comprehensive Animal Welfare Standards for Gathers from BLM Instruction Memorandum IM-2015-151.



WILLIAM A. DUNKELBERGER  
Forest Supervisor

Enclosures

cc: Nora Rasure, David Rosenkance, Mary Farnsworth, Alan Rowley