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## Eleven Wild Horses Start New Jobs in Oregon

**Baker City, ORE.** -- Eleven wild horses (all mustangs) reported for duty in Enterprise, OR this March. They will work on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (WWNF) packing in loads of gear for summer trail crews. The mustangs came from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Nevada's Wild Horse and Burro program in partnership with the Northern Nevada Correctional Center's (NNCC) Inmate Saddle Horse Training Program. NNCC is part of the Nevada Department of Corrections in Carson City, NV.

"It was time to replenish our stock in order to be able to keep our public lands open to everyone," said John Hollenbeak, Recreation Technician, WWNF, and the person who brought the wild horses back from the Saddle Horse program in Carson City, NV.

This summer the mustangs will be packing supplies and riders into Hells Canyon and the Eagle Cap Wilderness, in northeast Oregon. Work will include bringing in tools and equipment for volunteers and partners to set up base camp, routine trail maintenance, and assisting with firefighting efforts in the wilderness.

"The partnership with the BLM made this a win-win for both agencies - they are now mustangs with jobs," continued Hollenbeak.

The BLM and USFS are mandated to follow and implement the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, with the BLM as the lead. Therefore the mustangs were able to be transferred from the BLM into the care of the USFS at no cost to taxpayers.

"Inmates started riding the mustangs at the Northern Nevada Correctional Center in Carson City, Nevada," Justin Pope, Nevada Dept. of Corrections farm manager said. "This is where the saddle horse program resides and trains around 100 horses per year for adoption to the public."

BLM Nevada estimates that over 35,000 wild horses are currently on Nevada public land.

"Each horse has been trained for about 120 days," Alan Shepherd, Nevada BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program Lead said. "The inmates have given them enough foundation training to be ready for packing and riding; now they are working in some of the most rugged country in Oregon. Hells Canyon is known for being one of the deepest and widest gorges in the West."

Getting to know these wild horses this spring includes learning their names; there is Bojangles who has a little bit of fire, but has been gentle and nice to be around. There's Ringo, and Heart; because of the half of a heart shaped star on his head. Then some of the wilder ones: Oden, Jed, Batman and Gil. There's also Studley, Joe Kid, Spanky and Rupert; who's just a nice horse. They will all receive additional training this spring and have the advantage of working alongside the existing stock on Wallowa-Whitman this summer.

Don't miss all of their exciting adventures this summer on the social media outlets listed here!

Please like our pages on Facebook [www.facebook.com/WallowaWhitmanNF/](http://www.facebook.com/WallowaWhitmanNF/) and [www.facebook.com/BLMNevada/](http://www.facebook.com/BLMNevada/). Follow the 11 new coworkers throughout Hells Canyon and the Eagle Cap Wilderness this summer. A big thank you to our volunteers and partners who help care for our stock throughout the year, we couldn't do it without you. Please be safe and enjoy your visit to your public lands.



John Hollenbeak (left) and Curt Booher (right) WWNF Recreation Staff



Mustangs in their new home on the Wallowa-Whitman. (High resolution photos available upon request.)



John Hollenbeak and an NNCC inmate trainer, discussing the characteristics and abilities of this black mustang.