

Social Effects

Wild horse management is of major concern for many people. Comments on the Jicarilla wild horse herd have been received from all over the United States, as well as locally. Some people want to adopt wild horses because they are a part "the West". Others just want to know that our history is still alive in the form of herds of wild horses roaming freely throughout the West.

Comparison of Alternatives

Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Activities

The past, present, and reasonably foreseeable activities that will be used to analyze the cumulative effects on the social setting are: Wild horse, livestock, and wildlife grazing, and activities associated with natural gas development (roads, pipelines and well pads).

Alternative A

This alternative would continue to support a wild horse herd in the JWHT. This would be acceptable to most of the people who commented about leaving the wild horses essentially untouched and who wanted more wild horses present in the JWHT. Considerable concern would likely arise during years when the horse population exceeds available forage and a large number of horses may die of starvation during severe winters. No horses would be available for adoption.

Alternative B

This alternative would continue to support a wild horse herd in the JWHT, however the number of horses would be managed according to the amount of available forage, especially during periods of drought. Initially, this alternative would provide a large number of horses to people who want to adopt them, but over the long-term there could be fewer horses available for adoption, as well as for viewing.

Alternative C

This alternative would continue to support a wild horse herd in the JWHT, however the number of horses would be fewer than at present. Initially a large number of horses would be available for people to adopt. Over the long-term, horses would be offered for adoption every one to two years. People would continue to have the opportunity to view wild horse herds within the territory.

Alternative D

This alternative would continue to support a wild horse herd in the JWHT. Initially it would provide a large number of horses to the people who want to adopt them. Over the long-term, horses would be offered for adoption every one to two years. This alternative would maximize the number of horses for viewing and for adoption.

Livestock Grazing

Like the occurrence of wild horse herds, cattle grazing is a tradition in the area. The Jicarilla wild horse territory encompasses three grazing allotments (Cabresto, Bancos, and Carracas).

Cabresto Allotment

Thirty-five percent (27,079 acres) of the JWHT lies within the Cabresto Allotment. The allotment has a seasonal cow/calf operation with 101 head authorized through a 10-year term grazing permit. The Cabresto uses a one-pasture grazing system and grazing is permitted from June 1 to October 31. Prior to 1955, the Carracas, Cabresto, and Bancos allotments were one allotment, called the Carracas Allotment. The Cabresto Allotment has not been grazed since 2001 due to the climbing wild horse population and ongoing drought. The average grazing from 1991-2001 was 81 head of cattle. During the January 2004 horse survey flight, 80 head of horses were counted in the Cabresto Allotment.

Bancos Allotment

Twenty-one percent (15,399 acres) of the JWHT lies within the Bancos Allotment, excluding private land. The allotment is managed as a seasonal cow/calf operation with 80 head authorized through a 10-year term grazing permit. The Bancos uses a four-pasture rest/rotation grazing system and grazing is permitted from May 16 to October 31. The average grazing from 1991-2001 was 48 head of cattle. During the January 2004 horse survey flight, 58 head of horses were counted in the Bancos Allotment.

Carracas Allotment

Forty-four percent (31,918 acres) of the JWHT lies within the Carracas Allotment, however livestock use is limited to the Carracas Canyon area. The allotment is managed as a seasonal cow/calf operation authorized through a 10-year term grazing permit and a temporary use permit. Eight head are permitted under the term permit and another 4 head under a temporary permit. The Carracas uses a one-pasture grazing system and grazing is permitted from May 16 to October 15. Livestock graze approximately 5,000 acres (15%) of the 31,918 acres on the Carracas allotment. The average grazing from 1992-2002 was 11 head of cattle. During the January 2004 horse survey flight, 20 head of horses were counted in the Carracas Allotment.

Comparison of Alternatives

Past, Present, and Reasonably Foreseeable Activities

The past, present and reasonably foreseeable activities that will be used to analyze the cumulative effects on livestock are: wild horse and wildlife grazing.

Alternative A

Under this alternative the wild horse herd would continue to increase, reducing the amount of forage available for livestock grazing. It is unlikely that the number of permitted livestock would be able to graze under Alternative A. During drought conditions, permittees may be forced out of the livestock business by competition for forage from the wild horses.

Alternative B

Permitted livestock would receive preference over horses for allocating available forage under this alternative. This alternative would be most beneficial for grazing permittees.

Alternative C

Alternative C would allocate available forage first to wildlife and then balance the remaining forage between wild horses and permitted livestock. Range conditions would improve under this alternative, thus maintaining livestock grazing on the allotments involved.

Alternative D

Permits for livestock grazing would be issued, however opportunities for grazing livestock could be limited depending on available forage.

Cumulative Effects

Effects described above include the cumulative effects of wild horse grazing along with the impacts of wildlife on livestock grazing.

Heritage Resources

The Jicarilla Ranger District is located along the eastern portion of the San Juan Basin and the cultural chronology, especially of the Ancestral Pueblo Cultures and to a lesser degree the Historic Navajo, applied to the District has been adapted from the 1966 Navajo Reservoir Project conducted and written by Frank W. Eddy.

Currently no Paleo-Indian sites (15,000+/- to 5500+/- B.C) have been identified on the district. Also, Archaic sites, dating from approximately 5,500 B.C. to A.D.400, are extremely rare on the district. To date, only four lithic scatters with points diagnostic of the Archaic Period have been identified. The two sites located within the Jicarilla Wild Horse Territory comprise less than one-half of one percent of the known sites in the JWHT.

On the other hand, the Ancestral Pueblo Period is well documented in the JWHT. Using the chronology adapted by Eddy (1966) the period of identified predominant use begins at approximately A.D. 1 and continues through about A.D. 1050 with very slight utilization between A.D. 1050 and 1300.

Navajo Occupation Period

The early Navajo occupation of the area is referred to as the Dinetah Phase and extends from late prehistoric times (with a beginning date between A.D. 1300 to 1500) to A.D. 1680. Sites from this early phase would be forked-stick hogans and/or ramada-like structures and the presence of thin-walled gray ceramics identified as Dinetah Utility, but because of the lack of preservation of wooden structures over such a long time period there is still little firm archeological data for the district substantiating this phase, therefore, determination in the field has been extremely difficult (see Eddy 1966:505-508). It is thought that the Navajo were primarily hunter-gathers during this phase, although to lesser extent, they may have been cultivating corn as well. Currently seven sites within the JWHT have been identified with possible Dinetah phase components.

The Gobernador Phase, A.D. 1680 to 1775+/-, on the district is distinguished by the presence of Gobernador Polychrome, Dinetah Utility ceramics, sweat-lodges, forked stick-hogans, pueblitos, slab-lined features, ax-cut juniper, distinctive projectile points and the occasional occurrence of Pueblo ceramics or European goods. The pueblitos, found on mesa or bench points or boulder or cliff prominences, of this phase frequently have been described as defensive, although they may have also served as signaling or lookout locations. During this phase it is known from historic accounts, especially Roque Madrid's 1705 Campaign Journal, that the Navajo in the La Jara-Gobernador area were growing large tracts of corn in the drainage bottoms. Hunting and gather-

ing probably contributed substantially to their subsistence as well. By about A.D. 1750, the Navajo had essentially abandoned the area, perhaps as a consequence of increased raiding by the Ute who were being forced out of their territory to the north and east by the Comanche and Apache. Nineteen sites in the JWHT have components identified to the Gobernador Phase, however, an additional 21 sites were listed as Navajo (indeterminate) and many of these are likely to be Gobernador Phase.

Historic Hispanic and Anglo-American Utilization

Prior to the late nineteenth century, non-aboriginal use of the JWHT was limited to trails, especially the Old Spanish Trail established after 1830 that runs along the north eastern edge of the area. A small number of Hispanic and Anglo-American homesteaders began to move into the region after the 1870s and by the turn of the twentieth century a few ranches were established. It was also during the early part of the last century, that large numbers of sheep, goats, cattle and horses were grazed in the area resulting in severe degradation of the land that would become the Jicarilla Ranger District of the Carson National Forest. By the early 1950s oil and gas exploration began to dominate both the landscape and economy of the area.

Previous Research and Known Sites

On the Jicarilla Ranger District, 953 cultural resource surveys have been conducted. Subsequently, monitoring and associated activity reports -- mostly related to gas and oil extraction (well pads, access roads and pipelines), water developments, road closures, fuelwood areas and prescribed burns -- were developed. These surveys have covered approximately 4,861 acres, or 6.5 percent of the Jicarilla Wild Horse Territory. The surveys located a total of 491 sites (as of the forest corrected ARMS update of Spring 2003) comprised of 85 percent Ancestral Pueblo, nine percent (9%) Historic Navajo and/or Apache, approximately one percent (1%) Historic Anglo, less than one-half of one percent (0.5%) tentatively identified Archaic, approximately three percent (3%) multi-component sites (Prehistoric and Historic components) and approximately one and one-half (1.5%) percent sites with insufficient data to make a determination of cultural affiliation or phase. There are no known sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places or Traditional Cultural Properties located in the project area.

At present, no monitoring of sites within the JWHT, nor comments in site reports have specifically addressed the impacts to sites by the presence of wild free-roaming horses. Sites that may be considered susceptible to grazing impacts are rock art and standing ruins or structures. Currently only one site containing rock art is located within the JWHT and it is situated in an area that would be relatively inaccessible to horses. There are a few prehistoric sites that were recorded with walls of only one, or at most two, intact courses and impacts from grazing are considered to be minimal on these sites. Of the Navajo sites, the pueblitos are located in areas not particularly accessible to horses or other large grazing animals, but the hogan sites composed primarily of decaying, burned or remnant wood members could continue to be impacted by the presence of large animals.

Tribal Consultation

A scoping letter was sent to the governors, chairpersons, and cultural specialists of the sixteen tribes, pueblos, and nations. [103] The Carson National Forest consults with tribes on cultural resource issues and traditional cultural properties, as well as access to resources on National Forest System lands. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe provided a response to the scoping letter, indicating that there are no sites sensitive to the Southern Ute Indian Tribe that would be impacted by the proposed action. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe does wish to be notified in the event of inadvertent discoveries of human remains.

The Jicarilla Apache Nation also responded to the scoping letter and did not indicate any cultural resource concerns. The issues raised by the Jicarilla Apache Nation indicated concern with the encroachment of wild horses onto the Jicarilla Apache Reservation, and the competition for resources with tribal livestock and native wildlife species. The Jicarilla Apache Nation supports a gathering of the wild horses on the Jicarilla Ranger District and would like to include gathering of trespass wild horses on the Jicarilla Apache Reservation.

A follow-up consultation letter was sent in August 2003 to the same mailing list as the scoping letter. [167] There were no responses.

Comparison of Alternatives

The JWHT is located within one of the highest cultural resource site density areas on the Carson National Forest. Project planning must consider the potential impacts to these sites. Currently there is simply no data on the potential impacts of wild horses on the cultural properties within the JWHT. Current levels are estimated to be over 200 head of wild horses and this number may need to be reduced in order to both maintain key wildlife habitat and to meet Forest Plan utilization guidelines.

Alternative A

Under this alternative, the wild horse population would be allowed to grow unhindered by Forest Service action. It is unlikely that livestock grazing could continue based on current utilization levels within the JWHT. This alternative would increase the likelihood of direct impacts to cultural properties from trampling by horses, especially in those areas of good forage and water. Herds would be allowed to increase without direct intervention and management beyond current levels.

Alternative B

This alternative would limit the possible number of horses to a level substantially lower than at present. Alternative B would potentially result in reducing the effects to cultural resources from wild horses. Additionally, during periods of drought, the number of permitted livestock would be reduced, further lessening the potential impacts to cultural resources.

Alternative C

As in Alternative B, this alternative would substantially reduce the number of horses from both the historic (since approximately 1976) and current levels, therefore, reducing any impacts to the cultural resources. This alternative also would balance the needs of wildlife and horses and reduce the number of permitted livestock, resulting in a net decrease in animals on the JWHT.

Alternative D

As in Alternatives B and C, this alternative would lower the maximum number of wild horses in the JWHT to no more than 75 percent of the current level and would therefore reduce the possible effects to the cultural resources. With this alternative, livestock numbers would remain at the current level and wildlife numbers might have to be adjusted downward, but there would still be an overall decrease in large animals in the JWHT.

Cumulative Effects

When considering the other activities that have or would occur in the JWHT (especially those related to gas exploration and development), the action alternatives would actually decrease the potential to impact cultural resources. Alternatives B, C and D all reduce, from current or historic

levels, the number of large animals within the JWHT, thus decreasing the potential of adversely affecting the cultural properties.

