

Heber Wild Horse Territory Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest

Historic Research and Ethnographic Study



Forest
Service

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USDA Forest Service
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Executive Summary

The USDA Forest Service Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (Forest) is currently developing a management plan for the Heber Wild Horse Territory in Heber-Overgaard, Arizona. In an effort to further understand the territory and the horses within, the Forest tasked the Enterprise Program, Heritage Service Line with conducting and synthesizing oral histories given by people with various associations with the territory.

Methodology

This report was prepared by USDA Forest Service Enterprise Program, Heritage Service Line, specializing in history, historic preservation, and cultural resource management. To develop this report, Enterprise Heritage's Historian conducted record searches and interviews of individuals to determine the history of the Heber Wild Horse Territory and the horses within.

Record searches included primary records and secondary sources regarding the territory and were collected during a site visit to the Forest and Territory as well as online and information shared by interviewees.

The oral history interview process was a collaborative effort completed by the Forest and Enterprise Heritage. The Forest first identified individuals for interview with a known association with the Territory, whether a former Forest Service employee, grazing permittee, interested party, or tribal representative. The Forest and Enterprise Heritage's Historian created questions for the interview that were reviewed and approved by the Region 3 Regional Office and Washington Office. The Forest contacted the identified individuals to request an interview and collected Interview Agreements from interviewees. Enterprise Heritage's Historian then set up interviews and interviewed the agreed parties over the telephone. All interviews were recorded as mp3 files and were transcribed. The interview transcriptions of all interviews are attached as Appendix A.

Section I: Interviews

Interviewees

The following is the list of individuals selected for an interview, their association with the territory, and the interview date. Their names have been undisclosed for privacy.

Name	Association	Interview Date
Subject A	Former Apache-Sitgreaves NF Black Mesa District Ranger, 1991-2009	2/23/15
Subject B	Arizona Department of Game and Fish	12/16/15
Subject C	Advocate, 1990 - Present	2/29/16
Subject D	Forest Range Staff, 1974 -1990	2/29/16
Subject E	Local resident, 1997-2016	3/3/16
Subject F	Coconino County Sherriff Deputy, 1990's – 2002 Area Resident, 1979-1980, 1985- Present	3/4/16
Subject G	Permittee, 1999 – 2009; Life-long Resident	6/20/16
Subject H	Retired, Arizona Department of Agriculture, Resident	6/20/16
Subject I	Former Apache-Sitgreaves NF Pinedale District Range Staff, 1979-2000	11/22/16
Subject J	Permittee, Life-long Heber-Overgaard Resident	11/30/16

Additionally, the Forest reached out to White Mountain Apache Tribe cultural representatives for interviews but requests for interviews were not answered.

Interview Questions:

Interview questions asked of each interviewee included:

1. What is your history, relationship, or connectivity to the Heber Wild Horse Territory?
2. How long have you been in the area to observe activities in the Territory?
3. What have been your observations of the herd over time in the Territory?
Follow up questions:
 - A. Have you observed changes within the Territory or horses?
 - B. Have you observed reproduction rates of the horses?
 - C. Have you observed the distribution of animals, e.g. numbers of horses, specific locations, any changes over time to this distribution?
 - D. Have you observed any changes within the Territory or horses due to weather?
4. Have you observed any changes regarding the horses and/or Territory since the Rodeo-Chedeski Fire?
5. Have you observed movement patterns of the horses throughout the Territory and neighboring areas?
6. What have been your observations regarding the fencing within the Territory and neighboring areas, if any?

These questions were followed up by the Enterprise Heritage Historian asking clarifying questions or asking for additional information based on the interviewee's previous statements.

Interview Responses:

Subject A:

Note: Subject A was interviewed at the earliest stage of the process before she retired in 2015 and before the general interview questions were developed. Questions asked of her are similar to the general interview questions though ask more about her recollections in general about the territory during her tenure as the District Ranger.

Subject A served as the District Ranger on the Black Mesa (then Heber) Ranger District from 1991 to 2009. Her range employee had worked on the district 15 years prior to Subject A's arrival. She states that the range employee had a very strong, good knowledge of range conditions, range management, and the wild horse territory. He had been closely monitoring the territory during his tenure.

In 1993, the range employee advised the District Ranger that the territory had only two mares remaining with no further reproduction. He suggested that because the herd on the territory was no longer viable and not requiring management that the territory designation be removed.

The Forest Supervisor agreed with the assessment and the Forest operated under the assumption that the territory had closed until staff proposed to gather what were considered to be trespass horses from the Fort Apache Reservation after the Rodeo-Chediski Fire. The fence between Black Mesa Ranger District and the Fort Apache Reservation came down during the fire from damage and after the fire due to trees falling on the fence. It was known to the Forest that a great influx of horses crossed the fence from the Fort Apache Reservation onto the Forest after the fire. Subject A states the White Mountain Apache Tribe had acknowledged at the time of the fire, the Fort Apache Reservation had numerous horses and many had moved onto the Forest. The Forest Supervisor contacted the White Mountain Apache Tribe to see if they would be interested in claiming the horses after the Forest gathered them and the Supervisor acknowledged an agreement with the White Mountain Apache Tribe to do so.

Subject A was aware that the Ranger District had a couple pockets of horses that had been a nuisance for a number of years that were outside of the territory. The Forest considered them to be trespass and gathered many in roundups throughout the 1990s.

A suit was filed against the Forest claiming that the Forest had no authority to gather the horses as the plaintiff argued the horses were part of the Heber Wild Horse Territory. It was determined that the Forest Supervisor did not have the authority to close the territory. The Forest then acknowledged the territory on the Black Mesa Ranger District and began articulating and mapping the boundaries, characterizing winter range and summer range, and identifying where the fences were. No management plan had been produced after the creation of the territory in 1972. The Forest acknowledged that a management plan was required and recognized that original AML included seven horses. Subject A and the Forest became involved in the management plan process and public involvement. Subject A left the Forest in 2009.

Subject B:

Note: There was a problem with the recording during the interview. The Enterprise Heritage Historian started a new recording and asked Subject B to repeat his answers to the questions. A portion of the interview was not recorded, however, notes were taken.

Subject B worked in the Heber area for the Arizona Department of Game and Fish between 1992 and 20XX where he managed wildlife and oversaw the game and nongame programs.

Subject B states that the Rodeo-Chediski fire burned a large area of boundary between the Fort Apache Reservation and the southern boundary of the Sitgreaves Forest which had a standard, four or five (approximate) strand barbed wire fence. He believes the fence was broken from the heat of the fire, the poles burning down, and then subsequent dead trees, mostly Ponderosa Pine, falling on the boundary fence. He states that this allowed easier movement of animals between the Fort Apache Reservation and the Forest. And after the fire, Subject B noticed along with other Game and Fish Department employees, a large increase in the numbers of horses and also distribution of horses in an area encompassing roughly east of Pinedale going west to approximately 8–10 miles west of Heber, and north to Highway 260. Especially along the rim on the south end, Subject B and others observed a large increase of horses and it was believed that the horses originated from the Fort Apache Reservation.

In June of 2011, the Wallow Fire caused about a half-million acre burn in the Bear Wallow Wilderness. Subject B states that the fire burned along the east boundary of the Fort Apache Reservation and onto the Apache National Forest. Subject B observed that the fire burned a lot of pasture as well as allotment and boundary fences, causing them to be burned on site, fallen to the ground, or subsequently had trees falling on them. He states that this second fire and down-fencing allowed the horses that were either from the Fort Apache Reservation or already on the Apache National Forest to go further east and north. He observed that the Department, who managed the area as a wildlife area, noticed horses for the first time ever on their property and near some private land. He states that primarily before that Wallow Fire, the horses were mostly located along the Black River Drainage and north of there on the drainages of Boggy, Centerfire Creeks, and Wildcat Creeks. Subject B noted that from his observations, these horses displaced on the Apache National Forest, did not interact with the horses associated with that Heber Wild Horse Territory but are separate herds. He states he believed all of these horses originated from the Fort Apache Reservation.

Subject B states that he knew of some horses on the National Forest, but after the 2002 fire there was a significant increase in the numbers.

While not involved in formal surveys of horses or no longer involved in aerial reconnaissance, Subject B noted that reproduction rates rose after the 2002 fire. During field reconnaissance, Subject B stated that he would make a quick, cursory count of the horses and foals. He states that he frequently saw a decent number of foals in a herd.

Subject B then speaks to various issues regarding grazing and water capacity. He reiterates that he observed two different herds in the area approximately 50 to 60 miles apart. One of herds encompassed that of the Wild Horse Territory, spanning from eight or ten miles west of Heber, east to about Pinedale with the northern boundary at Highway 260. Subject B states that the second population occurs on the Apache National Forest approximately from Bear Wallow Creek north to Forest Road 116. These horses are primarily located along the forest boundary with the Fort Apache Reservation. Subject B notes that

after the fire, he observed that the horses spread to the east into the west fork of the Black River Drainage. He stated the he never observed the two herds interact. In his opinion, both of these herds originated and are descendants of horses from the Fort Apache Reservation.

Subject C:

Subject C has been in the Heber-Overgaard area since 1990 as a resident, photographer of the horses, and advocate for the Wild Horse Territory. He states that in 1990, the horses were sparse and not as available for viewing like that after the fire. While hunting, Subject C would observe horses crossing the fence line of the Fort Apache Reservation. He noted there were family units of approximately 17 horses composed of three colts and mares not capable of reproduction. He did not see the units interacting.

After the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, he is certain that some of the horses came from the Fort Apache Reservation by crossing the downed fence. He notes that the fence was and has been down by falling trees in addition to the destruction of the fire. Due to this, he states that there is no doubt there are more horses on the Forest and neighboring areas. He has not observed any of these horses having had a brand, specifically the Apache brand featuring a broken arrow.

In regards to reproduction, he notes that he has seen new foals on the Forest. He notes that most of the horses he has observed are near the 300 Road, along the Fort Apache Reservation, and near Overgaard.

He states that he believes some of the horses may have descended from United States Army cavalry horses turned out and others originated from the Fort Apache Reservation. He believes Fort Apache Reservation horses, horses of cavalry descent, and other horses have over time interbred and despite where the horses cluster or live, are all one and the same.

After the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, Subject C describes that with the canopy down, grasses and shrubs flourished. He states that this benefited the view-shed for seeing the horses more openly and has provided adequate grazing for the horses.

Subject D:

Subject D served as a Forest employee, administering range and wildlife on the Apache-Sitgreaves from 1974 until retirement in 1990. Subject D states that in 1974 when he first took over administration of range for the Sitgreaves Forest, the Forest believed they had a limited amount of wild horses. He states that there was a small herd close to Heber on the Black Canyon allotment, and that was the extent of the herd. The consensus at that time was that other known horses mostly west of the Heber District were horses from the Fort Apache Reservation and not part of the wild horse herd.

In 1986, the range employee and Subject D determined that there were only six of the original wild horses left and had identified their location. Subject D notes that the range employee was very astute in tracking and keeping track of the herd and the territory. Subject D mentions that several ranchers, including Subject J, have observed the herd and its location since the 1970s as well. When the herd began declining, Subject D states that he and the range employee decided it would be beneficial to count them. Subject D and the range staff visited the location on horseback and found only four horses. Subject D

recalls that the group consisted of a light roan and sorrel, or it may have been two sorrels and a bay. In any case, he notes being impressed that there were a couple of light colored horses among the group.

Subject D notes that there were no studs or colts among the four and that the herd looked like “they were on their way out.” Because the wild horse herd had been a distinct group from other horses coming up from the Fort Apache Reservation further west of the territory near Gentry Lookout, Subject D states he and the range staff were looking to see if there was a viable herd without intermixture from these other groups. At that time, they determined that the four remaining horses did not constitute a viable herd.

Subject D contends that the original herd that he, range staff and other district staff believed the herd they were managing had died out by 1990. During that same period, Subject D states there were approximately 300 horses coming in to the Forest from the Fort Apache Reservation on the south side by coming up from below on the Mogollon Rim. Subject D and the range staff caught some of those in trigger traps and transported them to the sale at Holbrook. He states that was the Forest’s direction for handling the increase in that herd. Neither the range staff nor Subject D considered these horses to be included within the wild horse herd at the time.

Subject D states he believes the originally designated wild horse herd was offspring from remount horses released after World War I. He notes that ranchers in the area had devoted their ranching operations to raising remount horses for the Army and war effort in the 1910s.

Subject E:

Subject E and her family own a second home in Heber and have observed the horses since 1997. Since then, she has observed that the population has grown in size. She has seen them around Turkey Springs, Black Canyon Lake, and near Highway 260, west of Heber. She notes that she observed horses before the Rodeo-Chediski Fire but believes there are more horses now than before the fire. She notes that this may be due to the fact that visibility is much more open since the fire as well as a growing population.

Subject F:

Subject F has been a resident of Forest Lake, 15 miles from Heber, since 1979. He left the area in 1980 and returned in 1985. He has also been a hunting guide for the area, known as Game and Fish Department Unit 3-C. He further served as Deputy Sheriff in the area since 1985.

Subject F states that he first observed the area in 1976. At that time he would see 6 or 8, maybe a dozen horses in the area. He mentioned that very seldom did you see any sign of them. He states that through the years the population has increased. During the 1980s, he observed that it was common to see groups of 8 or 10 in the area while hunting or walking through it. By 1990 through the 1990s, Subject F states that he saw a large increase in population and the subsequent the damage, erosion, and water displacement caused by over-grazing of the horses. Subject F notes that the fence bordering the Fort Apache Reservation and 3-C Unit was in disrepair where he observed the horses had come through. Since the 2000s, Subject F has observed that the horse population numbers in the hundreds.

When describing the distribution and location of the horses, Subject F states that the horses travel into the Fort Apache Reservation during the winter months to get out of the snow. In the spring the horses move back north to the Forest. He mentions that reproduction has been consistent with two or three new colts within groups of 8 or 10. He states that the horses are specifically found along Big Canyon Road (Forest Service Road 168), which goes south off of the 300, just west of the Black Canyon Lake turnoff. Another place that Subject F has observed the horses is Eubank, a road that leads to the southwest. The 162 road south of Gentry Lookout, leading south, Subject F states is also populated with horses. He notes that the Fort Apache Reservation line is close to that area where they travel to and from. Subject F states that in late spring, the horses start crossing the 300 road into northern country between 300 and 260.

Subject F states that after the Rodeo-Chediski, the horses have remained in the burned areas with new growth much longer than they previously stayed in the natural meadows before the fire. Regarding the fence along the Fort Apache Reservation boundary, which is also the edge of the rim and Road 300, Subject F states there were many places where the fence was destroyed. He has observed that portions of the fence have been destroyed by horses crossing over, pushing down the top strands of barbed wire, sometimes pushing through all the strands. Subject F concludes that he believes the horses are those that have left the Fort Apache Reservation over the years.

Subject G:

Subject G is a life-long area resident, rancher, and Forest permittee from 1999 to 2009. He served on the original Forest advisory board in 1972. When he visited the newly formed territory, he and others observed 7 horses within the territory. He states that the original herd was not very large, recalling no one thought the territory would be much of a big deal.

Subject G states that from local knowledge, he had heard that a hard snow storm in 1967 adversely affected the herd and there were no new foals after the storm. During the 1970s and 1980s, Subject G recalls seeing a horse on his ranch running up and down the fence that bordered the Fort Apache Reservation. He states that for various reasons, fencing was down in parts and horses would make their way onto his ranch, and then return to the Fort Apache Reservation on their own or with help. He also remembers observing horses that had been turned out wanting to return to town. He notes this as a problem still occurring to the present; local people unable to care for their horses will turn them out.

After the Rodeo-Chedeski Fire, Subject G notes continual problems with the fence along the Fort Apache Reservation, stating it was hard for anyone to maintain the fence due to continual damage from falling trees. Due to the deteriorated fence, Subject G states that there was a huge influx of horses on his forest allotment and his former ranch. Horses continually crossed back and forth from the Fort Apache Reservation. He notes that the horses remain south of Highway 260. He further notes that he has seen continual reproduction in the last several years with colts every year on his specific allotment.

Subject H:

Subject H served as a meat inspector for the livestock department in the area in 1981. He then was the livestock inspector for an area rancher in 1987. This area rancher was a lessee of a Forest permit around the Heber Wild Horse Territory. He has observed the area for the last 33 years as an inspector for the Arizona Department of Agriculture.

Subject H states that his first visual contact with what he presumed were horses from the territory, included two buckskin mares in 1985 in the Buckskin Canyon area. Wanting to know more about the territory, Subject H said he asked [name] who had been ranching the area. He states that [name] explained that the Forest Service had designated the specified area as a wild horse territory back in 1974 starting with the group around the Black Canyon lake area. Subject H states that according to [name] the Forest did not have a problem with horses coming off the Fort Apache Reservation in that section of the Forest. When there were occasionally horses coming off the Fort Apache Reservation, the Forest Service would gather them and put out a bid for their sale. Subject H asked about the presence of a stallion and [name] responded that the original stallion went sterile in 1983 after a freeze. [Name] stated that the stallion still had the strength to keep other sterile stallions from coming across from the Fort Apache Reservation and keep his herd together. Consequently, there were no offspring and the original herd eventually died off either because of bad winters or because of age.

Subject H states that after the Rodeo-Chedeski Fire, miles of the fence separating the Forest and the Fort Apache Reservation were burned up, and it subsequently allowed many horses from the Fort Apache Reservation onto the National Forest. He states that there had been problems before over the years, but he, [name], and others knew the difference between the horses from the Fort Apache Reservation and the original wild horse herd. He states that the 300 plus horses currently on the Forest is causing a tremendous habitat problem for the wildlife and livestock.

Subject I:

Subject I served as range staff on the Pinedale District and portions of the Lakeside District from 1979 to 2000. Subject I did not directly deal with the Heber District but recalls from permittees and other range staff that there was a small herd the Forest was protecting. During the 1980s to 1990s, Subject I recalls there being trouble with incoming horses from the Fort Apache Reservation.

By the late 1990s, Subject I recalls the reproduction rate was slowly going down but then stallions or studs began crossing over from the Fort Apache Reservation. Before retiring in 2000, Subject I observed a few horses crossing from the Fort Apache Reservation each year onto the Pinedale and Lakeside Districts where he primarily worked. These horses remained around the area Fenced Tank on the west side of Show Low near Linden to Juniper Ridge.

After the Rodeo-Chedeski Fire, he states that there are horses everywhere now, many coming from the Fort Apache Reservation with no fence to keep them home. He states that the horses are free to cross from the Fort Apache Reservation, all the way from Forest Lakes Estates to Show Low/Lakeside.

Subject J:

Subject J is a third-generation rancher from the area, born in 1958. His family has been ranching the area since 1930. He recalls that the wild horse herd consisted of 7 horses in the 1960s and 1970s. He states that he and others believed the wild broomies were adversely affected by the snow storm in 1967/1968. Subject J recalls that it was during that storm, the stud horse had frozen and become sterile. Although the mares survived, there were no more colts within that herd after the storm. He notes that the mares eventually died of old age.

Subject J states that his permit borders 27 miles of the Fort Apache Reservation. He notes that the number of horses have increased substantially since the 1970s and has observed that these horses within the Forest came from the Fort Apache Reservation. During the 1980s, he and others gathered up many of the horses and took them to sale in Holbrook. He left 12 on his permitted land.

After the Rodeo-Chedeski Fire, he states that the fence was destroyed and it took three years to rebuild as they had to clear every tree within a hundred feet on both sides of the fence. During this three year period, Subject J witnessed approximately 400 to 500 horses entering the Forest from the Fort Apache Reservation. He states that the horse population has been increasing for the past 15 years due to holes in the fence, reproduction rates, and people turning out horses. He notes that he has found many horses turned out by owners who could no longer care for them, including tattooed race horses, work horses, and Shetland ponies.

Subject J states that there is a large crop of new colts each year; he estimates that there is a 30% increase every year from offspring. He notes that these horses come down along Highway 260 to lower elevation to avoid snow.

According to his family history and archival records he has read, Subject J states that this grandfather arrived in the area in the 1930s when the Forest Service and local residents were under the impression that the horses were a nuisance and so many were shot. He states that many of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century horses in the area were bred as remounts for Army cavalry. A lucrative business for pioneers, they bought a small number of mares and released them with a cavalry remount stud. Subject J describes that they would later gather the offspring, break them, and sell them to the Army. He states that once the Army did not require horses anymore after World War I, they turned them out to the forest.

Summary of Findings

Of the ten interviews completed, all interviewees who had good to extensive knowledge of the territory and area corroborated similar stories, despite numbers and dates occasionally remembered differently. There were around 7 horses in the 1960s and 1970s when the territory was first created. A hard winter in 1967-1968 left the stud or stallion sterile (one source indicates 1983). There were no more foals within that original herd after that winter or any subsequent years. The herd dwindled down to 2 horses, which likely died of old age.

Of those interviewees who had extensive knowledge of that herd stated those horses originally came from retired Army remount horses no longer needed after World War I. They were turned out to the area sometime in the 1930s.

Between the 1980s and 1990s, new horses began entering the Forest and Territory from the southern Fort Apache Reservation due to growing issues with the fencing.

After the Rodeo-Chediski Fire in 2002, all interviewees stated that the fencing separating the Territory and the Fort Apache Reservation had severe issues and allowed numerous horses to pass onto the Forest and Territory. The fencing persists as an issue still today. All interviewees with knowledge claim the resultant herd(s) today are horses that have passed from the Fort Apache Reservation to the Forest and Territory. None of the horses are from the original designated herd.

The interviewees also contributed additional information and included anecdotes regarding personal opinions, wildlife/habitat issues, over-grazing and limited allocation for grazing permits, as well as enjoyment in seeing the horses on the Forest. Only information related to the interview questions is included in the interview summaries above, however, this additional information can be found in the individual interviews included in the Appendix.

Recommendations

The history of the area horse herd(s) suggests that there are two periods of occupation. The first period dates between the 1930s to c. 1990, followed by a second period that dates from c. 1990 to the present. The first period encompasses the originally designated herd of seven horses, which more than likely descended from the turned-out Army remount horses or other turned-out horses in the 1930s and then dissipated by c. 1990. The current horse population dating from c. 1990 appears to be a mixture of horses from the Fort Apache Reservation and other unidentified horses with no substantiated link with the originally designated herd.

As such, this study concludes that there is no historical precedent for the current population occupying the area. The history of the horse herds does not provide any conclusive, historical basis for how to designate the horses for the future as the originally designated herd does not appear to be extant. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the author that the Forest and interested parties determine future direction and management of the Territory based on the current condition and population of horses.

Section II: Records Search

Annotated Bibliography

The following literature review includes primary records and secondary sources regarding the territory and were collected during a site visit to the Forest and Territory as well as online and information shared by interviewees.

1. Baltimore, Pamela. February 19, 2015. Email Correspondence to Esther Morgan and jbrooks@wmatforestry.com. Carbon copied to Waconda, John E-FS; Meza, Dan-FS; Osen, Thomas D-FS; Begay, Yolynda-FS; Evans, David A-FS; James, Stephen G-FS; Baltimore, Pamela-FS. "Notes from WMAT/A-S NF Meeting in December." Attached: Draft WMAT A-S Minutes 2014_12_15.docx

The email message is referencing notes taken at a December 15, 2014 White Mountain Apache and Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests meeting and asking recipients for edits.

2. Baltimore, Pamela. June 7, 2015. Email correspondence to FS-pdl r3 apachesitgreaves all; Rex Thompson; Thompson, Rex-FS; Thompson, Rex-FS. KNAU piece on Heber Wild Horses.

This email message references an email sent by Cathie Schmidlin, Forest Service Media Officer regarding an article published by the KNAU and Arizona News on the Heber Wild Horses. A link is provided to the KNAU's website in order to listen to interviews, one specifically mentioned by Pamela Baltimore is Chris James, Black Mesa District Ranger's interview.

3. Basso, Keith. 1983. "Western Apache", in *Handbook of North American Indians*. Vol. 10. Southwest edited by Alfonso Ortiz, 462-488. Washington: Smithsonian Institution

This document provides an overview of the Western Apaches from early in their history to current times (as of 1983). Included are sections on language and territory, prehistory and early history, interactions with Spaniards, Mexicans, and Anglo-Americans, culture and social organization, subsistence, reservations and directed culture change, economic change, social change, education, missionaries and religious change.

4. Friends of Animals and The Cloud Foundation, "Petition to List a North American Distinct Population Segment of Wild Horse (*Equus caballus*) under the U.S. Endangered Species Act" petition submitted to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service June 10, 2014.

This document includes a cover letter to Secretary Sally Jewell (U.S. Dept. of Interior) and Daniel M. Ashe, Director (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service) from Michael Harris, the legal director of the

Wildlife Law Program for Friends of Animals. The petition contains thirty-six pages four of which are references cited. The Friends of Animals and the Cloud Foundation request through this document the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service list the North American distinct population segment of wild horses found on federal public lands as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The majority of the document consists of referenced material attempting to create a case justifying why wild horses should be an ESA listed species.

5. Granilla, Aaron. June 5, 2015. "Heber Wild Horses: Legendary or Problematic?" *KNAU and Arizona News*. Published online <http://knau.org/post/heber-wild-horses-jegendary-or-problematic> accessed July 13, 2015.

This document provides a very brief overview concerning the horse population on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. One opinion from two opposing views are provided, a horse advocate and photographer and a permittee holder for cattle grazing on Forest Service land. Fifty-six comments from readers have been posted at the end of the article.

6. Graves, Michael W. 1982. "Apache Adaptation to the Mountains." In *Cholla Project Archaeology, the Q Ranch Region*, edited by J. Jefferson Reid. Vol. III. 193-215. Arizona State Museum Archaeological Series 161.

This document focuses on the Q Ranch Region of the Cholla Project, which was historically Western Apache territory. The purpose of this study is to better understand the Apache groups that lived in this region. In doing so the protohistoric and historic Apache materials would be easier to identify and understand promoting a better comprehension of Apachean activities in central Arizona. The author discusses prehistoric Puebloan abandonment and the Apachean spread into central Arizona. Culture and social aspects are looked at as are settlement patterns, subsistence practices, trading, raiding and warfare.

7. Hilpert, Bruce. 1996. "Indé (Western Apaches) The People of the Mountains" in *Paths of Life American Indians of the Southwest and Northern Mexico*. Edited by Thomas E. Sheridan and Nancy J. Parezo, 61-90. The University of Arizona Press.

This document is two chapters in the book, *Paths of Life American Indians of the Southwest and Northern Mexico*, which is approximately 300 pages. This document provides a description of the different Apache bands and regions. An overview of their lives in the past and present is described as is their connection with the land.

8. Morgan, Esther. July 30, 2014. Email Correspondence to Joseph P. Martin and David A. Evans. Carbon copied to Peter M. Taylor and Esther Morgan. Western Apache references on O drive – 2360 HeritageRestricted folder – For Heber Wild Horse Territory project.

This document references the location for information Esther Morgan discussed the previous day regarding the Apaches references. The information can be found at

O:\NFS\ApacheSitgreaves\Program\2360Heritage\2360HeritageRestricted\Literature\Ethnographic\Apache.

9. Pearce, G. Joseph. 1984. "Arizona's First Forest Ranger" in *Arizona Memories*. Edited by Morgan H. Anne and Strickland, Rennard. 125-134. The University of Arizona Press.

This chapter in the book *Arizona Memories* is a memoir of Joseph Garrison Pearce, the first Black Mesa Forest Reserve Forest Ranger who also happened to have been raised on the Mogollon Rim County in Arizona. Joseph Pearce described his time as a forest ranger depicting forest fire suppression, collecting range fees, trail blazing, and marking timber for logging activities. He gave examples of his experiences with ranchers grazing sheep and cattle. A section of his memoir describes his recollection of the wild horses in the Black Mesa Forest and reservation and how they were a nuisance. He states after his time as a ranger orders came from the government to kill horses on forest land and he was glad he did not have to carry out that order.

10. Perry, Richard. Date unavailable. *Western Apache Heritage People of the Mountain Corridor*. Austin, TX: University of Texas.

This document is two scanned chapters from the book *Western Apache Heritage People of the Mountain Corridor*, which is approximately 300 pages long. The first chapter, *On the Fringes of the Southwest*, covers the early Apache history starting from 1000 A.D. and possible areas they might have passed through. Other people and their cultures the early Apache might have come into contact with and the influence it might have made on them is discussed. Eastern and Western sections of the Apache territory are addressed separately. The second scanned chapter, *The Western Apache*, focuses on Apache residing in the western portion of their territory in the early nineteenth century. Subsistence opportunities at different ecological zones are described as are the similarities of their mannerisms to their ancient subarctic ancestors'.

11. Ramsey, Shelly. January 16, 2015. "The Wild Heber Horses Part II: What will the future hold for the Heber Wild Horses?" *Mogollon Rim News* <http://www.mogollonrimnews.com/the-wild-horses/>. Accessed online July 13, 2015.

This two page document provides an overview of the current situation, as of January 16, 2015, with the Heber Wild Horse Territory (HWHT). Very brief explanations of pertinent background information are provided regarding the Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) guidelines regarding resource usage with wildlife, permittee cattle grazing and horses, and the Rodeo-Chedeki Fire of 2002. Explanation of the USFS's status of the management plan is provided as is the author's opinion that possible destruction of the horses removed from the HWHT should be avoided. The author suggests community engagement is needed for long-term care of the removed horses in order to avoid euthanasia.

12. Triefeldt, Laurie. 2014. "Wild Horses." The Independent. October 20, 2014

Informational newspaper article on feral, or wild horses. This very short article provides information on the evolution of wild horses, where wild horses can be found today, and how a wild horse herd lives. An artist's rendering of several wild horse breeds is provided.

13. Unknown. Undated. Heber Wild Horse Territory Management Plan Attendees.

This one-page document includes the name, organization/role, and emails for each of the twenty-four attendees.

14. Unknown. Sign-In Sheet. Undated. Untitled.

This document is a sign-in sheet with gathered information including: name, affiliation, phone number, and email address. Individuals signed in from U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and tribal council members.

15. Unknown. 1971. Fact Sheet Sitgreaves National Forest. October 1971.

This document provides an overview of the Sitgreaves National Forest from its designation as public domain in 1908 to current land uses (as of 1971). Activities occurring on the four different ranger districts, the supervisor's office and Job Corps' conservation center are described as are facts pertaining to each land use.

16. Unknown. "Federal officials, horse advocates disagree over wild status for Heber herd".

Associated Press

<http://www.therepublic.com/view/story/02296d77b1914b3eb5a8af3bea28b2c5/AZ--Wil-Horses-Management>. Submitted by Ghuhn, December 15, 2014.

<http://www.wildhorsepreservation.org/media/federa-officials-horse-advocates-disagree-ov...>

Online one-page article by Associated Press posted on the Wild Horse Preservation website. Hardcopy printed on July 13, 2015. The article briefly delves into the development of a management plan by the U.S. Forest Service for the Heber horses, but that the local residents of Heber fear the agency may roundup the horses at any time. The article portrays Forest Service and horse advocates on opposing sides with Forest Service officials wanting to remove the horses and horse advocates wanting the horses to stay on the landscape.

17. USDA Forest Service. 1974. "A History of the Sitgreaves National Forest" in Southwestern Region Supervisors Sitgreaves National Forest.

This document consists of records, interviews, and unpublished manuscripts assembled by the Forester, Harold W. Harper in May 1974. This collection of material was put together in response of a circular from the Washington Office in January 1972 and the Forest Manual

indicating a History Program consisting of historical records of the developments and activities of the Forest would be collected, organized and maintained. An overview of the Sitgreaves National Forest history is provided and leads into the collected material.

18. USDA Forest Service. 1974. The Sitgreaves National Forest 1898-1974.

This document provides an overview of the history of the Sitgreaves National Forest from 1898 to 1974 and the land's establishment of public domain to national forest land. Different supervisors and headquarter locations are summarized. A letter written by Supervisor Alex MacKay to all rangers and guards in September 1908 is attached portraying the appropriateness of the Forest's new name, the Sitgreaves National Forest.

19. USDA Forest Service. Undated. Talking Points for frontliners regarding flight surveys for horse counts week of May 12, 2014.

This document is an outline of talking points for frontliners. It contains information of how the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests and TEAMS are conducting horse counts via helicopter the week of May 12, 2014. The document covers why the counts are being conducted and the need for a management plan for the Heber Wild Horse Territory on the Black Mesa Ranger District. It also briefly explains how National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation will be conducted and that more information regarding public involvement is to come.

20. USDA Forest Service. 2007. "Heber Wild Horse Plan." Map. Prepared May 11, 2007.

This document is a map depicting the Heber Wild Horse Territory on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, Black Mesa Ranger District.

21. USDA Forest Service. 2015. Draft White Mountain Apache and Apache-Sitgreaves NFs Meeting Minutes. Rick Lupe Fire Emergency Management- Whiteriver, AZ. Meeting notes (attached and referenced in 2/19/14 email from Pamela Baltimore). December 15, 2014 (titled incorrectly as 2015).

Contained within the notes are attendees and several topics discussed at the meeting. Included was a discussion on the USFS Heber Wild Horse Territory. For this portion of the meeting notes point of contacts were provided, the need for a Memorandum of Understanding was discussed and boundary fence reconstruction was introduced.

22. USDA Forest Service. 2015. WMAT Heber Wild Horse Meeting. February 23, 2015.

Document consists of handwritten notes from a Forest Service meeting regarding the Heber Wild Horses.

23. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. June 22, 2015. 90-Day Finding on a Petition to List a Distinct Population Segment of North American Wild Horses on all U.S. Federal Public Lands as an Endangered or Threatened Species. Federal Docket No. FSW-R8_ES-2015-0049.

This document is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's notice and evaluation of the Friends of Animals and The Cloud Foundation's June 10, 2014 Petition to List the Distinct Population Segment of North American Wild Horses on all U.S. Federal Public Lands be listed as an endangered or threatened species under the ESA. The evaluation addresses three different criteria required to be considered a distinct population segment. Substantial information was noted to be lacking in order to meet the conditions needed. This federal docket found the petitioned animal not a listable entity under the ESA.

Appendix A: Interview Transcripts

Subject A

Q: The point of the interviews is to establish how long have these horses been on the property? How many? And the history of the horses prior to '71, and after '71. To really determine are these wild horses or are they feral livestock. And you know especially in '93 saying that only two mares could be found... is really important information in leading us to a decision. And so I wanted to get more on that decision and how that determination came to be. What you guys saw on the territory and whatever else you might be able to add, et cetera.

A: Yeah, okay. I started working on... I started at the ranger on... it was Heber Ranger District at the time and of course you know now it's Black Mesa, but I started as the Ranger at Heber in 1991 and my range staff his name was [name]. And [name] had been on the district for probably 15... he's been there probably 15 years, something like that. He'd been working in the Mogollon Rim Country prior to that with Job Corps, and then he switched over to the Forest Service when the Job Corps center closed. I don't remember the exact date. At any rate, [name] had a very strong, good knowledge of range conditions, of range management and the wild horse territory conditions and management because he'd been there for quite a while. So in 1993 [name] came to me and said that he recommended that we try to close the territory, I guess. Delist it or whatever the correct term is, that there were only two mares left. He'd been monitoring the territory. Of course the population since he started working there on the district, and there were only two mares left, there was no reproduction, and he recommended that we seek to eliminate the territory. So my letter to the forest supervisor was based on that data and that recommendation from my range staff. And I sent it to the Forest Supervisor and he responded — I don't know whether it's in the record, I believe his response to me is in the record — that he agreed with my assessment and I don't remember his exact words but consider it done that we closed the territory. So at that point I was operating under the understanding that we no longer had a formal wild horse territory on the Heber Ranger District. And I guess maybe you could say ignorance is bliss. We operated under that understanding until we proposed to gather what we considered to be trespass horses from the White Mountain Apache Reservation after the Rodeo-Chediski Fire.

Q: Those horses were identified as not part of the earlier group of the two mares?

A: Were they identified as not part of that group? We didn't do any genetic testing. I don't believe there's any data on genetic testing of the mares or anything like that. I think we recommended gathering the two mares up and I think we had permission to do that. But I had... when I was there I looked and we could find no documentation that [name] had indeed followed through and gathered the mares. So that, I think that's unknown for me. However, to me it's not an unknown that we had a great influx of horses from the reservation after the fire. There's no question in my mind. The fence was down, the fence between Black Face Ranger District and the White Mountain Apache Reservation came down during and after the fire with fire damage and then trees falling on the fence. And it was a fifty mile long boundary across the ranger district, and it was known and acknowledged at the time that the tribe had a lot of horses running on their reservation. A lot of feral horses. And we had... a forest supervisor had contacted them, the tribe to see if they would be interested in claiming the horses after we gathered them and she had acknowledged an agreement with them to do so.

Q: Okay.

A: So I can't tell you genetically if those horses had any relationship to the mares. I just know that they came from the reservation in huge numbers. And that is... so let me add to that. We were aware on the ranger district that we had a couple pockets of horses that had been a problem for us for a number of years that were outside the territory. We always had issues with the fence between White Mountain Apache Reservation and the ranger district. There were always holes in it. Like I said, it was a fifty mile fence. The maintenance for that fence... we had had an agreement with the tribe to maintain it, and we each had sections to maintain. However, the implementation of that wasn't very good and the follow through on maintaining the fence. About the only people that ever maintained it were grazing permittees on Black Mesa, and maybe the Ranger District. And so there were holes in the fence. We had a couple pockets east of Heber of horses that we had worked on doing some roundups through the 90's. We'd done some roundups of the horses while [name] was still the range staff for Heber Ranger District. And then after he retired we really did not do any further gathers of those. We considered them to be feral. They were outside the territory. They were not part of that population and so we had been pursuing prior to the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, we had been pursuing getting some funds to do some gathering again but hadn't done it. So to my knowledge we had a couple of pockets of horses east of Heber. And I think [name] who I believe is still on Black Mesa Ranger District was a... he was a Range Con on the district at that time, in the 90's and could provide you with some, I think, information on that and maybe more detail than what I can provide on the status of those groups in the 90's.

A: Another person that you may want to talk to is a local rancher [name]. I believe [name] may have been involved in some of the contracts to gather those feral horses in the 90's. We had some horse traps actually established which burned up during the fire. I do know that they were used, though, in the 90's at times to gather the feral horses.

Q: Okay.

A: So what I did hear from people after the fire was that... *some* people... was that those horses didn't come from the reservation, that they had always been on the forest. So we did have some horses outside the territory on the forest. They were not in our minds ever considered wild horses. They weren't in the territory, they weren't close to the territory, and so yes we had some small pockets but we didn't have the hundreds of horses that we had after the fire.

Q: Okay. So the fire really moved things about? Moved horses, displaced them maybe?

A: Absolutely.

Q: Okay.

A: After the fire we seeded 60,000 acres with... aerially seeded with annual and perennial grasses. And we... the timing was perfect for that. We seeded and then the monsoon came in and we had gentle rains, not the downpours that sometimes can happen during the monsoon, and we had a great take on the seeds. And so we had abundant and maybe they still do, abundant forage, so the reservation lands were not as abundantly re-vegetated. I guess... I am certain that the horses moved. The tribe didn't argue that. They didn't debate that. They acknowledged that

they had a lot of horses and that the horses had moved — had moved onto the forest — and they were willing to take them back. At the same time when we were trying to implement the contract to gather the horses, I would have some conversations with tribal representatives and they were also gathering horses because the fire had had a major effect on ground cover and tree cover. They were trying to gather the horses on the reservation and were doing some pretty large gathers. However, at that time they didn't want to go on the record and I'm guessing they may *still* not want to go on the record because they were concerned about attention from the environmental groups, or the... not environmental groups, the advocacy groups, animal groups. So I could never get them to put anything in writing or acknowledge that. So that's problematic, but it is what they told me — that they also were gathering horses because of the great numbers they had and the damage they were causing. So that's a bit of information I don't know if you can pursue or not with the tribe.

A: Yeah, I questioned it many times. It was not a viable territory. A population of seven is not viable.

A: I think where we landed, was that... so let me talk about some other things. I mentioned that I thought we had gotten permission to close the territory. I thought the forest supervisor had that authority. He told me it was closed so I operated under that assumption. So after the fire they mentioned... we put out a contract. I talked to the Forest Supervisor, we knew we had way too many horses on the district post-fire. Our conditions... so we did have a good take on the grass cover post-fire, however, we still had severe post-fire effects. That fire burned 120,000 acres I believe on the ranger district and 70% high-severity fire, so it was a stand-replacing fire over much of that 120,000 acres. So, anyway, so I went and talked to the Forest Supervisor and asked if we could maybe do a contract to gather. And we got some money to do that. We had worked with the State of Arizona. I don't remember all the details but in Arizona the state... I'm not sure which department now — State Lands? — but anyway, the state controls feral horses. They are the ones that are authorized to dispose of them and manage them in the State of Arizona. So we had talked with the state and had their support for gathering and disposing of any horses that the tribe would not claim. And we had talked to other partners like Game and Fish and other... just other entities that were interested. So we put the contract out and one of the groups... I'm sure you could look at the lawsuit, maybe it was Friends of the Animals, I don't remember now, filed suit against us and they claimed that we could not gather those horses, they were part of the Heber Wild Horse Territory. And I tried to argue that we did not have a territory anymore. And it was determined that action by the forest supervisor was not legitimate, that he did not have the authority to close that territory. So that... we researched that all the way up to the Washington office. We never really got a clear answer on who *did* have the authority to close the territory, however, but we were told that the forest supervisor didn't have that authority. So we were back to acknowledging that we still had a wild horse territory on Heber Ranger District, the Black Mesa, at that time. And so we... I guess we accepted that and so we started out clearly articulating the boundaries of that territory, trying to map it clearly, characterized the territory, winter range, summer range, and identify where the fences were and all that sort of thing, allotment fences for that territory. It was not fenced. It was never fenced in the territory so there were some pasture fences, probably still are, that go through it. But the boundary itself is not... was not fenced when I left the district. So we just said okay we have a territory. And I think the court directed us that we could not gather those trespass horses — what we considered to be trespass or feral horses — until we had an approved territory management plan.

So we really had no recourse but to start on a management plan. And that's what we did in 2006, 2007, somewhere in there. And... let me think... we put together... the district didn't have the capacity to do that analysis by ourselves. We didn't have the staffing. So we got some, I think we got a team leader out of the SO. I don't know if she's still there and her name's not coming to me at the moment but she was the Range Program Manager for the forest. Became our team leader and... let's see... this isn't totally linear, I keep remembering things.

Q: No, that's absolutely fine.

A: Okay, we actually did take it on initially as a Ranger District and I had an assistant District Ranger at the time after the fire and he... I assigned him the role of ID Team Leader for the project, for the Wild Horse Territory Plan development. So we really did... we worked a lot on that project. Just kind of shoe-horned it in to our work load. And we had [name] was the Team Leader. He was the Assistant District Ranger. [Name] was the Range Con on the team. We had [name]... I don't know if Chris is still working for the Forest but [name] was a long time soil scientist with great knowledge of the forest and great analytical skills, understanding their systems there on the Mogollan Rim. He was on the team, I think the District Wildlife Biologist may have been on the team, [name], at the time. And they did an analysis of forage production. They did analysis of what would be considered summer range, what would be considered winter range, and transitional range. And they developed an AML. [Name] would know the details. [Name] would know the details of how... what formula he used to come up with the AML. And we went out with... I think we went out with a proposed action for scoping and that's when we got the 10,000 comments or whatever it was we got. So then [name] retired in 2008, I think, and at that point we wanted to keep it going. We thought it was critical given the reproductive rates of horses. So we reconfigured the team a little bit I guess and got some SO support and like I said the Range Program Manager became the ID Team Leader at that point. But our assumption... just a couple of things that our assumptions were that we had a territory, we had to acknowledge that we still had the territory, we used the very general area map that was attached to that 1971 or 1972 letter nominating the territory. That's all we had for the territory boundaries was that half-inch-to-the-mile map, I think. That's what we used to identify the territory boundaries. So we acknowledged that we had a territory. We acknowledged that we needed to do a management plan and honestly we were remiss in not doing one but I didn't think I had a territory anymore. (laughs) When I got there and we got approval to close it. I no longer I felt like I needed to do a management plan. They never did one in the 70's. No management plan ever. And so when I got there, had we not closed the territory, we would have done one. But that just didn't come to pass. So anyway we acknowledged we had to do a plan. We acknowledged that the boundaries were. We acknowledged what the original AML was, which was seven. And we set about coming up with a new number that would be supportable by the range, by the size of the territory. And developed the AML and went out with that proposal. And I really think even when we got our SO Team Leads it really, really... the project foundered at that point. And then I left in 2009. And I wasn't sure what was happening after that but sounds like maybe it's been on hold.

I want to go back and then talk about some of the things we've heard which you will probably hear from others as you talk to the advocacy groups. We had people that wanted us to make the whole Sitgreaves National Forest the territory. They wanted all of Black Mesa the territory, or they wanted a significant expansion of the territory. To incorporate all these horses that had

come onto the forest and make that part of the territory. We did not... it was our belief that we did not have the authority to propose an expansion of the territory and that's what we shared with people. I think we got that advice from the regional office and the Washington office, that we did not... just like the Forest Supe could not close the territory, we had no authority to expand it. So we did not include that as an alternative. We didn't even pursue that while I was there. I don't know what the thinking is on that right now but that's where we were at the time I left. We had a couple of public meetings that were very heated. I'm sure they're in the records somewhere.

A: Well, of course there were some that had validity and on all sides of the issue, you know. It wasn't just... it was not just the advocacy groups that were commenting, we had some very passionate people on the side of "These are trespass horses. You guys need to get rid of them. They're ruining the range. They're taking forage from livestock." We had comments from state land... er from the State, the entity which manages feral horses. They were very much convinced they were trespass and needed to be gathered. We had... you know I don't know if Arizona Game and Fish went on the record because sometimes they aren't willing to do that, but they were opposed to those horses being there. They weren't, in their opinion, wild horses and that they were impacting the range and wildlife habitat. So there are people with valid concerns on all sides of the issue. A lot of the comments were form letters from the advocacy groups. They put it up on the web and people just sent it in, emailed it to us. That's where a lot of the comments came from. So when we categorized the comments it was kind of easy in some cases. We lumped all those that were identical together and tried to pull issues out. I thought we did that at one point. Again you'll have to ask [name]. I thought we actually pulled out the issues. We did a lot of work on this project before I left. I thought we had identified the issues. It sounds like they're starting over but still it might be instructive for you to look at that. That works. So there were, oh there were people who wanted us to do genetic testing. And I don't know really where that would take us; what benefit it would have had then or even now. Because the mares were gone. We couldn't — I mean that was the early 90's when Bruce told me there were two mares left. They weren't around anymore. We could have I suppose done some testing between our horses and the horses on the reservation and made some assumptions there. The tribe would cooperate with us. But anyway there were people that wanted genetic testing and people who argued that these horses were descendants of the horses that came into the country with... they used the name of a Spanish priest I think maybe who came into the country and I don't remember his name. But descendants of those horses. So they wanted us to test them. I guess my... at that time. And I guess that particular... that issue probably needs to be pursued because what they were saying that they're wild horse, you have to treat them as wild horses. It didn't mean necessarily that we had to expand the territory but it would mean that we would have to dispose of those horses under the Wild Horse and Burro Act and not as feral horses under state law. That was a big point, I think. Are they feral or are they wild? And so that informs how you dispose of them if you're going to gather them. Those issues raised, and of course what I said about the territory, expanding territory to incorporate more horses. There were concerns about the AML and the validity of even the one we'd come up with, whether it was a viable AML. There was concerns about genetic diversity within... could we maintain genetic diversity within the territory. There were concerns about can that territory, the size of it, really truly support a wild horse herd because we had very little winter range within the territory itself. That was another issue raised. Impact to wildlife.

Subject B

Q: Please go back over the distribution of animals, specific locations you saw, after the 2002 Rodeo-Chediski fire and the 2011 fire.

A: Okay. In June 2002, there were two actually man-caused fires that started on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. First there was a Rodeo fire. And then probably and that became a very large wildfire that had national attention. And then there were some lost hikers on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation that lit a signal fire to, I guess, passing news helicopters that were flying to the fire from Phoenix. And that helicopter landed to rescue the hikers, and when it did it started the Chediski fire with the rotor wash and then spreading live ash onto the dry ground there and vegetation. And that became the Chediski fire. And they both merged into the Rodeo-Chediski. Burned I think about, from the top of my head, 450,000 acres. About a quarter million of those acres were on the Sitgreaves National Forest. And then associated patented lands that are in holdings. It burned a large area of boundary between the Fort Apache Indian Reservation and the southern boundary of the Sitgreaves Forest which had a standard, I believe, four or five strand barbed wire fence. And either the fence was broken from the heat of the fire, the poles burning down, and then subsequent the dead trees caused by the over story fire killing the over story and then the trees subsequently, mostly Ponderosa Pine, trees falling on the boundary fence allowing now livestock and it's easier movement of animals from the reservation, or actually from the forest onto the reservation, went both ways. And after that fire, I noticed and also just talking discussions with our other Game and Fish Department employees, a large increase in the numbers of horses and also distribution of horses. And roughly starting on the east side from around Pinedale going west to probably 8–10 miles west of Heber, and then in an area that was — the north boundary would be Highway 260 — the boundary fences there on the right of way fences. Especially along the rim on the south end we saw just a large increase of horses and it was believed that they did come from the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. So that's from the Rodeo-Chediski fire. And then to the... around June 2011 it was another very dry winter and then especially summer, and there was an abandoned campfire in the Bear Wallow Wilderness that caused about a half-million acre fire called the Wallow Fire. And it burned along the boundary with the east boundary of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation and it burned a lot onto the Apache National Forest. It burned a lot of pasture and allotment fences, boundary fences, causing them again to either just be burned on site, laid on the ground, or subsequently had trees falling on them and allowing the horses that were either already on the Apache National Forest to go further east and north, at least from my observations. Along Black River Drainage we started seeing the horses by some private land. And we manage there as one of our wildlife areas, on the west fork of the Black River we saw horses on our property for the first time ever. And also to the north there on the west fork of Black River we were picking up horses in that area where we never had before. Primarily before that Wallow Fire the horses were mostly located mostly along the Black River Drainage and north of there on the drainages of Boggy, Centerfire Creeks, in that area, Wildcat Creeks. So these horses I'm talking about on the Apache National Forest, at least in my observations, they do not interact with the horses that

are associated with that Heber Wild Horse Territory. These are separate herds. But all are originating in my opinion from the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. They're just feral animals that they've allowed to just roam over the decades on the Indian reservation. That's where these horses, it's been my opinion, of all the horses came from the Fort Apache Indian Reservation that are on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. Is that what you were looking for, something like that?

Q: Yes. And so you think that's due to the breakdown of that fence from the 2002 fire?

A: Yes, we did have horses, there were some horses on the Sitgreaves National Forest, but after the 2002 fire there was a significant increase in the numbers. I don't have a percentage number but it was after that fire and a few years subsequent, it wasn't uncommon if you wanted to go find the horses on the National Forest you could go find them. It would not be that big of an issue, after that fire, especially a few years afterward.

Q: Okay, so you would say you observed movement patterns of the horses throughout the territory and neighboring areas specifically after the fire?

A: Yes, after the fire. That's when it became more of a concern with our department. With the numbers now, the current numbers, we've seen them grow after that 2002 fire also in numbers and distribution.

Q: Great. And have you observed any reproductive rates of the horses within the territory or in the other herd that you were referring to?

A: Again, I'm not involved in any formal surveys of horses. Or I don't do any aerial, I'm no longer doing any aerial wildlife surveys, either fixed wing aircraft or helicopter. But I know while we are flying and we do encounter horses we do record at least total numbers. I'm not sure if we do classifications oh with "let's try to sort out the foals." And also we GPS the locations too and provide that information to the Forest Service. But when I'm on the ground doing in my vehicle and I do encounter horses, I normally do just stop and try to make a quick cursory count and then look and see how many foals are there. And more times than not I do see a decent number of foals in a herd. And tell what's... more times than not I do see young animals in those herds. But again I don't record how many.

Q: Okay. Sure.

A: I do see that reproduction is occurring on the National Forest.

Q: How about between the '92 period when you first started and 2002; do you recall any movement or reproductive rates? Or interactions with the herd before the...

A: No, I don't.

Q: Okay.

A: I really don't.

Q: Okay. So more in your mind is the activity after the fire?

A: Right, right. That's when we were as an agency we were concerned about the numbers of these feral horses. They're going to be impacting the resource out there. But as an agency in that Rodeo-Chediski area, we have different game management units across the state and where the wild horse territory occurs and where the bulk of the Rodeo-Chediski fire occurred is in what we call Game Management Unit 3-C. And as an agency we try to be proactive. We realize that post-fire this is probably a once time in a career opportunity to see the landscape go from this essentially blackened state where we lost the canopy and also where we go through the different several stages of a forest, I guess I think evolution. And then so what we did as an agency we made a conscious decision to keep our elk herd in check and we've increased our permits, especially for our antlerless segment of the population. So we try to be a responsible agency. We wanted to see that area recover, especially for the benefit of our mule deer population. Prior to the fire I believe our, I know our hunt successes were very low and our recruitment of fawns to doe was rather on the low side in that 3-C unit. And then after the fire we were seeing our fawn recruitment go up from around 60 fawns to 100 does is what we did record for a few years post-fire. And we're still recording that. And in adjacent units it's not uncommon to have maybe 35 or 40 fawns to 100 does. So we are still seeing a recovery of the deer in there and they're still sustaining a good population. And then like I said the elk, we knew we could always grow elk so we made a conscious decision to at least stabilize and even reduce the elk herd when that fire was going through its first stages of recovery in that burn area. It was going through that recovery. Because we know that elk are very mobile. They'll take advantage of new resources. And we did reduce the herd. And then again at the same time we're seeing an increase in the horses which gave us some concern, which we have no management responsibility over.

Q: Okay. Could you speak again to how or if the horses have impacted your game movements or patterns? Or concerns with water?

A: As the horses have increased our concerns about carrying capacity for a wildlife species has increased, but I don't have numbers on that, on how the horses directly impact our game animals. How I would expect it to happen is during times of low water distribution in our drought situations which in Arizona normally is from probably around April through the end of June, early July, just before a monsoon starts, that the horses will localize around permanent water sources. And they may be very territorial around these and not allowing deer, elk, maybe even some other wildlife to drink. I don't have any direct evidence to this effect. I do know that on the western part of the state that burros have been observed keeping desert bighorn sheep away from waters and occupying those waters. That has been documented. I would not be surprised if some horse herds also adopt that type of behavior to defend what they think is a limited resource out there. Also if we have continual use of the forest resources out there through the horses that are not being regulated, counted, managed for, they can't be moved or

anything on those lines, they're not managed. It's just kind of like they're wildlife but there's no management to reduce numbers that they are exceeding acceptable levels on local levels that they can impact the forage, that the grass is coming in, and then also possibly the browse, I believe though they'd be more of a grazer. And they can impact the grasses out there. And our wildlife species specifically elk and especially our turkeys rely on a good composition and distribution of grasses across that area. Our turkeys for instance, the poults, the young turkeys will rely on grass covers to essentially hide them from predators when they are young. And then later in the fall as the seed heads come on, the turkeys will rely on those seed sources and as a food resource. And if the horses graze those down then we are going to be lacking that. Elk are a little bit more mobile and a little bit more generalists on how they feed. But certain times of the year they do rely fairly heavily on grasses, just like cattle do.

Q: Okay.

A: But I don't have any direct information to say yes these horses have reduced our elk herd by X percentage, or turkey populations by Y. I do not have that information.

Q: Okay. But you do have an overall sense that the horses have impacted water areas and grasses?

A: Yes. Especially I think the water sources on a localized level and those kind of critical early- mid-summer type of time periods, that that can occur. I have seen, especially on the Apache side, I have seen some water sources that were just beat out by horses and there'd be one or two herds just right in the area of a water. And not a whole lot of wildlife sign there. And you could tell large impacts on the ground and the forest resources in the area. And probably by the horses.

Q: Okay. And have you had any records or observations of the horse herds impacting hunters, or any other landscape users?

A: Not directly. No. Sometimes the hunters maybe talk about the horses, stating that that they felt there's been an increase in the populations there in 3-C, and they wished that there was some type of management options to balance those numbers, or even eliminate those horses totally. Some of them say that they don't belong there, they belong on the reservation or not anywhere on the landscape. They're just not a natural part of the ecosystem here. And they should be removed.

Q: Okay. Sure. Have you observed any other types of movement patterns of the horses or various herds? You mentioned two herds, one on the territory and one more towards the east, towards the Apache Forest?

A: Right. On the National Forest, at least my observations are we have two kind of main herds. One of them would encompass that wild horse territory. It essentially goes from maybe eight or ten miles west of Heber, east to about Pinedale. And then the north boundary of that would be Highway 260. And that's one herd. And probably estimating there's possibly 400-700 animals in

that population. And then there's another population that occurs on the Apache National Forest. Roughly from I think around Bear Wallow Creek, north to maybe as far north as Forest Road 116, and primarily they're along the forest boundary with the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. But then after the fire I have observed that they have spread to the east a bit there into the west fork of the Black River Drainage, and in that area. And there's possibly another 300 animals in there, 200–300 animals in there, just be my guesstimate of the population in there. And those animals don't interact. Those two different herds, they don't interact. We're probably talking air miles 50–60 miles apart. Something like that.

Q: Okay. Do you think that eastern herd though originated from the fence again?

A: I believe those animals they came across from the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. That boundary between the Fort Apache Indian Reservation and the Apache National Forest and that area even pre-Wallow Fire, the 2011 fire, was in some remote sections was pretty poor shape and the horses were able to easily come back and forth. And actually we also do have an issue with reservation cattle, Hereford cattle coming across, and getting established on the Apache National Forest. Now I guess the National Forest can manage those animals and as I understand it, cattle growers on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation are more willing to come and retrieve their animals under cattle. But when it comes to the horses, from what I've heard, the reservationists say "You can do what you want. We're not going to come and get them. They're yours now. We don't want them."

Q: Okay. Have you observed any changes or movement patterns of the horses due to weather? You spoke about some dry cycles.

A: I have not observed that. Again they're going to be more limited to, in drought times they're going to be restricted to waters, free water, and so if those sources do disappear as the landscape becomes drier, they'll become more tethered to these water sources. And I have not observed them, though, moving the snow or anything like that. And again since about 2002 we've been in a dry cycle. A few years, like maybe 2009, and some other years like that where we had above normal snow pack or even normal snow pack, so that I would surmise that the animals would have to try to move from areas of deeper snow because it's harder for them to forage and move in those areas. They try to go to areas of lower snow. On the Sitgreaves side of the forest, the southern boundary of the Sitgreaves Forest, along the Mogollon Rim is normally the higher elevation and as you go to the north it generally slopes down towards the Little Colorado River Basin. And then the Mogollon Rim is right there on the south boundary with the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, and that drops off pretty abruptly to the south. If the horses can get through that boundary fence, they probably will just drop off there and get on the reservation and then winter down there. If they cannot, they probably would move towards the north, towards Highway 260. I would surmise this. I don't know if that does occur. I know it does occur with our wildlife, especially specifically our deer, turkeys and elk. And those are the patterns of movement that we observe. But for a while I would just surmise that does also occur in the winter with the horses.

- Q: Okay. Sure. To make sure we got it on this recording, can you reemphasize that you didn't see much activity when you first came to your position in '92 — between '92 and 2002?
- A: Between 1992 and 2002, there were aware of other horses on there and I probably did observe some horses on the Sitgreaves National Forest, but at the time it was not a concern. I did have the opportunity to hunt antlerless elk on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation on seven, probably eight, different occasions. Some of those were on the east side and then the last couple of years, subsequent to the Rodeo-Chediski fire, hunted down there. Observed a lot of feral horses down there. I saw the impact that they made on the east side, on these natural cienegas, or kind of open marshy areas. It seemed like every one of those cienegas had at least one, I guess horse if you want to call it a herd, and maybe a main stallion and a group of mares out there and it seemed like they were definitely impacting the resources out there. Again, this was on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. But I could see the potential if we allow the animals to just continue to grow as they have on the reservation, that we'd have the same type of resource concerns.
- Q: And what years were those that you did those hunts?
- A: Oh gosh, probably off the top of my head, probably starting about 1996 to about 2004. Right in that area.
- Q: Okay.
- A: About those years.
- Q: Okay. Have you observed any specific parts of the fence? Any areas that are specifically deteriorated or broken or that are critical points?
- A: I have not. And I'm not even aware if there is a perimeter fence around the wild horse territory. I'm not aware if there even was an established fence around that or if that's just a kind of a line that was drawn on the National Forest lands as an identified wild horse territory. I don't know how that came about, how that delineation was established or maintained.
- Q: Okay. How about when they crossed from the fire in 2002, was there a specific crossing point that you're aware of?
- A: No. There were probably hundreds of them. All up and down [inaudible] it was amazing how many trees came down, and just after the fire I'm sure, that was a very intense, it was a scary fire for the residents here and I'm sure the wildlife. I mean, I believe in one day we had 64,000 acres burned. So 100 square miles burned in one day. And again as I stated, if you go from the forest boundary, you drop off to the south and a pretty good drop in elevation. And if you get a wind behind that to the south, pushing the fire uphill with the wind, it would... I mean we were losing... there were some herds of elk that got killed, I know, and our bears that died. I'm not aware of horses that were lost in that, but I'm sure the horses probably even would just... they probably just broke right through the fence. Either that or they would have been lost in the fire. And subsequent to the fire there were many, many breaks in the fence just from the heat of the

fire. And subsequent trees falling, too. So there are probably hundreds of beaks up and down that fence. I think you're probably talking a forty-plus mile stretch of fence. And I believe the whole thing had to be replaced, post-fire, and a lot of trees removed on both sides — on the reservation and on the forest side that were dead, to prevent them from falling on a new fence.

Q: Okay.

A: As I recollect, that took several years to get that fence up and running, because it was so long and it was so much involved in reconstructing that fence.

Q: Okay. When you were talking more about a kind of an imaginary line, what were you referring to, versus a physical fence?

A: Was that the wild horse territory?

Q: Yeah, I just want to clarify which fencing is physical and what you thought was more of an imagined boundary.

A: Because you had mentioned the wild horse territory, I thought your question was referring to integrity of that fence on the boundary. Now I was not even aware that there was a boundary fence around the wild horse territory.

Q: Okay, gotcha!

A: That's what I was referring to. I don't know if that was... how that wild horse territory delineation was established. I don't know how it was, through the Forest Service, or proponents of the Wild Horse and Burro Act, I don't know how that boundary came about. Was it established fence lines, I don't know.

Q: Right. I don't think there's a physical fence surrounding the entire territory. I was referring more to the fencing between the reservation and the forest area.

A: Oh, okay. Well they're trying to maintain that fence. At least from what I understand, the forest and all, but again after 2002 they kind of, the door was open right then and cattle and the horses just had pretty much free roam to go back and forth. And a lot of times, those horses when they came back on the forest, they didn't go back onto the reservation. I'm sure there was a lot of movement both ways, but we definitely gained horses versus losing them after that fire.

Q: So essentially the fire really churned up a lot of your animal populations and moved a lot of populations and killed off some... right?

A: Yeah. It killed off some. But then it did, and then that flush of new vegetation though was a boom for the livestock and for the wildlife, also.

Q: Okay. Well, thanks. And this concludes our interview.

A: Okay.

Subject C

Q: This is Forest Service interviewer with Subject C on February 26th 2016. And we're talking today about the Heber Wild Horse Territory. So, can you please explain what is your history, your relationship, or your connectivity to the Heber Wild Horse Territory?

A: Well, I came here in 1990 so I've got 26 years vested in this area, full time. And the horses have always been here. They've always been something that really drew me and kept me in the area. The freedom and stuff like that that they have here, and the protection that they need on an everyday basis because of a lot of activities going on here. There's a lot of predators, humans being one, and then there's mountain lions, and then there's the wolf releases that they're doing more and more of as we speak. I'm a photographer, I have my own horse here. I was 57 years old when I got my first horse and so I ride him out there regularly just to see the horses, photograph them. I have thousands of pictures of the Heber wild horses.

Q: Mm hmm.

A: We don't really have that many horses. We really need every single one that we have. I don't know, I might be able to elaborate more on that subject, but did you have another question that you wanted to ask?

Q: Yes, please. And you are a photographer of the horses and you would consider yourself an advocate, correct?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Okay, and any kind of other relationship you have to the area? Where do you live in the area?

A: I live in Overgaard. It's right next door to Heber. We have a population here, full time, of about 2500 people. And then in the summer time it probably jumps to 25,000. So it's kind of like Durango, Colorado as far as... you know we got the Grand Canyon, and we got all of that, but it's not here. It's on down the road.

Q: Okay. So let's talk about your observations of the herd over time within the territory. Let's start out with just your general observations of the herd, and then we can talk about changes you've seen over time. For example, what were your observations of the herd in 1990?

A: They were sparse but that was well before the fire in that you weren't able to view them like you are today. The absence of the trees and that sort of thing really opens it up where you can get the binoculars out and see the horses. I was an active hunter so I spent a lot of time in tree stands and stuff like that, and I would see them, catch glimpses of them once in a while, you know, before the fire. And while I was hunting and stuff, archery hunting, and as well as being down in unit 23 (I know you don't know where that is, but that's down towards Young) and on that fence line down there the Apache horses would cross over from fences being down. So I was able to view them as well and they were... I mean a couple of paints, I think, and that was

the only two paints I've ever seen, anywhere up here. And there was five in that group down there. And we have little family units here of never more than say 17, 18, something like that, in the very biggest groups. That it can be down as many as a family unit of three. And when I say family unit, I don't mean a group that can produce babies. I'm talking it might be three stud colts running together and they're herd animals so that is their family unit. And they're not allowed in with the other band. So they don't always... they're incapable of reproducing, a lot of the little bands that we see. As time went on, I mean I would always run across them here and there as I would go to the lakes and go fishing and stuff like that. I had a motorcycle at the time and I would ride some of the country on motorcycle and I would come across some. And it would just be luck of the draw. Now we can take binoculars and we can look, you know, 2, 3, 4, 5 miles distant and pick them out. If there's some white ones in the bunch. We can pick out the cremelos and the palominos and the buckskins and stuff like that. And we have such a diverse herd. It's absolutely wonderful because they do their natural selection process, you know, who they want to be with. And so it would be like going to a nursery and seeing all of the same tree in the nursery. It would be kind of boring, you know, same plant. This is a diverse, this is just as diverse as the foliage out there. All the different colors, and all the different things. So then after the fire, I'm sure that some of the horses came from the Apache Reservation across... they can come across that fence anyhow. It doesn't have to be a fire to make it happen. Trees are always falling down on the fences when the wind blows. There's no doubt there are more horses there. I've seen no brand whatsoever on any of the horses that came from the reservation. The Apache Reservation brand is the broken arrow on, I think it's the right rear hip or right front shoulder. I can't remember which it is. And that is their brand. I have never ever seen that brand. Even on the ones down along that I mentioned before, the five paints.

Q: Sure. Okay, so you discussed a little bit of reproduction rates of the horses in the earlier period. But now that the fire has cleared up the landscape, have you been able to observe any reproduction rates of the horses? You just mentioned you saw a few units of 41 horses. Can you explain a little bit about, or describe any of your observations about those reproduction rates?

A: Right. Well, as I said before, just because you see three horses out there, that doesn't mean that they are producing babies. The 17 that I saw in one, the biggest, the largest group, there was a couple of babies in there. Not exactly of the same age, but one I was really monitoring because I have a picture of her on the wall right here, when her momma is carrying her. And then a week later when we took a ride, I took my camera and pulled in the momma from a quarter of a mile away and got the best picture that I could get, and the baby was born at that time. And that's one of the babies that I've been monitoring. There's another one that's probably maybe a month old. At first there's two weeks old, so maybe even two months old. So that's the only two real little ones out of the 17 or 18 that I counted. And then of course there was a youngster or two from last year.

Q: Sure. Okay.

A: And now the family unit is, I think, six. He has gotten a couple more mares and then the baby is there. So there's about six in the group. And now they can survive because they have sufficient eyes and ears on each other. But the old mare that had April and May, I doubt whether she will be there next spring. She's pretty old.

Q: Okay.

A: So we have a baby and then we lose a mom. You know what I mean?

Q: Sure. Okay. Let's talk about some of your observations of the distribution of the animals. For example, numbers of horses. We've talked a little about that. But how about their specific locations and any changes over time to this distribution?

A: I can't remember... it would be like five animals in one section, and then a lot of these sections are fenced. Some of them are fenced off, probably in townships, 36 sections, you know, but I'm not sure. But there would be like five in each of the sections on the outlying areas close to Overgaard and stuff like that. And then a lot more sparse further away. I think the safety net, they know where they're safe and where they're not. They know when they're vulnerable they tend to move. But like a said, a mountain lion can run them clear across the highway if they get after them. I've never really seen any horses on the north side of the highway except one mare that's living in a community with two or three dogs.

Q: Okay.

A: And then the bigger groups are... they kind of hang in the area, but surprisingly they can just disappear overnight and you won't see them for two or three weeks, a month. They're highly mobile. They don't sit there and just graze and graze and mow everything down to nothing.

Q: Yeah, where do you see the larger numbers of herds? Can you give me any particular place names or along any creek beds or any particular fence lines or roads? For example, where do you see most horses to take all your photographs?

A: Well, depending on the time of the year. When it's in the summer time you'll see them up on the 300 road which is the General George Crook Trail. The famous trail.

Q: Right.

A: Up on that rim. And it's right near the reservation. And so I've seen during the summer what I thought was good numbers up there. When there's snow on the ground and it's windy, I've seen them clear down close to Overgaard and close to Heber.

Q: Okay.

A: But there's a thousand trails and hundreds of roads out here.

Q: Sure. Well, you answered one of my next questions. But would you like to speak any more about the movement patterns of the horses throughout the territory and neighboring areas? So you mentioned the Salt River, the Apache and the Heber. So you see a fluid movement of the horses between those three locations?

A: I never have, but over the 400 years I know that it did happen. Because 60 miles to a horse is nothing. You can hop on a horse and ride... by just walking a horse you can ride 30 miles, just, you know, real easy. But 60 miles, that's up and down hills and all of that, so that's as the crow flies. But that's still, even if it was double that, that's nothing. An endurance race is more than 120 miles sometimes. They just kind of trade, they just kind of go back and forth as the offspring is produced, you know.

Q: Sure. And do you think that's part of the allure of people like yourself, photographing them and tourists coming to look at them?

A: Oh, absolutely.

Q: How about... we've talked a bit about your observations since the fire. To recap what I've heard you say, you've seen a lot more vegetation open up so that you have a better view shed of the horses. Correct?

A: Right. The canopy is down. The grasses have flourished, though, because everywhere that the trees were, there were no grasses before. It was pine needles and stuff like that underneath the big pine trees. So that stuff is all down. The areas where the manzanita is, that's problematic. Over towards Show Low, more. Nothing will grow around the manzanita, hardly. But yeah, you can really claim that there's a quarter of a million acres of forage on our side of the fence. And it's true. I'm not kidding you. Without that canopy, then everything else can grow underneath. And the horses actually act as really good stewards of the land by keeping the fuel loads down. There's still plenty of grass to burn. Literally. But the bushes and stuff that are coming up, they actually eat the little leaves and stuff on the bottom side of the limbs, which is what a nursery would do if you had a tree in the nursery shop, or yard. They trim the limbs on the underneath side and allow it to grow more upward. And the horses do the same thing.

Q: Okay, sure. Since the fire, you've talked about a lot of more grasses growing because the canopy isn't there to block that growth. Has that provided a lot of food source for the horses, do you think? And changed any movement patterns of the horses?

A: Yeah, it really produced a lot, not just for the horses but when the cattle come out there in the spring from May through October, they as well really benefit from the lack of the canopy. Because that sun can get right to that grass, you know. And the other shrubbery that they nibble on. When the cattle... what the horses are eating right now out there, the cattle won't be eating that in the spring anyhow. They will be going for, you know, the greenery, the green grass that comes up underneath. The taller stuff, they're called shoots or stalks or whatever, they actually provide shade for the upcoming green plants. And if you also watch a horse eat, and horses and

buffalo are the same, they will not eat the tall grass with the seeds on it, in the fall because they know that those seeds will provide them crops next year, so they don't eat the seeds. The other animals will, you know, deer, elk and cattle and sheep and all of that, goats. They will eat pretty much everything, you know. They wrap their tongue around it and just rip it off, you know. But a horse is very selective. He will even avoid stepping on that plant.

Q: Yeah, sure. Last question, is what have you observed regarding the fencing within the territory and neighboring areas, if any? We talked a little bit about fencing. Any other thoughts about the fences and the movement of the horses across those fences? Particularly on the reservation line?

A: There was some fences that people had purposely cut. [audio abruptly ends]

Subject D

- Q: All right. This is Forest Service interviewer with Subject D on February 29th, 2016, and we are talking about the Heber Wild Horse Territory (HWHT). So, can you explain what is your history, relationship or connectivity to the HWHT?
- A: Well, the HWHT is on the Sitgreaves National Forest and I was on the Apache Forest in 1974 and they combined the two forests and made it the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. And so I was here at Springerville, but I mean in administering the range and wildlife's portion of the Apache-Sitgreaves from 1974 until I retired in 1990.
- Q: Okay. Do you live in the area, or you just managed the area?
- A: I just managed the area from Springerville, Arizona.
- Q: Okay. What kinds of time did you spend physically on the territory?
- A: Well, actually the territory is quite broad. It's about 200 sections. And I spent on various portions of that a goodly amount of field time. I can't remember exactly, but I'll give you an estimate of maybe three or four days a month.
- Q: Okay. Was that on horseback or was that in a vehicle, or... what was your transportation?
- A: Well, it was mostly in vehicles.
- Q: Okay.
- A: Some on horseback as well.
- Q: Okay. Between 1974 and 1990, what have been your observations of the herd over time within the territory?
- A: Well, this is a little confusing, probably, for you. In 1974 when I first took over administration of range for the Sitgreaves Forest, they only thought they had a very limited amount of wild horses. There was a little herd there close to Heber on the Black Canyon allotment, and they thought that was it. The consensus at that time was that the other horses mostly west of the Heber were Indian horses and not part of the wild horse herd per se.
- Q: Okay.
- A: And so about 1986 [name] and I — he's dead now — we went in, our understanding was there was only six of the original wild horses left. And he had them pretty well pinpointed and we went in there on horseback and we found only four. And there was no stud and there was no colts. And this was what we were looking for to see if there was a viable herd there. And apparently there wasn't. And so that was our impression of what the wild horse herd consisted

of. And later on, of course, it became an issue and others maintained that the wild horses included all of the horses that were coming on us from the Indian reservation.

Q: Okay. From 1986 to 1990 did you notice any differences in the herd as far as reproduction rates or the distribution of the animals?

A: Well, see this makes it kind of hard to answer that question. The original herd that we thought was what we were managing, by 1990 had died out. But during that same period there was about 300 horses or so coming in from the Indians on the south side from below the Mogollon Rim. They were coming up the rim and getting into the forest. And we even caught some of those in trigger traps and transported them to the sale at Holbrook. And that's how we were handling the increase in that herd. But we didn't consider them to be wild horses at the time.

Q: Okay. So that original six number you said earlier... how were you able to identify those six horses and then later those four horses?

A: Well, the range staff on the Heber District, [name], he was very astute in tracking and keeping track of things. And also there was a rancher over there, his name was [resident], and some others. Then they all kind of knew where this wild horse herd was. And when we heard they were declining, we decided we'd better go in there and count them. And this is when we found four. And we felt like they were on their way out and I'm pretty sure those four died in a few years after that.

Q: Okay. Do you recall the specific locations or distribution of those six and then the four horses, like specific locations?

A: Well, they were on what we call the Black Canyon Allotment, and that's close to Heber. And they were distinct from the other horses that were coming in further west near Gentry Lookout. And so we were... that's what we were worried about, though, is that they would intermingle with these horses coming up from the Apache Indian Reservation. And that's why we wanted to get a count on them and see if there was any intermixture. And at the time we felt like they were still intact and not mixed in with the Indian horses, which were mostly further west.

Q: Okay. And how are those horses distinct again? Just specific markings that you had identified? Or Bruce had identified?

A: Well, one was a light roan. I was impressed that there were a couple light colored ones in there. One was a light roan, and one was as I recall a sorrel. Or it might have been two sorrels and a bay. And that's how they were colored. We couldn't get any closer than across the canyon from them.

Q: Okay. When you first started, do you recall any kind of history or some other range managers talking to you about what they saw before? Or to identify that small herd?

A: Well, most of the people that were familiar with these horses felt like they were offspring from some remount horses that were there during the First World War. And they were raising horses, you know, for the war effort at that time. And there was a... I have a name here that I'm not sure of, but it kind of sticks in my mind that one of the ranching families was [name].

Uh huh.

Q: But this would be kind of an ancient history of these horses, but the Indian horses probably go back further... some of them. So I don't know. It's a mixed bag.

A: Okay. The remount horses from the World War I period, was that the removal of the horses from Sonora Mexico up to Canada? Was that part of that, or is this a different group?

Q: No, they called them remount horses. And during the war effort in World War I they needed some good horses. And so some of the ranchers devoted their ranching operations to raising the horses for the Army. And this is what the opinion was of where these horses started.

A: Okay. Did you ever observe any changes within the territory of the horses due to weather or any other kind of impacts, like wildlife or any fires during your period that you were...?

Q: No, this was before the Rodeo-Chediski fire, which was a big one.

A: Right.

Q: The later foresters blamed the fire for burning down the fence along the Mogollon Rim, there, but it was down before that, in many places. And of course the Mogollon Rim is a formidable barrier but there were a few horses coming up through there every year.

A: Uh huh. And then how about, just during your tenure, were there any fires or other kinds of impacts that pushed the horses around, or were they pretty much within that Black Canyon Allotment?

Q: Okay, we're still talking about the Black Canyon bunch?

A: Mm hmm.

Q: No there weren't any fires in there that pushed them around. No.

A: Okay. During 1974 to 1990, you pretty much saw them just in that allotment, that Black Canyon Allotment?

Q: Maybe six is when we saw them and then most of the ranchers over there, even in the newspaper, said they were pretty sure they'd all died.

A: Okay.

Q:

A: I have some newspaper clippings from that period.

Q: Okay. That would be interesting if you would be able to give the Forest a copy.

A: I did give a copy to [name].

Q: Okay. I'll make sure to attach that then to your interview.

A: I think I've got one that's turned up since, that I did give them. But [name] was a lookout on Gentry Lookout and she's an author for the White Mountain Independent Newspaper. And she has written some very... she wrote one very good article about the horses that she observed and their history. And that was from the Lookout. And that wasn't the four that I'm talking about, but it's certainly the ones that were coming up through the fence that she observed.

Q: Okay. And what was her name again?

A: [Name].

Q: Okay.

A: And I think she should be on your list. I asked [name] if she was and he said she was.

Q: I don't see her but maybe...

A: You'd better get her because she knows more about... she was a lookout for about ten years on Gentry.

Q: Okay.

A: And she observed all this stuff. She's interested in it, too.

Q: Great. Any other final thoughts on the horses?

A: Well, let me... let's see. The territory... this is a big territory. It's about, I was just estimating on the map this morning, about 200 sections. And it's all the area south of 260, from Heber. No, from Show Low, all the way to the Mogollon Rim. And then the south boundary fence follows the Forest Road 300 that goes along the rim on the south side of this. And this is a big area. And the four that we saw are just a piddling amount. The other horses of course is a controversial disagreement about whether they're actually wild horses or just feral horses that come on up from the Indians. So that's not settled. And let... when the Forest Service, including the ranger, they were hit with a lawsuit, you might know all of this already, but they were hit with a lawsuit in 2005. And to settle the lawsuit the Forest Service was required in 2007 to come up with this plan that they're working on now.

Q: Uh huh.

A: And the Forest, I'm talking about the Apache-Sitgreaves Forest, after I went over there in 1994 or after we took over — not 1994, in 1974 — we had an agreement with the Arizona Sanitary Board, which is also your Brand Board, and it is in writing, that we would capture those stray horses over there on around Gentry Lookout and... and first of all the agreement specified that we check them for brands. If they were branded, we'd turn them over to the Brand Inspector. If they weren't branded, we could take them to the sale at Holbrook. I attended the first sale and we sold about 14. And this would have been about in that same period, 1984, 1985, 1986. And there was only one branded horse. The Indian brand is a broken arrow; the Apache is a broken arrow. And there was only one. And we turned that one in to the inspector and there were about 13 or 14 that went through the sale that day. I was there at that the first sale. And they sold more later on, maybe another 15 or 20, at other sales, later. And at that time we estimated we had about 300 at large, coming in from the Indians on that west side there.

Q: Okay.

A: And so now that they can't catch them anymore — see that Wild Horses and Burro Society, they stopped [the Forest Supervisor] from contracting out any more pursuit of those horses, any of the horses. And so I'm sure they have built up considerably since that time.

Q: Okay. So just to clarify or verify, those around 300 horses you suspect were coming up from the south, some were branded, and some were not.

A: Oh yeah, they were already on the Forest. They'd dribble in every year more or less and they didn't go back, of course. I don't think they ever went back and so we started rounding them up and they can get ahead of you in a hurry. See if the Indians aren't controlling them down there, that's the source, well all you can do up above is remove them.

Q: Sure.

A: And my opinion is that the wild horses, per se, that have the best case for ancestry are Indian horses. So the Indians, the south of the Mogollon Rim which is the Apaches, they have the preponderance of the wild horses at this time. And we're just catching the drifts.

Q: Okay. And how about that Black Canyon allotment and those 4-6 horses? Where do you suspect those came from?

A: Those were the band from the remount.

Q: The remount. Okay.

A: The ranchers that were raising them for remount horses in 1916. That was my understanding.

Q: Okay.

A: Let me look here at my notes. I'll see if I have anything else. Well, the other thing I suggest is if [resident] is still alive you should contact him.

Q: Yes, he's on my list.

A: He's on there?

Q: Mm hmm.

A: And then [name] for sure. If you want me I could... I have a good article. Just a minute.

Q: Okay.

A: Okay, this article is dated, let's see, the newspaper is dated Tuesday February 21st 2012. And on the front page there's a story. It's called "Arizona Wild Horses, Living Symbols of the West." And it's by [name]. Let me see if I've spelled her name right. [name]. And it's about a two-page article. You sure need to get your hands on that.

Q: And what was the newspaper again?

A: It's the White Mountain Independent.

Q: Okay.

A: It's a consolidation with the Pinetop-Lakeside News. I think it's printed over there somewhere. But you need to get a copy of that. If you can't locate it, call me and I'll take this over to the Forest Service.

Q: Okay.

A: Let them make a copy. You sure need to get that one.

Q: Sure. That sounds good. And then, would you have... you had mention the [name] ranching family. Do you have any more information on them or where I could find more information?

A: Wait a minute, I didn't catch that.

Q: The [name] family that you had mentioned earlier. Do you have any more information on them or...

A: Oh, I think there's some [name] around Holbrook. I looked in the phone book one time but I never did call them. But I think there's some around... not a lot and you don't know they might know, if you'd contact one or two over there. Around Holbrook or Show Low.

Q: And where was their ranch, again?

A: I don't know. I don't know that they were on the Forest or off the Forest or... I don't know nothing about that. That history goes back too far, 1916.

Q: Okay.

A: And that name I'm not really sure about that, it just seems to stick in my mind that [name] told me that was the family. He's dead now. [Name].

Q: Okay. Yeah. But...

A: That's [name]. He was really good.

Q: Okay. But this [name] family was possibly related to the ranchers who made the remounts...

A: Possibly because there's always that possibility when there's that big of a family, you know, not that many of them. I looked at Holbrook and Show Low and I just found a few.

A: Okay. I think that does it for me. Unless you have any more questions.

Q: No those are all my questions, so that concludes our interview.

Subject E

Q: This is Forest Service interviewer and it is March 3rd and we are talking about the Heber Wild Horse Territory with Subject E. So could you please explain what is your history, your relationship or connectivity to the Heber Wild Horse Territory.

A: Okay, we own a second home in Heber and we spend a lot of time out in the forest. And we have observed the horses on many occasions.

Q: Okay. And how long have you been in the area to observe the activities in the territory?

A: We've been spending time in the Heber area for, oh gosh, I'd have to do the math.

Q: Okay.

A: Um, 19 years.

Q: Okay. And what date is that, just because I can't do math, either.

A: Um, 1997?

Q: '97. Okay.

A: We've been spending more time, I mean we've been going up there for, you know, I've been going up there most of my life. But since '97 we started spending more time up there.

Q: Okay. And do you observe the horses in an official capacity or just as part of the public?

A: As part of the public.

Q: Okay. Great. What have been your observations of the herd over time in the territory?

A: There seem to be more of them now.

Q: Than when you first arrived in '97?

A: Well, yes.

Q: At least?

A: And I don't know whether it's just I've been noticing them more, but it appears to me that the population has grown.

Q: Okay. Have you observed any reproduction rates besides seeing that there's more of them? Have you particularly seen any colts or foals or...?

A: Yes, I have seen foals.

Q: Okay. Can you guess what kind of a number or just more of a recognition of them?

A: Just more of a recognition.

Q: Okay. And besides observing that there have been more horses, any kinds of other changes within the territory that you've seen contribute to the number of horses?

A: No.

Q: Okay. Have you observed the distribution of the animals within like specific locations? They've favored one location during this part of the year or...? For example...

A: I haven't matched it with seasonality. But I've seen them around Turkey Springs and Black Canyon Lake. And then I've seen them closer to 260, west of Heber.

Q: Okay. Have you observed any changes within the territory or horses due to weather?

A: Not really.

Q: Okay. Have you observed any changes regarding the horses since the Rodeo-Chediski fire?

A: Other than it seems like there are more of them now.

Q: Okay.

A: Not really.

Q: Have you observed any movement patterns of the horses throughout the territory and neighboring areas, for example to the south and the reservation or...?

A: I have not.

Q: No, okay. Have you been able to observe anything regarding the fencing within the territory and any neighboring areas?

A: I have seen the fencing along the edge of the Rim at the border of the reservation there. And it seems to... the places that I've observed it, it's always been in place.

Q: Okay. Those are about all my questions. Do you have any other observations or anything to relate about the horses?

A: Well, I have read some information that said that the horses are an artifact of the Rodeo-Chediski fire, but I had seen them prior to Rodeo-Chediski fire. And perhaps I think maybe some of them came up during the fire or after the fire, but I had observed the wild horses prior to Rodeo-Chediski.

Q: Okay. As far as volume. Did you see about the same volume before the fire and after?

A: Yes. Well, immediately after, yes. But you know as years have gone by after the fire it seems like there's more.

Q: Okay.

A: Or maybe they're just easier to see [laughs] because a lot of the areas were burned out.

Q: For sure. Okay. Well that's about all my questions then, so if you don't have anything else to add, that will conclude our interview.

A: No, I don't have anything else.

Q: Okay.

Subject F

Q: Okay, this is Forest Service interviewer with Subject F on March 4th 2016 and we're going to talk about the Heber Wild Horse Territory (HWHT). Can you explain what is your history, relationship or connectivity to the HWHT?

A: I have been a resident of that area, which is actually Forest Lake, which is 15 miles from Heber. I've been a resident there since 1979. I left that area in 1980 for five years, came back in 1985, and have been there ever since. I am also a guide, a hunting guide for that area so I have extensive knowledge of that particular area that's mostly known as Unit 3-C with the Game and Fish Department designation. And I have been extensively hunting that area these years. I've also been a Deputy Sheriff since 1985, and that encompassed my area so I'm well versed in the horses there, the wildlife there. Just about everything in that area I've been involved in over these years.

Q: Great. And what have been your observations of the herd over time in the territory from your 1979 to 1980 and then 1985 to the present?

A: The population has greatly expanded. You know, not really thinking about it at the time in 1979, the horses were there but there was very, very few of them during that time. I would say, you know, if you ever went out into that area you might see a dozen or so.

Q: Okay.

A: At the most, is normally what you would see. Then through the years... [loud noises in background]. Hold on just a second, Rachel.

Q: Sure.

A: Somebody's alarm went off. So, I actually started to go into that area in 1976 and then living there since 1979 and the horses, you would see 6 or 8, maybe a dozen at that time. Very seldom did you see any sign of them. And then through the years it just increased. The 1980s you saw quite an increase in them and it was very common to see groups of 8 or 10 as you drove through that area, or hunted it, or walked through it. By 1990 through the 1990s I saw just a huge increase of them and I started to really see the damage that was being caused by them. Over grazing areas, trails that were pounded in to the ground so you would start to see erosion. You'd start to see water displacement because of the trails. Many, many places you would see the fence broken down that bordered the Apache Reservation and 3-C. You could see where the horses had come through year in and year out. And now over the years, I think through the 2000s — I don't know what the numbers are. I've never heard specifically what they are — but I have to believe that they're into the several hundreds, anyway.

Q: Okay.

A: I've seen that many myself when I drive through that country, seeing the groups of them. And of course that's dependent on when you actually are in there because those horses go off into the Indian reservation during the winter months to get out of the snow, and they drop down to better nutrient grass. And then in the spring they come right back up. And of course breeding occurs, and every time you see a new group there's two or three colts in the group. And it's just exploded in my opinion... the population.

Q: Okay. Anything else on reproduction rates that you've noticed?

A: You know I wouldn't be able to give a percentage, I wouldn't think, but I see in a group of 8 or 10 usually I see 3 or so newborns in the spring.

Q: Okay. And that's most recently?

A: Yeah. Just about every year. I spend an awful lot of time over there, specifically in 3-C in April, in March and April. And that's usually when you see them come up. Mostly now, when we have good winters they'll come up April or the beginning of May. So there's... the winter has a lot to do with that. But generally I see a lot of them come up in April.

Q: Okay. How about the distribution of the animals? Specific locations, any changes over time to this distribution?

A: Not to what I see. I'm not real versed on the herd if you were to go from Heber east. I don't spend near as much time and I haven't through the years. Most of my occurrences with them would be Heber, west to the edge of the Rim. And they specifically reside in certain areas. As soon as they come back up off the reservation there's certain meadows they hit first. Certain water holes that they hit. And they patterned very well over the years. I've seen them for probably 30 years.

Q: Okay.

A: Very consistently hit the same areas.

Q: Okay. Can you give any place names?

A: Yeah, I could. One of the first areas they hit is called Big Canyon Road which is the 168, Forest Service Road 168 which goes south off of the 300. That's just west of the Black Canyon Lake turnoff. They hit that a lot. Another place is called Eubank which is in that same general area. That road goes off to the southwest. They hit that extensively hard. That's one of the very first places. The 162 road is south of Gentry Lookout; it goes directly south from there. That area right there is probably extensively used more than anything else I know, early on. Of course the reservation line is very close to that area so they come up off the res and they hit those meadows that run along 300 road. Mostly south of the 300 toward the reservation. And then as the spring wears on then they start crossing the 300 road. And then they come down into north country, between 300 and 260.

Q: Great, okay. Have you observed any changes regarding the horses or the territory since the Rodeo-Chediski fire, specifically?

A: Yes, I have. They seem to have hit the burned areas more often. There used to be some natural meadows there along that area that they would hit first, and then immediately they were into the Rodeo-Chediski and they stay there much longer. The burned areas have come back very nice with growth, and that's where they spend a lot of their time. They're there probably through most of the summer.

Q: Okay. You had talked a little bit about movement patterns of the horses throughout the territory and neighboring areas. Could you expand on that a little bit? Where else they go besides the reservation, if anywhere else?

A: You know, I rarely see them go anywhere else. I've seen them a couple times off the rim which would be southwest of the reservation and the 3-C line. I've seen it... which I guess would be O W Ranch and Canyon Creek. I've seen them down on Canyon Creek a lot. They do drop into there, but for the most part it's the reservation, back and forth. Interestingly enough, the 260 seems to hold them south for the most part. I've seen a couple horses over the years north of 260, but it really seems like they stay to the south of 260, around either side of the 300 road. And then east over to Heber. Another area they hit a great deal is called Hoyle Canyon. That's about halfway between Forest Lakes and Heber on the south side of the road. Beautiful riparian area as Hoyle Canyon is and they really frequent that a great deal. In fact, I would say that's probably one of the biggest concerns I've seen up there is the stomping out of grasses and vegetation that are down along Hoyle. It's a beautiful spot. The Forest Service has... I don't know if it's official but they've kind of designated that as a walk-in area, a habitat area where they don't drive vehicles. And it's a beautiful, beautiful place to hike in through and the horses at some places have completely destroyed that riparian area. Their trails are going down into the canyon. Again I see a lot of water — change in the water pattern as it goes down through there. It's eroding onto those trails and making new little creeks down through there. So again I would say that that area between... as the 300 road leaves 260, which is milepost 291 on 260, as it goes south from there they're on either side of that 300 road and then south of the 300 as it turns east. And a lot of use in the Hoyle Canyon area. And I see them — it seems like they kind of pattern to the east as the season goes on they come up on that western side of what I'm talking about. And then throughout the summer they go east and they end up in Hoyle, a great deal toward July, August, September.

Q: Okay. And when do they head back to the reservation or south of 300, normally?

A: Most of the time I see them do that when the grass cures out. It's not always snow that drives them down. Now big snow, when we've have the frequent snows they leave then. But it normally seems like about mid-November is when I really see a decline in their numbers. I've seen a few still up after that, but I would say November is probably the time they really start

dropping down. And I think it's just a matter of nutrients being cured out of the grass at that point, so they're going lower, looking for better grass.

Q: And what have been your observations, if any, regarding the fencing within the territory or neighboring areas?

A: The fencing, meaning the Indian reservation?

Q: Yes. I believe there's the fence along 300 or anywhere else?

A: Yeah, there's no fence along 300.

Q: Okay.

A: It's south of the 300 road is the White Mountain Indian Reservation boundary, which is also basically the edge of the rim. And that's the fence line that they destroy. Many, many places. I've walked down through there over the years for several miles and within one mile they've probably crossed over a dozen times or so. And they usually destroy the top strand. Sometimes they'll push through all the strands. I've repaired it myself over the years just trying to help out with the fence. But dollars are important to the Forest Service and they don't always have the ability to go out and fix things right away. I've kind of fixed that fence a few times over the years, but they go right through it. It's not an issue to drop that fence, for them.

Q: What material is that fence?

A: It's wire. It's probably 10-gauge metal wire. It's barbed.

Q: Okay.

A: The bottom strand is... I think it's smooth up there. Normally you have 4-strand wire and the bottom one is usually smooth. And then the top three are usually barbed. And I think that's the case up there right now. I don't remember. But that's generally what the Forest Service does. And then you have 42 inch top wire from the ground. And then you have T-posts usually every six or eight feet which are metal posts. And you usually have two stays, which can be metal or can be wood, in between those. And stays just kind of keep the fence together and usually tie all four strands together. Another post, in a sense, but usually not buried into the ground like the T-posts. So, four strand wire, three of it being barbed.

Q: Okay. To just recap, when you see the horses return to the territory in the spring and summer months, do you see any kind of population swing between that November shift south and then when they come back in the spring?

A: They bring their young with them.

Q: Right.

A: Always that in the spring, there's always new ones. And that's been going on, again, since the 1970s. You'd see 8 or 10 horses that we knew on sight, color, style horse, you could see that. And then they'd come back the next spring and there would be two or three young with them. And I guess that's the issue here is how much they procreated since those days.

Q: Uh huh. And you said it was the 1990s where you saw the larger increase in population?

A: Yeah, and I don't know that it slowed down any in the 2000s. That was probably just as bad. But it was around 1990 that I really started to see a big jump. It was kind of... in the 1970s if you drove around you'd stop if you saw a few horses because that was kind of unusual to see in the 1970s. I would stop and look at them. Kind of interesting. And then in the 1980s you started to see a few more. By the 1990s you didn't even stop to look at them, there's so many of them at that point — 1990 on, you know, give or take a few years, just using it as a decade. Off the beginning of that 1990s is when, to me, it seemed to me like it exploded. And I talked to people in the past back then, too, that agreed at that time (biologists, Forest Service folks) that had seen that same increase about that time.

Q: Okay, and did you see another big jump after the fire? Or did it...

A: Yes.

Q: You did?

A: Yes. I saw a big jump. I don't know that it was necessarily the fire itself. I think it just condensed them into areas that they had better feed for the fire. So I think the big groups of them ended up there more often. You know, we used to see a lot of deer and elk in certain areas and they're not there to the degree that they used to be, because they've been pushed out by the horses. The horses stay right there in those areas and they'll eat all day long. So pretty soon in just a matter of a couple weeks an entire meadow can be ate out. And so the elk don't return to those particular spots anymore. I think they've been displaced more than anything.

Q: The elk have?

A: Yes, I think they have because I used to see them again in certain native grass areas that the elk ate. Mostly meadows and they would hit that traditionally at the beginning of the season because they're moving south just like the horses do. So when you see the elk first come up in March and April, we used to see certain meadows that you could always go see elk if you wanted to show kids, or something like that. You could take them to those meadows. And then after a while by about 1990 on, you didn't see the elk in those particular areas anymore because the horses had got there and, you know, elk will graze for a few hours at night and then bed down. Whereas the horses, they will stay there all day long and eat. So it doesn't take long to wipe out the grass in that particular meadow. So by a couple weeks after arrival, the elk have moved on. There's no grass left in those meadows. And the fire also, you know when the Rodeo-Chediski hit that area it opened up so much more grass. I saw the same thing happen there. The

best mosaic burns were usually the horses took over first and the elk just didn't really go into there.

Q: Okay. Any other species? Have you seen their distribution change?

A: You know I haven't very much. I can't say that I can really think that through because the deer, there's not a lot of deer over there and the deer are more of a browse species, so they would go to certain areas and not eat the same types of plant life, that I watched. Elk and horses are more compatible on what they ate. Whereas deer were browsers that ate a lot of the new forbs and the brush. So I really didn't see too much with the deer. The deer increased after the Rodeo-Chediski. I saw more deer, but I can't say that they were displaced by the horses.

Q: Okay. Well this concludes our interview. Thank you.

A: Okay, thanks.

Subject G

Q: Today is June 20th 2016. This is Forest Service interviewer with Subject G and we are talking about the Heber Wild Horse Territory. So, can you tell me what is your history, relationship, or your connectivity to the Heber Wild Horse Territory?

A: I originally was on the Forest Supervisor some kind of team he had — I don't remember what it was, his advisory board or something — when the territory was set up. Like in what '72, something like that. We went and toured the thing a little bit. There wasn't many horses there at that time, because I think there were only like 7 when they set the thing up. The '67 snow storm had kind of wreaked havoc with them and the guys that were there — that's not my particular area where I live or work, but I'm not far away — and the guys that were there on the ground said there really hasn't been any colts there for a few years after that snow storm because something had gone wrong with the stallion or something. And then I kind of lost track for a few years. Then these horses begin to grow, these numbers begin to grow, and it got to be a big talking point all over the area about that. And of course, that's my relationship to it. Then I've gone to several meetings in the Overgaard area when I had a forest permit out there.

Q: Okay, so how long have you been in the area to observe activities? Since about the early 70's?

A: Well, I was born right here, the north west of Show Low. So I've been here all my life in this area. I was born here. I'm 79 years old so it's been a little while. I've ranched right here out of the Pinedale District. And then I had a permit, later I had a permit, out of the Heber District from '99 until my son took it over seven or eight years ago, something like that. And so I had it for a while. So I would be out there with those people meeting, and of course we met about horses and all kinds of things, you know at the time.

Q: Okay. Can you talk to me about more on your observations of the herd over time? For example, when you started in the 70's you mention there were seven, and then could you talk about you mentioned the horses expanding, the herd expanding. So could you talk about your observations of the herd over time?

A: What has happened, and of course it happened right here on my own ranch right here where I'm adjacent to the reservation out at Show Low, to the west we had about 25 or 35 miles of reservations on our south side there of the Apache reservation. And over time that horse herd every time anything had happened to a fence you'd wind up with horses. And that just kept on. It didn't seem like it was much to start with, but over time that herd just grew. And then I was out of the picture just at that moment. I sold this big ranch that I had here, the whole west half of the Lakeside District was the ranch that I'd put together over a 40 year period, and I sold it in 2002 just before the Rodeo-Chediski fire. And after that fire, of course, all the fence got burned, and then the horses just really came and there's been horses... everybody talks about them, and when you drive out there you see them, you know, they're just out there all over the place. And so the influx of the huge number of horses came after that fire more than anything else. There

were always some horses there but not to the proportions that we have now. And of course the reservations... I can remember when I was working on that fence along there, nobody ever maintained that fence it didn't seem like, except me, where I was involved with it. But the Indian boys were always chasing horses over there which meant there was a quite a lot of horses there or they wouldn't have been doing that, you know. I'd see them along the fence and they'd stop me and say "You got any water? I'm choking to death. We've been chasing horses all day." So I'd let them drink up my water and go on. I mean, just interesting little things that happened along the way. And of course when that fence came down then all those horses that were up there were just, you know, they were just free running and here they come. I really think the major part of that herd of horses that's out here now all across through there come off that reservation after that fire. They'd been here always but not big numbers, you know. And I don't know exactly how that herd out there was. I had heard earlier that that herd had been growing, but how much, I don't know. I know sometimes some of those ranchers said "Well, we're going gather those horses." Well those horses aren't easy to gather. You can get a few, but you don't get a herd of them. That's kind of my relationship with it. But I had a friend here that cut logs over in that Heber District right up to where those horses were and he said those horses were not many of them up there, but you did see them and they were mainly buckskins, the start of it. I don't know why that was, but that was kind of the deal. But now there's everything there.

Q: Okay. Do you recall any observations from the 70's and 80's?

A: Not really, because in the 70's and 80's I was here along on my side of the fence and we'd get a horse every once in a while over off the rez on our ranch but they'd be running that fence up and down, they were wanting back for whatever reason, they'd wind up a tree and fall down or some woodcutter would cut the fence, and then horses would get in and they'd just be walking that fence wanting out. So I'd figure out a way to open that fence up and let them go back. And they did. Because I knew that's where they'd come from. And the ones that... people turn horses loose, but those horses always wound up down next to town because they wanted to go back where civilization was. Those horses that were wild and come off the rez always walked that reservation road and wanting out, and if you opened the fence somewhere and hazed them a little they'd walk out the gate or out of somewhere. For a long time it was kind of open and then over the years — and I don't remember what the time frame was — they started locking all those gates and keeping people out. And at that point it got harder to get rid of them.

Q: Okay. All right, and then in the 90's and then after the fire, you mentioned they started growing and that's again just due to the fencing and of course after the fire the fence was down.

A: Yeah, it was just down everywhere from those trees. You know at first it burned the trees and then the trees fell later. Those trees that burned they stood there for a while and directly they began to fall. When they did that just crashed that fence everywhere, you know. I wasn't up there at that time but I know what it does. And the guys that were... that bought my ranch said "Man, it's just a nightmare." Then they built a new fence. After that, I don't know what point in time they did. I don't know, the government did something or the Indians or somebody built a

new fence. But the trees fell on that, too. That was a problem. The dead trees that weren't cut fell on that, even on the new fence. And still presented a big problem for them. And I'm sure that went on out on the Overgaard-Heber area. I was not there because I was out of the picture. I wasn't... too busy in the cow business right then or I had cattle but not up in that area. But then I went out to that meeting when the group met that was appointed by the government to study that area. I don't know it was two or three years ago, I can't remember. We went and made a little tour. We listened to them all morning and interacted a little bit and then we made a little tour and saw I think 7 or 8 head of horses up there. That's all we saw that day.

Q: When was that again?

A: It's been two or three years ago. They had a group that came there to Overgaard to meet and talk about how to solve that area... solve that... might have been last year. I didn't think it was that close up but it hadn't been long ago. My mind don't remember hours and dates very well, but we were there and a friend of mine or another rancher and I were out there, and I don't think we were even invited. But we showed up and they said "Well, good. Just sit down and listen to us. We're glad to have you here." So we went and we made the tour with them and drove around and the funny part about the whole thing was that the 6 or 7 or 8 — whatever it was, seven I think really — horses we saw most were buckskins. And I said "Ho, man these things have lived a long time." They liked it. [laughs]

Q: [laughs] Funny. Okay.

A: But we didn't see a lot of horses. It was kind of in the early spring.

Q: Okay. Early spring. And then, can you speak to any reproduction rates you've observed of the horses over time? From maybe the initial seven to... or is it just mostly what you're seeing is influx from the fence?

A: Oh, they reproduce. There's stallions and mares and everything up there, you know. And here on my particular allotment, though, there was colts every year there. You know those mares had colts. It's been... it isn't like they were sitting idle. Just the natural increase was getting a little bit out of control for my blood. And out there I wasn't on that particular area you know it's just east of it, and we're having experienced the same kind of a situation. But the one thing, let me tell you there's something else that goes on here — that the people turn their horses loose. People will just... they'll have horses in there they can't afford to feed them so they just haul them out here and turn them loose. Just local people that can't afford to feed the horses so they haul them out there and turn them out. And it happened right here. I live right in the middle of this forest. They turn them out. I know they've been right here around my house. Stray horses that don't have a home, old horses that you know have been in a corral because they have places on their legs where they've laid in a pen and wore the hair off their knees and stuff from laying down. They've just turned them loose and they just wind up out here. Don't have any brands on them, nobody claims them. Now I don't know if there's hundreds of them but they do do it.

Q: Interesting. Okay. You had mentioned earlier about that stallion that something had gone wrong with. Did you notice any early on reproduction rates within that group of seven? Or what was...

A: The guys that were there that gave me the information — I was not there, I want you to know that, that was not my area — but they said there was no colts for several years there. After that '67 snow storm which was six feet deep all over the mountain here, and so those horses they had a hard, you know, I'm sure they were lucky to survive, you know. Because we had snow. I mean it was... all right away all fences were buried in snow all across this mountain. And the fences were torn down, and the interesting phenomenon was those fences, a lot of those in the higher elevation, that ground got so wet and that snow came and it just sucked those fences down until they were only like two feet tall. Even the posts went into the ground. Not everywhere, but in areas it did. And so all of a sudden when spring come we had miles and miles and miles of fence that was not in existence. And so those horses came over right then, probably. After that, that was before the wild horse territory was even designated. When they designated it in '72, something like that, I can't remember.

Q: Yeah, '72 or '74, I think.

A: Yeah, and so there's been a lot of things contributed to all these... what's now.

Q: Sure.

A: You know that '67 snow had a lot of fence on the ground, and then after that. But then it was really cold then. Those horses were standing in snow, and those guys out there said there was no colts there for a while. The permittee that was on that area shared that with me, he was a friend of mine. We talked about it and he said "Those mares didn't have any colts for a while after that." And I don't know at what point that that changed, but those fences intermittently get down. And so when they do, if that stallion was not good there probably was one came off the reservation and he was good, you know. Because over on that south slope it wasn't near as bad as it was up here on top.

Q: Okay.

A: The snow storm wasn't.

Q: And then, let's see, you said you've observed changes regarding the horses and territory since the Rodeo-Chediski fire. Can you elaborate a little bit on that?

A: Well, I can tell you more about what went on here than I can out west where that territory really is. Right here in our area, the horses just... really, there's been a huge influx of horses on these forest permits here. Between us and the reservation. We're probably 10 miles from the reservation right here straight south, and those fences were down and the horses just... they came in everywhere all over this ranch that I owned. And we never did get... our permit we had at Heber was below Highway 260 which is miles below the reservation fence. We never got horses down there. But those horses appeared everywhere up in those permits. Guys begin to

complain. The horses... I just heard just the other day from my son, he was talking to a permittee out there, and he said "We can't even use our permit up there because the use by horses is higher than our allowed use before we ever move up. We go up and we don't have anything to eat and we're over use than when we check it." We have these rules that we check these pastures every year and he says "Our allowable use is already gone before we even get there."

Q: Okay, wow. Let's see, so what kind of movement patterns have you observed from your area to maybe the territory in other neighboring areas?

A: Those horses have moved... they're just back and forth all across, and you'd say well these fences between allotments. But you've got to know that's all summertime country where those horses have been. Ranchers don't have cattle up there in the wintertime, so in the winter those gates and everything all across there wind up open, for whatever reason, and then horses can just move. Especially up in the high country. Highway 260 cuts those things off from the north side of the forest here, so they wind up staying mostly on the south side... what little I know about it. Now, back before the... when the wild horse territory was set up that road wasn't there to the magnitude it is now. You know it wasn't fenced and all those things. Or maybe it wasn't even there, I don't remember when it was built. But it was dirt through there. So they were more able to manipulate around there, but when that road got built that isolated them to the south side of the road.

Q: Okay, and what was that road again?

A: Highway 260. Run from Heber to Show Low... or from Payson to Show Low.

Q: Okay.

A: And so that limits those horses from going way north down where the winters are less and easier. But they seem to do all right up there. I don't know. You'd think they'd just get so much snow they wouldn't do well. We haven't had a lot of snow the last several years, so they've been navigating pretty good. And then there's always lots of steep canyons, steep ridges, that the wind/sun blows the snow off and so they can get there. Just like our cattle do, even lower, our cattle get on the ridges in the south slopes and the sun knocks it off or never was there as much. Those horses do that up higher, I'm sure, and managed to survive. There's a lot of country up in there that's not very habitable for horses or anything. Elk do better than anything else. I guess those horses are tough as elk, I don't know.

Q: Okay, interesting. Let's see. We've talked about the fences. Anything else you want to add about the fences? Your observations regarding the fencing on the territory or the neighboring areas?

A: Well, out there where those horses are there's been sheep allotments and stuff there. And over time... and see about the same time the horse territory was set up, was when they converted a lot of that country out there from sheep to cattle. And at that point there were no fences. That whole area was just open because they didn't need fences for sheep, they herded them. Then

when they converted them to cattle they begin to have more fences and that started pinching on the horses because if the fences were kept up and gates shut that limited out... well they manipulated the area. You understand what I'm saying? Their movements... that their movement. And so that has complicated the wild horse area probably to some degree because it's narrowed up their ability to move around. The road and the fences (because we switched from sheep to cattle) has changed in that period of time.

Q: Okay. When was that change over? Do you remember what date maybe?

A: Well it was along about the same time the horse herd was designated. I don't... can't remember the exact date, but there was a lot of those sheep allotments. There's still one or two out there but most have all been fenced and they've changed from sheep to cattle. And I don't know, my personal opinion was when we switched it over we talked about that too on those... how you evaluated how many sheep and how many cows you could put on. Well we underestimated what a cow used and so we wound up with too many cattle, in my opinion, out there. And we didn't have near the water... that country doesn't have good water. You can't build big dirt tanks to make water because it's rocky. And so the water became a limiting factor to the cattle, and being able to utilize the whole area. Where the sheep, you can drive them him back and forth and move him around. But them cattle are limited by water. And so we kind of overgrazed that country, or I thought we did anyway. You know, I didn't. But I mean that's... we as cattlemen, we were allowed to put too many cattle out there for the area that we could really utilize. We'd take the whole area and we'd call it 100,000 acres here. Well we'd divide it 9 cows or 7 cows... a cow for every 7 sheep or something like that. Well, we didn't think about the fact that those cows, they're travelling, they're limited by water, and the sheep... I don't know, they hauled water to them. They did a lot of different things, or else they'd drive them to water to places where the cattle couldn't go or wouldn't go. And so we should have evaluated really the usable areas for cattle in that division instead of calling the whole area available. Does that make sense?

Q: Sure.

A: And so I thought we had some inequity there. And it showed up later when the numbers began to get cramped. And then the elk came into the picture and they really made a big difference. The elk became a big factor in the use out there. We had lots of elk and they become a big factor in the overall use across the whole forest here on this end. We just had thousands and thousands of elk. And the forest plan allowed them to grow and so they've grown and I mean we have elk now in addition to horses. So there really isn't much room for a cow any more up in that higher country.

Q: Yeah, it sounds busy.

A: It is busy. And then you've got people, too, that have grown the same magnanimous proportions. People out there all the time. Makes it harder to keep the fences up. Makes it

harder for everything. And also they're just there. And they cause a disturbance of the animals. They can't be everywhere they want to be because somebody's there. Some human is there.

Q: Okay. Let's see. Well, that answers about all my questions. Do you have anything else to add?

A: Now that we've got a herd of them over there that have become "occupants" and they're home. They've made that their home. And people think that's a natural thing, but it isn't. We've got an influx of horses off the reservation that came on there after that '67 snow and ever since then. And every time that fence gets down more come. Because there's hundreds of them. I went down there one time looking for a bull and the Indian stockman took me around all the way down through there, and it was the most phenomenal thing I had ever seen. All up and down every road we went —, if you're acquainted with horses you'll understand it — there was a stud pile every quarter of a mile or a hundred yards just everywhere in the road where stud horses stop and go to the bathroom. There was a pile in the middle of the road which told me there were *lots* of horses down there. So they're there and available. If anything goes wrong with that fence, they're going to be on your side.

Q: Uh huh. Do you remember when that was?

A: That would have been in the 80's some time. In the late 80's. And that was on a permit I had just west of Show Low. But those horses, they were just... you don't see that many but there's evidence that there are a lot of them there.

Q: Could you actually talk more about your role on that advisory board you mentioned at the beginning?

A: What we talked about. Number one, that horse herd was being designated. And they'd delineated an area and there was only a few and we never thought much about it. You know what I mean? It didn't seem like much. The horses had always been there and in there had been a lot more in the past, earlier. There'd been lots of horses that people had just turned out. There were ranchers and people in the area and they'd go get them and collect them and bring them home. And they were their horses. You understand what I'm saying? And that's probably how that wild horse herd actually accrued out there in the very beginning. So we just talked about how to manage that little herd of horses because that was a mandate from the government. And then we talked about the cattle and the numbers. And they'd come up with these numbers and they shared that with us and asked us what we thought. And we kind of agreed. But then as I shared with you, over time as I watched what went on, it became obvious to me that we'd overestimated what cattle we could run on those areas because they can't use some of that rougher country, you know, because of the water. And then another thing that happened out on the west of Heber out there, especially on the Chevelon District and the Heber District, something I observed and I've never... nobody ever wants to listen to this. Before the sheep left, they kept those pine trees eaten off. And so there was not the thickets of pine trees, little pines, in that area, anywhere. There was pines and lots of them and it was a beautiful forest and huge timber, but them thickets that were allowed to grow up there after the sheep left because there

was nothing destroying them, got to be just terrible. I mean our forest just began to get choked out with little pine saplings so thick you couldn't walk through them. And I guarantee you those sheep eat those little trees. That's why they weren't there. And after they left then we began to get those huge influx of little pine trees that just choke the whole thing out. That was another thing that affected the grazing ability because we had trees that started taking over. And it only took a few years until they were thick. But the sheep, I'm convinced those sheep kept those down, that's why those forests were so clean and so nice.

Q: Interesting. And the advisory board was around '72?

A: Yeah, it was in that time where our supervisor for the Sitgreaves Forest was in Holbrook at that point in time. Then it moved to... it came to Snowflake. And then it joined with Lakeside, or our ranger district. The supervisor's office was in Holbrook and then went to Springerville. Then our ranger district moved to Pinedale, then it moved back to Snowflake. And then we joined with the Lakeside District. And then the Apache Sitgreaves were joined and so now it's called the Apache-Sitgreaves. The Apache and the Sitgreaves were joined and that happened back before that all took place. I don't remember the years when they were that... when the Apache Sitgreaves were put together. But anyway, that was when the Sitgreaves was by itself. But anyway, that's been 50 years ago. Anyway. But we used to go to Holbrook to the Supervisor's office which is 50 miles, 45 miles. North of the forest, really. But it was the county seat of Navajo County. And that was the Sitgreaves Forest. And you see that was when that wild horse herd was designated was when the Sitgreaves was... now that it's the Apache-Sitgreaves out of Springerville and our district was the Pinedale District. And then the Heber District and the Chevelon District as you went west out through there. But the Heber and Chevelon in recent years was combined and earlier the Lakeside and Pinedale joined... were put together into one district that was managed out of Lakeside.

Q: Right. And then just another follow up here, when you guys were talking about that horse herd being designated, what were your initial thoughts or your initial intentions — what was the initial conversation about management of that herd?

A: Well, there really wasn't any big time talk about the management of that herd. They were just there. And they said if they're there, we have to designate them. If there are horses there in the area and they've been there over — I don't remember the time frame — then we have to designate it as a wild horse herd area. And that's what the whole thing was. But the permittee out there didn't think that amounted to much because he only had seven head. You understand what I'm saying? We never thought much about that. There had been more, earlier, but there'd been lots of wild cowboys in this country back in those days earlier that would have gathered those horses. They drew on them down and gather them and they'd break them to ride and do things with them. But it had dwindled down there to where there wasn't much. And the old timers out there swear those were just horses that they'd not gathered. They were not branded but they just had horses out there. I know my father had horses right here where we lived out on the forest, but when the Forest decided to get rid of the horses they just came out here with

30-30's and shot them. I mean they shot them by the hundreds to get rid of the wild horses that were all over this forest. And so that's what went with them to start with, that's why they got rid of them. Then as time went on then that herd maintained out there. Nobody did anything. Nobody gathered them. Nobody worried about them. So they became part of a wild horse area, and so they designated a little area and set it aside for them. At that point in time, the sheep had been running out there all the time and there wasn't any fences so they could go about anywhere they wanted to go. And when they designated that area, it wound up being on the south side of Highway 260.

Q: Sure. Okay.

A: I don't remember the particulars of that. That's been a lot of moons ago. But I know... nobody thought it was a big deal. But now then that we've had this influx from these storms and stuff that's tore the fence down, it has become a big deal. But the original wild horse herd was not big at all. It was just a little dab of horses. And I remember nobody thought it was a big thing.

Q: Okay. Well great. That's all my questions, so this will conclude our interview.

Subject H

Q: Today is June 20th, 2016. This is Forest Service interviewer and I'm with Subject H and we are going to talk about the Heber Wild Horse Territory. So would you tell me what is your history, relationship or connectivity to the Heber Wild Horse Territory?

A: Well, to begin with, [name] who was the lessee of the forest at least in that area, he was the rancher that ran cattle to the Heber Wild Horse Territory, and I became the livestock inspector for [name] back in 1987. And therefore, I learned a little bit about that. But prior to that, I was also a meat inspector for the livestock department. There's a livestock department. And being that, I got – I learned a lot of knowledge about the people of the area. I came up to this area in 1981 and the actual – one of the individuals that owned one of the meat plants talked to me about he would spend – him and his wife would spend time horseback near that territory and they would see those wild horses in there. And they're the ones that told me about it and made me aware of the wild horses in that area. And consequently, I gained more knowledge through [name] and his family.

Q: Okay. So how long have you been an observer of the territory?

A: Well, I've been in and out of that area for about thirty-six years, so it's – I probably – I've had knowledge of the Heber Wild Horse Territory for about probably closer to about thirty-three years. It's probably when I gained knowledge of the area and knew that there were a few wild horses actually in that territory over there, west of Heber, Arizona.

Q: Great. Okay. And so, since that time, what have been your observations of the herd over time?

A: Well, that's a very good question because my actual visual contact with what I presumed were some of those horses from the territory, there was only two of them at that time and this was back in 1985 and the only two that I saw were two mares. And I was in the Buckskin Canyon area, and when I came out of there, I talked to a couple of the people in the area and they said, "Yeah, those are the Heber wild horses." And I said, "Well, you know, I wanted to know a little more knowledge about it." So I went to [name] and he's the one that explained to me that they had started with a group around the Black Canyon lake area and they had this group and they designated it as wild horse territory back in 1974. And they were just going to designate them and they would – obviously, were supposed to manage them or whatever.

And at that time, according to [name], they did not have a problem with horses – with the feral horses coming off the Indian Reservation which bordered that piece of country. And occasionally, they did get a few feral horses coming off the reservation but they – when they got too many of them, the Forest Service would put out a bid and consequently somebody would apply for that bid and would set up what they called trigger traps along the Rim Road and

would – these trigger traps would catch some of these horses. They'd get inside where there's a water hole and they would set a gate with poles on them when they got in there and they couldn't get out. And the guy would go and check them and he would haul those horses off.

And I learned about this through being a livestock inspector and going to the sale barn up in Sun Valley, Arizona which is just east of Holbrook where [name], the original person that got the bids the last time I remember, and he brought in a few horses and he was being paid by the Forest Service for taking those horses and checking them and getting rid of them. Consequently, he – when I talked to [name] later on, I said, "Why did you quit putting in for those bids?" He said, "The money wasn't worth it." So he said, "I was mostly catching mares and foals instead of stallions that might have been worth some money", you know, where he could utilize those horses for something different. But the mares and foals, that was all he was catching and the money wasn't as good according to him.

But that's how I got started on these and I actually got to see two mares at one time. They were both buckskin. They looked like they had a little age on them. I never did see a stallion which I presumed that stallion was around there but I did talk to [name] off and on over the years and he said that the stallion, the original stallion, that was part of that original herd, he said, in a freeze in 1983, that stallion went sterile according to [name]. And consequently, because the stallion went sterile but he still had the strength to keep other stallions, sterile stallions, from coming across from the reservation. He was still able to keep the herd together but they didn't have any offspring and consequently, they – because he was sterile, the mares didn't have any offspring and they eventually died off either because of bad winters or because of age or what have you, but they did eventually die off according to [name].

Q: How interesting. Okay. And then –

A: That's some of the history of – I don't know if I told you, but [name] and [name] which may be somebody else you might want to talk to, [name] is the owner of Malapai Meat Packing in Taylor, Arizona. He's the one that originally told me about these wild horses and his wife and him is – him and [name] would go down there and camp out at Buckskin Canyon and they would take their horses and they'd ride around there and they would see these horses in there. And so, you know, we had problems over the year. Being a livestock inspector, I had numerous problems with the horses coming across the reservation if somebody left a gate open or the fence got torn down or whatever, we had holes in the fence. I was constantly contacted by the reservation saying, "Hey, I've got some horses out here. You guys need to gather them up." And it wasn't a problem.

Now, this is something that everybody needs to understand that the wild horses, that was a good thing. Everybody agrees in putting – the ranching community agrees that yeah, it's not a bad thing to have a herd of wild horses out there and have 21,000 acres set aside for them provided they're managed properly. And that was the big thing. But what happened in 2002

when the Rodeo-Chediski Fire hit and the fence was – you know, miles of the fence were burned up and all those because that fire started on the reservation, it pushed a lot of those feral horses from the reservation onto the Sitgreaves National Forest. And yeah, we had problems with them off and on over the years but we knew the difference between the horses from the reservation and the original wild horse herd. But now, we got 300 plus horses out there on the Sitgreaves and it's causing a tremendous habitat problem, not only for the wildlife but also for livestock and things like that and creating problems.

Q: Okay.

A: I can go into a lot more detail as we progress but I think I'd better answer your questions first and then we can talk some more.

Q: Okay. Well, let's go back. You mentioned that in the earlier – before the fire specifically, so in those earlier years, you were able to tell the difference between the reservation horses and this group of horses that had been living in the territory. Could you go into more detail on, for example, like how many horses you saw and how were you able to tell a difference, and were those horses on the territory considered – so the wild horses on the territory, did they stick to one certain area? Or where did they go? So could you talk a bit about how you understood that difference?

A: Well, primarily, the main difference was the fact that we maintained a good fence between the reservation and the Sitgreaves National Forest. And even though some of those horses – even though the horses moved off of that territory, and we're talking 21,000 acres. It wasn't 21,000 acres specifically fenced just for those horses. They were supposed to be managed on that and it was my understanding that that 21,000 acres was supposed to be fenced or even partitioned. But it occasionally got, you know, you had fence problems and – bless his heart – [name]. I don't know that he was the greatest rancher in the world or the most concerned and he was more concerned about maintaining his cattle and keeping feed for his cattle as opposed to the wild horses. And it was my original thought that they started out with seven, seven horses: the stallion and six mares and foals, okay.

Q: And that wasn't seven before, you think?

A: That was my understanding as original from [name]. He said they only started out with seven and, you know, now we're down to three and the stallion's been sterile for ten, you know, for years and they hadn't had any offspring for years and so I don't even know – he says I don't mind those horses being out there. But what's the point, you know? Because really, if you got 21,000 acres set aside for wild horses, there's only three of them left and the stallion's sterile, you're not gaining anything, if you understand what I'm saying.

Q: So can we talk a little bit more about the patterns of that seven, that group of seven, and then you said it got down to three. Where, specifically, were they in your observations or maybe what you heard from permittees like [name]?

A: Oh, well, you know, if you – you have to know the country up here because you have – the Sitgreaves National Forest is a very narrow strip, basically, because it's bound by the White Mountain Apache reservation on the south and it just barely goes a little bit across Highway 260 in several places because of the BLM and private land and states land that encompass it because of the railroad that runs along I-40. So consequently, you have a narrow strip of land called the Sitgreaves which is part of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest that runs all the way to what we call the Young Road, which is a road that goes to a community off of the Mogollon Rim down to about halfway between Roosevelt Lake and the Mogollon Rim.

So the consequence of it is and why I understand this is, the 21,000 acres that was designated is – that all goes back historically to the ranchers and there's a lot of – I mean, I don't know how many people you've talked to but there's beaucoup stories of the long established families that set up homesteads in the Heber-Overgaard area, the Linden, the Clay Springs, the Young area, and quite a bit of history right there. And, you know, there's – you'll get a lot of history from the Crooked Trail to Holbrook, which is from Nun to Holbrook, and a lot of history there. But what the consequence was, back in the day, ranchers didn't – you know, they didn't just raise their horses on their property and they didn't necessarily have fences to bound each individual rancher. They had coops. There'd be four or five ranchers that would cooperate with an area and run all their cattle on that area and they would consequently have what they call a roundup.

And when they'd have this roundup, not only would they roundup the cattle, they'd also roundup the horses, okay? And they'd have horses that – mares that were branded with their brand and any foal running with *that* mare was their foals. And they'd get those foals and cut them off and brand them and they would turn out these horses and just let them run, okay. They were all pasture bred. Well, it gets a little out of control for the – historically, it gets out of control and that's where consequently you have hundreds and thousands of these horses running loose on the pasture and the prairie and BLM and state and private land and everywhere else. And the consequence of that was, they said, "Well, we got to get them under control" so what they did is that's when they formulated the Wild Horse and Burro Act and they designated certain herds in certain areas as wild free-roaming horses.

And that was a great thing because now, you didn't turn your stallion out there or you didn't turn your mares out there to run on that wild free-roaming horse territory to get bred by the wild stallions out there. You just couldn't do that anymore. Those horses were specially designed for people to observe and preserve and for the Forest Service and the BLM to manage which – you know, I don't know if you knew about this but they actually did one of those down in Gila Bend which is the last known – well, maybe some of the burros too around the Lake Pleasant might have gotten designated too but the most recent wild horse herd that I know of

that was designated was down outside of Gila Bend maybe in the Gila Mountains or the Sawtooths or something like that.

But the ones out here, the reason why I know some about them is because I spent time at Black Canyon Lake fishing and I would occasionally see – I did see what I presumed was the stallion but I can't say for certain because they didn't have brands on them and none of that kind of stuff. They were just there. And we didn't have an issue with the horses, the feral horses from the reservation at that time. There just wasn't a big issue with it. Occasionally, we'd get a small herd of horses coming across but the reason why you didn't have a problem with the mares and the stallion of that wild horse herd is because that stallion was strong enough for a long period time to fight off any other stallions. And he didn't – it was a small herd, so he didn't have to worry about other stallions coming in there and breeding up his mares because he always fought them off. And [inaudible] when they came across from the reservation they were other lesser stallions that were kicked out by stallions on the reservation. So he didn't really have a problem fighting them off at the time. And consequently, those mares, you know, they got too old to be breedable anyhow. And so, it's my understanding that when I saw the two mares back in '86, I think it was, or '87, that's when I went to [name] and asked him about them and that was in an area just off the Rim Road and west of Buckskin Canyon. And he said, "What did they look like?" And I told him. I said, "They were buckskin mares, you know, with – one of them had three white socks and the other one had two and you know the black mane and tails, and this that." So he says, "Yeah, that's the two mares from that wild horse herd." He said, "You didn't see the stallion?" I said, "No, I didn't." He says, "Well, he's around there somewhere."

Q: Okay. So any idea when that stallion finally died or...?

A: I hadn't – I have no idea.

Q: Okay.

A: I could not tell you. You know, I'm sure somebody knows, that B from that family maybe somebody in the [name] family might have known or they'd have – there's some written history by [name] or his wife, you know, that might be written down somewhere in some memoirs or something. But I couldn't tell you. The only thing that I saw was two mares that, I was told, were the mares from that herd by the individual that ranched that area all of his life.

Q: Okay. So how did you – did you observe any kind of, you know, new members to that herd? Obviously, they weren't breeding with those mares and the stallion couldn't, but did you see any horses maybe coming from the reservation or other places joining that herd?

A: No, I never did.

Q: No? So they just kind of stayed local and never joined up with any –

A: That was my understanding. They stayed pretty much to the west – they stayed west of Overgaard, and you got to remember these animals were wild at that time. Wild free-roaming designated in '74 because of the ranching community decided that they needed to good out with them and keep everything out of there, okay, keep the reservation horses out of there and we're going to let these horses go because they're part of that original group that the ranchers, you know, that weren't on the reservation that actually decided to designate as a wild horse territory and wild horses and let them go. And consequently, my thought would be that they'd probably gathered their own mares up and quit turning them out at that point in time and no longer turn them out out there anymore. And that's a good thing because you don't see that much anymore. And some of your big ranches still do that. I think Babbitts still, you know, run some pasture breeding programs and stuff but it's very well controlled. Much better than what our Forest Service did for those horses, I think.

And like I said, off and on, there was – when horses would come across from the reservation, they generally didn't have that coloration. Although there is some buckskins in there, I see a lot of black horses coming off the reservation, a lot of bay-colored horses, sometimes they've got brands, some of them got marks on their head from halters, some of them have brands on them. And you will see some buckskin horses and it's very possible. It's very possible that some of those buckskin horses were offspring of the original herd but they ended up – you know, you got to remember, if that stallion breeds the six mares and three of those foals out of those mares are male, geez, they're going to fight each other. And he was strong enough to take them off. Well, they had to go find their own animals and it's very possible that they went onto the reservation. It's very possible. I mean, you know, you could –like I said you could test their blood but I can test blood of my horses that I have up here and they're going to match some of that Spanish barb stuff. So it's not how you do it, you know. You've got to – it's not how it's done. Not every horse in the United States of America is a designated wild horse or free-roaming wild horse and burro.

Q: Great. Well, thank you. And that will conclude our interview.

Subject I

Q: This is November 22nd 2016. This is Forest Service interviewer with Subject I and we are talking about the Heber Wild Horse Territory. So, can you please explain what is your history, your relationship, or your connectivity to the Heber Wild Horse Territory?

A: I was the Range staff on the Pinedale District, and part of it on Lakeside District. And working with the permittees, they talked about... mentioned wild horses and how they used to run between... up toward Heber and Taylor. There was a run down through there. That's how I got started with them.

Q: And how long have you been in that area to observe activities, or how long did you do that?

A: I was in on... between Pinedale and Lakeside I was there... about 23 years.

Q: Do you remember what years, from what year to what year?

A: Well I retired in 2000, so it would go back from there. I think it was '79.

Q: Ok. And so what have been your observations of the herd over time? Can you recall what they were in '79 when you started, and then we can work our way to...

A: I just knew of the herd on Heber. I wasn't actually on the Heber District. Old Heber District, whatever they call it nowadays. But anyway, the permittees on the Pinedale District used to talk about catching the horses and whatnot. When they were even kids. There was a small herd there that they were trying to keep and protect and whatnot. I know at one time somebody got on the rim road and shot a bunch of horses. Whether they were part of the wild horses or not, I'm not sure, because we had trouble with the White Mountain Apache Indians coming across on the forest and they weren't necessarily loyal. They were owned by an apache. It was a form of wealth that they could ...

Q: Ok. Interesting. Do you recall how big that herd was or how small that herd was?

A: No. I don't remember the number at all.

Q: Ok. How about closer to 2000? By the time you retired what information did you know about the herd by then?

A: I just knew Heber had it and they had a plan for it. And that's about all I can really tell you. They were really working with it.

Q: So, you weren't able to observe any changes when the horses or say reproduction rates or distribution?

A: I think the reproduction rate was slowly coming down but then we had some stallions or studs coming across from the reservation. I know on Lakeside I had some... a little herd of Indian

ponies coming across. And then when we had the big Rodeo-Chediski Fire... I mean there's horses everywhere now, as far as I know. There's no fence to keep them home.

Q: Ok. And how about any changes regarding the horses? Even the horses you observed more on your district since the fire?

A: Well, I retired about the time of the fire. Oh, shoot. All's I know is what I see and what my old friends are telling me there's horses everywhere now. Or there were. Oh and I was there... the Indian horses coming across the fence line was growing. And it was thick enough that you couldn't round them up, you know.

Q: Ok. Could you maybe guess a number? Or you know sort of...

A: On me, at the time I retired I probably had 15 or so that I can vouch for.

Q: Okay, and was that like in one year or...

A: No. No. We had a couple coming across, you know, three or four and then it just kept growing from there.

Q: Ok. Did you observe any particular time of the year when that would happen, or...

A: Once they came across they seemed to stay on us.

Q: Ok. So it didn't really matter what time of year they came across, it just...

A: No.

Q: Ok.

A: The Pinedale District or the Lakeside District, a lot of where the horse are on the old Pinedale District. And that went from the pines down into the junipers. So you had all seasons there.

Q: Ok. And then could you discuss any movement patterns you saw at least of the horses on your district besides those coming from the reservation?

A: No. Most of them were in the fenced tank area. From there over to Juniper Ridge was my main group. And they stayed in that area, pretty much. You know 'cause if they went to the East they ran into town; they went too far to the West they had the subdivisions there too.

Q: Ok. So what area is this? Could you explain that for me just a little bit more... what area that is?

A: The fenced tank... there's a road that goes out to Fenced Tank. It's just on the west side of show Low there. Near Linden. In that area. And it goes from there to what they call Juniper Ridge, that's before you get to Pinedale.

Q: Ok.

A: That's the best I can tell you on that... without having a map.

Q: Ok. Sure. And then the last question is regarding the fencing, what were your observations of the fencing in the neighboring areas? You talked a little bit about the reservation.

A: Oh, the reservation had some pretty good fences but trees fall across them, all the stuff like that. They tried to keep their fences up because they didn't want their cattle coming across. And my permittees didn't want their cattles going down on the reservation, either. So between the two of them they tried to keep the fences up. But things happen.

Q: Ok. And is that where you saw the horses crossing and in any particular area?

A: No, I can't say where. It happened over several years. It wasn't just over night.

Q: Ok. Do you have any...

A: I was just going to say once the Rodeo-Chediski Fire come across there was no fence. It burned it up. And then they can come across any place they wanted. All the way from Forest Lakes Estates to Show Low, Lakeside.

Q: Right. And do you have any other observations or comments about the territory or the horses in general?

A: No I don't. Everything on lower toward Heber ... I'm sure you got ahold of few permittees like [resident] and a bunch of those over that way, [residents] and whatnot.

Q: Right. Yes. I've spoken with at least [resident] and...

A: Yeah. And he would have a pretty good idea.

Q: Great. Well, thank you. And this concludes our interview.

A: Very good.

Subject J

Q: Today is November 30th, 2016. This is Forest Service interviewer. I am with Subject J. And we are talking about the Heber Wild Horse Territory. So can you tell me what is your history, relationship, or your connectivity to the Heber Wild Horse Territory?

A: Well, my family started ranching here in 1930. I'm a third generation rancher from this area. Well, I've been familiar with this country up here all my life, which is 58 years. Been around the horses that are up there and the fences and the various problems that are associated with the horses.

Q: Great. So you've been in the area around Heber-Overgaard all your life, you said?

A: Yes. Fifty eight years. My dad's been here his whole life. And my grandad has been here for a good deal of his life.

Q: Great. So can you tell me what have been your observations of the herd over time? For example, you can start as early as you have recollection. And then we'll move closer in time to the fire. So if you could start with as early as you can recall.

A: Well the earliest I can recall there was 7 head of actual horses in broom fields up there. That would have been in the early 70's or late 60's. And gathering cattle up there I ran into that little bunch of horses from time to time every year. And then there was a few horses that people had turned out within that time period. But as far as I know and everyone else that I've talked to that seven head that we considered the wild broomies had perished in the snow storm of 67/68. And that was the night... the mares were around after that but the stud horse had frozen himself in that big snow. And there were no more colts after that. And then every horse that came along after that came right off the Apache reservation.

Q: Okay, so that stud was lost in a storm? What year do you remember?

A: That was the 67 we had about seven feet of snow up there.

Q: 67? Okay.

A: Yeah. That little bunch of mares survived the snow storm but the stud was sterile after that and there never was any more colts after that. And the actual herd of wild horses that they set up the habitat for.

Q: Okay. So what other observations of changes have you seen within the territory since, I guess, that 67 snow storm?

A: In 68, 69, 70 that little bunch of mares was up there and they slowly died off of old age. The fact that we bordered the Apache reservation for 27 miles on our permits that we use ourselves — that's not including everything all the way to Show Low — but the horse numbers have

increased substantially ever since then. And it was quite obvious to all of us that these horses all came off the reservation. You know, when you can ride the reservation fence and see literally hundreds and hundreds of horses on the other side. Every time you get a hole in the fence you're going to get loaded up with horses over here. And in 1987 we had a deal with the Forest Service where we gathered all the wild horses up from the permit up here, so we took them to the sale in Holbrook. And I myself had gathered every horse up there except for 12 head and the Forest Service said "Well, those 12 head probably won't hurt it. You can just leave them." And then after that of course the Rodeo-Chediski fire happened and that fence all burned up. Well it took us three years to fix that fence because we had to cut every tree for a hundred feet on every side, on both sides of that fence all the way across there. That three year period there was probably four or five hundred horses came over here from the reservation. That had been my observation. We pretty much had them cleaned up but after the fire they just snowballed.

Q: Okay. How about reproduction rates of the horses besides coming in from the reservation? What have you observed regarding that?

A: Well, every year when you look there's a large crop of new colts. Every year. You know, I've been up there every year of my entire life. So. You know, you're probably getting a 30% increase on your numbers every year from offspring up there.

Q: Okay. How about the distribution of the animals? For example, numbers of horses? Have you noticed any specific locations? Anything due to weather? Any sort of patterns you've seen with the horses?

A: Well, in the winter time of course there's a large bunch of horses come down along Highway 260 just for the fact that it's lower elevation and they can kind of get out of the snow. You know, I think if you went in there and did a count right now you could probably come up with just [indistinct] across the [indistinct] You could probably come up with 300 horses right there in that area. But there are certain bunches of them horses that kind of just stay in their locations up along the rim road, and just wherever. The last couple of times I've been up there there are just horses everywhere, bunches of them. My point, though, the Apache reservation estimates there's 5,000 head on the reservation. And there's no way we can keep that fence up all winter long because we don't have [indistinct] up there. It's a big chore to mend 10–20 miles of fence [indistinct] You know, if you got rid of every horse on there today, by next year you could have another 200 up there. And people go up there and they cut the fence all the time trying to give the horses access off the reservation to get over here.

Q: Uh huh. Okay. Any particular watering areas, or anything you're seeing in that regard?

A: In the past bunch of years I've gone up there with a front end loader and cleaned out hundreds of dirt tanks, reservoirs, and then there are springs. The horses are just anywhere and everywhere. As far as picking out a location [indistinct] there's a certain number here and a certain number there, you know you couldn't do that because they'll travel 10–15 miles in any direction. And there's water everywhere up there. The permittees have put a lot of work into

water up there, and they gave them... funded a big project last year and the summer before. We cleaned out — I'd have to look at my paperwork — but we cleaned out close to 70 substantial dirt tanks, that are going to have water in them from now on. We spent right at \$40,000 up there in the last three years, just cleaning tanks.

Q: Okay. Let's see, you've mentioned the Rodeo-Chediski fire and your observation since, so do you want to talk any more about that? You said the fence has been down since the fire, it's been hard to replace it.

A: No. The fence was down for three years following the fire, but we put it up. It took us a bunch of time and money to put it up. You can imagine 27 miles of fence, and I had to cut every dead tree that could fall on the fence, on either side of the fence, all the way across the country. And I mean those canyons are rough and steep and deep. It took us three years to do that. And a lot of those places, when we got through cutting the trees down and then you had to go cut a tunnel through to find the fence. But we have got the fence up now, but during the wintertime you're going to have a green tree blow down or somebody cut the fence or for whatever reason the fences are going to get down, they help them tear it down. And you can imagine with 5,000 head of horses on the other side of the fence, try to find a way out, they're going to come over here no matter what.

Q: Uh huh. Sure. So you've noticed since that fence was down those three years, did you see quite a bit of horses come over and now it's less or would you...

A: No, it's been increasing every year for the past 15 years. You know, like I say in 1987 I gathered all the horses up — the permit that we use up here — and I left 12 head up there. And since we'll say '89, the horses have been steadily increasing ever since then, just for holes in the fence, the reproduction, and people turning horses out. We catch horses up there all the time that people have turned out. You know, just regular backyard pets they got tired of feeding and they just go up there and they turn them out. Any and every kind of horse you could imagine will show up there eventually because people get tired of feeding them and they just haul them out there and turn them loose.

Q: Okay. Can you go back, sort of in memory to those original seven? Do you have any more observations on those? Where they might have come from or how early if say even your grandfather or father had any comments about them?

A: Well, when my granddad first got here in the 30's, the Forest Service and everybody was under the same impression that these horses didn't need to be there, so they killed them. In the 30's by the hundreds. The Forest Service, written in their daily logs — I was looking at one of them here a while back and this Forest Service guy was out there and he said I killed 15 or whatever number of horses there was, and he said I'd have gotten the rest of them but I ran out of bullets. And that was written right in his daily log. You know, there's been horses there for a couple hundred years and where these horses came from was the remounts for the cavalry. You know the pioneers in this country, that was big business for them back then. They would buy these

little bunches of mares out somewhere and they'd take a cavalry remount stud out there, turn him loose. Then they would gather the offspring, and break them, and sell them to the Army. Well once the Army didn't need horses anymore, well everything out there just got turned loose. That's where they all came from. There are not descendants from [indistinct] horses. They're just stuff that man's abandoned over the [indistinct] years. These horses here were all handled by men in the past hundred years. And when it wasn't practical anymore to raise horses then of course they just turned them out.

Q: Right. The remount horses you were describing, were they turned out around 45, 46, then?

A: I would imagine it would have been in the late 30's. I could just research, but it was at the end of World War I and beginning of World War II when they went away from horses.

Q: Yeah, because they didn't need cavalry in the World War II. Okay, so in the 30's.

A: But they did use a lot of horses in WWI. It was some time right between the two wars when they just turned them all out. If you can get documented proof of that from all these pioneers, their daily logs, you know the Mormons they kept their daily logs. We were just looking in a book this morning showing that these people were... raising these horses... they'd take a stud and turn them out with these so-called wild horses, then they'd gather the colts and break them and sell them to the Army. And it's all documented that that happened.

Q: Great. Well thank you. So that will conclude our interview.