

# Ochoco National Forest Wild Horse Herd

Big Summit Herd Management Area



# The Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971

- This Act authorized the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the US Department of Agriculture's Forest Service to manage, protect and control wild horses and burros on the nation's public lands to ensure healthy herds and healthy rangelands.



In doing so, this declared wild horses as living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West and they shall be protected as an integral part of the natural system of the public lands.

# Big Summit Herd Management Area (HMA).

- The Lookout Mountain Ranger District manages 55-65 horses in several bands (a family unit) within the HMA. It is 27,300 acres and is located about 25 miles east of Prineville, Oregon.



# History



- Early accounts of horses in the Ochoco Mountains vary, so it is difficult to know the herd's exact origins. Ranchers would selectively turn breeding stock loose to ensure a supply of horses for ranch work.

# Characteristics



The Big Summit wild horse is generally a blend of modern equine characteristics.

Some bands bear a strong resemblance to the classic, well-muscled and sturdy Morgan horse. Others have predominant and distinctive facial markings, which help trace family histories. Coat colors tend toward dark bay and black, with a few very light bays and chestnuts.

# Survival



The Big Summit wild horse is the product of generations of survival of the fittest in the often harsh mountain conditions.

They possess stamina and endurance, can subsist on marginal forage conditions, and have developed a sound hoof that tends to leave a perfect track, even in extreme terrain.

These traits contribute to the Ochoco wild horse's outstanding ability to pack an elk or travel tirelessly up a steep trail.

# Managing the Herd



The Lookout Mountain Ranger District works cooperatively with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Burns, Oregon to manage the Big Summit wild horses.

The herd is carefully managed to maintain ideal numbers of animals that the range can support and remain in a healthy, productive condition. When the numbers of the herd exceed the capacity for the rangeland to support them, animals are captured and made available for public adoption.



The Big Summit wild horses captured off the Ochoco National Forest are transported to the Bureau of Land Management's Burns Corral Facility in Burns, Oregon.

After the horses are sorted into the appropriate holding pens, they are inoculated, wormed and branded prior to being made available for adoption.

# Where to See Wild Horses

There are many roads and trails throughout the Big Summit HMA where visitors can view signs of the wild horses, or the horses themselves. Please use good judgment when approaching wild horses and stay a respectable distance away.



Should you encounter wild horses on the Big Summit HMA, expect behavior similar to that of domestic horses: they are never entirely predictable.



Unless startled, a wild horse will usually not bolt away, like deer or elk. They are curious, and will probably move out just far enough to gain a better perspective on you.



During foaling season, they are very protective and wary, and at all times you should be prepared for aggressive behavior;



# Volunteers at Work



# Summer Inventory

The Lookout Mountain Ranger District conducts an annual inventory every June in partnership with the Central Oregon Wild Horse Coalition (COWHC). There is also an annual wild horse show and adoption event partnered with the COWHC, where interested adopters are partnered with TIP (Trainer Incentive Program) trainers to help gentle the horse and educate the horse owner.

If you are interested in the many volunteer opportunities with the Big Summit wild horses, contact Connie Baker with the COWHC at (541) 447-2002 or the Ochoco National Forest at (541) 416-6500.





**Thank-you Volunteers!**

# Adoption Clinic



Partnering with COWHC, the annual adoption event allows interested adopters to work with TIP (Trainer Incentive Program) trainers to help gentle the horse and educate the horse owner.

# Wild Horse Show



Along with the adoption event there is also the annual wild horse show that highlights some of the skills learned by previous adopters and their horses.

# For More Information



Thank you for your interest in the wild horses. We welcome all comments and suggestions.

Lookout Mountain Ranger District  
3160 NE 3<sup>rd</sup> St.  
Prineville, OR 97754  
(541) 416-6500

Web sites with wild horse information:

[www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov](http://www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov)

[www.fs.fed.us/rangelands/ecology/wildhorseburro/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/rangelands/ecology/wildhorseburro/index.shtml)

[www.blm.gov/or/districts/burns/wildhorse/](http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/burns/wildhorse/)