

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-12

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF RIO BLANCO COUNTY, COLORADO REGARDING MANAGEMENT OF WILD AND FREE ROAMING HORSES WITHIN RIO BLANCO COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act was passed on December 15, 1971; and

WHEREAS, wild horses and burros were to be protected in the areas they existed on that date and were not to be allowed to live in any other area; and

WHEREAS, in 1975 the White River Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management wrote Wild Horse Management plans which specified the areas wild horses would be allowed to exist and in this plan it was determined that all feral horses would be removed from the lands West of Colorado Highway 139, commonly known as the West Douglas Herd Area; and

WHEREAS, BLM has failed to abide by their own plans and have allowed wild and feral horses to proliferate to the point that they have migrated out of The West Douglas Herd Area and have been in trespass in those areas for 45 years; and

WHEREAS, these animals have increased to the point of overgrazing and have migrated onto private lands within Rio Blanco County as well as onto The Grand Junction Field Office and Vernal Field Office lands; and

WHEREAS, the County is obligated to protect and ensure the local socioeconomic wellbeing, the culture and customs of the constituents, and conservation of natural resources of the County and therefore created and adopted the 2016 Rio Blanco County Land and Natural Resources Plan, herein "RBC LNRP" with the intent to address issues at a federal level; and

WHEREAS, the County relies on the RBC LNRP to guide all of our natural resource actions; and

WHEREAS, the existing handling of wild horses is vastly inconsistent with Section 4.13 of the RBC LNRP, which addresses wild horses, burros and stray livestock management; and

WHEREAS, paragraph 4.13 (4) of the RBC LNRP requires the BLM to immediately remove wild horses from private lands when notified of their presence as defined through the WFRHB Act and Colorado stray laws. Immediate removal should be conducted in such a manner so that the horses will not return to the private land nor be placed within County boundaries as long as the BLM is out of compliance with AML; and

WHEREAS, private land owners, at their own expense, may be willing to assist with the removal of these animals and should be able to do so without the threat of litigation; and

WHEREAS, the adoption of this Resolution is necessary and proper to provide for the safety, preserve the health, promote the prosperity, and improve the order, comfort, welfare, and convenience of the County and the inhabitants thereof;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Rio Blanco County, Colorado, as follows:

1. That BLM be required to change their regulations to allow private landowners to use any non-lethal methods to remove trespassing wild and feral horses from their property located within Rio Blanco County.
2. The Board shall send a copy of this Resolution to the Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Land Management, and all other relevant Federal and State agencies.

DULY MOVED, SECONDED, AND PASSED ON A VOTE OF 3 FOR AND 0 AGAINST THIS 11th DAY OF May 2021.

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
RIO BLANCO COUNTY, COLORADO**



ATTEST:


Boots M. Campbell, Clerk & Recorder


Gary Moyer, Chairman


Jeff Rector, Commissioner


Ty Gates, Commissioner