From:	Turner, Ed
To:	Genevieve Skora
Cc:	Lief Wiechman; Lara Juliusson
Subject:	GRSG Free-roaming Equid data issues notes
Date:	Monday, March 30, 2015 3:50:45 PM
Attachments:	Wild Horse and Burro.docx

Hello Genevieve, Here is a little text on why we could not do the AML with the limited data information we have.

Also note, I have been trying to get updated data for BLM and data that represents the Herd Areas that are not managed. Reason being, I was told they have animals on them and they should be treated as footprints of threat unless you think otherwise.

Thanks, Ed

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Wild Horse and Burro

Data was obtained from USFS and BLM for these efforts. Source data represents two managing agencies that have varying boundaries and associated names for numerous BLM Herd Management Areas and USFS Territories (referred to as area/areas in this text). These data are limited to specifics of the areas in general and have no associated information regarding horse or burro AML's or annual population estimates. Our intent was to use these data to determine on-the-ground footprint effects on the Greater Sage-Grouse habitat range, GRSGRH.

Both source data was combined and the resulting product contained overlapping areas where BLM/USFS designation varied. In determining footprint area, this is not an issue because we use these data at face value and represent all areas as potential impact to GRSGRH. We were asked if we could determine herd AML and in an attempt to rectify discrepancies between agency boundaries, a manual editing process was used. This process was subjective and no clear method or guidance was available to determine rightful managing agency of overlapping/sliver polygons. Speculation was to merge said polygons to BLM classification due to joint management, but other cases leaned more towards USFS. Accurate editing was not possible as a whole and each joint managed area would need individual investigation based on in-place management agreements and support from agency leads.

AML values are not supplied in these source data. In an attempt to obtain this information, we populated AML fields based on the U.S. Forest Service Wild Horse Burro Territory Status 2014 tables and the BLM Herd Area and Herd Management Area Statistics table as of March 1, 2014 into these data. Doing so proved unfeasible as these tables have varying levels of AML between USFS/BLM and values are dependent on area specific management agreements. Agreement information is not clearly represented in these tables and all must be addressed individually with support from agency leads. Contact was established with agency leads, but even with this, the USFWS can, with no level of certainty or accuracy, depict the true levels of AML because of differences between the source data and the fact that population estimates are in the update process. Herd areas are

dynamic and changing due to rapid reproduction, drifting animals, and annual understandings of what is truly on the ground. Additionally, because of agreements, possible tract exchanges within areas, and areas no longer having the ability to sustain herds and thus being converted from managed areas; it is extremely difficult for any agency other than the USFS or BLM to depict/represent these data in a clear, accurate, and defendable manner.

The source data do not provide adequate levels of information to determine AML and it is not recommended that the US Fish and Wildlife Service attempt to recreate, edit, or update these data. These data should be created and managed at the source agency and we, USFWS the user, should not be creating these.