



2013 Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge **Feral Horse Gather**

Public Observation Announcement

Sheldon-Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge Complex, Lakeview, Oregon

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On September 9, 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will begin gathering approximately 400 feral horses at Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) as part of its ongoing management actions to implement the Service's 2012 Record of Decision for the Sheldon NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan and associated Final Environmental Impact Statement.

In order to conduct effective and efficient operations, to improve safety for horses, and to ensure public safety, portions of Sheldon NWR surrounding gather operations, including some roads, will be closed to public entry during the gather. Public viewing and observation of gather operations and sorting may be possible at a distance from other roads and areas of Sheldon NWR open to the public.

In addition, the Service will provide an escort for up to 10 members of the public/media per day for observation of gather operations. Observation opportunities will be provided on a first-come first-serve basis. Primary considerations for selection of observation sites are safety and to ensure efficient and effective gather operations. The exact location of the gather sites will depend on site-specific conditions that may vary from day to day. The observation locations will be selected to provide an opportunity to view the gather without disrupting gather operations or creating a safety hazard. Consequently, members of the public/media should not expect opportunities for up-close observation or observation of all gather operations and should be prepared to travel to different locations within the broader gather area. Currently we anticipate gather operations will conclude on Thursday September 12, 2013. However, gather operations and schedules are subject to change at any time.

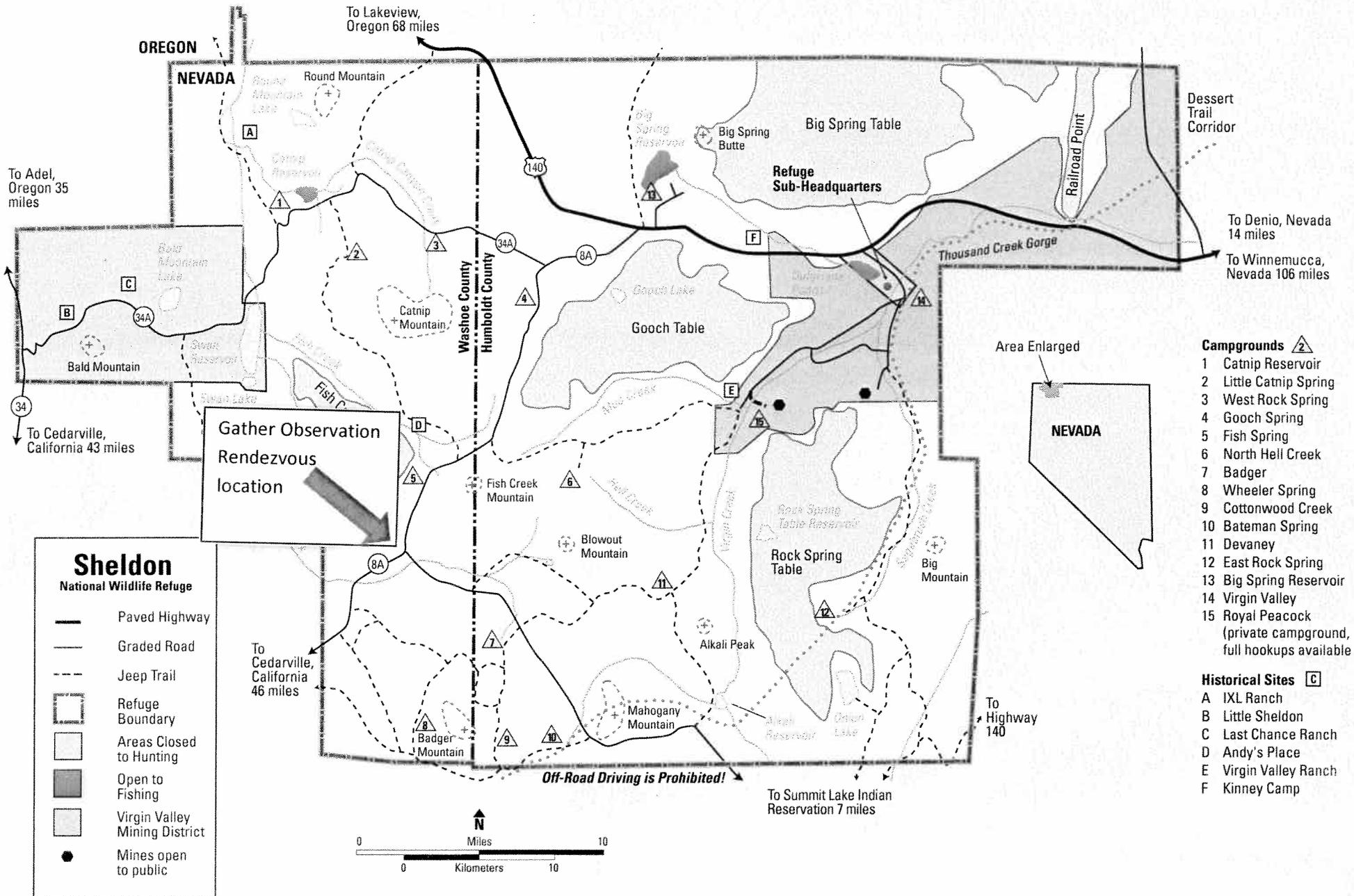
Members of the public/ media will not be allowed into temporary closed areas of Sheldon NWR without escort. A Service escort will depart from the road intersection of Washoe County Road 8A and the Summit Lake-Badger Road (see attached map) at 8:00 a.m. on Monday September 9, 2013 and 6:00 a.m. on following days to allow for travel time to the observation site without interfering with gather operations. Members of the public/media arriving later are not guaranteed observation opportunity and escort to the observation site will be contingent upon staff availability and gather operations in progress. Travel to gather observation sites will require driving gravel roads and potentially dirt roads suitable only for high clearance four-wheel drive vehicles. The Service will not provide transportation to the gather observation sites.

Weather during the gather may be variable with temperatures ranging from 30-90 degrees Fahrenheit with rain showers or thunderstorms possible. Facilities will not be available and observers should plan accordingly, including adequate food and water. Observers should be prepared to hike through steep, rocky and uneven terrain for distances up to one-half mile and to remain at the observation site for a minimum of four hours. Departing from/arriving at the observation site at other times will depend upon Service escort availability and gather operations underway.

Due to the remote location of the gather; our need to ensure public safety as well as the safety of animals, employees, and contractors; to achieve successful gather operations; and to arrange logistics and travel to and from the observation site; the following guidelines will apply to members of the public/media observing the gather:

- Members of the public/media will have access to view the gather from a designated safe observation site. Members of the public/media will be escorted at all times by Service personnel.
- The gather trap-site, temporary holding areas, and aircraft landing areas are designated as safety zones and only essential personnel will be allowed inside these zones during gather operations or while animals are in the trap or temporary holding areas.
- Service corrals in Virgin Valley are within a portion of Sheldon NWR closed to public entry. However, corral facilities are visible from Virgin Valley Road.
- Pets will not be allowed.
- Any disruptive behavior or interference with the gather operation by any member of the public/media will result in the immediate removal of individuals exhibiting unsafe or disruptive behavior. In addition, such individuals may be banned from observing future gathers.

If you wish to observe the 2013 horse gather operations within Sheldon NWR, please notify Megan Nagel no later than 12:00 p.m. on Saturday September 7, 2013 at megan_nagel@fws.gov or by calling 503-231-6123.



- Campgrounds**
- 1 Catnip Reservoir
 - 2 Little Catnip Spring
 - 3 West Rock Spring
 - 4 Gooch Spring
 - 5 Fish Spring
 - 6 North Hell Creek
 - 7 Badger
 - 8 Wheeler Spring
 - 9 Cottonwood Creek
 - 10 Bateman Spring
 - 11 Devaney
 - 12 East Rock Spring
 - 13 Big Spring Reservoir
 - 14 Virgin Valley
 - 15 Royal Peacock (private campground, full hookups available)
- Historical Sites**
- A IXL Ranch
 - B Little Sheldon
 - C Last Chance Ranch
 - D Andy's Place
 - E Virgin Valley Ranch
 - F Kinney Camp