

WYOMING WILD

PRYOR MOUNTAIN MUSTANGS:
MORE THAN NUMBERS ON A PAGE



DAVID PECK, LOVELL CHRONICLE

A curious trio of Pryor Mountain mustangs enjoys a summer afternoon in August of 2025 in the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range north of Lovell. Various entities are challenging the Bureau of Land Management's plans for managing and culling the herd.

Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center director explains
concerns over BLM plan to reduce historic herd

JOHN BERNHISEL
Lovell Chronicle via Wyoming News Exchange

It does not take long sitting across the table from Nancy Cerroni to realize that, for her, the debate over the future of the Pryor Mountain wild horses is about much more than numbers. There are plenty of numbers, of course. Appropriate Management Levels, population projections, genetic diversity calculations, age ratios and removal targets fill hundreds of pages of federal documents.

But Cerroni, director of the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center in Lovell, also knows the horses. She knows their mothers. She knows their offspring. She knows which family lines have been on the mountain for generations. She can describe the characteristics that hint at the herd's historic Spanish ancestry. And behind her are decades of records documenting individual horses, records that began before she ever became involved.

That is why she is troubled by the Bureau of Land Management's new plan for managing the herd.

It is not that Cerroni believes no horses should ever be removed. In fact, she said she is comfortable with the BLM's initial goal of reducing the herd to about 150

animals. It is which horses are removed, and what happens after that, that worries her.

According to BLM documents, the agency's spring census counted 187 horses at least a year old, including 82 studs and 105 mares.

The long-term plan establishes an Appropriate Management Level of 107 to 120 horses. The initial gather would reduce the herd to approximately 150, with subsequent gathers eventually moving toward the lower end of the AML.

Cerroni believes 150 is a much better number, noting, "Personally, I think 150 is a great number for the herd."

She points to previous recommendations from equine geneticist Gus Cothran, BLM guidance concerning genetic viability and the history of the Pryor herd itself.

"The average size of this herd in the past 50 years has been 150," she said.

A long relationship with the BLM

One thing Cerroni wants people to understand is that the Mustang Center has traditionally worked very well with

the BLM. The relationship has not always been difficult. Quite the opposite.

"We have never filed a lawsuit, nor do we intend to on this one," Cerroni said. "There was always a strong collaboration between the BLM and the Mustang Center. We really strongly believe you can work together with someone, rather than on the outside. And unfortunately, we don't have that relationship right now."

Cerroni hopes that can change, noting, "I'm hoping that can change in time."

The Mustang Center has, however, appealed the BLM's management decisions through the Interior Board of Land Appeals. Cerroni views that as different from a lawsuit because an administrative appeal is part of the process provided by the BLM itself. The BLM plan confirms that decisions may be appealed to the IBLA and that a petition for a stay may also be filed.

Which horses leave?

Perhaps the biggest disagreement comes down to one simple question: If horses must come off the mountain, which ones should leave?

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AARON SCHWARTZ, AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

President Donald Trump, center, alongside, from left, Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, Sen. Rick Scott, R-Fla., Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., and Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., speaks to the press after a meeting with Senate Republicans at the Capitol in Washington on June 24.

Pro forma sessions a way for
Congress to get around Trump

Method allows for bills
to become law without
president's signature

VICTOR FELDMAN
CQ-Roll Call

WASHINGTON — With members largely in their districts to campaign in the final stretch before the midterm elections, the House and Senate have transitioned to "pro forma" mode. But the rhythm of chambers gaveling in briefly every few days can mask the political undercurrents in the constant push and pull of power between Congress and the executive branch.

That dynamic was on display in July,

when a blockbuster housing overhaul and a lesser-known measure expanding disaster relief payments to farmers quietly became law without the pomp and circumstance sometimes seen in presidential bill signings.

The two laws were enacted through what's known as the "10-day rule." The Constitution says that bills become law after 10 days, excluding Sundays, without a presidential signature — as long as Congress has not adjourned. Pro formas, brief meetings of the House or Senate during which business is not usually conducted, allow the chambers to stay in session.

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