

## News Release

**For Release:** February 27, 2006

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### **BLM Helps Wild Horses Return Home Emergency Fire Stabilization Begins Healing of the Land**

TWIN FALLS, ID – With stabilization efforts now complete on land burned during last summer's 193,000-acre Clover Fire, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today announced the return of 93 displaced wild horses to their home on public land in southwestern Idaho. On March 1, a BLM Wild Horse and Burro Team will transport the final group of these horses from BLM corrals in Boise to the Saylor Creek Herd Management Area (HMA) south of Glenns Ferry.

"These are wild horses that were rescued from the blackened Saylor Creek HMA during an emergency gather last July," BLM Twin Falls District Rangeland Management Specialist Mike Courtney said. In all, 334 wild horses were rescued from the area after wildfire left insufficient forage to sustain the herd.

"Following that emergency gather, an adoption was held, where many of the horses were taken in by good homes," Courtney said. "Others were sent to long-term holding facilities in the mid-west. We cared for the remaining 93 horses over the winter at the BLM Corrals in Boise, awaiting this return to the range."

"Everything is in place for these horses to be able to go back home," Courtney said. "The horses that are going back have been well taken care of, and now they can return to the range where they are most comfortable."

Immediately following the emergency gather last summer, BLM began stabilization and fencing efforts to begin restoring the health of the rangeland burned by the Clover Fire.

BLM Twin Falls District Fire Rehabilitation Specialist Scott Uhrig said BLM, with the help of the Boise District Force Account and private contractors, drill seeded a mix of native vegetation on 58,000 acres during October and November last fall. "We drill seeded to achieve soil stabilization and to reduce competition from annual grasses and noxious weeds," he said.

"In mid January over the same area, we aerial seeded Wyoming big sagebrush on 58,816 acres to restore the shrub component," Uhrig said. "We are also building protective fence, which is a big part of any restoration plan. So far, we've built about 50 miles, with about 100 more miles to go." The new fences will separate the wild horses from the new seedings and keep them in an area with sufficient forage and water.

In the BLM Twin Falls District, the Clover Fire, although by far the largest, was only one of seventeen stabilization and rehabilitation efforts this year. Across the District, a total of 72,081 acres were drill seeded; 110,307 acres were aerial seeded; 95 miles of protection fence were built; and 210 miles of fence were repaired.

"With the support of the BLM Twin Falls and Boise District Fire Crews, we received and mixed over a million pounds of seed," according to Uhrig. "And it is already on the ground."

"This was a huge workload, one we couldn't have done ourselves," Uhrig said. "It has been a big year for fire rehabilitation projects on public land across southern Idaho. We all pulled together, with support from our Washington, DC office, State Office, our contractors, our Boise Force Account and Fire Crew and all of our Idaho districts. I can't begin to say enough about this team effort."

The Saylor Creek HMA covers 83,540 acres. Wild free-roaming horses on public land are protected by the Wild Horses and Burros