



**2020 NORTH AMERICAN POLICY STATEMENT:  
U.S. FERAL HORSE AND BURRO MANAGEMENT**

**Purpose:** The intent of policy statements are to provide a formal mechanism for Backcountry Hunters & Anglers to engage in specific conservation issues while establishing clear policy direction that not only defines the parameters of our position statements but the relevance to our mission. As declarations of policy, statements do not direct specific actions, establish policy priorities or allocate BHA resources.

**Sponsored by:** Originally proposed by the Nevada Chapter of BHA, this policy statement reflects revisions and additions made by the 2020 policy review committee.

**North American Board Action:** Adopted on February 8, 2021

**North American Policy Statement:**

*Backcountry Hunters & Anglers supports science-based wildlife management based on the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation and improved standards for rangeland health on U.S. public lands guided by allotment management plans. Feral horses and burros, unlike wildlife or livestock which are either managed by state and federal agencies or livestock owners, are federally protected under the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lacks adequate resources to execute the management framework to manage population growth while remaining fiscally sustainable. As a result, BHA urges management agencies, conservation organizations, rangeland scientists and other stakeholders to support and advocate for the following solutions:*

- *Congress must appropriate adequate long-term funds for U.S. rangeland management agencies to develop and implement management programs that reduce feral horse and burro populations to within Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) as defined by the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, continually survey feral horse and burro populations on federally managed lands, and report to Congress annually on the impacts to wildlife and degradation or loss of habitat on federally managed lands caused by feral horses and burros.*
- *Appropriate Management Levels (AMLs) must be set and adjusted by U.S. land management agencies on a herd-by-herd basis through existing processes for evaluating and analyzing environmental impacts with public input. These processes include, but are not limited to Resource Management Plans, Forest Plans, multiple use determinations and other land-use decisions guided by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Feral horse and burro populations must not exceed AML in order to protect the health of rangelands, maintain a natural ecological balance for wildlife*

*habitat, and preserve the integrity of water and riparian resources. If feral horse and burro populations exceed established AMLs and carrying capacity on federal lands, herd sizes must immediately be reduced to meet AMLs.*

- *Conduct targeted gathers or removals at over-populated Herd Management Areas (HMAs) in the U.S. to make immediate progress towards reducing herd size to within AMLs.*
- *Attempt to relocate horses and burros taken off the range or in holding facilities to humane pasture facilities funded through cost-effective public-private partnerships.*
- *Promote adoptions in order to help reduce captive populations and off-range holding costs.*
- *Manage all herds of captive or unadoptable feral horses and burros as non-reproducing populations and ensure that gathered horses and burros are treated by the most effective long-term population control methods endorsed by professional wildlife managers prior to returning any feral horses and burros to rangelands in order to maintain populations within AML standards.*

