

## **THE GREAT DIVIDE BASIN HMA**

The Great Divide Basin HMA encompasses 778,915 acres, of which 562,702 acres are BLM-administered public lands. The management area is located 40 miles east of Rock Springs, to the Rawlins/Rock Springs field office boundary, west to the Continental Divide, and north of I-80 to just south of South Pass City. The northern portion of the herd management area consists primarily of consolidated public lands with state school sections and small parcels of private land making up the remaining lands. The southern portion is in the checkerboard land ownership area created by the Union Pacific Railroad grant. Topography within the herd area is generally gently rolling hills and slopes with some tall buttes and streams. Elevations range roughly from 6,200 to 8,700 feet.

Precipitation ranges 6-10 inches, predominately in the form of snow.

The AML for this HMA is 415-600 horses. Most horses are bay, sorrel, black, brown, paint, buckskin, or gray, but many colors and combinations are present.

Four livestock grazing allotments in the Great Divide Basin HMA are authorized to use 17-26 TIMES MORE forage and water than are the federally-protected wild horses. The BLM also authorizes significant oil and gas development and operations on the public lands in this HMA.

Between October 25 and November 11, 2011, the BLM conducted a massive helicopter roundup in the Divide Basin HMA, capturing 1,132 wild horses and permanently removing 993 of them from their homes on the range.

### **Rock Springs Grazing Association vs. Department of the Interior**

The BLM is conducting this roundup at the behest of the Rock Springs Grazing Association, a group of ranchers that, in 2011 — [at the urging of the Interior Department](#) — filed a lawsuit against the BLM seeking removal of all wild horses from a 2 million acre swath of land known as the "[Wyoming Checkerboard](#)." The American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign (AWHPC), the Cloud Foundation, and the International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros intervened in the case, but were not able to stop the government from giving the ranchers exactly what they wanted. The Great Divide Basin roundup is the next step in a destructive plan that will negatively impact and jeopardize the survival of nearly half of Wyoming's remaining wild horses. (The first step was the November 2013 [roundup in the Salt Wells HMA](#).)

In April 2013, the U.S. District Court in Wyoming approved a Consent Decree to settle a lawsuit by the Rock Springs Grazing Association against the BLM and the Department of the Interior seeking the removal of all wild horses from the Wyoming checkerboard lands. Under the terms of the settlement, the federal government has agreed to the following devastating actions:

- Reduce the maximum number of wild free-roaming horses allowed in the state of Wyoming by 46%, from 3,685 to 2,070. An additional 205-300 sterilized horses (castrated stallions and spayed mares) would be allowed to remain on the land.
- Zero out (entirely eliminate) wild horses from the Salt Wells and Great Divide Basin Herd Management Areas (HMAs).
- Sterilize wild horses in the White Mountain HMA, thus destroying the federally protected wild free-roaming behaviors of the mustangs who are a popular tourist attraction and permanently reducing genetic variability that is necessary for the long-term survival of these herds.

Cut by more than half the number of wild horses allowed to live in the Adobe Town Herd Management Area, also reducing genetic viability and variability of this herd.