

Salt River Horses Collaborative Final Report

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On behalf of the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution
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Introduction

The Salt River Horse Collaborative Final Report

The Salt River Horse Collaborative Final Report documents the outcomes of the Salt River Horse Collaborative (Collaborative or SRHC) process. The report is submitted to the Arizona Department of Agriculture (AZDA) and the US Forest Service (USFS) on behalf of the Collaborative by the facilitation team, comprised of the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (U.S. Institute), CONCUR, Inc and Keith Mattson, LLC.

Impetus for the Collaborative

Several Federal and state policy initiative and related activities in the 2015-2017 timeframe, summarized below, provided the backdrop and impetus for the convening and formation of the Collaborative.

H.B. 2340 and A.R.S. 3-1491

On July 31, 2015, the USFS issued a notice of intent to impound unauthorized livestock from the Tonto National Forest. Following significant opposition expressed by both members of the public and public officials in Arizona, the USFS withdrew the order. Following these events, the Arizona Legislature passed H.B. 2340 (see Appendix A: H.B. 2340), which enacts A.R.S. 3-1491 (see Appendix B: A.R.S. 3-1491). The statute established certain protections for the Salt River horse herd (SRHH) and committed the State to enter into an intergovernmental agreement (see Appendix C: Intergovernmental Agreement between AZDA, USDA, Tonto National Forest Re: Salt River Horse Management Agreement) with the USFS to implement the law and address other issues related to the SRHH.

Intergovernmental Agreement

On December 28, 2017, the USFS and AZDA entered into an intergovernmental agreement that identified actions and responsibilities to manage the horses as required by H.B. 2340. The IGA directs AZDA to contract with a private entity for short-term management of the horses. AZDA conducted a RFP process and chose the Salt River Wild Horse Management Group (SRWHMG) to undertake short-term management of the SRHH beginning in May 2018.

The agreement also committed the USFS to fund and organize a Collaborative process of interested parties to create a proposed long-term management plan for the Salt River horse herd. The U.S. Institute was requested to convene and facilitate the group. (For more information see Appendix C: Intergovernmental Agreement between AZDA, USDA, Tonto National Forest Re: Salt River Horse Management Agreement.)

Udall Foundation Assessment and Collaborative Initiation

To begin the process of convening and facilitating the Collaborative, the U.S. Institute initiated a neutral situation assessment to (1) evaluate and articulate the challenge at hand (2) make process recommendations and (3) identify and recruit potential members of the Collaborative. (For more information on the purpose of the situation assessment, see Appendix D: SRHC Assessment Report, slides 9 & 10.)

U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution and CONCUR, Inc.

The U.S. Institute is a program of the Udall Foundation, an independent federal agency located in Tucson, AZ. The mission of the agency is to support all stakeholders in addressing environmental challenges and conflicts through collaboration and cooperation. The agency is neutral and impartial and has a long history of working on complex, regional public lands issues with the USFS, state agencies, tribes, and stakeholders.

CONCUR, Inc. is an environmental policy analysis and conflict resolution firm located in the San Francisco Bay Area. The firm specializes in analyzing and resolving complex disputes involving natural resources, contested science, and a diverse array of stakeholders. CONCUR works closely with the full range of affected parties to build broad-based agreements. CONCUR is a neutral 3rd party mediator and has been active in this work for 25+ years.

CONCUR worked on a contract basis to the U.S. Institute to provide independent, third-party neutral collaboration and facilitation support services for the Salt River Horse Collaborative. CONCUR retained Keith Mattson, LLC to assist with the project.

Launch of the Collaborative

Situation Assessment and Process Recommendations

U.S. Institute staff worked with the AZDA and USFS to define the situation assessment scope and approach, and to identify the initial set of interviewees and interview questions. U.S. Institute staff then conducted hour-long confidential interviews with over 50 individuals. The interviews were either in person or via telephone and individual or group. Interviewees represented a diverse array of stakeholders and interest groups actively engaged in or concerned with management of the Salt River horse herd. Other interviewees included representatives from federal, state, and local government agencies, three impacted or interested Tribes, and other stakeholders with technical or policy expertise. (For a list of interviewees, please see Appendix D: SRHC Assessment Report, slides 13-17.)

Based on (1) Input and perspectives from this set of interviews with a cross-section of stakeholders, as well as: (2) Direction included in A.R.S. 3-1491; (3) Successes from similar collaboratives; and (4) Best practices and lessons learned from past experience, the U.S. Institute staff developed a set of Findings and Recommendations for the Collaborative organization and process. These are captured in the SRHC Assessment Report (see Appendix D: SRHC Assessment Report, slides 19-50 [Findings] and 51-76 [Recommendations]) and are focused on several items including: (1) Outcome and Objectives, (2) Structure and Organization, (3) Roles and Responsibilities, and (4) Process Elements.

Some key recommendations included:

- Outcome of the Collaborative should be a recommended Salt River Horses Management Plan, or recommended components of a management plan, that provides appropriate approaches and strategies for managing the SRHH
- Inclusion on the Collaborative of a balanced set of interest groups, including affected governmental agencies (federal, state, local, tribal), range expertise, ranching, horse advocacy, equine expertise, conservation, local business/recreation, among others.

- The Collaborative should include advisory members and a plan development team (PDT). The PDT is responsible for development of the content of the management plan, with regular feedback on recommendations based on technical analysis, and legal/regulatory constraints from advisory members.
- Advisory members (with authorities and responsibilities directly related to the management of the SRHH) to include AZDA, USFS, Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), Maricopa County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MSCO), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and Salt River Project (SRP). Advisory members would be active participants on the Collaborative, both providing feedback on ideas, clarifying constraints, and helping identify new options/alternatives.
- The Collaborative will strive to achieve consensus; if consensus is not reached, then areas of agreement and disagreement will be identified and forwarded to lead agencies for further consideration

For the full set of Recommendations substantially informed by the Assessment, see Appendix D: SRHC Assessment Report, slides 51-76.

SRHC Member Identification/Selection

The Collaborative was comprised of approximately 30 members. Members included federal, state and local agencies, neighboring Tribes, and other stakeholders. Stakeholders were selected to represent a balanced and diverse set of interests, to ensure a broad array of perspectives on the Collaborative. Broad, diverse participation in collaborative processes help ensure wise, implementable outcomes that take into account various areas of experience and interests. To select the initial stakeholder appointments, the U.S. Institute, in consultation with AZDA and USFS, reviewed the list of stakeholders from the initial situation assessment that had indicated interest in participating on the Collaborative relative to the criteria and qualifications listed below. Upon selection, an invitation letter was sent to members.

To identify members of the Collaborative, the following criteria were used:

- Is able to commit the time required to participate fully in the Collaborative;
- Is committed to making good faith effort to seek balanced solutions that address multiple interests and concerns and not just addressing their own agenda;
- Demonstrates expertise in one of the distinct issue areas related to Salt River horse management;
- Can demonstrate an established communication network, preferably through professional affiliations, to keep constituents informed and efficiently seek their input when needed.

In addition, a set of general qualifications were used to narrow down the list of candidates (see Appendix D: SRHC Assessment Report, slides 63-64).

The set of stakeholder/interest categories included:

- Range expertise
- Ranching
- Horse advocacy
- Equine expertise
- Conservation
- Local business/recreation, and
- General public

Operating Protocols

The Salt River Horse Collaborative Operating Protocols were initially developed and proposed by the U.S. Institute, then reviewed by the lead agencies. Finally, they were reviewed, revised and adopted by the Collaborative at its second meeting on December 17, 2018.

The Operating Protocols outline the goals of the Collaborative (including desired outcomes and process objectives), the group structure and organization, membership, SRHC roles and organization (workgroups, technical experts, facilitator), stakeholder/interest categories, SRHC roles and responsibilities, meeting structure and approach, decision making, timeline, anticipated outcome, expectations for termination of the Collaborative, member responsibilities, conflicts of interest criteria, and grounds for member termination. (See Appendix F: Salt River Horse Collaborative Operating Protocols.)

Decision Making Process for Final Recommendations

Importantly, the Operating Protocols outline the decision-making process for the Collaborative, including: (1) The PDT shall develop a recommended Salt River Horse Management Plan, or components of a Plan, (2) The PDT shall strive to achieve consensus or outcomes they can “live with”, which is defined as the willingness of group participants to support a particular outcome, even if the outcome is not wholly satisfactory, (3) In lieu of a consensus outcome, areas of agreement and disagreement on recommendations will be documented by the facilitation team, and (4) the Collaborative is to develop recommendations on SRHH management for ultimate consideration by AZDA.

As outlined in the Operating Protocols, the final recommendations from the Collaborative, as documented in this report, will be formally presented to AZDA. AZDA is responsible for reviewing the outcomes produced by the Collaborative for potential adoption in a final management plan.

Ground Rules

The Salt River Horse Ground Rules were developed by the U.S. Institute with input from CONCUR. They were informed by the SRHC Assessment Report (see Appendix D: SRHC Assessment Report) and the U.S. Institute and CONCURs’ combined experience with best practices in dispute resolution of environmental management conflicts of this nature. The proposed ground rules were presented at the first meeting of the Collaborative on November 7, 2018, slightly modified in response to comments by Collaborative members, and adopted at the second meeting on December 17, 2018. (See Appendix E: Adopted Salt River Horse Collaborative Ground Rules).

Charge to the Collaborative

The Charge to the Salt River Horse Collaborative was drafted by the Lead Agencies and finalized by those agencies in a meeting facilitated by the U.S. Institute and CONCUR on October 3, 2018.

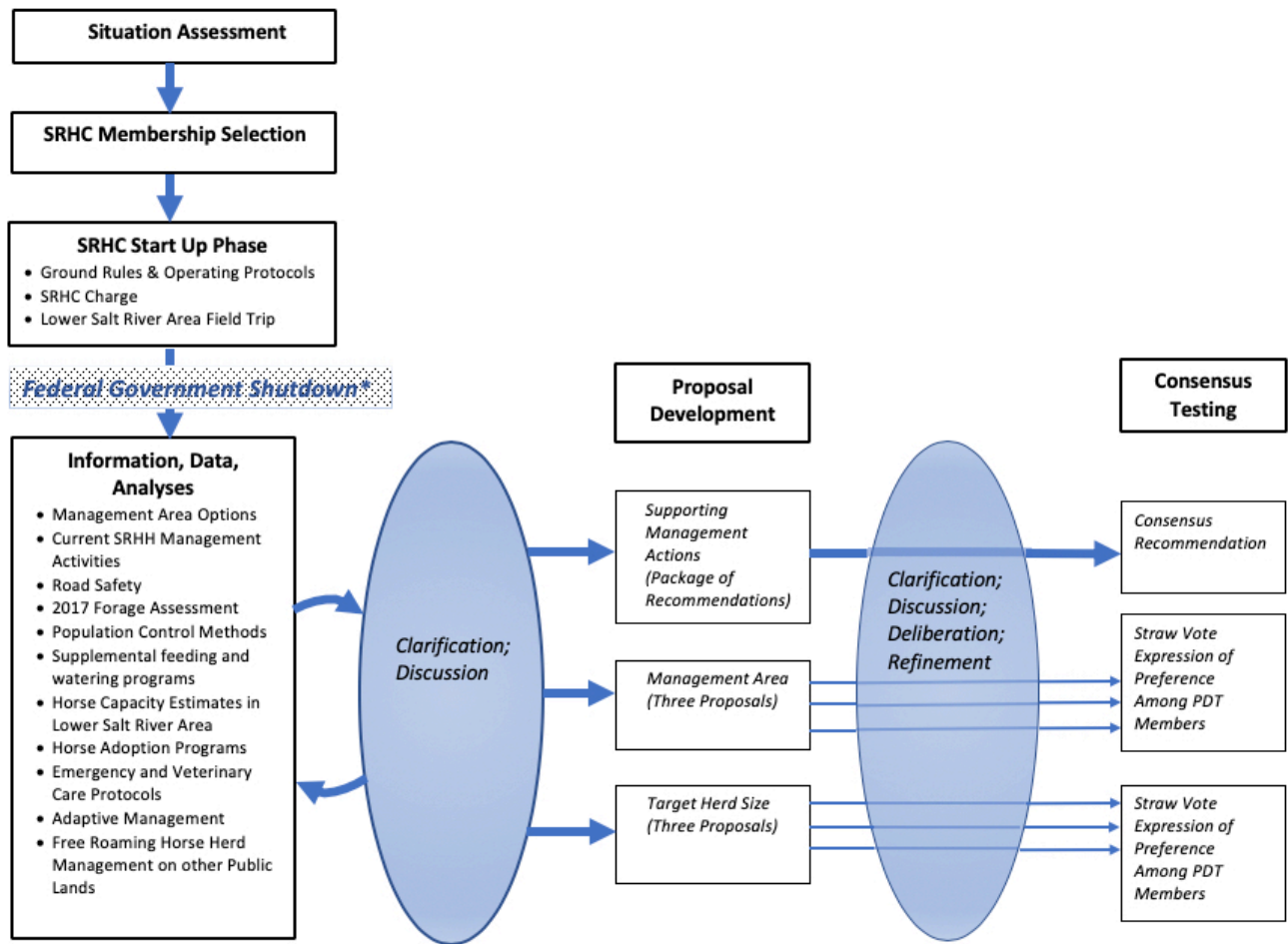
The Charge to the Collaborative outlines the broad objectives of the Collaborative, and the specific charge: to review, refine, and finalize a recommended Salt River Horse Management Plan, or components of a Plan, in response to the identified Plan Elements set forth by the lead agencies. Each Plan Element described the associated tasks for the SRHC, available information, and any information gaps. Plan Elements included:

1. Herd location and population size

2. Population management
3. Horse management
4. Public health and safety
5. Other key issues or sub-issues that may be identified by the SRHC

The Charge also identified additional SRHC tasks, and lead agency “sideboards” to further guide the Collaborative’s development of Plan Elements. Sideboards included legal or authority-based constraints and realities that must be factored into recommendations and outcomes of the SRHC. (For more information, see Appendix G: Charge to the Collaborative.) Figure 1 (below) illustrates the general flow of how the SHRC addressed the Charge to the Collaborative.

Figure 1: SRHC Process Diagram



*The 2018-2019 Federal Government Shutdown and associated impacts on agency operations and contracting created a 2.5-month hiatus in SRHC process

The full Collaborative met nine times between November 2018 and October 2019. The first two SRHC meetings in late 2018 laid the foundation for the Collaborative. As described above, the U.S. Institute presented on the findings of the SRHC Situation Assessment (see Appendix D: SRHC Assessment Report), CONCUR introduced the Ground Rules and Operating Protocols, and the Lead Agencies (USFS and AZDA) explained the Charge to the Collaborative. After the initial SRHC meeting, the Facilitation Team conducted individual telephone interviews with each SRHC member to better understand their personal views of the SRHH situation and address any questions they might have about the Collaborative process. The Collaborative also made a site visit to the Tonto National Forest on December 17 2018 to learn more about potential SRHH Management Areas.

In late December 2018, a lengthy shutdown of the Federal government necessitated a hiatus until mid-March 2019. The SRHC meeting process resumed thereafter with presentations and the launch of initial deliberations on potential Management Area options. Early preparation for each meeting entailed check-in calls with the Facilitation Team and Lead Agencies to outline key topics and potential presentations. Later meeting preparation steps entailed reviewing draft agendas and firming up logistical arrangements and presentations for each successive meeting.

Following each meeting, the Facilitation Team prepared a meeting summary highlighting key outcomes from the presentations and deliberations. The summaries were then distributed to the Collaborative for red flag review and essential feedback was incorporated into the final meeting summary.

Recommendations of the Collaborative

The SRHC Recommendations are organized into three basic categories:

1. Management Area, including the specific geographic areas of the Tonto Forest in which the SRHH should be free to roam along with any necessary fencing or other features;
2. Long-Term Herd Size and Birth Control Methods, based on practical considerations including available natural forage, resource impacts, reasonable level of supplemental feed, and other factors; and
3. Supporting Management Actions, including those additional recommendations that are not dependent on the specific Management Area or Herd Size ultimately adopted.

Two important provisions in the Operating Protocols guided the development and decision-making process for recommendations:

First, all of the proposed recommendations considered were developed by SRHC Plan Development Team members. Over the course of SRHC process, members were asked to devise specific proposals and further, were encouraged to “reach across the aisle” to build proposals that could attract broad based support. Proponents were also given opportunities to refine and update their proposals over the course of several meetings, which helped to narrow some differences between proposals.

Second, in decision-making, Plan Development Team members were asked to ‘seek consensus or outcomes they can “live with”. If consensus (defined as unanimous consent from all PDT members) was not possible, the Facilitation Team would document the areas of agreement and disagreement.

Management Area Recommendations

SRHC members ultimately devised three Management Area proposals for consideration. The proposals are summarized in Tables 1 – 3 below, along with the associated rationale for each proposed Management Area.¹ A map of each proposed Management Area is included below its respective table. Table 4 summarizes the similarities and differences between the three Management Area proposals.

As the SRHC deliberations proceeded and interim tests for consensus indicated that the SRHC would not be able to converge around a consensus recommendation, the Facilitation Team conferred with the Lead Agencies and agreed that appropriate step would be to conduct a straw poll to test for support for the respective proposals. Accordingly, this straw poll was conducted at the conclusion of the October 17, 2019 SRHC meeting and the summary of the results is presented at the end of this section.

Table 1: Management Area Proposal #1

| Element | Associated Rationale |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Phase 1 Management Area</u> includes 14,836 acres with 8.75 miles of Salt River, including entire Goldfield Area and part of Bulldog Area (see Figure 1) • Exclusion of SRHH from Coon Bluff and Usery areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes area most used by SRHH, per University of Arizona Forage Assessment observation • Provides unencumbered year-round access to water • Multiple points of access for public viewing, including possible new viewing area with parking in northern ‘pyramidal’ section • Reduces and better manages conflicts with other Forest users • Allows continued rehabilitation of native riparian and upland vegetation in Coon Bluff area. • Reduces horse crossings on Bush Highway in western area of Tonto Forest (between Coon Bluff and Usery areas) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Phase 2 Management Area</u> would include additional full access to Usery area and the rest of the Bulldog area, subject to following preconditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>User conflicts must be resolved with approval of responsible agencies</i> – <i>Horses will be fully prevented from entering roadways</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates additional space and viewing areas for SRHH • Reduces potential for road accidents involving horses • Manages user conflicts • Allows for fiscally responsible expansion and enhancement of SRHH area • Ensures long-term monitoring will be done |

¹ The rationales presented here are based on the submitted proposals, and were included in a prior Supplemental Memo following the October SRHC meeting. This FINAL document reflects modest corrections to the rationales from proposal authors themselves. The underlying information supporting stated rationales has not been subject to independent review or confirmation by the full SRHC. The text does not reflect “cross edits” of rationales on one Proposal by authors of another proposal.

- Funding must be raised entirely from non-public sources for necessary underpasses or overpasses across Bush Highway and all other required implementation, maintenance, and monitoring
- A fully funded monitoring program must be in place

Figure 2: Management Area Proposal #1 Map

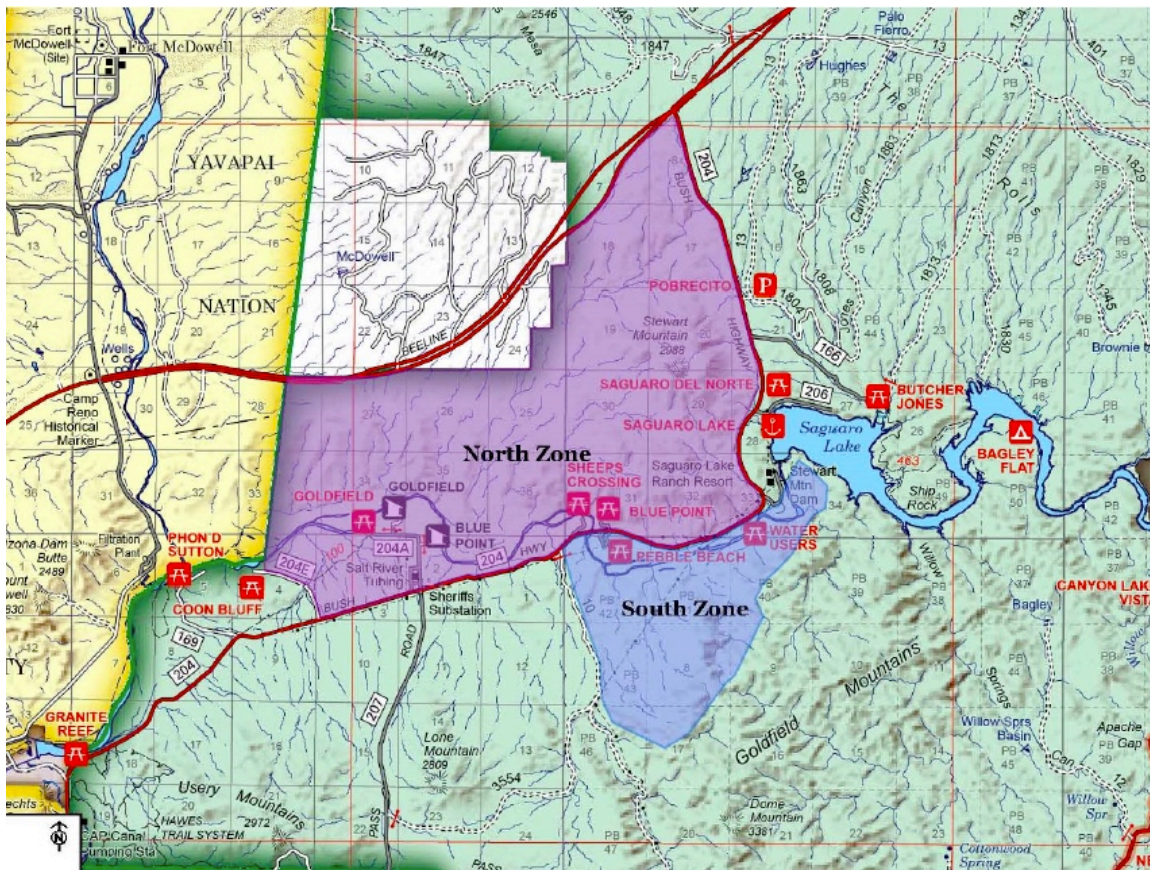


Table 2: Management Area Proposal #2

| Element | Associated Rationale |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes approximately 26,000 acres with all 12 miles of Salt River, including Goldfield (neutral on the pyramidal area), Bulldog, Usery Areas and most of Coon Bluff area (see Figure 2) • Exclusion of SRHH from fire restoration area within Coon Bluff • Exclusion of SRHH from developed recreation areas and Granite Reef area • Fence both sides of Bush Highway from Granite Reef to Beeline Highway with emergency gates • All fencing and cattleguards to be horse safe • Underpass or overpass to allow horses to cross Bush Highway into Usery area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retains SRHH access to area where they have historically lived • Reduces horse concentrations in watershed and high visitor areas, particularly during seasonal migrations • Spreads out safely to each of their historic home ranges, preventing a high concentration of horses in high use areas. • Facilitate safer movement of horses between areas • Reduce potential for horses to be injured by conventional barbed wire fences and standard cattle guards • Preserves and protects fire restoration area in Coon Bluff • Prevents horses from becoming entrapped and maintains their access to all 12 miles of the lower Salt River where they have historically lived. |

Figure 3: Management Area Proposal #2 Map

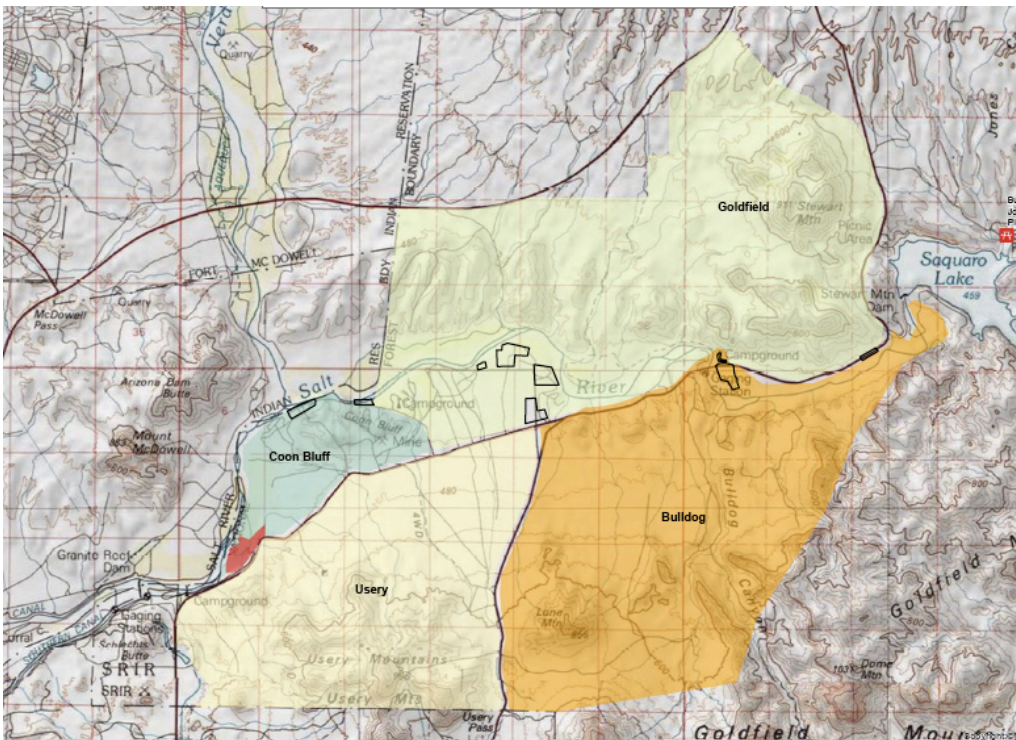


Table 3: Management Area Proposal #3

| Element | Associated Rationale |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes approximately 28,588 acres with 8.75 miles of Salt River, including entire Goldfield, Bulldog, Usery (see Figure 3) • Exclusion of SRHH from Coon Bluff area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes recent SRHH historical range; allows continued use of areas of seasonal importance, such as Usery • Preserve and protect fire restoration area in Coon Bluff • Enables SRHH to roam more widely and hide from people |

Figure 4: Management Area Proposal #3 Map

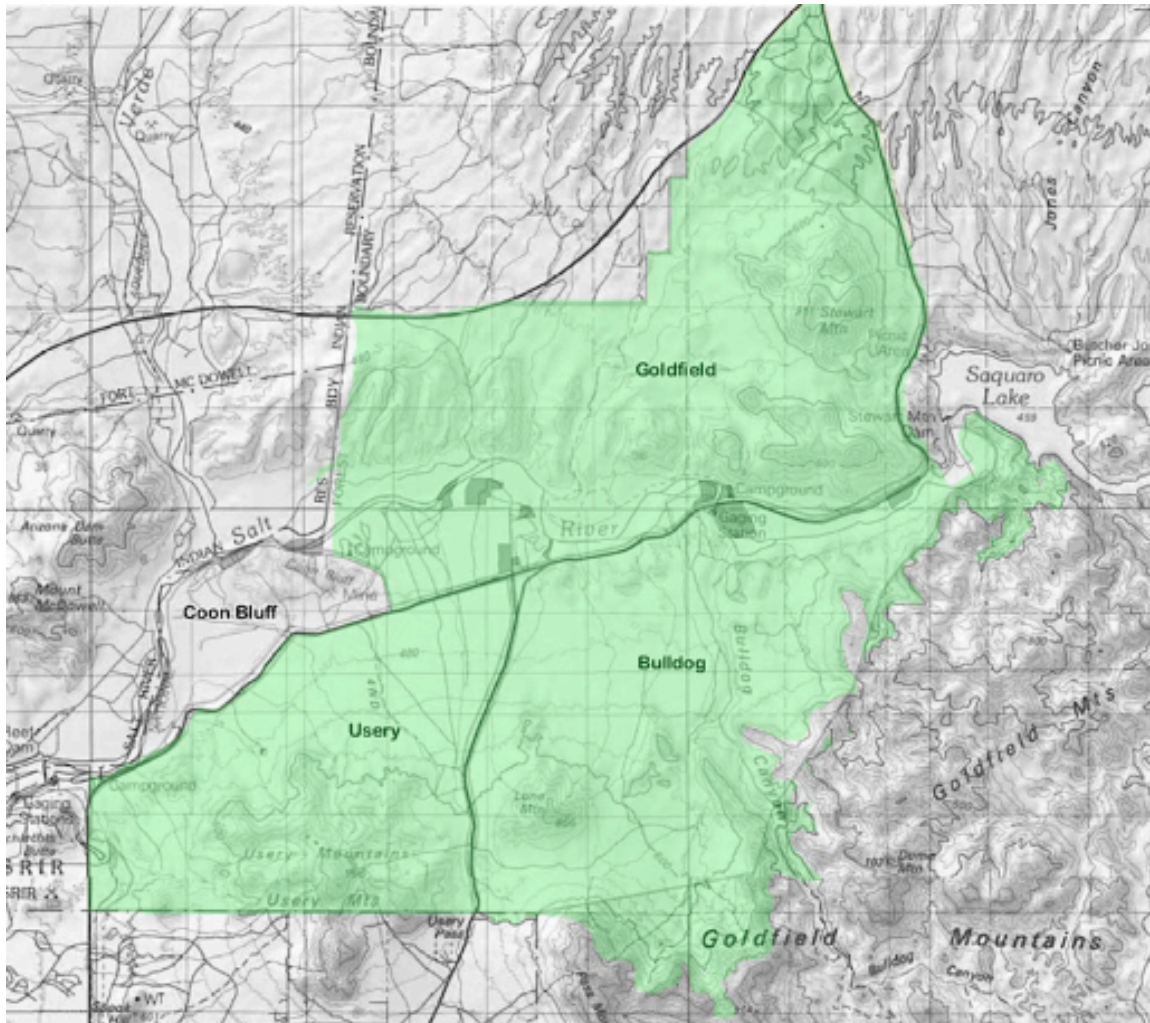


Table 4: Key Similarities and Differences between Management Area Proposals

Management Area Proposal

| Element | Included in #1 | Included in #2 | Included in #3 |
|---|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Goldfield Area | Yes | Yes (neutral on the pyramidal area) | Yes |
| Northern half of Bulldog Area | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Access to 8.75 miles of Salt River between Coon Bluff and Stewart Mountain Dam | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Exclusion of horses from a portion of fire restoration area in Coon Bluff | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Full fencing along both sides of Bush Highway wherever horses could potentially cross | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Horse access to rest of Coon Bluff outside of fire restoration area | No | Yes | No |
| Horse access to Usery and southern section of Bulldog | Only in Phase 2 | Yes | Yes |
| Underpass or overpass for horses to cross Bush Highway | Only in Phase 2 | Yes | Yes |
| Access to 3.4 miles of Salt River between Granite Reef Dam and Goldfield area | No | Yes | No |

Summary Results of the Straw Poll on Management Area Proposals

The Facilitation Team conducted a confidential straw poll of the voting Plan Development Team members at the October 17, 2019 SRHC meeting.² The questions posed in the straw ballot regarding the three Management Area proposals were as follows:

² Per the adopted SRHC Operating Protocols, only Plan Development Team (PDT) members are responsible for developing the content of the recommended SRHH Management Plan. PDT members include those from stakeholder interest groups, and from federal, state, or local government agencies without direct authorities and responsibilities related to the SRHH. The Operating Protocols further note that SRHC members *may* be removed from the Collaborative if they miss more than three SRHC meetings. With the approval of the Lead Agencies, the Facilitation Team applied the minimum attendance threshold for SRHC meetings by allowing only those PDT members who had not missed more than three meetings to participate in the straw poll.

A. Which proposal is your first preference?

B. Which other proposal(s) could you live with to advance as part of the SRHC's recommendation to the Lead Agencies?

The overall results are summarized below:

SRHC Recommendation for Management Area

1. A substantial majority (about three quarters) of PDT members indicated that Management Area Proposal #1 was their first choice.
2. About one quarter of the PDT members were evenly split between Management Area Proposal #2 and #3.
3. About one-quarter of the PDT members indicated they could accept or 'live with' Management Area Proposal #2 to advance as part of the SRHC's recommendation to the Lead Agencies, if their first choice for the Management Area was not implemented. A similar proportion of PDT members expressed the same acceptance of Management Area #3, if their first choice for the Management Area was not implemented.

Herd Size and Birth Control Method Recommendations

The development and discussion of Herd Size proposals followed a similar process as was used for development and discussion of Management Area proposals. SRHC members deliberated over the recommended herd size over a period of several months in both plenary and work team formats, and SRHC members put forward various proposals. (References to PZP in the tables below pertain to *Porcine Zona Pellucida*, a contraceptive vaccine currently used for birth control for the SRHH. PZP is also commonly used for population control of many other types of livestock and wildlife.)

Herd Size Proposals:

Table 5: Herd Size Proposal #1

| Element | Associated Rationale |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Return of approximately 150 horses to SRPMIC and YAN tribal areas through a coordinated and timed closure of planned Mesa Boundary fence between Tonto Forest and neighboring tribal areas.• Reduction of remaining SRHH after Mesa Boundary Fence is built to approximately 100 horses within a two-year period | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SRHH is too large to survive without supplemental feeding and has overgrazed the lower Salt River area.• Recommended herd size of 20 – 44 horses based on natural forage sustainable evaluation by J. Dyess of USFS• University of Arizona Forage Assessment found no perennial grasses in SRHH area |

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption programs for selected remaining SRHH horses, focusing on 75% of existing bachelor band horses and 50% of all horses under two years of age. • Consider removal of horses over the age of ten years and with unsustainable health conditions, with relocation of such horses to rehabilitation facilities. • Continued administration of PZP to remaining mares in SRHH, with adaptive management monitoring to determine when fertility controls need to be adjusted to allow for reproduction when needed. • Long term herd size should be determined by recovery and sustainability of native vegetation and by herd health without the need for supplemental feeding | <p>and high dependence of horses on less nutritious woody species.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of herd size will allow habitat to recover • While USFS recommended stocking rate is 20-44 horses, a SRHH of 100 is a short-term rational goal that is socially and politically acceptable. • AZDA is aware of adoption partnerships that could allow for near-term placement of horses |
|---|--|

Table 6: Herd Size Proposal #2

| Element | Associated Rationale |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of more than 50% of existing SRHH to approximately 200 horses over a ten-year period • Continued use of PZP birth control program targeting all mares capable of reproduction. • Targeted annual net reduction of approximately 30 horses based on PZP birth control and natural attrition • A five-year period to review efficacy of PZP program • Consideration of adoption program to reduce herd only if five-year review of PZP program results indicates population targets are not being achieved. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current PZP program is thoroughly addressing all mares capable of reproduction with documentation. • SRWHMG has only been able to implement its PZP program since 2018; initial demonstration of foal reductions should be evident beginning in 2020. • Reduction of herd to 200 is an achievable, humane, and responsible plan that is socially and politically acceptable. • Recent extreme droughts have been a deciding factor on forage. • The management plan must protect the Salt River horses in their historic habitat and provide for humane management, including fertility control for population reduction with ample time to humanely decrease herd size, while maintaining a sufficient number of horses to allow for a healthy, genetically viable herd. |

Table 6: Herd Size Proposal #3

| Element | Associated Rationale |
|---------|----------------------|
|---------|----------------------|

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of SRHH to between 180 and 240 horses • Minimum 180 SRHH size must include at least 24 family bands with 60 or more stallions and bachelors • Continued use of PZP for every mare until just prior to their expected permanent sterilization • Total cessation of supplemental feeding • Monitor range health and herd reduction for two years before considering selective removals that target foals over one year old who were born during years of supplemental feeding. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplemental feeding may have allowed SRHH to increase above its carrying capacity. • Small herd sizes may be at risk to demographic, environmental, and genetic events. • The author of this proposal states that historically, the Goldfield Allotment allowed up to 186 grazing cattle and that 40 horses occupied that area in late 1970s.³ • Selective removals will allow for retention of horses with unique character and phenotypes to contribute to genetic diversity |
|--|---|

Table 7: Key Similarities and Differences between Herd Size Proposals

| Element | Included in Proposal #1 (100 Horses) | Included in Proposal #2 (200 Horses) | Included in Proposal #3 (180 - 240 Horses) |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Reduction of current SRHH size | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Continued use of PZP birth control | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Short and longer-term monitoring of SRHH reproduction and herd health | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Use of Mesa Boundary Fence to reduce SRHH size by eliminating access to Tonto from neighboring tribes' horses | Yes | No | Yes |
| Monitoring range health to determine need for further SRHH reduction | Yes | No | Yes |
| Implement adoption programs to reduce SRHH | Yes | Only if needed after Year 5 | Possibly |
| Cessation of supplemental feeding | Yes, but as a long-term goal | Contingent on forage conditions ⁴ | Contingent on forage conditions |

Summary Results of the Straw Poll on Herd Size Proposals

The Facilitation Team conducted a confidential straw poll of the Plan Development Team members at the October 17, 2019 SRHC meeting. The straw poll was conducted by distributing paper ballots to each PDT member. The questions posed in the straw ballot regarding the three Herd Size proposals were as follows:

³ SRHC members hold divergent views on the veracity of these figures.

⁴ Authors of Proposal #2 state that supplemental feed is contingent on forage conditions with rainfall being a key determinant.

- A. *Which proposal is your first preference?*
- B. *Which other proposal(s) could you live with to advance as part of the SRHC's recommendation to the Lead Agencies?*

The overall results are summarized below.

Herd Size

1. A substantial majority (about three quarters) of PDT members indicated that Herd Size Proposal #1 was their first choice.
2. Less than one-quarter of PDT members were evenly split between Management Area Proposal #2 and #3.
3. Of members who stated a second-choice herd size proposal that they could live with, most preferred Herd Size Proposal #3.

[Other Management Recommendations](#)

Over the course of the SRHC deliberations, members developed a set of Supporting Management Recommendations through discussions in Work team calls and plenary SRHC. These recommendations are considered independent of any specific Management Area or Herd Size that will eventually be adopted.

Consistent with the protocols established for the process, Lead Agency staff contributed their important perspectives as potential management area recommendations were outlined and refined. Also consistent in plenary discussions, we tested for support for these recommendations and confirmed consensus support for them as a package.

Table 8 below lists management area topics, initial management proposals and also includes key discussion points raised in both work team and plenary meetings.

Table 8: SRHC Management Area Supporting Management Recommendations

| | Topic | Initial Proposal | Refined Recommendation | Lead Agency Considerations | Key Discussion Points from Work Team Meetings |
|---|------------------|--|---|--|---|
| 1 | Safe Viewing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish safe horse-viewing areas with appropriate parking. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider Fox Tail and Flag Hill as good viewing locations. Establish linear easements along selected SRHH fence lines to provide safe viewing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid unintended consequences of creating a parking area in a hazardous location or a location that allows visitors to avoid paying user fees. Discuss use of existing permit holders' parking areas with current permittees. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevent users from parking along highways Fox Tail and Flag Hill are good viewing spots with existing or potential new parking Potential to add linear easement for safe viewing along certain boundary fences |
| 2 | Public Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address public education needs to improve safety and reduce harassment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public education about safe and proper interaction with horses should include the consequences of unsafe and improper actions Assateague Island NPS education materials are highly useful and relevant MCSO Officers can play important public education roles to address situations involving people and horses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- Dog owners should be advised to keep their dogs under control at all times, particularly in proximity to horse</i> <i>- Dog owners are advised not to allow their dogs to chase, confront or otherwise engage horses in a manner threatening the horse</i> <i>- Dog owners should be advised that if they do not control their dogs, they may subject to penalties, per A.R.S. § 11-1012</i> | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yellowstone Park and Assateague Island could serve as models for educating public about safety around horses and other wildlife. Maricopa County has significant influx of new residents, so it is difficult to maintain levels of education on wildlife Public needs to know consequences of harassing or interfering with horses SRWHMG now provides some guidance about safe and appropriate interactions with horses |
| 3 | Harassment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide enforceable standards. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an easy-to-understand standard. 50 feet is a reasonable and appropriate distance to prevent habituation Enforce safe viewing distances to prevent SRHH from being habituated Exercise discretion for enforcement of any minimum distance buffer rule. Consider the context of specific situations to avoid punishment for inadvertent violations. Existing rules from Assateague Island and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Human safety is law enforcement's first priority AZ 3-1491 states: a person shall not interfere with, take, chase, capture or euthanize a SRHH without written authorization from AZDA or MCSO Arizona and/or Maricopa County may have applicable dog leash laws for consideration Incidents of horse harassment under Statute 1491 can result in charges as a Class 1 Misdemeanor The FS has a policy regarding the use of drones in the Forest | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An option is to create general standard using a buffer zone of 50 feet. Such a measure would need to be promulgated as a new rule. Need a standard that is simple to understand. Maintaining safe distances also helps prevent SRHH from becoming habituated. Must be careful in application of buffer distance for different circumstances. Not every occurrence of being less than 50 feet away should be interpreted as harassment. Any new guidance or rules regarding the SRHH and |

Table 8: SRHC Management Area Supporting Management Recommendations

| | Topic | Initial Proposal | Refined Recommendation | Lead Agency Considerations | Key Discussion Points from Work Team Meetings |
|---|-----------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| | Harassment (continued) | | <p>Ozark Riverways National Parks should be considered as examples for the SRHH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following should be considered as forms of harassment: making loud noises; encircling, flanking or separating horse bands; feeding; touching; throwing rocks or other projectiles; shooting arrows or guns; chasing horses by any means; pursuing horses from the air via helicopter, airplane, or drone. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FAA has oversight responsibility for human flight operations and can investigate claims of aerial pursuit of horses | <p>horseback riders requires more research and discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current AZ Dept of Fish & Game rules for interaction with wildlife do not appear to be relevant for horse harassment. Unleashed dogs are potential sources of harassment, but more research and discussion are needed to determine appropriate SRHC recommendation for this. Existing rules from Assateague Island and Ozark Riverways National Parks have many relevant features for SRHH Forms of non-proximate harassment must be addressed Consider establishing a 100-foot safe distance for vehicles approaching horses Some current forms of harassment should ease lessen once full SRHH management plan is implemented. |
| 4 | Public Safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide for safety on the road through fencing Bush Hwy and horse safe cattle guards.⁵ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deploy cattle guard options that reliably prevent horses and other livestock from entering roadways but do not cause injury to horses. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Per the IGA, FS commits to build a fence for the recommended Management Area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design alternative to cattle guards could include cobbled surfaces. Fences should be 'horse safe' |
| 5 | Fence Maintenance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management area fencing to be maintained by FS. Potential responsibility by MCDOT for portions bounding Bush Hwy. | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FS will rely on AZDA's 3rd party manager to maintain fences the agency builds for SRHH. | |
| 6 | Sufficient Forage and Water | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide sufficient forage and water. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional locations for supplemental water sources could include: near Phon D Sutton; near the existing SRWHMG | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current AZDA protocol for approving supplemental feeding is to consider environmental conditions in terms of recent rainfall and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water could be drawn from existing wells and readily conveyed by black poly lines to |

⁵ Some Members proposed that 4-strand barbed wire fencing with back fencing be used as a preferable alternative to cattle guards.

Table 8: SRHC Management Area Supporting Management Recommendations

| | Topic | Initial Proposal | Refined Recommendation | Lead Agency Considerations | Key Discussion Points from Work Team Meetings |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| | Sufficient Forage and Water (continued) | | facility; pyramidal area of the North Zone; the base of Stuart Mountain. | <p>existing forage and monitor the SRHH for horses with a Body Condition Score of 2 or lower.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FS has a responsibility to maintain healthy ecosystems and cannot allow rangeland to become substantially degraded due to overgrazing. The riparian area being considered in the current management proposal provides sufficient water for SRHH needs. Supplemental sources would only be needed to attract horses to other locations. Supplemental water sources should not be located near fences and/or highways to avoid drawing horses and people into unsafe situations. | different locations at a reasonable cost. |
| 7 | New Water Sources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide new water sources for horses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use new alternative new water sources to guide horses from the Salt River to more secluded locations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FS will not fund or build new sources. FS will address permit and authorization needs. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One option is to site a new windmill and water tank for North Zone of the proposed Management Area. This option could attract SRHH away from river and closer to existing SRWHMG facility. An alternative is to extend water lines from existing pumps inside or outside the Forest. |
| 8 | Identification and Return of SR horses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify SR horses that escape the Management Area. Establish procedures for returning them. | | . | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of SR horses will not be possible or practical until the fence is built to prevent neighboring area horses from entering the Forest. |

Conclusions

The SRHC worked diligently over the period of November 2018 to October 2019 to meet in collaborative dialogue and strive to the respond to the Charge. The Lead Agencies and Facilitation Team appreciate the time commitment, focus, and effort invested in the Collaborative Process. Importantly, at the completion of this Report, the responsibility for discerning and implementing recommendations rests with AZDA in cooperation with US Forest Service.