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WILD HORSE FOUNDATION February 1, 2004 – February 4, 2004 SITE INSPECTION

The following narrative describes the results of the onsite inspection of the facilities, records and site visits to locations where the Virginia Range Estray Horses (VRE) have been located by the Wild Horse Foundation (WHF). The assessment was conducted with the knowledge, cooperation and participation of Mr. Ray Fields, Executive Director and his wife Susan Calhoun, President of the WHF. The Nevada reviewers were Mike Holmes, VRE Range Manager for the Department of Agriculture and Olivia Fiamengo.

The mailing address of the WHF is Franklin, Texas. The physical location is Marquez, Texas which is about 2.5 hours north of Houston, Texas. The property is one hundred (100) acres the majority of which is pasture with some corrals. The facilities are well-maintained and on a public road where anyone can view the livestock and care being given.

Ray and Susan have completed a compliance course by the Bureau of Land Management and are certified to inspect potential adoption sites for the BLM. Copies of their certificates are included as part of this report. In addition, both have completed management workshops pertaining to mare/foal, performance horse owners and basic horse management. Copies of their certificates from the Texas Cooperative Extension/Texas A & M University System are included.

In October, 2004, a forage/feed analysis report was done on a sample of hay from WHF. The report from the Texas Cooperative Extension office is attached. With this report and the over-all favorable site inspection, there is no problem with the feed, layout or conditions for any livestock at the WHF facility. A bale of hay was opened at the time of inspection and found to be of good quality; the color was good and they hay leafy.

The offsite inspections began by car on Wednesday, February 2nd and ended Thursday, February 3rd. Ray participated at his own expense which included fuel, vehicle, and time. Susan took time off her professional job in Houston to participate. Thanks to both, the site visits were facilitated and allowed more than sixty (60) horses and locations to be seen. Without their participation and familiarization with the county roads, it is doubtful that more than twenty (20) animals could have been seen. It should be noted at this point, that cooperation, "welcome mat" and graciousness extended could not have been better. Several parties inquired about more horses.

The horses were seen up to a 100-mile radius of the WHF. A map of the towns where the horses are located is attached to this document. Altogether, more that 800 miles were traveled during the 2-days of site visits.

All of the areas traveled are pasture with 5' fences. The majority of the adopters had smaller pens to work their horses. The standard practice is to feed all livestock in open pasture with hay. The hay is 1500 – 1800 pound round bales and are available at an average price of \$25.00 to \$30.00 per bale. This is one reason why the horses are easy to adopt. There were six (6) horses at one location which had 200 acres of open pasture on which to feed. The condition of the land and the cost factor of the feed make good adoption conditions. It should be noted that all of the sites visited had other animals that are well managed.

The over-all general health of the animals was not an issue. At one location, there were two (2) horses whose health did raise some question. Ray will work with the individual to put weight on the horses and improve the health. At a second location, the size of the pen was of concern; however, there was ample pasture for the horse. The owner's reluctance to turn the horse out was resolved at that time since the horse was fed in the pen and would return to it. The horses are halter broke and beginning training programs are under way.

At the completion of the inspection tour, mutual satisfaction was expressed. There will be no recommendation to discontinue the working agreement with WHF. In fact, there will be plans made to ship another load to WHF in the near future. Ray and Susan, along with a caring and industrious staff, are committed to placing the VRE animals in a strong, healthy environment. I am pleased to note that WHF has taken and placed the largest number of VRE horses in 2004 than any other non-profit group working with the Nevada Department of Agriculture. There is no further legal justification to question WHF's ability to manage or place VRE horses.

Respectfully submitted,



Mike Holmes, VRE Manager
Nevada Department of Agriculture



Date