



WILD HORSES

of America Foundation

Sinbad Wild Burro Gather – Utah (Day 2)

DATE: 12 April 2016
LOCATION: Temple Mountain Road (Exit 131) and I-70
BURROS GATHERED: 14

INTRODUCTION: Today, three members (including me) of the public showed up to observe the helicopter gather of the Sinbad burros. The trap site was in the same location as yesterday. Below, are the notes and observations I made.

Jim Schnepel
Wild Horses of America Foundation

JIM'S NOTES:

- Yesterday, I reported that the public viewing area was about 1/2 mile from the trap. However, the distance was measured today and it is 450 yards, or about 1/4 mile. While we couldn't see very far up the trap where the helicopter made the final push of the animals, the location was a good location since it afforded us a very good view of the valley where a lot of the roping occurred.



- All 14 captured burros were rated a 4 on the Henneke body condition rating system. 6 were driven into the trap by the helicopter, while the cowboys on horseback roped 8.
- I believe the temperature never went above 70 degrees today, and it often felt cooler than that. There were intermittent breezes and dark clouds that dropped rain for a short period.
- Early in the day one of the helicopter pushes was foiled at the last minute by the bucking of a horse that was being ridden to chase the burros past the gate of the pen. The three burros escaped up the hill.



- We were told that the primary helicopter never went more than 3-4 miles out to pick up burros to push toward the trap, or to the mounted wranglers. We did not get a distance for how far the second helicopter was going out, but the timing and sound indicated that it was similar to yesterday's 10-12 mile maximum.
- Each helicopter bills at \$800 per hour! I asked if BLM would get a discount if the work ended prior to the end of the contracted period, and was told they would not. They feel that it is better to pay the contractor by the day for the full contract period (without a per animal bonus) since it encourages the contractor to not push the burros too hard.

- Part way through the day we were allowed to get close to the burros who had been captured so far. All seemed to be in okay condition and uninjured.





- One of the more exciting moments of the day was when a burro escaped from the jaws of the trap at the last second and ran uphill through the rocks and trees. A few cowboys on horses took off in hot pursuit and one unlucky guy got his rope around the burro's neck and body and was just about to dally it when his horse ran under a low hanging branch. The cowboy was thrown to the ground, the burro kept running (uninjured) and the unencumbered horse ran back down the hill. The other cowboys up the pieces and headed over the hill to find the burro but came back with just the shucked rope instead.



- On another push to the trap two burros made another last second course correction as they got close to the gates. One jumped clear over the jute fence (which I hear is an uncommon feat for burros, who usually push their way through the jute) and ran up a side hill, while the second was lassoed right before he pushed through the same section of jute. The rope held and he was drawn back into the trap area.



- At some point the contractor decided to reposition the mounted riders in the trap area. Instead of starting from a purely flanking position on the right side of the trap, which seemed to encourage the burros to make a break back up the hill, the riders were spread out more on the hill and would ride a downward moving line to help push the burro into the trap.
- At the end of the day we drove to the holding pen that was a few miles away. There, the burros were given hay and water, and awaited transportation to Axtell.





- Other pictures:



This jack demanded respect.





I'm headed back out tomorrow for Day 3.

Jim

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