

THE NATIONAL

ACADEMIES

Committee to Review the  
Bureau of Land Management  
Wild Horse and Burro  
Management Program

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National Research Council

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International Equine Conference

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*Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine*

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# Overview

- National Research Council
- NRC Study Process
- Statement of Task
- Committee
- Previous NRC Studies on Wild Horses and Burros

# National Research Council

- National Academy of Sciences chartered by Congress in 1863.
- Followed by establishment of National Academy of Engineering and Institute of Medicine.
- National Research Council (NRC) is the working arm of the NAS, IOM, and NAE.
  - Created in 1916 to advise the federal government and advance science and technology.

# National Research Council

- NRC creates about 1 report/day on issues in science, technology, medicine, social science, and education.
- Sponsors are usually federal agencies.

# Unique Strengths of the NRC

- Ability to get the very best to serve
- “Pro bono” nature of committee service
- Quality control procedures
- Independence, scientific objectivity, balance

# NRC Study Process

## Stage 1: Defining the Study

NRC staff work with sponsor to:

- Determine questions to be addressed by committee, aka the Statement of Task
- Study duration and cost

Statement of Task

- Defines and bounds the scope of the study
- Determines expertise and perspectives needed on the committee

# NRC Study Process

## Stage 2: Committee Selection & Approval

- NRC staff solicit nominations for committee
- Sponsors may submit nominations but have no control over conduct of study once statement of task and budget are finalized
- Committee should comprise an appropriate range of experience for the task and contain a balance of perspectives on task questions



# NRC Study Process

## Stage 2: Committee Selection & Approval

- Nominees selected for provisional committee are reviewed and approved by President of the National Academy of Sciences
- Provisional committee is posted to NRC Current Projects System for at least 20 days
- Provisional committee members complete background information and conflict of interest disclosure forms
- A committee is only final after it has undergone a discussion of balance and conflict of interest at the first meeting
- Issues raised by the public are investigated and addressed in this discussion
- A conflict of interest is different from a point of view
- Committee members serve as individual experts, not as representatives of organizations or interest groups



# NRC Study Process

## Stage 3: Writing the Report

- Committee meets several times throughout the duration of the study
- Committee gathers information by inviting speakers and hearing from members of the public during open sessions of meetings
- Committee reviews scientific literature on study topic
- Members of the public may submit information to the committee
  - All written materials submitted to the committee are publicly available upon request
- Committee deliberates in closed session

## NRC Study Process

### Stage 3: Writing the Report

Who may be present at a committee meeting?

#### Open Session

- Committee members
- NRC staff
- Sponsor
- Invited Speakers
- Members of the public

#### Closed Session

- Committee members
- NRC staff

**Committee deliberations and report drafts  
are confidential.**

# NRC Study Process

## Stage 4: Report Review

- NRC recruits independent experts with range of views and perspectives
- Reviewers provide comments anonymously to committee
- Reviewers assess if committee has answered the statement of task
- Committee must respond to all reviewer comments, though it does not have to agree with all comments
- Sponsors are not given an opportunity to suggest changes to the report

## WH&B Committee Statement of Task

At the request of the Bureau of Land Management, the National Research Council (NRC) will conduct an independent, technical evaluation of the science, methodology, and technical decision-making approaches of the WH&B Program. In evaluating the program, the study will build on findings of three prior reports prepared by the NRC in 1980, 1982, and 1991 and summarize additional, relevant research completed since the three earlier reports were prepared. Relying on information about the program provided by BLM and on field data collected by BLM and others, the analysis will address the following key scientific challenges and questions...

## WH&B Committee Statement of Task

- 1) Population estimates and population growth
- 2) Genetic diversity
- 3) Population control
- 4) Managing populations
- 5) Societal considerations and additional research

Complete Statement of Task available at:

<http://www8.nationalacademies.org/cp/projectview.aspx?key=49392>



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# WH&B Committee\*

**Guy Palmer**§ (*Chair*), Washington State University

**Cheryl Asa**, St. Louis Zoological Park

**Erik Beever**, U.S. Geological Survey

**Michael Coughenour**, Colorado State University

**Lori Eggert**, University of Missouri

**Robert Garrott**, Montana State University

**Lynn Huntsinger**, University of California, Berkeley

**Linda Kalof**, Michigan State University

**Paul Krausman**, University of Montana

**Madan Oli**, University of Florida

**Steven Petersen**, Brigham Young University

**David Powell**, Wildlife Conservation Society/Bronx Zoo

**Daniel Rubenstein**, Princeton University

**David Thain**, University of Nevada, Reno

\* Committee is provisional until Bias and Conflict of Interest discussion at 1<sup>st</sup> meeting has occurred.

§ Member of the Institute of Medicine



# Committee Schedule

- October 27-28, 2011, Reno, Nevada
  - Open session afternoon and evening of October 27
  - Meeting agenda posted on Current Projects System
- January 27-28, 2012, Spokane, Washington
- March 19-20, 2012, Irvine, California
- May 14-15, 2012, Washington, DC
- August 7-8, 2012, Irvine, California
- October 18-19, 2012, Washington, DC

Report projected to be released Spring 2013.

# Previous NRC Studies

## Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros

- Called for in Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978
- Directed NRC committee to
  - Assess state of knowledge of wild horses and burros
  - Recommend research to fill gaps in knowledge
  - Oversee conduct of recommended research
  - Compile relevant information at end of 2-year research effort
- Conducted in 3 Phases

# Previous NRC Studies

## Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros

- Phase 1 (1980) - Literature review of:
  - Biology of horses and burros, including eating habits, genetics, reproduction, behavior, and paleontology
  - Ecosystem interactions
  - Socioeconomic issues
  - Recommend priority research areas, particularly for the subsequent 2 years

# Previous NRC Studies

## Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros

- Phase 2 – 5 research projects conducted
- Phase 3 (1982)
  - Evaluated research projects
  - Summarized research findings
  - Reiterated long-term research needs identified in Phase 1

## Previous NRC Studies

### Wild Horse Populations: Field Studies in Genetics and Fertility (1991)

- Formed in 1985 at the request of BLM
- Monitored and evaluated 2 prioritized research projects
  - Population genetics
  - Fertility control

## Previous NRC Studies

- 1980 report: Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros – Current Knowledge and Recommended Research (Phase 1)
- 1982 report: Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros – Final Report
- 1991 report: Wild Horse Populations: Field Studies in Genetics and Fertility
- All 3 reports are publicly available from Google books.

Thank you.

