

Forest Service – Region 3 – Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

Statement of Work

This project consists of the capture and removal horses from national forest system lands on the Apache Sitgreaves National Forests. Current estimates of horses to be removed from the Black Mesa and Lakeside Ranger Districts of the Sitgreaves National Forest are near 2,000 head of horses. Gather efforts will be conducted on the National Forest where we are experiencing issues with horses. The objective of this contract is to remove as many horses as funding allows. Gather efforts shall not start without approval from the contracting officer's representative (COR). The COR will work closely with the contractor during implementation of the gather and provide direction as to where gather efforts are requested.

Gathering must start within 60 days of contract award.

The work includes the gathering, handling/loading, holding, care, transportation, delivery and facilitation of the sale of horses from the National Forests. The work also includes impounding and caring for branded, stray animals while public notice of unauthorized livestock is given. The health and well-being of the animals and personal safety of individuals involved with gather operations is high priority. The work will be accomplished in a safe and humane manner and be in accordance with appropriate State of Arizona laws (Arizona Department of Agriculture (az.gov)).

While the objective of this contract is to remove as many horses from Forest Service lands as funding allows, the contractor will only be authorized to invoice for the actual number of livestock gathered.

Modifications to this contract may be negotiated if determined within scope by the contracting officer. Such modifications may address horse gathers on Forests across the Southwest Region.

Contractor Requirements

Technical Requirements / Tasks

The Contractor will be required to gather and remove horses from national forest system lands. Passive trapping will be the primary method of capture for horses; however, instances may arise that could require the need for other gather tools to include herding with horses, roping, leading, tie down, etc. Helicopter gathers for horses will not be allowed. Helicopters can be utilized for surveying and scouting purposes but are not a requested service for this contract.

The Contractor would undertake trapping activities only in areas requested by the COR and conduct work within the time periods requested by the COR.

The Contractor may be asked to take possession of horses gathered by the Forest Service for purposes of feed care and holding, transportation or sale. The contractor will not accept horses captured by private individuals not in their employment for purposes of billing to this contract.

The Contractor will provide for feed, water, boarding, and basic care of the animals from the time of capture until transfer of ownership. All livestock must be held for a minimum of 5 days for claiming purposes. Holding periods are expected to range between three weeks to 8 months but could extended for periods of time beyond this estimate.

All trigger and/or trip gate devices must be approved by the COR prior to capture of animals. Trigger and trip gate devices must be designed so that they do not injure livestock.

The Contractor will be required to provide general care to sick or injured animals and restrain them if treatment is necessary.

The Contractor may be required to facilitate working days where horses could be examined or treated by a veterinarian in larger numbers.

The Contractor will be required to humanely euthanize livestock that are injured or sick. The COR will determine if injured animals must be dispatched and provide direction to the Contractor for disposal of such animals. See attached Euthanasia Guidelines.

The Contractor may be required to dispose of the carcasses as directed by the COR. Disposing of carcasses may include moving livestock off trails, from areas of high recreation use, or removal from the Forest.

The Contractor will transport livestock from the temporary holding facility at capture site to their designated holding facility within 24 hours of capture unless prior approval is granted by the COR. The Contractor is responsible for coordinating inspection from Arizona Livestock Officers if required by Arizona State Law.

The Contractor is responsible for providing permanent corrals and holding facilities off Forest. Facilities must be approved by the COR. General expectations for approval are adequacy of the facilities for safe holding of ungentled horses (see Care and Handling Guidelines), are located within the state of Arizona, and they are no more than a one-way travel distance of 3 hours from Overgaard, Arizona. Contractor must have the capacity to hold a minimum of 100 horses at a given time (this can be achieved through multiple facilities if needed).

On occasion, branded livestock or privately owned may be gathered. Under these circumstances, the Contractor is responsible for feeding or feed costs while livestock are impounded at a temporary facility (typically on site, or within 40 miles of capture site) for approximately 7 days while public notice of stray livestock is given. If branded livestock are not claimed within the designated period, the contractor will be responsible to transport the livestock to a final destination. In the case that an owner is identified the contractor will be responsible for facilitating the transportation and transfer of claimed livestock as identified by the COR.

Sales

The Contractor will be responsible for facilitating the public sale of impounded livestock as requested by the Forest Service. Sale options provided by the contractor must include delivery to a livestock sale barn. Sale barns would be located within 900 miles of Overgaard, Arizona. All sale locations would be determined by the Forest Service in coordination with the Contractor as livestock are captured.

The Contractor will be responsible for collecting any proceeds from the sale of livestock on behalf of the Forest Service. The Contractor will return all funds received for the sale of livestock minus any fees incurred for the sale of livestock such as: sellers premiums, sale barn fees, testing fees (if performed by the sale barn), credit card fees, etc..

The Contractor will be responsible for care and holding of any animal that fails to sell at the time of public sale.

Transportation

The Contractor will schedule shipments of animals to arrive at final destination in coordination with the COR. No shipments shall be scheduled to arrive at final destination on Sundays or on Federal holidays, unless prior approval has been obtained by the COR.

The Contractor will not allow livestock to remain standing on trucks while not in transit for a combined period of greater than six (6) hours.

Government Furnished

The Government may furnish handheld radios if needed for safety purposes.

Deliverables / Schedule

The contractor will meet with the Forest regularly pre, post and during implementation.

The Contractor will submit a written schedule discussing gather plans to remove horses from ApacheSitgreaves National Forests located on the Black Mesa and Lakeside Ranger Districts within national forest system lands.

The Contractor will gather horses.

The Contractor will transport unbranded livestock from the temporary holding facility at capture site to an approved destination within 24 hours of capture and accommodate inspection from Arizona Livestock Officers when required.

The Contractor will provide feed and care for all gathered livestock until transfer of care has occurred though the sale or approved ownership claim of horses.

The Contractor will provide documentation for any livestock that die in the process of removal or holding or livestock that was humanly euthanized due to injury or sickness. The Contractor will only bill for an animal once. If a horse is billed for capture and is euthanized it would not be eligible for billing under euthanasia. Euthanasia applies only to horses euthanized or put down in accordance with the euthanasia guidelines prior to acceptance as a captured animal by the COR.

Animal Handling and Welfare Guidelines¹

Facility Design

Trap Site and Temporary Holding Facility

- The trap site and temporary holding facility must be constructed of stout materials and be maintained in proper working condition, including gates that swing freely and latch or tie easily.
- Fence panels in pens and alleys must be not less than 6 feet high for horses and the bottom rail must not be more than 12 inches from ground level.
 - ◆ Horses in pens at the temporary holding facility should be maintained at a proper stocking density to allow, when at rest, all horses to occupy no more than half the pen area.
- There must be no holes, gaps or openings, protruding surfaces, or sharp edges present in fence panels or other structures that may cause escape or possible injury.

- Water must be provided at a minimum rate of ten gallons per 1,000-pound animal per day, adjusted upwards accordingly for larger or smaller horses, foals, and environmental conditions, with each trough placed in a separate location of the pen (troughs at opposite ends of the pen). Water must be refilled at least every 12 hours.
- All gates and panels in the animal holding and handling pens and alleys of the trap site must be covered with materials such as plywood, snow fence, tarps, burlap, etc. approximately 48 inches in height to provide a visual barrier for the animals. All materials must be secured in place. These guidelines apply:
 - ♦ For exterior fences, material covering panels and gates must extend from the top of the panel or gate toward the ground.
 - ♦ For alleys and small internal handling pens, material covering panels and gates should extend from no more than 12 inches below the top of the panel or gate toward the ground to facilitate visibility of animals and the use of flags and paddles during sorting.
 - ♦ The initial capture pen may be left uncovered as necessary to encourage animals to enter the first pen of the trap.
- Nonessential personnel and equipment should be located accordingly to minimize disturbance of horses.
- Trash, debris, and reflective or noisy objects should be eliminated from the trap site and temporary holding facility.

Loading and Unloading Areas

- Facilities in areas for loading and unloading horses at the trap site or temporary holding facility must be maintained in a safe and proper working condition, including gates which swing freely and latch or tie easily.
- The side panels of the loading chute must be a minimum of 6 feet high and fully covered with materials such as plywood or metal without holes which may cause injury.
- There must be no holes, gaps or openings, protruding surfaces, or sharp edges present in fence panels or other structures which may cause escape or possible injury.
- All gates and doors must open and close easily and latch securely.
- Loading and unloading ramps must have a non-slip surface and be maintained in a safe and proper working condition to prevent slips and falls. Examples of non-slip flooring would include, but not be limited to, rubber mats, sand, shavings, or steel reinforcement rods built into ramps. There must be no holes in the flooring or items that can cause an animal to trip.
- Trailers must be properly aligned with loading and unloading chutes and panels ensuring no gaps exist between the chute or panel and floor or sides of the trailer creating a situation where a horse could injure itself.
- Fully enclosed stock trailers should be positioned for loading or unloading to allow no more than 18 inches clearance between the ground and floor of the trailer for horses.

¹ This information has been adapted from the Bureau of Land Management Comprehensive Animal Welfare Standards in accordance with the project design for the Unauthorized Livestock Project. Any need to deviate from these guidelines must be approved by the COR.

Transportation

- Only fully enclosed covered stock trailers in sound mechanical condition will be permitted to transport horses. Trailers must have sufficient interior height to allow each equine to stand with its head extended to the fullest normal postural height.
- Each horse has enough floor space to ensure no equine is crowded in a way likely to cause injury or discomfort.
- All trailers will be single level and no “pot-belly” trailers are authorized to transport horses.
- Flooring of all transport trailers should not be slick or slippery, if metal, it should be covered with rubber matting to allow for secure footing and minimize slips and falls.
- All FS personnel driving transport trailers will have been properly trained in driving trailers with live animals.
- Adequate space to prevent overcrowding will be provided following American Veterinary Medical Association humane care when horses are loaded for transport. <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/avma-policies/humane-transport-equines>

Animal Care

Feeding and watering

- Adult horses held in traps or temporary holding pens for longer than 12 hours must always be fed and watered at approximately 12-hour intervals with water available other than when animals are being sorted or worked.
- Water must be provided at a minimum rate of ten gallons per 1,000-pound animal per day, adjusted upward accordingly for larger or smaller horses, and foals, and environmental conditions, with each trough placed in a separate location of the pen (troughs at opposite ends of the pen). Water must be refilled at least every 12 hours.
- In all holding and working facilities the best hay possible will be used. Hay should be inspected prior to purchase to reduce the amount of weeds present.
- Hay must be fed at a minimum rate of 20 pounds per 1,000-pound adult animal per day, adjusted accordingly for larger or smaller horses and foals. Hay placement must allow all horses to eat simultaneously.
- When water or feed deprivation conditions exist on the range prior to the gather, the watering and feeding arrangements should be adjusted as necessary to provide for the needs of the animals.
- Dependent foals or weak or debilitated animals should be separated from other horses at the trap site to avoid injuries during transportation to the temporary holding facility. Separation of dependent foals from mares should not exceed four hours unless the immediate decision is made to wean the foals.

Temporary holding facility

- All horses in confinement must be observed at least once daily to identify sick or injured horses and ensure adequate food and water.
- Dependent foals must be reunited with their mares at the temporary holding facility within four hours of capture unless foals are old enough to be weaned during the gather.
- Non-ambulatory horses will be humanly euthanized.

- Alternate pens must be made available for the following:
 - ◆ Horses that are weak or debilitated
 - ◆ Mares with dependent foals
- Aggressive horses causing serious injury to other animals should be identified and relocated into alternate pens when possible.
- Horses in pens at the temporary holding facility should be maintained at a proper stocking density such that, when at rest, all horses occupy no more than half the pen area.

Handling

General Handling

- All sorting, loading, or unloading of horses during gathers must be performed during daylight hours except when unforeseen circumstances develop, and the COR approves the use of supplemental light.
- Horses should be handled to enter runways or chutes in a forward direction.
- Horses should not remain in single-file alleyways, runways, or chutes longer than 30 minutes.
- No equipment should be operated in such a manner as to cause flighty behavior by or injury to horses.

Willful Acts of Abuse

- Hitting, kicking, striking, or beating any horse in an abusive manner is prohibited.
- Dragging a recumbent horse without a sled, slide board or slip sheet is prohibited. Ropes used for moving the recumbent animal must be attached to the sled, slide board, or slip sheet.
- There should be no deliberate driving of horses into other animals, closed gates, panels, or other equipment.
- There should be no deliberate slamming of gates and doors on horses.
- There should be no intentional excessive noise (for example, constant yelling) or sudden activity causing horses to become unnecessarily flighty, disturbed, or agitated. *Handling Aids*
- Handling aids such as flags and shaker paddles must be the primary tools for driving and moving horses during handling and transport procedures. Contact of the flag or paddle end of primary handling aids with a horse is allowed. Ropes looped around the hindquarters may be used from horseback or on foot to assist in moving an animal forward or during loading.
- Electric prods must not be used routinely as a driving aid or handling tool. Electric prods may be used in limited circumstances only if the following guidelines are followed:
 - ◆ Electric prods must only be a commercially available make and model that uses DC battery power, and batteries should always be fully charged.
 - ◆ The electric prod device must never be disguised or concealed.
 - ◆ Space in front of an animal must be available to move the horse forward prior to application of the electric prod.
 - ◆ Electric prods must never be applied to the face, genitals, anus, or underside of the tail of a horse.

Contractor Reporting Needs for the Gather Contract Apache-Sitgreaves
National Forests

The Forest will need the following information prior the sale of impounded livestock:

- Date of capture
- Location of capture
- Description of each animal captured ○ Color and markings ○ Approximate age (as available) ○ Sex (Not required for foals) Information needed post sale:
- Date of Sale
- Sale records ○ Contractor facilitated sales: Purchaser information required for Bill of Sale to be issued by USFS.
 - Sale Barn: Sale records provided by sale barn.

Additional records required:

- Descriptive photos of each animal that show identifiable markings such as brands, coat variations or color markings. To be provided upon request.
- Situational To be provided upon request.
 - Any recent injuries (description, if known how the injury occurred and any care provided)
 - Any veterinary testing (e.g., coggins test) or care given ○ Any care given by contractor

Euthanasia reporting (also notated in the euthanasia guidelines)

- The COR must be notified within 24 hours of the animal being euthanized.
- Documentation of the injury; any vet records should be included if used
- Documentation should include a description of the animal, the injury and how the injury occurred.
- The COR may request an inspection of the carcass prior to disposal. Documentation requested may be adjusted as needed.

Sale and livestock information requested in excel format or use the Forest Service application for data collection needs upon request.

Euthanasia Guidelines for Apache-Sitgreaves Horse Gather Contract

The ASNF takes the humane treatment of animals very seriously. Severe illness and accidents involving horses may happen at any time. Some situations resulting in severe injury or illness of the animal may require humane euthanasia. The aim of emergency euthanasia is to provide a quick and humane death to ultimately, prevent and minimize suffering. Emergency euthanasia should only be performed when catastrophic injuries have occurred, and a horse is in significant pain and suffering.

Per the statement of work, the Contractor will be required to humanely euthanize livestock that are injured or sick. The COR will determine if injured animals must be dispatched and provide direction to the Contractor for disposal of such animals. See attached Euthanasia Guidelines.

The contractor will be preapproved to humanely euthanize livestock under the following conditions identified below, for animals that are in the possession of the contractor and animals encountered on the range. This approval can be revoked at any time by the COR.

Preapproved Situations

- Non-ambulatory horses
- Broken limbs or shoulders
- Horses with mortal injuries that impact the quality of life.

Reporting requirements

- The COR must be notified within 24 hours of the animal being euthanized.
- Photo and/or written documentation of the injury; any vet records should be included if used.
- Documentation should include a description of the animal, the injury and how the injury occurred.
- The COR may request an inspection of the carcass prior to disposal.

Situations other than those identified above must be approved by the COR prior to proceeding.

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