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Superintendent, Bandelier

January 31, 1967

Chief Ranger

Burro Survey, 1966

Soil Erosion
note on
last page

STATEMENT OF FACT

In the Fall of 1966 Superintendent James W. Godbolt requested a survey and count be made of the "Feral Burros" within the boundaries of Bandelier National Monument. It was felt this should be the first step in implementing our program of direct reduction as approved in our "LONG RANGE WILDLIFE AND RANGE MANAGEMENT PLAN".

"Efforts shall be continued to eliminate the exotic feral burro from Monument lands by trapping at the water holes by authorized persons and direct control by rangers using high powered rifles".

It is noted in the Fall of 1964 an attempt to trap burros was made by the Mounted Patrol of Los Alamos. The attempt was unsuccessful.

Lands adjacent to the Monument on the East and South have populations of feral burros. Mr. C.B. Rice, Tesuque District Ranger, U.S. Forest Service has met with Superintendent James Godbolt and discussed the procedures and steps required prior to the Forest Service beginning a reduction program similar to the Monuments. Mr. Rice plans to start the necessary action during the spring of 1967 and keep this office notified of the proceedings and results.

* LONG RANGE WILDLIFE AND RANGE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR BANDELLER NATIONAL MONUMENT 1964 - 1969 (N-16) 1964

* Superintendent's monthly narrative, September 30, 1966

* Superintendent's monthly narrative, November 30, 1966

HISTORY, 1946

The first recorded references made to the feral burro in Bandelier National Monument are found in the wildlife card file. The file card begins February 25, 1946 and notes an observation of three sets of tracks near Frijolito Ruin. The card has been kept up to date and shows an increase in number of recorded sightings and numbers of individuals within the groups sighted.

burros were seen to gather in north of Alamo Canyon and Capulin Canyon during the winter months. This observation

The first known or recorded direct reduction began in the Spring of 1946. The following entry is taken from the Superintendent's monthly narrative, under "Wildlife";

"During a year of normal snowfall the burros would

"Last spring rifles and ammunition were finally procured for a campaign to reduce wild burros on the monument.

To date 52 of these animals have been destroyed and plans call for carrying on the program until the feral animals are reduced to a minimum. It is estimated that the burro population has been reduced about 50%. Reduction of the

burros should result in a marked improvement of the range and more plentiful winter food supply for turkeys, deer and other wildlife.

The next bit of information is from a later narrative of the same

year;

"The rain forced postponement of the survey until the following

"Twelve more wild burros were eliminated during the month"

Since that time four more are known to have been killed. Mr. Valencia

The building repairman for Bandelier reports reduction attempts have taken place since 1946, however none have been as effective as

the program which reduced the population by sixty-four animals during the winter of 1946.

and Alamo Canyons. At the East end of this mesa they were able to take stock down into the mouth of Alamo Canyon using the old trail marked on the U.S.G.S. Quadrangle.

All sightings were marked on maps and recorded in the Field Notes. The unusual sighting was that of three burros on the mesa between Alamo and Bando Canyons.

* Superintendent's monthly narrative, September 30, 1946

* Superintendent's monthly narrative, November 30, 1946

FERAL BURRO SURVEY, 1966

For the next three days the major mesas and canyons were checked as thorough as possible and all sightings recorded. By the 15th

The survey was conducted during the month of December due to the past history of sightings and the availability of manpower and stock.

Past records indicate the burros tend to gather in mouth of Alamo Canyon and Capuline Canyon during the winter months. This observation was found to be true for the week of December 12th 1966.

Burros were located near the Stone Lions and even above the trail in Red Canyon. During a year of normal snowfall the burros would undoubtedly seek the more accessible feed and warmer slopes near the Rio Grande Canyon. Evidence of burros pawing out ice in search of water in the canyon above the Stone Lions was noted. This points out the all important factor of water which dictates the range of burros both during the Summer and Winter.

The Survey began December 5th with five employees covering the mesa south of Frijoles Canyon. The mesa was checked from upper Crossing to the Rio Grande and Frijoles Canyon to Alamo Canyon. Some tracks were noted, however an intermittent rain through out the day prevented a determination as to their age.

The rain forced postponement of the survey until the following Monday December 12th.

On Monday morning December 12th we resumed the survey with four men. Two men crossed to the mesa on the south side of Alamo Canyon and searched to area west to the point the upper Crossing trail enters Capuline Canyon. The other two men covered the narrow mesa between Lummis and Alamo Canyons. At the East end of this mesa they were able to take stock down into the mouth of Alamo Canyon using the old trail marked on the U.S.G.S. Quadrangle.

All sightings were marked on maps and recorded in the Field Notes. One unusual sighting was that of three horses on the mesa between Alamo and Hondo Canyons.

January 31, 1967

For the next three days the major mesas and canyons were checked as thorough as possible and all sighting recorded. By the 15th a total of fifty eight burros had been sighted. Some burros were obviously missed as tracks in some areas would indicate. On the basis of tracks near San Miguel Ruin and the braying heard in the upper portion of Red Canyon, a conservative estimate of twenty more burros could be added to the fifty eight known burros.

Two areas showing considerable amounts of soil erosion which may have been caused by burros, are the eastern ends of the mesas both to the north and south of Alamo Canyon. Here the grass has been removed and the trail is worn deep which collects the storm runoff and washes the trails into gullies. These trails appear to be step in used by the burros and deer to water in the Rio Grande. In our "1966

Due to the lack of available funds the survey was carried out in the most economical manner possible. A total of 184.00 was used in obtaining two W.A.R. employees who donated many hours which they did not ask of expect compensation. A debt of thanks to both M. DeVargas and E. Salazar for their enthusiasm towards the project and the advice based on their knowledge of the Back Country of Bandelier National Monument.

Units adjacent to the Monument on the East and South have populations of feral burros. Mr. G.E. Rice, Banquo District Ranger, U.S. Forest Service has met with Superintendent James Godbolt and discussed the procedures and steps required prior to the Forest Service beginning a reduction program similar to the Monument. Mr. Rice plans to start the necessary action during the spring. Lee Roy C. Brockup this office notified of the proceedings and results.