



**U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Eastern States
7450 Boston Boulevard, Springfield, Virginia 22153**



Press Release

For Release: Immediately

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Wild Horses and Burros Available for Adoption in Lexington, Virginia

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is holding a wild horse and burro adoption at the Virginia Horse Center in Lexington on March 9 & 10, 2002. BLM will offer approximately 80 mustangs and 20 burros gathered from Western rangelands for adoption through the competitive bid process to qualified people willing to provide the animals a good home.

You, too, can join thousands of animal lovers across the Nation who have adopted these “living legends” of the West. “With a good home, time and care, they can be the gentlest animals and great companions,” said BLM’s Eastern States Associate Director Mike Nedd. Mustangs are very athletic and have excelled in a variety of disciplines, including trail and endurance, roping, reining, dressage and, in Virginia, for hunting and pony club. Burros are not only good companion animals but are guardians for domestic stock.

The Wild Horse and Burro Program began in 1973 in an effort to control the increasing population of wild horses and burros on Federal lands. These animals are descendants of horses and burros that were released or escaped from Spanish explorers, soldiers, and Native Americans. They are protected under the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971 as “...living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West.” Since the animals are protected and have few natural predators, their numbers have increased significantly through the years. They are gathered from the rangelands not only to ensure their survival but to keep the rangelands healthy for the remaining wild horses and burros, native wildlife, and permitted livestock.

To qualify to adopt, you must be 18 years of age, have proper facilities, and have no convictions for inhumane treatment of animals. Adopters must provide a 12 x 12 foot covered shelter, such as a run-in shed or a box stall adjacent to the corral, including a corral at least 20 x 20 feet per animal. The fence, made of rounded pipes, poles, wooden planks or similar materials, should be at least 6 feet high for horses and 5 feet high for burros and horses under 18 months. You must also bring a solidly-constructed, stock-type trailer with a covered top and

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side-swinging gates to transport your animal home. Drop ramp trailers and divided two-horse trailers are not acceptable due to safety concerns; however, a two-horse trailer with the middle partition removed is acceptable if it has a full backdoor. Additionally, you are expected to provide your own halters and lead ropes at the adoption.

The public is invited to view the animals beginning on Friday, March 8 from 1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. and again on March 9 from 8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Bidding will begin at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 9, and the adoption will continue on March 10 from 8:00 a.m. - Noon.

Adoption application forms can be obtained from the BLM, Jackson Field Office, 411 Briarwood Drive, Suite 404, Jackson, Mississippi 39206, or by calling 1-888-274-2133. You can also learn more about these special animals and requirements by visiting the Wild Horse and Burro Adoption Web site at www.adoptahorse.blm.gov or by calling BLM's toll free number at 1-866-4mustangs.

DIRECTIONS: From I-81 North or South, take Exit 191 to I-64 West. Proceed to Exit 55 (first exit is Lexington). Take Exit 55, go right on Route 11, north 1/10 mile to Route 39 West. Go left on Route 39 to the Virginia Horse Center, approximately 1 mile.

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