



Lawsuit Filed in Oregon to Uphold Right to Observe Controversial Wild Horse Sterilization Experiments

The American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign and The Cloud Foundation filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court to uphold their First Amendment right to observe.

PORTLAND, OREGON, USA, August 16, 2016 /EINPresswire.com/ -- PORTLAND, Ore. – August 16, 2016 – Two leading wild horse advocacy organizations today filed a lawsuit in Oregon U.S. District Court to uphold their First Amendment right to observe highly controversial and invasive sterilization experiments that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) intends to conduct on federally-protected wild horses at the agency’s Wild Horse Corral Facility in Hines, Oregon.

The [American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign](#) and [The Cloud Foundation](#), veterinarians and at least one United States Congressman contend that the surgical procedures to be performed by BLM in conjunction with Oregon State University (OSU) are invasive, inhumane, outdated and dangerous, and that the BLM should not be allowed to conduct them behind closed doors.

“The BLM has refused to allow any opportunity for media or the public to observe and record these procedures, despite the fact that such observation would further the BLM’s own stated goal of assessing the “social acceptability” of these procedures,” stated the complaint filed by Nick Lawton of Meyer Glitzenstein & Eubanks LLP, which is representing the groups. “The BLM’s refusal to allow any access to observe and record these experiments thwarts the important newsgathering objectives that Plaintiffs aim to achieve by observing and documenting the BLM’s treatment of wild horses, and thus violates Plaintiffs’ rights under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.”

“It is abundantly clear that the permanent sterilization of mares is completely unnecessary, horribly cruel, and places wild herds at greater risk of genetic failure,” states Ginger Kathrens, Executive Director of TCF and the Humane Advocate for the BLM’s National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board. “For decades BLM has largely turned its back on humane, reversible infertility vaccines. Now they are opting for invasive procedures, which have no practical application on Western ranges, unless the death of wild mares is an acceptable outcome.”

“These risky procedures are placing the lives of these innocent and federally-protected wild horses and their unborn foals at grave risk. Spaying will also take the wild out of these wild horses by destroying their natural behaviors – the very thing that distinguishes them from their domestic counterparts,” said Suzanne Roy, Executive Director of the American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign. “We firmly believe that once American citizens and our elected leaders see what the BLM is doing to our federally-protected wild horses, they simply won’t stand for it.”

BLM and OSU intend to perform a procedure on wild mares called ovariectomy-by-colpotomy, which involves a veterinarian blindly cutting into a mare’s vaginal wall, placing his hand and arm through the vagina into the abdominal cavity, manually locating the ovaries, then severing them with a rod-like chain tool called an ecraseur.

The surgery puts mares at risk for death from hemorrhage and infection and for evisceration – the

protrusion on the bowel through the surgical incision. In addition, 75 percent of the mares who will be experimented on will be pregnant, and the procedure will cause many to abort their unborn foals. In wild horses, it's not possible to provide the same post-surgical care available to domestic animals, or to forcibly restrain their movement after surgery, resulting in a high risk for infection and pain following the procedure. Removing mares' ovaries will also cause serious behavioral changes, making this an inappropriate management tool for wild herds.

The groups are seeking an injunction to force BLM to allow them to observe the experiments, which the agency says could begin as early as October.

[Link to First Amendment lawsuit documents: http://www.wildhorsepreservation.org/media/oregon-sterilization-experiments-first-amendment-lawsuit-documents](http://www.wildhorsepreservation.org/media/oregon-sterilization-experiments-first-amendment-lawsuit-documents)

The American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign is a national wild horse advocacy organization whose grassroots mission is endorsed by a coalition of more than 60 horse advocacy, public interest, and conservation organizations. AWHPC is dedicated to preserving the American wild horse in viable, free-roaming herds for generations to come, as part of our national heritage.

The Cloud Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of wild horses and burros on our Western public lands with a focus on protecting Cloud's herd in the Pryor Mountains of Montana. Cloud is the subject of Foundation founder Ginger Kathrens' groundbreaking PBS/Nature documentaries.

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