

# BLM Report Calls for Billion-Dollar Government Plan to Gather 30,000 Horses and Burros a Year from our Western Lands

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, May 15, 2020 /EINPresswire.com/ -- By Wayne Pacelle

Free-roaming wild horses and burros have never faced a greater threat if you read the long-term plan for management of these animals released to Congress by the Bureau of Land Management this week.

Here are its key features:

- “Annually gather (through both helicopter and bait/water trap methods) between 20,000 and 30,000 animals”
- “Annually remove 18,000 to 20,000 animals permanently from public rangelands” for 15 years
- “Treat (using various temporary long-term or permanent fertility control methods) 3,500 to 9,000 gathered animals annually over the initial 10 years,” mainly with an inhumane form of surgical sterilization

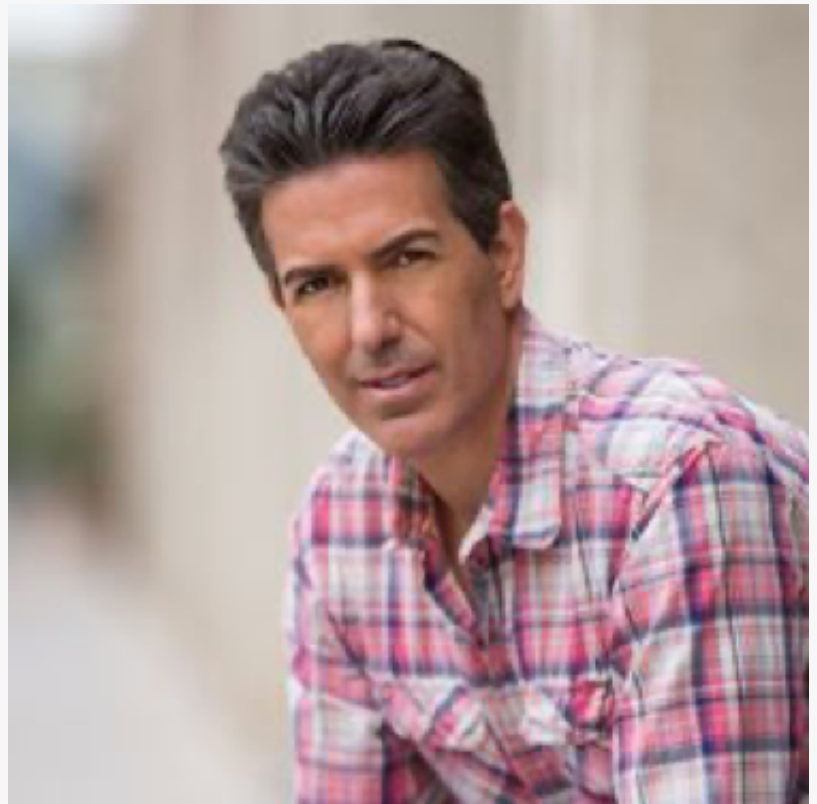
Is this anything but a corrupt, massive depopulation plan, a prescription for terror for hundreds of bands of horses, and a gutting of the Wild Horse and Burro Act?

The plan is a direct follow up to “The Path Forward,” a naïve and reckless proposal cooked up mainly by the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA), the Humane Society of the United States, Humane Society Legislative Fund and a handful of other groups who know little about the

situation for wild horses and burros on the ground. These groups produced a windfall of \$21 million in additional funds this year for wild horse and burro “management” with no guarantee that PZP fertility control would be used and no restrictions on the use of barbaric surgical



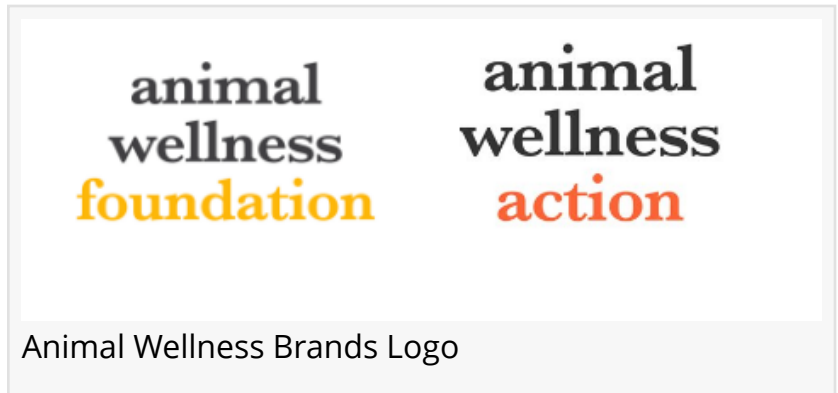
BLM Roundup



Wayne Pacelle

sterilization and mass roundups. And now the BLM has released its plan revealing specifically how congressional funding will be used. It's exactly what we at Animal Wellness — and a number of other wild horse and animal protection groups — have warned all along.

BLM says that the Congress should spend more than a billion dollars over just the first year to conduct this attack on wild horses, leaving only remnant populations.



Let's face it, when the agency had \$80 million a year, we've criticized it for annual round-ups of 10,000 wild equids a year and its pitiful record in applying PZP for fertility control. It's been running horses to exhaustion at full gallop in helicopter chases and separating family groups before corralling and then shipping them off to short-term and long-term holding facilities. This latest plan, enabled by the animal welfare groups, is that same game plan.

With more than 50,000 wild horses and burros already in holding facilities, that number would balloon to 100,000 in three or four years. The holding operation already eats up two-thirds of BLM's budget and doubling or tripling the numbers would have a budget-busting effect. And the horses would be the ones to pay the price when they are inevitably sent to be slaughtered.

I have negotiated hundreds of animal welfare agreements with industry and lawmakers during my career in our field. So, it's anything but my instinct to scold animal welfare parties for trying work with adversaries. Indeed, securing an agreement from parties or industries doing harm may be the best pathway to reduce violence against animals.

A good deal must, however, have specificity, clearly articulated benefits to animals, and leverage on enforcement. In this case, the deal has none of that. It's an inexplicable capitulation to the cattlemen's association and others who want the horses gone from our federal lands so that they can put more cattle and sheep in their place.

There are more than 80,000 wild horses and burros over vast expanses in 11 western states, but on those same federal lands, there are more than 4,000,000 cattle and sheep. But not a word from BLM about the need to control their numbers and prevent overgrazing.

BLM is housed in the same agency (the Department of the Interior) that is seeking to remove federal protections for wolves and grizzlies in the West, that is working to gut the Endangered Species Act, scuttling a prior agreement between industry and conservation groups on sage grouse, and promoting oil and gas development on these same lands at a time when the planet faces a climate crisis. With this plan to depopulate horses and burros, we see how all the pieces of the puzzle fit.

The management of these animals in the complicated political environment is a Rubik's Cube, and I've come to see many colors and angles of it. While acknowledging the complexity of the problem, it doesn't take much understanding to know that the so-called "Path Forward" is leading us off a cliff.

Natural Resources Committee Chairman Raul Grijalva and several other lawmakers recognize that the mass depopulation plan is a disaster. AWA will work with him, other lawmakers, and numerous wild horse and animal protection organizations to turn this plan back and unwind the damage that's been done.

We said when the deal was announced months ago that it would lead to the near liquidation of wild horses and burros in the West. That's exactly how it's played out. Only Congress, with the power of the purse, can stop this mayhem from playing out on our federal lands.

This is an utter failure of two of our nation's largest animal protection groups. Please join us in the fight to protect our iconic American wild horses [by clicking here](#) and asking your Members of Congress to oppose these types of dangerous and misguided schemes.

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