

Parading Celebrities to Save Wild Horses: Does it Help Wild Horses? Or the Non-profits?

There's no doubt that today, wild horses and burros are in their darkest hour. And human meddling is closing the door on their future.

YREKA, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATE, July 3, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- After thirty-years of non-profit organization advocacy efforts by wild horse activist organizations and over \$100-million in donations spent, wild horses are arguably worse-off today than they were thirty years ago.

Sadly, that's because the dominant non-profit advocates, who have media budgets of some medium for-profit corporations, have been ineffective in soliciting any major change that would benefit the health and well-being of American wild horses and burros.



Photo by: William E. Simpson II - "Over the past 7-years living among and studying free-roaming wild horses, I am priviledged to catch special moments.

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Even on a large animal struck correctly, the dart [contraceptive PZP and GonaCon darts] can cause hemorrhage and hematoma. Misplaced shots can break bones or even kill the animal”

Thomas and Marburger 1964

And they still have no plan that is ecologically and economically appropriate, which is acceptable to the majority of stakeholders.

So the '[Wild Horse Wars](#)' continue.

As we read in a [2017 HorseTalk article](#) about celebrity advocacy, the parade of celebrity spokespersons over the decades is long and distinguished.

Longtime wild horse and burro advocates have all seen the continuous parade of movie stars, rock stars, TV stars, talk

show hosts, scientists and other celebrities by various non-profits.

The latest non-profit organization to use a celebrity spokesperson paradigm is Animal Wellness Action, who through the efforts of Marty Irby and Scott Beckstead have convinced screen star Katherine Heigl, to be a spokesperson for wild horses.

According to a recent [article by Makenzie Sisson at Deseret News](#):

“Heigl, who lives in Utah, says the issue is personal to her, and that the inhumanity of the helicopter roundups disturbs her. The actress has been involved in the protection of the Onaqui wild horses since May, when she publicly called for the Bureau of Land Management to leave the horses on the land and manage their population numbers using birth control.”

As we learn from the Deseret News article, Ms. Heigl is a relative newcomer to the debate regarding wild horses.

There are thousands of advocates, including some celebrities, with 10-years or more of full-time wild horse and burro advocacy, and dozens with 20, 30 and 40 years or more.

The obvious questions that come to mind regarding Ms. Heigl’s advocacy, is; what new information, empirical experience or specialty with regard to wild horses and their management does she bring to the table?

There’s no doubt the Ms. Heigl loves horses, but is that enough given the



A family band of wild horses symbiotically grazed-in a firebreak, ecologically mediating wildfire fuels in a remote forest in a critical wilderness area; important protection for ancient conifers



Intensive ongoing close-observational study of wild horses in wilderness ecosystems has unveiled new understandings of their evolved symbiotic status with flora and fauna. Photo: Carla Bowers



The award-winning micro-documentary 'Wild Horses' tells an important story. Photo: William E. Simpson II

history of the advocacy and the past parade of newsworthy celebrities who also love wild horses?

So, the question arises; have the dozens upon dozens of celebrities speaking-out in favor of wild horses and burros helped?

Empirically speaking, given what we see going-on today, generally, the answer is no.

Have non-profit advocacy organizations learned anything from this history?

The answer may be; yes and no.

Clearly, they know the situation for wild horses is dire, even after 30-years of essentially doing the same things over

and over. Even today, wild horses are still being treated in a draconian manner by the Bureau of Land Management ('BLM') using motorized roundups that arguably lead some wild horses to a veiled pipeline for slaughter.

Of course, the head honchos of some of these non-profit organizations pay themselves handsomely. Reading the IRS-form 990's of some non-profits and their detailed accounting can be very interesting.

So, while having celebrity spokespeople hasn't done much to change the trajectory of the fate of wild horses, maybe it has a more practical purpose?

Could it be that money from new donors gleaned from celebrity fan-bases is the real incentive for the continual use of celebrity spokespersons? Do celebrity fan-bases provide new wells of money outside the traditional advocacy for dipping their donation buckets? It seems like a real possibility.

Casting a dubious shadow over some non-profit advocacy organizations is that, even as they condemn the BLM for the mistreatment of wild horses, they are themselves engaged in violating the intent of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 ('the Act'), and engaged in activities that are insulting to nature's evolutionary wisdom. An overview of some facts explains why this may be a fair assessment.



The vigor of native species American wild horses depends upon ongoing evolutionary 'Natural Selection'. Selective breeding of wild horses using drugs like PZP and casual choice of culling wild horse leads to genetic bottleneck and extinction Photo: William E. Simpson II

The preamble of the Act provides the intent of the Act and what the framers of the Act intended for wild horses and burros.

The preamble states:

“Congress finds and declares that wild free-roaming horses and burros are living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West; that they contribute to the diversity of life forms within the Nation and enrich the lives of the American people; and that these horses and burros are fast disappearing from the American scene. It is the policy of Congress that wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death; and to accomplish this they are to be considered in the area where presently found, as an integral part of the natural system of the public lands.”

Clearly, the intent of the Act was not to have herds of wild horses and burros artificially managed as if they are livestock in unnatural, artificially managed landscapes:

Non-profit wild horse activists and their organizations who condone or support the policy of chasing wild horses around the landscape and shooting them with high-powered firearms containing chemical contraceptive darts containing porcine zona pellucida (PZP) weighing 500-grains or more, are also indirectly culpable in what is arguably 'harassment' of wild horses.

Activists Scott Beckstead and Marty Irby of Animal Wellness Action are promoters of using PZP on American wild horses, as is Suzanne Roy of American Wild Horse Campaign. Both American Wild Horse Campaign and Animal Wellness Action are donation supported non-profit organizations.

“Non-profits who are using chemical contraception on native species American wild horses are literally engaged in 'selective breeding' of wild horses. Selective-breeding is a form of domestication, and in this case is caused by the action of the drug, porcine zona pellucida (PZP) as a so-called contraceptive on wild horses, which works best on mares that have strong immune systems.”

“However, some mares injected with PZP that have weak immune systems can and still do have foals, resulting in a disproportionately larger number of foals born with weak immune systems, a highly unnatural and undesirable situation.”

"The result of this ignorant experiment on wild horses and burros is that the ongoing progeny of the herds are artificially selected to have subsequently weaker and weaker immune systems by the effect of the drug, PZP. This makes future generations of wild horses increasingly susceptible to disease, weakens the gene-pool, and adversely affects the future survival of wild horses in America", said William E. Simpson II, a naturalist who lives among and studies free roaming wild horses in the wilderness.

Furthermore, the human decision-making process in selecting horses or burros for contraceptive injection is in fact a form of 'selective breeding'. Generally, horses that are treated, cannot have foals, while the untreated do have foals, and the person pulling the trigger decides which mares (and genes) are selected.

Therefore, the act of a human choosing which animals get to breed and which do not, is also another way 'selective breeding' is forced upon wild horses, and that is also part of domestication. In some cases, the decision is based upon a horse's appearance in the eyes of a person engaged in darting (shooting) horses, or which horse happens to be a convenient target. And even with a genetic analysis of the target horse(s), it is still; a form of selective breeding.

The use of the contraceptive chemicals known as 'PZP' and 'GonaCon' have a seriously adverse effect on the gene-lines of native species American wild horses.

The results of using PZP and/or GonaCon to control populations of equids, kept in artificially managed herd areas with collapsed trophic cascades (natural predators of equids are largely missing), disintermediates the essential evolutionary process of 'Natural Selection', where co-evolved predators weed-out the sick, elderly and diseased animals.

Given Ms. Heigl's being relatively new to the wild horse debate, it's easy to understand how she is faced with a very steep learning curve, and may have been misinformed early-on about what the best plan for wild horses truly is. And it's certainly not achieved via 'selective breeding'.

There is no doubt that physical trauma is inflicted upon wild horses and burros via shooting them with firearms using contraceptive darts

Comparing the projectile weight of an average contraceptive dart to that of the world's most powerful handgun, the Smith & Wesson .500 magnum; the S&W .500 magnum shoots projectiles (bullets) weighing from 265-grains up to a 700-grain projectile.

Contraceptive (PZP and GonaCon) filled darts weigh 500-grains and heavier!

"Even on a large animal struck correctly, the dart (contraceptive PZP and GonaCon darts) can cause hemorrhage and hematoma. Misplaced shots can break bones or even kill the animal" (Thomas and Marburger 1964).

"Report--Muzzle report can cause problems in darting either captive or free-ranging animals. In captive situations, the noise can be more disturbing to animals than getting struck with a dart."

"Disturbed animals are then more difficult to approach, or the entire group of animals may run away". (Page 32; Overview of Delivery Systems for the Administration of Contraceptive to Wildlife", by Terry J. Kreeger

“Wild horses and burros must be allowed to live naturally ‘wild and free’ in a ‘natural system’ on public lands pursuant to the intent of the 1971 Act. That vision can still be sustainably realized via an amendment to the 1971 Act, that would allow the Bureau of Land Management and United States Forest Service to rewild and relocate American wild horses into defined ‘critical wilderness areas’ that are both ecologically and economically appropriate, where they can resume their naturally evolved role as symbiotic keystone herbivores” said William E. Simpson II

More about William E. Simpson II and a proven plan that saves wild horses naturally, can be found at: www.WHFB.us

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