

ISPMB Pushes for New Model for Effectively Managing Wild Horses on Public Lands

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA, UNITED STATES, July 16, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros (ISPMB) announces its push for the adoption of a new model for managing wild horses on public lands—a model based on the success of the widely known Heber horse herd—in this first part of a three-part series focusing on the well-protected Heber herd.

According to the ISPMB, 2021 marks the 50th year of the existence of The Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971. This federal legislation was designed to protect wild horses/ burros on public lands in the United States from capture, harassment, branding, and death. However, the ISPMB is now questioning whether these burros and wild horses will indeed continue to live with the freedom to manage themselves and their families.

The ISPMB strongly supports “minimal feasible management,” where efforts are made to maintain intact family band structures for wild horses through a hands-off horse management strategy. This is necessary to keep wild horses’ reproductive rates and, in turn, their populations low. Only through this hands-off behavioral management strategy can wild horses maintain optimal wellbeing and health through self-regulation. This was seen in the ISPMB’s own four herds, which the society has managed undisturbed for more than 17 years, according to the ISPMB.

Unfortunately, the United States Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service are mismanaging wild horses through huge roundups, which is destroying their social systems, according to the ISPMB. The ISPMB did successfully sue the Forest Service in 2006, and the court stipulated in 2007 that no horses could be removed from their public lands until the FS completed a territory plan. However, 15 years later, the Forest Service is now proposing a new territory plan that could disrupt the wild horses’ family band structures.

In light of this, the ISPMB is encouraging officials to study the Heber wild horses, which have roamed freely across 300,000 acres of public land in Heber, Arizona’s, Apache-Sitgreaves Forest. The herd has not presented any overpopulation issues for the past several years. Studying this successfully preserved herd may lead to a new, more viable model for managing wild horses on other public lands moving forward, according to the ISPMB.

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