

# Wild Horse Groups Condemn BLM Abuse of Foal in Buffalo Hills Roundup, Call for Congressional Oversight

GERLACH, NEVADA, UNITED STATES , July 6, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A coalition of wild horse advocacy groups joined in condemning the Bureau of Land Management for its apparent abuse of a foal during its helicopter roundup of wild horses in the Buffalo Hills wild horse Herd Management Area in northwestern Nevada. The agency has targeted over 350 wild horses for permanent removal from the HMA during its operation as part of its campaign to remove at least 22,000 federally-protected wild horses and burros this year from public lands to



Foal

make way for private interests, especially commercial livestock companies. The coalition is calling on Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, to hold an oversight hearing to hold the BLM responsible for the incident, as well as its overall failure to handle and manage wild horses and burros humanely, as required by the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971.

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*Ginger Kathrens, Founder and Board President of The Cloud Foundation.*

In video footage shot by observers, a BLM contractor on horseback is shown roping a foal by the neck before two additional personnel arrive on an ATV. One individual picks up the foal, which is immobilized by the rope around its neck, and slams the animal to the ground. Minutes later, after the foal regains its footing and stands, the second individual does the same thing, picking it up and slamming

it to the ground. The workers then hogtie the young animal, hoist it onto the ATV, and transport it to the trap area. It is unknown what injuries the animal sustained during the ordeal.

The incident constitutes an obvious violation of the BLM’s own Comprehensive Animal Welfare

Program, a set of guidelines the agency claims to abide by in its handling of wild horses and burros during roundups and in its holding facilities. Since the BLM began its campaign of mass roundups last year to benefit livestock, mining, and energy interests across the American West, public observers have documented multiple violations of the CAWP by BLM personnel and contractors during its roundups. One well-publicized incident occurred earlier this year during a wild horse gather operation on the Pancake Complex in Nevada during which a foal broke its front leg while being chased by a BLM helicopter contractor. The foal was ultimately euthanized by the BLM, but the incident played a key role in the introduction of a federal bill by Rep. Dina Titus (D-NV) to end the use of helicopters in BLM wild horse and burro management. In addition to injuries and deaths during the roundups, this spring nearly 150 wild horses died from equine influenza at the holding facility in Canon City, Colorado, and dozens more died from an outbreak of strangles at the facility in Wheatland, Wyoming.

“As clearly shown in the video, BLM and its contractors engage in deliberate abuse of these animals they are supposed to be protecting,” said Scott Beckstead, director of campaigns for Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy. “If ordinary citizens treated animals this way, they would be arrested and jailed. This rogue agency will continue with its cruelty and callousness and its arrogant disregard of public will until Congress gets involved and exercises some oversight.”

“Most recent video footage and horse mortalities coming out of Buffalo Hills HMA shows the cruelty of relentlessly chasing wild horse bands with many young foals in tow at high speeds in dusty conditions,” states the core group of advocates for Advocates for Wild Equines Grassroots Coalition. “BLM’s own standards of CAWP are being violated. The contractors’ behavior in this roundup shows woeful gaps and inadequacies of CAWP. Roundups are cruel, regardless of the mechanism that is used, as evidenced by the video of Sampson Livestock staff slamming the foal to the ground twice. CAWP should be written whereby criminal code and regulatory code align and contractors and BLM alike, are held accountable and criminally charged, accordingly.”

“BLM contractors have been caught yet again in an act of flagrant abuse of a federally protected wild animal. This incident is sadly not an outlier, said Ginger Kathrens, Founder and Board President of The Cloud Foundation. “There could be no clearer example of the need for Congress to hold the BLM accountable for its mismanagement of our wild horses and burros. Without oversight this is what we get; government-sanctioned animal cruelty.”

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that’s why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don’t. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Center for a Humane Economy is a non-profit organization that focuses on influencing the conduct of corporations to forge a humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both.

Scott Beckstead

ANIMAL WELLNESS ACTION

+1 541-530-3460

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