

# WILD HORSE ADVOCACY GROUPS CALL ON BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT TO HEED SCIENCE, STOP WILD HORSE ROUNDUP

*BLM Claims Refuted By Latest Ecological Assessment of Piceance Basin Colorado*

MEEKER, COLORADO, USA, July 15, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A coalition of wild horse advocacy groups joined today in urging the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to heed a recent [independent ecological assessment](#) of the Piceance East Douglas Herd Management Area of Colorado and stop the planned roundup, which will be the largest in state history. The report directly contradicts the BLM's own claims that the herd is starving, the range is suffering, and the horses are to blame.



The BLM has targeted over 1,000 wild horses for permanent removal from the Piceance-East Douglas HMA as part of its campaign to remove at least 22,000 federally protected wild horses and burros from public lands this year to make way for private interests, especially commercial livestock grazing. The coalition is calling on acting Colorado State BLM Director Stephanie Connolly to halt the roundup until a thorough needs assessment can be conducted. Colorado Governor Jared Polis, First Gentleman Marlon Reis and Congressman Joe Neguse have spoken out against the removal on behalf of the state's wild horses and the Colorado public. State government has offered to assist BLM in managing wild horses more humanely and expressed disappointment that the BLM still planned to move ahead with the "costly and wasteful roundup of our wild horses."

The [independent scientific assessment](#), conducted by Colorado Sierra Club ecologist Delia Malone, found the Piceance herd and its habitat to be generally in good condition. "Field observations from this reconnaissance provide no evidence to support the BLM's claims of wild horse malnourishment or damage to *Physaria congesta* (a federally protected plant species) or

its habitat. Instead, field assessments document that upland habitats provide ample forage to support the Piceance-East Douglas wild horse population. Field reconnaissance also identified domestic livestock as a primary cause of riparian habitat degradation."

"Current photos of the horses, shared with us by long time advocates of the Piceance herd, certainly support the findings of Ms. Malone." stated Ginger Kathrens, Board Chair of the Cloud Foundation. "BLM needs to reverse course here before another Colorado wild horse disaster occurs. This has little to do with forage availability. It is the same old story of privately-owned livestock taking precedence over federally protected wild horses on the very few ranges left for their use."

"The Bureau of Land Management is gaslighting the American people in trying to justify its cruel helicopter roundup of the horses of the Piceance Basin, who by all accounts are healthy and thriving on robust rangelands," said Scott Beckstead, Director of Campaigns for Animal Wellness Action. "We urge acting Colorado BLM Director Stephanie Connolly to halt the planned roundup, an operation that will target newborn foals and heavily pregnant mares with unimaginable suffering, and listen to the science showing it is commercial livestock, not the wild horses, causing harm to the public lands of the Piceance."

"The last EA Completed was in February 2021, stated the core group of advocates of Advocates for Wild Equines. "NEPA regulations require inviting 'the participation of interested parties.' On 10/28/20, letters were sent to 4 tribes and 3 BLM consultants engaged in comments on 10/13, 10/16, 10/23/20. Conversely, and without invitation, 1 scientist/scientific organization, 1 veterinarian and numerous wildlife experts & photographers have observed the range in recent days. The horses are said to be in good health, with adequate water and forage. How can an EA be determined based on inadequate & discriminatory scoping practices? This is why AWE has asked appropriations to include unbiased subject matter experts in a National Academy of Sciences study & in ongoing NEPA processes."

"Stampeding the Piceance-East Douglas mustangs during torrid summer temperatures is extremely cruel, even by the Bureau of Land Management's poor standards" said Ginger Fedak, Wild Horse and Burro Campaign Director for In Defense of Animals. "Multiple photos, videos, and eyewitness testimony from independent sources prove that ranching is harming the Piceance rangeland, not the horses. We urge State Director Connolly to stop issuing bogus claims about "unhealthy" wild horses, halt this dangerous and disastrous roundup, and conduct a thorough needs assessment."

"BLM is targeting over 10,000 wild horses and burros for capture before October, the end of the fiscal year," said Laura Leigh, President of Wild Horse Education (WHE), "Throughout the West every single range is facing this exact challenge: habitat fragmentation for industry and removal with exaggerated and outdated justifications. BLM needs to halt the '2020 agenda' and take a hard look at this fast path that is leading to the collapse of the system; taking more wild horses and burros off ranges that can sustain them and overloading facilities unable to care for wild

horses appropriately is political pandering, not management, with a high price-tag for the taxpayer. What we are seeing at Piceance is not isolated, it is systemic."

The Cloud Foundation (TCF) has been at the forefront of wild horse advocacy since its inception in 2005. TCF was founded by Emmy award-winning filmmaker Ginger Kathrens and is dedicated to the protection and preservation of wild horses and burros on our public lands.

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.

Advocates for Wild Equines (A\*W\*E) is a grassroots group of concerned citizens who strongly oppose the cruel and inhumane roundups of wild horses and burros on our public lands and advocates for legislation that stops roundups and preserves our magnificent wild equine herds.

In Defense of Animals is an international animal protection organization with over 250,000 supporters and a 39-year history of fighting for animals, people and the environment through education and campaigns, as well as hands-on rescue facilities.

Wild Horse Education (WHE) is a groundbreaking, boots-on-the-ground nonprofit at the frontline of the fight to gain transparency of federal agency actions and in the ongoing battle against abuse on and off the range for America's wild horses and burros.

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