

Vermont Law and Graduate School's Environmental Advocacy Clinic Files Suit to Protect Wild Horses in Southern Oregon

California-based all-volunteer nonprofit Wild Horse Fire Brigade files federal lawsuit alleging illegal roundup of wild horses

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Vermont Law and Graduate School's Environmental Advocacy Clinic filed a federal lawsuit against the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, on behalf of its client Wild Horse Fire Brigade (WHFB), on

Wednesday, Oct. 5. The lawsuit seeks a halt to the roundup of wild horses from private property within and adjacent to the Pokegama Herd Management Area in southern Oregon. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) failed to follow the law and its own guidance before initiating the roundup.

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Horses are significantly more ecologically appropriate in wilderness areas over ruminant livestock like cattle, sheep, and goats”

*William E. Simpson II -
Founder/Exec Dir Wild Horse
Fire Brigade*



BLM photo shows burned forest and downed fences in Pokegama HMA in Oregon

[The suit](#) seeks to prevent the loss of wild horses and to compel BLM to conduct legally required studies regarding the horses.

Approximately 230 wild horses live in the Pokegama Herd Management Area (HMA), located in a remote area near the California-Oregon border, southwest of Klamath Falls, OR. Wild horses have lived in the area since the turn of the 20th century and play an essential role in managing grassland ecosystems by reducing and maintaining grass

and shrubs that present a major wildfire hazard.

BLM initiated the roundup in 2020, intending to capture 200 of the estimated 230 horses that live in Pokegama HMA. Before initiating a roundup, BLM is required to conduct an excess

determination as required by the Free Roaming Wild Horse and Burro Act (WHBA), and conduct a review of the decision under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The BLM must also provide the public with reasonable notice and an opportunity to comment, as required by the Administrative Procedure Act (APA), BLM guidance applicable to decisions to remove wild horses from the range, and/or NEPA.

“BLM has a history of cutting corners and ignoring their legal obligations in a rush to get rid of wild horses in the west,” Professor Michael Harris, director of the Environmental Advocacy Clinic at Vermont Law and Graduate School said. “Horses are native to the west and are an important aspect of the ecosystem. We need to work to increase their numbers to ensure healthy, stable herds.”

Wild Horse Fire Brigade is a California-based 501-c-3 nonprofit working to promote wild horse populations in critical wilderness areas where horses and the environment will thrive and will not disrupt public land or industry.

“Horses are significantly more ecologically appropriate in wilderness areas over ruminant livestock like cattle, sheep, and goats,” WHFB founder William E. Simpson II said.

Scientific studies prove that horses help promote healthy vegetation growth that can also benefit other co-evolved animals and insects, including deer, a host of other mammals, birds, and pollinators. Horses do this while reducing the built-up grasses and vegetation that often fuel massive fires in the west.

The suit seeks a declaration from the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia that the BLM has violated the WHBA and/or NEPA, and further requests that the Court issue a Temporary



Vermont Law and Graduate School's Environmental Advocacy Clinic



Professor-Litigator, Michael R Harris J.D.

Restraining Order to stop the removal of wild horses from in and around the Pokegama HMA.

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About Vermont Law and Graduate School: Vermont Law and Graduate School, a private, independent institution, is home to the nation's premier environmental law program. The school features innovative experiential programs and is home to the Environmental Law Center, South Royalton Legal Clinic, Environmental Advocacy Clinic, Energy Clinic, Food, and Agriculture Clinic, Environmental Justice Clinic, and Center for Justice Reform. For more information, visit vermontlaw.edu, find us on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram.

About Wild Horse Fire Brigade: Wild Horse Fire Brigade (WHFB) is a California-based 501-c-3 all-volunteer nonprofit organization. WHFB is working to save native species American wild horses by rewilding them away from Bureau of Land Management holding facilities as well as relocating wild horses away from areas where they are deemed to be in conflict, and humanely reestablishing these American icons into ecologically and economically appropriate wilderness areas as keystone herbivores where they will reduce the frequency, size and intensity of catastrophic wildfire by reducing grass and brush wildfire fuels. For more information visit WildHorseFireBrigade.org.



William E. Simpson II - Wild Horse Ethologist / Founder-Ex. Dir. Wild Horse Fire Brigade Org. - an all volunteer 501-c-3 California nonprofit



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