

Wild Horse Protection Organization Releases Welfare Report

The BLM CAWP program is riddled with deficiencies, a lack of transparency and zero consequence.

RENO, NEVADA, UNITED STATES, October 12, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- An internationally recognized Wild Horse Protection organization, the leading organization in the fight against abusive practices, has released an eye-opening report on the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Comprehensive Animal Welfare Program (CAWP). The report issued from [Wild Horse Education](#) (WHE) addresses deficits in the program from a lack of transparency to repetitive abuses that are allowed to continue with no real consequence.



Wild horses in temporary corral

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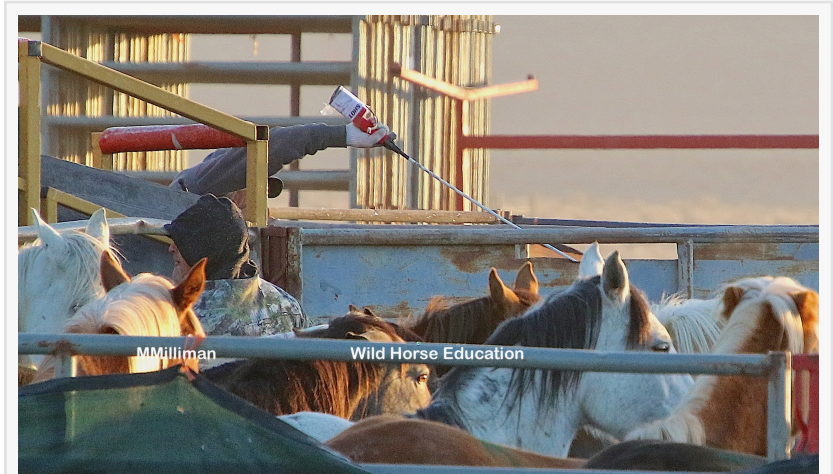
Revise CAWP, create consequence, and provide transparency; that is the only responsible path of action a taxpayer funded agency should be on.”

Laura Leigh, President of Wild Horse Education

“BLM has utterly failed to prioritize one of the main tenants of the law, humane management and care,” stated Laura Leigh, President of WHE. “A roundup is an event where the attitude of the entire agency is front and center when it comes to the welfare of wild horses and burros. What the public sees, over and over again, solidifies the lack of trust for any action the agency takes from on-range population counts to the assertion of protections from sales to slaughter. Change is long overdue... the public is waiting.”

The [CAWP program](#) was formalized by the BLM at the beginning of fiscal year 2016. The agency promised reviews of roundup operations, expansion of the program into holding, annual reviews and revision of the policy. In addition, the agency was to create a set of consequences that included cessation of operations, written reprimand and closure of contract opportunities.

From 2016-2020 the agency did not perform a single assessment or a single revision of an existing standard. An online assessment tool was provided with the instatement of the program in 2016. The public was informed that train had begun and the tool was being utilized; a report would soon be made public. In 2021, the agency admitted that no assessments were done and none would be completed for that timeframe.



Repetitive electric shock during loading

In 2021, the agency began to assess capture operation and holding facilities. In a report to the public the newly-hired BLM CAWP team lead stated her purpose as “establishing standards, training on standards, assessment tool” to “document, share, learn.”

The 2023 fiscal year has begun. Six years after the program was created the CAWP team lead stated (at a recent meeting of the BLM Advisory Board) that training was being refined and standards for assessment and care were being created.

During this same six-year timeframe observers have continued to document repetitive abuses during capture and holding. In addition, our team has documented a rampant lack of knowledge by BLM staff of the standards outlined in CAWP. WHE observers continue to capture images and video of wild horses and burros slamming into unmarked barbed wire, foals being left behind as their bands are pursued at rates of speed foals simply cannot match, rampant use of electric prods, avoidable broken limbs and necks. Simple preventative measures such as lowering a trailer to minimize injuries during loading are ignored.

“Why is it important to observe wild horse roundups? It is a layer of public oversight that yields critical documentation that otherwise would not be revealed to the public, our elected officials, and even those in charge within the U.S. Dept. of the Interior and the Bureau of Land Management,” stated Colette Kaluza, WHE CAWP team. “Having viewed well over 100 days at roundups, my presence puts pressure on the gather operation to follow the humane handling policy, but even then, the animals are being treated inhumanely in number and degree that is utterly unacceptable. The information we provide could be invaluable to anyone looking to improve the program, but we are ignored.”

Not one capture operation has been stopped (or even delayed) by the agency to address repeat offenses. Not one lucrative contract has been impacted. Not one employee given a permanent citation to their record. In fact, it appears the BLM favors these employees and these same employees continue to write capture plans and lead removal operations.

The organization has requested a meeting to urge the agency to implement immediate change before the BLM roundup schedule for 2023 begins later this month.

The report and recommendations include a cover letter and 3 documents: Assessing the Assessment Process and Policy Change, Programmatic Recommendations and the team included the WHE CAWP team assessment of the recent Triple B roundup for comparison with the BLM document assessing the same. These documents can be found at the [organizations website](#).

Quotes from the WHE team:

"I am conservatively optimistic that the extensive experience and knowledge of WHE will be thoroughly reviewed and implemented in an unbiased manner. For it is only with transparency and an honest voice, that we can speak their truth by working together for improved treatment of our revered living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirits of the West." ~ Marie Milliman, WHE CAWP team.

"As a member of the WHE CAWP Team, my job is to document to expose for awareness of the improvements that are needed and for the reports we produce to be recognized for their indispensable value. We have recommendations that can address neglect and abuse of these animals to make roundups safer. How do things change for the better? By engaging with advocates on the ground and utilizing their expertise." ~ Colette Kaluza, WHE CAWP team.

"The time for BLM to stop creating bureaucratic processes, holding meetings, creating slideshows and crafting public relations messaging, has long since expired. The public expects concrete actions that translate into visible changes in what is observed and consequences for violations. Changing what the public sees by reworking an access policy to roundups to create new limitations and discrimination, or closing the doors to facilities, is not appropriate action. Revise CAWP, create consequence, and provide transparency; that is the only responsible path of action a taxpayer funded agency should be on." Laura Leigh, WHE President.

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