

Wild Horses and Cattle - Important Differences and Why it Matters

Wild Horses digest their food differently than ruminant livestock (cattle, sheep and goats) and that has a serious impact on our pristine wilderness areas

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- During the course of giving a national newspaper reporter an interview and tour, a grievous sight was discovered.

A formerly pristine alpine meadow in a wilderness area had been devastated by a local livestock producer and their cattle. And the physical evidence was beyond any reasonable doubt. From the evidence on the ground and from photos of the area over the past two-years, it's clear that the livestock managers from a ranch near Fall Creek in Oregon have wintered their herd of cattle in this area in Siskiyou County California.



A herd of cattle that have devastated the landscape east of Fall Creek on the south side of Copco Road in California. Their unmanaged grazing interrupted natural reseeding of flora, leading to defoliation of a meadow's cover crop

An impromptu video was made using an iPhone by a wild horse researcher (William E. Simpson II) of some of the shocking damage that was caused by the cattle.

(NOTE: The photo being held and shown in the video was shot in early May, 2021)

The Video also documents littering (plastic hay bale strings, etc.) on the landscape with plastic becoming part of the soils on the landscape being used by the livestock producers. The area involved is about 2-miles east of Fall Creek, on Copco Road (approx. mile post 25) in Hornbook, CA (Siskiyou County). It is believed that these impacts were caused by livestock and managers operating from a ranch in Jackson County, Oregon.

[That 2-minute Video](https://youtu.be/HQ6Jxc1CLZE) can be seen at YouTube by clicking this link: <https://youtu.be/HQ6Jxc1CLZE>

Having seen the photos of the area and the videos (numerous photos and videos of the area were made), Deb Ferns, the President of Wild Horse Fire Brigade said; "There's a right way and a wrong way to graze cattle. This devastated area in Northern California is the perfect example of the wrong way!"

In the photo image of the herd of cattle, a greenish area is seen on the ground in the center of the herd. This green area is the fine remains of hay bales that were spread out over a large area to feed the cattle, since they had already stripped-off most of the native plants and grasses in the immediate area.



This image was taken early May 2021. Wild Horses naturally reseed native flora because they pass virtually all the seeds they consumer in their dung. This is a function of their simple stomach and maintains native cover crops

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Deb Ferns, President of Wild Horse Fire Brigade

The issue with feeding hay in wilderness areas is that hay is grown and baled down in the lower valleys where invasive species weeds are a serious problem. And these invasive weeds and their seeds are imported into wilderness areas in hay bales. This is another serious management issue that is integral to livestock being ranged in wilderness areas, especially 'critical wilderness' areas that must be protected from importation of invasive species weeds by livestock managers.

The article titled 'Blaming Wild Horses For the Spread of Invasive Species Weeds is a Twisted Tale' discusses the importation of invasive species weeds into wilderness by livestock managers feeding hundreds of cattle daily requiring dozens of bales of contaminated hay daily.

That article can be read at this link: <https://rtfitchauthor.com/2022/04/12/blaming-wild-horses-for-the-spread-of-invasive-species-weeds-is-a-twisted-tale/>

The Good News:

William E. Simpson II and Michelle Gough, who are part of the all-volunteer California 501-c-3

nonprofit team at 'Wild Horse Fire Brigade', are wild horse researchers who live among and study free roaming native species American wild horses in this remote wilderness area on the California-Oregon border. Their research is turning-up cost-effective solutions and proven Plan called 'Wild Horse Fire Brigade' that benefits multiple private and public land-use stakeholders.

Beneficiaries of the Plan called 'Wild Horse Fire Brigade':

1. Plan creates more ecologically sensible grazing for livestock producers; and
2. Plan enhances western cervid (deer, elk, etc.) habitat; and,
3. Plan creates more wildfire resilient forests, benefiting wildlife, hikers, timber industry and fisheries; and
4. Plan reduces the frequency, size and intensity of catastrophic wildfires, and reduces toxic wildfire smoke (greenhouse gas), and
5. Plan benefits native species American wild horses by relocating them away from areas where they are deemed as being in conflict with commercial enterprises and relocates them into remote critical wilderness areas that are both ecologically and economically appropriate.
6. Plan keeps carbon compounds sequestered in soils by reducing the need for polluting prescribed burns, which volatilize sequestered carbon, and;
7. Plan saves homes from wildfires and reduces casualty and capital losses.

The research and resulting new information that is coming from the efforts of Wild Horse Fire Brigade will empower both advocates and range managers, allowing for greatly improved wild horse and range management, which is proven to benefit wilderness ecosystems in ways that are now just being revealed by this research effort.

The research station where Gough and Simpson are stationed is called 'Wild Horse Ranch'. Wild Horse Ranch serves as the pilot study area in regard to how wild horses reduce wildfire by naturally managing wildfire fuels in a manner that is symbiotic to a myriad of flora and fauna.

More about how the Plan known as 'Wild Horse Fire Brigade' works at this PDF:

https://www.wildhorsefirebrigade.org/files/ugd/b50928_b546b19ef08441349993b0d3fd8111eb.



This image was taken March 31st (spring of 2023) of a wilderness alpine meadow that had been devastated by cattle which digest virtually all seeds consumerd. This same area was photographed in early May 2021 and had been used by wild horses for centuries without harm

[pdf](#)

Gough and Simpson also collect information about the behavioral ecology and ethology of wild horses using a study method that Simpson has coined as the 'Goodall Method' in honor of Dr. Jane Goodall who pioneered wildlife study as an embedded observer with the Apes she studied during her 1960 study in Gombe Africa.

Together, Michelle and William have captured over a quarter-million photographs and dozens of hours of videos of wild horses in their local wilderness study area, which augment their ongoing intimate close-range observational studies of wild horses.

In a recent one-hour interview on [All About Animals Radio](#) with Stacilee Sherwood, Simpson disclosed samples of his newly documented discoveries of wild horse social dynamics and how those highly evolved behaviors impact the survival of wild horses in the wilderness. The research also helps others to understand why they have lasted on the North American landscape for 1.8-million years, and why they are so beneficial when located in wilderness areas that are both ecologically and economically appropriate.

More about livestock grazing from Stacilee Sherwood:

<https://www.realitycheckswithstacilee.com/post/grazed-to-death-how-the-livestock-grazing-program-on-public-lands-cause-dead-zones-extinctions>

#WildHorses, Wild Horses, #Ecology, Ecology, #Wilderness, Wilderness, #ForestManagement, Forest Management, #Climate

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