

Leading Equine Scientist Joins Wild Horse Fire Brigade's Team To Help Save Wild Horses Via Nature-Based Solution

Wild Horse Fire Brigade's nature-based solution for wild horse management that reduces catastrophic wildfire has gained international attention and acclaim

YREKA, CA, US, August 4, 2023

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Wild Horse Fire Brigade ('WHFB') is very pleased to announce that a leading equine researcher, Professor Wayne Linklater, PhD, has joined the Advisory Board of WHFB.

Professor Wayne Linklater's training and experience are very substantial:

Professor Linklater trained first in zoology and botany, Wayne completed two graduate degrees during the 1990s: a Masters in freshwater ecology and a Ph.D. in the behavior, ecology and management of wild horses.



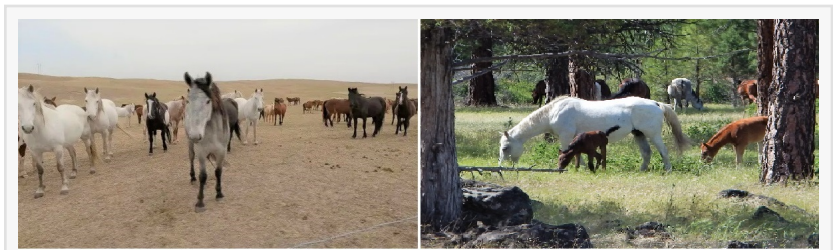
Professor Wayne Linklater, PhD

After a Millennium Research Fellowship for rhinoceroses' conservation in Southern Africa with the San Diego Zoo (2001-2005), he took a permanent academic position in the School of Biology at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, to teach and investigate a diversity of topics in wildlife biology and management, and develop an interest in the human dimensions of environmental science.

Wayne became the Director of their Centre for Biodiversity & Restoration Ecology at Victoria University (2012-2018). He received the Peter Nelson Memorial Trophy for leadership of research and teaching on vertebrate pest management (2018), and the Ecological Society of New Zealand's annual Science Communication Award (2015). He is the author of over 100 scientific

publications and reports, principle investigator on over \$3M in research grants, and holds a US patent for novel chemical lures for rats (2021).

Seeking new challenges and adventures, professionally and personally for himself and family, Wayne accepted the position as Chair (Head) of the Environmental Studies Department at California State University – Sacramento in 2019. There he is part of a \$2M initiative to better measure air quality pollutants in underserved neighborhoods in Sacramento City. He is also currently writing a book about New Zealand's wild horses with the working title 'Wild Horses of the Last Land – a scientific, personal and political journey to reimagine our future relationship with horses'.



Left Photo: CBS 4 Denver. BLM's Plan for Wild Horses

Right Photo: William E. Simpson II. Nature's Plan

The horses seen in the CBS image above on the left are wild horses that were rounded-up by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and relocated to the barren ground of the failed Haythorn cattle ranch in Maxwell Nebraska. Many decades of poor land management and over-grazing of these lands has stripped-off most of the native cover crop, leaving unproductive ground. The horses seen in the CBS photo are just part of the approximate 900 wild horses that are no longer living naturally as 'wild and free' horses pursuant to the intent of the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (WFRHBA). Now, as captive horses, they must be cared-for at great taxpayer expense. The BLM pays the Haythorn family \$1-million annually to feed these now captive horses, which is just part of their flawed off-range grazing program nationally, costing taxpayers nearly \$100-million annually. Adding financial insult to injury, these horses will also require additional care that was unnecessary when they were wild, including but not limited to population control. This is a human-created problem, because these horses are not living among their co-evolved predators (bears, mountain lions, wolves and coyotes). Science proves that wild horse must be allowed to live in immediate proximity to their co-evolved natural predators that provide the critical benefits of evolutionary Natural Selection. This evolved natural process eliminates sick, diseased and elderly horses from the herd, thereby maintaining the genetic vigor of the species. Therefore, as is the BLM's reckless practice, these captive horses will be treated with dangerous chemicals, like 'PZP' and 'GonaCon' that are posited as so-called 'contraception'. The use of PZP and/or GonaCon is by definition Selective Breeding, which science shows leads to genetic erosion and ultimately genetic defects. Additionally, taxpayers are further burdened with the BLM's national wild horse contraception program, costing tens of \$-millions in additional expenses that must be shouldered by taxpayers. The photo on the right, shows wild horses naturally grazing in a forest. They are Nature's keystone herbivores and they symbiotically reduce and maintain wildfire fuels (grass and brush). Their wildfire grazing is 'symbiotic' because horses, with a simple stomach, pass most of the seeds they consume undigested and intact and able to germinate in their droppings. This is naturally-evolved process that helps complete the life-cycle of the grasses and plants horses consume by spreading the undigested seeds in their humus and biome-rich dung. Wild horses also make trees more fire resistant by reducing flashy grass and brush wildfire fuels under and around trees, as well as breaking-off dead limbs from the trees (aka: fire ladders) via scratching, as well as fertilizing these trees, which they also use for year-round shelter.

Ultimately, keeping wild horses from living in our critical wilderness areas and putting them into captivity in expensive and ecologically obtuse off-range holding is like putting the fire department in jail during wildfire season. There is a natural, holistic and humane solution to managing America's wild horses!

Learn about a proven solution at: <https://www.WildHorseFireBrigade.org>

Side by side comparison between current BLM wild horse management vs. Wild Horse Fire Brigade's re-wilding and relocating model

Deb Ferns, MBA and President of Wild Horse Fire Brigade said, "Speaking for our all-volunteer board of directors and advisors, we are very pleased and excited that Professor Linklater see's the value and application of our nature-based solution for the plight of American wild horses and the research opportunities that are available though the groundwork of our founder, William E. Simpson II.

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We already have a lot of the information needed to solve the problem. What is required is new questions.

The Wild Horse Fire Brigade is asking new, more interesting questions”

*Professor Wayne Linklater -
PhD*

Simpson, the executive director of Wild Horse Fire Brigade, was recently featured in an article at The Guardian titled "Are America's wild horses the answer to wildfires? – a photo essay".

Through an ongoing dialog with Professor Julie Murphree, an Advisory Board member of Wild Horse Fire Brigade and teaching professor at Arizona State University, Professor Linklater learned about Simpson's full-time 9-year study (2014-present) of free-roaming wild horses in a wilderness area using what Simpson calls the "Goodall Method" of close observational wildlife study, in honor of famed ethologist Jane Goodall, PhD.

During the same period, in 2018, Simpson personally observed and documented how wildfire

grazing by wild horses was beneficial to the wildfire suppression efforts of CALFIRE during the deadly Klamathon Fire while being the local knowledge advisor to CALFIRE on the fire-line for 9-days.

Learn More at AM BEST TV's production:

<https://www.ambest.com/video/video.aspx?s=1&rc=wildhorses323>

Professor Linklater said, "I was attracted to the work of the Wild Horse Fire Brigade because it demands a deeper understanding of wild horse ecology to meet the challenges of managing landscapes and their wildlife. I am convinced that those challenges require new frameworks and approaches, not just more information. We already have a lot of the information needed to solve the problem. What is required is new questions. The Wild Horse Fire Brigade is asking new, more interesting questions. It is a great privilege to be able to help find the answers".

Learn more about Wild Horse Fire Brigade at its website:

<https://www.WildHorseFireBrigade.org>

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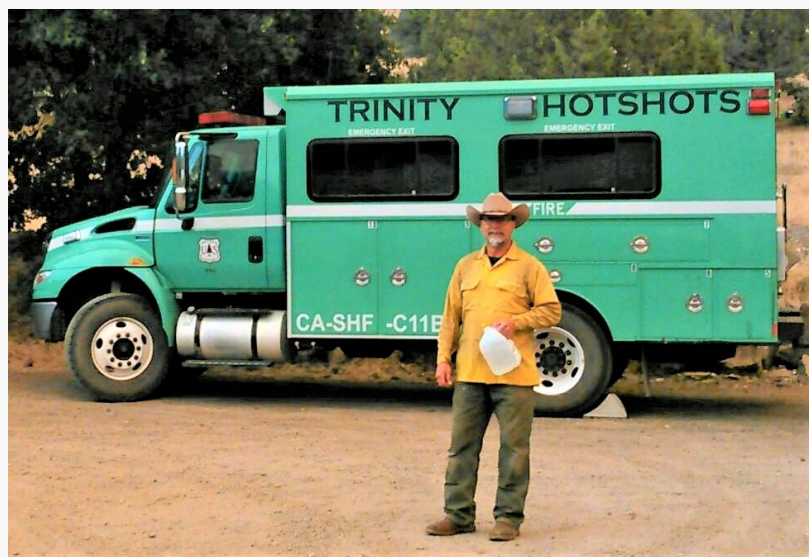
[Other](#)



Wild Horses are seen grazing dry wildfire fuels as smoke from the 2022 McKinney Fire looms in the background sky



A family of wild horses grazing wildfire fuels. Unlike ruminant grazers (cattle, sheep and goats) wild horses Don Not digest seeds of native plants, thus completing their life-cycles supporting other co-evolved fauna



Simpson served as local knowledge advisor to CALFIRE commanders during the deadly 38,000-acre 2018 Klamathon Fire

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