

Wrongdoing With Wyoming's Wild Horses, Part 2

The Preventable Travesty Of North Lander And Reasonable Request To Cancel Roundup

UNITED STATES, June 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The financial details exposed in the previous press release (Wild Horses, Wolves and Wrongdoing in Wyoming) are all available on the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) website. Many other factors have contributed to potential loss of wild horse herds that currently live wild, free and undisturbed in the North Lander Complex (NLC) near Riverton, Wyoming. One factor to be considered when reducing herd numbers is maintaining genetic diversity in order to keep herds healthy and sustainable. Unfortunately, looking at the NLC and the number of horses involved can lead to deceptive impressions. The NLC includes 4 herd management areas (HMA), each has its own separate herds. The BLM's plan to remove 2,806 horses and return 40 who have been rendered infertile through surgery, intrauterine devices or treatment with an immunosuppressant birth-control will leave just 321 horses in the entire complex. The 4 HMAs, Conant Creek, Rock Creek Mountain, Muskrat Basin and Dishpan Butte are separate from each other and the BLM's statement that horses from these areas intermingle has never been studied or documented.



Elvis, Wild And Free On His Home Range, Jim Brown, High Plains Reflections Photo

Jim Brown, renowned wildlife photographer, has lived in the region his entire life. He studies, photographs and defends the horses and their right to continue living undisturbed on the land where they do no damage and have thrived for millennia. Brown has never witnessed horses from these 4 distinct areas intermingling and has stated that the terrain and distances are not conducive to horses transferring between HMAs.

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) recommendation for herd size to maintain genetic diversity is 245 horses. With the intermingling idea unproven this places each of the 4 NLC HMAs in danger. Each herd should be considered separately and the pitfalls of not meeting these herd

numbers must be identified. Excessive inbreeding (mating of close relatives) can cause the downfall of viability in a herd and eventually lead to extinction.

The low Appropriate Management Levels designated by the BLM will take each of the 4 herds far below safe numbers for herd health and genetic viability as prescribed by the NAS.

Wyoming experienced the worst winter (2022-2023) in 50 years. Though payouts were made to ranchers for livestock losses the BLM is accounting for no winter kill in the horse herds.



Mare And Foal in grave danger if roundup proceeds.
Jim Brown, High Plains Reflections Photo

Brown has witnessed winter kill horse carcasses in all 4 HMAs totaling a loss of over 180,

although he admits, “the numbers may be 10 times what I saw because many of the areas are so remote that I could not access them.”

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Barbara Moore

The BLM range condition reports and commitment to maintaining biodiversity are refuted by Erik Molvar, Executive Director of Western Watershed Project, “Public lands designated for wild horses are often grazed by domestic livestock. However, BLM typically does NOT consider the ecological impacts of domestic cattle and sheep. Wild horses are labeled ‘overpopulated’ when the livestock are exerting far greater pressure on the

vegetation. Agencies prioritize reductions in wild horse populations, they seldom alter the number of cattle and sheep authorized to lease the same lands for grazing.”

Sandy Sharkey, wildlife photographer and global wild horse adventure guide said, “I traveled over 1400 miles to experience wild horses of Wyoming's North Lander complex. They are the wildest of the wild; federally protected with the right to a life of freedom on public lands. Driving from dawn to dusk through NLC, capturing images of wild horses proved difficult. The vast areas of the wild horses' rightful land were dotted with thousands of privately owned cattle. Wild horses on North Lander's public lands symbolize freedom. Privately owned cattle on NLC's public lands symbolize greed. The BLM's summer removal of 2700+ wild horses should concern every American citizen. This is your land, and these are your wild horses.”

The BLM often claims that horses must be removed to prevent starving. Photographic evidence from Brown's frequent visits to the herds show horses that are fit and healthy.

Brown reports pregnant mares and young foals (baby horses) currently with the herds and is concerned for the safety of both. Being chased by low-flying helicopters over miles of rough terrain during the hottest part of the year puts very young and older horses in greater danger and pregnant mares have been known to prematurely abort foals in these circumstances.



Bonds between horses are strong and deep. Jim Brown, High Plains Reflections Photo

Advocates for Wild Equines Lobbying Coalition core team member, Brenna Wright commented, "When motorized vehicle use was approved for capture in 1976 (after the 1971 Act originally banned it) an annual hearing was added as a requirement to address serious concerns that reinstating motorized vehicle use in any way for the capture of wild horses and burros would be inhumane. (Federal Land Management and Policy Act, FLPMA). When the provision of law was codified, the regulation stated that hearings would occur annually in the area where the use of motorized vehicles would be employed in capture." Wright added, "The law is pretty clear... BLM is required to hold an annual hearing in the area where such use would occur. A hearing has NOT been scheduled in this area."

The National Environment Policy Act requires a period of public comment after they have presented an Environment Impact Study (EIS). Following the public comments adjustments are to be made to the EIS. BLM employee, Clay Stott, when questioned about all of the phone calls and e-mails that came in reported to Brown that, "those opinions do not matter to us."

In the wild foals are generally weaned at 8 to 9 months although Brown has noted, "Most young wild ones will stay with the family band until the spring of their third year. The bond between mares and offspring is strong. When the BLM roundup takes place weaning time is when they say and foals can be separated from their dams very early."

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