

New 'Save the Wild West' Initiative Unveils Wild Horse Rewilding Strategy to Help Reduce Wildfire Risk

MARIN COUNTY, CA, UNITED STATES, June 28, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the Western United States battles unprecedented wildfires, recent reports indicate that over 140,800 acres have burned in Utah alone. Over the past decade throughout the West, wildfires have claimed hundreds of lives, billions of dollars in annual economic damage, and destroyed tens of thousands of homes and businesses. The potential role of free-roaming wild horses as a keystone species in addressing the West's escalating wildfire and desertification crises continues to be largely ignored by current federal land management policies. Love Wild Horses Foundation's (LWHF) rewilding and land resilience models, now underway in three Western states, are producing compelling evidence that wild horses can help reduce wildfire fuel loads, restore grasslands, combat



Northern Nevada--Two LWHF's rescued, rewilded wild horses comfort one another as smoke rises nearby. Less than half a mile away-an escaped controlled burn spread where free-roaming wild horses are not permitted-underscoring the need to restore them to Western landscapes

“

Let's set our wild lands free! Wild horses and burros are the spirit of the West. Instead of rounding them up, let's give them back their stage and let nature thrive!"

Dewey Bunnell, Founding Member of the band America

desertification, and strengthen ecosystem resilience. Yet more than 70,000 federally protected wild horses and burros remain confined in government holding facilities while taxpayers continue to fund the costly program and direct helicopter round ups of wild horses and burros. Through its proposed "Save the Wild West, Natural Grassland Protection Act", LWHF seeks to restore wild horses to their natural ecological role, protect millions of acres of public lands and America's last free-roaming wild horses, and, according to the Foundation, save taxpayers up to \$25 billion annually. Advocates are pushing for the

"Save the Wild West, Natural Grassland Protection Act" to be introduced as legislation in Congress.

The Bureau of Land Management and United States Forest Service's ongoing removal of wild horses and burros has created an ecological imbalance that exacerbates wildfire risks. These animals are not merely part of the landscape; they are as a keystone species crucial for maintaining healthy ecosystems.

In regions like Northeastern Nevada, Utah, and California, the presence of wild horses has been linked to a decrease in fire incidents. These animals play an essential [role in sustaining the ecological health of the Wild West](#), making it safer for both wildlife and surrounding communities.

The LWHF initiative is based on successful rewilding and land resilience models implemented in California, Wyoming, and Nevada. These models have demonstrated [a significant positive impact on fire danger reduction](#), transforming landscapes from yellowing, flammable areas into vibrant green ecosystems. Where wild horses roam freely, the ecosystem thrives, reducing the likelihood of catastrophic wildfires.

Importantly, the “Save the Wild West” initiative is poised to benefit all stakeholders—including for public, state, private, and tribal lands. By fostering collaboration among these groups, the initiative aims to enhance the protection and restoration of land wellness, ensuring a fire safer and healthier environment for communities and wildlife alike.

A Call to Action for Legislative Support

LWHF is seeking a champion in Congress to support their initiative and introduce the “Save the Wild West” bill. This legislation not only aims to protect wild horses and their habitats but also



Two wild mares and their foals, spared from the slaughter pipeline, now roam free with their herd through Love Wild Horses Foundation's Land Resilience & Rewilding Project, in partnership with the Eastern Shoshone Warrior Society



Nevada—LWHF's Rewilding Land Resilience Project. Left of the fence, where wild horses are absent, dry yellow grasses dominate. Right, where a rescued herd of 22 horses roams freely, grasses remain greener despite two years of drought

presents an opportunity to save taxpayers approximately \$25 billion in costs associated with wild horse and burro mis-management, wildfire mitigation, damage and land restoration. The round ups cost about \$100 million per year.

The Foundation encourages citizens to contact their elected representatives to champion and urge support for the legislation. Private landowners, conservation organizations, and Tribal Nations interested in participating in LWHF's rewilding and land resilience projects are also invited to explore collaborative partnerships.

"The wild horses embody the spirit of the land, reminding us that their freedom is intertwined with the health of our ecosystems. As we face the threat of wildfires, we must recognize that safeguarding these magnificent beings is essential to maintaining our ecological balance and resilience in the Wild West."

-----An Oglala-Lakota, Chief Lee Plenty Wolf, Spiritual Leader, and a Director on LWHF's Board of Directors

References:

- Wildfire Statistics and Trends in Utah (<https://www.utahfireinfo.gov>)
- Love Wild Horses Foundation's Rewilding Models (<https://www.lovewildhorses.org>)
- New paper highlights the benefits of grazing with wild horses (<https://rewildingeurope.com/news/new-paper-highlights-the-benefits-of-grazing-with-wild-horses/>)
- The Role of Grazing Animals in Fire Prevention (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-018-20953-1>)
- Horses Proven to Reduce Fire Risk (<https://www.theportugalsnews.com/news/2025-06-29/horses-proven-to-reduce-fire-risk/98946>)
- Wild horses Save the West From Wildfires (<https://lovewildhorses.org/f/saving-america's-wild-horses-saves-the-west-from-wildfires>)
- Desertification in the American West: Causes and Solutions (<https://www.usgs.gov/mission-areas/water-resources/science/desertification>)
- Fire rages in areas where wild horses aren't permitted to roam (<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/17eKJESVuD/?mibextid=wwXlfr>)
- Yellow fire fueling grass on one side of fencing and despite two years of drought greener grass on the other side of fencing where wild horses roaming for 3 ½ years and are participating in a five year LWHF Land Resilience project (<https://www.facebook.com/share/r/17eKJESVuD/?mibextid=wwXlfr>)
- America the band (<https://venturahighway.com/>)

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact LWHF's Founder and President, Jetara Séhart 833-2ReWild or heartofsky@lovewildhorses.org.

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