

RIDE FOR THE SALT RIVER WILD HORSES



The 4th annual Ride for the Salt River Wild Horses took place on Saturday January 26, 2019. Simone Netherlands, President & Manager at Salt River Wild Horse Management Group proclaimed, "1st year was a 'protest' ride. 2nd year was to gain support for the horses. 3rd was a celebration. 4th ~ it's become a tradition!"

Tradition indeed! It seems quite appropriate, since wild horses such as these have been living along the Lower Salt River for more than 400 years. They are believed to be descended from horses brought to Arizona in the 1600s by the Spanish. Over the generations they too have become an Arizona Tradition... One that needs protecting.

Sticking with tradition, sign-in for the ride took place at the American Legion Post 58 Fountain Hills. From there the self-paced and unescorted ride traveled along Bush Highway thru the Lower Salt River, in the scenic Tonto National Forest. This is where the wild horses call home. Butcher Jones Beach {on Saguaro Lake} and Coon Bluff are favorite stops along the ride. On quieter days, these are locations where you can sometimes watch the horses.

There are always people who want to show support, but don't take the ride; instead gathering at the last stop. Yes, cages are welcome. While, of course, it is a motorcycle ride, it is SUPPORT for the horses that is paramount. Superstition Harley-Davidson, located at 2910 W. Apache Trail in Apache Junction has always been the ride's destination. Once the majority of the riders arrived, the National Anthem along with an Honor Guard were presented. The traditional group photo was also taken.

Vendors at Superstition HD included sponsor Law Tigers, and AMSAF - promoting the upcoming 'Riding For the Long Haul' event. (Read that article in a future issue of *AZ Rider*). Ridescapes Event Photos had photographers at Post 58 in Fountain Hills; plus out on Bush Highway near Saguaro Lake. In case you didn't get a chance to find your photos at their booth on the day of the event, you can still go to their website Ridescapes.com, go through the albums, and order your copies from there. Oth-

er booths included Blades & Shades, Clip Man, Red Feather Trading Company, Girl Scout cookies, Kopp Knives {AJ}, Kat's Creations {painting, garden art, painted rocks, etc}, Unconditional Love Therapy Creations {jewelry}, and a Direct TV rep. There were 3 food trucks to handle your hungers.

Moonshine VooDoo Band brought the tunes... originals & covers, classic rock, country, & more... All with their own style ~ making for a good show.

The raffle table included goodies such as tickets for the USS Midway Museum [in San Diego], gift baskets in the H-D, Rt 66, & 'man-cave' themes; framed photos & other artwork, and adult beverages. The SRWH merchandise booth offered artwork, apparel, calendars, jewelry & more as fundraisers.

Here's an example of how far-reaching the interest is in protecting these horses... A couple from Ohio, Dave & Nicole Luttrell, flew out and rented an H-D to attend this event. *How cool is THAT!*

This was a record-breaking day. The stats are very exciting! Attendance exceeded 800 people, with 667 riders signing in. Donations at the time of this writing were at \$12,000 {beating the previous record of \$8220}. That will go a LONG way toward supporting the SRWRMG programs. These numbers are a testimony to the value that people have come to place on humane treatment of animals and the protection of our history.

From their website <https://saltriverwildhorsemanagementgroup.org/> you can learn in more detail about how these monies are used to benefit the horses, but here is an overview....

"All of the SRWHMG non-profit programs are dedicated to safeguarding wild horse habitat and using humane standards of treatment. Every dollar of your tax deductible donation will go towards the horses directly."

Among those programs are addressing road-safety issues that affect horses and humans in the wild-horse habitat, fence maintenance, humane birth control, habitat cleanup {aka picking up PEOPLE's trash!}, educating the public about the horses, rescue & rehabilitation of severely injured horses {to

prevent unnecessary suffering}; and monitoring births, deaths, injuries, migrating patterns, & other statistics of the herd. All of these efforts contribute to the mission 'To protect the Salt River Wild Horses from harm'. And YES ~ volunteers are always welcome!

Skeeter sent along thanks to their event sponsors American Legion Post 58 Fountain Hills, Superstition HD, Len Novin The Bull 97.3 fm/ 1340 am, Carnation Home Cleaning, Law Tigers, and the Tribute Riders.

She also expressed appreciation to supporters Moonshine Voodoo Band, Logan Roberts from Grand Canyon HD in Mayer, Rhino from Discount Biker Supply, Girl Scouts Troop 1651 Apache Junction, AJ Mounted Rangers, Joe Miller and Aurora from Liberty Wildlife, Buzzberry, and the AJ JROTC Color Guard. Thanks go to all the volunteers that came out to help with the event. She hopes she did not forget anyone. And lastly, "We would like say thank you to everyone who participates to support and help the SRWHMG in keeping the Salt River Wild Horses Wild, Free and Protected; for without the support of the public we could not accomplish what we do."

These horses represent the wild, free spirit of Arizona and the American West.... A Spirit which some would say is dwindling. This herd of majestic animals is a living history that deserves a tradition of consideration & protection.

Learn about how to stay informed on issues, make donations, volunteer, & more at their website <https://saltriverwildhorsemanagementgroup.org/> and follow SRWHMG at <https://www.facebook.com/saltriverwildhorsemanagementgroup/>

The outpouring of support for the Salt River Wild Horses is heartwarming. Thank you SRWHMG, for all you do to help keep these horses Wild and Free!

Betsy & Bruce

See more photos by clicking the title in our digitized online issue.

