

SAVE AMERICA'S WILD HORSES

The BLM continues to round up large numbers of wild horses in spite of the large public outcry and several law suits. You can help by sending your comments. Please feel free to use our outline to make it as simple as possible with the following points.

Here is a draft letter that you can send to the following E-mail wildhorse@blm.gov Please put into the subject line: WHB Public Comment

Or you can mail it postmarked no later than September 3, 2010 to:

BLM Washington Office
1849 C St. NW, RM 5665
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the BLM plan for management of wild horses and burros in our country. As an American citizen, I am so touched by the beauty, grace, and intelligence of these animals. We are so fortunate to have wild horses and burros in our country because they do represent to the American people the very last living symbols of the "Old West."

I am disheartened by the loss of numbers of wild horses and burros since 1971. I understand that we have fewer animals today than when the law passed in 1971. Today, as I write this letter, wild herds are losing their right to roam on public lands. The BLM has zeroed out more than 100 wild herds and that is very distressing.

To make this brief, here are my following points that I would recommend to effectively manage "our" wild horses and burros and answer the questions you asked of me. Although I am not an expert in the field of wild horses, I do follow and read carefully the information provided by many of the groups who have expertise in this field. It seems that changing the program to a sustainable program can be accomplished by the following:

Sustainable Herds:

1. BLM must understand the wild behaviors of the wild horses and burros and not treat them as livestock.
2. Wild horse families should not be ripped apart in roundups. With new data available through the ISPMB, stable families have a growth rate of only 10%. Destroying family structures has led to the increase in growth rates and this is a result of not understanding the wild and free-roaming behaviors of wild horses.

3. Because baseline behavioral data has not been accumulated in the past thirty-nine years, I would suggest that BLM implement a Scientific Advisory Board made of scientists who understand wild horse and burro behavior and who could advise the BLM.
4. The Advisory Board could then get baseline data on the different wild herds understanding the behaviors of those herds and what makes them different from each other.
5. Since BLM cannot accomplish adopting animals to the general public over all these years with 36,000 animals in holding pastures, it would be my suggestion to hire an outside marketing firm to promote animals on and off the range. I would further suggest that BLM stop using the term “unadoptable” as this is a misleading term.
6. I have found out that BLM does not have a training program for its Wild Horse and Burro Specialists. I would advocate that BLM develop strict criteria for qualifications for specialists. It is common sense that behavioral specialists (wildlife ecologists) should be one of the qualifications for the position. You must first understand the species before you can manage them.
7. For too long the emphasis on management has been *off* the range. More emphasis should be on taking care of the animals on the range.
8. If weather emergencies ensue, than remove the livestock from the range and develop water for the horses. Isn't that what you should do to protect our horses and burros? Livestock can always come back on but when horses and burros are gone, they are gone forever. (Multiple-use does not mean you have to have all the uses.)

Preserves:

1. The priority should be to return the captured wild horses to the over 100 herd areas from which animals were removed. They could easily all be moved to the 19 million acres they lost.
2. If there are private preserves, BLM must write in protections to make sure that wild horses never go to slaughter as they did on the fee-waiver program.

Treasured Herds:

1. I oppose defining some herds as treasured. They are all treasured.

Placing Excess Animals into Private Care:

1. This can be done with a good marketing program from an outside agency.
2. Utilize more volunteers who assist the BLM in placing animals.
3. Stop using the word “unadoptable.”

Communications:

1. BLM needs to have a consistent program throughout all the states.
2. Having qualifications for Wild Horse and Burro specialists that have a biology, ecology background will do much to heal the program and bring transparency to the program.

Animal Welfare:

1. Understanding the wild horse and burro and their wild behaviors will assist in good animal welfare.

Science and Research:

1. The Scientific Advisory Board should assist BLM in bringing the best science available to the BLM and determine studies that need to be yet accomplished.
2. BLM must have more of their budget appropriated to monitoring and inventorying of the animals and the habitat.
3. BLM cannot determine excess animals unless they do the monitoring. Therefore animals should not be removed until current monitoring data is completed.
4. Most important is that the stallions must never be separated from their mares. So bait or water trapping of individual bands would be ideal.

Answers to questions:

1. I do not believe that sex ratio adjustments should be made nor should stallions be gelded. If birth control is used, stallions should not be separated from mares to apply the birth control.
2. I do not support male herds. Management should match normal behavioral models.
3. I do not agree with placement of animals overseas because of the inability to protect the animals under international jurisdictions.
4. You can increase animals into private care with an outside marketing program
5. Adoption requirements could change for physical structures but definitely the rules for titling the animals should not change.

Sincerely,

Your name