

# International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros

# ISPMB



NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011

WWW.ISPMB.ORG

## WINTER STILL RAGES IN SOUTH DAKOTA WE URGENTLY NEED YOUR HELP!

As this newsletter goes to press, South Dakota has received another winter blast laying one foot of heavy snow across our landscape. We haven't seen a sign of spring here yet. With another harsh winter under our belt, we have expended all of our hay supplies. It is time to purchase our spring supply of hay before the summer growing season begins.

When our winters are so cold with winds blowing upwards to 40-60 mph, you can imagine how much hay is needed for fuel for our wild ones. They are not comforted by barns, shavings, and warmed waters. Their shelter comes in the way of tree lines, valleys and other natural wind blocks. The colder the season, the more hay they eat.

With cold rains expected all of next week, I hope you can help so that we can make sure we have an adequate amount of feed to sustain our herds. This is no small task but so worthy as we have two very rare herds that exist nowhere else on earth!

*By the time this newsletter reaches your door, we will be out of hay.* I can't imagine having to disperse these beautiful herds if we don't meet our fundraising goals. We have invested eleven years of behavioral studies which

is invaluable. *I was surprised to find that Universities don't even have the data that we have collected so far.* Our studies must go on. This is why we so desperately need your help.

Each 1200# bale of hay costs \$35. One bale lasts one month per horse. Now imagine feeding 500 horses for one month! We can be successful if we can count on your call to action – *help save our herds.*

\$35 – one bale feeds one horse for a month

\$70 – feeds one horse for two months

\$105 – feeds one horse for three months

\$350 – feeds 10 horses for one month

\$700 – feeds 10 horses for two months

\$1,050 – feeds 10 horses for three months

\$17,500 – feeds 500 horses for one month

\$52,500 – feeds 500 horses for three months

*Hope we can count on your generosity to help us save our horses!*

Gypsy and Brownie  
our Rescue mares  
from Arizona.



Two Socks going for his morning walk on April 15th



Can you find my car?



## BLM ACCELERATES FUNDAMENTAL REFORMS TO WILD HORSE AND BURRO MANAGEMENT

In a press release recently, BLM Director, Bob Abbey, announced a proposed strategy that includes reducing the numbers of wild horses removed from the range for at least two years.

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) will play a central role in on-going reviews of the program developing science based decisions. The BLM will continue to oppose the killing or slaughter of wild horses or burros as a management practice.

The reforms respond to the input of 9,000 members of the public who commented on last year's Wild Horse and Burro Program Strategy Development Document through public meetings and written statements.

We appreciate all of our members who took the time to comment on these documents. ISPMB will keep on top of these reforms and keep you informed.





## International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros

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## AUDUBON MAGAZINE

A five-page article by Ted Williams appeared in the February issue of Audubon Magazine that took to task wild horses in the American West. This was not the first publication by Ted Williams in this magazine denigrating wild horses. We could make excuses for the magazine for the first article but not a second time. Audubon received many rebuttals at that time.

However, for the second time it is truly unacceptable for this magazine to allow Mr. Williams tirades against wild horses.

He is quoted as saying "Feral horses are out of control in the American West, laying waste to vast tracts of wildlife habitat and imperiling native species. What's worse, the public seems determined to keep it that way."

Let's get the facts straight for Mr. Williams. In 1971, our organization along with our first president, Wild Horse Annie, worked hard to get federal legislation passed so today our children and grandchildren could see wild horses roaming free. They are the last living symbols of the American West. Had we not intervened on their behalves, they would be gone today like the buffalo. In 1971 there were 303 areas where wild horses and burros had the right to remain. Today we have only 180 areas where these animals can be seen. In 1974 there were nearly 60,000 wild horses and burros done by visual count which is notoriously inaccurate at undercounting animals. Today we have half those numbers roaming free. Over 19 million acres have been taken from wild horses and burros - never to roam on those acres again.

We have approximately 6 million livestock and over 4 million wildlife on public lands. How can 30,000 wild horses be accused of destroying the habitat?

A 1990 GAO report (Government Accounting Office) stated that unless BLM removed the same percentage of livestock on public lands as they have removed wild horses, the land would not regenerate. BLM refused to do so. From firsthand experience, I can tell you how cattle graze differently than wild horses. Mr. Williams is wrong when he states wild horses camp around water. They are unlike livestock that do camp and create a lot of damage in riparian areas.

Wild horses do not nor do burros. He also states that the "feral horse is a far greater threat to native ecosystems than a cow." This is so far from the truth. The majority of environmental groups acknowledge the damage done by livestock grazing over the past 100 years. Mr. Stevens thinks that if cows are rotated from pasture to pasture it will save the habitat. Let

me tell you my experience where our horses roamed for nearly one year without any evidence of using the vegetation. I observed our horses every three days. There was a beautiful meadow that they frequented but it never looked grazed. I found out early that wild horses don't stay in one grazing area for very long unless they are just resting and not grazing. I would place all my journals, cameras and binoculars outside my truck to observe the horses and before long the horses were gone and I was busy packing up again. One spring day, I came down on my third day to observe the horses again and was shocked to see cattle out in their 2,000 acre pasture.

The cattle were on this beautiful meadow and there was neither one blade of grass left nor any shrubs. It was as if someone took a lawn mower and had it ratcheted down to the lowest level of cut. Since then, I have observed other fields where livestock are and where wild horses ranged in the pasture next to it. There is no comparison. Livestock do a lot of damage and they can do it in just hours of grazing because they don't move until all the forage is gone. Even if livestock are rotated, the fact remains that they utilize more than 50% of the grass which makes it much more difficult to grow and could ultimately damage the grass in a drought. Wild horses clip the grass and as I have observed they don't utilize more than 50% of the blades of grass before they move on to another site allowing the grass to regenerate.

The Forest Service also noted that when water development on public lands increased during the mid 80's, it allowed cattle to move to other parts of the grazing land. Putting water developments on public lands increased more areas for cattle to forage. When livestock numbers should have been decreased, they remained the same or in some cases increased.

According to the Forest Service water developments allowed for more destruction of the lands now accessible to livestock.

When the Taylor Grazing Act was passed in 1934 the forage allocation was greater than the forage that existed on public lands! Now forage allocation known as Animal Unit Month (AUM) have been divided into two categories. Inactive is for the forage that never existed on the lands and put to rest and active is for the forage that does exist. The rancher can still claim inactive and active to acquire loans from the banks. We often hear how ranchers have given up so many of their AUMs. Now you know why. Those AUMs never existed in the first place! Many were on the inactive list.

Mr. Williams uses many disparaging words to



# ARTICLE DENIGRATES WILD HORSES

describe wild horses such as diseased, mongrels, alien, and feral. The name of the section for his article is aptly named INCITE.

Wild horses are reintroduced native wildlife to our North American continent. Cows are non-native and yes, they are destructive to the habitat. Wild horses evolved on this continent over the past 60 million years. They disappeared for a very short time of 8,000 to 12,000 years which is "but a wink of the eye in geological time." Vegetation had not changed enough for wild horses to still find their niche in our American landscape once more. DNA shows that the horse that existed 26,000 years ago is the same horse that returned 500 years ago with the Spaniards. Thank goodness for genetic testing – our proof.

He quotes, "No alien species can thrive or even exist in a 'natural ecological balance.'" Two to three million wild horses and 60 million buffalo existed in 17 western states in the early 1800's. The grass remained knee high with all those numbers until the introduction of millions of livestock and the invention of barbed wire by the end of that century. Since the turn of the 20th century, the western rangelands' health declined and has been generally in a static to downward trend.

Wild horses and burros have always been a target for removal by wildlife interests and livestock operators – simply because they can both agree at the table and compromise sacrificing wild horses.

As a team member of the Black Mountain Eco-team in AZ where advocates for Big Horn Sheep wanted wild burros eliminated. I was told by the head of the National Big Horn Sheep Society that if burros had "horns," they would be worth something. Is this the value we put on animals – if they are hunted they are useful to us?

Speaking of our team for which we were awarded the prestigious "Health of the Land Award" in 1996, I must say I knew the burros would win over the Big Horns when we completed our habitat monitoring studies. After the first year of monitoring, it was found that the Big Horn Sheep had an 80% utilization rate in their prime lambing grounds in the Black Mountains (BLM allows only 50%). That meant that the Wildlife agencies would have to remove ewes and transplant them in other places. Removing ewes is a taboo no matter how degraded the habitat becomes. What did BLM and the Wildlife agencies do in Arizona? They simply cancelled the lambing grounds as a monitoring site and claimed it a "sacrifice" area. This means that the land could not regenerate because of over usage

by Big Horn Sheep and that the sheep would remain. If the agencies are truly concerned about the habitat as they often state, they would have removed the ewes to a level that the land could sustain and allowed the land to recover.

Yes, I could give many examples like this. This is why our western rangelands are generally in a declining to static trend.

Although there are many points of contention in this article, I'll close with William's assertion that wild horse numbers increase 20% to 30%. The National Academy of Sciences noted that fertility rates in horses were half those numbers in 1980. With the massive removals of wild horses over the past twenty years, fertility rates have increased. Our studies can confirm that when wild horses are left alone and family structures are not broken through repeated round-ups, that the wisdom of these animals keeps fertility rates around 10%.

We agree that recruitment rates could be as high as 20% but that is not normal. It comes because of our lack of understanding the true social structure of wild herds. It comes from repeated gathers where the family bands are broken. ISPMB now has eleven years of study and we have extraordinary findings regarding these family bands.

Our studies are so important to the future of all wild horses on public lands. I have discussed our findings with BLM Director Abbey. Our goal is to help BLM manage wild horses in a way that protects their herds. I am hopeful that BLM is listening. We just must make critical changes in the way wild horses are managed on public lands. It may mean whether they survive for future generations to enjoy.



## One Comment and Action Taken Against the AUDUBON ARTICLE (FOOD FOR THOUGHT)

I would like to cancel my subscription to Audubon and my membership due to an article written under the "Incite" article by Mr. Ted Williams. I have been a member and supported Audubon from the 1970's, but I was mortified to see your magazine serve as a forum for this person who is a well known as a bigoted and mean spirited person who would like to cruelly exterminate all of the remaining wild horses in this country. I find it irresponsible of your organization, which once held in high esteem, to provide a platform for anti-environmental views of this magnitude.

You once stood as a guardian against the extinction of threatened and endangered species. I am an ardent and passionate supporter of many environmental groups. I have heard and read in their publications the odds that our environment is fighting and the conflicting views of other groups, but not expressed in a form that reads like a Mission Statement. You should be ashamed of whatever person or policy allowed this type of article. NOT letter to the editor, to see the light of day.

I want you to immediately remove my name, address and e-mail from your records. Please rethink and return to the days when your publication was not the best choice to line the bottom of a birdcage.



## TO THE RESCUE OF TWO SOCKS

Every year it seems that we have to rescue one or two foals. But for the most part, the mares take very good care of their offspring. This March 8th day was very cold and snow dotted the pastures. The winds were their usual force at 10 mph. Our Virginia Range herd that we rescued in 2007 had a first time mother who gave birth to a handsome sorrel foal with fancy white markings on his face and legs. We found him running with our beautiful pinto mare that obviously was not pregnant nor had she been. After finding his mother, we set up our capture pens to see if she would take her foal back. In using birth control drugs, we have noticed that mothers who have had many foals will try to steal foals from other mares. We don't see it in our two herds that we use no birth control. After containing Two Socks mother, we had to then confront our pinto mare and steal the foal back. This at times can be very dangerous as mothers will kick, strike and bite to save their foals. Luckily, this pinto knew this wasn't her foal and she let go of the foal as we moved in. We put Two Socks with his mother who tried to kick and bite him. The handwriting was on the wall. We took the little boy into our ranch living room where he would spend the next month of his life.

The next big hurdle was to provide this foal with colostrum which provides all the nutrition and antibodies to keep babies healthy. Thankfully our neighbor, Courtney Dosch, donated his cow's colostrum for

Two Socks. The first 24 hours are critical for a foal. He took to the bottle right away and was downright thankful for a warm house and soft blankets on the floor. He is such a smart foal. The next day he was drinking out of a bowl and using his quilt to sleep on. We tried to reunite mother and foal again but the mare exhibited the same behaviors.

Raising foals requires a lot of time and Foal Lac milk is very expensive. Our foals stay on milk until they reach their sixth month at which time we transfer them to Purina's Junior feed. After spending three sleepless nights on call to provide milk like his mother would, it was a welcomed sight to see our first volunteers come to relieve me. Thanks to Bernay Rosenthal and Mirey Bodner who helped provide care to this foal.

Two Socks is one of the brightest foals we ever raised. He looks forward to our daily walks, weather permitting. We can usually do a half mile every morning. He plays hard and has just about every action and movement available to the most athletic of horses. He does dressage, western pleasure, pole bending, rodeo, and trail. He can jump four feet off the ground and never seem to come down! He loves running like a Thoroughbred, streaking across the fields.

He learned to walk up the steps and through the front door into the living room. He also loved looking out the picture window



Shawn carrying Two Socks

Photo Sheila Nicoles

watching his herd members. We have tried uniting him with other mares but to no avail. Some days, I'd watch him "nurse" the blanket that he was lying on.

Hopefully, we can find a home where he can have constant attention. He is one great foal who is fearless.

(Thank you to Syd M. from Skokie, IL, who bought Two Socks his first foal blanket which he wears everyday! She also sent cow cookie treats for Courtney's cow. We are grateful!)

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This year marks my 30th year dedicating my life to the preservation and protection of wild horses and burros. In some ways, it seems like a very short time. It is hard to believe how fast time really goes. I started riding at the tender age of four and by five my girlfriend and I would disappear into the deep thicketed woods in the mountains of Pennsylvania on our ponies. I was the only one in my family who had a passion for horses. In grade school, all of my book reports were on horses. Finally in sixth grade after reading all of Walter Farley's books on the Black Stallion, my teacher ordered me not to write another book report on a horse. I was devastated.

I know she had my best interest at heart trying to broaden my scope of the world through a diversity of books. For years, I worked in a Trauma One Center as a Critical Care nurse and also taught classical piano for twelve years. I think my sixth grade teacher would have been proud of my diversity!

Yet when I adopted my first wild horse in 1981, she changed my course in life. I had the greatest opportunities in the horse world from trail riding, showing and training but to share your life with a wild horse was beyond the greatest pleasure anyone could have. I encountered great opposition from the horse industry telling me that I could get killed, who would want an inbred stupid etc. etc. I knew they were wrong and I set out to prove it. When one has lived and breathed horses all your life, it is easy to recognize truly a remarkable animal. There isn't a wild horse yet that I have met that isn't remarkable. Nature has a way of keeping these animals pure - without influence by humankind. They are honest, kind, loving and fierce when they need to be. They can carry you like the wind to places where man cannot travel.

All these years, I have volunteered my time for this cause. It is truly a labor of love. Work begins when I wake up and ends when I fall in bed at night. I have never worked harder

or longer hours in my life as I do now. But how can one say it is work when it is your passion.

Our organization has made great accomplishments. Saving four wild herds is truly one of our greatest accomplishments. No other organization in the U.S. has accomplished as much for wild horses and burros as ISPMB.

Yes, there are times, like now, that I wonder if we can continue to raise the funds that we need to sustain our Conservation program. But I am confident that if I have dedicated my life to saving our nation's great heritage - wild horses and burros - that there are many people who believe as I do and will also give from their hearts to sustain our program.

I am always awed by the generosity of humankind even in the darkest of times.



## OUR FAMOUS STALLION IAN ~ INJURED BY SNOWMOBILER



Ian, Gila Herd Stallion

On February 20th, 2011, South Dakota suffered another winter blizzard. If one stays inside, the blizzard is absolutely awesome to behold knowing the strength and power of nature. We always prepare the horses for upcoming storms after receiving reports from our weather radio. As the winds hit velocities of 40 mph and greater, the horses line up tail to the wind one after another in straight lines. As the storm was subsiding at 3 PM, a person, who may never know the damage he caused, went out snowmobiling after being high on "spirits." The tracks led to our south pasture where our rare and endangered Spanish horses reside on 500 acres.

The horses apparently were terrorized by the sound of this snowmobile in a snow storm still blinding the skies. The police came to our ranch looking for this person around 7 PM that night. According to the search party that ensued that evening, they found our famous stallion, Ian, outside the pasture standing in two feet of snow in last year's sunflower field. At first they thought Ian was the missing person. They wheeled around in their snowmobiles to come back for a second look. The horse never spooked but just stood there in the dark, obviously dazed.

No one told us that we had a horse out. We didn't find out until the next morning after more snowmobiles and a helicopter joined the search. When Shawn, our ranch manager, and I went down to the South pasture we saw the Gila herd running like cougars were chasing them!

There were snowmobilers at the top of the field but still outside the pasture. I was shocked to see Ian out of the pasture. He wasn't himself as he knows me and wouldn't even look toward me as I called his name. As Shawn tried to herd him back to the road, I watched as he picked his feet up much higher than the drifts. He appeared lost and had no idea where the road was. It became painfully evident that he could not see. We saw the barbed wire fence that was down. The snow had already blown over any of his tracks. This stallion would never go through a fence. He is the kindest, most gentle and yet most dominant stallion who has fought off four stallions at a time to keep his harem. When the horses were released in 2003, he had the most mares caring for our oldest mare, Diana, whom he had the greatest of respect.

My heart was broken to see this great stallion pick his way to the road with Shawn behind him gently pushing him forward with his voice. We had hay in the back of our truck and we put it down for Ian. He couldn't see but his sense of smell was working and he eased

his way to the flake of hay. How could this happen to the greatest of all stallions? There were barbed wire cuts across his face and chest. In storms, wild horses keep their heads close to the ground as they move. This is how he hurt his eyes. The snowmobiler must have really spooked the herd and cut off Ian from his mares and ran him through the fence.

We were fortunate that the road crew came earlier that day to keep the road open for the search party. Otherwise, we would not have been able to capture Ian. It required us to take our horse trailer and be able to turn around somewhere down the very narrow road. Shawn and I sized up the road condition and we realized it could work without us getting stuck in three feet of snow.

We went back and got panels and captured Ian. Without his ability to see he just walked into the panels and then panicked for a minute until he realized he could stay there and eat. After all it must have been a full day without food or water for him.

The next step was to bring the truck back with the trailer behind and try not to panic Ian as we drove past him so we could back the trailer up to the panels. Ian has been in a trailer before.

He suffered a terrible injury several years ago which without surgery would have been the end of the horse. So several thousands of dollars later he survived without any lameness from a torn ligament and joint capsule from a sharp cut across his front foot.

Trying to load a blind wild horse is quite interesting. He smelled the trailer and knew what it was but he didn't pick his legs up high enough to enter the trailer. With soft coaxing and a finger to his rear he made the big step into the trailer.

We brought him back to the barn where his bride, Brianna and her foal, are housed for the winter. Brianna knew something was wrong with Ian and she refused to acknowledge him.

This behavior, I have seen over and over. When there is something wrong with a horse in the herd, they are ostracized.

Upon examination, Ian had barbed wire cuts below his right eye. There is almost nothing at the left eye but that is the eye Ian doesn't like touched. We are grateful for our vet from Denver, Dr. Scott Toppin, who is always available to help us. For three weeks, we had been going to the barn every three hours to put medicine in Ian's eyes. He was on antibiotics and pain medicine.

In spite of all the treatment, Ian still cannot see today. Ian has been featured in National Geographic magazine twice and just recently in the Smithsonian magazine. We will turn him out with Santiago, our young Gila stallion. We won't give up hope that maybe his eyesight will come back. At least he can buddy up with Santiago who will keep him from going through the fences he cannot see.

### UPDATE on the SNOWMOBILER from MN:

*About 9AM that morning, the lost snowmobiler walked into a farm house 9 miles south of our pasture. He went into a river with his snowmobiler and walked for hours with frozen clothes until he found the farm house. Of course he is fortunate to be alive but he may have destroyed the life of our great stallion not to say how many people he put in danger by searching throughout the night for him. The searchers did not hear one thank you from this man. I do hope someday that he realizes the consequences of his actions.*





## INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF MUSTANGS AND BURROS

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Check out our website for  
updated news and pictures:

[www.ISPMB.org](http://www.ISPMB.org)

or Visit us on Facebook!

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### DID YOU KNOW

*ISPMB created the concept of the adoption program in 1968 when we adopted out foals from the Pryor Mountains in Montana. The BLM adopted our program in 1976 and began a nationwide Adopt-A Horse/Burro program. More than 200,000 wild horses and burros have been adopted by the BLM.*

**ISPMB's Helping Wild Horses for over 50 years!**

### HOW CHILDREN CAN CHANGE THE WORLD



Kira and Josie

In Leesburg, Virginia, two first grade girls read in the local paper about the plight of our wild horses and our need to buy hay before winter set in. Josie Binkley and Kira Ziemniak decided to sell lemonade and cookies to help ISPMB. The girls raised \$150 and became a sponsor of Miss Little Ears. If we

could judge the future of our planet based on the actions of these two special ladies, we can be very hopeful for a bright future based on their compassion for animals. We appreciate their parents who have taught them that giving is just as important as receiving.

(Special thanks to Polly and Brad Shaffer who ran ads in the local Virginia papers requesting donations for hay.)

ISPMB gives a great big thank you to the Interscholastic Equestrian League in Studio City, CA, who held a bake sale at their horse show in December for our benefit. These youth raised \$300 and sponsored two of our foals, Miss Little Ears and Lakota Cate. We appreciate all the hard work that this team did under the supervision of Darlene Kaplan. Thank you to all! They had a great time and hope to help again.

*Thank you girls from all of us here at ISPMB!*

### WELDON LEE'S ROCKY MOUNTAIN PHOTO ADVENTURE WILD HORSE PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP COMING TO ISPMB IN MAY 29TH-JUNE 1ST

This is a great opportunity to photograph our rare Gila herd in their natural habitat. You'll learn everything you wanted to know about photographing wild animals.

Please contact Weldon and Lori for more information at 303-747-2074 or  
[wlee@RockyMountainPhotoAdventure.com](mailto:wlee@RockyMountainPhotoAdventure.com)

***This is a workshop you cannot afford to miss!***