

FACT SHEET ON WILD HORSE AND WILD BURRO ABUSE

For more than two decades I have appealed for the enactment of legislation in behalf of the wild horses and burros of our country.

Commercial exploitation through capture by airplane and mechanized vehicles during the 1940's and 1950's brought them to a point of near-annihilation, and served two purposes: (1) It made more of our public land available for the grazing of privately owned domestic livestock and for target animals to lure the hunting industry which in turn enriches the coffers of State Fish and Game Commissions: (2) It provided a cheap commodity for the suppliers of pet food.

Public support of Federal legislation to outlaw the use of airborne and mechanized vehicles in the capture of wild unbranded horses, mares, colts and burros running at large on public lands of the United States resulted in the enactment of Public Law 86-234 in 1959.

With this expedient means of capture outlawed, the "harvesters" were not able to continue taking the animals in large quantities, and for a time it seemed these living symbols of our heritage of freedom were to be safe at last. But it was not enough to say "Leave them alone" and it became increasingly evident that the additional protection, management and control program for which I had unsuccessfully pleaded in 1959 MUST be put into effect if any were to survive . . . FOR:

In a decade of man's encroachment upon the habitat of the wild ones to a degree never dreamed of a few years back, they have been fenced off from their watering holes and grazing areas;

Being neither an edible nor a trophy animal, they have been indiscriminately shot, trapped, driven off, lest they reduce the forage available for edible and trophy animals;

Domestic horses released on the open range to produce a harvestable commodity for pet food use -- namely offspring -- have been gathered by any means deemed most expedient by the claimant (airplanes for the most part) and all horses and burros in an area, including progeny and wild, were captured;

With jurisdiction in the hands of state and local agencies susceptible to pressures from commercially-oriented interest, what amounted to an "open season" on them prevailed, despite the fact they are a species of animal that belongs to all of America, not just to those whose areas they inhabit -- areas for the most part where their welfare was of secondary consideration or non-existent concern -- and enforcement of the anti-airplane and mechanized vehicle law was negligible;

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Efforts directed toward enactment of legislation to provide for a protection, management and control program persisted and gained momentum, and in 1971 such a measure was passed by Congress to emerge as Public Law 92-195, with the two federal agencies representing all the people of America -- the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service ---- assigned responsibility for carrying out the provisions of the law.

With two Federal laws enacted in their behalf, it would seem that these animals, colorful remnants of our pioneer heritage, would be assured a place on our public lands -- your land and mine -- but pressures on the management agencies by private commercial interests are intense.

Little more than a year had elapsed since enactment of Public Law 92-195 when in February of this year a roundup of approximately sixty wild horses took place in a remote area in Idaho. It would have gone undetected had it not been for the courage of a witness who reported it to us. So brutal were the methods used in the roundup that many died before ever reaching their destination, a pet food slaughtering plant. Seven plunged to their deaths over a cliff.

Because of our immediate action after being alerted to the tragedy a few were saved -- a miserable remnant of a once proud band, located at the pet food processing center.

They are still there -- in pens -- nineteen in all counting the new foal whose mother miraculously survived the brutality. We appeal to you, the public, to help us set them free on the land they once roamed -- and in order to safeguard them from retaliatory measures at the hands of those who have already destroyed so many of them there -- help us in our appeal to have their habitat designated a national wild horse range.

Please write to: The Honorable Rogers C. B. Morton, Secretary of the Interior,  
Washington, D. C. 20240: and to  
The Honorable Earl Butz, Secretary of Agriculture,  
Washington, D.C. 20250

and ask that the survivors of the Idaho atrocity be returned to their lands; that their habitat be designated a national wild horse range; that action be taken against those responsible for the roundup. Thank you.

VELMA B JOHNSTON (Wild Horse Annie)  
140 Greenstone Drive, Reno, Nevada, 89502

October 10, 1973

Mr. Ed Pierson, LaPorte, Colorado, retired State Director, Bureau of Land Management in Wyoming; member Board of Directors, Larimer County Horsemen's Association; 40 years specialized experience in Natural Resource Management.

Mr. Dean Prosser, Jr., Cheyenne, Wyoming, past President of the National Livestock Brand Conference; Executive Secretary, Wyoming Livestock Association, member Wyoming State Legislature.

Mrs. Pearl Twyne, Great Falls, Virginia, Executive Director, Virginia Federation of Humane Societies; President, American Horse Protection Association; past President, Defenders of Wildlife.

Mr. Roy Young, Elko, Nevada, Rancher; past President, Nevada Cattlemen's Association; member Nevada Legislature.

SECRETARIES BUTZ AND MORTON BOTH SAID THAT THEY WERE ESPECIALLY PLEASED WITH THE HIGH QUALITY OF SPECIALIZED KNOWLEDGE POSSESSED BY MEMBERS OF THE BOARD. THEY STRESSED THAT THE APPOINTMENTS WILL ENABLE THE FOREST SERVICE AND THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACT FOR THE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WILD FREE-ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS THAT ARE TRULY SYMBOLS OF A NATIONAL HERITAGE IN THE SETTLEMENT OF THE WEST.

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Dr. C. Wayne Cook, Chairman

Mrs. Velma Johnston, Vice-Chairman

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SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE EARL L. BUTZ AND SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR ROGERS C. B. MORTON ANNOUNCED TODAY THE APPOINTMENTS OF NINE PERSONS TO THE WILD HORSE AND BURRO ADVISORY BOARD. THE APPOINTMENT OF AN ADVISORY BOARD IS A REQUIREMENT OF THE WILD FREE-ROAMING HORSES AND BURROS ACT PASSED BY CONGRESS IN DECEMBER 1971.

Board members will advise the secretaries on matters pertaining to the protection, management, and control of wild free-roaming horses and burros on public lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. The members will serve an initial appointment of one year beginning January 1, 1973. The board is scheduled to hold its first meeting in January.

AGRICULTURE AND INTERIOR NAME MEMBERS TO WILD HORSE ADVISORY BOARD  
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The advisory board members were selected for their specialized knowledge as required by the act about the protection of horses and burros, management of wildlife, animal husbandry, and natural resource management. The following members have been appointed to the Board:

Dr. C. Wayne Cook, Ft. Collins, Colorado, Head, Range Science Department at Colorado State University, recognized authority on Range Nutrition and Range Management; past President, Society for Range Management.

Floyd W. Frank, D.V.M., PHD, Moscow, Idaho head of the Veterinary Science Department, University of Idaho.

Mr. Ben Glading, Sacramento, California, retired Chief, Game Management Branch, California Department of Fish and Game, past President of the Wildlife Society.

Dr. Roger Hungerford, University of Arizona, Tucson, Professor of Biological Science specializing in Desert Wildlife species.

Mrs. Velma Johnston (Wild Horse Annie), Reno, Nevada a leader in promoting legislative efforts for protection of wild horses and burros, currently President, International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros, and Chairman - Board of Trustees of Wild Horse Organized Assistance, Inc. (WHOA!).

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