Data Submitted (UTC 11): 7/9/2013 12:00:00 AM
First name: Carmen
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: I attended the meeting regarding your assessment of wild horses on June 27,2013 in Cold Creek.

1 would have to question your count of the horse population. I live there and know how the horses move in and out of the area. Your estimate seems high and I believe because you don't have an accurate way of counting them that you are estimating high for your purposes.

Your report contends that the wild horses and burros have a detrimental effect on the habitat without offering any proof. On the contrary, horses have a beneficial effect in that they keep the dry grasses down and remove fire fuel from the area. This is noted in the Cold Creek fire manuals and evidenced in the Red Rock fires after removal of the horses.

The BLM is required under federal law to protect and contain horses where they existed in the 1970's. However, their allotted land is continually being eliminated to the point that their numbers are exceeding the AML allotments. It's not so much that populations have grown as it is land allotments have arbitrarily been reduced.

I have to question whether the BLM is sincere in their concern for the wild horses in light of their refusal to cooperate with Madeline Pickens who has put up millions of her own money to provide for them.

In the same vein, residents in Cold Creek have been trained in darting and offered assistance in the implementation of the birth control PZP to help control populations. Additionally, offers have been made by the residents to assist in bait trapping to do the darting. To date the BLM has refused to cooperate. Most of the budget is geared towards gathers which results in higher ongoing costs to the taxpayers. Gathers (roundups), especially using helicopters, are not only costly but cruel and abusive to the animals.

If the BLM was truly sincere they would listen to their own contracted study by the NAS. The way you have managed the horses, thus far, has been a miserable failure. Try a new way.
It is a given that the impetus behind the gathers is the need" of the range by cattlemen for their welfare cattle. It may come as a surprise to these ranchers but these public lands belong to all Nevadans for our enjoyment too.

Now, I would like to take exception to the rigid "one size fits all" policy of the BLM. Each area should be looked at individually and judged on its own merits. Cold Creek is a unique area. We don't have cattlemen to contend with and there is ample water in the area. We are situated 45 minutes from Las Vegas and have hundreds of tourists from all over the world visiting Cold Creek just to get a look at the "Wild West".Not a day goes by that we don't see tourists with their cameras and tripods set up waiting for hours to capture the horses on film. What a tragedy it would be to deny the public the privilege of seeing these horses in the wild. This privilege doesn't exist in too many places in the world. The BLM is fast eradicating the wild horses to the point of extinction. For what I might ask? To satisfy a few greedy ranchers?

A plan could be devised to preserve the Cold Creek horses for purposes of generating tourism revenue and providing enjoyment for the general public.

Sincerely,

Carmen Rhoda/J //}}
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