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Organization:
Title:
Comments: I strongly oppose any roundups or horse removals from the Heber Wild Horse Herd.
Do not manage this herd into extinction: the herd needs more than 104 horses to be genetically viable. Protect the Heber Wild Horses as a wild and free-roaming herd.
Roundups and removals are brutal and deadly. It is unacceptable that these FEDERALLY PROTECTED HORSES are put in harm's way by the very agencies that have the legal obligation to protect them!
The Forest Service has not provided any scientific data to prove that there is an overpopulation of horses in the Heber Herd. Where is the hard data to back up this claim? The arbitrary Appropriate Management Level (AML) is not based on science and cannot be used to assess overpopulation. Unless the Forest Service provides census numbers (with photographic proof) from 2005 to present to substantiate their allegation of the herd's rapid growth, there is no basis for this claim.
Furthermore, the Forest Service needs to provide the data it used to define the extent of the Heber Wild Horse Territory and explain why only a portion of the forest was designated as Wild Horse Territory even though historical accounts show wild horses had been roaming through the entire forest.
The Forest Service must provide the data that show water and forage consumption for each grazing species, both domestic and wild. It must publish number of livestock, grazing allotments and grazing periods for all livestock, including the names and provenance of all the allotment holders.
The proposed management plan does not have the welfare of the horses at heart; it caters only to the private interests of the ranchers who want to graze their livestock in the area. The Forest Service needs to stop prioritizing special interest groups such as ranchers and must instead represent the vast majority of the public who wants to protect wild horses. Federally protected wild horses must have priority over private livestock.
The Forest Service needs to make sure to include an equal proportion of true horse advocates with expert knowledge of this herd in any meetings and working groups. The meetings must be open to the public and need to be on tape, with official minutes. Wild horse advocates are not to be silenced, ignored, censored or fired. They need to have the same freedom of speech and opportunities to voice their opinions and concerns as other groups, and their comments are to receive the same consideration and weight as the comments from other parties.
The Forest Service must focus its energy on finding the criminals who kill and steal horses and bring these criminals to justice. The Forest Service must put a plan in place for the protection of the wild horses and enforce the harshest prison sentences and penalties for each offense.