

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/12/2020 9:56:19 PM

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Comments: You state that one of the primary purposes for establishing the Tonto National Forest in 1905 was to protect its watersheds. Cows deposit between 29 - 70 pounds of feces and 30- 49 pounds of urine daily, most of which ends up in the surface water. Yet, you propose decreasing the herd of 418 wild horses and continuing the grazing of 26,000 livestock. Horses roam and do not degrade the environment, unless their territory is restricted by fencing. There is no proof in any previous environmental assessments that removing horses has significantly improved rangeland conditions. Reduction of livestock would have the greatest impact. Previous EA's done by the Bureau of Reclamations on the Tonto Forest note dramatic improvement in the condition of riparian habitat with the removal of livestock grazing. I would like to see tax payer money used to preserve these horses, rather cattle grazing that involves subsidies in the form of below market grazing fees, water storage and delivery costs. It is disturbing to me that your plan is not based on current scientific information. I would like to see wild horse management based on the National Academy of Science report of 2013. This would provide an objective assessment of wild horse populations and a science-based rationale to allocate forage and habitat resources. It has been established by the GAO that recreation contributes more to local economies than ranching. Wild horses provide interest. It seems to me that they pose no more of a problem than other wildlife viewing. Most wild horses do not seek contact with humans and, therefore, should be viewed as an asset.

This is not about demonizing the livestock industry. It is about changing a policy that is behind the times. We cannot afford to keep destroying wild places with exploitive and harmful activities. We are dependent on the earth and need to protect it. Our survival depends on it.