

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/16/2020 11:33:45 PM

First name: Rebecca

Last name: Dante

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Hello!

I am a college student who values safeguarding our ecosystems. I respectfully ask you to protect horses and not reduce the wild horse herd.

The Ochoco National Forest is proposing a wild horse herd management plan that would reduce the current estimated 135 wild horses in the Big Summit wild horse territory to only 12 to 57 horses under their preferred alternative. The Forest Service's preferred alternative would not result in a viable population since it wouldn't be large enough to maintain genetic diversity over time and one severe winter or drought could kill 12 or more horses. By contrast, there are two bands of sheep totaling 2,200 ewe and lamb pairs using the same area. The wild horses are blamed for issues that include long-term legacy damage to riparian areas from livestock grazing, roads, and logging, as well as from overgrazing winter range which is also used by increasing numbers of elk and deer, and in most years by the sheep.

Please allow the horses to roam freely.

Take care,

Rebecca