Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/27/2021 7:40:00 PM
First name: Lawrence
Last name: Hyer
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Please remove the feral hoses that now exist on the national forest.
The wild horses herd of the Apache Sitgreaves National forest are dead. Stop spending money treating feral livestock as wild national treasures.

Under US law the words "wild horse" means a free roaming horse on BLM or Forest Service Land. (They must have originated on that land.) Legally, those words do not apply to any other free roaming horses in the US.
Feral
An animal or plant is considered feral if the population was once domesticated but has subsequently either escaped human captivity, strayed, or has purposefully been released or abandoned.
The Heber Wild Horse Territory was established in 1974, pursuant to the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971. This decision was a doomed one from the start. in 1974 a small band/herd of seven horses was identified by the Forest service. We understand now that for a herd to have genetic viability it needs to have around 120 individual horses. The size of the territory was far too small to allow for needful movement/migration of the herd due to weather and food/water availability. All that being said, only those original seven horse and their posterity fall or fell under the 1971 wild horse and burro free roaming act.
ACCORDING TO THE 1971 ACT
ALL OTHER HORSES ARE TO BE CONSIDERED STRAY LIVESTOCK AND TREATED AS SUCH.
IN 1993 the Heber district ranger reported to the forest supervisor only two mares remained (USDA Forest Service 1993a).

In 2016 and 2017, an ethnographic study was conducted by a Forest Service historian to inform the deciding official about the relationship of the current horse population to the horses on the territory when it was designated (USDA Forest Service 2017). The study included conducting and synthesizing oral histories given by ten people with various associations with the territory.
Of the ten interviews completed, all interviewees who had good to extensive knowledge of the territory and area corroborated similar stories, despite numbers and dates occasionally remembered differently. There were around 7 horses in the 1960s and 1970s when the territory was first created. A hard winter in 1967-1968 left the stud or stallion sterile (one source indicates 1983). There were no more foals within that original herd after that winter or any subsequent years. The herd dwindled down to 2 horses, which likely died of old age. Of those interviewees who had extensive knowledge of that herd stated those horses originally came from retired Army remount horses no longer needed after World War I. They were turned out to the area sometime in the 1930s.
In a court of law, ten witnessed testimonies would be sufficient.
Most of what I have written was taken from the Forest service proposals.
I have added this because it is evident that most of the respondents have not bothered to read the act from 1971 or the forest service proposal. I object that feral horses are being allowed to be on and damage federal lands. According to the 1971 act the land must be used in a balanced way. This includes the wild and the permitted domestic animals that graze there.