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First name: Annette

Last name: Ancel-Wisner

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am concerned about the future of the Heber Wild Horses. My understanding is that you are proposing to leave a herd of only 50. This is not even genetically viable, will lead to inbreeding, and eventually extinction. What a travesty. This herd needs to be humanely managed.

The AML is too low! You only counted the available forage in the 19,000 acre Wild Horse Territory (much of it is fenced off!)--most of the horses live on 300,000 acres outside of the territory. 300,000 acres!!

Livestock grazing is allowed almost everywhere on the Apache-Sitgreaves Forest and should be decreased in the WHT. Livestock should not be taking forage away from the horses. The horses deserve their fair share of the resources!

Removal operations are very costly--both to conduct and to care for the horses after removal and for the rest of their lives. Roundups are also cruel and often result in the deaths of some horses. PZP is a proven, safe, and cost-effective method of birth control. It is currently being used successfully in many other herds. It would be less expensive and a better strategy to start using PZP now to keep the herd size in check, rather than reducing the herd to such an unviable number and then start using PZP. PZP is the only method that should be considered as it is more cost-effective and safer than Gonacon and IUDs. Sex ratio skewing does not preserve natural herd behavior.

The majority of Americans want to see wild horses (and burros) on our public lands. America was built on the backs of horses--they deserve and we demand better for them. We want these resilient icons of the West to be around to enjoy by future generations to come.

In summary, please leave the Heber Wild Horses where they are and start administering birth control to keep the herd size in check. Instead of rounding them up, I think your time would better served trying to find the killer(s) of these protected animals. The Hebers have already lost more than enough horses.