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Comments: I am vehemently opposed to rounding up the Heber wild horses and reducing the herd to a nonviable number of 52 and then injecting the remaining mares with PZP. These unique horses must be preserved and protected in the entire forest where they have long been living, including: the areas where they roam in the forest, the Heber Territory and the Black Mesa Ranger District.

These wild horses are legally protected under The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, which states that "it is the policy of Congress that wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death; and to accomplish this they are to be considered in the area where presently found as an integral part of the natural system of the public lands." The Heber horses are an integral part of our public lands.

The Forest Service must conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), not only an Environmental Assessment, due to the significant effects this roundup will have on the environment, which will become strikingly different following the removal of so many horses from this historic Heber herd and due to the aftermath of birth control on the remaining herd's social structure. The National Environmental Policy Act requires that an EIS be done.

By law, wild horses cannot be removed until they are proven to be "excess." No monitoring studies have been conducted to determine the causes of damaged habitat. That is not legal.

Finally, I live in California where wildfires are an annual, ever-deadly threat to the environment, economy, quality of life and communities. Wildfires typically originate in forested areas and spread rapidly. The Heber horses perform a valuable and important service by keeping fires down and contributing to the biodiversity of the eco-system.