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Organization:
Title:
Comments: I am writing to express my concern with the proposed plan by the Forest Service to cull the Heber Wild horse herd, possibly to extinction. I understand that growing numbers of wild horses place a stress on the environment; however I believe that allowing cattle to free-range in the forest also places a stress on the environment. The influence and overwhelming power of the cattlemen to influence the decision to reduce/eliminate wild horses to the benefit of cattle is not a decision that should stand.

Wild horses have been a part of Arizona's history much, much longer than cattle. Historically, wild horses ranged across pre-historical Arizona and while some think the horses disappeared thousands of years ago, the Native American story says that this is not so. Horses have been with us for eons in Arizona, cattle have not. Cattle are the invaders and should carry less weight in any decisions made by the Forest Service.

While the Forest Service considers wild horses an irritant and would prefer, perhaps, not to have to deal with them, it is incumbent upon those who are mandated with being stewards of the forest to include being stewards of the wild horses as well. The wild horse is representative of a way of life that we should treasure that we should value. The beauty of this amazing animal and the source of delight they bring to those lucky enough to see them in their native environment is a moment to be treasured.

While ranchers have an unequal amount of influence with the Forest Service, along with loggers and miners, it is important to consider the average person who just happens to live in Arizona. The average person, who also pays taxes and enjoys the wonders of the forests in our state, would must prefer to allow the wild horse to remain a part of our heritage.

There are methods available to reduce the number of wild horses, such as birth control darts. This method is currently being used in the Salt River area and the herds are not increasing as rapidly. I would encourage the Forest Service to consider these humane methods of birth control for the Heber herds.

Please do not murder hundreds of wild creatures in order to allow cattle to have a higher priority. The owners of cattle will ultimately take those creatures to slaughterhouses and butcher the creatures for meat. The wild horses, if allowed to survive, will provide a beauty and magnificence of spirit that cannot be sold for profit.