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First name: Ieva

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Sir or Madam,

While I am not a US citizen, I would like to briefly voice my support to the organizations, communities and individuals who are striving to ensure healthy wild horse and burros populations in the USA.

First of all, I think that scientific and environmental considerations must be taken into account with as much regard as the expressed wish for the local society to keep their icons, to have these magnificent animals to love and to follow their lives.

These times are times when hope is really relevant, when being heard is vital - and elimination of any species fills us with dread of everything that we might lose.

We do not want to lose as much as we might, and we certainly do not want to lose the characters of the legends and fables, and our folklore and our community spirit.

It is also, as far as scientific evidence goes, unfeasible to maintain healthy populations of wild horses and burros upon implementing the current plan in which the population levels are set at the lowest.

It is especially unviable in this period of great change in our climate when species struggle as it is due to drought, fires and other disasters of natural or manmade nature.

Any species that we want to conserve must now be put at higher numbers for them to adjust and to adapt and to ensure genetic diversity of the populations because only diverse populations can withstand the biotic and abiotic stress successfully.

In many places of the world the wild horses and donkeys are also currently regarded as an insurance against wildfires because they graze on the ladder fuels ensuring the regeneration of vegetation and limiting the spreading of flames.

There are many reasons why these populations should be kept thriving - cultural and environmental justice being two of them.

I would very much like to see the US Forest Service upholding its responsibilities and justifying the trust that communities are placing in you regarding our collective states, hopes and goals.

I should very much like to believe that the US Forest Service will listen to the scientists and to the people of the USA, your nation, who wish to ensure that the wild horses and the wild burros will, too, receive full capacity to survive the adversity and thrive.

That can only be possible allowing them enough genetic diversity and enough chance to recover from sudden hits such as natural disasters which are inevitable at this point.

In estimating the populations, we cannot afford setting for the lowest number because the environment and the conditions have changed, and more individuals might be needed to survive these new conditions.

Thank you for considering my message.