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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing in opposition to the round ups of the Mono Lake/ Benton/Montgomery Pass wild horses you are proposing. I am not someone who usually speaks out, spending time with wild horses for me is healing and private, something I tend to do alone or with someone very close to me. I believe wild horse herds are pure magic and in my humble opinion should be kept wild where possible. And if it's not possible managed in a sustainable and humane manner. So, I am imploring you, would you please consider a different way? A new way.

Can I ask if you have spent any time with a herd of wild horses? On the ground or in the car just watching? From a distance, felt the calmness, the inclusivity, the healing they offer? The genuine one on one connection, your heart bursting open, your ability to navigate the world much clearer and compassionate once you leave. Your emotions on your sleeve, vulnerable, alive, close to mother nature...a total release, a healing.

I have been visiting the Mono Lake/ Benton/Montgomery Pass wild horses for the past four years and feel an incredible affinity and gratitude to them. They also healed a friend of mine who had been struggling with terrible trauma from being raped, after spending three days with them the pain in the back of her heart lifted and has never returned.

I am telling you all of this so that you can understand what empathetic and sensitive beings they are, how horrific it is for them to experience round ups and water trapping. How traumatic it is when you split up their family units. They are not like humans; they feel things on a much deeper level than we ever could. They don't have reason or logic. Please don't hurt them. Please let's just leave them alone, in peace, let's find a way to solve your problems but keep them safe. I believe we could do this together. I believe if you gave us some months, a year, two years - we could figure this out.

I know the horses are doing proposed damage to the tufa, that you think there isn't enough water, that a no action alternative is not possible, but couldn't we do something that is humane and fair and considered? Couldn't we have a little more time to come up with an alternative?

Below is a list of alternatives to round up and questions I would like to raise, if you could address each, I would appreciate it.

1. NATURALLY CULLED - it was always my understanding that these horses were a natural culled herd, culled by mountain lion in the region. Can you please advise me when this changed and why the BLM was not aware of the numbers increasing? My feeling is something could have been done much sooner, am I wrong? A 25 year study shows that mountain lions primarily manage this herd through natural predation. Why has this become a problem so quickly, with no warning? Is someone killing the mountain lions?
2. ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS - research shows that the Mono Lake/ Benton/Montgomery Pass wild horses appear to benefit their habitats by increasing the accessibility of the surface water in the area and reducing fire risk. Isn't this a good thing, a reason to keep them?
3. AML NUMBERS - can you explain why the AML numbers haven't been adjusted since 1988, 36 years ago? Can also explain how you determine how many horses should be able to reside in a certain territory without the basis of any scientific research. And would you allow us to conduct that research and agree on a fair number?

4. MOVING HERDS TO HIGH COUNTRY - why did you take down the historical management practices from the website? Why are you not backing indigenous tribal management practise suggestions? Can we not move the herds to higher country, mountain lion territory instead of a round up?

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REOPRT (EIR) and ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY (EIS) can you please provide EIR of the proposed project? Can you please also provide an EIS? Both EIS and EIR are needed to assess the proposed project and to accurately reflect all the environmental impacts of the herd. Jan Roser believes there are plenty of mountain lions that kill the foals. You need to do this study before you start rounding up horses.

6. GENUS SPECIES PROOF / DNA TESTING - I have been told this herd may be the last truly wild horse herd in the USA, indigenous to the land. There is current science needed; can we collect more research from UC Davis professor Dr Roser? Can you please let us know? Will you give us time to do that? Mono Lake/Benton/Montgomery Pass wild horses DNA gathered before roundups to look and see if they are indigenous? And therefore, would be classified as endangered species and require protection.

7. FENCE MANAGEMENT Would you consider putting up fences to manage the herds? It is my understanding that the herds in question are those near the Lake, that they are damaging the ecosystem, could we not move those horses to River Springs Road and Dobie Meadows and then keep them fenced in to a degree?

8. DARTING / FEMALE BIRTH CONTROL would you consider this more humane approach to keeping the breeding numbers down if the mountain lions can't? Will you also give more time for local people to come together and do more research? Use the PZP vaccine.

9. ACTUAL NUMBERS - can we ask for a non-biased party to conduct a simultaneous double observer aerial survey to record the accurate numbers and take photographs and have records.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read my letter and address my concerns. Any questions please get in touch.

Love and horses, Sibylla