

WESTERN JUSTICE

With the inception of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, the BLM and FS were mandated to manage free-roaming horses and burros in a thriving natural ecological balance with wildlife, livestock grazing, and other public lands uses in accordance with the Multiple-Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960.

Appropriate management levels (AML) were established; in other words, the number of wild horses and burros that could sustainably exist in each herd management area (HMA) alongside native wildlife and other types of mandated multiple use. The total AML for wild horses and burros in the West is 26,785, spanning 177 herd management areas (HMAs). This number was established in accordance with multiple use mandates for federally managed lands. Nevertheless, the most recent population estimates show that Western Rangelands now have 86,189 total wild horses and burros.



July 2021 Wild Horses gather at a hillside water seepage area in Southeast Oregon.

Over the years, wild horse extremists have used litigation to block necessary and proper herd management, quite literally forcing herd numbers to expand far beyond appropriate management levels (AML). The Bureau of Land Management's efforts to properly manage herd numbers have been stopped at almost every turn by extremist lawsuits, which has allowed on-range populations to burgeon completely out of control.

The result is the multi-faceted, ever-evolving crisis that we have on our hands today. The immense overpopulation of wild equids is having a devastating effect on the semi-arid high desert environment and scarce water resources, native wildlife populations, ranchers' grazing rights, and on the welfare of the horses themselves.

For extremists, the highly romanticized concept of freedom is of much greater importance than the actual well-being of wild horses. Their alleged "love" for wild horses has directly caused countless instances of horses thirsting or starving to death. To the extremists' deranged way of thinking, a free wild horse dying a slow and miserable death of thirst and starvation is preferable to a captive wild horse living out his days with a full belly in long-term holding.



October 2021, the same water seepage area, littered with wild horse carcasses prompted an emergency gather.



With winter conditions approaching if these horses remained “free” many would have also suffered painful deaths. Poor body conditions weaken a horse’s ability to travel far distances in search of food and water. These are the lucky ones.



October 2021 Mares and foals at Burns Junction temporary holding facility, saved during an emergency gather in Southeastern Oregon Herd Management Areas.



