

EMERGENCY: Historic New Mexican Mustang Herd in Desperate Need of Help!

By Craig C. Downer, wildlife ecologist, author: The Wild Horse Conspiracy

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Two years ago in April, 2012, it was my pleasure to get to know the El Rito and other New Mexican wild horses at the Monero Wild Horse Sanctuary managed by dedicated wild horse advocate and horselady Sandi Claypool. They were roaming in extensive pastures in the highlands of Tierra Amarilla of northern New Mexico. Initially I was attracted to them by their great variety of colors and energetic “joie de vivre” appropriate to the Spring season.

I shall never forget “El Faro” (“Lighthouse” in Spanish)! This stunning black stallion’s white face glowed like a beacon. His movements were direct and expressive and sent out an electricity to me and all who witnessed him. His Spanish mustang heritage was inspiring to behold!

Nor shall I forget the running band of roans, whites and chestnuts by the lake as they pranced in unison, frolicking in the mellow afternoon sun with splendid white cumulus clouds in the background – just enjoying this unique and special moment in Time and the purity of being alive. These mustangs came from various herd areas and territories in the state, such as Jicarilla. But there is a core group of pure blood El Rito mustangs that is of great importance to preserving this unique lineage.

I could see where the horses were actually helping to reinvigorate the soils through their droppings, as I noticed seedlings from a wide variety of grass and herb species sprouting from their midst. It is a known fact that the feces of horses, and other equids, contribute significantly to the humus component of soils. As organic gardeners realize, this is vital to the long-term health of terrestrial ecosystems, as attest the rich soils of San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park, where plants from all over the world thrive. These soils were created by mixing sandy loam with horse manure in the 1870s, and are so maintained to this day. Furthermore, horses are wonderful dispersers of intact seeds from an amazing variety of species as well as very important reducers of dry flammable vegetation over broad areas, something of which we should be increasingly appreciative today as concerns the prevention of catastrophic fires!

In spite of all the positive assets of these wild horses, a dismal history has unfolded concerning Carson National Forest’s “El Rito” mustangs. These wild horses have legal right to thrive at viable population numbers in the Jarita Mesa Wild Horse Territory, yet their rights are being denied to favor ranchers who only have a cancelable privilege to graze their livestock here, not a right! Lamentably, the US Forest Service’s record reveals a shameful betrayal both of these awesome wild horses and thousands of their human supporters!

The El Rito herd stems from Spanish Mustangs dating back over 4 centuries and is linked to horses brought to the Americas in 1598 by the Spanish explorer Juan de Onate. Blood tests carried out at the University of Kentucky indicate significant Spanish markers in their genetics. But even more important is the fact that this is a unique herd that has become specially adapted over many generations to this spectacular mountainous area in northern New Mexico. This region contains pinyon-juniper woodland and sagebrush at its lower elevations and mixed conifer forest with ponderosa pines at higher levels. Between these two zones the herd migrates during winter and summer seasons, thus naturally rest-rotating their grazing.

At around a dozen (12) individual horses, the so-called “Appropriate Management Level” that has been set by the Carson National Forest for the El Rito herd is grossly unfair, i.e. the same as one large family band. This is in disgusting contrast to the over-500 head of cattle that are allowed to graze at the most forage-rich seasons in this legal wild horse Territory! This does not at all accord with the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 and its core intent: Section 2 c that plainly states that the areas where the wild horses lived in 1971 (meaning year-round habitat) should be “devoted principally ... to their welfare...” -- not the welfare of ranchers or big game hunters or miners or fracking energy developers, etc.! This ‘principal devotion of land and resources to the wild ones’ is simply not happening: far from it – yet this is the heart and soul of the unanimously passed Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971! This is a Quality of Life issue, a General Public issue, my friends, and Americans must exercise their rights as part of a Democracy and not allow America to become a “Corporocracy”! But we must all stand up now for what matters most in life – Life Itself!

Due to a massive herd reduction in 2012 and before in various legal mustang areas, Sandi Claypool has taken ca. 100 of these precious and spectacular New Mexican mustangs into her keeping, but in recent days has been obligated to put them into a temporary holding pens, where she reports them as being “very unhappy.” Through no fault of their own, they now find themselves in a facility whose owner could order the removal of these priceless living gems any day. Not only does she need support for hay to feed these, but also a safe place where they can be taken, with a healthy habitat and plenty of space.

For this reason it is absolutely imperative that people come through now for these mustangs, as for Sandi herself, at whatever possible level of contribution! Together we can and must preserve this precious and singular herd so that in the future we will be able to restore them to their rightful land and freedom. In their own special way, these horses are indispensable! We must not let them down now in their time of need!

Let your gift for their continuing life and future be your Easter/Passover/Spring gift to all of life and all future life on Earth today! The Urgent Goal is to deliver these magnificent wild horses to a safe and secure place and to provide them with the feed they now require. Your generous contributions to secure their future will be most appreciated.

Please make your tax-deductible contributions to Monero Mustangs either at:

P.O. Box 432,

Tierra Amarilla, NM 87575;

or at the webpage: www.moneromustangs.org

For further details and questions, please contact Sandi Claypool at 1-575-756-8674 or at moneromustangs@yahoo.com

Vaya con Dios!