

Bob Bauer's first experience with wild horses was in the September of 2009. Bauer went for a freedom ride in the Pryor Mountains with a group thanks to the Cloud Foundation.

"I came to experience wild horses, not just to see them," Bauer said. "I didn't have a camera with me. I wanted something to sink in. I wanted the spiritual aspect of it."

While Bauer was on the mountain, he had the opportunity to ride up a ridge that had a lake where horses watered. At one point, about 30 horses came running over the ridge, split up, and ran around Bauer.

"It was such a rush," Bauer said. "I dropped to my knees it was so powerful."

Bauer was taken to another area on the mountain where he sat on the ground and remained still.

"Before I knew it I had wild horses grazing all around me," Bauer said. "They read body language and read eye movement. It's like they can see into your heart."

This experience was very meaningful for Bauer, and he described it as "perfect peace, perfect harmony."

"It was like a cloud of peace came over me. It sounds overly poetic and gooey, but that's what it was," Bauer said.

While Bauer was having this experience with the wild horses, the Bureau of Land Management came out.

"What was perfect peace and perfect harmony turned into utter chaos," Bauer said. "I said to [one Bureau of Land Management (BLM) employee], 'If I were doing what you were doing right now, I would be arrested for harassment of the wild horses. You can come in and break the law whenever you want.' She said to me, 'yes we can'. That's an exact quote."

Since then, Bauer has spent time lobbying in Washington D.C., talking to senators, writing letters and reports.

"I realized I can't turn my back on this anymore," Bauer said. "You have to allow your heart to absorb what is happening, it is imprinted inside of you. It's engraved on your heart."

Bauer remains less than impressed with the BLM.

"The BLM have the mentality that they are the gestapo of the 21st century. They believe themselves to be gods. That sounds a little harsh, [but that's how it is]," Bauer said.

In 2005, there were 575 horses counted in the Calico Mountains Herd Management Areas (HMAs). In 2010, the BLM claimed that there were 3,055. Suspecting that this number was inaccurate, Bauer began to crunch numbers. After taking into consideration the gender ratio, the mortality rate of young horses, the PZP affect, and likelihood of a horse to become pregnant, Bauer concluded that this would require a 125% annual reproductive rate, which is impossible.

"That just doesn't happen," Bauer said. "The BLM has to be lying about their figures. It is a conspiracy, as Craig Downer so poetically stated in his books. There's no question about it. It's nothing less than a conspiracy of the BLM to eradicate horses out there. They see them as pests and not vital component to ecological balance."

Bauer suspects that the BLM is lying to create an image to the public that the wild horses are overpopulated. Bauer also suspects that the BLM may be moving wild

horses around to justify roundups. There may actually have been 3,055 wild horses in the Calico Mountains HMAs, but they more than likely were put there by the BLM, according to Bauer.

The roundups are unnecessary, according to Bauer and mess artificially with nature.

“Nature knows how to thrive and have an ecological balance without mankind’s intervention. Nature knows how to manage appropriate management levels. Why does mankind seem to think he can do it better than nature? Numbers have to exist out there as nature dictates, not as mankind dictates.”

According to Bauer, many people side with the BLM because they do not like the idea of wild horses suffering or being malnourished. In reality, wild horses are excellent survivors and are very adept at foraging for food and seeking out water, according to wildlife biologist Craig Downer. They are almost always in fit condition, according to Downer, the main exception being when they are intentionally blocked from food and water sources by barbed wire fences or other restrictive elements. They are also naturally leaner at the end of cold winters or hot summers.

“They’re just like an other wild animal. This is their life. This is the life God has intended them to be in,” Bauer said. “This is what makes them wild. This is the beauty of what they are.”