

## Help stop the elimination of one of California's last remaining herds.

California - November 13<sup>th</sup> 2013

The US Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has unveiled plans to drastically reduce the Massacre Lakes wild horse herd which spans across northeastern California and northwestern Nevada. Numbering around 200, this is one of California's last remaining herds. If approved, the proposed action would reduce the herd to just 25 horses – a biologically unsustainable number that will set the herd up for inbreeding and the strong possibility of a die-out. The herd will be replaced by more livestock from the corporate ranching interests who are in opposition to the wild horses, in spite of the Wild Horse and Burro Act's mandate that the wild horses are to be given the principal resources in their legal areas on BLM and US Forest Service (USFS) lands.

The herd has been untouched since the 1980s and is a vital part of the ecosystem of the Massacre Lakes region. It is also an important subject of scientific investigation, particularly due to its wild nature and its large Spanish mustang component. The protection of our wild horses is mandated by federal law, but more of the general public needs to know what is happening to them and to voice their concerns so these precious "national heritage" herds can remain at viable levels for future generations.

Wildlife ecologist Craig Downer of the Wild Horse and Burro Fund says: *"This is a relatively untouched herd and it would be a travesty to allow the BLM, corporate interests and anti-wild-horse groups to push their own narrow agenda on the public and the public lands. If this ill-conceived plan moves ahead, it would destroy many generations of harmonious adaptation by these wild and beautiful creatures who should be regarded as returned natives to North America."*

Downer further states, *"The justifications presented by the BLM's Surprise Field Office fly in the face of an objective understanding of how the horse complements the natural ecosystem. Such low Appropriate Management Levels as the BLM has decided upon do not conform to nature's own benign agenda. Horses returned to living freely and naturally restore and enhance the ecosystem here, but these officials are loathe to recognize this abundantly proven fact. For example, wild horses serve to enrich soils and to disperse the intact seeds of many native species, and also to reduce the dry fuel that leads to catastrophic and soil-sterilizing fires."* Wildlife ecologist Downer urges those who care about this critical issue to check out [www.thewildhorseconspiracy.org](http://www.thewildhorseconspiracy.org) and to voice their opinion concerning the Massacre Lakes and other herds to U.S. Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell as well as to the BLM's Surprise Field Office and its state office in Sacramento.

### **About us:**

#### **Wild Horse and Burro Fund**

We are a team of advocates dedicated to protecting the wild horses and burros. We base our defense of these animals on a deep understanding of their history and important role in the ecosystem. As volunteers we support our chief ecologist, Craig Downer, the author of *The Wild Horse Conspiracy*.

Our organization is part of a broad-based effort which educates the public on the plight of America's wild horses and burros and advocates for their protection and restoration in many of their zeroed-out or underpopulated but still legal herd areas (BLM) and territories (US Forest Service). These beautiful and highly evolved animals, who have done so much for humankind, have both a legal and moral right to live free on our public lands as the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act mandates.

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