

March 9, 2023

House Representatives

My name is Frank Kuntz with the Kuntz Nokota Ranch. I am here to testify in favor of SCR4014. I am so very pleased that Governor Burgum and the tourism office and others are stepping up to the plate to save the wild horses in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP). These horses belong there. TRNP created that type of horse. But what are we saving? After 40 some years of total mismanagement the wild horses of TRNP, with the introduction of domestic breeds like the quarter horse and the Arabian and a shire crossed stud and changing the historic phenotype horses that were there before the white man came here. In 2018, the genetic analyst of the wild horses in the TRNP showed that the horses there are one of the worst inbred wild horses on public lands. It also stated that they needed to introduce new bloodlines.

Also, the TRNP has been using the horses there as guinea pigs for the drug Gonacon to permanently sterilize the mares in the park. What will be the long term effect of this drug? Will the TRNP continue to dart the mares with Gonacon and what new bloodlines do they need to introduce?

They also noted in Governor Burgum's press release, that the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt was important to the state of ND. I did not hear one word about Sitting Bull's legacy. That was their type of horse that was in the TRNP when it was fenced in.

So, if you are going to save the wild horses in the TRNP based on science, genetics and historical evidence, let's do it the right way.

Slowly reintroduce the NOKotas, the state's Honorary Equine into the TRNP, set up an interpretive center in the park, which should include the history of descendants of Sitting Bull's horses. After all, Sitting Bull's name is known worldwide.

The TRNP should stop using Gonacon on the horses and the TRNP should work with the tribes to take some of the excess horses to the reservations for use in therapy programs for traumatized, PTSD people, etc. AND find a way to help the tribes with some of the infrastructure to make it happen.

It's a win-win situation for all. TRNP, the state of ND and the native people of ND.

Thank you

Frank Kuntz  
Owner and Preservation Breeder of the NOKOTA HORSE