

Please Pass SCR 4014

I am one of many ND residents who have concerns regarding the NPS plans for eliminating the wild horses at TRNP.

Although the TRNP wild horses are not protected under the 1971 Wild Horses and Burros Act, they are a significant part of the natural heritage of the park and the state. Equally important, they are a tourism draw for North Dakota.

Currently the wild horses in the TRNP are managed by a 1978 Environmental Assessment. Has a recent EIS been done to determine their impact? Is there any data on how the TRNP wild horses have had a detrimental effect on other wildlife in the TRNP?

The wild horses are currently classified as "livestock" even though the NPS provides no care for them and they fend for themselves alongside the bison, elk, and other wildlife. Scientific paleontological evidence and mitochondrial DNA analysis support the fact the wild horses are a reintroduced native species to this continent. Consider changing the designation of the TRNP wild horses from "livestock" to "wildlife".

Other National Parks - Assateague Island in Maryland and Shackleford Banks in North Carolina - maintain healthy wild horse herds. In fact, the NPS calls the Assateague herd a "cultural resource", and the Shackleford herd is protected after enabling federal legislation for the Cape Lookout National Seashore was amended - a similar move could save the TRNP wild horses.

Set a minimum herd size of 150 horses to ensure a genetically viable herd, as recommended by Dr. Gus Cothran, geneticist and professor emeritus at the Texas A&M School of Veterinary Medicine and acknowledged by the BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Handbook.

Adopt a management plan that uses current science and herd data to keep the number of wild horses large enough to have a healthy breeding population and maintain vital blood lines. For fertility control - instead of using GonaCon, use PZP which has a 40-year history of being reversible and safe even for pregnant mares. If "new blood" needs to be brought into the herd, introduce horses who are historically significant to the TRNP and prioritize the Nokota horses.

The fate of wild horses that may need to be removed is also a concern. Instead of selling captured horses via the General Services Administration Online Auctions website, the NPS must develop an adoption program that screens potential adopters, includes a contract with facility and care requirements and prohibits the sale of wild horses for slaughter.

The TRNP wild horses contribute their awesome beauty to the park and are a living example of resilience. They have a history here; it is their home. They deserve to remain in the park and be treated fairly and humanely.

Thank you for your review and continued attention on this time-sensitive issue.

Susan Brenan

6280 Osgood Parkway So

Fargo, ND 58104