

February 8, 2023

Gentlemen -

Please Listen! The currently management plan, which will result in the severe harm and reduction or total eradication of these mustangs, is wrong and must be halted. I agree with resolution SCR 4014, which properly urges the Secretary of the Interior and the Director of the National Park Service (NPS) to preserve **this cherished and important wild horse herd.**

As an American and horse lover, any harm, let alone destruction, to these beautiful, wild, historic animals, who are a symbols of freedom in American and part of the joy in maintaining life and liberty, is a sad and unnecessary act that lacks any merit. Only harm and pain. Other less restrictive alternatives are available and should be used so that no life is unnecessarily harmed in the control of this herd. Why is that even a question?

The herd consist of unknowing old and young wild horses, who only know this land as their home. Their care should be a primary concern to you as the humans who are in charge of their management in this area. Management should NOT look toward hurtful and destructive choices, but instead be concerned with what are the best methods available in order to keep these souls protected from harm! Otherwise, what is the point of management - if not protection from harm? If it is not a priority to keep these animals from unnecessary pain and abandonment and to protect them from harm, they should not be in charge of their management in the first place! Certainly not be able to construct plans to lead to eradication!

These horses cannot speak - They need our protection. It is only fair and humane to protect these historical America assets and symbols of liberty and freedom, and do everything in your power to protect them from harm. Please do not desert them!

Thank you -

Additionally, Wild horses are integral to the scenery, native wildlife, and wilderness qualities of the Park – the landscape that inspired President Theodore Roosevelt and still inspires visitors today. **If the horses are removed, I will not spend tourism dollars in the state.**

The horses in the Park are descendants of the original Badland horses with historical lineages that trace all the way back to the horses surrendered by Sitting Bull in the late 1800s. The Teddy Roosevelt horses are North Dakota's only wild horse herd and should be protected as such. The Teddy Roosevelt herd must be kept at at a minimum of 150 horses in order to ensure a genetically viable herd.

SCR 4014 will help support ecotourism and business development in North Dakota by protecting the horses. SCR 4014 is consistent with the wishes of 80 percent of Americans who want wild horses protected. SCR 4014 will support humane, scientifically recommended methods of managing these wild horses on the public lands they call home.

Sincerely -

Ruth Toporoff, RA, JD
she/her/hers