



March 20, 2025

Chairman Beltz and Committee Members:

My name is Christine Kman. I am the co-founder and president of Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. We are a nonprofit organization based in Dickinson, ND that advocates for the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of SCR 4006. I am asking that the committee give a "Do Pass" on this resolution.

Our organization, along with the State of North Dakota including our state and federal legislators have spent the last 3 years fighting for the wild horses of TRNP to remain IN the park. Since the park has a clear history of trying to eliminate the wild horses from the park, and some very questionable management practices, we have worked with our legislators to draft SCR 4006.

There are two other national parks that have federal protection for their wild horses: Cape Lookout National Seashore in North Carolina and The Ozark Scenic Riverways National Park in Missouri.

There can be no arguing North Dakota's rich equine history. Still, the park tried! In March of 2024, they released the paper that we believe was crafted to try to refute the historical significance of the wild horses and help prepare them to litigate over the findings of the State Historic Preservation Officer, Bill Peterson. He sent a letter to the park weeks before they abandoned their plans to remove the horses that emphasized the historical significance of these horses.

The state of North Dakota clearly recognizes the value of the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The state heard overwhelming testimony in 2023 when SCR 4014, a resolution asking that the wild horses be allowed to stay in the park, was passed here unanimously. This committee has also heard from hundreds of people from around the world that have contacted you asking for a "DO PASS" on this resolution.

The biggest difference between SCR 4014 and SCR 4006 is that SCR 4014 was simply asking that the horses be allowed to remain in the park in response to the threat of their removal in 2022. Now that the park has been forced to allow the horses to stay, our organization is working with our federal legislators to make sure that the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park never face the threat of removal again. Federal legislation is the only way to make sure these horses stay in the only home they have ever known.



It is important to note that since the passing of SCR 4014, the Medora City Council has also passed 3 of their own resolutions asking that a viable and healthy herd of wild horses remain in TRNP. The Billings County Commission also passed one of their own. These were drafted, voted on and passed as a direct result of concerning actions from Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

In January of 2023, Governor Doug Burgum held a press conference offering the park whatever resources were available from the state of North Dakota to allow the horses to stay. He continued sharing this sentiment with the park up until his last days in office.

The ONLY response his office EVER received from the park was that the state should remove the horses from TRNP, take ownership of them and put them in a state park where they could manage them in any way they choose. Needless to say, Governor Burgum never took them up on that offer. He knew, as most of us sitting in this room today know, that part of the draw of these horses is that they reside in the badlands of North Dakota and in a national park named to preserve the legacy of President Theodore Roosevelt and his time in North Dakota. As you know, Theodore Roosevelt National Park is also unique as it is the ONLY national park named for a person.

We also know that no matter what anyone's personal feelings are on wild horses, one fact remains clear: These horses drive tourism in our state. A simple formula that I have shared with all of you as part of my testimony shows that the wild horses that currently call Theodore Roosevelt National Park home bring AT LEAST \$37 MILLION DOLLARS to North Dakota's economy EVERY SINGLE YEAR!

When the park was forced to abandon their Environmental Assessment in April of 2024, we celebrated, but warned everyone that it would just be a matter of time before the park was back again with a new plan to try to eliminate the horses.

6 months later, our words became reality. The park gave the state 2 weeks' notice that they would be rounding up all the wild horses, hand injecting all the mares with a very controversial birth control drug called GonaCon and removing up to 15 horses that were non-responders. The aggressive use of GonaCon is just another attempt for the park to silently eliminate the horses. Please note: as part of an experiment between the park and Colorado State University on the horses in the park, they found that 2 injections of GonaCon have caused 19 of the 24 mares to STILL not return to fertility since their 2nd injection in 2013.

The park also told us that during the October 2024 helicopter roundup, they would also be taking DNA samples from all the horses to collect data to help them better manage the herd.



That March 2024 report shows that in 2022, the park already had DNA on 98% of the horses. We know from the [usaspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov) website that helicopter contracts to roundup the horses were put out for bid AT LEAST 60 days before the roundup. Remember, the state of North Dakota and the taxpaying public were only given 2 weeks' notice.

During the roundup, 15 mares were fitted with GPS collars (photos attached). The park tells us that they need to monitor the land usage of the horses to help determine future management plans. That March 2024 report also shows that the park already knows the land usage of the horses.

The park's actions over the last 3 years have rightfully sparked anger from the general public. The October roundup and the tracking collars have elevated a movement, independent of our organization, to boycott Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I have attached comments from social media for the committee to review.

Our organization has continued to try to work with the park. In a recent meeting with TRNP Chief of Resource Management, Blake McCann, he stated that they would continue their aggressive use of GonaCon as the park was "trying to halt the reproduction of this herd."

I share all this with you today to show that despite all the work being done by Senator John Hoeven and Doug Burgum as governor of North Dakota to preserve North Dakota's only wild horse herd, Theodore Roosevelt National Park continues to do whatever they want to do, as they have for decades, even if it is to the detriment of the state of North Dakota. The only way to change this is through federal protection.

Over the last few years of advocating for these horses, one of my favorite quotes has come from Attorney General Drew Wrigley. He said, "Yes, this is a national park, but it falls under the stewardship of the state of North Dakota."

We could not agree more. And that is why we ask that this committee to join the North Dakota Senate and give a Do Pass to SCR 4006 today.

Thank you for your time.

*Christine Kman*

Christine Kman  
President  
Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates  
[www.chwha.org](http://www.chwha.org)



Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates  
P.O. Box 3562  
Dickinson, ND 58602

**How much are the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses worth to the local economy of Medora North Dakota?**

Theodore Roosevelt National Park had approximately 900,000 visitors to the park in 2023. Please note, this number is expected to increase significantly every year, especially in 2026 with the opening of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library.

The wild horses are always within the top 3 reasons why people visit the park. That means an average of 300,000 people come to Medora every year just to see the wild horses.

The average visitor spends \$50 for day trippers; \$200 a day for overnights: making the average \$125/per day/per person

$\$125/\text{day} \times 300,000 \text{ visitors} = \$37,500,000 \text{ per year}$

$\$37,500,000 \text{ divided by an average of } 200 \text{ wild horses in the park} = \$187,500 \text{ per horse, per year}$

Take that number times the average life expectancy of around 18-20 years and that brings it to \$3,375,000 – \$3,750,000 per horse in their lifetime! They are a true natural treasure to the state of North Dakota in every sense.

\*\*These numbers do not include visitors that drive across the state of North Dakota on their way to see the horses. Those visitors only increase the amount of money that the horses bring to the total economy in the state of North Dakota.

