

My name is Kathy Heise. I am a preservation breeder for the Nokota Horses. The Nokota Horses have been recognized as the ND state horse.

Last Fall I traveled to Theodore Roosevelt National Park for the first time. My goal was to see if there was any merit to the idea that my Nokotas originated from TRNP stock over 40 years ago. What I saw was living proof my horses were definitely descendants of TRNP horses. I saw horses with more bone and thicker legs, good wide feet and lower tailsets than the domesticated horses in the US. The shape of their heads and the hook at the top of their ears were all indicators that they were indeed descendants.

I am a preservation breeder because the Nokota Horses aren't fortunate enough to have a large plot of land to live on like the park horses do. The horses in TRNP coexist fabulously with the other wildlife that call the park home. I saw buffalo and horses grazing together when I was there. The pronghorns, elk, coyotes, and prairie dogs all live peacefully with the horses as well. To remove them would upset the delicate balance of the ecosystem that has been in place since the park was formed.

Lastly, There is no doubt in my mind, the horses in the park as well as my herd of Nokotas are living pieces of history. With so much of our national history being removed and forgotten, these horses need to remain in TRNP to keep this part of the American history alive for the next generations. I believe the time is now to ensure that the horses who call the TRNP home remain in the park. I'm asking you to please approve this bill.

With heartfelt thanks,
Kathy Heise