



Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to hear and read all of the submitted testimony on SCR 4006.

My story begins in 2006 with this historic herd. Their power and charm have brought me back to North Dakota multiples times a year since that first moment. Each trip introduced more and more humans to the landscape and horses, and today I proudly work with my Wild Lands, Wild Horses partner, Jamie, as we create a documentary of their colorful, historical story for all Americans.

This herd of resilient survivors has taught me respect for their home and place on it, the significance of their role in relation to other species, along with the importance of cultural history. A TRNP stallion called Blaze gave my life purpose, and his ultimate gift – tolerance of human intrusion so I could reveal their natural world to humanity through award winning, storytelling imagery.

The past nineteen years, the horses helped build lasting relationships from across America and created deep rooted ties to the community of Medora and surrounding area. Medora is a second home.

In addition, the horses triggered the opportunity to work as a research tech in TRNP. Working directly with park staff opened the window to witness first-hand the challenges of managing multiple species and dealing with the arduous demands of the public.

In 2016, we adopted one of these historic horses directly from TRNP. We fully accepted the long-term responsibility of caring for this yearling filly. Pinnacles, a Blaze daughter, continues to impact human lives with her royal, born wild presence here on our Minnesota ‘farmette’.

During the countless visits to TRNP, these horses exposed me to the many types of mindsets, cultures, and life experiences of those who visit the TRNP landscape from around the world. Their reasons varied, but each one were thrilled by the experience of viewing a ‘wild’ horse.

What about those millions who cannot physically visit TRNP? They follow social media accounts who take the time to document and share the lives of these historical horses for the world to see. These dedicated humans, hike hundreds of miles, in all kinds of conditions, to give millions the chance to witness life in TRNP, all of it, birth through death. These millions witnessed how species share the ability to grieve for each other, as bison did for a beloved gray stallion in 2018.





My point, my life was profoundly changed, as millions of lives have been, by this historic herd.

It is way past the time to recognize their place in history regardless of what their origin story is. The American public clamored for that during the recent EA process. Passing SCR 4006 will take this herd one step closer to solidifying and protecting their cultural place in history for all Americans and especially for the intangible cultural heritage the community of Medora was built on and the state of North Dakota recognizes is important to the fabric of her communities.

We must all remember that there would be no TRNP if T.R. had not visited this region. We also know that T.R. wrote about witnessing mustangs in his time there. We also know T.R. came to this region to grieve and would ride his horse out across those badlands to heal.

I urge you to pass SCR 4006 to endorse the first steps necessary toward the federal protection process. Federal protection is the only way to ensure this herd is never again faced with being eradicated from where they have called home long before 1947, that place made from wailing winds and groaning stones, named after our 26th president, Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

A very special thank you to Senators Boschee, Paton, and Rummel along with Representatives Lefor, J. Olson, and Steiner for working with your constituents to introduce this critical resolution to kickstart the essential federal protection process.

Respectfully submitted,

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