

SCR4006

Chairman Patten and Committee Members. My name is Frank Kuntz from Linton, ND and I am here to testify in support of SCR4006.

My late brother, Leo Kuntz, and I have been working 45+ years to try to get the TRNP to manage the wild horses the right way. The TRNP has done a lot of thoughtless things to our horses in our park. But having the goal of a non-producing horse herd will be the ultimate death of these horses.

The wild horses in TRNP need to be protected from the Park's total mismanagement 'policies'. Right now they are managing the horses to their death.

Here's a little history of TRNP's mismanagement of the wild horses.

At one time the horses in TRNP were classified as a historic resource; later the TRNP changed that to a historical representation which meant if it looked like a horse it belonged there. Now TRNP has classified the horses as livestock, and livestock in TRNP have a totally different management plan ... no livestock in a national park at all.

In the late 70's and early 80's they introduced domestic studs into TRNP and then had to use helicopters and outriders to eliminate the dominant native stallions so the introduced studs would have a chance to get mares. The parks first round-up killed around 18 horses.

In 2009, the TRNP started a gonacon test program on the horses. This park was chosen, as was Blake McCann, to use the TRNP horses as guinea pigs; to try to find a one-shot method to sterilize the wild horses. If we want a genetically viable herd in TRNP, the use of gonacon needs to stop NOW!

Why is a national park killing off a wonderful tourist attraction? Tourism is a large industry world wide. There are so many people in the world that love the west, of which Medora and the Badlands are a part.

The wild horses in the TRNP are a part of that history as are the Native Americans, Theodore Roosevelt, the Marquis DeMores, the HT Ranch in Amidon which was one of the largest horse operations in the nation with 4000-7000 head of horses. The HT ranch bought 62 mares from DeMores, of which Heidokoper wrote in his journals they were an interesting lot, many of the mares showing scars from the Battle of the Big Horn. TR wrote about seeing many wild horses as well. If the TRNP wants to classify the wild horses as a non-native animal, then they should be able to scientifically prove the horses died out here on this continent. If not, the horses need to be classified as a native species. They have always been here!

I want to thank Chasing Horses for their hard work to bring worldwide attention to the horses.

Thank you, Senator Hoeven and Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum for all your support. And please, committee members, vote in favor to help save this living history.

I stand for questions.