2025 SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SCR 4006

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

SCR 4006 2/6/2025

A concurrent resolution urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

3:24 p.m. Chairman Patten opened the hearing.

Members present:

Chairman Patten, Senators: Beard, Boehm, Enget, Gerhardt, and Van Oosting. Vice Chairman Kessel absent.

Discussion Topics:

- Federal protection
- · Management of horse herd
- Classified as livestock
- ND economy
- Advocacy of equine welfare
- 3:25 p.m. Senator Boschee introduced the bill.
- 3:30 p.m. Christine Kman, President of Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates, testified in favor and submitted testimony #35753 and #35754.
- 3:41 p.m. Frank Kuntz testified in favor and submitted testimony #36028.
- 3:48 p.m. Carole Two Eagle testified in favor.
- 3:56 p.m. Rebecca Falk testified in favor and submitted testimony #34081.
- 3:58 p.m. Jamie Baldanza, Wild Lands Wild Horses Fund Corp., testified in favor and submitted testimony #33353.
- 4:00 p.m. Joanna Grossman, Equine Program Director of Animal Welfare Institute, testified in favor and submitted testimony #34455.
- 4:01 p.m. Ashely Avis, President of The Wild Beauty Foundation, testified in favor and submitted testimony #33395.

Additional written testimony:

Michelle M. Jennison submitted testimony in favor #33135.

Allison Bowling, Red Feather Equine Sanctuary, submitted testimony in favor #33154.

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Tami S. Jones, President of the Idaho Wild Horse Alliance, submitted testimony in favor #33292.

June D. Johnson submitted testimony in favor #33326.

Cara Artman submitted testimony in favor #33348.

Karen Mertes submitted testimony in favor #33359.

Galen Hazelhofer submitted testimony in favor #33367.

Anne C. Schultz submitted testimony in favor #33389.

Kari S. Hooker submitted testimony in favor #33390.

Birgit M. Pruess submitted testimony in favor #33413.

Pat J. Kerzman submitted testimony in favor #33453.

Mary E. Mcdonald submitted testimony in favor #33461.

Laurie Greenwood submitted testimony in favor #33654.

Renee Villari submitted testimony in favor #33782.

Suzanne H. Voss submitted testimony in favor #34024.

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4:05 p.m. Senator Beard adjourned the meeting.

Kendra McCann, Committee Clerk

My favorite part of Theodore Roosevelt National Park is the wild horses. Park management has been aggressively trying to eliminate the herd of wild horses for years, even though the majority of ND residents and park visitors have repeatedly stated they want the herd to remain. I believe SCR 4006 should pass so the wild horses are finally protected and remain in the park forever.

Michelle Jennison Fargo, ND





January 31, 2025

Dear Chairman Manchin and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

My name is Allison Bowling, and I am writing to you in support of federal protection for the wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP). As a committed advocate for equine welfare and co-founder of Red Feather Equine Sanctuary, I have spent years working to protect and care for horses in need. However, my passion for this issue deepened after visiting TRNP in May 2024, where I saw firsthand the profound importance of these horses—not only to the landscape but to the history and spirit of the park itself.

My visit was driven by a desire to better understand the wild horses, their significance, and the historical and cultural ties that bind them to this land. I spent time learning about the park's history, the town of Medora, and the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt himself—a man whose deep appreciation for the West and its wildlife shaped his conservation policies and our national park system. Standing in the park, watching these horses move across the rugged Badlands terrain, I saw living history in motion. These are not just horses; they are a heritage herd, a symbol of the American West, embodying the resilience and wild beauty that Roosevelt sought to protect.

The current threats facing the TRNP horses are deeply troubling. Proposals to remove them ignore their ecological role, their historical presence, and their value to the thousands of visitors who come to Medora each year, drawn in part by the opportunity to witness them in their natural habitat. The loss of these horses would not only erase an irreplaceable part of the park's identity but also negatively impact local tourism, the economy, and the cultural fabric of the region.

Federal protection is essential to ensuring these horses remain a part of Theodore Roosevelt National Park for generations to come. They deserve to be recognized as a historic and cultural resource, safeguarded against arbitrary removal, and managed with humane and scientifically sound practices. As someone who has dedicated my life to equine welfare, I urge this committee to support legislative and administrative actions that will guarantee their future in the park.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "The wildlife and its habitat cannot speak, so we must and we will." Today, I am speaking for the TRNP horses. I ask you to stand with those of us who believe their presence matters, not just as a remnant of the past, but as a vital part of our national story.

Respectfully,

Allison Bowling Co-Founder Red Feather Equine Sanctuary Our organization is in support of providing protection for the wild horses in the park. They represent an important part of our national history. With appropriate herd management focused on natural predation and birth control darting program the herd will enhance the ecology through decreasing wildfire fuels and reseeding the land. Also, importantly for the economy of North Dakota the tourism industry will benefit from the tourist and photographers who will travel to observe the wild horses in their natural environment.

Sincerely, Tami Jones, President Idaho Wild Horse Alliance Boise, Idaho January 31, 2025

Chairman Lee and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing in support of federal protection for the wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Wild horses are fast disappearing from our western lands.

These horses are important to telling the history and legacy of TRNP and Theodore Roosevelt. This is a heritage herd. People from all over the world visit the park to see them and learn about the history of American West. I urge you to guarantee their future. Prevent their removal and support humane and scientifically sound management. They are irreplaceable. Please protect them.

Respectfully,

June Johns

I support SCR 4006.

We must do everything we can to protect all living creatures, especially those who do not have a voice.

Not protecting them will only cost everyone in the future, with our lives and with our dollars.



Dear Committee Members.

I am writing today in strong support of SCR 4006. My name is Jamie Baldanza, and I am the Co-Founder of the nonprofit Wild Lands Wild Horses and the Director of the documentary on the Theodore Roosevelt National Park horses. Our documentary, in partnership with Click Content Studios, a division of Forum Communications in Fargo, has gathered over 17 interviews—including former park management, advocates, scientists, government officials, natives, historians, locals, and journalists—with more still to come.

Though I do not reside in North Dakota, these horses have drawn me to the state time and time again. I began documenting this herd in 2015—ten years ago—and in that time, I have come to understand just how deeply they are woven into the fabric of American history.

These horses are more than just animals; they are a living testament to what it means to be American—resilient, strong, and unwavering in the face of adversity. They have survived not just the harsh landscape, but also repeated political battles that have threatened their very existence. And yet, they are still here. That speaks volumes. The people want them here. North Dakota wants them here. And they belong here.

Now, we have an opportunity to secure their future. Federal protection is not just an option—it is a necessity to ensure that these horses do not become nothing more than a footnote in history. I urge you to stand with us in preserving this iconic herd for generations to come. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie Baldanza

Testimony on Theodore Roosevelt National Park (2025)

Regarding: SCR 4006

Dear Senate Committee, my name is Karen Mertes and I'm a resident of Illinois. Per this testimony, I am asking you to vote 'Do Pass' on Resolution SCR 4006 to enact Federal protection for the Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) herd of wild horses. Since these horses are not protected under The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act¹, this resolution is extremely important to the survival and freedom of these horses that have lived on TRNP land all their lives, and to the continuation of a viable herd without the threat of removal.

As someone who loves visiting the park, the presence of the wild horses is a significant draw and adds to the overall appeal of TRNP. Scientific studies show that horses play a major role in maintaining the park's fragile ecosystem by re-seeding as they forage over the entire park, eat plants that cause wildfires, and contribute to its wilderness character.

By preserving these wild horses, we not only protect a living symbol of American Heritage but also ensure that future generations can experience the wonder and beauty of seeing these magnificent animals roaming freely in their natural habitat.

Again, I sincerely ask that you vote in favor of this resolution. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Karen Mertes

Karen Mertes

Dated this 1st day of February, 2025

Congress finds and declares that wild free-roaming horses and burros are living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West; that they contribute to the diversity of life forms within the Nation and enrich the lives of the American people; and that these horses and burros are fast disappearing from the American scene. It is the policy of Congress that wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death; and to accomplish this they are to be considered in the area where presently found, as an integral part of the natural system of the public lands.

¹ The Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195) §1331. **Congressional findings and declaration of policy**

The TRNP wild horses should be allowed to remain there, wild and free. Free from GONACON birth control use which is very detrimental to the horses and in many cases makes them permanently sterile. This treatment would mean eventual total elimination of the herd and is totally counter to the WFRHBA of 1971, therefore illegal.

They have had genetic testing done several years ago so there is no need for any roundups on that account, that information is already known.

Horses have evolved on the north American continent and there is now proof that they never disappeared for a period, that they always were here so they are not an invasive species and they belong in the ecology of the area where they live. They are known to mitigate fires which are happening more and more frequently on our planet now and their service in this regard is even more important that they remain in their habitat.

Visitors come to see them and love them. They are beautiful beings and deserve to live in their own place in the ecology of their habitat.

Ms. Galen Hazelhofer

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a retired person with a love for animals and in particular wild horses found on the public lands and national parks of the United States. I give monthly monetary support to six different wild horse and burro sanctuaries in the United States. I have visited several Herd Management Areas managed by the Bureau of Land Management which were difficult to find and had few wild horses as the Bureau of Land Management continues to remove wild horses and burros from public lands, over 70,000 between 2020-2024. At this rate I am afraid no wild horses or burros will be left on public lands. It is now so important that the wild horses and other wild animals inhabiting the Theodore Roosevelt National park receive federal protection.

Many people feel this issue of preserving wildlife and wild horses/burros on public lands is important. Many people travel to visit places where they can see wild horses and burros roam relatively free. The wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park are living symbols of America's history and a legacy of President Theodore Roosevelt. These horses benefit North Dakota's economy by attracting visitors and researchers from all over the country. I plan to visit Theodore Roosevelt National Park and view the horses and other animals in what looks like a beautiful, unique setting. I have purchased several photographs and calendars of the horses that live in Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Wild horses have an important role in maintaining the park's ecosystem, keeping biodiversity and helping to maintain the land and surrounding wildlife such as bird life. The horses are an integral part of the park's landscape and realizing this fact by giving them federal protection will ensure their future for generations. These horses deserve humane, science-based management rather than mass removal or elimination.

I strongly support SCR 4006 which calls for federal protection of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horse herd. These horses need to remain in the park for many generations. A national treasure that should be preserved.

Thank you for your consideration for this important bill.

Anne Schultz San Diego, California Do Pass.

The WILD BEAUTY Foundation

February 1st, 2025

To the Members of the Committee,

My name is Ashley Avis, and I am the founder of The Wild Beauty Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to the protection and preservation of America's wild horses. I am also a film director devoted to bringing wildlife themes to the world.

Our film, Disney's BLACK BEAUTY along with our award-winning documentary WILD BEAUTY: MUSTANG SPIRIT OF THE WEST, the latter in which the horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park are featured— have inspired tens of millions of children and adults across the globe to cherish, respect, and fight for the existence of our fast-disappearing wild world. We cannot afford to lose it.

I am writing today to express my strong support for SCR 4006 and SB 2331, both of which are essential to ensuring a future for the wild horses of TRNP.

For the past several years, the fate of this historic herd has been in jeopardy. The park's plans to eliminate these horses and dismantle their families— whether through outright removal or permanent sterilization—have been met with overwhelming public outcry. These are icons of North Dakota, not only a cherished part of its cultural and ecological landscape, but a living tribute to Theodore Roosevelt's legacy and his deep commitment to conservation. To erase them would be a travesty— an irreversible wound on the wild, one that will never heal.

SCR 4006 is a first vital step in securing lasting federal protection for these horses—something that should serve as a model across the West. This resolution sends an undeniable message: North Dakota values its wild horses and is committed to their future. Passing this will call upon federal lawmakers to take meaningful action, ensuring these horses remain free-roaming and protected for generations to come. Future children and families who deserve to see wild horses in the *wild*, galloping across the astonishing tapestry known only to North Dakota.

But a resolution alone is not enough. That is why SB 2331 is equally essential. By establishing a North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group, this bill creates a real, structured plan to ensure responsible management of the TRNP horses. This group will bring together key stakeholders, require accountability, and develop sustainable solutions—rather than leaving the fate of this herd to bureaucratic decisions that lack transparency and public input.

We must learn from the past three years. Park officials have openly stated their intention to "halt reproduction" in the herd, and we know that without intervention, we may very well find ourselves in the same fight again.

Please stand with the wild. Please stand with the children, and the community, and the tourists who visit every year just to see this herd and experience its unique spirit. A spirit forged in the rocks and the skies of indomitable North Dakota. Fight beside these horses, don't allow them to fade away.

I urge you to support and pass both SCR 4006 and SB 2331. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ashley Avis

Founder & Filmmaker

The Wild Beauty Foundation

Birgit Pruess, Ph.D. 3696 Harrison St. S Fargo, ND February 1, 2025

RE: SCR4006

Dear members of the 69th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota,

I am a resident of Fargo, ND. Please, accept the below as my testimony IN enthusiastic FAVOR of SCR4006, "A concurrent resolution urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park."

The horses enjoy the support of over 100,000 fans, including the entire 68th Legislative Assembly, former Governor now Secretary of the Interior Burgum, Senator Hoeven, all five of our tribal nations, and many others. Not to forget about myself. Two years ago, our State Legislature voted unanimously in support of a resolution to save our horses. In April 2024, Senator Hoeven got federal support for our horses. We all thought the situation had improved at that time. However, there was a helicopter round up in October where almost all horses were captured and the mares were hand administered another shot of Gonacon, which is used for birth control. 15 mares were outfitted with collars, one mare died shortly after being released. Data were provided to the public, though in a shape that I as a scientist can only consider sloppy (or deliberately misleading). All mares have been treated with Gonacon by now, most of them many times. Though some mares seem resistant to the drug and keep reproducing, which balances the gene pool in favor of their genes and reduces genetic diversity. By now, we are faced with a herd that is mostly sterile, though it is currently not know whether at least some of the mares could come back to fertility if taken off Gonacon. Five mares were taken off Gonacon and we will see what happens to them. This method of birth control was researched in TRNP for some 12 years, but the aggressive use that is being done right now was never covered by the research study.

The collars were unnecessary for the collection of location data for the horses. There are thousands of horse fans visiting the park. Everybody who has access to Facebook knows where the horses are and what the drivers are behind their movements. The collars are uncomfortable, it is not known whether this discomfort may change the behaviour of the horses, and there is a potential for injury to the horse. Helped by one or the other out of state non-profit, TRNP is still doing what they can to get rid of the horses.

If we are to keep 200 horses in the park, it is necessary to have a genetically viable herd and I doubt we have that right now. However, we should do what we can to keep these horses and hope a good number of them will return to fertility. It is obvious to me that TRNP is not working towards maintaining a genetically viable herd without federal 'encouragemnt'. For this reason, I support this resolution to urge Congress to establish federal protection for the wild horse herd in TRNP.

I highly recommend a DO PASS vote.

As in all my testimonies, I much appreciate the hard work and dedication that each member of my state legislative assembly puts into our state. Thank you.

Sincerely and respectfully Birgit Pruess, Ph.D.

I believe SCR 4006 should pass so the wild horses living in Theodore Roosevelt National Park are finally protected from park management trying to eliminate them and remain in the park forever.

Pat Kerzman West Fargo, ND



Good Day

My name is Mary McDonald, I am writing in support of SCR 4006, regarding the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I am an advocate for keeping these national, historic treasures in the park for all to enjoy.

The horses have roots in the park even before the park was fenced and designed as a National Park. There is legacy that these horses may have been part of Theodore Roosevelt's own horses. In the past the horses have been designed as a historical value to the park. Not only is it a historical value, but an economical value. There are not many National Parks that offer visitors to see horses in native habitat, running free. Unlike the larger National Parks there seems to be a close symbiotic relationship between the state of North Dakota, the community of Medora and Theodore Roosevelt National Park, in which all three enjoy an economic value with the horses being a key to that relationship. Other parks offer bison, prairie dogs, Elk and pronghorn, but only Theodore Roosevelt offers the ability to seen wild and free horses.

Please join me in supporting SCR 4006, to securing federal protection for the Theodore Roosevelt National Parks wild horses. Passing this resolution will be a critical step towards a long term solution.

Thank you.

Mary McDonald

Hello,

First I'll tell you I have 2 mustangs. They are great!

Second, I was in VA when 36 wild horses from TRNP were rounded up and then rescued by the Cloud Foundation abd trucked to VA.

It's brutal, inhumane and wildlife do not deserve to be treated this way.

Do the right thing and protect the wild horses in TRNP!

Thank you.

Testimony on Theodore Roosevelt National Park (2025)

Regarding: SCR 4006

Dear Chair and Committee members,

My name is Renee Villari and although I have not had the privilege of visiting Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP), I've been following the fight to save the wild horses at the park as these majestic horses instantly remind me of our American Heritage and the symbol of freedom. I personally ask that you vote in favor of SCR 4006.

After learning these horses are <u>not</u> protected under The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act¹ of 1971, I feel it is our duty to maintain the survival and freedom of these horses that have lived on TRNP all their lives, and to the continuation of a viable herd without the threat of removal.

Again, I sincerely ask that you vote in favor of this resolution. Search your heart and stand with those of us who believe the presence of this wildlife matters.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Renee Villari

Dated this 3rd day of February, 2025

¹ The Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-195) §1331. Congressional findings and declaration of policy

Congress finds and declares that wild free-roaming horses and burros are living symbols of the historic and pioneer spirit of the West; that they contribute to the diversity of life forms within the Nation and enrich the lives of the American people; and that these horses and burros are fast disappearing from the American scene. It is the policy of Congress that wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be protected from capture, branding, harassment, or death; and to accomplish this they are to be considered in the area where presently found, as an integral part of the natural system of the public lands.

2/3/2025

Hello,

I am submitting this testimony in favor of establishing federal protection for the wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Thank you for your consideration.

Suzanne Voss Hicksville, NY 11801 Suzanne.voss10@gmail.com I strongly support SCR 4006. This bill is very important for federal protection of the Theodore Roosevelt wild horses in North Dakota. I ask the sixty- ninth legislative assembly to urge congress to enact legislation establishing federal protection of the Theodore Roosevelt wild horses of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park to ensure the long-term health and preservation of these wild horses. This herd needs to be protected for generations to come.

Bill SCR 4006 is very important and should pass, so the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park are enjoyed by North Dakotans and other Americans all over the states. I really enjoy hearing about all the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt national park. I like to hear about how the wild horses are doing. It is neat to hear about the new foals and how the older horses are doing. I watch these horses, stories on the internet. I know that many horse lovers follow their story.

I also am planning to come see the Theodore Roosevelt wild horses in a couple of years. When I do, I will spend money in North Dakota. These wild horses bring a lot of tourists to North Dakota and lots of tourist dollars to the state. Many people want to come see these historical horses in the park. These wild horses are followed all across the country. They bring out Teddy Roosevelt's legacy. In fact, in 1970 the park recognized the wild horses in the park as historical.

Unfortunately, the park has not wanted to protect the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt national park. They have done numerous gathers of this herd which is too bad. They wanted to remove these beautiful horses, until chasing wild horses and other horse groups stood up for these wild horses. Luckly the park agreed to let the wild horses stay in the park. The question would be how long? That is why, SCE 4006 federal protection for Theodore Roosevelt wild horses needs to be passed.

The park has agreed to let the wild horses stay but they are slowly exterminating them. They are using fertility drugs such as Gonacon. If Gonacon continues to be used on this herd, they will slowly die out. That would be very unfortunate, This herd dates back to the 1800's, days of Teddy Roosevelt. They are historical and are part of America. They are the only wild horses in North Dakota. Many historians believe they are descendants of Sitting Bull's horses and related to the rare Nakota breed. They need to be protected and enjoyed in the future.

With passing SCR 4006 these wild horses will have federal protection. Then the park service will have to listen to the community. Gonacon use needs to be stopped. The park service has also put radio collars on some of these horses. These collars are dangerous to the horses and need to be removed. The park service already has data on what they need to know. The collars are not necessary and with Passing of federal protection, will be removed. That is what is best for the horses.

Please pass SCR 4006 and keep Theodore Roosevelt Park a great destination with wild horses in it.

Thank you for your consideration.

For the wild ones

Rebecca Falk

Protect Our Nation's Wild Horses

Senators, Representatives, and members of the Committee. My name is Tatyana Louise Spaulding, and I live in Louisville, Kentucky. I am a graduate student, writer, and long time horse enthusiast. I stand IN SUPPORT of SCR 4006 that urges Congress to establish PROTECTION for our nation's wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

As a small child, I remember watching the 2002 Dreamworks Animation Film, 'Spirit, Stallion of the Cimarron' that told the story of the brave mustang Spirit and his Native American friend and companion, Little Creek. Not only did this story tell the riveting tale, capturing the lives and struggles that wild horses faced during the expansion of the American West, but it also parallels the struggles that Native Americans faced, brilliantly and honestly addressing colonialism, with an inspiring message of how the land and animals deserve to be wild and free. Not only was this movie the beginning of my ever horse-obsession, but it also grew my love, appreciation, and awareness for the story of Native Americans in this country.

This past weekend, I had the immense honor and pleasure to attend a free online seminar to learn more on what's happening in our nation, regarding our wild horses. Several well-educated speakers, all from biologists to advocates shared their research on the validity that wild horses belong in this country and deserve as much protection as any other endangered species.

It has always been said that horses evolved on the North American continent, but migrated to Europe and Asia, dying out in North and South America 11,000 to 12,000 years ago, returning to the continent when colonizers and settlers stepped foot in the 15th, or 16th century. Now, even if this was true, that only is proof enough that wild horses belong in this country and have every right to remain, as they are not an invasive species, but the returning of a native species.

Wayne McCrory, a RPBio. Wildlife Biologist, and Ashley Avis' Documentary "Wild Beauty" both present research that suggests that wild horses did NOT die out on the American continent, but that many herds continued to thrive. Many Indigenous histories also show that it was NOT the settlers that introduced horses to their tribes, but that Indigenous People have ALWAYS used horses, showing that there had been a lack of proper research on the subject of wild horse herds. Not only that, but DNA samples on the genetics of several herds further shows that wild horses have always been here.

Wayne McCrory also shows evidence of the misconceptions that many people believe about wild horses. One of them is the issue of overgrazing; while it is shown that wild horses can overgraze, this is not due to the animal's grazing patterns themselves, but rather the LIMITED space they have to travel and graze. Limited space from fences, areas where they are allowed to live, AND having to share the grazing space with cows and sheep (which have been proven to be even LESS native than the wild horse!). McCrory also points out that wolves, cougars, and occasionally bears provide a natural maintenance on herd population, however, due to overhunting, this has negative effects, due to the predator populations not being allowed to grow.

In her powerful documentary "Wild Beauty", Ashley Avis also exposes the corruption regarding horse herd management, not only to the animals themselves but to the American taxpayer. Big corporations, working with the BLM have LIED to the public saying that the horses are starving and overpopulated, however fail to provide evidence for this; all the horses captured are fat, and healthy, only becoming sickly and dangerous when captured in the roundups. Furthermore, they are not sharing the land with small farmers and ranchers, but billionaire ranches, oftentimes paying much less to have their animals graze on PUBLIC LAND, while forcing small farmers and ranchers to keep their animals on their own private land. The documentary also exposed the millions of dollars it is causing taxpayers for these roundups, auctions, and euthanization for these animals.

Ladies and gentlemen, congress men and women, I implore you to pass this bill that will ensure the protection of these wild horse herds—icons of America. They are more American than any non-Native American person here, more so than even our President of the United States of America. Protecting these horses is more than just protecting the animals themselves but protecting the land in all its beauty and protecting taxpayers from corrupt corporations who only seek the next big profit. We blame the wild horses for supposed environmental issues, yet seek to replace them with even less native livestock. We blame the horses, when this country is in one the top of most polluting countries in the world and with CO2 carbon emissions. Ladies and Gentlemen, that is not from the horses, but from people and from companies.

Our wild horses deserve to be wild and free and protected. They deserve to have a healthy number of herd members to keep healthy DNA diversity, to utilize the and care for it in the way that mother nature intended. Please be the voice that they do not have. Thank you.

February 3, 2025

Dear Chairman and Committee Members,

My name is Regina Knapp. I am asking for your support for SCR 4006, a resolution to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP). As a United States citizen, wife, mom, and grandma, I'm speaking out on behalf of the wild horses in the TRNP. I've always admired the vast beauty of the Western States, the national parks, and the wild horses. It is important to me as a wilderness and horse lover to protect the historic wild horses that call TRNP home. The TRNP wild horses are not protected under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971. Tragically, the TRNP management has taken repeated actions towards eliminating the wild horses within the park. Further, the TRNP management has not been transparent with the public regarding the wild horses.

Your support for this resolution is essential to ensure a viable wild horse herd remains in the park. I believe President Theodore Roosevelt would want the wild horses to have a designated place to roam free. The TRNP, with over 600,000 visitors each year, is the ideal location to support the wild horses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely, Regina Knapp February 3, 2025

To members of the 69th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota, specifically Mike Lefor, Jeremy L. Olson, and Vicky Steiner,

Do you believe in Jesus Christ? He loves horses. The horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park deserve our protection. We need to continue Roosevelts legacy and preserve our countrys values and freedom. I support federal protection for the wild horse herds at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park are not protected under the 1971 Wild Horses and Burros Act.

The wild horses are wild and need to stay wild. Putting collars on them, trying to remove the herd, and trying to sterilize the herds with GonaCon is unacceptable. It inhumane and against the values with which our country had been founded on. Freedom. Wild horses are free and will always be free no matter how much the legislators and/or BLM try to control them. It is a waste of our tax dollars and against democracy to try and control these herds. Sterilization will cause the herds to die out. According to the National Academy of S?Sciences, an independent and bipartisan group, roundups only exacerbate the population growth of wild horses. They realize they are lower in number and make up for it.

I oppose round-ups, collars, and GonaCon. I am only in support of a safe and temporary birth control which is PZP. I would prefer to leave the wild horses alone but if our country must control, conquer, and destroy like the English do, then continue roundups and sterilization. If our country believes in freedom, then leave the wild horses free.

Thank you,

Nasreen Brooke Naeemullah



Animal Welfare Institute

900 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, SE, WASHINGTON, DC 20003 · 202-337-2332 · AWIONLINE.ORG

February 6, 2025

North Dakota Legislative Council State Capitol Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee 600 East Boulevard Avenue Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: A concurrent resolution (SCR 4006) urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park

My name is Dr. Joanna Grossman, and I am the equine program director for the Animal Welfare Institute. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 4006, which urges Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. AWI is one of the nation's oldest animal protection organizations, and we advocate for the humane treatment of wild equines. We are grateful for the committee's attention to this matter and, on behalf of our hundreds of supporters in the state, urge you to support this resolution.

As the only wild herd in the state, these cherished horses are unique, and their conservation must be a priority. Unlike the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service manages only a few wild horse herds in the United States – Teddy Roosevelt being a prominent example. The Schakleford horses in North Carolina, which are also under NPS authority, were granted protections via federal legislation to ensure their preservation on the Outer Banks (the Shackleford Banks Wild Horses Protection Act, P.L. 105-229). Similarly, on separate occasions, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives have passed legislation to protect the Corolla wild horses, which are also managed by NPS.¹

As this committee knows, in recent years, congressional appropriations bills have included accompanying directives underscoring the desire of North Dakotans to see the Teddy Roosevelt horses protected (S. Rept. 118-83, S. Rept. 118-201). AWI, like many others, was alarmed when the National Park Service proposed eliminating the herd in its entirety despite the immense popularity of these horses – not only among the citizens of this state, but also among countless visitors to North Dakota from across the United States.² SCR 4006 would likely go a long way

¹ "Senate Passes Burr/Tillis Amendment to Save the Corolla Wild Horses." Press Release from the Office of Senator Burr. April 2016. *Available:* https://www.legistorm.com/stormfeed/view_rss/792408/member/15/title/senate-passes-burr-tillis-amendment-to-save-the-corolla-wild-horses.html *Amendment text available:*

https://www.congress.gov/amendment/114th-congress/senate-amendment/3175/text *House bill text available:* https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/126

² National Park Service TRNP Livestock Plan documents. *Available*: https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=167&projectID=105110&documentID=125324

towards prompting federal lawmakers to take action on this issue and work to ensure that these horses can be treasured for generations to come.

We are grateful to Chairman Kreun for holding this hearing and soliciting input, and of course to Senators Patten, Boschee, and Rummel for their leadership on this issue. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Joanna Grossman, PhD Equine Program Director Animal Welfare Institute Please pass SCR 4006. I fully support this bill. Thank you for the opportunity to protect these horses.

Please pass SCR 4006

Thank you

Marguerite Nico

faxgoddess@gmail.com

469.667.4439

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X\$versionY\$archiverT\$topX\$objects †_ NSKeyedArchiverÑ Troot€ ¢ U\$null_bPlease protect the Theodore

Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses Please Pass SCR 4006 and SB 2331

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Please Pass SCR 4006! The wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park need our protection to remain in this Park in western North Dakota. I grew up in Mandan, ND and my mother came from north of Medora, ND. We frequently visited TRNP while visiting family there. Seeing the wild horses was a treat. As a wild horse advocate, I have been working with CHWHA to keep these horses in the Park. The National Park Service needs to listen to the people who visit. They overwhelmingly want the wild horses to Remain in the Park! Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ruth J Kary

Wild Horse Advocate

Please Pass SCR 4006 North Dakota Legislative Committee Members,

Please pass SCR 4006" AND "Please pass SB 2331"

Support the TRNP wild horse herd in a safely and humanely.

Follow the guidelines set forth by the wild horse advocacy group Chasing Horses. They are a heartfelt, science backed, passionate community of people who are serving the greater good by preserving this majestic and historic wild horse herd.

I appreciate your consideration and I know you will find the necessary compassion to move resolution SCR 4006 forward.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kelly Doyle Sausalito Ca.

Wild horses TRNP

DO Pass SCR 4006 please.

Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

I am writing to ask that you give a "DO PASS" to SCR 4006. This will come before your committee this week.

SCR 4006 asks for federal protection for the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. This is important, to ensure that the horses remain in the National Park.

This resolution will help to support the dedication we have from Senator John Hoeven as he continues to take a lead role in making federal protection for this wild herd a reality.

Thank you for your consideration.

Lindsay Mann

I am submitting my testimony for full support on SCR 4006.

SCR 4006 is a resolution asking our federal legislators for help to secure federal protection for the wild horses present on the Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

This herd has thrived on this landscape and it an integral part of this national park. Thousands of visitors come to the park to see the wild horses. I will be traveling to North Dakota this summer for the sole reason of seeing this iconic, beautiful herd of mustangs.

Protection is necessary as this country continues to wipe out herds of wild horses across the west at the bequest of private interest groups.

Wild horses are good for the land and environment, aid with restoration, help with fire prevention, and do not pollute water sources, unlike livestock.

Federal protection is needed to keep the wild horses present and thriving in their home.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this vital matter. Shelly Thime

Testimony in Support of SCR4006 2/4/2025

To the Sixty-Ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota:

My name is Sabina Louise Pierce, and I am a National Geographic Explorer, photographer and storyteller working on a project on the North Dakota Native American Nokota Horse

I am writing regarding SCR4006, a resolution urging the U.S. Congress to establish federal protection for the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I have made many trips out to your beautiful state and have spent much time with the TRNP wild horses as they are the origins of the Nokota Horse. These horses are rich in history and cultural connections with your state along with being the last herd of wild horses in it too.

I believe they need Federal protection to preserve this historic wild horse herd in the Little Missouri Badlands, where they have been present since at least the late nineteenth century. These horses relate to North Dakota's heritage, originating from both ranch and Native American herds. Theodore Roosevelt and other open-range ranchers documented their presence, and they have been a distinctive attraction since the park's establishment. They attract visitors from across the state and beyond, contributing to tourism in Medora and gaining a dedicated global following on social media.

Even though they one of the main draws attracting visitors, and are rich historical and cultural significance, the National Park Service has considered eliminating the herd over the past sixty years. The most recent attempt came through an Environmental Assessment (EA) process in 2022, ending this past year. Many North Dakotans opposed the removal of the horses, and the decision was only halted due to the intervention of influential Senator Hoeven. While the park has since abandoned the EA plan, they have not made a long-term commitment to preserving the herd. They continue to use of the immunosuppressant GonaCon on mares as a strategy of gradual reduction through eventual sterilization and eventual elimination with the horses aging away.

There is concern that the National Park Service may not voluntarily commit to maintaining the horses or ensuring their long-term health and viability. Local and regional NPS staff have expressed opposition even this year.

Passing this resolution could help secure lasting protection for the wild horses, ensuring they remain a part of North Dakota's history and landscape.

Sincerely,

Sabina Pierce National Geographic Society Explorer My name is Andrew Marx and I support bill SCR4006 because the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt national park are very important for me. This herd has gone through so much in the last years and many people love them and visit the park just because of them. The park management is really not to be trusted- they are working to remove every single horse from the park. Since many years they are trying to get rid of those majestic animals- the newest campaign with the roundup and the collars and hand-injections with Gonacon was a real mess. They are aiming to erase the herd by making them genetically unviable. Therefore the herd needs federal protection badly.

Thank you for your consideration Andrew Marx

February 4, 2025

RE: SCR 4006

Dear Chairman Lee and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am in favor of providing federal protection to the Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) wild horses. They are a living historical remnant of true American freedom and draw thousands of people to the TRNP every year. Federal protection is a necessity to ensure that these living symbols of our country's resilience and strength do not become another sad, tragic footnote to our history.

Please vote to protect and preserve this iconic herd and pass SCR 4006. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Longman Tucson, Arizona

02/04/2025

Dear Committee Members -

I am asking that you please pass SCR 4006.

Sincerely, Isabella Kuzniak

(Dur wild	horses	are a	national	treasure	ĺ

I SUPPORT federal protection of the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park!

Thank you!

Peter Wood Maryland 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 Thoedore 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 definately 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

Dear Legislator,

I urge you to support SCR 4006 to protect and preserve the horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. These horses play an important role in maintaining our ecosystem and contribute to the local economy.

Thank you

Madhu Anderson Green River , Wyoming February 4, 2025

North Dakota Legislative Council

State Capitol

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

600 East Boulevard Avenue

Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: A concurrent resolution (SCR 4006) urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park

I am writing as a concerned tax payer in support of SCR 4006. The wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park are the only wild herd in North Dakota and it is critical that they be federally protected. I was alarmed when the National Park Service proposed a complete eradication of the horses despite how very popular they are with public. Over the past three years, the National Park Service has tried repeatedly to eliminate the wild horses through various means and methods. The Park's repeated and aggressive use of the birth control drug GonaCon demonstrates a reckless misuse of the drug, especially for such a small population of horses. In 2024, the Park Service conducted a roundup and placed obtrusive neck collars on the majority of mares, raising serious safety concerns from equine welfare advocates and the public. There needs to be federal oversight to ensure that these majestic wild horses remain in Theodore Roosevelt National Park for generations to come.

I strongly urge you to support concurrent resolution (SCR 4006) urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Respectfully,

Bonnie Cormier

I am writing to you today to ask that you give a "DO PASS" to SCR 4006.

SCR 4006 is asking for federal protection for the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

This is something that the park has shown us over the last 3 years is greatly needed to ensure that North Dakota's ONLY wild horse herd always remains in this park.

The time is right for this to happen!

Stacie Umetsu

Please protect our wild horses.

Thank you.

Toby Blauwasser.

2-5-2025

Please accept this letter as my written testimony in SUPPORT of establishing federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,

Danielle RA Peterson
116 Woodland Drive
Camano Island WA 98282

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Rachel Lynch. I am a volunteer and advocate with **Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates** and the **American Wild Horses Conservation** non-profit organizations. I am here today to ask that you vote in favor of Senate Bill **4006**. This bill would create federal protections for the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The resolution before you is asking our federal legislators to help get federal protection for this herd since they are not protected under the Wild and Free Roaming Horse & Burro Act.

In my home state of Missouri, there are federally protected wild horses whose origination began during the Dust Bowl of the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s when families were no longer able to care for their livestock. Set free, these once-cared-for horses were left on their own to survive. They formed small bands of families and propagated along Missouri's beautiful rivers and streams, known today as the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. Here, Missouri's wild horses have been allowed to roam free, carefully managed, happy, and still roaming free under federal protection.

There is a wonderful history to the Theodore Roosevelt National Park horses, similar to the horses from Missouri. A history of the land. A history of the free-roaming horses that call this park their home. A history to the testimony of what it means to be free in the land of the free.

"The history of our country is in the bloodlines of our wild horses. Horses played a role in every significant development in our nation's history, from building the West to fighting alongside Americans in our most significant wars. They're the horse we rode in on. Only the power of the people will... preserve these national icons for future generations of Americans to enjoy."

- Ellie Phipps Price, president of the American Wild Horse Campaign*

Please vote in favor of Senate Bill 4006.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Rachel Lynch Concerned Horse Advocate Please pass SCR 4006. Let the wild horses run free.

Ms. Galen Hazelhofer

I am in SUPPORT of Federal Protections of all the Wild Horses and Burros living within the Teddy Roosevelt National Park. love all Animals especially Horses! I'm an Equine Facilitated Psychotherapist and have done extensive research on how Horses and Burros, espscially in the Wild, help heal humans, particularly military veterans considering their high rate of death by suicide. You can start an emotional and mental health and well being project for veterans upheld by veterans as a safe place to come for healing and being of service to such Noble Wild Horses! Serving and Protecting, with Honor, being part of a unit again, experiencing a sense of community and altruism, for a Just cause, would be very healing! And having Indigenous Nations lead the Way, on such Sacred Lands would be even more healing for all. We must save and protect Horses

and Burros. I travel across America and have visited Teddy Roosevelt National park, but was disappointed not seeing ANY Wild Horses, Burros, or Buffalo. Horses have lived "wild" in TRNP for generations and MILLIONS of Park visitors CHERISH these SENTIENT BEINGS as an integral part of the cultural heritage of the Badlands.

These Horses must be protected to preserve natural behaviors just as Teddy Roosevelt would have experienced. He would have seen stallions protecting their families, foals with their mothers and aunties, and the entire repertoire of natural "wild" horse behaviors.

To protect the GENETIC HEALTH of the herd and promote its genetic viability, the minimum population should be much higher than 150! I do not think there is an overpopulation of Horses, as I have not

seen one when I visited and looked out at the vast area of land. Not one! By allowing the Horses to use additional areas of the TRNP, the Herd CAN and SHOULD be managed at a MUCH HIGHER MINIMUM POPULATION LEVEL! Dawn Ulle 30572 Mallard Cove Westlake, OH 44145 440.590.5330

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SCR 4006

As a volunteer of CHWHA, I hear by testify **that I whole heartedly support** SCR 4006, the resolution asking for federal legislators to obtain federal protection for the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I support both SCR 4006 and SB 2331 together.

Please pass SCR 4006

Kaitlin Galanos League of Humane Voters Chapter President Please pass SCR 4006 AND SB 2331 in support of wild horses. Thank you,
Laura Fuson
Carson City NV

Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Christine Snow. I am testifying today to ask that you vote In Support of **SCR 4006**. We are asking our federal legislators for help to secure federal protection for the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park since they are not protected under the Wild and Free Roaming Horse & Burro Act.

I love to visit TRNP specifically to see the wild roaming horses in the park, as well as the rest of the wildlife, all living free and wild in their natural habitat.

Thank you for your time and consideration for this important issue.

Sincerely,

Christine D Snow

Kearney, MO

I support SCR4006, please pass. Thank you

DO PASS... PLEASE!!!

The beloved herd of wild horses in the ND park, the ONLY park named after one of our most beloved presidents, Theodore Roosevelt, are in dire need of your protection.

The park service has failed miserably and consistently in their duties for decades now. It is time North Daloka protects these valuable assets once and for all.

This bill, SRC 4006 needs to pass.

Thank you all in advance for caring about your horses.

Wild horses are being eradicated across the West and it has been horrible to witness. We can stop this terrible injustice from happening in North Dakota. Please pass SCR 4006 to protect Theodore Roosevelt Park's iconic wild horses.

Stephanie Selensky Fargo, North Dakota

I support SCR 4006 Please Pass SCR 4006

Sincerely, Diane Smith TO: Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Hearing February 06, 2025 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM, Peace Garden Room - ND State Capitol

Regarding: Bill SCR4006 and SB

Dear Committee,

"Please pass SCR 4006" AND "Please pass SB 2331

I have visited Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Theodore Roosevelt National Park is the only national park in the ten western states of the United States with wild horses. They were here before the park became a national park. People from around the world come to see this herd in TRNP. Horses are part of this park's diversity in cultural and natural resources. A One-of-A-Kind National Park. We are asking you to provide safekeeping and protection for the horses who add beauty to the Badlands as iconic keystone animals, and to the cultural heritage of this national park.

Sincerely,

Jannett Heckert 7908 Mustang Loop Road Park City, Utah 84098

From: Lynn Brubaker | brubaker@dia.net Subject: SCR 4006 Date: February 4, 2025 at 10:03 PM To: Lynn Brubaker | brubaker@dia.net

PLEASE PASS SCR 4006.

Thank you.

My name is Sonja Stimmer. I am an advocate and fan/supporter of the wild horses in the American West. In fact, I constantly promote them in my position as publisher and editor of an international magazine about the American West.

This issue is important to me as for me and many of our international visitors the "wild Mustangs" are an American icon, they belong to the wild West. They do not – contrary to the constant denying of it – disturb anyone. They are loved, more than the farmers' mass cattle productions.

In this case, too, the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park are a living symbol of America's history and the legacy of President Theodore Roosevelt.

These horses contribute to North Dakota's identity and heritage, attracting visitors and researchers from across the country.

Wild horses play a role in maintaining the park's ecosystem, contributing to biodiversity and land management.

These horses have coexisted with the landscape for generations.

As mentioned above, the presence of wild horses attracts tourists, boosting North Dakota's economy through travel, lodging, and local businesses.

Preserving these horses supports jobs related to tourism, photography, filmmaking, and local commerce.

Thousands of people from North Dakota and beyond have expressed their desire to see these horses protected.

Resolutions like SCR 4006 reflect the will of the people and the need for legislative action.

This is an ethical responsibility and humane treatment is absolutely called for. These horses deserve humane, science-based management rather than mass removal or elimination!

Acknowledging these horses as an integral part of the park's landscape ensures their future for generations.

I am a strong supporter of SCR 4006 to secure federal protection for the horses. This resolution needs to be passed and it is a critical step toward a long-term solution.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

SCR 4006

I wanted to write today to give testimony for the horse's of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. In following the history of the park around these horses, I've learned a lot. The time has come to finally get Federal protections for these horses once and for all. It's the will of the majority of visitors, the City of Medora, and the Elected officials in the State of North Dakota.

This park is unique in the fact that it was named after a US President. The park us also unique in that inside the park it has a non commercial aspect and the fact that you can see wild horses is truly amazing.

I enjoyed them on my visit along with other visitors I talk to.

I urge you to get this bill passed.

Thank you, Diane Tutas We are all aware of the myriad of reasons as to why we want our WILD HORSES to remain on our lands.

I CANNOT stress this enough — we NEED our Wild Horses — We NEED our Wild Horses to live freely on our lands.

Not only do our Horses benefit, BUT our Planet benefits in a very big way, which in turn benefits the Human race. Sir or Madam,

I write is support of protections for the Teddy Roosevelt National Park

Horses. I see them as national treasures and believe that their presence in the
park is a draw for tourists of all kinds.

Please find a way to not only help these wonderful iconic animals but help the park thrive as well.

Best regards,

Linda Brunner

Stockton, MO.

Please pass SCR 4006

Please PASS SCR 4006 – Please PASS SB 2331!!

As a resident and tax paying constituent of ND, I have watched with fear and concern over the recent treatment of the Wild Horse Herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

It appears that the NPS is adamant about either removing the horses from the Park or sterilizing them into extinction with the overuse of Gonacon, which I adamantly oppose.

These horses have as much right to be here as we do and I'm rightfully concerned about maintaining a genetically viable horse herd.

Also – PLEASE take the Damn Collars OFF the 15 mares that have been wearing these since the Oct 2024 roundup, with NO plans to remove them until the batteries wear down, which could take YEARS. Unsightly and Dangerous!!

Thank you,

Gabriella Theodore

730 9th St North #23 Fargo, ND 58102

SCR #4006 Claudia Hebert-Low

My name is Claudia Hebert-Low. I have been following this iconic historic herd of horses for several years. I purchased a yearling from the park in 2016 and after relocating to West Texas from North Dakota in 2019, I continue to assist with documentation and preservation of this historic herd. As a member of North Dakota Badlands Horse Board of Directors, I would like to see this Resolution PASS.

As for the wording "significant" concerns regarding the current management by the Park, I am not in agreement. I feel the Park Management wants to collaborate with the public and I have no significant concerns with the Park's current ability to create a sustainable reproductive herd as they have committed to already. Collaboration requires discussion and compromise and stating Park management efforts are "significantly" concerning directly contradicts a group's ability to work together. I believe the experts in TRNP have the herd's best interest in mind and it will take time to develop a comprehensive plan.

Thank you for continuing to support the horses of TRNP. I appreciate your willingness and concern.

SCR NO. 4006

Testimony of North Dakota Badlands Horse Sherry Mills Moore, Vice President

Good morning,

My name is Sherry Mills Moore, and I am the Vice President of North Dakota Badlands Horses ("NDBH"). NDBH is a 501(c)(3) formed in North Dakota in 2009 to continue the decades of work by Marylu Weber, and others, who were tracking, advocating for and assisting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park ("TRNP").

NDBH supports SCR 4006. This bill puts the strength of the North Dakota people behind the protection of the wild horses at the federal level. We disagree only with the wordage of line 12 that there are "significant" concerns regarding the management of the herd by Theodore Roosevelt National Park. We would prefer the word "significant" be struck. This subjective wordage winds up running contrary to the efforts to collaborate. Thank you for your past support of the TRNP horses. We request your "do pass" vote on this bill.

FROM THE DESK OF

Bob Shoemaker

February 5, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

I strongly support SCR4006. I, as are many if not most, am not a resident of North Dakota but do enjoy visiting the park and especially the wild horses that are resident there, and I visit the park often.

People can learn a lot from watching and understanding the social and familiar interactions of the herds. How they Nurture each other, protect each other, teach the young and so on. Perhaps having a brochure created explaining the horses actions would be a positive teaching aid to improve visitors visits as well. Just an idea.

So I urge you members of the committee to overwhelmingly pass this resolution.

Thank you,

Bob Shoemaker

February 5th, 2024

RE: SCR 4006

Chair and Committee Members:

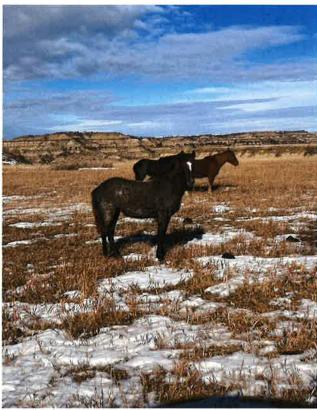
I am Maria Ricks, a volunteer for Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates, from Dickinson, North Dakota. I am writing today to ask that you support SCR 4006. Being a recent transplant from central Minnesota, TRNP is the reason I made the move to Western North Dakota. TRNP would not be as known or visited if not for our wild horses. We need to work together with the NPS to ensure safety of these animals and enjoyment for the generations to come.

 $V \cup V$

mariavricks0@gmail.com



Photos from my most recent trip to TRNP. February 1, 2025



The wild horses in Theodore National Park are beautiful and wonderful. Visitors come from all over the world to see them. Theodore National Park had 900,000 visitors last year. This number is expected to increase significantly every year particularly with the 2026 opening of the Theodore Roosevelt National Library. The wild horses are always in the top three reasons why people visit the park. Using an average daily expense of \$125 for 300,000 people a year is \$37,500,000. Removal of the wild horses would be a terrible tragedy.

The wild horses lived here before the park was founded. They are descended from the famous Nokata horses of Sitting Bull. In the 1800's the famous artists Frederick Remington and George Caitlin depicted the wild horses. President Theodore Roosevelt who ranched in the Little Missouri between 1883-1886 describes the wild horses living here.

The wild horses living in Theodore Rooselvelt National Park are an economic boon. They are historically important. Please pass this bill to protect them and keep them in the park.

Thank you.

Sincerely, Jane Purtzer

LETTER TO 118TH CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

May 18, 2023

Honorable Elected Congressmen/women and Senators:

Congratulations on making it to the Washington Congress representing your state and hope you are enjoying the Spring season.

Recently I met with your aids covering Public Lands issues to give information concerning our country's beautiful and valuable wild horses and burros and why I am very concerned about what is happening to them and how they are being denied their legal rights to live at truly healthy population levels in corresponding viable, year-round habitats.

As a wildlife ecologist during my career, I have made the wild horses and burros, along with others of their Order, a chief focus. What has stood out particularly is that these horses and burros are ancient and long-standing, as well as beneficial, members of the North American life community. Being different from the cloven-hoofed, ruminant herbivores, which they balance out, they are real gardeners of the natural world who more greatly build healthy soils, seed a diversity of plants, including many natives, and, due to their blunter, more rounded hooves as well as upper and lower incisors, do not impact the soils and vegetation as severely. In fact, objective scientific studies have shown that they actually restore and enhance many ecosystems as *keystone species*, including, of course, right here in North America, their evolutionary cradle.

These very beneficial animals, who are "national heritage species" as well as "returned North American natives", are, unfortunately being treated abominably and very much contrary to the true spirit and intent of the unanimously passed Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act (Public Law 92-195, 16 U.S.C. 1331-1340, abbrev. WFHBA), as well as a number of other Acts when appreciated for their true intents and purposes.

One of the most disturbing aspects of current BLM-USDI and USFS-USDA policies (the two agencies charged with wild equid protection and conservation) concerns the enormous amount of filtered and skewed information that is put out by public lands resource exploiters who deviously distort the truth and narrow the perspective, or overview, in order to cast blame upon, or "scapegoat" the wild, naturally living horse and burros. These are people who realize enormous, overly subsidized profits on our – the peoples' – public lands, yet who, instead of being grateful for this and showing respect for the wild horses and burros in their relatively minor legal habitats on BLM and USFS lands, rather have become insufferably selfish in refusing to share the land and freedom with these wonderful and inspiring animals! These people really need to be checked in the name of the public good as well as in the name of defending the precious life community on Earth.

I am including some fair and objective assessments of the current wild horse and burro survival crisis in America. Though legally protected, these innocent animals are being viciously attacked, not only by their traditional enemies against whom the WFHBA was meant to defend them, but by the very agencies that were and remain presently mandated to defend them in their legal habitats, meaning to defend their free and natural lifestyle and the realization of their truer nature, as opposed to the derogatory "feral" domestic escapee label their detractors like to put on them. While analyzing the accompanying information, I urge you to carefully consider the Relative Proportions between the grazing pressure of

livestock and that of the wild equids. Also consider the relative proportions of the impacts of public lands mining and energy development as well as vehicles and other factors in relation to the wild equids and their effects. This more all-inclusive view of what is happening upon our public lands truly unmasks the prejudiced claims against the wild horses and burros for what they actually are: a form of egotistic put-down and negativity aimed at the horses and burros and their true place in nature. This perversity mustn't carry the day, but needs to be dispelled by greater truth and justice.

What can be done to correct this terribly unjust situation? How can we restore the wild horses and burros, along with, as well as in, their rightful legal habitats throughout the West and at truly long-term-viable, thriving, un-biologically altered and harmoniously adapted populations.

As a professional wildlife ecologist and conservationist who takes his duty to the whole of Nature seriously, I propose the *Restore Our American Mustangs and Burros Reserve Design and Rewilding Act*, or ROAM-RD for short. This approach derives from Conservation Biology and would adhere and be consistent with the true spirit and intent of the WFHBA. It would achieve the following urgent reforms:

- (1) Restore the wild horses and wild burros to their rightful legal Herd Areas on BLM and Territories on US Forest Service lands wherever possible.
- (2) Establish complete, year-found and long-term-viable habitats for each particular mustang and burro herd with all the various requirements for truly viable population sizes, adequate forage, water, shelter, minerals, seasonal habitats, etc.
- (3) Reform the Appropriate Management Level (AML) population designations for all the original wild equid herds and along with this the Animal Unit Months (AUM) forage allocations in order to provide adequate sustenance during all seasons of the year that would insure the crucially resilient survival of each herd.
- (4) Cut back on livestock grazing permits and other public lands exploiting permits such as mining and energy development within the legal habitats of the wild horses and burros as the WFHBA mandates as well as 43 C.F.R. 4710.5 & .6 and other related laws authorize. This would restore the true and core intent of the WFHBA that mandates these legal equid habitats be "principally devoted to the welfare and benefit" of the wild horses and burros themselves, not public lands ranchers and every other public land exploiting interest before them as is currently the case! This is right in Section 2 c of the WFHBA, just as "minimum feasible level" management is in Section 3 a. (See Introduction section of my book <u>The Wild</u> Horse Conspiracy for points of law.)
- (5) Instead of disrespectful, invasive alterations of the wild horses and burros biological constitutions, such as certain part-time or permanent sterilizing drugs such as Gona Con and PZP, and instead of the cruel and even sadistic surgical sterilizations, such as ovariectomies and castrations, allow the wild horse and burro populations to self-stabilize their numbers once having filled their respective ecological niches within their variously bounded natural habitats. Although this equid capacity is often overlooked, these horses and burros are long-standing and harmonious members of Earth's life community that are capable of self-limitation once they have filled their respective ecological niches. Additionally, the restoration of natural predators can and does play an important role in achieving this self-stabilization, but it is by no means the only means or even necessarily the primary means thereof. It is very important for people to allow the benign establishment of mature social units, often called bands among the horses, and harems among the more territorial burros. These can and do limit reproduction by submature horses and burros. This occurs because the older males and females repress reproduction by the younger males and females, both behaviorally and in other ways. This natural population stabilization

has been going on for ages, yet it is precisely what the thoughtless and draconian helicopter roundups destroy, as do other herd reduction methods. This is counter-productive to achieving harmony and balance within wild-horse/burro-containing ecosystems.

- (6) Set up Cooperative Agreements by using authorities under Section 4 and 6 of the WFHBA in order to achieve the true and noble purposes of the WFHBA. This will undo so much of the mischievous subterfuge that has taken away the wild horses' and burros' legal habitats often totally! These are on lands that should have been occupied by the wild horses and burros today, and beneficially so! Section 4 and 6 would allow our public servants to solidify positive contracts that support rather than take away the wild equid's rightful land and freedom. This can work greatly to combat Global Warming and mitigate against or even prevent catastrophic wildfires.
- (7) Reserve Design and Rewilding also involve the establishment of reserve habitat boundaries and the identification of those natural barriers that exist in any given area. These would greatly facilitate any necessary containment of any given herd, preventing the horse and burro from coming into harm's way in agricultural, industrial and urban areas. Where necessary, artificial, semi-permeable barriers, such as the very effective long-&-pole buck-rail type fences could be employed. These would be particularly doable around forested areas that could provide the appropriate logs and poles. Also, the establishment of buffer zones is very important to achieve an attenuation of equid presence around the margins of the reserve (see my Reserve Design proposal https://www.gofundme.com/mstngreservedesign)
- (8) Positive educational programs would undo the negatively-premised years of disinformation and sinister plotting that have been trying to destroy the wild horses and burros, take over their habitats completely and totally subvert the true and noble spirit of the WFHBA. For many years this has been going on! Particularly important is the positive involvement of human communities that surround the wild horse and wild burro herds. These communities can be "brought on board" with a positive approach to learning to live in harmony with the wild, naturally living horses and burros and the fascinating and enhanced wild-equid-containing ecosystems. The horses and burros contribute very positively to these as deeply rooted North American Natives. Believe me! If our public officials had taken this approach from the beginning of the WFHBA, we would now see a much more pleasant, healthy world than today!

Conclusion:

Given the dire situation of America's wild horses and burros, bold and caring action is required now to avert a total tragedy. First, we must not be intimidated by what appear insurmountable obstacles. Let us affirm: these can be overcome. Where there is a will born of a higher vision and belief for a better tomorrow ... this inevitable sense of what is right for ALL of us, including the horses and burros, there shall open up a way forth. We mustn't lose our faith, mustn't lose sight of the vision of this superior way of life "when man and horse in Freedom live / once again with mutual Respect". (From my "Poem to Wild Horses" in my book Wonder Streams of the Soul, p. 20, and delivered during my presentation on 4-25-2023 at the Save Our Wild Horses conference in Washington, DC.)

To conclude, I present to Americans the *Restore Our Wild Horses and Burros through Reserve Design and Rewilding Act*, ROAM-RD for short. This proposed plan is described in detail in accompanying documents. I would greatly appreciate your careful consideration of my professional proposal and, if you agree, I would likewise appreciate your help in formalizing this urgently needed reform as an introduced bill. If we promote it with true heart, clear vision and resolute persistence, we can make this urgent change in our society happen. The world needs this today! Rather than the present misnamed "path forward" subscribed by BLM, this will be the true road into a much more enlightened and balanced

future for America's magnificent wild and free-living horses and burros, for us humans, and for all the Great Rest of Life!

In keen expectation of your response, I am Sincerely and Respectfully,

Craig C. Downer, Wildlife Ecologist Wild Horse and Burro Fund / Andean Tapir Fund (501 c 3) P.O. Box 456 Minden, NV 89423 Cell: (775) 901-2094

Email: ccdowner@aol.com

Enclosures

CC: Various interested parties.

T.R. Horses

Please enact the legislation below, SCR 4006. Leave a good legacy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF NORTH DAKOTA, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN: That the Sixty-ninth Legislative Assembly urges Congress to enact legislation establishing federal protections for the wild horse herd of Theodore Roosevelt National Park to ensure the long-term health and preservation of the herd for generations to come...

Greetings, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee members.

A 57-year resident of North Dakota before retiring to South Dakota, I am Marylu Weber, president and co-founder of the North Dakota 501c3 nonprofit, North Dakota Badlands Horse (NDBH). My husband and I created NDBH in 2009 to make the public aware of the wild horses that have roamed the area of Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) since before Theodore Roosevelt lived there. NDBH has consistently and cooperatively worked alongside park staff for the betterment of these horses. Having personally volunteered for the park for over 20 years, I have had the privilege and joy of seeing huge improvements in management and handling. However, recently, the National Park Service (NPS) considered as an option removing all horses from the park. Thankfully, the people of North Dakota and the entire nation convinced the NPS that the horses should stay. The current TRNP staff is committed to keeping a genetically viable herd of horses in the park. Still, as administrations change, the horses could again be in danger.

For that reason, I am supporting North Dakota Senate Resolution 4006, working toward federal legislation to permanently protect the horses in TRNP. I would not want federal legislation to contain details of how the horses would be managed but rather simple language to ensure that the park maintains a genetically healthy reproductive herd of wild horses in the park.

Thank you for your service to North Dakota and your consideration of this resolution!

Marylu Weber, President, North Dakota Badlands Horse



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,

Deb Lee Carson

Deb Lee Carson Photography 30648 County 2 Blvd Red Wing MN 55066 (507) 269.1289 deb@debleecarson.com

Cofounder Wild Lands, Wild Horses Series & Fund Elmer, NJ

/dlc



These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

They Have No Federal Protection

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

 A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Sincerely,

Jason George Brooklyn NY North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

02/05/2025

North Dakota Senate Committee Senate Energy and Natural Resources North Dakota State Capitol Bismarck, ND

Subject: Testimony in Support of Senate Resolution 4006 – Protecting the Wild Horse Herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Chairman Kreun, Vice Chair Roers, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Kerry Ferguson, and I am honored to provide testimony in strong support of Senate Resolution 4006, which urges Congress to establish federal protections for the historic wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

As Executive Director of The Cloud Foundation, I am dedicated to the protection and preservation of America's wild horses and burros. I have worked extensively on issues related to wild horse conservation, public land management, and community engagement in preserving our nation's living history.

The wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park are an irreplaceable part of North Dakota's heritage, a living connection to the very spirit of the park's namesake, President Theodore Roosevelt. Their presence offers visitors a glimpse into the past, where horses roamed freely alongside bison, elk, and other native species that call the Badlands home. Beyond their historical and cultural significance, these horses contribute greatly to the park's thriving ecotourism economy, attracting visitors from across the country and around the world.

Despite their long-standing presence in the park, the National Park Service has frequently considered measures such as the use of fertility control drugs, which can effectively sterilize mares, and even the complete removal of the herd. Such actions threaten to erase an essential part of North Dakota's cultural and natural history, disregarding both the ecological role of the horses and the strong public support for their protection. This herd needs and deserves formal protection. Without it, the US Forest Service's management practices could lead to their disappearance. Losing this herd would not only be a loss to the park but also to the people of North Dakota, our country, and future generations who deserve the chance to witness these remarkable animals in their natural habitat. Theodore Roosevelt himself cherished the wild horses of this region. Allowing their removal would go against the very spirit of conservation that he championed.

Senate Resolution 4006 represents a critical step in urging Congress to take action and ensure these horses receive the federal protection they deserve. Establishing legal protections would safeguard the herd's future and recognize their role in our national story. It is imperative that we work collaboratively with state and federal agencies, tribal nations, advocacy organizations, and local communities to develop a sustainable management plan that prioritizes preservation of a healthy herd over eradication.

On behalf of The Cloud Foundation's staff, board, and our nearly half a million supporters, I urge this committee to pass Senate Resolution 4006 and stand in support of the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Kerry L Ferguson

The Cloud Foundation

kerry@thecloudfoundation.org

719-203-8321

• These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

• They Have No Federal Protection

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

• Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today in support of establishing federal protections for the wild horse herd of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park for the following reasons:

• These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

• They Have No Federal Protection

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A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Lisa Welden

Wild Horses (Theodore Roosevelt)

Wild horses are our legacy, and we are abusing them by overestimating their reproductive rate as well as introducing commercial cattle herds onto the land they use. Also, since unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time. (not that I think that act gives much protection.)

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Thank you, Dr Kathie Kingett I am urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. They are a historic part of the landscape and bring equine enthusiasts to the park increasing revenue to the community of Medora.

I support federal protections!

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2/5/2025

SCR4006 Testimony

Hello.

The wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) symbolize the conservation legacy of Roosevelt as well as the untamed spirit of the American West. North Dakotans and people across the country want protection for these horses. Support is overwhelming. These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

These horses are a living tribute to Teddy Roosevelt; protecting them honors his namesake and his contributions to preservation. Unlike other wild horse herds, these horses are not protected under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. While SCR 4006 cannot require federal protections, it will provide a strong showing to Congress that these wild horses are an integral part of this popular national park and important to North Dakotans and all Americans.

Thank you.

Monet Raths

• These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

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 A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

A Resolution Calling for Federal Protection

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 A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation. Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

We need to protect our wild horses and burros! Please help!

I support this legislation because these horses are a living tribute to Theodor Roosevelt. They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West.

Unlike other wild horse herds, they have no federal protection. TRNP

S horses are not covered under the Wild Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

These horses are a major tourism dray, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas, which boosts North Dakota's economy.

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X\$versionY\$archiverT\$topX\$objects †_ NSKeyedArchiverÑ Troot€¢ U\$nullo)Please secure the welfare and lives of our Theodore Roosevelt National Park s beautiful wild horses

Please give them the protection they need from the mismanagement of the Theodore Roosevelt national Park.

Please protect them from the mismanagement of the use of GonaCon, a fertility drug that has not been scientifically researched, and what the outcome will be for the horses that are given overdoses of the drug, GonaCon

The Parks sole target is to have these wild horses eradicated from the park

Please Pass SCR 4006 Please Pass SB 2331 Thank You \$)271LQSV\

2

Good afternoon,

I'm writing to voice my support for SCR 4006, a bill that would give federal protection to the wild horses in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. These horses are the living embodiment of what he hoped to achieve not only for the park itself, but for the wildlife that lives in it.

These horses currently have no federal protection, which is desperately needed to ensure their continued survival. They are an iconic part of this park and an important national symbol. Most Americans are in favor of preserving our wild horses, and I am one of them!

They also bring in valuable tourist dollars and other income to the surrounding communities.

In addition, if they are placed under the care of the proposed North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group (proposed SB 2331), this would be the optimum solution for these animals. This group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Thank you for your time and attention!

Dr. Michele Clark

North Carolina Central University

Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Birgitta Jackson of Houston, Texas. I am asking today that you vote in favor of Bills SCR 4006 & SB 2331. Bills would create the format of a working group that would work with Theodore Roosevelt National Park to help manage the wild horses. The resolutions before you are asking the Federal legislators to help give federal protection for this herd since they are not protected under the Wild and Free Roaming Horses & Burro Act

This heard of horses is important to me for historical reasons as well as humanitarian reasons. I remember visiting the park when I was 7 years old, and the horses made a huge impact on me as a child. I am hoping to bring my grandchildren to the park when they are old enough to travel and deeply hope that the horses are there for them to enjoy. There truly is nothing like it!

Unfortunately, the ability to view wild horses in their element is dwindling fast, so it's even more important that a piece of our heritage remains.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Birgitta Jackson

9742 Wheaton Edge Lane Houston, Texas 77095

To whom this may concern:

I, Macy Jo Kooima, am writing to you in support of finding a resolution for wild horse herds at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I write this letter with great concern and sadness that we as a nation have let down such majestic animals that have served no harm to society. It is disgusting behavior to ship these horses off to essentially become slaughtered meat. We are better than this and need to care more about these animals who are rooted in this country's history and have only one mission.... To be wild and free.

I ask you to please make an effort in finding a resolution this Thursday 2/6 to allow these wild horses to roam as they should. Stop the harassment, separating them from their young ones/loved ones. It is gut wrenching and heart breaking to see such humans treat them so poorly. Please be on the right side of history and help them. This is so wrong.

Sincerely, Macy Jo Kooima SRC 4006 Hearing-

February 5, 2025

To our legislators,

Please protect our country and its wild horses and burros (wolves as well!). This hearing is about the federal protection needed for wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The past three years has been a nightmare for our wild horses- they continued to be under threat, with collars placed on them and used as guinea pigs for GonaCon.

GonaCon was not studied as much by scientists as PZP. PZP is a safe and temporary birth control. GonaCon has served to only sterilize the horses and put the mares out of season. This has resulted in horses such as Stallion Nichols and Mare Berkleigh birthing a foal, Colt Jasper, who died. He died because he was born in the brutal cold.

The collars were asked to be taken off and the park said they would. This however did not happen. The collars are hideous, unsafe, and restrict the horses' movement.

Roundups were attempted before 2022 but the public worked hard to keep the horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Roundups create more problems, not only are they inhumane but also cause more population growth. The National Academy of Sciences states that Roundups exacerbate population growth. The same organization explains that birth control slows population growth and is the only solution that works. When horses are rounded up, they know they are lower in number. The horses make up for this by reproducing at a faster rate.

Please protect our beautiful, wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. They deserve it.

Thank you for your time.

Nasreen "Brooke" Naeemullah

Please protect this herd of wild horses for countless reasons. You have the opportunity to conserve & ensure that the future includes these beautiful creatures, adding to the gorgeous natural landscape. In a time of overproduction & overconsumption, please do your part in maintaining the preservation of these animals that behave in harmony with nature, without posing harm to positive development. Future generations will thank you!

(SCR 4006 urges U.S. Congress to pass federal legislators to protect this historic herd. While a resolution cannot require federal protections, it will provide a strong showing to Congress that these wild horses are important to North Dakotans and all Americans as an integral part of this popular national park.)



Kathy Mabry < kmabry 625@gmail.com>

NF State legislator testimony comments on February 5, 2025

Kathy Mabry <kmabry625@gmail.com>
To: Kathy Mabry <kmabry625@gmail.com>

Wed, Feb 5 at 3:57 PM

As a retired park ranger, having worked for the National Park Service and other federal agencies in my career, I respectfully ask for your support of SCR 4006 because the wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) are an extraordinary and integral part of the history of North Dakota, TRNP and this great nation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sara Palmitessa St. Paul, MN 55122 612-695-3190 02/05/25

Committee on Natural Resources United States Congress Washington, D.C.

Subject: Urging Support for SB 2331 and Federal Protection of TRNP Wild Horses

Dear Members of the Committee,

I urge you to protect the historic wild horse herd of Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) by supporting SB 2331 and passing federal legislation to ensure their long-term conservation. These horses embody Theodore Roosevelt's conservation legacy and are a vital part of North Dakota's landscape.

Currently, TRNP's wild horses lack federal protection and can be removed at any time. They are a major tourist draw, supporting local economies. Their removal would harm businesses and diminish North Dakota's cultural heritage. Public support for their protection is overwhelming, as reflected in SCR 4006.

SB 2331 proposes a state-led working group to develop a humane, science-based approach to managing the herd, modeled after Colorado's successful program. This initiative would ensure responsible, long-term conservation.

I urge you to support SB 2331 and push for federal protections to preserve these horses for future generations. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Sara Palmitessa I strongly support SCR 4006 for (at least) the following reasons: These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore RooseveltThey symbolize RooseveltÕs conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the parkÕs namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.* They Have No Federal ProtectionUnlike other wild horse herds, TRNPÕs horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.* Wild Horses Boost North DakotaÕs EconomyThese horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

In support of a concurrent resolution urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park

These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

They Have No Federal Protection

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

 A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

February 5, 2025

Martin Espinosa 32245 SW 200 CT Homestead, FL 33030 Martin.espinosa.jr@gmail.com 786-542-4277

North Dakota Legislative Assembly Senate Energy and Natural Resources 600 East Boulevard Bismarck, ND 58505-0360

Subject: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATIVE PROTECTION FOR THE THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATIONAL PARK WILD HORSES

Dear Members of the North Dakota Legislature,

I am writing to you today as a concerned citizen and advocate for the historic wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP). These iconic horses are living symbols of North Dakota's heritage, the untamed spirit of the American West, and a crucial part of the park's cultural and ecological landscape. Their presence not only enhances the park's natural beauty but also contributes significantly to local tourism and the economy.

This week, the North Dakota Legislature has a critical opportunity to lay the groundwork for federal protection and humane, science-based conservation of these horses. The two pieces of legislation under consideration will help ensure that these animals remain a cherished part of our state's legacy for future generations.

The wild horses of TRNP are deeply tied to the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, whose time in North Dakota shaped his conservation ethos and led to the establishment of America's National Parks system. Removing or drastically reducing their population would be a tragic loss, severing a vital link to our nation's history.

Furthermore, these horses have thrived in the park's ecosystem for generations, coexisting harmoniously with native wildlife. Science-based, humane management strategies—such as fertility control programs—offer practical and ethical alternatives to removals and ensure that the herd remains sustainable without

resorting to drastic measures that would permanently erase them from the landscape.

Beyond their cultural and ecological significance, the wild horses of TRNP draw thousands of visitors annually, fueling local businesses and boosting North Dakota's economy. Their loss would not only diminish the park's appeal but would also negatively impact the livelihoods of those who depend on tourism revenue.

I strongly urge the North Dakota Legislature to support legislation that establishes protective measures for these historic horses and promotes humane, science-based conservation solutions. The people of North Dakota, and indeed the entire nation, are watching closely and counting on you to uphold the values of conservation, history, and responsible stewardship.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully ask that you vote in favor of protecting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and securing their place in our national heritage.

Sincerely,

Martin Espinosa Jr.

These Horses are a living tribute to Pres. Theodore Roosevelt, symbolizing Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Not just North Dakotans, but people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected. The country is watching what happens to these horses.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Thank you,

Nina Davis

RE: SCR 4006

I am in favor of passing this resolution which calls for federal protection of the Will Horse hear in TRNP, North Dakota. Of the trips I make during the year, this park is a MUST because of our wild horse heritage. My husband and I are forever in awe of the terrain and hardiness of them. We see them as a source of pride and remembrance. Because they have NO protection under the Wild and Free Roaming Wild Horse & Burro Act, we believe this bill is instrumental for the future of our TRNP wild horses. They enhance healthy vegetation within the park and can be managed successfully as proved in studies. Please hear us and ACT.

I believe that we should protect the wild horses as they are part of our historic past and our management of these herds should be first humane and second in the best interest of the horses themselves so they can maintain their free life and third it should be a good use of tax payer dollars. The unnecessary removal of these horses to then be housed in open pens at outrages cost to tax payers does not meet any of those objectives, not to mention how many end up in the slaughter pipeline.

These horses are a living tribute to Theodore Roosevelt. They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

They have no federal protection. Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild horses boost North Dakota's economy. These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public support is overwhelming. North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

A North Dakota wild horse working group will promote humane wild horse conservation. Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

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 A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Thank you for your compassionate attention, Kathy Sugarman

I am proud to lend my voice in support of SCR 4006—a resolution that powerfully underscores the importance of protecting our historic herd of wild horses. This resolution is not just a symbolic gesture; it is a data-driven call to action for our nation's leaders to recognize the immense ecological, cultural, and economic value these animals represent.

A Living Legacy Backed by Data

Wild horses are an iconic part of our national heritage, with a lineage that dates back centuries. Recent studies by the U.S. Department of the Interior have shown that these horses are not only a window into our past but also a critical component of the present ecosystem. For example, research has demonstrated that the natural grazing patterns of wild horses help maintain ecological balance by reducing overgrown vegetation, which in turn lowers wildfire risks and supports native biodiversity. One study even estimated that these natural behaviors can reduce the prevalence of invasive plant species by up to 40% in key areas of the park.

Economic Impact and Visitor Engagement

This popular national park draws millions of visitors each year—over 2.5 million in the past year alone. Visitor surveys reveal that more than 85% of park guests consider the sight of these wild horses a highlight of their experience. Their presence not only enriches the visitor experience but also contributes significantly to the local economy, with tourism-related revenues approaching nearly \$100 million annually. Protecting the herd means safeguarding this substantial economic engine and ensuring that future generations continue to benefit from both the cultural and financial impacts of these majestic creatures.

A Call for Federal Protection

While SCR 4006 itself does not impose federal mandates, it serves as a crucial signal to Congress: our wild horses are invaluable to both North Dakotans and all Americans. This resolution demonstrates that when we base policy decisions on robust, data-driven insights—from ecological studies to economic impact assessments—we can make informed choices that honor our past while securing a sustainable future.

I have witnessed firsthand the awe-inspiring beauty of these wild horses roaming freely across our cherished landscapes. Their galloping presence is a reminder of the natural wonders that define our nation. By supporting SCR 4006, we are not only preserving a unique cultural symbol but also endorsing a proactive approach to environmental stewardship and economic vitality.

In conclusion, the data is clear: protecting this historic herd is essential for maintaining ecological balance, enhancing tourism, and preserving an irreplaceable piece of our national identity. I urge Congress to take decisive action in favor of federal protections that will ensure these magnificent creatures continue to thrive for generations to come.

5th February 2025

Kyrissa Morigeau 5748 McConihe Rd Ne Moses Lake, WA 98837

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of SCR 4006 that would establish federal protection for the herd of horses that call Theodore Roosevelt National Park home. My husband and I have four kids, two of which are horse crazy girls. In 2016 we took a road trip from our home in Washington state all the way to Medora, solely for the purpose of seeing horses living wild and free. In fact, just months before, I never even knew Theodore Roosevelt National Park existed. It was a random hashtag search of #wildhorses on Instagram where I stumbled upon the beautiful horses of TRNP. At the time of our trip my kids were ages 10, 7, 5 and 3. There are wild horses living in Oregon, which would've been a much shorter road trip for our young crew. However, Theodore Roosevelt National Park is unique in that the horses can often be viewed from the park's loop road making it much more accessible for families with young children that otherwise wouldn't be able to hike for miles. We spent three days visiting the park and it was not nearly enough. On our first day driving through, my children were delighted when we rounded a corner and Teton's band was right off the side of the road. Not a single day of the trip went by without my kids being able to see the horses. We now own 4 horses of our own but there is nothing quite like seeing them living wild and free. Nearly ten years later and my girls still talk about that trip and we continue to follow the horses via North Dakota Badlands Horse on Instagram. The horses are what brought us all the way from Washington state, they are an integral part of the park and the economic well-being of Medora. Please grant them federal protection so that people of all ages and mobility levels can continue to enjoy their majesty.

Sincerely, Kyrissa Morigeau











February 5, 2025

Dear Congressional leaders,

I desperately urge you to be in FULL FAVOR of the SCR 4006 resolution to fully protect the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park in ND! As an avid horse lover and citizen who cannot even fathom why policies exist that abuse, neglect or disregard any wild animal's natural right for existence AND human respect on this beautiful earth, I beg you to please support federal regulations to protect these wild horses. Not only are these horses a living tribute to Theodore Roosevelt and help boost ND economy, but they have NO federal protection! They must have this protection to be safe and not at risk of removal. The citizens of ND and across the US want these horses protected.

Please, Vote in FAVOR of SCR 4006 and pass the much-needed federal legislation for the majestic and symbolic horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park!!!

Sincerely,

Julianne Allen Whittington 18512 Hammock Lane Davidson, NC 28036



Wild Horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park, ND

Please provide federal protection to the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt Nati	onal Park. Thank you.
Sincerely,	

Shirley Usher.

Chair and Committee Members, my name is Linda Haake from Albany, New York.

Please pass SCR4006. The resolution before you is asking our federal legislators to help secure federal protection for the wild horses that call Theodore Roosevelt National Park home. These horses are NOT protected under the Wild and Free Roaming Horse & Burro Act. The resolution clearly states that the state of North Dakota wants federal protection for this herd. The state recognizes the cultural and economic importance of these horses.

I enjoy following this herd on the Facebook posts by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. I look forward to the pictures and stories of these amazing wild horses that they share. It brightens my day! It would be a shame if future generations were not able to enjoy them too!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Linda Haake

To the North Dakota State Legislature, I am writing to express my support for SCR 4006 A Resolution which calls on Congress to protect the historic wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

These iconic horses are integral to American history and the identity of the American West. They symbolize President Roosevelt's strong legacy of conservation and embody the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to the preservation of American Public Lands.

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild Horses boost North Dakota's Economy. These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors and their dollars to Medora and the surrounding areas. As an out-of-state resident & horse advocate/lover, I can attest to this and the ability to view wild herds in their natural habitats makes TRNP a must-visit for me, and is one of my top destinations within the US to visit so I can see these majestic creatures. Their removal would decrease tourism to the state and could negatively impact local businesses and jobs. Americans in North Dakota and across the country overwhelmingly support the protection of wild horses and want the TRNP herd to be protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected today and for future generations to come.

I strongly urge the North Dakota Legislature to pass SCR 4006 to stand up for TRNP's wild horses. Their strength, beauty, and resilience represent everything it means to be an American. They represent freedom and are living testaments to the American West. Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts and submit this testimony in favor of protecting the wild herds of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely, Alana Dowden

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OPINION LOG IN SUBSCRIBE



William Simpson watches over a herd of wild horses. Courtesy of Michelle Gough

Wild Horses Can Help Prevent Wildfires, Advocates Say- the EPOCHTIMES

January 7, 2025 6:15 am

by admin

Views: 347



orses don't tear out the roots of plants while grazing, unlike cattle and sheep, says Simpson.

By Brad Jones – the EPOCH TIMES

At his ranch along the Klamath River in Siskiyou County in Northern California, near the Oregon border, William Simpson lives among free-roaming native American wild horses in what he calls an "immersion study."

When he bought the ranch in 2014, Simpson discovered wild horses roaming his land. He noticed that they would eat dry grass and brush—the kind that fuels wildfires and the stuff that cattle and sheep won't eat. He has since advocated wild horse grazing to mitigate wildfires, and the idea has gained support from Elko County in Nevada and groups such as the Nevada Lands Council.

Local governments in California such as Placer and Marin counties already use goats to reduce wildfire risk. Simpson says his plan would not only mitigate the fires but also clear up more areas for cattle grazing, make wild horse herds stronger and healthier, keep them from potentially being sold for slaughter, and save U.S. taxpayers billions of dollars—but most importantly save thousands of people's lives and livelihoods lost to wildfires and smoke.

The producer of a short **film** called "Wild Horses" and author of a preliminary 2019 **study** on the behavioral ecology of these animals, Simpson said he believes that they could have a major effect on reducing fire damage because of how they graze.

He is also a wild horse ethologist who teaches University of California students about horse grazing patterns and how they help prevent wildfires at his ranch, which consists primarily of grass and brush with scattered pine trees.

Simpson's wife, Laura, died in June 2019 as a result of complications from smoke inhalation after a massive fire in 2018.

"She got sick right after the Klamathon fire," he said. "The toxins in the wildfire smoke killed her."

During that fire, wild horses grazed Agate Flat, which straddles the California—Oregon border, and played an important role by reducing fuel and creating a fire break that helped suppress the speed and heat intensity of the blaze to keep it from spreading to an old–growth forest wilderness area about two miles north in the Cascade–Siskiyou National Monument, Simpson said.

"That was a critical point in the battle ... that helped Cal Fire win the war," he said. "Thanks to the horses, we won."

Everyone near his ranch was evacuated, but Simpson stayed—suffering lung damage himself—to help battle the blaze and keep watch over the horses.

"I stayed back because I wanted to see what these horses were going to do," he said.

And by doing so, Simpson said, he discovered something quite interesting: "Wild horses are not afraid of fire."

He watched and photographed the wild horses "grazing calmly" near the fire, which he attributes to the instincts of wild horses, whose ancestors have seen thousands of wildfires.

"The ancestors of these horses saw Mount Shasta erupting, and they've seen lava. They've seen erupting volcanos," he said. "They've seen it all."

Simpson has written two books and more than 500 articles about wild horses, wildlife, wildfire, and public land and forest management, and he has appeared on several TV and radio shows.



William and Michelle giving affection to a member of wild horses in the fire brigade – photo courtesy of Michelle Gough

Native Species?

Recent **research** from the University of California–Santa Cruz (UCSC) shows compelling evidence that wild horses are native to North America, challenging the long-held belief that these animals are invasive species.

Alisa Vershinina and Beth Shapiro at the UCSC Paleogenomics Lab, and others, traced the DNA of modern horses to ancient ancestors in North America by analyzing well-preserved horse remains from across the Bering Land Bridge, a landmass that connected Eurasia and North America during ice ages of the past. Their research maps the historical journey of wild horses from North America to Eurasia and back.

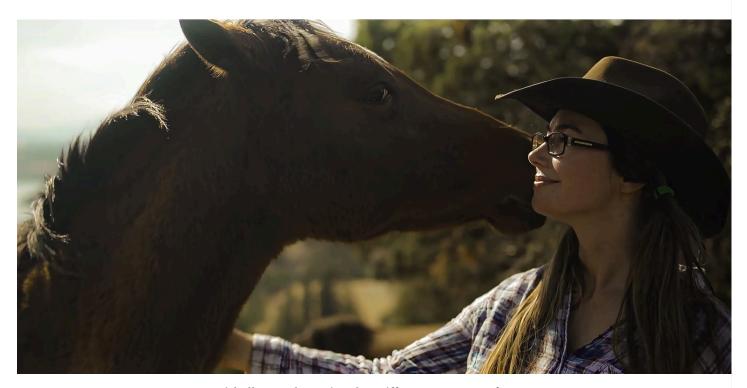
The **digestive systems** of horses and cattle, although both are herbivores, are also vastly different. Cattle have stomachs with four distinct compartments and are often said to have four stomachs. They are also "foregut" fermenters, while horses are "hindgut."

Unlike ruminants such as deer, cattle, sheep, and goats, which have complex and more efficient digestive systems, wild horses and burros have single-stomach digestive systems and don't fully digest most of the seeds they eat, making them nature's "re-seeding experts," Simpson said.

Horses also graze differently and don't tear out the roots of plants in the way that cattle and sheep do, he said.

A **study** published in the British Ecological Society's Journal of Applied Ecology in 2002 on comparative foraging of horses and cattle in Europe found that horses ate 63 percent more than cattle, and consumed more dry grasses.

A herd of 200 wild horses consists of about 20 family bands, each made up of a stallion with a lead mare, usually a harem, and foals.



Michelle Gough passing the sniff test – courtesy of WHFB

"They all know each other. They're very social. They have their own society," Simpson said. "They actually have rituals, which I've documented, when one of their own that they really love dies, they actually pay respects. It's pretty amazing to see. I filmed it.".

Simpson, who is currently listed on Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s "Nominees for the People" website as a nominee to head the Wild Horse and Burro Program at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), told The Epoch Times that the incoming Trump administration's plan to "make America great again" should include "making American wild horses great again."

"I want to save our heritage horses ... of course, because we love them, but mostly I want to save taxpayers' money and save people's lives," he said.



Image credit – Michelle Gough

Wildfire Mitigation

The founder of a nonprofit organization called the **Wild Horse Fire Brigade**, Simpson seeks to save wild horses from being rounded up by the BLM to be penned, or potentially sold for slaughter.

"That's a waste of tax dollars and our resources," he said. "What I want to do is have them reallocated into wildfire mitigation."

Wild horses are a protected species under the **Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971**, which made it a federal crime for anyone to harass or kill wild horses or burros on public land. The law also opened the door for studies of habitats and behavior and allowed federally managed lands to be set aside for herd management areas.

But the law also allows for "excess animals" to be removed to "maintain a thriving natural ecological balance among wild horse populations, wildlife, livestock, and vegetation and to protect the range from the deterioration associated with overpopulation."

Although the BLM denies that it sends wild horses to slaughter, Simpson and others claim that the agency has indirectly enabled it.

Amelia Perrin, a spokeswoman for the American Wild Horse Conservation (AWHC), which says it represents 600,000 supporters who believe that wild horses and burros deserve to roam free as symbols of "freedom, heritage, and the untamed spirit of the American West," told The Epoch Times that the BLM doesn't directly send horses to slaughter but that the animals have been sent to Mexico and Canada to be butchered through the agency's adoption incentive program.



The heritage horses are always game for a good scratch – courtesy of WHFB

Those who adopt the wild horses must sign under penalty of prosecution adoption agreements stating that they will not give away or sell the horses or burros to any person or organization that intends to give away or resell that animal for commercial processing, Perrin said.

The program allows people to adopt up to four horses per year and be paid \$1,000 per horse after successfully caring for the animals for one year. But, after the year is up, they are given ownership of these animals and are free to sell them, she said.

"When the program was announced in 2019, we knew that it would end in disaster for wild horses," Perrin said.

"Unfortunately, we were right, and—as our investigations has shown, people are adopting the maximum number of horses and burros that they can. They're pocketing that adoption incentive money, and then they're sending the horses and burros into the slaughter pipeline in direct contravention of a congressional ban on wild horse slaughter."

She pointed out that public opinion is heavily in favor of protecting wild horses.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals released a 2022 **poll** showing that 83 percent of Americans oppose the slaughter of U.S. horses for human consumption, and a 2017 Public Policy Polling **survey** found that 80 percent of respondents wanted Congress to continue to protect wild horses from slaughter.



Wild horses do reduce fire risk by eating grasses like cheatgrass after they've dried up, whereas cattle only eat that cheatgrass when it's green and not really as much of a fire risk.

Amelia Perrin, spokeswoman, American Wild Horse Conservation

Wild horses symbolize freedom and the spirit of the West, and horses, in general, are "so deeply entwined in our culture" that most Americans don't want to see them slaughtered, Perrin said.

The AWHC supports any alternative, including grazing to mitigate wildfires, that could keep wild horses from being killed, she said.

"Wild horses do reduce fire risk by eating grasses like cheatgrass after they've dried up, whereas cattle only eat that cheatgrass when it's green and not really as much of a fire risk," Perrin said.

Adoption and Sales Programs

A 2015 U.S. Interior Department Office of Inspector General **report** showed that the BLM sold 1,794 federally protected wild horses to a Colorado rancher who allegedly sent them to slaughter in Mexico. The report revealed that the rancher, who also allegedly had connections with former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, bought the horses through the BLM adoption program for several years ending in 2012 and later sent nearly all of them to Mexico.



A livestock helicopter pilot rounds up wild horses from the Fox & Lake Herd Management Area in Washoe County, Nev., on July 13, 2008. Brad Horn/AP Photo

Periodically, the BLM, which manages about 245 million acres (about 383,000 square miles) of public lands—one-tenth of the nation's land—rounds up excess wild horses and burros and places them in its **adoption and sales programs**.

In November, the BLM announced five new public-private partnership agreements to place 11,000 of these animals, in addition to its existing adoption program. These partnerships could receive up to nearly \$25 million in funding over five years and save taxpayers roughly \$160 million by reducing the costs of caring for unadopted wild horses and burros.

"Based on 2023 prices, the average cost is approximately \$15,000 to care for a wild horse in BLM facilities over its lifetime if it is not placed into private care, leaving taxpayers on the hook for more than \$1 billion for the 67,000 wild horses and burros currently in short- and long-term holding," the federal agency said in a Nov. 12 statement.

"The BLM is committed to ensuring the health and long-term sustainability of America's wild horse and burro herds and the public lands they roam," BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning said in the statement. "By working with partners, we can reduce the number of animals in off-range facilities and ensure a healthy balance on public lands. These efforts are crucial for the well-being of the animals while also a savings for taxpayers."

Too Many Horses?

According to the BLM, wild horses and burros have "virtually no natural predators that can control population size" and can double their numbers every four years, straining ecosystems, degrading forage and soil, damaging riparian areas, and competing with other wildlife, including endangered species.

But both Simpson and the AWHC disagree, citing a 2021 **study** of mountain lions published in the Journal of Wildlife Management that found the diets of cougars in the Great Basin—including parts of California, Nevada, Oregon, and several other states—"were composed predominantly of horses," at 59.6 percent, and said "cougars may be an effective predator of feral horses."

In the agency's 2020 **report** to Congress, the BLM estimated that there were at least 88,000 wild horses and burros within the 177 herd management areas on public lands—more than three times higher than the "appropriate management level" of less than 27,000 animals.

"If nothing were done to reduce the annual growth rate of these herds, by 2040, the BLM estimates the on-range populations of wild horses and burros could increase to over 2.8 million," the report stated.



William Simpson stands near his home outside of Yreka, Calif – Photo credit – Michelle Gough

The agency published a 2023 **infographic** indicating that wild horse populations had decreased to fewer than 83,000, but remained at unsustainable levels across the Western states, and that herds were at risk of death by starvation or thirst. In March 2024, the agency pegged the wild horse **population** at about 73,520—a 9,363 decrease from the previous year.

The wild horses held in off-range pastures and facilities cost taxpayers \$108.5 million in 2023, the Property and Environment Research Center, a nonpartisan public policy think tank that advocates free-market environmentalism, said in its May 2024 "From Range to Ranch" report.

Although the AWHC supports the agency's adoption programs as a way to get horses out of holding, Perrin said the only way that the BLM can alleviate the burden on taxpayers is to stop rounding up wild horses and instead invest in humane fertility control programs.

The cost to treat one mare over her lifetime is about \$2,500 and doesn't affect her behavior or ability to nurse or nurture babies, Perrin said.

The BLM roundups and the agency's practice of using low-flying helicopters to move thousands of wild horses from the open range to confinement in holding pens can be traumatic and result in animal injuries, she said.

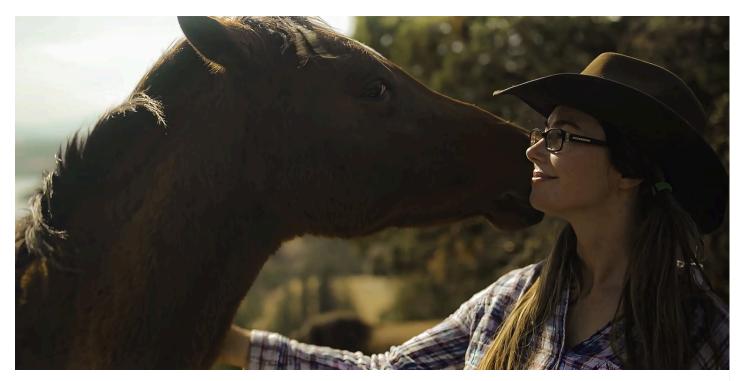
BLM Response

Jason Lutterman, a BLM spokesman, told The Epoch Times in an email that the agency does not have the legal authority to place wild horses in protected wilderness areas and that the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 prohibits the agency from placing wild horses on public lands where they were not found when the law was enacted.

"Using wild horses to reduce fuels could also cause ecological problems. If targeted in the right season, high numbers of any grazer can reduce annual invasive grasses, like cheatgrass, that feed wildfires," Lutterman said.

But intense, year-round grazing by unmanaged horses can reduce native plant and animal diversity and disturb soils in a way that "actually favors" these invasive grasses and "could even increase fire frequency and spread," he said.

Introducing horses without fertility control would lead to uncontrolled herd growth in wilderness areas, Lutterman said.



Michelle with one of the 200 heritage horses on the Range – courtesy of WHFB

"Predation doesn't typically limit herd growth on BLM's herd management areas, or on other western lands where there have been credible ecological studies," he said.

The BLM website answers common questions about the Wild Horse and Burro Program, as well as sharing facts and addressing myths related to the program, according to Lutterman.

Cattle and Sheep Grazing

Meanwhile, Reps. Doug LaMalfa (R-Calif.) and Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.) have proposed legislation, H.R. 7666, which would require the U.S. secretary of agriculture to work with the U.S. Forest Service and livestock grazing permit holders on federally managed public lands to increase livestock grazing opportunities that would mitigate wildfire risks.

If passed, it would allow permitted grazing on vacant land during instances of drought, wildfire, or other natural disasters.

Although the bill doesn't specifically exclude wild horses, LaMalfa told The Epoch Times that it's more intended for cattle and sheep because domestic livestock are more easily managed and moved to different sites to target specific areas for responsible grazing.



If someone can gather them and keep them firmly corralled in an area that needs to be grazed, theoretically that could work, but it's already so hard to get grazing permits and keep them for people that are actually legitimately ranching out there to produce a beef product.

Rep. Andy Barr

Wild horses, LaMalfa said, wouldn't be as effective as cattle and sheep because they're harder to manage than domestic livestock.

"They don't herd as well," he said. "They're not manageable in the same way."

And besides, LaMalfa said, the wild horse population is already unsustainable.

"Those horse numbers need to be brought down dramatically," LaMalfa said. "Many of them need to be removed."



An aerial view shows cattle grazing on small islands of hay surrounded by pastureland burned by the Smokehouse Creek fire near Canadian, Texas, on March 4, 2024. Scott Olson/Getty Images

Also, LaMalfa said he couldn't imagine that many ranchers would support the idea of having to compete with horses for grazing land.

"If someone can gather them and keep them firmly corralled in an area that needs to be grazed, theoretically that could work, but it's already so hard to get grazing permits and keep them for people that are actually legitimately ranching out there to produce a beef product," he said.

Vacant Wildlands

According to Simpson, LaMalfa and the BLM are missing the point: Under his plan, wild horses wouldn't compete for the same grazing land as cattle and sheep and would not be placed in protected wilderness areas but would instead be deployed to "vacant wildlands" typically at higher elevations in more remote areas near forests where they would graze to create fire breaks, thus freeing up—in his estimation—about 15 percent more prime grazing areas for cattle and sheep.

Those vacant wildlands, he said, are vacant for a reason: Ranchers don't want to put cattle and sheep in there because "they're too dangerous and too remote," with predators such as mountain lions, bears, and wolves, and are harder to access, often by single-track roads.

Simpson said he isn't suggesting that wild horses be placed in established grazing areas and agrees with LaMalfa that it would cause needless tension and "economic conflict" with cattle and sheep ranchers.

'Genetic Vigor'

Putting wild horses in established grazing lands would also be a bad idea because those areas are usually protected from predators that are needed to thin the herds through survival-of-the-fittest "natural selection" and maintain "genetic vigor," Simpson said.

In his opinion, the proposed bill, H.R. 7666, doesn't go far enough to specifically include wild horses, which are more resilient to withstand harsher conditions and more rugged diets such as drier grasses and brush, which cattle and sheep won't eat.

Wild horses "eat every kind of grass out there," including cheatgrass and shrubs such as poison oak, and will even eat oak branches and leaves, cleaning up the forest floor around trees, which they use for shade and shelter, Simpson said.

"They graze under the trees, clean all that fire fuel out, which makes the trees more fire resilient," he said.



Image by Ronald Plett from Pixabay

Dry grasses and shrubs burn rapidly and "catastrophically hot," while areas that have been grazed burn lower and slower and reduce the risk of massive forest fires, Simpson said.

The Klamath fire started as a grass-and-brush fire near Interstate 5 and burned all of the dry grass and brush in the area that was not grazed, he said.

Prescribed Burns and Wildfire Smoke

With hundreds of millions of acres of vacant wildlands in the United States, the push for more "prescribed burns" to reduce wildfire risks is not only "unscalable," but also unhealthy, considering how smoky Western skies have been during wildfire season over the past several years, Simpson said.

"We don't need to have all this fire, and we certainly don't need more smoke with prescribed burning, which doesn't scale," he said. "Prescribed fire? Oh, really, so you're going to burn those 300 million acres of vacant wildlands? Is that what you're telling us?"

According to the Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, smoke from wildfires presents significant **health risks**, and a University of California—Los Angeles (UCLA) **study** released in June found that "thousands more people than previously counted die each year in California due to the health impacts of wildfire smoke."

The **research**, published in the journal Science Advances, found that "inhaling the fine particulate matter known as PM2.5 from wildland fires led to 52,500 to 55,700 deaths in the 11 years from 2008–2018, with an associated economic impact of \$432 billion to \$456 billion," according to UCLA.

So if wild horses can mitigate fires, Simpson said, his plan could save the lives of thousands of Californians who die prematurely from wildfire smoke.

"That's got to be the highest priority," he said. "And that's why I push as hard as I do."



A home saved by firefighters sits surrounded by damage from the Airport Fire in El Cariso Village, Calif., on Sep. 16, 2024.

John Fredricks/The Epoch Times

Grazing Grievances

Siskiyou County Supervisor Ray Haupt told The Epoch Times that many historic grazing allotments on public lands aren't being used, mainly because of state regulations for sediment in streams.

As the owner of a forest and natural resources consulting business and member of the California Professional Foresters Association, with a degree in natural resources management and forestry, Haupt said he supports "anything that reduces fuel" to help suppress the rapid spread of wildfires.

But, he said, the ecological systems involved in grazing are complex, with no "one size fits all" solution.

Grazing is effective in dry areas with grasses underneath the tree layer, but not in heavily forested areas with high tree density where "horrendous fires" are occurring, he said.

"Horses and cows don't eat trees," he said.

Looking at the big picture of forest fire prevention, Haupt said, livestock grazing by itself is "not going to do much."

'Too Many Trees'

Haupt suggested that one of the biggest problems in forest management policy may literally be not seeing the forest for the trees.

There are "too many trees," he said.

Haupt, a member of the Sustainable Forest Action Coalition, a grassroots coalition that seeks to restore an economically sustainable ecosystem on public lands through the "proper" management of watersheds, forests, and logging, has worked with Congress on natural resources legislation and on a research study with the University of California—Merced and University of California—Berkeley, published in 2014, that focused on changes in vegetation in a portion of the Scott watershed since 1935.



A firefighter uses a hand tool to extinguish hot spots while battling the Dixie Fire near Westwood, Calif., on Aug. 12, 2021.

Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

The study found that between 1977 and 1985, the region went through a wet spell that allowed more trees to grow on lands with thinner soils, increasing the forest density to four times as many trees per acre than there were in 1935, according to Haupt.

This shows a need to reduce fuel sources to prevent fires from spreading, he said, and policies "put in place as a reaction to politics" and litigation from environmental groups over the past few decades have hampered efforts to clear the dry underbrush and thin the forests.

During his first term, President Donald Trump voiced support for clearing the forest floors of overgrowth and conducting prescribed burns.

In September 2020, Haupt said, he met with Trump, California Gov. Gavin Newsom, and state officials in Sacramento to discuss wildfires, but with the meeting so close to the 2020 election and the end of Trump's first term imminent, no significant follow-up effort was made to clean the forest floors.

LaMalfa said he expects the next Trump administration to make necessary changes within government agencies to take a more "aggressive" approach to forestry and wildfire mitigation.



Brad Jones Author

Brad Jones is an award-winning journalist based in Southern California.

- Why does LaMalfa only support prevention of violence against some women?
- Obituary: Leonard Murphy
- Siskiyou County Sheriff's Wild West Wanted Wall February 3rd, 2025
- New California Bill Aims to Protect Klamath River Salmon with Extended Water Flow Regulations
- Garden Gab: Making the Most of Rainy Days

Arrest Arrested Avery Theatre bookings chinook CHSRA coho Copco Dunsmuir Dunsmuir Elementary

Easter Egg Hunt Etna EtnaCa FERC gardening Irongate Jail KCOC klamath Klamath National Forest klamath river

Klamath River Dams KNF KRRC Main Street Homestead McCloud Montague Mount Shasta Mt Shasta Obituary

Rodeo Salmon Scott River Scott Valley Scott Valley Agriculture Water Alliance sheriff Siskiyou

Siskiyou County Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors Siskiyou Golden Fair Trump USDA KNF weedca

YPD Yreka

Tags: Heritage horses, mustangs, the EPOCHTIMES, wild horses



Author: admin

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• They Have No Federal Protection

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

We all want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

Testimony:

These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelts conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the parks namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

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A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorados success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

I am in favor of urging the US Congress to pass federal legislators to protect this historic heard. While a resolution cannot require federal protections, it will provide a strong showing to Congress that these wild horses are important to North Dakotans and all Americans as an integral part of this popular park. Why are these wild horses important? Why does it matter to the public?

These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

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North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

Thank you for your consideration to this matter.

Sincerely,

Ashley Deasy

807 Riverside Drive, Apt. 1A New York, NY 10032 adamjesseburns@gmail.com 646-321-9238

February 5th, 2025

Testimony in support of SCR 4006 – A Resolution Calling for Federal Protection

I am one of the very lucky few to have seen America's wild horses stampeding through canyons.

These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt. They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

They Have No Federal Protection. Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy. These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming. North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation. Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Sincerely,

Adam Jesse Burns

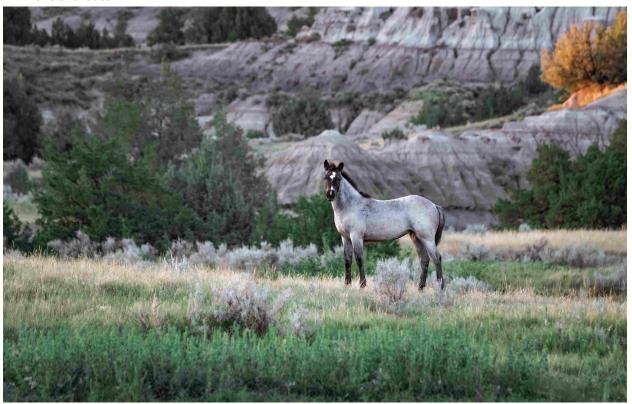
Action to Protect the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses

Action to Protect the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses

February 5, 2025



Author
AWHC Contributor



The iconic wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) are at risk, and I support this legislation to secure their future.

This week, the North Dakota Legislature is considering two critical pieces of legislation that could lay the foundation for federal protection and humane, science-based conservation of this historic herd.

I have been informed daily as an online visitor to Theodore Roosevelt National Park of what has happened to many generations of horses in the wild there. Generations of horses wild in Theodore Roosevelt National Park who are KNOWN

NAMED

and LOVED

by their worldwide audience of visitors, both online and in-person.

Folks worldwide are anxious to visit the horses in the wild in Theodore Roosevelt National Park and be documented as being in support of long term protection for these generations of horses. Horses Well Known, Named and Loved.

I agree with AWHC and I too applaud Chasing Wild Horses for their excellent advocacy for the TRNP wild horses and documentation including getting this legislation introduced. We urge you to support their efforts at the

Upcoming Hearings:

SCR 4006 – A Resolution Calling for Federal Protection

Hearing Date: February 6, 2025, at 3:15 PM

SCR 4006 urges the U.S. Congress to pass federal legislators to protect this historic herd. While a resolution cannot require federal protections, it will provide a strong showing to Congress that these wild horses are important to North Dakotans, all Americans and their worldwide, concerned, audience as an integral part of this popular national park.

And

Please also support at these hearings

SB 2331 – A Bill to Establish a Wild Horse Working Group

Hearing Date: February 7, 2025, at 9:30 AM

SB 2331 calls for the formation of a state-led working group to collaborate with the park and interest groups to ensure the long-term management and protection of the wild horses. AWHC led the effort to pass legislation in Colorado creating a successful model for state participation in wild horse protection. In North Dakota, this model would help ensure the wild horses remain a treasured part of North Dakota's landscape.

I agree

• These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation!

They Have No Federal Protection

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans, people across the country and their worldwide audience want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

• A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation. Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative.

humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

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They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

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* Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

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* Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

* A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

I am writing to support SCR 4006, which urges the U.S. Congress to pass federal legislation to protect the historic wild horse herd in TRNP. I hope this resolution will show Congress that these wild horses are important to North Dakotans and all Americans as an integral part of this popular national park. This model would help ensure the wild horses remain a treasured part of North Dakota's landscape.

Here is more detail on why I believe this herd should be preserved.

These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

They Have No Federal Protection

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country, such as myself, want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP herd remains wild.

As a fan of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and the amazing wild horses that are at the heart of these historic badlands, I encourage you to pass SCR 4006. The wild horses need protection, and TRNP needs the horses. You've spoke up for them in the past. Please do the right thing now. Thank you, Charlotte Roe

- 1. **These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt.** These horses are a living tribute to Theodore Roosevelt. They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.
- 2. **They Have No Federal Protection and should** Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.
- 3. **Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy.** These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.
- **4. Public Support Is Overwhelming** North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.
- 5. **Would provide a North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group** will promote humane wild horse conservation. Modeled after Colorado's success, SCR4006 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Please protect these horses. Thanks.

2/5/25

SCR 4006 urges U.S. Congress to pass federal legislators to protect this historic herd. While a resolution cannot require federal protections, it will provide a strong showing to Congress that these wild horses are important to North Dakotans and all Americans as an integral part of this popular national park.

Please protect these horses, leaving them to live peacefully and successfully in the open. The only interaction with humans should be for humans to help them in time of need whether for medical attention, or for food/water. Our wild herds are precious and there are so few left. They are amazing to watch. This is a part of our nation's heritage, let us protect it forever.

Thank you.

Ellen Baer

Riverside, CA

- They Have No Federal Protection Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.
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Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Regarding SR 42006

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Thank you.

Please pass SCR 4006. The wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park need Federal protection. The Wild Horse Working Group will help ensure we have a well-managed herd forever in the park. The State of North Dakota has many resources to ensure We keep a viable herd in the park. But we need Federal protection to prevent the National Park Service and BLM from removing them or sterilizing them so they die off. I visit TRNP yearly to see the wild horses. I want the next generation to enjoy these animals as much as I do.

February 5, 2025

To Whom it May Concern:

The wild horses living in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park are not just beautiful animals roaming free for everyone to admire; they represent Teddy Roosevelt's love for nature and the wild spirit of the American West. They remind us of how Roosevelt helped create public lands and save America's natural beauty. Protecting these horses isn't just about respecting the park's namesake; it's about keeping alive the ideals of conservation that Roosevelt fostered.

Additionally they are a boon to the local economy. People come from all over to see them, creating profits for local businesses and increasing jobs. Losing the horses would be bad news for Medora, ND, and nearby towns.

Sadly, the TRNP horses aren't protected by the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act like most wild horses in the U.S. This means they could be removed or disposed of at any time in the future. We need to ACT now to keep them safe.

LOTS of people want to protect these wild horses. It's not just a few activists; it's a lot of North Dakotans and folks across the country. SCR 4006 will encourage Congress to pass legislation to protect the TRNP wild horses.

SB 2331, which is similar to a successful plan in Colorado, suggests creating a North Dakota wild horse working group. This group would include state officials, wild horse supporters, horse experts, and others to come up with humane ways to protect the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses. The goal is to make sure these iconic animals have a decent and hopeful future. Isn't that what we all want?

The wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) are not just majestic creatures roaming the rugged landscapes of North Dakota; they are a living tribute to Theodore Roosevelt himself, symbolizing his indelible legacy of conservation and the untamed spirit of the American West. By protecting these horses, we honor the park's namesake and his monumental contributions to public land preservation.

However, it is alarming to note that unlike other wild horse herds, the TRNP horses lack federal protection under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. This oversight leaves them vulnerable, as they can be removed at any time without legal consequence, threatening their very existence within the park that bears Roosevelt's name.

Moreover, these horses are not only a symbol of natural heritage but also a vital asset to North Dakota's economy. They draw thousands of tourists to Medora and the surrounding regions each year. The potential removal of these horses could devastate local businesses and lead to significant job losses, underlining the economic impact of wildlife tourism.

The public's support for protecting these horses is overwhelming. North Dakotans and people across the nation are calling for action. SCR 4006 is a crucial step forward, urging the U.S. Congress to heed this widespread support by enacting federal legislation to safeguard the TRNP wild horses.

We must act now to preserve this irreplaceable part of our national heritage and continue Theodore Roosevelt's vision for our nation's wild spaces and wildlife. Protecting the wild horses of TRNP is not only a tribute to our past but a crucial investment in the future of our natural world.

Regarding SCR 4006

February 5th 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

I spent many summers in North Dakota visiting family, as my dad grew up on a farm near Bismarck. I love the wild country there and know it is a special place and its land and animals are a big part of that. This obviously includes the wild horses in the park.

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

Please help these wild creatures live their lives in peace and freedom.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Hintz.

2/5/2025

Dear To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of herd protections for the wild horses of TRNP. Wild horses are an integral part of our Country, and protecting them is our responsibility. If we all work together in every state, with every herd, we can protect and humanely manage this national treasure.

In my 20 yrs of activities operating a 501c3 nonprofit horse sanctuary in AZ, I have directly interacted with wild horses and donkeys. I can tell you first hand the amazing creatures they are, each a beautiful testimony for what our Country stands for.

I urge you to please step up and advocate for this herd, and all other wild horses in your state. Please keep them living free, and manage them with care. They deserve no less.

Sincerely,

Toni Leo, Ph.D Arizona To the Honorable Members of the United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

The wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park are more than just a symbol of America's untamed spirit; they are a living connection to our nation's history and a beloved part of North Dakota's landscape. SCR 4006 is a crucial resolution that urges Congress to take action in protecting this iconic herd, ensuring their survival for generations to come.

While this resolution itself does not mandate federal protections, it sends a powerful message: North Dakotans and Americans alike recognize the cultural, historical, and ecological significance of these horses. Their presence enhances the visitor experience, supports local tourism, and embodies the legacy of conservation championed by President Theodore Roosevelt himself.

Congress must act to safeguard these wild horses before they are lost to bureaucratic decisions that do not reflect the will of the people. By supporting SCR 4006, we affirm that these horses deserve a permanent place in our nation's treasured landscapes. Let's stand together to protect this irreplaceable part of our American heritage.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Mustang Comments

The mustangs at Theodore Roosevelt Park, and the mustangs all over the USA and world, need to be protected. Mustangs are beautiful and created by God for humans to enjoy and protect. They are a blessing and bring peace to humans as they are beautiful, wild, and free. They are good for the environment because they keep grass trimmed and do not tear up the roots (like cattle), nor do they destroy water beds (like cattle), and their manure is good for the soil. They are excellent for the economy because people from all over want to see them in the wild. They are good for nature because they are part of a balanced ecosystem.

Thus, the mustangs must be preserved!

February 5, 2025

SCR 4006: A concurrent resolution urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Testimony for the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Hearing to be held on February 06, 2025 from 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Dear Committee Members,

We are writing in support of SCR 4006 which will urge Congress to establish federal protections for TRNP wild horses. Visiting this iconic herd is on our bucket list and we are afraid that if the horses are not federally protected, we will never have the opportunity. We recently traveled to Nevada to see and photograph wild horses (and burros) – Theodore Roosevelt National Park is a place that we want to visit too, mostly to observe these majestic, beloved creatures which deserve to live wild and free.

Please \sim *pass this resolution*!

Judy Salvadore and Bob Cazzani Saunderstown, Rhode Island USA My name is Lyndsay Little and I am a concerned citizen and wild horse advocate of the United States. I am testifying for the federal protection of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses through SCR 4006.

The wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park are a symbol of American Freedom. Although some sources state otherwise, the nation's wild horse bands have shown to benefit the environment, not degrade it. Throughout the past few years, mustang advocacy groups have created rewilding projects. Under the projects, the environment is thriving and more animal species have returned to the land.

I am sharing this because it is important to me, as well as the rest of our nation, that these horses are protected. Theodore Rosevelt National Park named after the United States' twenty sixth president for his conservation heritage. Therefore, the horses are connected to this piece of environmentally and culturally diverse land, roaming and thriving here even before the park's creation. Americans care about their symbolic freedom, of which these wild horses are a part of.

Passing SCR 4006 will establish federal protection for the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park allowing them to thrive and benefit the land's diverse species. This bill will also protect this mustang herd through conservation, consisting of humane efforts, not round ups.

Testimony in Support of SCR4006 January 31, 2025

To the Sixty Ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota:

I write in support of SCR4006, a resolution requesting the legislature to urge the U.S. Congress to devise and impose federal protection for the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I studied the horses for the National Park Service (NPS) between 1987-1990, compiling a lengthy cultural history of the herd and its management by the NPS.

Federal protection is necessary to ensure that this historic wild horse herd remains in the Little Missouri Badlands, where wild horses have existed since at least the late nineteenth century. The horses embody the history of North Dakota, since they originated from both ranch and Native American herds. Theodore Roosevelt and other open-range ranchers described and wrote about their presence, and the horses have been a unique and popular attraction since the establishment of the national park honoring the twenty-sixth president. They draw both North Dakotans and out of state tourists to the park and the Medora area and are now followed on social media by people around the world.

Despite their popularity and significance, Theodore Roosevelt National Park has sought to eliminate the herd several times during the past sixty years. However, they were kept as a "historic demonstration herd" that evoked Roosevelt and North Dakota's open range ranching era. In 2022, the park announced that Roosevelt's ranching career was no longer part of their mission and began an Environmental Assessment (EA) process to remove the resident horses and longhorn cattle. Because North Dakota state officials and thousands of residents opposed the removal of the horses, Senator Hoeven intervened, and the EA was aborted.

Unfortunately, I have no confidence that the National Park Service will voluntarily retain the horses and manage them to ensure their long-term health and viability. The park has not made a public commitment to keeping the herd forever, and their continuing efforts to sterilize the mares by using Gona Con, an immunosuppressant, suggests that they have simply found a new strategy for eliminating the herd. Put bluntly, I believe that to be their intention.

Only federal protection will secure their future. Please pass this resolution to ensure that the wild horses remain part of North Dakota's history and landscape for coming generations.

Thank you for your consideration,

Irene Castle McLaughlin, Ph.D. Belmont, MA



February 5th 2025

To Whom it may concern,

I am urging legislators to protect this historic herd of wild horses. The are an integral part of this National Park. I am a photographer and as a visitor to the park my main reason for coming is to see and photograph these iconic horses. They are part of the fabric of the North Dakota and The Theodore Roosevelt Park its self. "Defenders of the short-sighted men who in their greed and selfishness will, if permitted, rob our country of half its charm by their reckless extermination of all useful and beautiful wild things sometimes seek to champion them by saying the 'the game belongs to the people.' So it does; and not merely to the people now alive, but to the unborn people. The 'greatest good for the greatest number' applies to the number within the womb of time, compared to which those now alive form but an insignificant fraction. Our duty to the whole, including the unborn generations, bids us restrain an unprincipled present-day minority from wasting the heritage of these unborn generations. The movement for the conservation of wild life and the larger movement for the conservation of all our natural resources are essentially democratic in spirit, purpose, and method." These horses are loved and must be preserved and protected for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration, Pauline St.Denis

Pauline St.Denis 150 East 18th street 8p 10003 psd@paulinestdenis.com 917-541-4245

Sheri A. Pellegrini 6700B Reservation Road Yorkville, IL 60560

January 5, 2025

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Hearing

Re: SCR 4006 – A Resolution Calling for Federal Protection

of the Wild Horse Herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park

Senate State and Local Government Public Hearing

Re: SB 2331 – A Bill to Establish a Wild Horse Working Group

Please be advised that I am in favor of SCR 4006 and SB 2331. As one of the overwhelming majority of Americans who support the protection of wild horses and wish for them to remain free in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, I agree with the propositions set forth by the American Wild Horse Conservation campaign, specifically:

- These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt. They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.
- <u>They Have No Federal Protection</u>. Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.
- Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy. These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.
- <u>Public Support Is Overwhelming</u>. North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.
- A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation. SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely.

Sheri A. Pellearin

Written Testimony in support of SCR 4006

Attention:

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Public Hearing

February 06, 2025 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM

Peace Garden Room - ND State Capitol

Establishing Federal protections for a wild horse herd at the Theodore Roosevelt National Park would be a Living tribute to Theodore Roosevelt. They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

Sincerely,

Alex Nadolishny

100 S. Dos Caminos Ave., Ventura CA 93003

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of SCR 4006. Our environments, ecosystems, and all the living beings they contain are threatened more than ever before under our current administration. TRNP's horses are especially vulnerable because they are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time, and I believe we shouldn't leave their fate to chance or the capricious, impulsive, and destructive nature of the White House's current occupants. We must take every action possible to protect these horses.

The enthusiasm for this bill is far-reaching. It has garnered overwhelming support not just from North Dakotans but also from people like me all across the country. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that protects the TRNP wild horses. I hope to one day visit North Dakota to witness this beautiful herd of horses that harken back to a bygone era. I urge you to pass this bill so I and countless others like me can realize this dream.

Sincerely, Rebecca Marie Miller **February 5, 2025**

Please Protect the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses

•These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

•Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected.

Thank you,

Stephanie Honore'

Dear Committee Members,

I'm writing today in strong Support of SCR 4006. My Name Is Janine Mincks. I have been a Horse Lover and advocate for our Wild horses my whole life. These horses are an important part of our heritage, our culture, our community and Family. These amazing and majestic horses need our support and protection. Here is why...

- ~ These Horses have coexisted with the landscape for many Generations.
- ~ Wild Horses Play a Role in Maintaining the Park's ecosystem, contributing to biodiversity and the land management.
- ~These Horses contribute to North Dakota's identity and heritage, attracting visitors, Researchers, Tourists that boots North Dakota's economy and supports local businesses!
- ~ These Horses Deserve Humane, science-based management rather than Mass Removal and or Elimination.

I urge you to stand with us in preserving this iconic herd for many generations to come. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Janine Mincks

2/5/2025

I respectfully request that you pass SCR 4006 bill to protect this special heard of horses in the TRNP that mean so much to many people of North Dakota and others such as myself from other parts of the country who want to save a piece of heritage of our country. We can't wipe everything out because it's not convenient for some who have monetary goals. We have to preserve some things for future generations and this heard of wild horses is one of those things.

To whom it concerns:

I am writing as a wild horse advocate to implore you to support the resolution to federally protect the wild horse herd at the Theodoor Roosevelt National Park. These horses are beloved by the public and draw wildlife observers, photographers and historians alike who come from across our country to witness them in their natural glory. The American mustangs have been hunted down and rounded up based on unsound science from the BLM, often influenced heavily by the agriculture lobby to ensure cow populations graze without competition on our public lands. However, we now know that American mustangs are in fact native wildlife that date back thousands of years on this land. They play an important, vital role in the ecosystem. Wild horses graze in a way that promotes plant diversity and regeneration. They consume vegetation that can fuel wildfires, which can help limit the intensity and spread of fires. Wild burros and horses also are a source of finding water in arid regions, increasing water access to other animals in plants in the area. As of 2024, we have reached a tragic truth – that there are more wild horses being kept in cruel holding facilities funded by expensive taxpayer funded private contracts, than our wild horses living freely on our public lands. Wild horse advocates see on a weekly basis, wild horses that are sold at auction (torn from their family, terrified and unhandled) and often flipped until they end of in the slaughter pipeline – where they are shipped to Mexico or Canada bound to slaughter. It is an American tragedy that shouldn't be happening on our watch.

Additionally, I am also writing in support of a state working group that will work in collaboration with the park to help manage the herd. By having an objective, independent working group that advocates for wild horse preservation, mutual goals for wildlife can be met with consideration of top scientific research and conservation considerations. As an American citizen, I demand you protect our most precious, native wildlife in the American mustang herds of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. They belong to all of us.

Thank you for your consideration,

Dr. Cody Traweek



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 <u>always</u> 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 overnighters: making the average \$125/per day/per person

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

\$37,500,000 divided by an average of 200 wild horses in the park = \$187,500 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.



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

Chairman Patten 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.

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!



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 the 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.

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 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. 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 has 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.

Since 2023, the Medora City Council passed 3 of their own resolutions asking that a viable and healthy herd of wild horses remain in TRNP. The Billings County Commission passed one of their own.

The History of the park shows the need for oversight from this federal agency. In 2023, Attorney General Drew Wrigley 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 give a Do Pass to SCR 4006 today.

Christine Kman
President
Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates
www.chwha.org

SCR4006

Wild horses are important to North Dakotans and all Americans as an integral part of this popular national park.

Please protect these important and beautiful creatures.

These wild horses are a wonderful site to see – running wild as they should be in North Dakota. They bring in tourists so they are positive for the economy. They can clear out dry brush reducing the risk of forest fires. They are a tribute to our dear President Teddy Roosevelt. They deserve to live as they are as a symbol of the untamed lands that started our country. Thank you,

Tamara McCanless

I am writing in support of protections for the Theodore Roosevelt Wild Horses. These iconic horses need to be free to roam and not be harassed or abused in any way. They should not be subject to cruel helicopter or any other roundups. Control of the herd can be best achieved through birth control drugs allowing them to live their lives without cruelty and abuse.

Thank you for considering my input on this important subject.

Barbara Siewert



I am in support of federal protection for these wild horses for the following reasons:

These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

They Have No Federal Protection

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation. Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Wild horses symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West.

Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

Unlike other wild horse herds, these horses horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

North Dakotans and people across the country (see all testimonies) want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

To Whom It May Concern,

Thank you for opening this opportunity to testify in support of the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

For several years, I have spent thousands of hours studying, researching, and visiting wild horse herds in America. I have come to believe they are an integral part of our environment and an icon of our great nation. The American people love wild horses because they are symbols of freedom, majesty, and family. Wild horse ranges have become tourist destinations, supporting small towns and businesses nearby. Recently, much scientific information has been released showing the impact wild horses have on preventing wildfires. Wild horses are good for America.

I fully support SCR 4006 in calling for federal protection of the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. These horses deserve to be protected and preserved - just like Theodore Roosevelt would've wanted.

I look forward to visiting the TRNP wild horses in the near future for the first time!

Sincerely,

Erin Phillips Springfield, Georgia

re: SCR4006

I fully support this resolution to protect the wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Wild horses are a legacy in the United States, and should be protected.

Thank you for your time, Mona Motz

Dear State Legislators,

I am writing in support of SCR 4006 urging Congress to protect the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I am a strong supporter of our national parks. They are a living reminder of the natural beauty that inspired our forefathers to call this country their home. Theodore Roosevelt was a pioneer in preserving national parks so that future generations of Americans can appreciate the natural beauty of our country. America's wild mustangs are an iconic part of our heritage, and an important symbol of freedom. Sadly, they have been treated like vermin and herded mercilessly with helicopters and sent to slaughterhouses. This is a shameful way to treat such beautiful wild animals and they deserve our protection. Teddy Roosevelt loved horses, and we should honor him by protecting the wild horses that roam freely in the park that bears his name.

Sincerely,

Michelle Conklin Hillsborough, NJ Dear Chair and Committee members,

My name is Melissa (Missy) Sivigny, and I am an advocate and supporter of the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I am from Minnesota. I'm asking that you support the bill SCR 4006. This bill will ensure that these horses will be managed property and be allowed to stay in the park for generations to come. We come to this park to visit it because of the horses. We either stay locally there in Medora or camp in the park itself. These horses are an integral part of the area and deserve to be treated just like everything else that is living in the park.

I am a strong supporter of this bill and this resolution will be one step in a long-term solution for the horses.

Thank you for your time and proposed support of this bill.

Missy

I, Tara Murray of Jefferson, MA, support protecting our wild horses. They are as American as we are. They are a living monument as important as Mt. Rushmore or the Grand Canyon. They are our American Legacy and honor our past. Please protect them.

These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

They Have No Federal Protection

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Thank you.

Tara Murray

February 6, 2025

To Whom it May Concern:

I write to request for support of SCR 4006, to urge Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

These magnificent horses are part of American history, culture and spirit. Protecting them honors the park's namesake as well as his contributions to public land preservation. In a time when everything feels like we are on shifting ground, please support the foundations that help contribute to the beauty of our country.

Currently, unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time, which would be a travesty not only to the horses, but to our American Spirit. These historic herds present a special opportunity to teach future generations the value of preserving what makes our Nation unique as well as the importance of protecting our flora and fauna.

Thank you for your time and support of SCR 4006.

Ann K. Cumberland Glenville, Pennsylvania

You might remember seeing horses running wild when you were younger, either on TV or in person. It stirs the mind of a child and as an adult that memory should never fade, it keeps you young. That memory is a foundation of why we call the Plains home. Last year, my wife discovered a national park coloring book for adults. For Roosevelt national park, the Nokota wild horses were highlighted. I drove up from Sheridan Wyoming last October to view the round up, the couple of pictures I took, I sent to officials. This is not how we want the public to view our west. Tourists come, visit, and they return to their homes. Some may even have a picture with the horses in the background on their Christmas cards, others "pop the question" with the horses in the distance. We create memories here; they vacation where we live.

WE have the opportunity to watch elders, children, and generations of people from all over enjoy this. We can make history for generations to come. Protecting the Wild horses in TRNP may not make into history books, but someone, some family, some tour group generations from now will visit TRNP, and because of the outstanding leadership here in the State of North Dakota, they will see why this is where the horses stay wild. Let this be a time in this states great history to Be Legendary.

Chair and Committee members, my name is Lori Williams and I volunteer with Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. I am asking you today to vote in favor of Senate Bill 4006. This bill is so important and would create a working group that would then work together with Theodore Roosevelt National Park to help manage the wild horses. The resolution before you is asking our federal legislators to help get federal protection for this herd since they are not protected under the Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act. These horses are in dire need of federal protection.

The horses of TRNP are a treasure that need to be protected. These wild horses are so much a part of TRNP and have been there for generations and need to be there for generations to come. I myself have a planned vacation there all because of the wild horses. This is something we as a family have planned and are looking forward to spending time watching these beautiful beings in their natural habitat.

It would be beneficial for the State to be involved to help provide oversight with Wild Horse Management.

These horses desperately need federal protection. They are not protected under the Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act so federal protection is a necessity.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this Senate Bill. I ask you to please vote in favor of Bill 4006. We truly appreciate your help in protecting these wild horses.

Lori Williams



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

Chairman Patten and Committee Members:

My name is Gary Kman. I am the co-founder and vice-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.

Since we know that the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park are equally special and also deserve federal protection.

As our organization continues to work with Senator John Hoeven's office to secure federal protection, the state of North Dakota passing this resolution will help support CHWHA's tireless efforts.

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!

Since 2023, the Medora City Council passed 3 of their own resolutions asking that a viable and healthy herd of wild horses remain in TRNP. The Billings County Commission passed one of their own.

Since the entire state of North Dakota is on record asking for a healthy and genetically viable herd of wild horses to remain in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, it only makes sense that you pass SCR 4006 and listen to what the people of North Dakota have asked.

Thank you for allowing my testimony and for all your hard work this session.

Gary Kman
Vice President
Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates
www.chwha.org

Congress needs to protect the wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park because they are a living tribute to Theodore Roosevelt's conservation legacy, have no federal protection, and are a major tourism draw. The public overwhelmingly supports the protection of the horses, and their removal could have significant economic and environmental consequences.

Please help save the wild horses at wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Your grandchildren and relatives will thank you some day.

- I strongly urge you to save the Theodore Roosevelt herd of wild horses.
- These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.
- They Have No Federal Protection
 Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.
- Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy
 These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to
 Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively
 impact local businesses and jobs.
- Public Support Is Overwhelming
 North Dakotans and people across the country want these
 horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to
 recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal
 legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.
 - A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Sincerely, Sharon Blume February 6, 2025

To whom it may concern:

The wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt's conservation legacy are iconic and symbolize the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting the horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park honors and protects his contributions to public land preservation. Unlike other wild horse herds (who also need additional protection from removal), TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act.

In addition to North Dakotans, citizens across the United States want these wild horses to be protected from removal and harm. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are allowed to remain in the Park and be protected.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

For the sake of these horses and our nation's heritage, I strongly urge you to support this bill.

Sincerely,

Susan Rand (Vermont)

To whom this concerns:

I am writing you as a US concerned citizen, there are more appropriate ways to maintain and handle, not just this herd, but ALL in the US! This national park was created as a place to reflect, ponder possibilities, be thankful for all that is supposed to be America! Please, please set a precedent now. The government spends more money on the brutal capture, feed, and "RELOCATION" of these incredible creatures! DO NOT BE BLIND to the fact that they ARE SOLD to kill pins, shipped brutally across our boarders and sold for meat, chicken feed, fertilizers!! We have the answers through science and technology, please get this done! It the right thing!!

Heather Madelans

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Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

• A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

NOTE: It has been found in the West that wild horses allowed to graze BLM land reduce the ability for wild fires. These animals are helping maintain our environment and Ecosystem, not destroying it. We need the government to stop thinking in this narrow box and see what it really going on with these horses and why BLM herding tactics started. And not to mention the millions of tax payer dollars being spent is ludicrous.

Since I started adopting wild horses in the 1970s, my friend's mother was Director of BLM for the West region at the time, shared with me that this process of corralling horses (intended for slaughter) was not based on science but ranchers that had a very power government official backing them was able to back a bill allowing the collection of wild horses.

I am in total favor of protecting these wild horses!

Linda Anzellotti

503-781.5125

February 6, 2025

Dear Legislature,

I urge you to support resolution SCR 4006 and safeguard the legacy of our wild horses, specifically those at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Not only are wild horses part of our history and a symbol of the American West, but they play a vital role in maintaining healthy ecosystems by regulating vegetation through their grazing habits, and help to prevent overgrowth which promotes plant diversity. By consuming dry grasses they reduce the risk of wildfires which is especially relevant now. Sadly, they are unfairly blamed for their ecological impact on public lands when livestock grazing has had a more far reaching negative impact.

When I was a child, I was delighted when the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act was passed. Please continue to protect our majestic wild horses.

Many thanks, Karen L

These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

They Have No Federal Protection

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Coleen Chase 614 12th Street Bellingham, WA 98225

February 5, 2025

Subject: Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) Federal Protection for Wild Horses

I am writing to submit testimony that I fully and strongly support and applaud the efforts to legislate federal protection and humane, science-based conservation for the Theodore Roosevelt National Park's historic herd of wild horses.

Protecting our wild lands and iconic wild horses with respect, honor and dignity preserves an important legacy that all Americans will treasure, and future generations will view with the greatest of appreciation. When we work together to honor and protect what is wild and free, we are protecting the fundamental principles of the United States of America.

Thank you for your efforts to protect our beloved wild horses of the TRNP,

Coleen Chase

206.678.2663

In support of SCR 4006

As a lifelong supporter of keeping America's wild horses healthy and free, I submit my testimony to support the above legislation.

This historic herd is a living and (hopefully) continuing tribute to the efforts of Theodore Roosevelt, our 26th president who worked tirelessly to ensure our wild places remained wild and free.

• Currently, these horses in Theodore Roosevelt's National Park have no protection.

TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed from their homeland at any time.

•In addition, wild horses are a boost to the economy of North Dakota.

These horses are a major draw for tourists, bringing visitors to Medora as well as surrounding areas. Their removal could and almost certainly would be a financial detriment to local businesses and jobs.

• Public support for these horses is overwhelming.

North Dakotans and Americans across the country are in favor of these horses being protected.

Chairpersons, Members of the Committee, and Honored Guests,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in strong support of this resolution urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

These horses are more than just wildlife; they are living symbols of our past, deeply woven into the history and culture of North Dakota. Theodore Roosevelt himself saw wild horses on these very lands, and they remain a tangible link to the era that shaped him into one of our nation's greatest conservationists. Today, they are North Dakota's only wild horse herd, and their continued presence in the park honors our history, enriches our culture, and strengthens our connection to the land.

Beyond their historical significance, these horses provide economic and social value to our state. Tourism is a vital part of North Dakota's economy, and Theodore Roosevelt National Park is a major attraction. Visitors come from across the country and around the world to see the park's breathtaking landscapes and to witness these majestic horses roaming free. The presence of these wild horses enhances the park's appeal, drawing nature enthusiasts, photographers, and families eager to experience the wonder of seeing them in their natural habitat. The financial benefits to local businesses, hotels, restaurants, and shops are undeniable.

Perhaps most importantly, these horses create a unique and personal connection between the public and the park. Unlike other wildlife, individual horses can be easily identified by their unique markings and characteristics. This makes it possible for people to form deep, lasting bonds with specific horses, following their stories through social media, visiting the park to see them in person, and advocating for their well-being. This level of engagement has fostered a passionate community of supporters not only in North Dakota but across the nation and even internationally. The dedication of these supporters demonstrates the immense value these horses bring—not just as a tourist attraction but as beloved icons of the park itself.

Despite their importance, the long-term future of these horses is uncertain. Management decisions by the National Park Service have raised significant concerns about the health and preservation of the herd. Without clear federal protections, there is no guarantee that these horses will remain a part of the park's landscape for future generations to experience and cherish.

I urge you to support this resolution and send a strong message to Congress that the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park deserve federal protection. By taking this action, we can ensure that these magnificent animals continue to roam free, inspiring visitors, boosting our economy, and preserving a vital piece of our state's history.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully ask for your support in protecting North Dakota's only wild horse herd.

Jennifer DeVillez 567 Squaw Apple Rd. Durango, CO 81301

To whom it concerns,

I am listing the below points in SUPPORT of federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevel National Park.

• These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

• They Have No Federal Protection

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time. They deserve better.

Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could <u>negatively</u> impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. <u>SCR 4006 will</u> encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

 A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

Sincerely, Jennifer I am writing this in reference to SCR 4006 – This resolution, which calls for federal protection of the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

I do not live in the general nor specific area of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I live in the state of South Carolina, 1659 miles away from the park. I am as avid about this proposal as supporters nearby.

Why? We have an inherent duty as the stewards of our lands and the animals who occupy them to provide these horses with their needed living conditions, appropriate forage and opportunity to continue their blood lines.

These horses need our protection. Again, Why? Their natural habitats have continued to shrink and be compromised by our desire to expand our presence into their habitats.

So, it is incumbent upon us, as we limit their habitats, to provide federal protection of the wild horse herd in all ways necessary in this designated area of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely, Rachel OBrien Landrum, SC

Good Day,

The wild horse located in the U.S.A have been in North America longer than 500 years. Way before the 13 States. The wild (feral) horse has as much right to be left alone as any animal in the wild open spaces. In Fact they are a symbol of our way of life...free. Instead of rounding them up, in brutal ways to keep the herd in check, use artificial insemination! A lot less expensive...

The rancher's in our Country claim that wild horse herds on OUR pulic lands are hard on the inviornment, more so, than their cattle grazing our public lands. That's BS. I personally have seen how much cattle tear up land with their hoofs. If you are ever in the area of wild horses you will have a hard time telling that they have been around.

If ranchers want to raise cattle they need to keep them on THEIR land and off OUR land, the public lands. What makes the ranchers so special to have their cattle (live stock) graze public land. Cattle damage land. The wild horses make very little damage, if at all. I know. I was raised in the country, in Oregon, and have seen what cattle do to the land, creeks and streams, and along rivers. They dear it up!

Stop the ranchers from using our public lands and to leave the wild horses alone on their open (puplic) lands. Horses are very intilligent animals, not like a dumb cow.

Thank you for your time.

SCR 4006 A Resolution Calling for Federal Protection

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my support for SCR 4006. My name is Tiffany Craigo, and I am a resident of North Dakota and the administrator of several social media pages focused on the iconic herd of horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. For the past ten years, I have closely documented these horses throughout the year. My extensive time spent in the field with the herd and managing social media platforms has allowed me to witness the profound passion that both North Dakotans and individuals from around the world have for these magnificent animals.

They are not only a defining feature of our state but also a significant draw for outside visitors and a source of joy for countless people. It is imperative that we protect this herd. I strongly urge you to support their preservation by taking this first step in moving forward with their protection.

Thank you for your attention to this vital matter.

Testimony in support of SCR 4006

The wild horses in the Teddy Roosevelt National Park need federal protections. Wild horses are icons of the West and our heritage. Teddy Roosevelt valued and moved to preserve them and so should we. They are a living tribute to Teddy Roosevelt. Currently they've no federal protection under the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burros Act, as they are in the national park. They need federally protected status. It's up to you now to conserve them. I am hoping it is not too late. Americans of all generations should be able to observe and cherish them for generations to come.

Tragically, the wild horses in TRNP are being extinguished by the Park and Forest Service. The horses are aggressively shotted with GonaCon contraception, it's less beneficial to the horses than PZP and GC is not designed or labelled for as frequent use as the Park is shotting. This aggressive shotting of mares is leading to permanent infertility/sterility. Some stallions are being shotted with it, which is not an intended use. This repeated shotting with Gonacon is leading to sterility, which will extinguish the genes of the herd. The Park Service is 'managing' it to extinctions. Teddy Roosevelt would be outraged and appalled. Please stop the use of GonaCon on the TRNP wild horses. If any birth control, PZP is scientifically proven to have more favorable outcomes for the horses. Please do not let the genes of the TRNP wild horses be extinguished on your watch. Please vote yes on SCR 4006.

The Wild Horses bring tourists to ND. They boost the ND economy. The TRNP wild horses bring \$37,500,000 in value to the local economy of Medora ND EACH YEAR. The horses are always one of the top 3 reasons why people visit TRNP. It is one of the reasons that I am planning a trip to the ND. The number of visitors is expected to increase with the opening of the of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library. These horses are beloved by millions. Please vote in favor of obtaining federal protections of these heritage horses.

Respectfully,

Mary Butiste-Jones

Attorney at Law

I am writing today in support of SCR4006 which calls for federal protection of the iconic wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Without this protection these horses can fall prey to inhumane removals at any time. Such removals not only hurt the horses being taken away from their families and the only home they've known, but these removals also hurt the residents of North Dakota and people across the country who care deeply for this historical herd and believe they are worthy of protection. North Dakota is lucky to have this herd as part of the national park. They are a popular attraction among visitors. Any removal could impact business and the flow of money into the area from tourism. I hope to see them one day. Please pass this legislation.

• These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

They Have No Federal Protection

Unlike other wild horse herds, TRNP's horses are not covered under the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act. Without protection, they can be removed at any time.

Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

 A North Dakota Wild Horse Working Group will promote humane wild horse conservation.

Modeled after Colorado's success, SB 2331 will create a North Dakota wild horse working group that would unite state officials, advocates, experts, and interested parties to ensure collaborative, humane, science-based conservation of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses, prevent removals, and provide long-term oversight.

I am in support of SCR4006. Any help to protect our heritage and TRNP horses. They cannot speak, so we must advocate for them.

Distinguished legislators,

My name is Irene Davis and I am a passionate advocate for wild horses and burros, and I am deeply disheartened by the abuse and cruelty these magnificent creatures have endured. Sadly, they have become some of the most hunted fauna in our country and I believe their viability is at stake unless we act swiftly.

I urge you to vote in favor of bill SCR4006, which aims to protect the herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park, ensuring their long-term health and preservation. Currently, these horses lack protection under the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act, putting them at further risk.

Wild horses are emblematic of the pioneering spirit that shaped our nation, blazing the trail from east to west during its formation and settlement. They have served as our companions, alleviated the burdens of man's labor, provided a source of transportation, and were invaluable assets to early settlers.

Moreover, these magnificent horses are an integral part of our history and culture, drawing tourists from around the globe and generating significant revenue for North Dakota.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony and for your commitment to the welfare of these treasured animals. Your support in voting for SCR4006 is crucial in protecting this vital and treasured herd.

I am grateful for your time and efforts.

Sincerely,

Irene Davis

I support a concurrent resolution urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Wild horses are necessary for habitat protection against fire hazards. Wild horses must be protected!

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February 5, 2025

Cathy Weeks 52 Silver Spur Rd W Cairo, NY 12413

RE: SCR 4006

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

My name is Cathy Weeks and I am in support of SCR 4006 and would like to respectfully ask you to please vote in favor of this resolution.

I would like to ask you to please vote to establish federal protection for the wild horse herd of Theodore Roosevelt National Park to ensure the health and preservation of the herd for generations to come. These horses are not protected under the Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro act.

During the last three years, the park has very aggressively been trying to remove the historic wild horse herd. In addition, since 2009 they have been using Gona Con aggressively which is known to cause sterilization in mares. It should not be used for fertility treatment. I can only hope and pray that you look into more scientific options/solutions for keeping a viable herd, such as PZP which has been proven to be effective and much safer. The park has been removing, year after year, the younger horses which leaves a very aging population and compromises maintaining a viable herd.

I live in New York and have been driving out each summer for the last couple of years to spend time with the wild horses and enjoy the wide open spaces. I met my first wild horses at the age of 63, but have dreamed of them since I was a little girl growing up on the streets of Astoria, New York City. I come to Theodore Roosevelt National Park for the wild horses.....not the buffalo, which can be found in so many other parks. The wild horses are the draw for me, and the hills and buttes in your park present a stunning background.

Also, I hope you will consider the impact this herd has on your local economy. Chasing Wild Horses focuses on this wild horse herd and carries merchandise showcasing the beauty of Theodore Roosevelt National Park along with it. While here, folks such as I spend time in your local restaurants, motels and businesses.

Please, let's protect these wild horses for future generations and allow everyone an opportunity to view and spend time with these majestic and magical beings. Please vote in favor and pass this very important, and much needed resolution.

I thank you very much for allowing me this opportunity to have my thoughts heard and for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Cathy Weeks



February 6, 2025

To: North Dakota Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Firstly, thank you to the Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding Senate Concurrent Resolution 4006 on behalf of American Wild Horse Conservation ("AWHC"). AWHC is the leading national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the American wild horse and burro in viable free-roaming herds for generations to come, as part of our national heritage. On behalf of our over 800,000 supporters and followers nationwide, including more than 1,000 North Dakota citizens, AWHC strongly urges the Committee to support SCR 4006.

The wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) are a living link to North Dakota's history, reflecting both President Roosevelt's time in the Badlands and the deep cultural connections these horses share with Indigenous peoples, including the Hunkpapa Lakota leader Sitting Bull. Wild horses were present in the Badlands long before the park's establishment, and public opposition to their removal led to their formal recognition as a historic and cultural feature of the landscape by the early 1970's. These horses are not only a symbol of the American West but also an important economic driver for North Dakota, drawing visitors from across the country to TRNP and supporting local businesses.

Despite their importance, TRNP's wild horses currently lack federal protections, leaving them vulnerable to arbitrary removal and mismanagement. By urging Congress to enact legislation safeguarding the herd, SCR 4006 would ensure that these horses remain a viable, self-sustaining population as a permanent and protected part of the park. Establishing clear federal protections would prevent the loss of an iconic part of North Dakota's heritage, allow for responsible management practices, and ensure future generations can experience the wild horses that have roamed the Badlands for centuries.



AWHC strongly supports SCR 4006 and urges the Committee to advance this resolution to protect North Dakota's wild horses for future generations.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Abbey Benesh

Law and Policy Manager

American Wild Horse Conservation

February 6, 2025

North Dakota Legislative Council Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee 600 East Boulevard Avenue Bismarck, ND 58505

RE: SCR 4006

Dear Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 4006 (SCR 4006), a measure that urges Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

For generations, these horses have been an iconic and irreplaceable part of North Dakota's cultural, historical, and environmental heritage. Their presence dates back to the time of Theodore Roosevelt, and they continue to serve as a living connection to the legacy of conservation that Roosevelt advanced. Beyond their historical significance, the wild horses are a vital contributor to the state's tourism economy, drawing visitors from across the country and generating substantial economic benefits for local communities.

SCR 4006 recognizes the importance of preserving the herd while also responding to concerns regarding current management practices that could threaten the long-term sustainability of this population. Without proactive legislative intervention, these horses may face an uncertain future. It's important for the state of North Dakota to urge Congress to act to provide clear, lasting protections that ensure the herd remains a permanent feature of Theodore Roosevelt National Park for generations to come.

Additionally, I support Senate Bill 2331, which would establish a collaborative working group that brings together diverse stakeholders and state and federal interests to develop responsible management strategies for the herd. Such efforts reflect a commitment to balanced, science-based solutions that honor both conservation and local interests.

I ask you to adopt SCR 4006 and thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Holly Bice, J.D.
202-460-4289
holly@bicepolicygroup.com
www.bicepolicygroup.com



Christina DeGaglia testimony in support of SCR 4006

●These Horses Are a Living Tribute to Theodore Roosevelt

They symbolize Roosevelt's conservation legacy and the untamed spirit of the American West. Protecting them honors the park's namesake and his contributions to public land preservation.

●They Have No Federal Protection

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•Wild Horses Boost North Dakota's Economy

These horses are a major tourism draw, bringing visitors to Medora and surrounding areas. Their removal could negatively impact local businesses and jobs.

Public Support Is Overwhelming

North Dakotans and people across the country want these horses protected. SCR 4006 will encourage the U.S. Congress to recognize and act on this broad support by passing federal legislation that ensures the TRNP wild horses are protected.

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.

21 6 2

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Peace Garden Room, State Capitol

SCR 4006 2/7/2025

A concurrent resolution urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

9:00 a.m. Chairman Patten opened the meeting.

Members present:

Chairman Patten, Vice Chairman Kessel, Senators: Beard, Boehm, Enget, Gerhardt, and Van Oosting.

Discussion Topics:

- Herd management
- Comparison of current and previous resolutions
- House companion bill
- Sustainability of park ecosystem

9:13 a.m. Senator Van Oosting moved a Do Pass.

9:13 a.m. Senator Enget seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote		
Senator Dale Patten	Y		
Senator Greg Kessel	Υ		
Senator Todd Beard	Υ		
Senator Keith Boehm	Υ		
Senator Mark Enget	Υ		
Senator Justin Gerhardt	Υ		
Senator Desiree Van Oosting	Υ		

Motion Passed 7-0-0.

9:13 a.m. Senator Beard will carry the bill.

9:14 a.m. Chairman Patten closed the hearing.

Kendra McCann, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE SCR 4006 (25.3043.01000)

Module ID: s_stcomrep_22_001

Carrier: Beard

Energy and Natural Resources Committee (Sen. Patten, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (7 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SCR 4006 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar. This resolution does not affect workforce development.

2025 HOUSE AGRICULTURE SCR 4006

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Agriculture Committee

Room JW327C, State Capitol

SCR 4006 3/20/2025

A concurrent resolution urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

10:51 a.m. Chairman Beltz opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman Beltz, Vice Chairman Hauck, Representatives Anderson, Dobervich, Henderson, Holle, Hoverson, Kiefert, Nehring, Olson, Rios, Schreiber-Beck, Tveit, Vollmer

Discussion Topics:

- Health & preservation
- Equine history
- Drive tourism

10:51 a.m. Senator Josh Boschee, District 44, Fargo, ND, introduced and testified.

10:54 a.m. Christine Kman, President, Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates, testified in favor and submitted testimony #43037, #43038 and #43036.

11:01 a.m. Frank Kuntz, ND, testified in favor.

11:07 a.m. Deb L. Carson, Cofounder, Wild Lands Wild Horses, testified in favor.

11:16 a.m. Birgit M. Pruess, Fargo, ND, testified in favor and submitted testimony #41684.

11:20 a.m. Representative Tveit moved Do Pass.

11:20 a.m. Representative Schreiber-Beck seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Mike Beltz	Υ
Representative Dori Hauck	Υ
Representative Karen A. Anderson	Υ
Representative Gretchen Dobervich	AB
Representative Donna Henderson	Υ
Representative Dawson Holle	AB
Representative Jeff Hoverson	Υ
Representative Dwight Kiefert	Υ
Representative Dennis Nehring	N
Representative SuAnn Olson	Υ
Representative Nico Rios	Υ
Representative Cynthia Schreiber-Beck	Υ

House Agriculture Committee SCR 4006 03/20/25 Page 2

Representative Bill Tveit	Υ
Representative Daniel R. Vollmer	Υ

Motion passed 11-1-2.

11:21 a.m. Representative Tveit will carry the bill.

Additional written testimony:

Testimony submitted in favor #41634, #41651, #41654, #41689, #41715, #41836, #41909, #42460, #42486, #42610, #42852, #42900, #42920, #42930, #43008, #43011, #43013, #43023, #43024, #43030, #43032, #43033, #43034, #43039, #43040, #43056, #43068, #43072, #43102, #43111, #43126, #43140, #43141, #43159, #43192. #43197 and #43206.

11:21 a.m. Chairman Beltz closed the meeting.

Diane Lillis, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE SCR 4006 (25.3043.01000)

Module ID: h_stcomrep_44_011

Carrier: Tveit

Agriculture Committee (Rep. Beltz, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (11 YEAS, 1 NAY, 2 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SCR 4006 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.

The TRNP wild horses deserve federal protection. Please pass SCR 4006.

The TRNP wild horses deserve federal protection. Please pass SCR 4006."

The free roaming horses and burros in Theodore Roosevelt National Park deserve full protection from measures meant to limit or diminish their numbers in any way. These animals are a vital, living link to our nationÕs past. As a proven attraction that brings thousands of visitors to N. Dakota every year, these horses and burros are a valuable, irreplaceable asset that should be permitted to live in peace and harmony with the lands that they inhabit. Plus, they are a proven means of managing rangeland in ways that discourage damaging wildland fires.

Birgit Pruess, Ph.D. 3696 Harrison St. S Fargo, ND March 14, 2025

RE: SCR4006

Dear members of the 69th Legislative Assembly of North Dakota,

I am a resident of Fargo, ND. Please, accept the below as my testimony IN enthusiastic FAVOR of SCR4006, "A concurrent resolution urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park."

The horses enjoy the support of over 100,000 fans, including the entire 68th Legislative Assembly, former Governor now Secretary of the Interior Burgum, Senator Hoeven, all five of our tribal nations, and many others. Not to forget about myself. Two years ago, our State Legislature voted unanimously in support of a resolution to save our horses. In April 2024, Senator Hoeven got federal support for our horses. We all thought the situation had improved at that time. However, there was a helicopter round up in October where almost all horses were captured and the mares were hand administered another shot of Gonacon, which is used for birth control. 15 mares were outfitted with collars, one mare died shortly after being released. Data were provided to the public, though in a shape that I as a scientist can only consider sloppy (or deliberately misleading). All mares have been treated with Gonacon by now, most of them many times. Though some mares seem resistant to the drug and keep reproducing, which balances the gene pool in favor of their genes and reduces genetic diversity. By now, we are faced with a herd that is mostly sterile, though it is currently not know whether at least some of the mares could come back to fertility if taken off Gonacon. Five mares were taken off Gonacon and we will see what happens to them. This method of birth control was researched in TRNP for some 12 years, but the aggressive use that is being done right now was never covered by the research study.

If we are to keep 200 horses in the park, it is necessary to have a genetically viable herd and I doubt we have that right now. However, we should do what we can to keep these horses and hope a good number of them will return to fertility. It is obvious to me that TRNP is not working towards maintaining a genetically viable herd without federal 'encouragement'. We have a good opportunity in our former Governor Doug Burgum now being the Secretary of the Interior, as well as our federal Senator John Hoeven. This resolution would back them up should they chose to help North Dakota with their horse problem. This is especially important since our current federal administration appears to be on track of eliminating or reducing our National Parks to a large extent. The resolution could give Secretary Burgum and Senator Hoeven back up should they chose to fight for our horses and National Park.

I highly recommend a DO PASS vote.

As in all my testimonies, I much appreciate the hard work and dedication that each member of my state legislative assembly puts into our state. Thank you.

Sincerely and respectfully Birgit Pruess, Ph.D.

The TRNP wild horses deserve federal protection. Please pass SCR 4006.

It is our and your responsibility to Protect our countrys Sacred Animals. First we must take care of our lands and animals in order for humans to be able to survive. As we know wiping out any native species will have significant effects for our future.

These Beautiful Majestic Innocent Horses are not able to protect themselves from humans wanting to destroy them. You must Be Their Voice and Protectors. This is what the American Public wants!! Honor our wishes to protect and preserve our heritage. Wild Horses bring Joy Happiness and Awe Inspiring Emotions . And I assure you our country needs the Mental Health benefits these Gorgeous animals provide to us.

Please stand up with The American Public and Honor our Countrys Wild Horses by protecting them with Federal Regulations.

This is So Cruel and Hélicopter Rounds ups are so Inhumane and Devastating to our horse families. These horses end up at slaughter horses which if you have not watched those videos, I promise you will be sick to your stomach.

Please stop the madness.

Annie

Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates/ North Dakota Hearings Testimony / Nathalie Paré Testimony.

Chair and Committee Members: My name is Nathalie Paré. I am a follower of Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates since April 2024. I learned to advocate for the proper management of the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I have been signing petitions and sending emails, learning more about that magnificent herd and getting more involved.

At that time, I knew that we saved the wild horses of TRNP, but we would need a federal protection to help them!

I am writing this testimony to ask you to vote in favor of SCR 4006.

The resolution before you is asking the federal legislation to help get federal protection for this herd since they are not protected under the Wild and Free Roaming Horse & Burro Act. The TRNP wild horses have to be manage in a proper and humane way.

The protection of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horse' herd will benefit to the park and to the town of Medora. This herd is followed by lots of people in the states and around the world. For example: Some people fly to North Dakota, invest in hotels, car rentals, restaurants. This is good for tourism and the economy!

Please pass the SCR 4006.

I am so grateful for the time you will take to consider my testimony; I hope that you will make a decision to protect the magnificent and unique herd of wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park!

Sincerely,

Nathalie Paré

March 15, 2025

To the North Dakota Legislature,

The TRNP wild horses deserve federal protection. Please pass SCR 4006.

I attended college in Dickinson, ND and grew up in Glendive, MT. My family traveled to Theodore Roosevelt National Park and Medora, ND many times over the last 65 years. My dad, God bless his soul, enjoyed driving the south loop of the park to see the horses. I am the third generation enjoying this beautiful national treasure. My grandchildren are the fourth generation.

Passing this resolution will help us in our efforts to protect this unique herd of horses.

Thank you.

Bernadette Hogan

Please pass SCR 4006. TRNP will horses are a North Dakota treasure and deserve federal protection.

The TRNP wild horses deserve federal protection. Please pass SCR 4006

Please protect our American Mustangs. The wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt national park must have protections and sensible herd management. We cannot continue to allow helicopter roundups which is animal cruelty at the hands of our government. There are more humane options such as birth control. Our national parks are under attack and it's inhabitants. This wild horse herd can be an attraction for the park. I didn't know until recently that there was such a national park named after our great president. And now that I know it has a special wild horse herd, I want to visit. There is an opportunity for eco-tourism. Horses are vital to the landscape and provide wildfire prevention with keeping the vegetation from getting out of control.

I am writing to support SCR 4006, a concurrent resolution urging Congress to establish federal protections for the wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Our wild horse family herds and donkeys are our Heritage. They have served us well for hundreds of years. Unlike cattle, our wild horse herds and donkeys protect and enrich our lands and it's soils. Our lands are better off with our wild horse family herds and donkeys on them. They deserve our protections, and to be fed and watered, not destroyed.

We are PROUD of our wild horse family herds and donkeys and want them protected, AT ALL COSTS. Thank you for your consideration.

Testimony in Support of SCR 4006

I urge you to **please pass SCR 4006**. Supporting it will bring positive change in meaningful ways.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely, Rachelle Rizzi Please pass SCR 4006. Our iconic wild horses need to be kept where they live.

North Dakota House Agriculture Committee North Dakota State Capitol 600 E Boulevard Ave Bismarck, ND 58505

Dear Members of the House Agriculture Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SCR 4006, which calls for the protection of the historic wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP). As a disabled North Dakota citizen, I cherish every opportunity to visit our state's beautiful national park units, and these horses are an essential part of what makes TRNP so special.

The wild horses are not only a vital part of North Dakota's history, but they are also a major attraction for visitors from across the country. As a photographer and wildlife enthusiast, I have personally witnessed how these animals inspire awe and appreciation from park visitors. They contribute to the unique landscape that reflects the spirit of Theodore Roosevelt's conservation legacy, and their presence enhances the park's appeal for tourism, benefiting our local economy.

Beyond their historical and economic significance, these horses hold deep emotional meaning for many North Dakotans, myself included. Their resilience and beauty serve as a reminder of our state's heritage, and they deserve to be protected for future generations to enjoy.

I urge you to support SCR 4006 and advocate for the continued presence of these horses in TRNP.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your dedication to preserving North Dakota's natural and historical treasures.

Sincerely,

A concerned North Dakota citizen

Please support SCR 4006. The wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park have long been a viewing tradition for my family, and many other North Dakota families, as well as visitors to our beautiful park. It is one of North Dakota's treasures that we need to preserve for our future generations.

Please Pass SCR 4006! The wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park need our protection to remain in this Park in western North Dakota. I grew up in Mandan, ND and my mother came from north of Medora, ND. We frequently visited TRNP while visiting family there. Seeing the wild horses was a treat. As a wild horse advocate, I have been working with CHWHA to keep these horses in the Park. The National Park Service needs to listen to the people who visit. They overwhelmingly want the wild horses to Remain in the Park! Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ruth J Kary

Wild Horse Advocate

You might remember seeing horses running wild when you were younger, either on TV or in person. It stirs the mind of a child and as an adult that memory should never fade, it keeps you young. That memory is a foundation of why we call the Plains home. Last year, my wife discovered a national park coloring book for adults. For Roosevelt national park, the Nokota wild horses were highlighted. I drove up from Sheridan Wyoming last October to view the round up, the couple of pictures I took, I sent to officials. This is not how we want the public to view our west. Tourists come, visit, and they return to their homes. Some may even have a picture with the horses in the background on their Christmas cards, others "pop the question" with the horses in the distance. We create memories here; they vacation where we live.

WE have the opportunity to watch elders, children, and generations of people from all over enjoy this. We can make history for generations to come. Protecting the Wild horses in TRNP may not make into history books, but someone, some family, some tour group generations from now will visit TRNP, and because of the outstanding leadership here in the State of North Dakota, they will see why this is where the horses stay wild. Let this be a time in this states great history to Be Legendary.

SCR 4006

Dear Committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my support for the protection of the TRNP horses. Besides all the reasons youve read in other testimonies, the park horses are extremely therapeutic! It may seem trivial, to some. But mental health conditions are atrocious and declining daily. Protecting this herd for future generations will help in ways you may not have considered.

Thank you for your time and service to your wonderful state.

Dana Hannum

Someone who uses that horse therapy!

The TRNP wild horses deserve federal protection. Please pass SCR 4006.

I strongly support SCR 4006 and urge the committee to pass this resolution to show that North Dakota stands behind the federal protection of the TRNP wild horses.

Scotland

#43030 Card No: Unique ID: 00000300 1 Of 1 Location: 19 HUNTINGTON RD Map Id: 21 19 13 Zone: VCD Date Printed: 1/12/2025 Neighborhood: Village Last Update: 1/10/2025 Owner Of Record Volume/Page Date Sales Type Valid Sale Price 0078/0893 10/30/2020 Quit Claim No 0 ABRAHAM STEPHANIE N Exempt PO BOX 346, SCOTLAND, CT 06264 **Prior Owner History** 0033/0732 ABRAHAM DAVID H & STEPHANIE N 12/22/1988 No 0 Permit Number Date Permit Description 1301 4/18/2012 REPAIR. REPLACE BTHRM FL 1302 4/18/2012 REPAIR. ROOF ON SUNROOM + BATHROOM Appraised Value Supplemental Data 8250 Census/Tract VisionPID 1877 Total Land Value 55,600 Dev Map ID Incr Reason **Total Building Value** 127,200 GIS ID Solar-owned **Total Outbldg Value** 1.600 Route TC Map# District PA490 Info **Total Market Value** 184,400 Utilities Well, Septic Acres State Item Codes Code Quantity Value Land Type Acres 490 **Total Value** 13-Residential Dwelling 1.00 89 040 1.00 0.00 Excess 11-Residential Land 0.50 37.590 House Lot 0.50 0.00 12-Residential Excess Land 1.330 1.00 14-Residential Outbuilding 1.00 1.120 55.600 Total Assessment History (Prior Years as of Oct 1) 490 Appraised Totals 2024 2023 2022 2021 2020 Type Acres Value Type Acres Value 38.920 38.920 44,600 44,600 44.600 Land 89,040 89,040 56,300 56,300 56,300 Building 300 Outbuilding 1.120 1.120 300 300 0 Totals 0.00 Total 129.080 129.080 101.200 101,200 101,200 Application Date: **Expiration Date:** Comments 6/30/2020 1011 SF, FOR BRIDGE REPLACEMENT, TC 453:

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1 Of 1

I strongly support SCR 4006 and urge the committee to pass this resolution to show that North Dakota stands behind the federal protection of the TRNP wild horses.

The TRNP horses deserve federal protection. Please pass SCR 4006.

"I strongly support SCR 4006 and urge the committee to pass this resolution to show that North

Dakota stands behind the federal protection of the TRNP wild horses."

I may not live in ND but when I see wild horses, I'm in awe of their beauty and how they travel far and know the lands so well. They can roam free and be wild just how nature intended it to be. DO NOT take away their home. They are no harm to us humans, they just want to be. Stop taking away things that are not yours. Stop ruining mother nature and her beauty. Please start making changes that benefit animals, humans and mother nature, the lands. Make better changes today so we can all come together and create a better world for humanity. Wild horses are a symbol of freedom, the American West, wild spirit, resilience and spiritual significance especially in some Native American cultures. Do better.

Thank you,

Brittany Rousseau



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 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



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 overnighters: making the average \$125/per day/per person

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

\$37,500,000 divided by an average of 200 wild horses in the park = \$187,500 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.





1:06



Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates's post



Brenda Ready

After fighting for two years, Theodore Roosevelt National Park decided to let the wild horses stay in the park with a proper management plan, and being transparent with Advocates and their followers, and visitors of the park.

AGAIN! The Park has pulled the wool over our eyes with removing the older mares who are resistant to GonaCon...

Shame all all of you involved!

We travel from Nebraska two or three times a YEAR to spend time with these beautiful creatures. NOT ANYMORE! We are tired of paying your entry fees just to be slapped in the face!

I hope you feel better knowing people will not come...

#BOYCOTTING

#boycottheodorerooseveltnationalpark #shameonevilpeople #fightingforthespiritofthebadlands

2h Like Reply Message Hide





Theodore Roosevelt National Park

23h · 🕙



Nikola Olson

I visited Theodore Roosevelt NP back in June. The horses ARE the reason I came! My third trip for that same reason.Will I have a 4th?

17h Like Reply

6









3d · 🚱



Linda Redman

BOYCOTT THIS PARK UNTIL THEY STOP TRYING TO WIPE OUT THE STATE'S ONLY WILD HORSE HERD!!!!!!!11

19h Like Reply







Theodore Roosevelt National Park

23h ⋅ 🚱



Preston Scott

Please reconsider your plans to roundup all wild horses and many bisons. A lot can happen whilst rounding up via helicopter. Animals die routinely in every roundup. And please don't remove any horses- especially don't hive them to reservations: they breed and sell horses to slaughter every season! Please don't make the herd infertile- if they are eradicated in a few years your park will have significantly less visitors! Sincerely

11h Like Reply



Theodore Roosevelt National Park 🕏

23h ⋅ 🚱

16h Like Reply

8 🗥



Maggie Flynn

With the dark plans (and the underhanded way you have handled informing the public) for the wild horses that reside in TRNP, you could make it FEE-FREE DAY every day and I still would not support you!!

22h Like Reply

4 💍



Kathy Lee

Maggie Flynn amen

22h Like Reply



We have been here for 4.nights and love this place. Sadly we're moving on today and we are not done exploring the park. That means we're leaving some explorations for our next visit. Yes we're talking about having to return here someday. The beauty of this place is amazing. Until next time TRNP!

3d Like Reply





Sue Sefscik

Greg Linn Don't return until they keep their promise not to zero out the wild horses!

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Population genomics provide insight into ancestral relationships and diversity of the feral horses of Theodore **Roosevelt National Park**

Melissa A. Thompson^{1,2} | Blake E. McCann² | Turk Rhen¹ | Rebecca Simmons¹

Correspondence

Melissa A. Thompson, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, PO Box 7, Medora, ND 58645, USA. Email: melissaathomps@gmail.com

Funding information National Park Service

Abstract

Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) manages a herd of feral horses (Equus caballus) which was present on the landscape prior to the establishment of the park. The population presents a unique scenario in that it has experienced fairly intensive and well-documented management since the park's establishment, including herd size reductions, intentional introduction of diversity, and subsequent attempts to remove introduced lineages. This provides an interesting case study on the genetic effects of diverse evolutionary forces on an isolated feral population. To explore the effects of these forces and clarify the relationship of this feral herd with other horses, we used genome-wide markers to examine the population structure of a combined dataset containing common established breeds. Using the Illumina Equine 70k BeadChip, we sampled SNPs across the genome for 118 TRNP horses and evaluated the inbreeding coefficient f and runs of homozygosity (RoH). To identify breed relationships, we compared 23 representative TRNP samples with 792 horses from 35 different breeds using genomic population structure analyses. Mean f of TRNP horses was 0.180, while the mean f for all other breeds in the dataset was 0.116 (SD 0.079). RoH analysis indicates that the TRNP population has experienced recent inbreeding in a timeframe consistent with their management. With Bayesian clustering, PCA, and maximum likelihood phylogeny, TRNP horses show genetic differentiation from other breeds, likely due to isolation, historical population bottlenecks, and genetic drift. However, maximum likelihood phylogeny places them with moderate confidence (76.8%) among draft breeds, which is consistent with the known history of breeds used on early North Dakota ranches and stallions subsequently introduced to the park herd. These findings will help resolve speculation about the origins of the herd and inform management decisions for the TRNP herd.

KEYWORDS

Equus, feral horse, genetic drift, genomics, population

TAXONOMY CLASSIFICATION

Genetics, Genomics, Population genetics

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²Theodore Roosevelt National Park, National Park Service, Medora, North Dakota, USA

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1 | INTRODUCTION

Feral or free-roaming horses (Equus caballus) can be found in many locations within the United States and in many other countries around the world, some with more recent or well-documented origins than others. These populations are often isolated to varying extents and usually require some form of management. There is strong public interest in feral horses on public lands and concern about the genetic health of small populations. Here, we present a case study of a feral horse population which has undergone fairly intensive and well-documented management since the 1940s and 1950s. This creates a unique study system to examine the effects of diverse evolutionary forces interacting with management actions upon the population genetics of a herd. There is also increasing public interest in the origin of this population, and a need for evidence-based decisions when considering management strategies.

TRNP herd history

Free roaming horses existed in the badlands of southwestern North Dakota when Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) was established in 1947. At that time, many of the horses roaming within the boundary of the park were owned and branded by local ranchers. The horses had either escaped or were released to forage and reproduce on their own, so that ranchers could recapture the horses and their offspring for later use (McLaughlin, 1989). In 1954, the park began work on the task of erecting a perimeter fence for the reintroduction of bison (Bison bison); an effort was made to round up the horses, which at that time were considered trespass livestock, to return them to their owners. Approximately 125 horses and mules were captured of the estimated 200 head present within the park boundary, 99% of which bore brands as evidence of ownership (McLaughlin, 1989). Over the next decade there were unsuccessful efforts to remove all remaining horses; in the 1970s, park administration decided to maintain the horses as a "historic livestock display" or "living history demonstration", reminiscent of the freeroaming livestock that Theodore Roosevelt documented during his residency (Harmon, 1986).

Reports vary as to the number of horses left in TRNP after these removal attempts, with some suggesting that the remaining founder individuals were one gray stallion and two mares. The consensus among reports, however, indicates that there were only about 16 individuals present in 1965 (Harmon, 1986; McLaughlin, 1989). Every few years thereafter the park conducted roundups to control population size by removing a portion of the herd. Population size was initially selected as 35-60 individuals (National Park Service, 1978). A habitat use and forage analysis later recommended a population maximum of 90 individuals to prevent overgrazing of some forage species (Marlow et al., 1992). More recently, a population objective of 70-140 animals was suggested following a genetic analysis which found low effective population size (Cothran, 1992). Ten roundups

were conducted from 1978 to 2013; each time the population was reduced by an average of 52% (TRNP records). Thus, the TRNP horse population has undergone 11 potential population bottleneck events. The herd has mostly been a closed population since the park perimeter was fenced. A few animals have likely entered the population over the years by mistake or intentional disposal by private persons, though all known trespass horses of the past 20 years have been removed (B. McCann, personal communications). In 1981 and 1982, several established TRNP stallions were removed as part of an attempt to augment the herd by introduction of "well-bred" stallions. Six stallions were introduced at this time, including an Arabian, a Shire-Paint cross, a Quarter Horse, and three feral stallions from a Wyoming herd. Each had varying levels of reproductive success within the population (McLaughlin, 1989). The Shire-Paint cross stallion was reported to be highly successful: he maintained a large band of mares for almost a decade and was considered the most dominant stallion in the park. An estimated 15% of the population could be traced to this single stallion in 1991 (Cothran, 1992). Introduction of stallions was discontinued in favor of maintaining the historic type; in 1991 and 1997 attempts were made to remove the introduced stallions and some of their known offspring (TRNP records).

An oral history of the herd collected from TRNP employees and local ranchers in 1989 suggested that some of the horses which eluded capture originally were descended from "Indian type" horses of Spanish descent (McLaughlin, 1989). The horses used for ranch work in late nineteenth century North Dakota some 70 years prior to the park's establishment were often "Indian type" horses crossbred with other European breeds from the eastern US, Texas, Colorado, and Idaho (Crawford, 1931; Huidekoper, 1947; McLaughlin, 1989). Some have suggested that the TRNP herd is a unique population due to this potential association with the historical Spanish-type horse; however, this assertion has not been substantiated with genetic evidence. A phenotypic evaluation based on physical conformation and coat colors found evidence of crossbreeding in all TRNP horses and the presence of Spanish-type features, but recommended genetic evaluation for further resolution (Sponenberg, 1994).

Previous studies have estimated genetic diversity for the TRNP horses. Seven red blood cell antigen loci were tested in the 1990s to calculate genetic variability measures for the herd. These values were compared over a nine-year period from 1991 to 2000, as well as compared to average values for domestic horse breeds and other feral horse populations. There were decreasing values for expected heterozygosity (H_a) over the sampling period, with the final value falling below the average for both domestic and feral horses $(H_0 = 0.327$, compared to 0.363 and 0.349 for domestic and feral populations, respectively). The report also found a lower effective number of alleles (A_o) than the average for both domestic and feral populations (Cothran, 2000). All reported allele variants were previously described in domestic breeds; no unique alleles were found in the TRNP population (Cothran, 1992). A later analysis of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) and 12 short tandem repeat (STR) loci from the present-day TRNP herd was conducted by Ovchinnikov et al. (2018). Values of H_e and A_e found for the TRNP herd were again lower

than the average for other feral herds and most domestic breeds. Three mtDNA haplotypes were found and fully sequenced, none of which were exact genome matches to any published sequences in GenBank. Two of the mitochondrial genomes belonged to the same haplogroup and were most similar to an American Paint Horse sequence; the other belonged to a second haplogroup and had no close match to published sequences. However, the control region sequences of both haplogroups had matches to a wide variety of breeds with a global distribution. This suggests that at least two different populations or maternal sources contributed to the genetic diversity of the TRNP herd. The STR analysis was inconclusive in determining the ancestry of the park horses and showed TRNP horses as distinct from other breeds (Ovchinnikov et al., 2018).

Genomic approaches can be used to gain insights into population structure, relatedness, and genetic diversity for TRNP horses. The development of a horse reference genome allows for a genome-wide analysis, using tens of thousands of single nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) (Wade et al., 2009). Genome-wide SNPs have been used in many horse breeds to measure genetic diversity, identify regions of diversifying selection, and make inferences about the origins of breeds (Cosgrove et al., 2020; Gurgul et al., 2019; Petersen, Mickelson, Cothran, et al., 2013). Prior studies of domestic breeds and feral herds suggest that population genetics can be a useful tool for investigating breed associations and the potential origins of feral herds such as the horses of TRNP.

Here, we use genome-wide SNP genotypes to examine the relationship of the TRNP horses to established horse breeds. Based on the known history of the herd, we hypothesized that TRNP horses would be most genetically similar to common ranch horses in the USA today (Quarter Horses and American Paint Horses), Shires, or Spanish-type breeds, but that they would primarily appear as a distinct population apart from any one breed. We also hypothesized that confinement and management actions have contributed to recent loss in genetic diversity within the TRNP herd. We found that TRNP horses are distinct from other breeds, likely due to isolation, population bottlenecks occurring as part of herd management, and genetic drift. For similar breeds, we found that these horses are most closely allied with draft breeds, particularly the Shire, which were historically associated with surrounding ranches and documented stallion introductions in the park, but not notably related to Quarter Horses, Paints, or Spanish-type breeds.

2 | METHODS

2.1 | Sample collection

Hair samples were collected during a regularly-scheduled roundup in 2013. From these, we selected samples of 87 horses which had been re-released into the park, including almost all adult mares and reproductive band stallions. In 2017, additional tissue samples were collected as part of management activities via biopsy dart from 12 individuals that had evaded the 2013 capture. With the addition of

these individuals our sample set represented an approximate census of the herd as it was at the end of 2013 (99/107=92.5%). In 2020 we collected an additional 18 tissue samples from young mares born post-roundup by biopsy dart. Our full dataset had 118 samples (91 mares, 27 stallions), including a sample from one more young mare. This includes 85% (94/111) of the adult individuals in the herd as of spring 2022 and represents 98% (177/181) of the herd when including offspring of sampled individuals.

2.2 | DNA extraction, genotyping, and sample selection

Genomic DNA was extracted from hair follicle and tissue samples by the Animal Genetics Laboratory at Texas A&M University using Gentra Puregene Tissue kits (Qiagen) following manufacturer's protocols. Individuals were then genotyped at Neogen Genomics Laboratory (Lincoln, NE) for over 70k SNPs located evenly across the horse genome using the Illumina Equine GGP 70k BeadChip. We combined the resulting genotypes with a dataset of 792 horses from 35 different breeds which had been genotyped using the Illumina Equine GGP 50k BeadChip (Petersen, Mickelson, Rendahl, et al., 2013). Mean sample size for breeds in that dataset was 22.63 individuals (Table A1); to prevent a comparatively large number of TRNP samples from skewing the principal components analysis (PCA), we selected a representative subset of 23 TRNP individuals for our final dataset. Using pedigree data determined by genetic testing and family band association records going back to the 1980s, we identified first degree relatives and excluded the younger individual (i.e., offspring) to reduce bias due to relatedness, which left 32 individuals. We then performed a random selection to reduce the dataset to the final 23 individuals, and manually checked to confirm that this subset contained individuals from both geographic regions within the park.

2.3 | Data pruning

We performed quality control filtering using SNP & Variation Suite v8.9.0 (SVS) (Golden Helix, Inc., Bozeman, MT, www.goldenhelix.com), with the methods used by Petersen, Mickelson, Cothran, et al. (2013). We first removed markers with call rate ≤ 0.95 , and then samples with call rate ≤ 0.95 . All 23 TRNP samples were above the threshold and were retained. This eliminated any markers which were not included in both the 70k and 50k genotyping arrays. We next removed SNPs with a minor allele frequency (MAF) of 0.05 or less. We mapped the remaining SNPs to EquCab3.0 (www.ncbi.nlm. nih.gov/assembly/GCF_002863925.1/) using SVS and filtered to include only autosomal loci. This resulted in a final set of 815 samples and 38,786 SNPs. We further filtered the dataset for linkage disequilibrium (LD) using a window size of 50 and an increment of 5, with an LD threshold of $r^2 = .5$. After LD filtering, this second version of the dataset retained 815 samples and 28,505 SNPs.



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2.4 | Among-breed relationships

To assess the current relationship of the TRNP horses to other breeds, we conducted a Principal Components Analysis (PCA) on the dataset pruned for MAF and call rate, as per Petersen, Mickelson, Cothran, et al. (2013). We computed the principal components in SVS using an additive model with the option selected to normalize each marker's data by its standard deviation. We then plotted the first three principal components against each other to visualize relationships among individuals of different breeds and the TRNP horses. We also calculated pairwise values of Wright's fixation index (F_{ST}) between all breeds and TRNP horses in SVS using the LD pruned dataset.

2.5 | Phylogenetic analysis

We conducted a phylogenetic analysis to depict evolutionary relationships among the populations. We converted the LD pruned dataset to Phylip format using vcf2phylip (Ortiz, 2019). We included all breed samples from the Petersen, Mickelson, Cothran, et al., 2013 dataset along with the same 23 TRNP samples used for the PCA and $F_{\rm ST}$ analyses. All phylogenetic analyses were performed via the CIPRES Science Gateway v3.3 (Miller et al., 2010). We converted the SNP dataset to a FASTA file using NCL converter v2.1, which maintained the original nucleotide information (Lewis, 2003). The final matrix included 815 individuals sampled for 28,501 aligned nucleotides. We aligned the resulting data using ClustalW v2.1 with standard parameters (Thompson et al., 1994), and used RAxML v8.2.12 (Stamatakis, 2014) to construct the phylogeny for these samples, with 1000 bootstrap replicates. Bootstrap values were calculated using a majority rule consensus tree with Consense (Felsenstein 1986-2008). Only bootstrap values of ≥70% are reported. We visualized the resulting phylogeny and edited the appearance of the tree using FigTree v1.4.4 (http://tree.bio.ed. ac.uk/software/figtree/).

2.6 | Bayesian cluster analysis

To estimate ancestral clusters and common heritage, we used the program ADMIXTURE on the LD pruned dataset (Alexander et al., 2009). ADMIXTURE employs model-based ancestry estimation to assign individuals to clusters with similar ancestry based on genotypes. For each individual sample ADMIXTURE returns the proportion of their genome that can be assigned to each ancestral cluster based on allele frequencies. Since there were 36 breeds including the TRNP samples in the dataset, we ran the program for K=1 through K=36, K being the assumed number of ancestral populations. To determine the value of K that created the most accurate model to describe the dataset we followed ADMIXTURE instructions and compared the program's values for cross-validation (CV)

error at each value of *K*, using the default setting of 5-fold CV and selecting the lowest resulting value.

2.7 | Estimates of inbreeding

To assess inbreeding and the effects of historical population management, we conducted two measures of estimating inbreeding levels. We calculated the individual inbreeding coefficient (f) for all 118 TRNP samples and each breed sample in the LD pruned dataset using SVS. Another approach to evaluating inbreeding or relatedness by descent is to identify runs of homozygosity (ROH) within the genome. These homozygous-by-descent (HBD) segments are created when an individual inherits two copies of the same stretch of chromosome from a common ancestor (Ceballos et al., 2018; Peripolli et al., 2016). We used the R package RZooRoH to identify ROHs and model the generational age of common ancestors based on segment length (Bertrand et al., 2019). RZooRoH uses hidden Markov models to relate the length of HBD segments to the age of the segments, as a more recent common ancestor will have had fewer opportunities for recombination of the homozygous segment. To evaluate the state of the TRNP herd we included all 118 TRNP samples, did not prune for LD, and used the RZooRoH default model. We used Vortex10 (Lacy & Pollak, 2021) to calculate the generation time of the TRNP herd using historical records of demographic survival and mortality rates. The resulting generation time of 10.48 years closely matched the 10 years previously reported for feral horses (National Research Council, 2013). We also selected several other breeds with known population history for comparison.

2.8 | TRNP population structure

To examine subpopulation structure within the TRNP herd, we prepared a dataset of all 118 samples pruned by marker call rate ≤0.95, sample call rate ≤0.95, MAF ≤0.05, and autosomes only. We then conducted a PCA of this dataset in SVS as above. We assigned samples to geographic regions based on observational data of spatial use by each family band of horses. The South Unit of the park was partitioned into two geographic regions by an intermittent stream: the categories were "North of Paddock Creek (NoPC)", "South of Paddock Creek (SoPC)", or individuals of mixed parentage resulting from observed dispersal.

3 | RESULTS

3.1 | Among-breed relationships

The first three principal components from our PCA account for 62.19% of total variation in the dataset. The first principal component (PC1) explains 36.90% of the variance in the dataset. The

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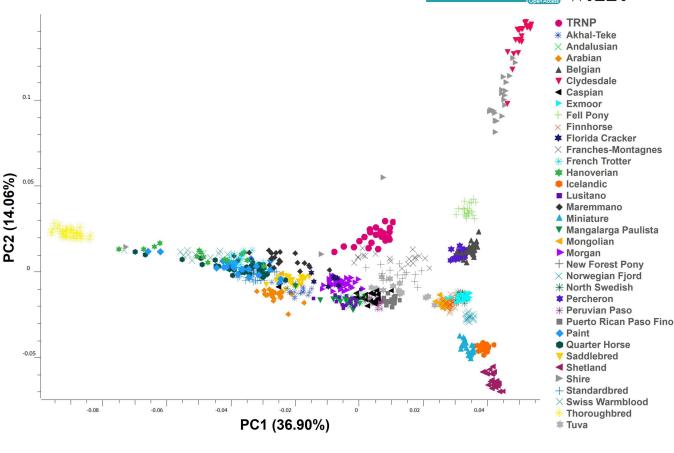


FIGURE 1 Principal components analysis of genetic variation among horse breeds and feral horses from TRNP, showing one plane of the cloud of points (PC1 by PC2). Points represent individuals. PC1 captures 36.90% of the variation in the dataset. PC2 captures 14.06% of the variation. TRNP horses fall into a group in the center of the plot, indicated by pink circles.

second principal component (PC2) explains 14.06% of the variance, with a more gradual decline in explanatory value from PC2 to PC10 (Table A2). On a plot of PC1 by PC2, the breeds follow the pattern described by Petersen, Mickelson, Cothran, et al. (2013). TRNP horses fall near the center of the plot (Figure 1). The TRNP cluster overlaps on PC1 with such breeds as Morgan, Lusitano, Mangalarga Paulista, Andalusian, Franches-Montagnes, New Forest Pony, Peruvian Paso, Tuva, Caspian, and Puerto Rican Paso Fino. On PC2, the TRNP horses are separated from these breeds in the direction of the draft horses such as Shire, Clydesdale, and Fell Pony. When looking at PC3 on the plot of PC1 by PC3 there is more overlap of the TRNP horses with the Tuva, New Forest Pony, and Caspian, as well as with the Akhal-Teke and French Trotter (Figure 2).

Mean pairwise $F_{\rm ST}$ value among breeds was 0.108, with a minimum value of 0.002 between Paint and Quarter Horse and a maximum value of 0.273 between Clydesdale and Mangalarga Paulista (Table A3). $F_{\rm ST}$ values between the TRNP horses and other breeds ranged from 0.104 to 0.217. Breeds with the lowest $F_{\rm ST}$ values in comparison with the TRNP horses were the Tuva (0.104), New Forest Pony (0.107), Quarter Horse (0.108), Paint Horse (0.108), Mongolian horse (0.111), Maremmano (0.115), and the Morgan (0.115). The breeds with the highest values were the Mangalarga Paulista (0.217), Clydesdale (0.213), Exmoor (0.203), Shetland (0.184), and Thoroughbred (0.180).

3.2 | Phylogenetic results

The results of the maximum likelihood analysis revealed a star phylogeny pattern with short internal branches and long external branches, typical of a lineage which has undergone rapid differentiation (Figure 3). Samples with the same breed assignment were placed mostly into their own respective clades. External nodes had high confidence bootstrap values, but many of the basal branches joining breeds were not well supported (<70% bootstrap values). TRNP horses were found to be monophyletic with strong support (100% bootstrap support) and were placed with moderate support (76.8% bootstrap support) with the Shire, Clydesdale, and Fell Pony, among other draft-type breeds such as the Percheron, Belgian, and Franches-Montagnes. The next nearest branches included the ponytype breeds (e.g., Finnhorse, Miniature, Shetland); this clade had higher support (81% bootstrap support). Spanish-type breeds (e.g., Andalusian, Peruvian Paso, Mangalarga Paulista) comprise a clade that is separate from TRNP horses with moderate support (73.3%).

3.3 Bayesian clustering analysis

The lowest CV error returned by ADMIXTURE was observed at K=25 distinct populations, though CV error values of K in the 21–28



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FIGURE 2 Principal components analysis of genetic variation among horse breeds and feral horses from TRNP, showing the same cloud of points from another plane (PC1 by PC3). Points represent individuals. PC3 captures 11.23% of the variation in the dataset. TRNP horses fall into a group in the center of the plot, indicated by pink circles.

range were of similarly low values (Figure A1). At K=25 each TRNP horse was grouped by a majority of their genome into the same cluster with minimal assignment to other clusters (Figure 4). The proportion of TRNP genomes assigned to this cluster ranged from 0.703 to 0.999, with a mean of 0.952. No individuals from other breeds had notable assignment to the TRNP horse cluster. Four TRNP individuals had a proportion of 0.039-0.075 of their genomes assigned to another cluster which included high genome proportions from Quarter Horse, Paint, and Florida Cracker individuals, and a 0.021-0.033 proportion assigned to a cluster including Thoroughbred, Hanoverian, Shire, Quarter Horse, Paint, Swiss Warmblood, and Maremmano individuals. Two TRNP individuals had 0.010-0.031 of their genome assigned to each of three clusters including Andalusian, Lusitano, Percheron, Shire, and Clydesdale individuals. The individuals from other breeds that had the highest proportion of assignment with the TRNP cluster (range 0.032-0.054) were a Swiss Warmblood, Hanoverian, Morgan, Saddlebred, two Paints, Maremmano, Quarter Horse, Puerto Rican Paso Fino, and a New Forest Pony.

In the K=21-28 range of low CV errors the TRNP horses clustered similarly to the K=25 results (Figure A3). From K=20 through K=8 the TRNP horses were still assigned to their own cluster. At K=7, the TRNP horse genomes were assigned by 0.621-0.850 to a cluster that included high proportions for other individuals of many different breeds of draft type, such as Belgian, Percheron,

Franches-Montagnes, and North Swedish Horse (Figure A2). At such a low number of ancestral populations most of the clusters separated into general groups of draft breeds (the Shire and Clydesdale formed their own cluster), pony breeds, Spanish, and Arabian breeds, or warmblood breeds, reflective of PCA and phylogenetic relationships.

At K=28, the TRNP horses were split into two clusters (Figure A4). The division was aligned with the geographical categories assigned to TRNP individuals for population structure analysis. Again, no individual from any other breed had more than a trace assignment to either TRNP cluster, and only three TRNP individuals had genome proportions between 0.0002 and 0.056 assigned to any other clusters (Figure A5).

Estimates of inbreeding

TRNP horses had relatively high values for inbreeding coefficients compared to other breeds. The mean f of TRNP horses was 0.180, while the mean f for all other breeds in the dataset was 0.116 (standard deviation of 0.079). Only seven breeds had a mean f higher than the TRNP horses (Tables A4 and A5).

RZooRoH identified 9195 HBD sequences among the 118 TRNP samples, on all autosomes and in all individuals. The mean



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FIGURE 3 Maximum likelihood tree with bootstrap values for horse breeds, including TRNP horses. Only bootstrap values with confidence of 70% and higher are given. TRNP horses were found to be monophyletic and were placed among draft breeds with 76.8% confidence, diverging from the branch that contains Shires, Clydesdales, and Fell Ponies.

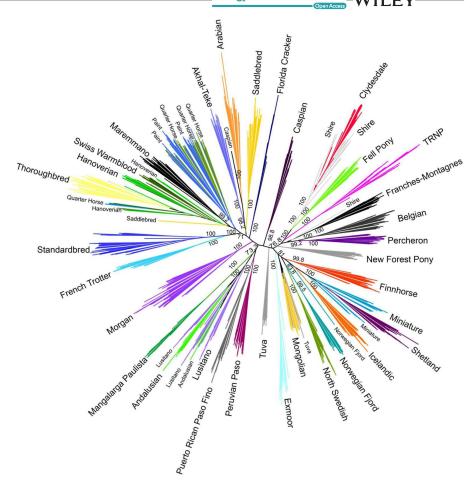
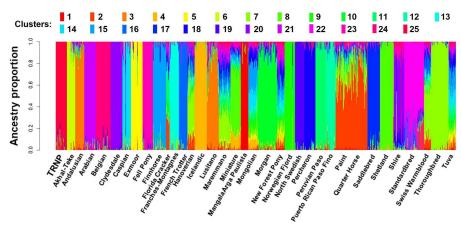


FIGURE 4 Ancestry estimation using ADMIXTURE modeling. The number of ancestral populations (clusters) K=25was chosen based on ADMIXTURE's CV error calculation. Vertical lines represent individuals, with colors representing the proportion of their genome attributed to each ancestral cluster. The TRNP horses make up their own red cluster (leftmost) with minimal shared ancestry from other clusters.



proportion of the genome covered by HBD segments for TRNP individuals was 0.22 (SD 0.066; range 0.095-0.47; median 0.21; IQR 0.17-0.25) (Figure 5). The highest proportions were in generation classes 4 and 8 (Figures 5 and 6). With a generation time of 10 years this corresponds to common ancestors approximately 40-80 years ago, suggesting bottlenecking or founder events around that timeframe. For comparison, Figure 6 also shows the Clydesdale and Florida Cracker, which have both undergone recent genetic bottlenecks, the Puerto Rican Paso Fino, which experienced a more distant bottleneck during the importation of

Spanish horses to the Americas, and the Quarter Horse, which has multiple sources of recent admixture.

TRNP population structure

On the plot of PC1 by PC2 for the 118 TRNP samples, individuals are noticeably sorted by geographic category along PC1 (Figure 7). PC1 captures 12.32% of the genetic variation in the dataset, and PC2 captures 5.27%. The individuals located South of Paddock



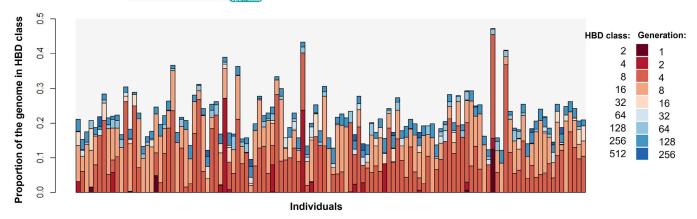


FIGURE 5 Proportion of the genome in each homozygosity by descent (HBD) class for all 118 TRNP individuals as estimated by RZooRoH. HBD classes represent inbreeding level based on number of generations removed to common ancestor, where HBD class 2 corresponds with 1 generation to common ancestor, HBD class 4 with 2 generations, etc.

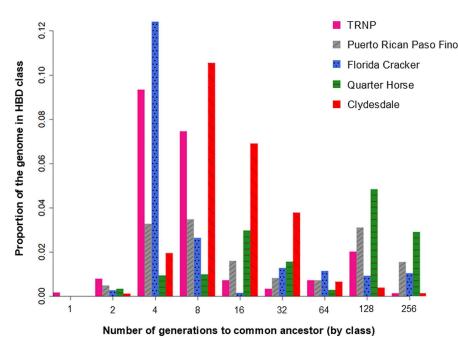


FIGURE 6 Average proportion of the genome in each generation class for all 118 TRNP horses in comparison to four other breeds of known population history, as estimated by RZooRoH. Clydesdale and Florida Cracker have undergone recent bottlenecks, Puerto Rican Paso Fino an older bottleneck, and Quarter Horses have been recently admixed. HBD classes represent inbreeding level based on number of generations removed to common ancestor, with lower generation numbers corresponding to more recent inbreeding. TRNP horses have highest presence of HBD segments in classes 4 and 8 generations ago, which corresponds with the initial population bottleneck from the time of the park's establishment.

Creek (SoPC) are more closely grouped than are individuals North of Paddock Creek (NoPC). Individuals of mixed parentage are between and among the two categories. On PC2, the NoPC points have a wider spread than do the SoPC points.

4 | DISCUSSION

By using multiple approaches to analyze the population genetics of TRNP horses, we identified overall patterns that reflect the history of this herd. These analyses place the TRNP horses well within the diversity seen in modern domestic horses, but do not show a strong signal of relatedness to any one breed, consistent with previous work and the evolutionarily recent development of most horse breeds. Based on park records, it is known that the TRNP herd has had genetic influxes from multiple sources. Admixture between breeds and the recent isolation of horse breeds makes it challenging to determine ancestry in the more distant past. As these breeds have

experienced continued artificial selection for certain characteristics, they differ from horse populations that existed in the late 1800s. Admixture can create new allele combinations and frequencies, contributing to the apparent population differentiation. However, some patterns emerge across these analyses.

The PCA plot reflects variation in genotypes and identifies unique populations and associations with phenotypic traits for the sampled breeds. Highly specialized breeds can be found as distinct from other breeds due to strong selection pressures and inbreeding, and the plot can also show evidence of admixture between populations (Petersen, Mickelson, Cothran, et al., 2013). The TRNP points are not as tightly clustered together as some of the other breeds, indicating admixture between multiple sources in their recent history (McVean, 2009). Some TRNP points are separated from the center of the cluster, falling toward the Shires and other draft breeds. This separation may reflect the influence of the Shire-Paint stallion introduced to the park in the 1980s. On the PCA plot, the five Spanishtype breeds are all tightly clustered together. The TRNP points align



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with Spanish-type breeds on PC1 as well as with such breeds as Franches-Montagnes, Morgan, and Tuva, but are separated from them on PC2, potentially indicating some affinity between the herd and these breeds.

The general distribution of domestic breeds in PCA is consistent across multiple reports (Funk et al., 2020; Ovchinnikov et al., 2018). Though direct comparisons cannot be made across separate analyses, there are some interesting similarities between our results and the results of another study of two feral Canadian populations evaluated with the same Petersen, Mickelson, Rendahl, et al. (2013) dataset. A large population of feral horses ("Alberta Foothills") that has ranged in size from 1000 to 1700 individuals and likely experienced continual gene inflow from multiple draft breeds and Quarter Horses/Paints appeared in a generally similar position to the TRNP horses in a PCA plot (Tollett, 2018). A second, isolated feral population of about 500 individuals ("Sable Island") was more tightly clustered on PC1 and PC2 but was noticeably separated from the main cloud of points on PC3 (Tollett, 2018). The TRNP herd, though considerably smaller than the Sable Island herd, does not show such divergence on PC3.

The maximum likelihood tree reflects the pattern seen in the PCA plot, with Thoroughbreds located in one portion of the topology while draft horses and ponies are found on the other side of the tree. The TRNP horses are found to be more similar to draft breeds and particularly the Shires, Clydesdales, and Fell Ponies, supporting the idea that the herd retains influence from the introduced Shire-Paint stallion. If

this influence does come substantially from that individual, the more recent timeframe of his introduction in comparison to the development of most breeds would contribute to the lower value of bootstrap confidence observed. Due to the local popularity of Percheron horses in the late 1800s, though, the genetic contribution of draft breeds may also have been present before his introduction (Crawford, 1931; Huidekoper, 1947; McLaughlin, 1989). However, there is support for separation of the Spanish breeds from the TRNP horses, suggesting that these Spanish breeds have had limited genetic influence on TRNP horses in recent history compared with draft breeds.

PC1 (12.32%)

During domestication, artificial selection for specialized traits, along with transport and husbandry of horses, resulted in breeds or types within a short evolutionary timeframe. Our analyses indicate that horse breed relationships are reconstructed in a star-like phylogeny, with short internal branches and long external branches, indicating rapid rates of diversification due to strong selection. Because horse breeds successfully interbreed, it is difficult to reconstruct that genetic history with a simple bifurcating phylogeny. This difficulty is reflected in the low nodal support for internal nodes. Recombination, or gene flow between branches, can affect the shape of phylogenetic trees, lengthening the terminal branches (Li et al., 2019; Schierup & Hein, 2000). This pattern is commonly seen within domestic species, such as dogs, cattle and water buffalo, goats, and chickens (Mannen et al., 2020; Quan et al., 2020; Rout et al., 2008; Sun et al., 2020; Vonholdt et al., 2010). Other trees constructed with different data show a similar phylogenetic pattern



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for horse breeds (Felkel et al., 2018; Khanshour et al., 2013; Vilà et al., 2001).

Based on the oral history of the herd, we would expect to see some genetic similarity between the TRNP horses and one or all of the Spanish breeds. In the PCA, the TRNP horses are close to Spanish breeds on PC1 but diverge from those breeds on PC2. Relatively high F_{ST} values indicate that there is little recent Spanish contribution to the herd. Further, the maximum likelihood tree and the ADMIXTURE analysis separate the Spanish breeds from the TRNP horses. Based on these observations, it seems that the present-day herd is not closely related to the Spanish breeds. Considering the history of horses in the Americas, though, we cannot rule out previous Spanish influences. However, there were approximately 70 years of few records between the purported import of Spanish type horses into the local area in the 1880s and the 1950s when herd management began, during which local ranchers were known to cross "Indian type" horses with European breeds (McLaughlin, 1989). Thus, any Spanish lineage would most likely have experienced admixture before the founding of the park. Additionally, most horses in the park in the 1950s were branded, suggesting considerable influence of 20th century ranching practices on herd composition.

A common thread across the ADMIXTURE, phylogeny, and PCA results is that TRNP horses are a distinct population in comparison to these domestic horse breeds. Genetic differentiation can be driven by selection, mutation, reduced gene flow, genetic drift, and nonrandom mating. Although the oldest formal breed registries have only existed for approximately 200 years, horses have been under artificial selection during their domestication for at least 4000 years (Orlando, 2020). The TRNP herd has not experienced artificial selection for specific characteristics but has had limited gene flow and a small population size (80-200 individuals) since the 1950s. A few individuals have been introduced over the history of the herd; however, the last intentional introduction as part of a management decision occurred in the 1980s. Genetic differentiation likely resulted from the isolation and repeated bottleneck events experienced by the TRNP herd, resulting in genetic drift. Essentially, the TRNP horses are more similar to each other in allelic combinations than they are to any other horse breeds.

Ovchinnikov et al. (2018) reported low values of genetic variability (observed heterozygosity and allelic diversity) in the TRNP herd compared to both domestic breeds and other feral herds. This is also reflected in inbreeding coefficients from genome-wide analysis of SNPs, with the TRNP horses having higher values of f than most other breeds. The F_{ST} values between TRNP and other breeds were all near or higher than the average among all breeds. F_{ST} measures genetic differentiation between populations using allele frequencies and can indicate reduced gene flow between those populations. While the TRNP horses are placed among the draft breeds on the phylogenetic tree, the Shire and Clydesdale also have some of the highest values for inbreeding coefficient, f. In combination with the high mean f of the TRNP population, this resulted in high values of $F_{\rm s.t.}$ between these breeds, despite some shared ancestry. We know that the TRNP population has been isolated for many years, and the

lack of recent gene flow with other breeds is supported by these high F_{ST} values.

Though F_{ST} values are lower between TRNP and Paint and Quarter Horses than TRNP and any draft breed, other results do not single out these breeds as recent contributors to the park population. Morgan horses are another putative source of TRNP ancestry based on PCA results; Morgan horses are the oldest remaining North American horse breed, originating in the late 1700s and early 1800s for use on farms (Battell, 1894). Perhaps the ranch horses of early western North Dakota were genetically similar to the early work horses of the eastern US and to the early Quarter Horses of Texas, before their differentiation into strictly kept breeds. It is possible that these early work horses contributed to the TRNP population.

The ROH analysis also shows that the TRNP horses have experienced relatively recent inbreeding. The high proportion of HBD segments in the genome due to inheritance from common ancestors four and eight generations ago coincides with the herd's isolation and known bottleneck events. The initial bottleneck occurred 60-70 years ago (6-7 generations) in the 1950s and 60s following the establishment of the park, when the majority of the horses on the land were rounded up and returned to their owners at the same time as the park perimeter was fenced and the remaining population was isolated. A reduction of the TRNP population to 16 individuals, followed by low gene flow into the population, explains the current presence of large chromosome segments inherited from common ancestors. The presence of these HBD segments and a relatively high inbreeding coefficient suggest that the bottlenecks experienced in the recent history of the TRNP herd have affected genetic diversity of the population. In the case of the individual horse with the highest presence of HBD segments (0.47), pedigree records indicate that this individual likely had the same stallion-mare mating in the P2 generation on one side and the P3 generation on the other. Chromosome 1 for this individual appeared almost entirely homozygous.

However, HBD segments are likely overestimated in our dataset, due to the density of SNPs called in the array. Lavanchy and Goudet (2023) demonstrated that SNP density is an important metric in accurately assessing HBD segment presence and recommend using high-density (>11 SNPs/Mb) datasets. While more recent inbreeding and longer HBD segments are easier to estimate, lower SNP density can result in overestimation of small segments. Still, since the TRNP population is small and inbred, some of the unsampled portions of the genome are likely to also be homozygous.

RZooRoH produced HBD class results consistent with the known history of several other breeds, indicating that the TRNP results for HBD classes were likely reasonable. For example, Clydesdales experienced a bottleneck following agricultural mechanization and their use in WWI and WWII during the 1920s-1940s (Hendricks, 1995). RZooRoH assigned a higher proportion of their genome to 8 generations ago, consistent with this timeframe. A more recent and severe reduction in population size occurred with the Florida Cracker with only 31 individuals present

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in 1989 (Florida Cracker Horse Association; Conant et al., 2012), which is reflected by the highest HBD level occurring in the four generation class. These breeds and the TRNP horses have a clear signature of inbreeding compared with the Quarter Horse, a breed with very large population size and admixture from multiple sources, but which has only formally existed since 1940. In fact most horse breeds and breed registries were only established within the last few centuries, alongside an increased awareness of heritability (Hendricks, 1995). The HBD classes here extend out to hundreds of generations and thousands of years ago and suggest a level of inbreeding that may be present for the species in general which occurred around domestication events.

As we hypothesized, large scale roundup actions have likely caused genetic bottlenecks in the herd and led to inbreeding, with the initial reduction of herd size at the time of the installation of the perimeter fence likely producing the largest effect. Inbreeding can also be exacerbated by subpopulation differentiation within a population. Smaller subpopulations can experience increased effects of genetic drift and an overall loss of heterozygosity within the population as a whole. Within the TRNP herd there is evidence of some population structure, as seen in the TRNP PCA and the splitting of the TRNP ADMIXTURE cluster at K = 28 (Figure A5). Observational data shows that many of the TRNP horses have a behavioral tendency to inhabit a regular area within the park and disperse to join other family bands that also frequent the same area. Though the Paddock Creek corridor is not a restrictive physical barrier, there seems to be enough site fidelity to contribute to nonrandom mating and the development of genetic population structure. However, there is still frequent gene flow within the population, as evidenced by the mixed parentage individuals, and likely enough gene flow to prevent substantial subpopulation differentiation.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of much larger numbers of markers in a SNP array provided a more in-depth evaluation of this feral population than had previously been possible with limited markers. While the TRNP population continued to group separately from other breeds, consistent with previous work, we did detect genetic relationships where previous work had been inconclusive. The strongest observed similarity is between TRNP horses and some draft breeds, based on phylogeny and ADMIXTURE relationships. In particular, the placement of the TRNP horses on a branch next to Shires, Clydesdales, and Fell Ponies in the maximum likelihood tree indicates that descendants of the introduced Shire-Paint stallion persist in the present-day herd. The inbreeding analyses indicate that the TRNP herd has experienced inbreeding and differentiation from other breeds, likely due to genetic drift, bottleneck events, and limited gene flow. Historical management actions likely exacerbated the inbreeding levels within the population, especially the original population bottleneck and initial removal attempt at the time of the perimeter fence installation in the 1950s.

6 | IMPLICATIONS

If a reproductive herd is to be maintained, approaches to reduce the effect of continued isolation on genetic diversity can be considered. Genetic diversity in a closed population may be increased with introduction of new individuals. Periodic introductions could be used to counter the effects of genetic drift. Depending on long term management objectives, individuals for introduction could be chosen from a more genetically distant population to maximize variation, or from a population with a more similar background. Analysis of additional samples from other feral herds across the country might identify more relationships, potentially suggesting another similar source from which to select animals for introduction.

PERMIT INFORMATION

2020 biopsy samples were collected under research permit number THRO-2020-SCI-0013 and NPS IACUC approval (ND_THRO_ McCann_HorseBiopsyDarting_2020.A1).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Blake E. McCann: Conceptualization (equal); writing - review and editing (equal). Melissa A. Thompson: Formal analysis (lead); writing - original draft (lead); writing - review and editing (equal). Rebecca B. Simmons: Supervision (equal); writing – review and editing (equal). Turk Rhen: Writing - review and editing (equal).

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Genotype data used in this study were submitted to the European Variation Archive (EVA) under accession number PRJEB64774 and will be openly available at https://www.ebi.ac.uk/eva/?eva-study= PRJEB64774 following a 1 year embargo.

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APPENDIX

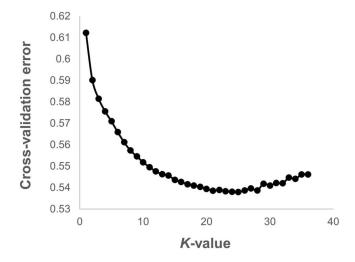


FIGURE A1 Cross-validation error for each value of K, calculated by ADMIXTURE. The most likely value of K was chosen by the lowest error value.



FIGURE A2 Ancestry estimation using ADMIXTURE modeling with the value of K=7, the lowest value of K for which the TRNP horses are primarily assigned to a cluster that includes other breeds. Vertical lines represent individuals, with colors representing the proportion of their genome attributed to each ancestral cluster. The TRNP horses are assigned to a cluster that also includes individuals from many breeds of draft type, including Belgian, Percheron, Franches-Montagnes, North Swedish Horse, Norwegian Fjord, Finnhorse, Mongolian, Tuva, and New Forest Pony. The Shire and Clydesdale make up their own cluster at K=7.

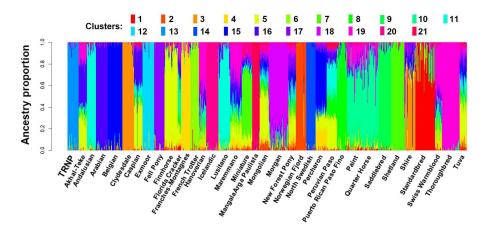


FIGURE A3 Ancestry estimation using ADMIXTURE modeling with the value of K=21. Vertical lines represent individuals, with colors representing the proportion of their genome attributed to each ancestral cluster. At K=21 the CV error is only slightly higher than the lowest value of K=25. At K=21, the TRNP horses are still assigned to their own cluster, which no other individuals share.

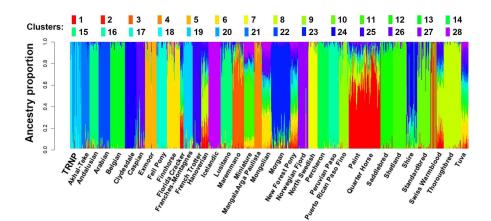
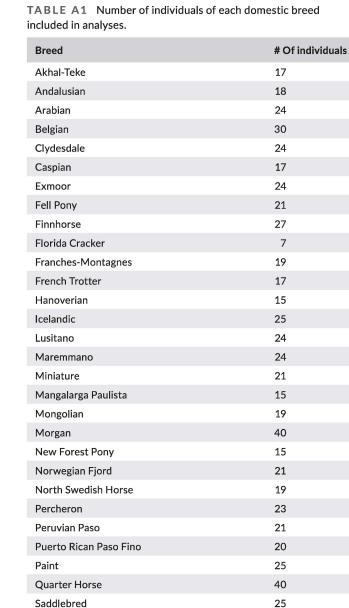


FIGURE A4 Ancestry estimation using ADMIXTURE modeling with the value of K=28. Vertical lines represent individuals, with colors representing the proportion of their genome attributed to each ancestral cluster. At K=28 the CV error is only slightly higher than the lowest value of K=25. At K=28, the TRNP horses are split into two clusters, still unshared with any other breed.



Shetland

Standardbred

Thoroughbred

Swiss Warmblood

Shire

Tuva

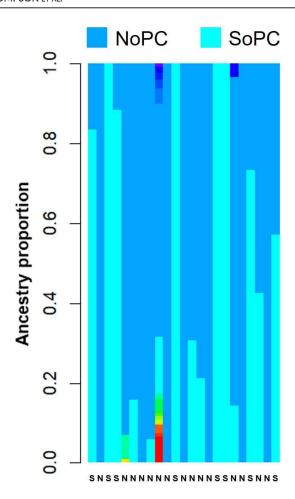


FIGURE A5 Closer detail to highlight the TRNP results from the ADMIXTURE K=28 model in Figure A4. The TRNP horses are split into two exclusive clusters that correspond with their geographical region (North or South of Paddock Creek) within the park.

27

23

40

14

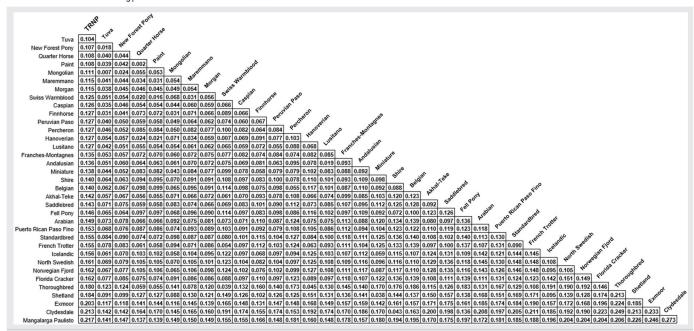
36

15

TABLE A2 First ten principal components from PCA.

Principal component	Percentage of variance explained/eigenvalues
1	36.90
2	14.06
3	11.23
4	10.16
5	8.98
6	8.36
7	7.42
8	7.18
9	6.07
10	5.63

TABLE A3 Pairwise F_{ST} values calculated for 36 populations/breeds.



Note: Rows are sorted by value in comparison to TRNP.

			pen Access	
Breed	Mean f	SD	MIN	MAX
Hanoverian	-0.007	0.016	-0.041	0.024
Swiss Warmblood	-0.003	0.025	-0.040	0.064
Paint	0.001	0.023	-0.038	0.061
Quarter Horse	0.005	0.031	-0.039	0.110
Maremmano	0.005	0.022	-0.033	0.044
Thoroughbred	0.046	0.027	-0.021	0.102
Caspian	0.062	0.043	-0.010	0.148
New Forest Pony	0.066	0.024	0.025	0.112
French Trotter	0.068	0.028	0.018	0.127
Mongolian	0.070	0.037	-0.078	0.099
Tuva	0.071	0.044	0.016	0.165
Saddlebred	0.082	0.024	0.032	0.129
Akhal-Teke	0.082	0.038	0.019	0.130
Peruvian Paso	0.088	0.034	0.050	0.149
Morgan	0.096	0.074	0.014	0.302
Lusitano	0.099	0.053	0.013	0.194
Finnhorse	0.106	0.018	0.076	0.166
Franches-Montagnes	0.109	0.047	0.041	0.233
Arabian	0.109	0.060	0.039	0.321
Standardbred	0.117	0.038	0.047	0.206
Andalusian	0.129	0.067	0.050	0.320
Miniature	0.132	0.024	0.096	0.210
Puerto Rican Paso Fino	0.141	0.061	0.035	0.324
Percheron	0.144	0.025	0.105	0.187
Fell Pony	0.155	0.028	0.121	0.228
Icelandic	0.157	0.032	0.125	0.281
Belgian	0.157	0.026	0.098	0.201
Florida Cracker	0.159	0.136	0.003	0.365
TRNP	0.180	0.094	0.018	0.466
Norwegian Fjord	0.184	0.031	0.130	0.257
North Swedish	0.187	0.038	0.120	0.266
Shire	0.194	0.088	-0.040	0.298
Shetland	0.237	0.056	0.158	0.408
Mangalarga Paulista	0.252	0.049	0.170	0.351
Exmoor	0.285	0.086	0.104	0.568
Clydesdale	0.310	0.046	0.189	0.374



TABLE A5 Values of inbreeding coefficient f for all 118 TRNP samples, as well as the number of observed homozygous loci and the number of expected homozygous loci as calculated by SVS.

f	# Markers	# Observed homozygotes	# Expected homozygotes	f	# Markers	# Observed homozygotes	# Expected homozygotes
-0.166	45,793	26,603	29329.30	-0.022	45,785	28,969	29326.44
-0.149	45,685	26,813	29259.76	-0.020	45,761	28,985	29312.11
-0.146	43,455	25,715	27969.38	-0.017	45,794	29,044	29331.60
-0.142	45,796	26,997	29332.39	-0.017	45,803	29,055	29336.75
-0.127	45,803	27,244	29336.49	-0.010	45,785	29,167	29325.38
-0.125	45,795	27,282	29332.16	-0.005	45,790	29,250	29328.92
-0.121	45,766	27,320	29315.20	-0.005	45,796	29,255	29331.91
-0.114	45,785	27,449	29326.62	-0.004	45,785	29,255	29325.62
-0.113	45,795	27,464	29330.87	-0.004	45,796	29,266	29331.33
-0.109	45,603	27,423	29211.23	0.002	45,802	29,362	29336.70
-0.108	45,804	27,562	29337.65	0.002	45,756	29,344	29306.15
-0.107	45,553	27,422	29179.40	0.003	45,774	29,367	29317.91
-0.106	45,790	27,580	29328.29	0.003	45,805	29,394	29338.23
-0.104	45,807	27,622	29339.30	0.003	45,795	29,388	29331.90
-0.103	45,803	27,633	29336.76	0.004	45,788	29,389	29326.76
-0.103	45,801	27,633	29334.89	0.006	42,728	27,637	27549.09
-0.102	45,796	27,648	29332.50	0.006	45,793	29,434	29330.63
-0.099	45,415	27,475	29087.60	0.011	45,709	29,462	29277.63
-0.098	45,791	27,720	29329.38	0.013	45,797	29,550	29333.38
-0.092	45,793	27,821	29330.03	0.018	45,788	29,627	29327.66
-0.090	45,377	27,588	29055.69	0.022	45,795	29,696	29331.84
-0.088	45,804	27,894	29337.46	0.022	45,790	29,692	29327.72
-0.086	45,735	27,885	29294.44	0.024	45,796	29,723	29331.87
-0.077	45,775	28,047	29318.10	0.027	45,783	29,768	29323.68
-0.074	45,791	28,106	29329.28	0.030	45,726	29,790	29290.24
-0.069	45,556	28,051	29176.05	0.031	45,703	29,783	29270.62
-0.066	45,709	28,194	29276.72	0.033	45,804	29,886	29337.59
-0.065	45,776	28,257	29319.24	0.034	45,801	29,902	29335.45
-0.064	45,779	28,264	29321.15	0.036	45,763	29,903	29311.07
-0.063	45,798	28,302	29333.37	0.036	45,797	29,928	29333.48
-0.062	45,805	28,312	29338.16	0.040	45,786	29,984	29325.14

TABLE A5 (Continued)

f	# Markers	# Observed homozygotes	# Expected homozygotes	f	# Markers	# Observed homozygotes	# Expected homozygote
-0.062	45,794	28,307	29331.18	0.040	45,786	29,992	29327.34
-0.062	45,750	28,284	29302.06	0.042	45,802	30,033	29336.43
-0.060	45,685	28,271	29260.95	0.047	45,802	30,116	29336.88
-0.059	45,743	28,326	29299.18	0.047	45,777	30,101	29320.66
-0.058	45,798	28,385	29334.00	0.066	45,787	30,415	29326.84
-0.057	45,790	28,398	29328.82	0.067	45,798	30,441	29333.57
-0.056	45,796	28,412	29330.90	0.069	45,769	30,447	29315.20
-0.055	45,803	28,438	29337.12	0.069	45,752	30,445	29305.89
-0.053	45,798	28,457	29334.12	0.071	45,792	30,498	29329.68
-0.053	45,801	28,471	29335.68	0.072	45,767	30,490	29312.09
-0.052	43,485	27,019	27835.87	0.072	45,808	30,522	29339.77
-0.049	45,791	28,525	29328.52	0.079	45,802	30,631	29336.04
-0.041	45,765	28,630	29311.84	0.081	45,800	30,668	29334.73
-0.041	45,802	28,665	29336.72	0.083	45,743	30,672	29300.52
-0.041	45,720	28,615	29284.88	0.088	45,791	30,774	29328.69
-0.040	45,741	28,643	29299.15	0.093	45,760	30,847	29309.74
-0.039	45,780	28,688	29323.74	0.100	45,774	30,959	29319.53
-0.036	45,805	28,744	29338.28	0.103	45,798	31,028	29334.24
-0.036	45,804	28,747	29337.14	0.117	45,686	31,177	29262.51
-0.035	45,799	28,755	29334.62	0.123	45,793	31,348	29330.17
-0.034	45,774	28,762	29317.90	0.134	45,742	31,508	29298.07
-0.029	45,802	28,858	29336.19	0.142	45,795	31,663	29331.35
-0.027	45,792	28,890	29328.37	0.186	45,796	32,394	29332.55
-0.026	45,692	28,844	29268.98	0.200	45,792	32,615	29330.60
-0.025	45,312	28,634	29048.60	0.225	45,778	33,026	29320.35
-0.024	45,787	28,928	29327.03	0.232	45,758	33,130	29309.27
-0.024	45,498	28,778	29162.53	0.268	45,785	33,741	29324.82
-0.022	45,787	28,958	29327.23	0.324	45,772	34,642	29317.30

I strongly support SCR 4006 and urge the committee to pass this resolution to show that North Dakota stands behind the federal protection of the TRNP wild horses. Wild horses are part of the fabric of the American image and we must protect them. It is shortsighted and cruelly destructive to strip away their protections and allow them to be culled. This is wrong, and must be halted. Below are an extensive list of reasons why it should be stopped:

- 1. The TRNP Wild Horses Are a Vital Part of North Dakota's History & Culture
- The Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) wild horses are living symbols of North Dakota's Western heritage and history.
- These horses trace their lineage to the early ranching era and embody the spirit of the American West.
- Protecting them ensures future generations can experience a piece of our state's past.
- 2. The Horses Contribute to Tourism & the Local Economy
- Thousands of visitors travel to North Dakota specifically to see these wild horses, benefiting local businesses, hotels, and restaurants.
- The economic impact of wildlife tourism in TRNP is substantial—removing the horses would hurt the tourism-driven economy of Medora and surrounding communities.
- 3. This Resolution Aligns with the Interests of North Dakotans
- A large majority of North Dakotans and Americans support keeping wild horses in TRNP.
- The state's voice matters—this resolution sends a strong message to federal lawmakers that North Dakotans want these horses protected.
- 4. Federal Protection Is the Best Path for Long-Term Preservation
- Without federal protection, the TRNP wild horses are vulnerable to removal by the National Park Service (NPS).
- The TRNP herd deserves the same recognition and safeguards as federal herds for future generations.
- 5. The Resolution Is a First Step—It Does Not Create Federal Protection, But It Helps
- SCR 4006 does not grant federal protection—it urges North Dakota's congressional delegation to take action.
- Having state support makes it easier to advance federal efforts to protect the herd.
- This resolution is a crucial part of the long-term fight to preserve the horses.
- 6. A Balanced Approach Is Possible
- There are responsible solutions that allow for a managed herd within the park.
- Federal protection can ensure humane management practices while maintaining the ecological balance of the park.

Sincerely, Ariana Lipsman To all that this concerns,

I'm writing to express my deep concern regarding the potential removal of the magnificent wild horses from Theodore Roosevelt National Park. These horses are the most unique feature of the park, and removing them seems absolutely absurd to me.

I first went to TRNP in 2015. My wife and I had just moved to North Dakota, and whenever we asked the locals where we should visit, TRNP came up as a suggestion. Initially, I wasn't too intrigued by the idea. I had already been to South Dakota's Badlands several times, and I imagined that North Dakota's must be very similar.

Then I heard about the wild horses. I've seen bison, bears, elk, deer, and other critters at other parks, but wild horses was something new. I couldn't wait to see them roaming free in a National Park, not just on a farm or ranch. Their presence is what makes Theodore Roosevelt National Park so unique.

On our first visit, we didn't manage to see any of the horses. All we saw were some prairie dogs, one single bison, and a dried-up river. I was so disheartened, and I couldn't help feeling that I had been right: this park was pretty much the same as the Badlands in South Dakota. Still, the idea of the wild horses intrigued me, and I decided to do some research on how best to see them for my next visit.

The first time I saw a wild horse is an experience I'll never forget. I was sitting in my car, completely awestruck by their beauty. After that day, I returned to TRNP many, many times. It became my passion, and I would regularly wake up at 3:30AM and make the 2 hour drive to the park just to catch a glimpse of a few horses before I needed to turn around and return to Bismarck for work later that day.

It was truly amazing!! I would find a different kind of peace that I had not felt before, in my heart a kind of oneness with the land, with the many critters that made their way out of their hiding spots so early in the morning. Is that not what a National Park should be? I can go to many different places to see Bison, but the wild horses are a huge part of what makes Theodore Roosevelt National Park special. With so many other amazing National Parks for visitors to choose from, without the horses, TRNP would quickly fall behind. I beg you to keep the park unique and give the opportunity for future generations to experience this sacred wildness.

I urge congress to Establish protections For this amazing herd Who calls Theodore Roosevelt National Park their home.

Sincerely, David Jones

I have enclosed several images to aid in my plea...Thank you

The TRNP wild horses deserve federal protection. Please pass SCR 4006. Thank you, Michelle Meyer The TRNP wild horses deserve federal protection. Please pass SCR 4006.

In Support of SCR 4006: "I strongly support SCR 4006 and urge the committee to pass this resolution to show that North Dakota stands behind the federal protection of the TRNP wild horses."

1. The TRNP Wild Horses Are a Vital Part of North Dakota's History & Culture

- The Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) wild horses are living symbols of North Dakota's Western heritage and history.
- These horses trace their lineage to the early ranching era and embody the spirit of the American West.
- Protecting them ensures future generations can experience a piece of our state's past.

2. The Horses Contribute to Tourism & the Local Economy

- Thousands of visitors travel to North Dakota specifically to see these wild horses, benefiting local businesses, hotels, and restaurants.
- The economic impact of wildlife tourism in TRNP is substantial—removing the horses would hurt the tourism-driven economy of Medora and surrounding communities.

3. This Resolution Aligns with the Interests of North Dakotans

• A large majority of North Dakotans and Americans support keeping wild horses in TRNP. • The state's voice matters—this resolution sends a **strong** message to federal lawmakers that North Dakotans want these horses protected.

4. Federal Protection Is the Best Path for Long-Term Preservation

- Without federal protection, the TRNP wild horses are vulnerable to removal by the National Park Service (NPS).
- The TRNP herd deserves the same recognition and safeguards as federal herds for future generations.

5. The Resolution Is a First Step—It Does Not Create Federal Protection, But It Helps

- SCR 4006 does **not** grant federal protection—it urges North Dakota's congressional delegation to take action.
- Having state support makes it easier to advance federal efforts to protect the herd.
- This resolution is a crucial part of the long-term fight to preserve the horses.

6. A Balanced Approach Is Possible

- There are responsible solutions that allow for a managed herd within the park.
- Federal protection can ensure humane management practices while maintaining the

ecological balance of the park.

Stacey Lumley 82 Judson Road Montgomery, New York 12549 (914) 329-1155

March 19, 2025

North Dakota House Agriculture Committee

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Stacey Lumley and I live in Montgomery, New York.

I am here today to ask that you vote in favor of Senate Bill 2331. This Bill would create the formation of a working group to work with Theodore Roosevelt National Park to help manage the wild horses responsibly. The resolution before you is asking our federal legislators to help get federal protection for this herd since they are not protected under the Wild and Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act.

I have travelled to your beautiful State many times, specifically to Theodore Rosevelt National Park to see the wild horses in the park again. My first trip out West our first "big" stop was Teddy Roosevelt Park. The first animals we saw were bison and boy, they are impressive and exciting to see one in person. Then we found a herd of wild horses and I have been hooked on the different bands in this park ever since. They are this park to me. They are a magical experience teamed with history. They are the reason I come back to North Dakota and back to that park.

Thank you for your time.

Stacey L. Lumley

Sincerely,

Stacey L. Lumley

250319 North Dakota Agri Comm

The TRNP wild horses deserve federal protection. Please pass SCR 4006.

My name is Crystal Sellers, and I am reaching out to express my support for SCR 4006, aimed at protecting the wild horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park and other areas of BLM land that are supposed to be safeguarded.

I am not sure if you are aware of the disturbing realities of slaughter pens and their operations. Many of these magnificent horses, if they do not find loving homes, face the harrowing fate of ending up in slaughterhouses, whether in Canada or Mexico. The inhumane deaths they experience are truly heartbreaking. I urge you to watch a brief video available on YouTube that reveals the grim circumstances these horses endure. It is challenging to watch, but it sheds light on the urgent need for action. Link provided:

https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=slauter+horse+videos+mexico+20 23&mid=BEBEF7C2579FEA4CECB6BEBEF7C2579FEA4CECB6&FORM=VIRE

These animals deserve freedom—to roam and to live their best lives as they were intended. We must advocate for their protection and prevent further suffering.

Thank you for your attention to this critical issue. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of these beautiful creatures.

Sincerely,

Crystal Sellers

611 8th Ave, Slater Iowa. 50244

410-782-9919

MARCH 19, 20025

The TRNP wild horses deserve federal protection. Please pass SCR 4006. Our American wild horses are American icons, leave them wild.

TRNP Wild Horses

I am writing you today because I feel that the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park deserve federal protection.

This herd is a symbol of our past with bloodlines back to the Crazy Horse era.

I have been planning a trip to visit TRNP and they are my main reason. I want to see what Roosevelt saw and feel what he felt.

I think these protections are necessary in keeping them safe from removal and keeping them genetically viable for all future generations to see.

Please pass SCR 4006

Thank you Suzanne..

I strongly support SCR 4006 and urge the committee to pass this resolution to show that North Dakota stands behind the federal protection of the TRNP wild horses.

One of my dreams as I have traveled throughout the west in places like Utah, Nevada, Montana, and Arizona has been to see wild horses on the landscape. (I haven't been to the Dakotas yet but it's on my list!!) They are a symbol of the west, and mean so much to people like me who hold these spaces dear. What I see here in the southwest with how wild horses are inhumanely rounded up by BLM is grotesque and disheartening. Without federal protection, the horses in your state could suffer the same fate. People travel from all over to see wild horses in many states, this can only help your state by bringing in tourism dollars. Who wouldn't want a chance otherwise see a mustang roaming the range?

Considering what is happening with the current administration and their plans for NPS, BLM, Fish & Wildlife, and so on, it is scary to think what would happen to these incredible animals. If they are willing to start ruining the environment for logging and drilling despite it impacting grizzlies, wolves, and other endangered animals, what do you think would happen to these horses? Slaughtered from a helicopter? Chased for miles until they collapsed from a heart attack? No animal deserves that.

I'm not from your state, I get it. I'm from a state you probably hate. But I love the animals in this country, and I love the parks we all get to share. I would hope you do too and would work hard to help get these wonderful horses protected. There is a way to responsibly manage this herd (and others across the US) and keep the ecosystem of the park functioning in a way to support all life there. Please, take the steps to get this process started.

Thank you for your time.

Shawn Bailey

1. The TRNP Wild Horses Are a Vital Part of North Dakotas History & Culture The Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) wild horses are living symbols of North Dakotas Western heritage and history.

These horses trace their lineage to the early ranching era and embody the spirit of the American West.

Protecting them ensures future generations can experience a piece of our states past.

The Horses Contribute to Tourism & the Local Economy

Thousands of visitors travel to North Dakota specifically to see these wild horses, benefiting local businesses, hotels, and restaurants.

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3. This Resolution Aligns with the Interests of North Dakotans

A large majority of North Dakotans and Americans support keeping wild horses in TRNP. The states voice mattersthis resolution sends a strong message to federal lawmakers that North Dakotans want these horses protected.

4. Federal Protection Is the Best Path for Long-Term Preservation Without federal protection, the TRNP wild horses are vulnerable to removal by the National Park Service (NPS).

The TRNP herd deserves the same recognition and safeguards as federal herds for future generations.

5. The Resolution Is a First StepIt Does Not Create Federal Protection, But It Helps SCR 4006 does not grant federal protectionit urges North Dakotas congressional delegation to take action.

Having state support makes it easier to advance federal efforts to protect the herd. This resolution is a crucial part of the long-term fight to preserve the horses.

6. A Balanced Approach Is Possible

There are responsible solutions that allow for a managed herd within the park.

Federal protection can ensure humane management practices while maintaining the ecological balance of the park.

In Support of the SCR 4006

Please Pass SCR 4006!!!!!

We must obtain Federal Protections for the Wild Horses of TRNP!

If you can't have Wild Horses in a National Park, where can you have them???

These horses are a unique strain dating back to their Spanish heritage, a beautiful group with thousands of followers from all over the World! They have already been thinned out, and given birth control.

These horses are a huge attraction to your state, and tourism bringing visitors Just to See the Wild Horses! I humbly request these collars be removed as well, as who wants pictures of collared horses? I hope to see them this summer, and am always spreading the word.

This attraction will only grow, as they are being removed from so many other places sadly.

Thank you for your vote to PASS SCR 4006 TODAY.

Elizabeth C Bloodworth



Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for taking the time to hear and read all of the submitted testimony on SCR 4006. We are here today in support of SCR 4006.

My name is Deb Lee Carson, and I am the Co-Founder of the nonprofit Wild Lands Wild Horses and writer and co-host of the forthcoming documentary on the Theodore Roosevelt National Park horses to be released in 2026.

Our documentary, in partnership with Click Content Studios, a division of Forum Communications in Fargo, has gathered over 17 interviews—including former park management, advocates, scientists, government officials, natives, historians, locals, and journalists—with more still to come.

My personal story begins in 2006 with this historical herd and their power and charm have brought me back to North Dakota multiples times a year since that first introduction.

This herd of resilient survivors have taught us respect for their environment—their home, the significance of their role in relation to other species, along with the importance of their cultural history, and we have witnessed firsthand the difficult task in managing this herd to the public. In addition three of our board members have adopted horses from TRNP.

Furthermore these horses have exposed us to the many types of mindsets, cultures, and life experiences who visit the TRNP landscape from around the world, with the primary draw the horses.

For those millions who cannot physically visit TRNP, they follow social media accounts. These accounts 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, and how they co-exist will ALL species.

Passing SCR 4006 will take this herd one step closer to solidifying 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.





They have survived not just the harsh landscape but also repeated political battles that have threatened their very existence. And yet, they are still here. That speaks volumes. The people want them here. And they belong here. Now, we have an opportunity to secure their future.

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.

Federal protection is not an option—it is a necessity to ensure these horses do not become a footnote in history.

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. Our lives, and millions of others, have been incredibly enriched by this historic herd of horses that call that amazing place home, that place made from wailing winds and groaning stones, Theodore Roosevelt National Park. We urge you to stand with us in preserving this iconic herd for generations to come.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Deb Lee Carson

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Cofounder Wild Lands, Wild Horses Series & Fund Elmer, NJ

/dlc



Dear Honorable Representatives,

My name is Josselyn Wolf and I am a seventeen-year-old artist, activist, and friend of the wild.

As Theodore Roosevelt himself reflected, "We have fallen heirs to the most glorious heritage a people ever received, and each one must do his part if we wish to show that the nation is worthy of its good fortune."

The moment I discovered wild horses' existence, I felt wonder not only at the natural freedom of these spirited beings, but in the fact that they have breathed, played, and formed bonds on our own Western lands since 48 million years before our first human ancestor emerged. Through the millennia of our natural world and the nearly three hundred years of our country, a heritage has been woven between our American ideal of freedom and the one who best embodies it: the wild horse. The Theodore Roosevelt National Park herd offers that same heritage and wonder to the thousands of people who have seen them and whose tourism has local economies just as the herd has enriched the land. As they do not fall under the purview of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act that offers basic protection for wild herds, these horses truly represent the most vulnerable among us.

Through unpredictable political change, it is crucial that their freedom does not become political. By supporting this resolution, you affirm the tenet that Theodore Roosevelt embodied through his words and actions: that no matter the political landscape of now or the future, we all have a duty to hear the spirit of the wild, and to protect our unbridled fellow species for my generation and all those to come.

My sincere gratitude for your solidarity with the future and the wild, Josselyn