

Chasing Horses

August 23, 2020 ·

If you can believe it, there is a non profit group out there who, along with their followers, are EXTREMELY upset that the captures were postponed this year. They are working very hard to try to slander us and place blame on us for fear based nonsense that makes absolutely no sense.

One of the biggest pieces of nonsense states that our current management plan is in line with the Pryors. The Pryors actually have a management plan, so as you can see, while we just welcomed baby #41 (and we are FAR from done for the year!) they just welcomed baby #13!

This is because Theodore Roosevelt National Park does NOT have a written management plan like other groups do. What they have is posted on our EARS site, and the NPS/BLM people reviewing this “plan” even stated that THIS is NOT a management plan.

They also told the park, back in the 1970’s, that we had one of the most genetically diverse wild horse populations in the US. They cautioned against introducing “new blood”.

The NPS and their “experts” knew better and now, according to a study published in 2018, the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park are the most inbred herd in the WORLD.

The park was warned by a top geneticist, who collaborated on the 2018 paper, that immediate action should be taken to avoid herd collapse. To date NO action has been taken. All of this information can be found on our site EARS . <https://www.facebook.com/EARS-101037237930630/>

Instead, the management of Theodore Roosevelt National Park has made a “long term commitment“ for continued “research” working with Colorado State University. This means CSU will get to continue to experiment on our horses for as long as they want.

In 2015/2016, as told to us by park management themselves, the last doses of birth control was given to this herd.

THAT is why we have 41 foals so far. The reasoning? This is the part of the study that lets them know which combination of doses of GonaCon were successful in permanently sterilizing our mares. Why? So that they can take that successful dosage out west and sterilize mares on the range.

Don’t believe us? Check our EARS page and listen to Dr. Dan Baker and Jenny Powers explain their on-going “research” which includes making a dart delivery system that will enable them to dart mares on the range that are not as easy to get as close to as the ones in our park. Most of you have seen the lovely, puss oozing wounds this has left on our mares. These wounds literally last for MONTHS.

If you are concerned about the research being done on the horses in our park, you can call IACUC. You will be directed to Jenny Powers, who handles these concerns. Yes! That is this same Jenny Powers <https://www.youtube.com/embed/7j0AYRRGlll?rel=0>

Do the horses need to be culled from the park? YES. Every single horse born into the park CANNOT stay. The park is fenced and cannot sustain what the horse population would become. This herd also CANNOT survive if every foal born into the park is captured and sold every year.

Other programs are successful because they #1 HAVE a management plan #2 those plans include a targeted birth control plan that darts older mares and rotates younger mares. The

lower number of births also means more horses get to stay in their programs. Imagine how much time, energy and tax payer MONEY this would save if we did this in our park. IF this had been done, we may very well still be able to enjoy and appreciate Mare Chubby, Mare Sweetheart, Mare Lacey & Mare Ginger - all of whom were older mares that should have been on birth control and died while foaling. Their babies also starved to death.

Please excuse us for being upset. While this non-profit wants to continue to throw mud at us seeing what sticks, we wonder how they sleep well at night knowing all of the above happened over the MANY YEARS that said organization made people believe they were “advocating” for these horses. To them and all of their supporters, remember this ALL of this happened under YOUR WATCH!

So yes, please excuse us while we continue to “harass” the park, if that is what is called asking for answers to questions we have that just don’t make sense for the health and well being of these horses.

Someone has to actually ADVOCATE and speak up for these horses. We are willing to advocate for these horses with actions and not just words. We have offered to pay for birth control. We have offered to start a financial campaign for a management plan. We have donated to volunteers who helped when our park was on fire. There is NOTHING we will not do for the park and the horses we love. We will NOT support with words, actions or money a plan for the National Park Service to continue to breed horses. We will also NOT support a plan to control numbers using their current system that in no way promises this herd a future in Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Part 3...

The Ugly

Colorado State University (CSU) was asked by Theodore Roosevelt National Park to come and experiment on our horses. Again, please feel free to do your own research – this one is pretty easy – Dr. Dan Baker speaking in his own words: <https://youtu.be/ynPF5cvfK1o> Please note that he says he has a long-term commitment from TRNP to continue his research. Those of you wondering when this experiment will end now have an answer. This is an ongoing study. CSU came into TRNP in 2009 for what was to be a 3-year birth control “study”. We are now on year 12 of that 3-year study. We like to call it what it is – an experiment on our horses. Dr. Dan Baker was quoted in a local newspaper as saying that TRNP was the perfect “laboratory” – what do you do in a laboratory?

The experiments have been everything from seeing which shots coupled with what boosters of GonaCon give the best results. The ultimate desired result is permanent sterilization. Then there were experiments on what happens when we take everyone off birth control? Then they get to see who may be permanently sterilized, when the mares come back into heat, etc.

According to CSU, there are no side effects or changed behavior to the mares.

We beg to differ. The mares who have not been able to have a baby for 12 years now have drastic changes in their behavior. There are also mares that have had healthy foals up until they started getting injected with GonaCon. Then they had still born babies or babies who were born but “failed to thrive”.

The other part of this experiment is the development of a better dart delivery system. They are trying to perfect this to take out on the range. Again, I couldn’t make this stuff up – fact check for yourself – Here you can hear Dr. Jenny Powers proudly explain it to you:

<https://youtu.be/7j0AYRRGllI>

Dr. Powers states: “you might ask about injection site reactions as you might imagine when you dart deliver something there's more tissue trauma than when you hand inject it and we found that injection site reactions were more frequent and they were more severe in our dart delivered animals however once an animal had an abscess that broken drain she recovered a whole lot faster than the animals that had just swellings at the site of that injection but they never broken drained so they may recover more quickly and that's something that we're also monitoring long-term we never saw lameness in any of these animals even though these injection sites don't look too pretty even this animal was not lame from that.”

The images shown on this post are some of the injections given to our mares over the past months. We have seen mares temporarily lame and dragging the leg they were darted in. Some of these “injection site reactions” have been like this for 2-3 months now. We are very concerned about the possibility of infection especially with the unseasonably warm weather we have been having.

We have no idea who is monitoring the reactions the mares are having now, but we have asked and will gladly share that answer when we get it.

It is also important to note here that we were excited to find an organization that handles animal welfare concerns in our national parks! NPS IACUC. You can read more about them here: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1103/iacuc.htm>

We were shocked that when we called to discuss our concerns regarding the wild horses in TRNP, we were referred to Dr. Jenny Powers. Yep, the same one you just saw in that video talking about the dart delivery system she was working on. When we expressed our concerns to Dr. Powers regarding the apparent conflict of interest, she told us that it was all a matter of perspective.

We don't know about you, but it is NOT ok with us that our mares continue to be experimented on like this! It is also NOT ok that there appears to be NO oversight when it comes to the health and wellbeing of our horses!

While we would like nothing more than to see the study end once and for all, we can accept that after 12 years there may still be more research that is needed. IF that is the case, we would ask that CSU work in a way that takes into consideration the health and well being of this herd. We would like to see them have a plan to give the right mares birth control ESPECIALLY to protect our older mares. We would also like the experimentation with this larger dart to stop as we believe it is hurting our mares physically and mentally.

+2

August 20, 2019 ·

Hello everyone and Happy Tuesday!

We cannot thank you enough for your outpouring of support for these beautiful horses that call TRNP home! Many of you have asked for a form letter of sorts. Here is one that states FACTS along with goals we would like to work toward. We ask that at the beginning, you introduce yourself and how/why these horses are important to you. At the end, we have listed some contacts we have. Please feel free to add contacts in the comments below. Please email everyone - eventually we will find the right person!

Please share this far and wide so that we can FINALLY get some much needed help for these amazing horses at TRNP. As always, thank you for your support and for loving these beautiful horses right along with us!

To Whom It May Concern:

[Insert your personal introduction and why these horses are important to you]

I am writing to ask for your help with a specific situation in Medora, ND.

Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) Is home to approximately 135 wild horses. The horses have been a part of the park since the development of TRNP in the 1950's. These horses need your help! They have been the subject of animal neglect and abuse for far too long.

- The park NOT the BLM is responsible for the health and well being of these horses. However, their horse management plan is outdated and has not been updated for 41 years.

- Colorado State University (CSU) is currently in its 11th year of what was supposed to be a 3-year Birth Control Study where they are testing Gona Con on our horses. This has caused a significant change in herd dynamics. It has also negatively impacted the mental and physical health of this herd.

- The only way the park manages the number of horses in the park is by culling the young horses 4 months to 3 years. There is nothing scientific about the culling; they are simply culled by ease of capture, or whoever is closest to the road.

- The impacts of the last two points has taken a very healthy, genetically unique and viable herd of horses and turned them into the most inbred herd of horses in the world. That information was published in a research paper by Dr. Blake McCann, the Chief of Resource Management for TRNP, and other researchers, last August.

What makes things worse is that the park personnel refuse to listen to common sense arguments from the public on alternatives that have been proven to work with other wild horse herds across the USA.

- When they were rounding up horses last fall, it was asked that one colt be left in the park. The reasoning was the lack of offspring in the park by his sire and his dam who passed away earlier that year. Even though the park was presented with over 700 signatures that were collected in 4 short days, that colt was the first to be pulled.

- This year it was announced that they would be pulling 4-month-old foals in the August culling. After it was announced, Park Superintendent Wendy Ross and Chief Resource Manager, Dr. Blake McCann, were unavailable until the day the captures began. Blake did e-mail me and say he would be available in the afternoons, after the captures had started.

- Several individuals and groups have begged the park to update their Horse Management Plan for 40+ years. Every year when we ask, we are misled again and again about when they will be updating their management plan. That is then followed by excuse after excuse as to why what they said previously cannot be done to update the management plan. We are tired of being lied to!

What is Theodore Roosevelt National Park hiding and why do they NOT care about the health and well being of their horses? They are an extremely popular attraction for the park and the small town of Medora that surrounds the park. These horses are followed by more than a half a million people around the world on social media.

As taxpaying citizens whose tax dollars pay for this park, we are asking for help to reach the following goals:

- An end to the 3-year CSU birth control study. We are demanding the no further extensions be given to CSU so that the park can start to repair the damage that has been done to our horses over the last 11 years.

- A 3rd party to begin to research and construct a much-needed horse management plan. As part of the process, the Department of the Interior, which governs the National Park Service, states that town hall meetings must be conducted throughout the process so that the public's voice can FINALLY be heard.

- That no other horses be removed from the park without a town hall meeting where the public can voice their opinion and where we can be presented with scientific facts on the reasons for specific horses being removed.

We are open to any and all suggestions you may have to help institute the necessary changes within the park we love so that our horses can continue to thrive for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration. Due to the extreme nature of this situation, we are hoping to hear from you very soon.

Sincerely,

Please send to:

Leah Baker

Acting Assistant Director, Resources and Planning, BLM Montana-Dakotas State Office

Email:

lbaker@blm.gov

Nikki Haskett

Assistant Director, Office of National Conservation Lands and Community Partnerships, BLM Montana-Dakotas State Office

Email:

nhaskett@blm.gov

Jeffrey Krauss

Acting Assistant Director, Communications, BLM Montana-Dakotas State Office

Email:

blm_press@blm.gov

Montana/Dakotas State BLM Office

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Bureau of Land Management

1849 C Street NW

Rm. 5665

Washington, DC 20240

National Park Service

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Dan Smith, Deputy Director, exercising the authority of the Director of the National Park Service Daniel_Smith@nps.gov

David Vela, Acting Deputy Director, Operations

David_Vela@nps.gov

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Joy_Beasley@nps.gov

Tom Medema, Acting Associate Director, Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers Tom_Medema@nps.gov

Ray Sauvajot, Associate Director, Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

Ray_Sauvajot@nps.gov

Patricia Trap, Acting Regional Director

Patricia_Trap@nps.gov

National Park Service

601 Riverfront Drive

Omaha, NE 68102-4226

Governor Burgum (you have to fill out the online form to contact him but you can copy the letter in the form)

<https://www.governor.nd.gov/contact>

Senator Cramer's Office

Jody_Link@cramer.senate.gov

Senator Hoeven's Office

Monty_Rausser@hoeven.senate.gov

Huffington Post

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Inforum

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The Bismarck Tribune

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Presidential Candidate Julian Castro

info@julianforthefuture.com

The Dickinson Press

This past March, we lost one of our 17-year-old Mares, Mare Chubby. She died during childbirth. Chubby gave birth to a filly, Miracle, that lived for 5 days thanks to the love and support of her brother – 2017 colt Bubbles (A.K.A. Chief; Bert).

The park is getting ready for the 2nd culling of the year. In the spring, 20 yearlings and 2-year old's were removed from the park and listed on GSA auctions. Next week, they plan to capture and auction off another 15 yearlings, older weanlings and 2 year old's. We are very happy that

the park chooses to no longer use helicopter round ups as a means of capturing the horses. The park, instead, uses low stress methods for removing the horses from the park.

The means for capturing the horses is always by “ease of capture” i.e. who is closest to the road, who is easiest to capture. No thought is given to things like, this colt is the last offspring we get of Mare Chubby who died. We do not get another Chubby baby. Because of the park’s “ease of capture” mentality, we have lost many horses that would have positively contributed to the genetics of this herd. We have asked the park to please leave this colt off the removal list. All we have been told is, “I understand your concern.” No further questions have been answered regarding the status of the planned removal of this colt.

We feel that as tax paying citizens, this park and the animals that inhabit it also belong to us and we should have a say in important matters like this – instead of just sitting back and allowing the park to continue to capture whoever is closest to the road when they begin captures next week.

We are asking that you please e-mail Dr. Blake McCann, Park Biologist at TRNP, Wendy Ross, Director of TRNP, and Dan Smith, Director of the NPS. Please let them know that you want Chubby & Cloud’s 2017 colt to remain wild and free in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Also let them know that while we understand that culling the herd is necessary, they need to take a more educated approach to decisions that are made about horses that are removed from the park.

Blake McCann can be reached at blake_mccann@nps.gov

Wendy Ross can be reached at wendy_ross@nps.gov

Dan Smith can be reached at daniel_smith@nps.gov

Please e-mail all three and please share this post far and wide. The captures begin August 13th!!!!

Meet Bubbles. Bubbles was born in 2017 to Mare Chubby and Stallion Cloud. He has quite the story for sure!

His healthy birth in itself was a miracle. Chubby and Cloud both carry the overo gene and had been known to have lethal white babies. We were there the morning Bubbles was born and we were OVERJOYED to see that he was a healthy colt! You can read more about Lethal White Overo Syndrome here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lethal_white_syndrome

We asked the park to PLEASE keep Bubbles in the park. This was especially important since Chubby passed away. Park management explained that they could not/would not. We even supported a petition to keep Bubbles in the park that got over 1500 signatures within a few days. The park still refused to listen to the public’s requests.

Then park biologist, now Chief of Resource Management, Blake McCann, originally tried to say that Bubbles could not stay because he more than likely carried the lethal white gene. When I pointed out to him that the paper they just released

(<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article...>) stated that 70% of the TRNP horses carried the lethal white gene, he did admit that one more really would not make a difference at this point. When captures started at the end of the summer of 2018, Bubbles was the first horse captured. Bubbles has a great home. That is not and never was in question. Without a management plan or logical birth control program in place, there is no way that the park can sustain 30-40+ new babies every year.

The question is: When do we get another Chubby/Cloud baby?

Chubby passed away and Cloud is now walking as a bachelor. Chubby has one offspring in the park: 2006 Mare Daisy. Cloud has NO offspring in the park.

The answer is we don't. There will NEVER be any more Chubby/Cloud babies. I can go down a list and give the same statistics for many other horses in TRNP.

THIS is why the National Park Service Management Policies state that when ANY plant or animal is removed from park property, science AND genetics MUST be considered.

Hello and we want to say a huge THANK YOU to everyone for your comments, PM's and e-mails. Again, please understand that we are visitors to the park the same as anyone else. We started this page as a place to share our photos and documentation of what was happening during our visits to the park. As we started learning more about these horses and their history, we started having a lot of questions – like – why are they taking so many foals and yearlings out of the park? Isn't this negatively impacting the future of this herd and destroying bloodlines? We have had so many questions regarding the birth control being given to mares that they really are too many to list here and just continue to boggle our minds.

We have been told by MANY people that we

1. Have no right to question the National Park Service (NPS) on decisions they are making regarding the management of the horses in TRNP.
2. We are not as educated as the people managing the horses in TRNP so we should just let them do their jobs and stop bothering them with our petty questions.
3. If we continue questioning things, the park will go back to helicopter roundups and/or shooting the horses; is that what we really want?
4. If we continue asking so many questions, the park will just get rid of all of the horses in the park.

We have lost many "friends" over our questions and views. We have even had one organization have people become close friends with us, only to find that those so called "friends" were (we are really not sure here) but reporting back to the organization on what we are "doing".

So, WHAT are we "DOING"?

While we are not sure what the fascination with us is all about, we are simply visiting a national park and spending time with the horses that call the park home. We photograph them and share their stories here on our Facebook page. When we don't understand things, we ask questions to try to gain clarification. Only, we don't get a lot of clarification.

There seems to be A LOT of secrecy surrounding these horses. So much that when we could not get our questions answered, we sent a FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) request to the NPS.

While a few of the items we asked for were released to us, the most intriguing thing was this: The NPS, who is charged with managing the horses in this park, does NOT own the rights to the historical records of these horses. A third party owns those records and refuses to release them to us, so we are unable to obtain any historical information on this herd.

Mind boggling isn't it?

The BLM does NOT manage these horses and they are NOT protected under the Wild Horse & Burro Act. The NPS themselves are charged with their management.

So how does the NPS manage the horses if they do not have the rights to any of the historical data?

They have the information. It just is not FOIA-able.

If we even so much as call them on the phone or have a meeting, THAT is governed by the laws of FOIA. Historical information on the horses they manage – NOT governed by the laws of FOIA. We hope that makes as much sense to you as it does to us.

Thankfully, the [Nokota Horse Conservancy](#) freely shares their information with the public. The birth of the Nokota Horse Conservancy is rooted within the fenced boundaries of TRNP. Since

they have nothing to hide, we will continue to direct anyone interested in the history of the wild horses in TRNP to their website. As far as we are concerned, they hold the only pieces of the documented history of these horses that is available freely to the public.

More importantly, if you visit www.nokotahorse.org, you will see that Frank Kuntz, along with his late brother, Leo Kuntz, have spent over 40 years saying basically the EXACT same things that we have been saying! Even more frustrating, they have spent over 40 years getting the EXACT same answers we have!

Frank Kuntz is one of the humblest men we have ever had the pleasure of meeting and we are honored to call him a friend. In the moments when the frustrations over all of this get overwhelming, we think about him and Leo and 40 years of this! We battle between if they weren't able to change things, how can we? And then remembering Frank looking at us and telling us that we can't quit. Keep doing what you are doing. His voice echoes in my head, "I have to believe that we are making a difference."

I hope we are Frank, because there are many days when it doesn't seem like we are making a difference at all.

To the best of our knowledge, there is not any group that is advocating for the actual horses living in TRNP. We are sorry, but we do not see how auctioning off every single horse between the ages of 4 months and 3 years old helps any of the horses living in TRNP. Quite the contrary, it has drastically changed their behavior and the dynamics of the entire herd.

Additionally, if you claim to have so many years of experience working with this herd of horses and the NPS but cannot speak up for the horses living in the park, you are NOT advocating for the horses. If you say things like, "We find that it is easier to get along with the NPS when we support their decisions, even if we do not agree with them." Then you are NOT advocating for the horses living in the park, you are advocating for the NPS. If you cannot take your years of wisdom of this herd and make common sense suggestions to the park, and have them take what you are saying into consideration, then we have to say that if you do not appear to have any credibility with them, you don't hold any with us either. Lastly, if you have self-proclaimed yourself as the ones keeping the official historical documentation of this herd, then share your information with the public. Unless we are mistaken, these horses do still belong to the public as they live on public lands.

Many of you have asked what we can DO? What do we DO?

We created a page called E.A.R.S. (<https://www.facebook.com/EARS-101037237930630>) to share information and articles written about the horses in TRNP and also success stories like the Pryor herd & Salt River herd. By the way, the Pryor herd has culled 5 – yes FIVE – horses in the last 4-5 years. TRNP has culled well over 200 in the same amount of time, with about the same number of horses on about the same amount of land. How is that possible?

TWO WORDS: MANAGEMENT PLAN!

If you go to the page E.A.R.S., you will see a link that says, "visit group". If you click on that, over to the left of the screen is a tab for "files"

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/423394111721223/files/>) – we have listed both some interesting files, as well as what the NPS calls the 1978 Management Plan (it came to me as a file titled, "The Reduction of the Feral Horses in TRNP"). If you read it, please be sure to read the BLM response to it at the end. It is quite eye opening. I am also in the process of adding all of the responses I have gotten from government officials and offices there. I will also add a list of the contact information we have for different government offices and individuals as well. One of our followers said something like, we have over 15,000 people following this page. We do! And we need ALL 15,000 of you to help these horses! You may find it hard to believe, but

we are part of the very very small MINORITY of people who believe that the horses are not being properly managed by the NPS.

Someone else expressed frustration of not having anyone to hold the NPS accountable for their actions. While we cannot find anyone to hold them accountable either, please don't forget that checks and balances were put in place to (try) to keep our government in line. When the system of checks and balances don't seem to be working, it is up to us as taxpaying citizens to make sure they are held accountable for their actions.

We have watched the same things happen over and over again for the last 5 years. NOTHING is going to change unless we insist on change.

What CAN we do?

Please read through the articles on E.A.R.S. and educate yourselves on what is happening. Read through the files on EARS. Visit the Nokota Horse Conservancy website at

www.nokotahorse.org for even more history of these horses. Call, e-mail, and write our North Dakota politicians as well as your own! While TRNP is located in North Dakota, as a national park, it belongs to everyone. Make sure your politicians hear your voice too!

Please keep sharing your thoughts, opinions and suggestions with us. Most importantly, SHARE this information with as many people as you can to get the word out that these horses need our help!

We are NOT a non-profit group. If you would like to donate to a non-profit group that helps wild horses in North Dakota, please donate to the [Nokota Horse Conservancy](http://www.nokotahorse.org). There are many ways you can help them listed on their website at www.nokotahorse.org.

We are two people who love TRNP and the horses and wildlife that live there. At the request of our followers, we began creating a variety of merchandise. Last year, our business grew into a store in Medora, about a block from TRNP, that pays tribute to these amazing horses. If you can't visit us in person, most of our items are also available on our website at

www.chasinghorses.com

Most importantly, don't be afraid to ask questions to ANY non-profit group you are donating to. Make sure their mission is in line with what you believe you are donating to and for BEFORE you hand over your money or buy their products.

We can't thank each of you enough for sharing your love and support of these horses with us!

Please contact [Congressman Kelly Armstrong](#)

[Governor Doug Burgum](#)

[Senator Kevin Cramer](#)

[Senator John Hoeven](#)

Be curious, not judgmental" – Walt Whitman

Part 4

Yesterday we talked about the paper written in 2018. You can read the entire paper here:

<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article..>

The last few sentences from the abstract of the paper state:

"However, measures of nuclear and mitochondrial diversity have elucidated management needs. It is recommended that new genetic stock be introduced and that adaptive management principles are employed to ensure that unique mitochondrial lineages are preserved and genetic diversity is increased and maintained over time."

That is where our conversation will begin today. First some history...

1978: Theodore Roosevelt National Park put together an Environmental Assessment entitled: Proposed Feral Horses Reduction Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The

document is all of 12 pages and you can view the entire document here:

<https://www.nps.gov/.../THRO-Feral-horse-reduction-EA...>

Please note that this is a guide that is currently being used to manage the wild horses in TRNP. When asked about an actual wild horse management plan, Blake McCann, Chief of Resource Management at TRNP, said recently in a news interview: "When we asked the park about their horse management plan, they said they don't have one right now, but they are working on one." You can see the entire interview for yourself here:

<https://www.kxnet.com/.../theodore-roosevelt-ntl-park.../>

What is even more interesting is that the Department of the Interior, who manages BOTH the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), sent a BLM Range Conservationist to TRNP to see if there were better alternatives to managing the wild horses in TRNP aside from removal/reduction. His 12 pages that rebuke most of TRNP's 12 page assessment provide factual advice and information, most of which was ignored by TRNP park management. Some highlights include:

"The habitat in Theodore Roosevelt National Park can best be described as excellent for wild horses. It should be obvious to even an untrained observer that the park could support a much larger population of wild horses without adverse impacts upon the soil or vegetative resources as well as other wildlife species."

"In regards to the topic of inbreeding, the wild horse management plan for Theodore Roosevelt Memorial National Park identifies inbreeding as a problem based upon the presence of crooked legs, poor conformation, and a predominance of blue and grey horses. While it is impossible to say for sure whether inbreeding is a problem, it is my opinion that inbreeding does not constitute a significant problem in wild horse populations. If the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park are compared with those on BLM administered lands, it is obvious that the TRNP horses are much superior in terms of conformation and condition."

Fast forward from the paragraph above in 1978 to the paper written in 2018:

"In terms of variability, the STR data shows similar results to what was found with the mtDNA data, that is, the TRNP herd has low genetic variability. Feral horse populations, on average, have levels of heterozygosity that are essentially the same as those of domestic horse breeds but the TRNP heterozygosity levels are well below those of both."

"Estimates of mitochondrial and nuclear genetic diversity lower than that observed for most feral and domestic breeds are cause for concern."

Yes, you are reading that correctly. In a 40-year period, the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park went from being one of the most genetically diverse herd of horses in the US to one of the most inbred herd of horses in the world!

How does that happen?!

This is the exact thing that the BLM agent warned about in the advice given with regards to the EA done in 1978. This is also a huge thing that Frank Kuntz and his late brother Leo warned about back in 1986-2000 when they purchased their last Nokota horses from TRNP in their round ups. You can read more about Frank & Leo's advocacy efforts to save this breed of horse that would come to be known as the Nokota horse, and later, North Dakota's honorary equine here: <http://www.nokotahorse.org/the-nokotareg-timeline.html>

In 1989, Castle McLaughlin, now curator at the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, published her report, the only research of its kind to date on the TRNP horses, titled The History and Status of the Wild Horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. She was

commissioned by Theodore Roosevelt National Park to conduct the extensive research she did. Part of her research included the fact that Sitting Bull's horses were purchased by local ranchers in the Badlands of North Dakota and brought to Medora, ND after his capture. We were able to FOIA this report and are happy to say that because of our FOIA request, the document is now digitized. This is great as the report is 300 pages! It would have been heartbreaking to have that lost within the NPS records! If you are interested in reading Castle's report for yourself, please email us at imchasinghorses@gmail.com and we will be happy to share this report with you. The file for the full report is too large to share on this page.

So the park was warned in 1978 about introducing new blood. TRNP was warned repeatedly about losing its rich genetic diversity within the wild horse herd. Frank and Leo asked for YEARS that the park take genetics into consideration when they were culling the herd.

In 2018, Gus Cothran, leading geneticist, gave the warning as a contributor to the paper written about the TRNP horses stated: "They're at a level of genetic variability that should raise concern. Their genetic variability is low enough that the possibility of an inbreeding effect is real." You can read a separate news article regarding Gus' contribution to the 2018 paper here: <https://vetmed.tamu.edu/.../texas-am-researchers-help.../>

Additionally, as we will share in a separate post, the National Park Service has a variety of management policies and Director's Orders that all say that genetic diversity MUST be maintained in the management of ALL plants and animals under their jurisdiction.

So HOW and WHY has the management of Theodore Roosevelt National Park continued to NOT take genetics into consideration when culling this herd for some 40+ years now? WHY are they not being held accountable for this continuous mismanagement?

THAT is the million dollar question we are trying to get answered.

We invite you to explore this for yourself.

Betsy has been captured this morning

Call Wendy Ross tell her to stop the captures: cel: 701-495-2095

office 701-623-4466

Call Wendy's boss Herbert Frost 402-661-1520

Call Mary Christy at Congressman Armstrong's office (701) 353-6665

Someone else suggested ND Dept of Tourism 800-435-5663

701-328-2525

They are with Xander, Sidekick and Arrowhead's bands this morni8ng

Announcements:

March 22, 2021

After seeing all these posts and the information that we shared, many of you have asked the same question: "What can we do?"

First and foremost, this is why we created our non-profit group. While captured horses do need homes and we are grateful to the people who do give these horses good homes, we felt that there was a need for people to be advocating for the wild horses that remain in Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

These horses need your help! We CANNOT be the only ones writing letters, emails etc. It is time for everyone to express their concerns regarding the treatment of the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

As we always say, we truly do not have all of the answers either! If you have thoughts or ideas to share – PLEASE DO!

We have contacted our local media and will continue to but there does not seem to be an interest there.

We have tried talking to directly to TRNP and that has not worked either.

We have filed a complaint concerning the treatment of the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park with the Department of the Interior Office of the Inspector General. Complaints can be filed here: <https://www.doioig.gov/site-page/complaint-hotline> Complaints can be filed anonymously as well as with all of your contact information. A summary of our own complaint to the Office of the Inspector General included the following points:

- No horses be removed from TRNP without taking into consideration the possible genetic diversity they can contribute to this herd.
- We would like CSU to either be forced to stop experimenting on our horses OR if further research is truly needed for their “study” it must be done in a way that works in the best interest of the health and wellbeing of the horses. We also want CSU to stop the barbaric practices of testing out new darting methods on our horses.
- We would like to know how the situation with Dr. Jenny Powers and her conflicting role within NPS IACUC and CSU’s TRNP study will be resolved.
- We would like a third party to be appointed to thoroughly research TRNP and its ability to ensure that the wild horses are able to continue to survive and thrive for generations to come. Once the necessary assessments are complete, this third party, working with TRNP management and the tax paying public can put together the management plan that these horses deserve that is now 70 YEARS overdue.

We have sent numerous emails to each of the following people. We encourage you to reach out to them yourselves and express your concerns:

TRNP Park Superintendent Wendy Ross wendy_ross@nps.gov

NPS Regional Director (Wendy’s boss) Herbert Frost Bert_Frost@nps.gov

ND Senator Hoeven’s office Shari_Buck@hoeven.senate.gov and

Monty_Rauser@hoeven.senate.gov

ND Congressman Kelly’s office Mary.Christy@mail.house.gov

ND Senator Cramer’s office Jody_Link@cramer.senate.gov

ND Governor Burgum’s office skhaugen@nd.gov

Alexandra Picavet (Regional NPS office) Alexandra_Picavet@nps.gov

Jace Beehler – Chief of Staff Governor Burgum’s office jabeehler@nd.gov

Sara Otte Coleman socoleman@nd.gov Director of Tourism for North Dakota – be sure to let her office know that you have specifically travelled to North Dakota to see the wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

As we said, we are open to your suggestions! Please feel free to comment below or PM us with your thoughts and suggestions.

Thank you for your support! These horses do need our help and time is of the essence. We expect them to start culling soon and once the horses are culled, there is no chance of bringing them back.

Have you made phone calls today to free Betsy & Shayna and stop the capture of other horses that may be targeted this week?

Secretary of the Interior 202-208-3100 option 3 will get you a nice man who will take your info!

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Announcements:

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Theodore Roosevelt National Park will conduct horse capture operations beginning March 22, 2021 to manage population numbers in the park. Up to ten horses will be captured using chemical immobilization techniques. For the safety of staff and reduced impact to horses, those animals closest to transportation routes will be targeted. Once captured, they will be held at corral facilities where they will receive care, veterinary inspection, basic trailer loading training, and be transferred to private owners through Government Services Administration (GSA) processes. Online GSA auction information will be posted on this site as it becomes available.

The park has received communication portal questions about capture plans, disposition of auction funds, and a wide array of details regarding horse management programming. The announcement above addresses current capture details and plans. We refer interested parties to FAQ 14 for information about disposition of funds from GSA auctions. Sensitive information regarding specific operation details will not be released. Future management plan discussions will be reserved for scoping as part of a public engagement and environmental planning process integral to horse management plan development.

We asked that Chubby and Cloud's yearling Colt Bubbles, remain in the park and supported a petition to keep him in the park. The group that stands alongside the park when they capture the babies made sure Bubbles was the first horse captured in that round up. We offered to help raise money for a management plan for the park, and were once again told no. This past fall, when we started a petition to stop the captures in light of COVID and all of the impacts that has had on the ENTIRE US financially, medically, physically and just about any other way imaginable, was the first time we felt like our voices were heard. Please know that we are being HIGHLY criticized, again, by groups that stand alongside the park claiming to "advocate" for these horses. We have no intentions to ever stop fighting for what is right for these horses. In reality, we are just two people who are visitors to the park and are criticized and attacked personally and financially for wanting what is best for these horses.

Hello and Happy Wednesday to everyone!

We want to thank everyone for their concern and support of Little Adi. Please remember that \$5 from each of our Mares & Foals calendar will be donated to Oreos Animal Rescue. We have also created a couple of digital downloads and 100% of the price you pay will also be given as a donation to Oreos in Adi's name and for her care. You can find these items on the home page of our online store at www.chasinghorses.com.

You can also donate directly to Oreos one of two ways:

You can mail a payment to:

Oreos Animal Rescue
93 21st St. East
Dickinson, ND 58601

Please put: For Admiral on your check

You can also visit their website at: <http://oreosrescue.org/>

From there, you can make a donation through PayPal.

Adi's recovery is what is important. Please send happy thoughts and prayers to this little one – she is NOT home free yet.

The second thing that is important to us is changing things so that other foals do not suffer the same fate as Adi.

We would also like our mares to NOT suffer the same fate as Mare Chubby did when she died due to complications foaling.

It would be GREAT if the park could consult with groups like the Salt River & The Pryor's to adopt programs similar to theirs so that we too can control our population in ways that positively benefit this herd now AND for the future.

This will only happen with an updated management plan.

We deleted a few comments again today. We will not tolerate those of you who only come to this page to "correct" us on things that were said on other pages. We also will not tolerate our loyal followers being harassed by our newfound visitors. Your childish behavior is exhausting! If we have removed your comment and you continue, you will simply be banned and blocked from our page.

This is NOT because we do not respect the opinions of other people. We do when it is done in ways that make sense and are respectful.

For those of you that chose to STILL correct us, here is a timeline for you...

The first photo was taken by my husband at 11:30 am on Monday, August 12th. Adi was just darted. THAT is the moment that her life changed.

She started to feel sleepy from the sedation – slowly watches things probably become weird and distorted.

She wakes up in a horse trailer – she has no idea what that is. She can see her family, but she can't get out of the trailer to run to them. She is then driven down the road – another new thing for her. The stress of the situation starts brewing. She is moved through chutes and into a fenced pasture, where she spends the night alone. She doesn't know any of the other captured horses and she is separated from many of them by a fence (another new thing for her). She spends a cold North Dakota night all alone (temperatures were in the 50's that night and she does not have her winter coat).

Yes, I am sure she was given water – but she has never drunk from a trough. Contrary to popular belief, WILD horses (VERY DIFFERENT THAN THEIR DOMESTIC COUNTERPARTS) depend on their mothers for much of the liquid their system gets. Domestic foals know what a trough is – it is not a foreign thing for them like it is for wild horses. I am sure it doesn't even smell like the water they are used to finding in water holes. No one will ever know how long it was that she may have gone without actually drinking water, so please leave that speculation out of this.

The second photo was taken at 5:40 pm on Tuesday, August 13th. It shows Adi in the pasture – her half brother Alabaster on the other side of the fence. I am sure that not being able to get to him also caused added stress for this little one.

Please do the math – 11:30 am Monday – 5:40 pm Tuesday is about 30 hours. 30 hours into her capture, we see her here, in the pasture.

It was not posted on social media until Thursday at 8:30 pm that she was receiving vet care. It was Saturday before the joyous post about her pulling through her surgery was shared.

We have no idea when she received vet care – when we visited the pens at 6 pm on Wednesday, Copper's filly was out in the girls' pasture by herself. We assumed the other fillies, including Adi, were in the chutes.

She had to have received medical care some time after 6 pm Tuesday or some time on Wednesday.

No matter what, again, do the math – we seem to be talking about more than 30 hours, not less.

There is also no one that knows what Adi's fate would have been IF she stayed in the park. So please stop telling us how she would have suffered immensely from colic and died a slow and painful death. There is truly no one that has that answer or ever will because she was captured and removed from the park.

Once again, this is our opinion and we are entitled to it – this is OUR page. If you want to argue – please find another place to do that. Here we are concerned with the health and well being of Adi and seeing positive changes implemented in TRNP that truly benefit the health and well being of this herd.

This is 2020 Filly Betsy in the holding pens. She is 11 months old and was captured today. She will be auctioned off next week unless you help her! Just because the park has never let them go doesn't mean that can't! They used to round up all of the horses and let the ones they weren't culling back into the park, so why should this be different?

Have you made phone calls for Betsy?

Captures will continue TOMORROW and all week until they capture their 10 horses - NO HORSE AGE 4 MONTHS TO 3 YEARS OLD IS "SAFE"

These horses need your help NOW!!!

Betsy from Arrowhead's band has been captured this morning now they are with Tetons Band 1 more horse was captured from Tetons band as soon as we find out who we will let you know.

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