NDBH answers to FAQs

1. *Why doesn't the park document its own horses instead of depending on volunteers?*
   Tom Tescher, a local rancher, had been documenting the horses since the 1940s. The park has never had enough staff to document just horses, so it depended on him. In the mid-eighties, long before any nonprofits were involved with the horses, Marylu Weber also began to document the horses. When Tom became too frail to actively track the horses, Marylu took over the documentation responsibilities, actively volunteering and sharing information with the park. The park has always depended on volunteers, including techs involved in the CSU contraception study because we know the horses, can identify them, and know what is going on with them. After North Dakota Badlands Horse (NDBH) was created in 2009, someone from our nonprofit has continuously tracked and kept reliable documentation on the horses. The park staff still depends on NDBH and other independent trackers working together to report births, deaths, injuries, escapes, and other events in the park.

2. *Why can't the horses just be left alone?*
   The park is 46,158.57 fenced acres. It is home to bison, elk, pronghorn, mule deer, and white-tail deer along with horses and many small animals. Looking at the topography, it is clear that not every acre of land is growing forage; much of the land is steep clay buttes, dry waterways, and prairie dog towns. The animals produce hundreds of offspring every year. Untreated, 80% of the mares will foal every year. To keep from overgrazing the fragile park ecosystem, the large ungulates are all managed for numbers.

3. *What does NDBH do besides Facebook?*
   Since 2008, NDBH members have had an online presence to educate people about the horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. We were the first to start sharing pictures and stories of the horses online so people worldwide could follow them, appreciate them, and grow to love them as we do. An early blog is" Wild Horses of TRNP."
   NDBH has been a North Dakota-registered nonprofit since December of 2009. We are dedicated to education about, advocacy for, and promotion of the wild horses. NDBH holds the most comprehensive documentation of the horses. Though we do register horses from the park, we do not consider NDBH a breed. Check out our statement called "What makes the TRNP horse a North Dakota Badlands Horse or a Nokota?" also under the LEARN tab.
   We have owners bring North Dakota Badlands Horses to horse expos. where they demonstrate the gentleness and trainability of the horses. Every year, we take part in the Medora Flag Day Parade and host the NDBH Reunion Ride. Often, behind the scenes, we work to promote and advocate for the horses. For two years, NDBH partnered with the park to find homes for removed horses and still helps with horse projects when needed.

4. *Does NDBH agree with everything the park says and does?*
   We do not; when the NPS seemed bent on removing the horses, we worked hard to convince them that the horses needed to stay. Now that the decision has been made to keep the horses in the park and still believing that trust and influence are built through relationships, we continue to work closely with the park for the betterment of the horses.

5. *Did NDBH pay for the GonaCon or anything else used on the mares during any roundup?*
   Our organization did not fund any part of the 2024 roundup, including any helicopter, drugs, or veterinary supplies. Three NPOs were invited to take part in the roundup. NDBH volunteered to help the park with the roundup to witness firsthand how the horses were being handled, correctly identify the horses, and assist with negotiating horses safely through the facility. When the park was using low-stress methods of capture and during the partnership, NDBH did pay for the DNA testing and some other supplies and equipment.

6. *How many horses died as a result of the roundup in October of 2024*
   One filly was observed lame after the roundup, very likely from a kick from another horse. After being checked by the on-site Vet and released, her condition worsened into an infection, and she was put down to prevent further suffering. The park posted a synopsis of the roundup, reporting which horses were captured, treated, collared, or sustained injuries. No horses were injured from being rounded up with the helicopter.

7. *Why is it taking so long to use the data collected from the 2024 roundup for current and future management?*
   Both blood and hair were collected at the roundup; both need to be processed and analyzed by outside sources before plans are developed. This process takes many months.

8. *How long do the mares have to wear the ugly collars? Aren't they dangerous and uncomfortable?*
   The collars provide valuable information concerning herd movement, land use, and forage. The batteries will give out in 2-2 1/2 years, but the collars can also be dropped remotely if need be. Animal collars have been researched and shown not to cause discomfort or injury to the horses. The bison and elk have also worn collars for years. The horses are checked regularly by staff and volunteers for any issues with collars or other problems.