

# WILD WORD

## Wild Horse Education Newsletter, Fall 2025

### Devil's Garden

With less than two weeks' notice, the United States Forest Service (USFS) in California began a roundup... we filed litigation.

The roundup ended early and now we await the raw data from a census flight (to occur in less than two weeks) and the Order from the court to determine what happens next.

We have every reason to believe there will be a release of wild horses back to the range. [See more HERE.](#)

### Antelope Complex and Triple B Complex

On the day our final brief was due in the [lawsuit filed in 2023](#), BLM Nevada released the final version on a [new plan](#) for these two massive complexes. We expected a maneuver like this and covered the potential in our briefs.

We will not stop fighting to gain justice for two of our nations last large herds.

We now await the ruling of the court.



Photo: LLeigh

### From our founder's desk

This last month has been a very busy one for those of us at WHE. On a daily basis we toggle from investigative work, field observation through multiple lawsuits that span 6 different states. In a single day we can provide documentation and edits on numerous active lawsuits and give input on desperately needed legislative change. The times we live in simply require this kind of “move on a dime” action and hyper vigilance from our team.

***“Hope is what enables us to keep going in the face of adversity. It is what we desire to happen, but we must be prepared to work hard to make it so,”*** is a quote from [Dr. Jane Goodall](#) who passed on from her extraordinary life on October 1, 2025.

Things may seem daunting, but there is reason for Hope. The will to work hard has not been extinguished.

*Onward - Laura Leigh, Founder of WHE*

## FEATURE STORY

### From Range to Holding: a look at “emergency” (and Strangles hits a holding facility)

*The dictionary defines an emergency as: a serious, unexpected, and often dangerous situation requiring immediate action.*

*But when an event occurs almost annually, occurs under specific circumstances that are both preventable and compounded by other actions knowingly undertaken, is it an emergency or severe and unacceptable neglect and abuse?*

**The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) completed a bait trap operation in the Maverick-Medicine HMA (Triple B Complex) and Wood Hills area outside the Spruce-Pequop HMA (Antelope Complex).**

On the “emergency gather” page BLM notes: “This ongoing drought-induced issue recurs annually due to the lack of alternative water sources on public lands.” They recognize this is an expected event and they know actions they have taken for livestock, mining and even wildlife, will make it worse each year. They have had thirty years to fix this water source and have increased the pressure on it year-after-year approving mining expansion and fencing for livestock.

BLM likes to use pictures of this area when they claim they have to roundup all of the HMAs in the Triple B Complex.

*WHE has active litigation to speak for these wild ones as BLM approved another mine expansion that will expand the footprint to 30% of the Triple B HMA. This increases the pressure on Maverick-Medicine to the north. BLM also approved new fencing and waters for livestock to offset some of the impact of the mine. BLM refused to even entertain the idea of doing any mitigation for the loss of resources and impacts to neighboring areas as the horses are forced to move. You can see more on the “emergency” and litigation update [HERE](#).*

Beginning August 8th, BLM removed 210 wild horses from Maverick-Medicine and Wood Hills area (outside of Spruce-Pequop), 11 died. One of the deaths was a foal that dropped dead in holding of “unknown causes.” BLM allowed no observation of trapping or at the temporary corrals.

We filed Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. A standard practice post-roundup for the WHE team.

In typical BLM fashion, records are incomplete. They note causes of death after shipping to the facility, but not numbers. We are following up.

They note things like old age, poor body condition and Strangles/pneumonia.

(Continued on page 6)



## Government Shutdown

What does a government shutdown mean for wild horses and burros?

- Captive horses and burros will continue to be fed.
- Agencies will continue to release draft plans and finalize plans.
- Comment and Appeal periods and deadlines do not stop.

The public is concerned about wild horses and burros in holding, rightfully so. During a shutdown they will continue to be fed. Facilities will close to the public due to lack of staffing.

Draft plans for public comment will not stop as notification becomes a nightmare. Our team will continue to check the [Federal Register](#) and notify you if we see something important.

Our team is also continuing to file briefs in active Appeals.

The [new roundup schedule](#) will be delayed. This does not mean removals will cease. Emergency removals or operations that secured funding prior to the shutdown, like [Centennial](#), will move forward.

## Shutdown Impact on Litigation

The Federal Court system has stated they have funding available through October 17. If the shutdown goes longer, criminal cases will proceed but others could face delays.

We can also continue to file, even if the shutdown impacts the court. This way we can be on file before the roundup schedule hits.

## Pancake Complex (Nevada)

After our ground-breaking ruling that kicked back the roundup plan and found BLM illegally delayed creating an actual management plan (Herd Management Area Plan, HMAP) in early 2024, BLM was given 1 year to create a plan.

Instead of creating a management plan, they just created a roundup plan with a new name.

We have reason to believe BLM is prioritizing a removal in this area for winter. In other words, as soon as funding is available we expect to see Pancake on the schedule.

We are jumping this case up the Federal District Court within the next few days.



## Spotlight: Carter Reservoir

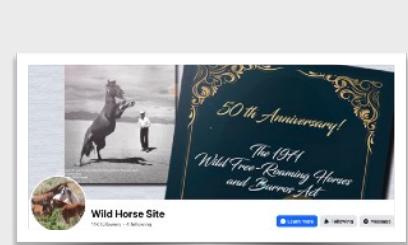
The Carter Reservoir mustangs carry ancient Spanish-Iberian lineage and display that genetic coding in their unique primitive coloration.

The over 300,000 acre New Years Lake Herd Area (HA) was gutted down to the existing 23,000 acre boundary for Carter almost immediately after the 1971 law to protect wild horses was codified. No existing data-based review can be found that demonstrates anything beyond agreements and conveniences for the acreage loss. BLM set the Appropriate Management Level (AML), the number BLM says can be on the range is only 25-35 wild horses.

BLM lumped Carter in with the last two herds (Buckhorn and Coppersmith) in the area not hit with mass removals in the last 3 years together in an approved roundup plan.

Wild Horse Education (WHE), Carter Reservoir Mustangs Inc. (CRMI) and individual members, began the legal battle to protect this herd and have exhausted all administrative remedies. This is a requirement prior to going filing in federal civil courts.

We are completing our opening briefs this week and will jump this case into Federal Court soon.



## Facebook Hack

Many of you are aware that Wild Horse Education has seemed to disappear off of Facebook. Our page is still there, but it was hacked.

We are still trying to get Facebook to return our property. Facebook has become a vital outreach and fundraising tool for our organization and every organization that exists today.

Until we get our page back we are using a page called "Wild Horse Site" that belongs to our volunteer Colette Kaluza.

**If you use Facebook please follow the page and help us continue to get our message out.**

**Click here to go to Facebook.**

## Online Shopping

If you are starting your holiday shopping you can also help WHE!



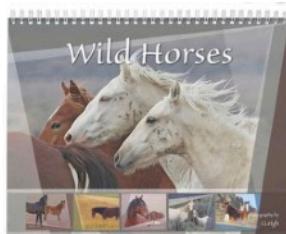
iGive is a free service that supports nonprofits like Wild Horse Education. iGive Members generate donations by shopping online at over 2,400 *participating stores*.

**Just click here to register and help WHE while you shop! For all new members that register, WHE will get a \$5. bonus!**

## WHE Storefront



Wyoming Wild Horses Calendar  
\$25.28 \$34.60 Comp. value



Wild Horses of the West Calendar  
\$25.56 \$34.95 Comp. value



Wild Horses (a calendar) Calendar  
\$25.56 \$34.95 Comp. value



Wild Horses, calendar  
\$25.56 \$34.95 Comp. value

We have calendars and more on our online store on Zazzle. 100% of the proceeds of sales from the store go to support our field teams. From roundup documentation to checking on herd and range health, your purchase helps us continue to gain up-to-the-minute information we use for litigation, educating Congress and reporting to the public.

You can save 20% on select items on Zazzle by clicking [HERE](#) with the code: SEASONSTART

## Freedom and Justice Shirts



Mercy, Equity, Compassion, Freedom and Justice.

100% of the proceeds from the sale of our t-shirts and sweatshirts supports the fight to protect and preserve our precious wild ones.

Shirts are made in the U.S.A. of high quality cotton and sold on Bonfire.

You can wear the mission message and support the work by ordering a shirt [HERE](#).

## Continued from page 2: From Range to Holding: a look at “emergency”...

The 199 surviving captive wild horses were sent to Palomino Valley Center (PVC) north of Reno.

Even though our FOIA specifically requested shipping records, vet record and various other requests for very specific information, we received a very general “facility statement.”

Although no numbers of deaths were provided, we know deaths occurred. “Major sources of mortality 1. Old age. 2. poor body condition 3. Strangles/pneumonia.” Another note states: “Strangles has infected 2025 colt crop.”

Strangles is a highly transmissible and potentially severe illness in horses. This disease is so transmissible that simply walking through infected soil and then going home to your own horses can spread the disease. Strangles takes more than a couple of months to clear a population in a facility.

Facilities that have the presence of Strangles need to notify the public and close for quarantine. Shipping more wild horses in or out of such a facility would be irresponsible.

BLM did not notify the public after the roundup nor close the facility. BLM provided no shipping receipts so we could see if they shipped out horses.

The only reason we know is that we took the time to file a FOIA.

Disease in holding facilities is a long-standing problem. Laxity in biosecurity, rushing to ship horses out to make room for new ones, delayed vaccination, all contribute to the lack of improvement. (See more HERE on disease in facilities)

A lack of record keeping and delays in entering information into the system is a rampant problem during roundups and in holding facilities. (4-part Spotlight series on facilities HERE)

Our team is following up on the deaths at PVC and Strangles.

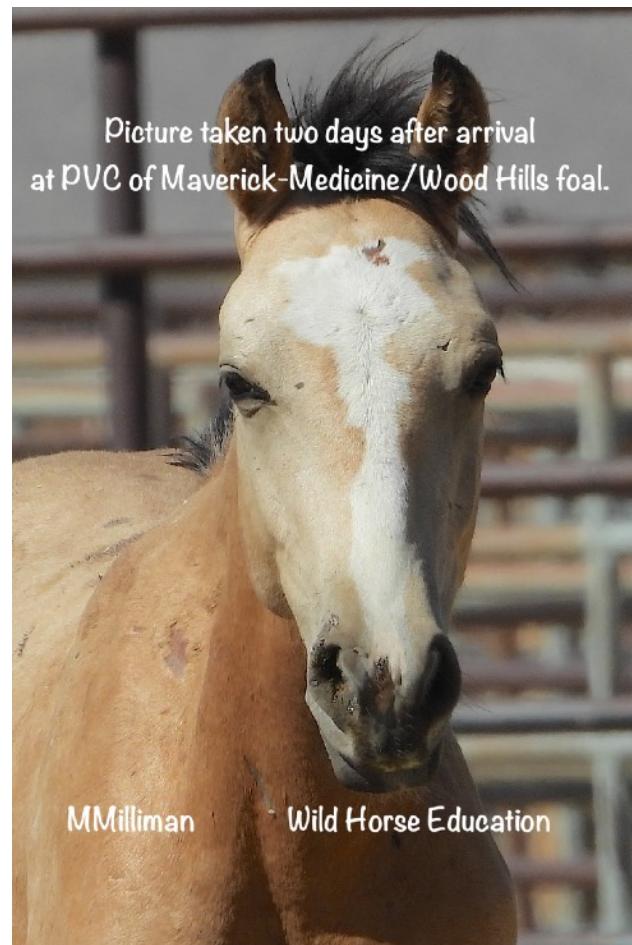
The work to protect wild horses and burros does not end after capture.

## Major sources of mortality

1. Old age

2. poor body condition

3. Strangles/pneumonia  
From FOIA



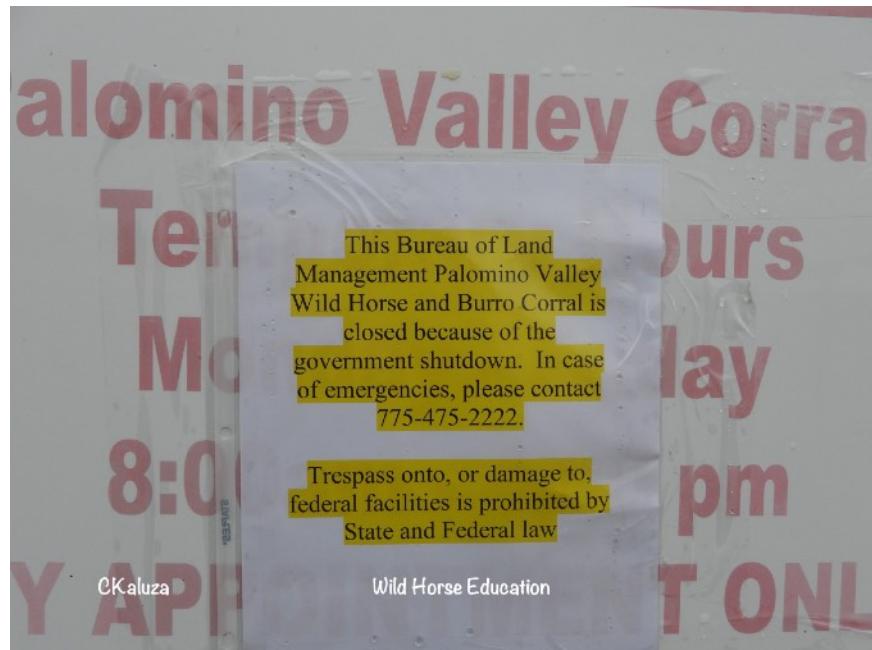
## Photos taken October 2, Palomino Valley Center



A double rainbow seemingly ending where the captive wild horses are inside a facility that is mostly empty



The only foal seen. See the ears? Did foals with Stangles die or were they shipped? We cannot see the internal pens and are following up on the incomplete FOIA.





LLeigh

Wild Horse Education

**Our team is busy again this week working to finalize and file new briefing to be ready when the government gains funding and reopens, to get a head start on keeping our wild ones free on the range and free from the abuses of a system that has repeatedly failed to protect and preserve them.**

**Thank you for joining us on the journey. A fight worth fighting.**

**WildHorseEducation.org**