

Institute of Range and American Mustang's Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary

Overview:

It has been eighteen years since Dayton O. Hyde first saw masses of wild horses standing in boredom in government-sponsored feedlots, and persuaded Congress and the Bureau of Land Management to let him put together a large tract of quality horse range and set these wild horses free. He left his ranch in Oregon to pursue that dream and with an abundance of enthusiasm and a dearth of fiscal resources managed to set up, in the Black Hills of South Dakota, a private non-profit sanctuary for America's unadoptable wild horses.

In a real sense, the hundreds of wild horses that make their home on the Sanctuary are in partnership with nature to save this piece of time and space. The time is history in the raw, not only of man, whose pre-historic flint mines still dot the hills, but pioneers who marked their passing on towering cliffs. The space is represented by thousand foot high rock formations along the Cheyenne River that displays a geological panorama painted 65 million years ago when the Earth was truly young. The Sanctuary is a veritable wilderness unblemished by roads, power lines, fences, nightlights or most especially humankind.

There is a tremendous need to preserve land such as this-a private land oasis- where human access can be regulated. Here, at last, is a valuable piece of wildlife habitat just for the animals, free from disturbance, as varied an ecosystem as one can find in America, a unique meld of eastern and western birds, where predator and prey can live in a balance, each nurturing the other, as the wondrous cycle of life turns without man's interference, where prairie flowers and grasses, some exceedingly rare, bloom untouched by human error.

In the years following the first truck loads of three hundred unadoptable wild mares that were sent to South Dakota, many others of joined the herd. Most of the newcomers were BLM wild horses that had failed to adjust to their newly adopted homes and were transported by their owners to be turned loose to run free once again. A small herd of original Spanish Mustangs were relocated due to drought on their home range in Wyoming in 2002 and were given a permanent home on the Sanctuary. In 2003, twenty-nine wild mares and foals from the Anza Borrego State Park were relocated to the Sanctuary due to conditions of severe drought in the home they had had for over fifty years in Coyote Canyon.

November 2004 signaled another challenge to wild horses in overcrowded federal managed ranges, as the original law that protected wild horses from being sent to slaughter since the early seventies was amended by the Burns Amendment. The new ruling, still being fought over in the courts, stated that any wild horse already in the adoption program over ten years of age having been rejected at three adoptions sites, could be placed in other situations.

Early 2005 news of a situation involving a group of wild horses from 252 which had been recently rounded up from their home ranges in Nevada and sent to a South Dakota Indian Reservation to be part of a Youth Program, ended up at slaughter plan in the Midwest. When the news reached the government officials and Ford Motor Company of the location of these wild horses, the slaughter was temporarily stopped. After hearing of the situation, the staff at the Sanctuary contacted the officials and offered to give a permanent home to the remaining 52 wild horses that were on the trucks awaiting slaughter. The first shipment of geldings from the group of 52 arrived at the Sanctuary May 17, 2005. The second shipment of mostly wild mares arrived in June 2005.

Other situations across the country, lead to 29 wild geldings being sent to the Sanctuary from an overcrowded rescue organization in California, these wild horses were part of the largest animal abuse case in the history of wild horses and had been in captivity for over two years awaiting a permanent home.

Late August 2005, 6 wild mares and geldings removed from Forrest Service ranges in New Mexico were relocated to the Sanctuary. These newly relocated wild horses have now raised the wild horse population that make their home on the Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary to over 500 head.

With the introduction of wild geldings to the wild mare bands created a new herd order and a need for more range, more sources of feed and water, and a strengthening of the boundary fences.

Goals and Needs:

The Institute of Range and the American Mustang (IRAM) founded in 1988, is a 501 © 3 non-profit registered in the state of South Dakota. Grants, donations, and a summer tourism program support IRAM. The goals of the organization are as follows:

Animal Welfare: To create and maintain a sanctuary for America's unadoptable wild horses providing them with a safe and well-managed environment. To provide a home for the incoming unadoptable wild horses that are sent to Sanctuary on a yearly basis from different rescue operations in an attempt to set free horses that are not suitable for backyard companions. Fences, gates and corrals are always in need of repair and upkeep to keep the horses secure and on the property. Providing enough hay for the horses makes it necessary to raise and purchase hay in order to produce enough volume to feed the animals over the winter. The Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary has given the wild horses that make their home there ten thousand years of freedom.

After five years of severe drought and wild fires in South Dakota, IRAM has had to purchase over 1000 tons of winter hay for the horses. Purchasing additional winter feed in the form of hay and supplements is always needed. In a continuing effort to help the Sanctuary become self-sufficient, a down payment was put on an adjoining irrigated ranch. This accomplishes two

things; it will assure the horses a source of top quality hay in the future and will protect the wilderness sanctity of the Sanctuary by staving off the development of subdivisions on our borders.

The Sanctuary is running at full capacity with over five hundred wild horses. At this time we have as many horses as the range can handle. Sadly, we have to turn down hundreds of wild horses that need a home every month. These are wild horses on state and federal ranges that need to be relocated to a permanent sanctuary. In the future we need more land adjacent to the Sanctuary for more horses.

Human Services: To create an organization, which will aid and assist in community development. IRAM's Volunteer Program is action-oriented and allows for community involvement by enlisting the cooperation and support of business and individuals. Volunteers have been vital to the success of the Sanctuary since its early days. People from all walks of life have come to lend a hand in building and repairing fences and corrals, planting and creating wildlife habitat and feeding areas, developing and maintaining the Nature Trail and assisting in the Visitor's Center. Their busy hands and minds help to stretch the dollars to keep the Sanctuary operating. Now thanks, to the financial assistance from The Kind World Foundation there is a fully functioning two-bedroom cabin to house volunteers during their stay.

As the volunteer program grows, additional housing is needed to accommodate the many that want to come and help.

Environmental Concerns: To develop conservation programs to improve wildlife habitat and range conditions. IRAM's theories of land management include diversified land use, preservation, and restoration of land and waterways back to a natural state of balancing the ecosystem.

One example of effective wildlife management is to keep sections of land isolated in order to bring back native plants and animals to the area. The public is given access to only 10% of the Sanctuary's land by way of a guided bus tour. The rest of the land remains untouched in its natural state, though observable from a distance.

Another management principle uses grazing to create plant and wildlife diversity and to help control the fire potential of the prairie grasses. An effort to control erosion by water run-off is implemented by placing stopgaps and gravel in strategic locations to slow or divert the water. The ranch roads are maintained by shaping and adding gravel with heavy equipment to slow water runoff and soil erosion. In an effort to protect the range, areas of high use are seeded with native grasses; this provides grazing for the horses and protects the fragile soil.

The Nature Trail and Wildlife Plantings along the Cheyenne River are demonstration areas for IRAM's program to balance the ecosystem by creating wildlife habitat. The Bluebird Trail, Bat Conservation area and Woodduck House Project along the Nature Trail and throughout the Sanctuary

help to create an environment to encourage natural control of the insects and grasshoppers by the bats, ducks and bluebirds.

Education: To educate the public regarding the evolution of the wild horse, and its contribution to the White and Native American destinies. To provide an educational showcase where young and old can see that it is all right to care for animals and be a part of that dream of doing something greater than one self. Visitors can learn about caring for the land and the wildlife that make their home on the Sanctuary.

The Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary Wild Mustang Sponsorship Program was established in 1995 and is a vital communication tool to help teach and promote animal welfare, environmental education and wildlife habitat. Each participant in the sponsorship program receives information on the Sanctuary's wild horse program and quarterly updates to keep him or her informed. This valuable program has helped to educate the public about wild horses and their herd management.

The Summer Internship Program funded by the Helen Close Charitable Foundation was started in the summer of 1998, to give students from the University of Nevada in Reno an opportunity to study the wild horses and other plant and wildlife found at the Sanctuary. Funds from this Foundation have provided for renovation of an existing bunkhouse to provide quarters for the intern students and funding for environmental projects for the students and the wildlife.

Each year thousands of people come to see the wild horse running free, learn about the history of the Native Americans and the early pioneers that have lived on the land, visit the ancient petroglyphs and be a part of a true wilderness experience.

As with any non-profit IRAM is always in need of financial assistance with the many programs necessary to keep the Sanctuary programs operations and provide a quality of life for the horses. As need for additional accommodations for staff and volunteers, more tour buses, additional range and water sources grows each year more, ranch road maintenance, additional winter feed and the need for more signage to direct the visitors to the Tourist Center, the economic needs IRAM are also growing. If your foundation could help us financially with any of the following projects, we would be greatly appreciate your assistance. Thank-you.

GOALS/NEEDS	ACTIVITIES	2005	BUDGET
Environmental Concerns	Development/ maintenance of Nature Trail		
	Wildlife Plantings Bluebird/Woodduck/		
	Bat Conservation Project		\$5000
	Erosion Control		\$10,000
Animal Welfare	Purchasing winter hay,		
	Feed, minerals and salt		\$90,000
	Veterinarian services /supplies		\$8500
	Maintenance and repair of fences and corrals		\$5000
Irrigated Ranch Purchase	quarterly payments		\$20,000
Human Services	Volunteer supplies/ material to build or repair barns /sheds		
	Visitor Center /Bunkhouse		\$10,000
	Building two new RV pads		
	Purchase of two campers		\$25,000
Construction of three new cabins to house volunteers			\$195,000
Two computer systems with printers			\$7,000
Educational Program	Brochures/ Lecture material		\$15,000
Wild Mustang Sponsorship Kit Program			
Annual Printing and Distribution Expenses of Quarterly Newsletters and Sponsorship Kits			\$50,000
Kiosk construction and Displays			\$5000
Summer Tourism Program	Fuel/Maintenance/Insurance for the tour buses		\$45,000
3 Additional vehicles to transport visitors			\$90,000

