



Wild Horse Observers Association (WHOA)
A public 501 c3 non-profit corporation

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PRESS RELEASE:

PLACITANS WANT THE WILD HORSES But Task Force and Committee Seek to Determine Their Fate

Placitans overwhelmingly want the wild horses to stay by multiple polls through time since 2002. They have formed a group called Wild Horse Observers Association, passed the NM Wild Horse Protection Act, and upheld this law in court.

Their government at all levels (local to federal) has used tax dollars to work hard against the people in court and at legislature, as well as arrested people for rescuing foals. So far, the wild horses are winning! However, WHOA has uncovered the next likely ploy to remove Placitas Horses under color of law.

This Thursday, October 4th, the Sandoval County Commission has asked New Mexico First to present suggested solutions regarding the Placitas “free roaming horses”. The Commission and New Mexico First are also promoting an online “survey” that is hosted on the County website.

The Sandoval County Commission and the New Mexico First Task Force and their “survey” paint a negative picture of the amazing wild horses in our community, only describing them as an “Issue” and referring to them deprecatingly as “free roaming horses”, rather than the legally correct “wild horses”. While bemoaning the lack of progress in implementing solutions, such as population management through contraception, the Sandoval County Commission and New Mexico First suggest a multi-jurisdictional community board dominated by the very government agencies which have literally blocked proactive population management via contraception and then followed up with illegal round ups and auctions. The multi-jurisdictional entities being proposed for the community board have also excluded pro-wild horse pueblos such as the Pueblo of San Felipe and have excluded the leading wild horse legal advocacy group in the State, which is WHOA.

The New Mexico First “survey” is both stilted and unscientific. Stilted in that it only offers a single option (other than an open ended what else question) and then only offers one means for funding the single option. This single option of a multi-jurisdictional board dominated by the BLM and NMLB negates the possibility of ***simple solution of requesting all entities to follow the current law (which both the BLM and NMLB have been breaking and fighting and losing in court) combined with passing the Wild Horse Darting Ordinance for Sandoval County which includes funding through a NM Wild Horse License Plate. (A DRAFT of this Ordinance is available upon request and is also in the hands of the Sandoval County Attorney who requested it in 2018).***

Already behind the scenes a “multi-jurisdictional team” called the Placitas Recreation Steering Committee has been meeting at the BLM to determine the fate of the Placitas BLM and thereby that of the wild horses, and to apparently exclude them from the 5000 acres of BLM lands, but to rather allow shooting ranges, wildlife hunting, and ATV’s instead, with a trail or two for equestrian riding and hiking. This according to the meeting minutes obtained from the BLM by FOIA. This group is led by the president of Las Placitas Association which previously condoned illegally kicking the Placitas Wild horses out of 560 acres of public lands of the Albuquerque Open Space (AOS) in Placitas, (possibly designated recently as BLM land?) and fencing them out, thereby blocking their route to and from the BLM lands (3000 acres) on the north side of Placitas. Hence not even providing a trail between their roaming areas and as a result pushing the wild horses into the roads.

Additional Background Information:

New Mexico First

- Four years ago, Placitans footed the \$23,000 cost for the previous New Mexico First “Task Force”, which tried to prohibit an open record via legal video, as well as refused to include pro-wild horse environmental information from WHOA. And yet, to this day, Placitans continue to be blocked from utilizing contraceptives to humanely manage the wild horses without disrupting their families or their location throughout Eastern Placitas, where they legally roam on both private and governmental lands, as well as federal public lands of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), just as all the State’s other wildlife legally roam.
- Instead of allowing WHOA or PAR to control the wild horse population with scientifically and field proven contraception, they are working to instead remove the majority of the wild horses and place “some wild horses” in a “sanctuary” which would only provide enough forage for one family band of horses (Wild horses need 75 to 100 acres/horse). Hence asking Placitans to pay for a glorified big corral with monthly feed bills versus free roaming wildlife in the beautiful foot hills of the Rocky Mountain wildlife corridor. In such a sanctuary situation the males would be gelded to prevent too much fighting.
- In the previous survey by New Mexico First, Placitans voted against “relocating some of the horses” and they voted against “restricting horses to welcoming areas of Placitas”.
- New Mexico First is a political steering committee itself, with New Mexico’s two Senators on its board at all times. In this case, these two Senators have been funneling money, \$86 Million just this year, into Livestock facilities at the Mexican Border. This time through the Core of Engineers for “flood control” in the desert. Horse slaughter is illegal in the U.S. but legal over the border. Again, \$86 Million is more than the entire federal Wild Horse and Burro Budget.

Recreation Steering Committee

Importantly, this “Recreation Steering Committee” work has largely been in the dark, away from the community and appears to have occurred without the appropriate and legal government-to-government involvement of the local Pueblos to the extent as legally required. In lieu, Sandy Johnson of the “Recreation Steering Committee” has “Brought up the issue of cultural sites and said we could reduce workload by using existing BLM cultural surveys during the planning/NEPA process for proposed actions.” This is among other apparent legal issues regarding our NM State’s Wild Horses.

- In WHOA’s Appellate Court win, there were a few people who intervened in the court against WHOA and the wild horses. One of these intervenors is a Placitas Attorney who was previously disbarred (for some years) for embezzlement by the NM Supreme Court in 2001, after which he embezzled for a second time (and got off the second time apparently due to health issues). Another one of the intervenors was caught on video with this same attorney fencing wildlife away from water on the Albuquerque Open Space in July of 20__, which was a pretty hot month in New Mexico. And yet another one of these few intervenors against the Wild Horses of Placitas is on the “Recreation Steering Committee”. These are the Placitans which New Mexico First has accepted environmental data from.
- The intervenor currently on this “Recreation Steering Committee” was also caught trespassing on federal trust lands of a local Pueblo, as well as on a local Ranch; who when caught, falsely impersonated/implicated WHOA (according to the ranch in a communication with the Pueblo).
- The SADLH Land Grant Radio Host also on this “Recreation Steering Committee” is communicating with the Pro-Horse Slaughter Pueblo, however, behind the scenes, for physical access to the “Recreational Area”, per Steering Committee Meeting minutes which credit him as follows: “Mentioned possible public access through the vineyard that he overheard during a previous, unrelated meeting.” Note: Lack of transparency, what meeting, with whom?

- No apparent open or secret communication with the Pro-Wild Horse Pueblo which has a valid aboriginal claim to these BLM acres, unlike the SADLH Land Grant which does not, and unlike the other Pro-Horse Slaughter Pueblo which also does not. This Pro-Wild Horse Pueblo has stated in writing that the Wild Horses could roam there and Placitans could have access. This same Pueblo rescued 16 wild horses from an auction house after the Pro-Horse Slaughter Pueblo had sent them to auction. This Pro-Wild Horse Pueblo, unlike this Steering Committee calls the horses “Wild Horses” not trespass horses or free roaming horses. They have always called them wild horses, though the NMLB continuously tried to get them to call them livestock and even misspoke and stated that they had.
- An Out-of-State Developer, whose 40 acre subdivision is contiguous with the BLM and is also a member of the “Recreation Steering Committee”, has repeatedly posited getting funding for fencing her private property to keep out “trespass horses”, a term which is legally diminishing and dangerous to wild horses. The NMLB puts “trespass horses” up for bid at public auction to the highest bidder.
- A Placitan who is a New Mexico Livestock Board (NMLB) Veterinarian, Dr. Alexandra Eckhoff, has presided over at least one illegal NMLB round up in 2016 after WHOA’s winning appellate court decision in 2015. (and is a likely addition to the multi-jurisdictional board)
- The BLM brags that in 1971 there were only 25,000 federally wild horses in the U.S., but that since then they have placed 245,000 horses into homes. TRUE enough, they have intentionally glutted the horse industry at less than kill buyer prices, thereby ruining the market. The BLM has refused to manage the wild horses ON THE RANGE utilizing science/contraception or natural predators, as per the National Academy of Sciences, and instead has treated them as a PUPPY MILL in an effort to make them appear unmanageable. They have recently worked to have them slaughtered over the borders against science and the will of the people. The federal government still spends more money killing their natural predators than they spend on the entire Wild Horse and Burro budget.

New Mexico First “survey”:

2018 Free Roaming Horses of Placitas

1. **Would you support the establishment of a “multidisciplinary board” comprised of community members and government officials to develop a comprehensive, long-term plan to address the issue of free roaming horses in Placitas? The board would have bylaws, follow the Open Meetings Act, and serve as the oversight body for devised plans.** Yes No
2. **Since costs will be associated with solutions, would you support a horse-specific Placitas Assessment? (For homeowners, this annual assessment would not exceed \$100, and for property owners who own only land, it would not exceed \$50.) These funds would be placed into a segregated account with the county, which would serve as fiscal agent to the multidisciplinary board. The board members themselves would not be paid; instead the funds from this assessment would support solutions for the horses such as contraception, land and/or operations of a sanctuary, fencing or other devised plans from the board.** Yes No Maybe (please explain) _____
3. **If you answered “No” to numbers 1 or 2, what do you suggest should happen to the horses?** _____
4. **Additional comments** _____

Where do you live? I live in Placitas. I do not live in Placitas but own property there. I do not live in Placitas but reside in Sandoval County. Other

Note: The only two scientific polls have been administered, both by The Wild Horse Observers Association (WHOA), which also passed laws in 2007 to protect these horses, Spanish or not. These polls show that Placitans overwhelmingly want the wild horses to remain in Placitas and also on the BLM lands, and also show that they overwhelmingly do not want a highway through the BLM lands.

The Wild Horse Observers Association (WHOA) is an environmental non-profit which works both locally and nationally to protect wild horses and their habitat which includes their natural predators.

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