



Wildlife Viewing



Handicap Accessible
Tables & Grills



1 Group Shelter



Handicap Accessible
Rest Rooms



Hiking Trails

Wild Horse State Park



Welcome to Wild Horse State Park

Only twenty minutes north of Albuquerque and thirty minutes south of Santa Fe is Wild Horse State Park. This high desert landscape features wide open mesas, divided by steep arroyos, pockmarked by green Juniper and Pinon trees, and covered by prickly pear cactus, cholla cactus, New Mexico feathergrass, black gama grass, and hairy gama grass. On display is full panorama of spectacular views of Cabezon Peak, the green Rio Grande Valley, the Jemez Mountains, Sandia Mountain, and the beautiful mesas on the Santa Ana Pueblo. The sunsets are often breath-taking, as the sun sets behind Cabezon Peak, against a sky painted with a prism of blues, purples, reds and pinks.

And we have not even started to talk about the main attraction: Wild Horses. Several herds have long inhabited this beautiful landscape, bringing both wonderment and joy to the local residents and visitors. The Wild Horses are constantly on the move, ranging across the flat mesas and steep arroyos, so to view them expect to do some hiking.

You may also encounter coyotes, rattlesnakes, bull snakes, tarantulas, as well as jack and other varieties of rabbits .

Our Wild Horse Herd

The first horse re-introduced to the wild in the Americas may have been an escaped chestnut mare belonging to one of Cortez' Conquistadors, in 1519.

In 1540, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado and his Expedition rode their Spanish horses into the Rio Grande Valley near the current site of the Coronado State Park,

across the river from the Wild Horse State Park.

In 1598, Don Juan des Onate lost approximately 900 horses in what would become New Mexico, which is the first recorded band of horses to run free in the present day United States.

Are the wild horses in Wild Horse State Park descendents of these Spanish horses, which are now

extinct in Spain? When the DNA from the wild horse herd near Placitas were tested, the results confirmed the Spanish heritage of many of the Wild Horse State Park's horses,

"Five of the horses were tested by the University of Kentucky and deemed 50 to 60 percent Spanish" - *Sandoval County Signpost, Oct 2004*

The Horse in America

“Are wild horses truly “wild,” as an indigenous species in North America, or are they “feral”? Should “modern horses, *Equus caballus*...” be considered native wildlife?”

“The key element in describing an animal as a native species is (1) where it originated; and (2) whether or not it co-evolved with its habitat.” Clearly, *E. caballus* did both, here in North America.”

“The genus *Equus*, which includes modern horses, zebras, and asses, is the only surviving genus in a once diverse family of horses that included 27 genera. The precise date of origin for the genus *Equus* is unknown, but evidence documents the dispersal of *Equus* from North America to Eurasia approximately 2-3 million years ago and a possible origin at about 3.4-3.9 million years ago. Following this original emigration, several extinctions occurred in North America, with additional migrations to Asia (presumably across the Bering Land Bridge), and return migrations back to North America, over time. The last North American extinction occurred between 13,000 and 11,000 years ago. Had it not

been for previous westward migration, over the land bridge, into northwestern Russia (Siberia) and Asia, the horse would have faced complete extinction. However, *Equus* survived and spread to all continents of the globe, except Australia and Antarctica.”

“In 1493, on Columbus’ second voyage to the Americas, Spanish horses, representing *E. caballus*, were brought back to North America, first in the Virgin Islands, and, in 1519, they were reintroduced on the continent, in modern-day Mexico, from where they radiated throughout the American Great Plains, after escape from their owners.”

“The relatively new (27-year-old) field of molecular biology, using mitochondrial-DNA analysis, has recently found that the modern or caballine horse, *E. caballus*, is genetically equivalent to *E. lambei*, a horse, according to fossil records, that represented the most recent *Equus* species in North America prior to extinction. Not only is *E. caballus* genetically equivalent to *E. lambei*, but no evidence exists for the origin of *E. caballus* anywhere except North America.”

Excerpted from “Wild Horses as Native North American Wildlife”, by Jay F. Kirkpatrick, Ph.D. and Patricia M. Fazio, Ph.D

Activities

Inside the park

On site activities include **hiking** and **mountain biking** on designated trails which wind their way through the many mesas and arroyos. Within as short hike visitors can enjoy the **wildlife viewing**, **bird watching**, and **nature photography**. Local conservation groups regularly schedule educational **nature walks**.

Horseback riding probably affords the best opportunity to observe the wild horses as they move across the State Park. Vehicle access is restricted to existing roads.

Backpacking and **primitive camping** are allowed within the interior of the park

Outside the park

in the immediate surrounding communities, there are a wide variety of activities. The **Coronado State Monument** across the Rio Grande contains

the ancient ruins of Pueblo Kuaua, a reconstructed kiva, and a museum that contains well-preserved murals from the original excavated kiva, as well as artifacts from the period of the Coronado expedition.

The **Cibola National Forest** has several access points from NM165, including the 10K Loop Trail near Placitas (which is ideal for running and mountain biking), Tunnel Springs, Piedra Lisa Trail, Sandia Man Cave (25,000 years old, late-Ice Age home), and the Las Huertas Picnic Area.

The Wild Horse State Park is bordered by the **Pueblos of Santa Ana and San Felipe**. Santa Ana Pueblo has developed a complex with two golf courses, Santa Ana Star Casino, and the Tamaya Resort. San Felipe Pueblo has their Hollywood Casino and Racetrack.

The park is located along Historic Route 66, so visit the **Town of Bernalillo**’s main street (Camino Del Pueblo), as well as its car museum.

New Mexico Wild Horse State Park

A Hidden Tourism Treasure of New Mexico

Wild Horse Tourism Brings Rural Economic Development

The State of New Mexico has a natural and cultural resource that can be used to increase tourism and revenue for the State. A partnership between the State, the Forest Service, and the BLM to protect, manage and promote the State's remaining wild horse herds as a national legacy with great cultural significance would increase tourism revenues in and around the Wild Horse Territories of New Mexico.

As an example of successful Wild Horse Tourism: The Wild Horse herds in Chincoteague, VA and Assateague, MD, which are maintained at 150 heads each, bring in several hundreds of thousands of direct tourism dollars and the parks collect entrance fees and donations that easily cover the costs of herd management.



Wild Horse Mosaic by Laura Robbins



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Placitas
REALTY



Proposed NM Wild Horse Tourism Model



A proposed wild horse tourism model for New Mexico might include a Spanish Colonial National Horseshow, which could follow a variety of Wild Horse Festivals staggered across the year and state, each highlighting a different Wild Horse Territory.

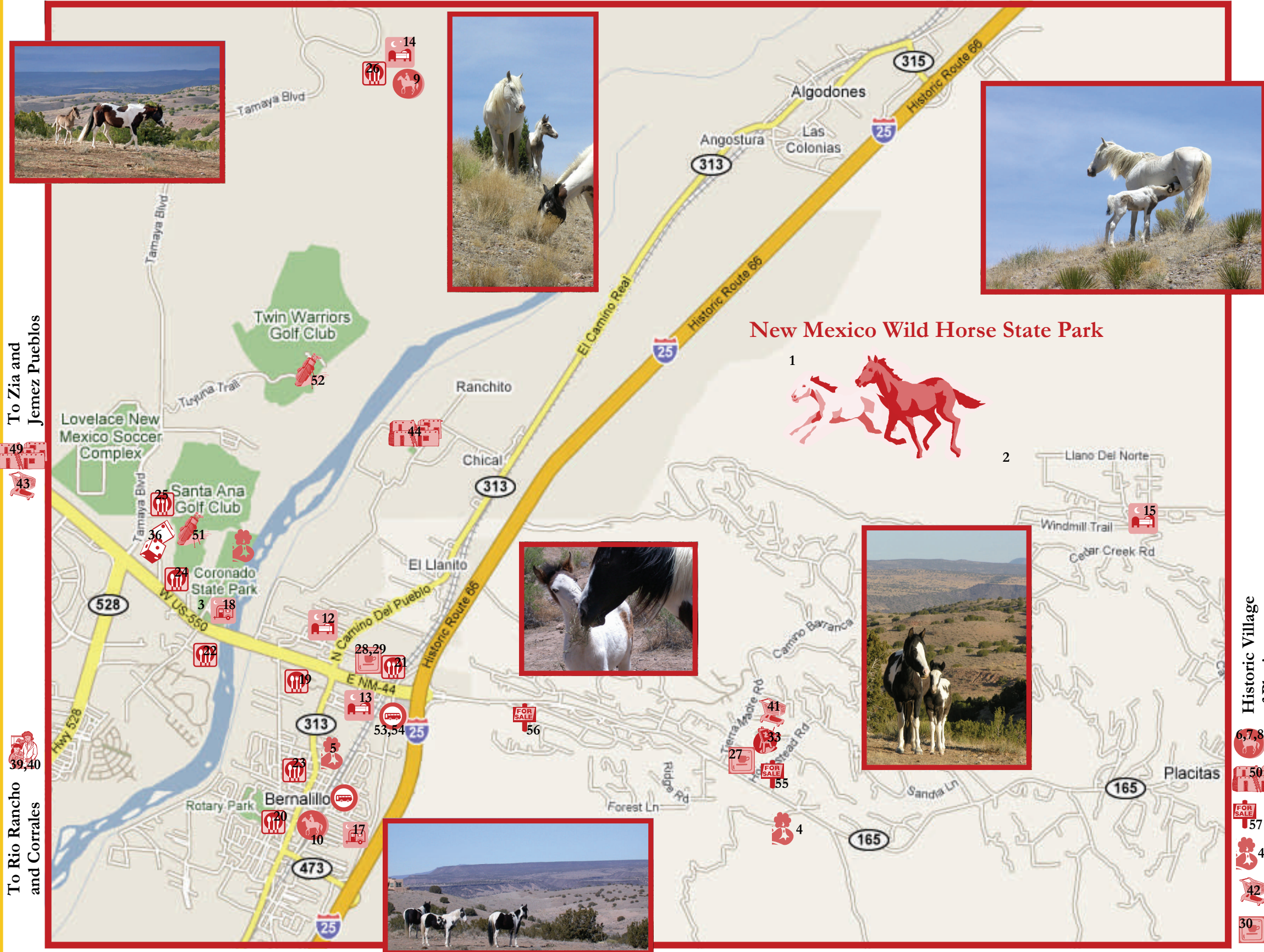
These Wild Horse Festivals, celebrate the local Hispanic, Native American, Anglo heritage in relationship to the horse, would create tremendous opportunities for rural economic development, including guided tours, wild horse souvenirs, lodging/camping fees, and horse-related business (riding stables, feed, training, etc), as well as careers in wild horse management.

Tourism traffic will be increased to areas outside of the current tourism centers of Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and Taos. Communities/areas like Bernalillo/Placitas, El Rito, Socorro, Jicarilla, Gobernador, Dulce, and Cedar Crest would feel a direct impact from the inflow of wild horse tourism dollars.



New Mexico Wild Horse State Park

45,47,48 To Santa Fe and San Felipe.
Santo Domingo, Cochiti Pueblos



To Zia and Jemez Pueblos

To Rio Rancho and Corrales

To Albuquerque and Sandia Pueblo

New Mexico Wild Horse State Park

Local Businesses and Services of Placitas, Bernalillo, Santa Ana Pueblo. and San Felipe Pueblo

Parks/Museums

1. NM Wild Horse State Park
2. Albuquerque Open Space
3. Coronado State Monument and Park
4. Cibola National Forest
5. Sandoval Historical Society

33. Rock n Art Gallery
34. Joan Fenicle Studio
35. Laura Robbin's Wild Horse Mosaics

Casinos

36. Santa Ana Star Casino
37. San Felipe Hollywood Casino
38. Sandia Casino

Horse Riding/Feed

6. McNulty Riding Stables
7. Hector Ramos Riding Lessons/Training
8. Holly Farms (Riding)
9. Tamaya Resort (Riding)
10. Bernalillo Feed
11. The Merc (Feed)

Veterinarians

39. Sunrise Vet
40. Middleton Equine

Groceries

41. Placitas Mercantile
42. The Merc
43. Albertsons

Lodging

12. Days Inn
13. Super 8
14. Tamaya Resort
15. Blue Horse Bed & Breakfast
16. Sandia

Pueblos/Villages

44. Santa Ana Pueblo
45. San Felipe Pueblo
46. Sandia Pueblo
47. Santo Domingo Pueblo
48. Cochiti Pueblo
49. Zia Pueblo
50. Historic Village of Placitas

Camping/RV

17. KOA Campgrounds
18. Coronado State Park

Recreation

51. Santa Ana Golf Club
52. Twin Warriors Golf Club

Restaurants

19. Guang Dong
20. The Range
21. Dennys
22. Coronado Grill
23. Abuelita's
24. Capos Italian
25. Prairie Star
26. Tamaya Resort

Transportation

53. RailRunner
54. Sandoval Express Bus

Café/Winery

27. Pinon Café
28. Starbucks
29. Dunkin Donuts
30. Anasazi Winery

Realty

55. Placitas Realty
56. La Puerta Realty
57. Sierra Realty

Photography/Art

31. Callahan Wild Horse Photography
32. Illuminaria Wild Horse Photography

A Vacation Destination Along Historic Route 66

New Mexico

Land of Enchantment

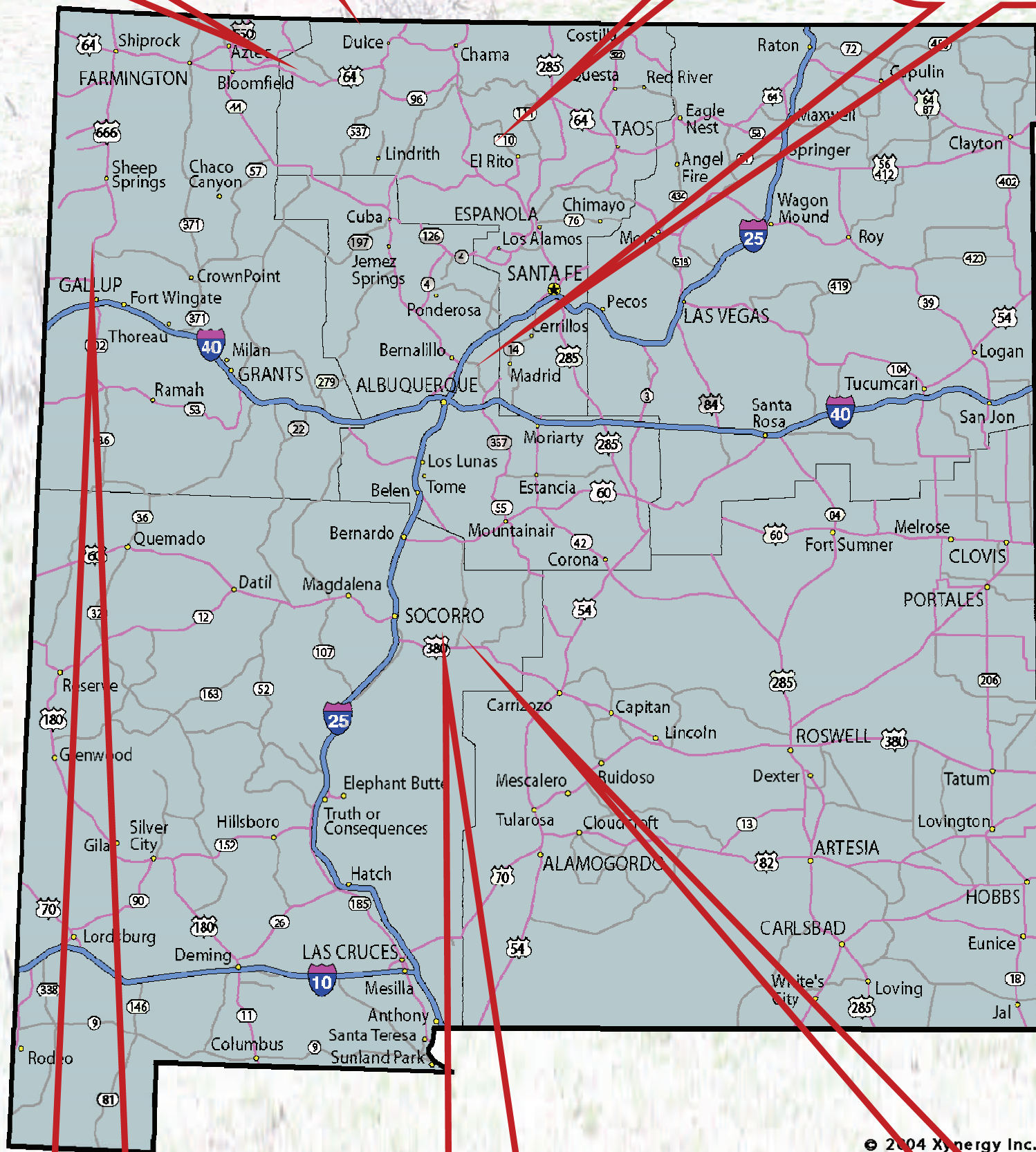
Where the Wild Ones Roam

Monero Mustangs Preserve

El Rito National Wild Horse Territory

Jicarilla National Wild Horse Territory

New Mexico Wild Horse State Park



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Mount Taylor Mustang Preserve

Socorro National Wild Horse Territory

New Mexico Horse Project