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PLACITAS: Home of the Legally Wild Horses

WHOA Successfully Protecting Horses, Habitat, and Placitas Page 2

WHOA has worked with San Felipe, Santa Ana, Albuquerque Open Space, the BLM, and private land owners to fence the horses out of certain neighborhoods with the idea that good fences make good neighbors. These neighborhoods include East Algodones, Terra, La Mesa, Sundance, Santa Ana, and Los Ranchos. WHOA has now even removed the Placitas eight from the Village and the Camino de Las Huertas area. WHOA is also certified and working toward a relationship with the appropriate government agencies to dart the horses with immuno-contraceptive (native PZP). WHOA is working toward darting all mares not on BLM lands in February and March of 2012.

WHOA is also currently working with the Department of Transportation which has agreed to put up appropriate Wild Life Corridor crossing signs along RT165. There have been Bears, Mt. Lions, Wild Horses, Deer, and Livestock crossing this rural mountain road. Placitas, visitors, and our beloved

wildlife deserve to have a warning, just as there are other warnings (speed limits, blind drive ways, children playing, road work, etc.). With adherence to the appropriate signage, and the Placitas 8 previously relocated, there should be little to no issue on RT165. For the sake of perspective, in the last 20 years 850 people have been killed by DWI's in Bernalillo County alone with another 27,911 injured. We typically jail DWI's, not their victims.

WHOA had long resolved the issues mentioned in the Journal. See WHOA's response at whoanm.org. WHOA has requested copies of all "complaints", as it appears that most mentioned were from neighborhoods where WHOA had long since resolved any issues with fencing. WHOA expects that the BLM should be providing many of these services and protections for Placitas and the wild ones they love. The BLM should also provide rules and regulations to protect the wild ones, even from well meaning Placitas. Placitas however, (WHOA included) on balance have done a great service for their community and for the wild ones. This has been done in the absence of the required action by the responsible federal agency, the Bureau of Land Management.

"Loop Rd Activist" Endangers Horses, Placitas, and Habitat

WHOA had the 8 horses safely tucked away in two corrals on the Hasset's lands at the bottom of Riley's hill ready for shipping. A women openly posing as an animal rights activist passed the No Trespassing signs and opened up the corrals, releasing these owned livestock back onto Camino de Las Huertas. Luckily, volunteer Maryann Mouton spotted this individual and attempted to stop her. Though MaryAnn was not able to, she called for help and the horses were herded back in. The owner of the horses and WHOA are working with the Sheriff's office to press the appropriate criminal charges (Police report case no. 11-1235).

This individual knew these horses were owned, is a neighbor of the owner, had called the owner, and knew WHOA had the right to recover them for the owner. WHOA believes this perpetrator put these livestock back out on this winding road (without signage), so that the wild horses

would be declared a public safety issue and rounded up. As part of this, she was working diligently to get these horses into the Signpost and stir up controversy.

Subsequent to releasing the horses, she sent an email to the Signpost, copying WHOA. This email included admission of "opening the gates" for "wild horses". Removal of the Placitas horses would damage WHOA's court case which asks the BLM to manage, protect and preserve the Wild Horses in Placitas (primarily on BLM lands). This court case would require the BLM to utilize the thousands of Placitan public comments that the BLM has received for the horses and against the Loop Rd (I40 bypass through Placitas). These same Placitan public comments are at present determined to be "out of scope" of the BLM's "public" process called the Rio Puerco Resource Management Plan Update (RMP). These Placitan comments are currently in the circular file.

A WHOA Community Survey, had over 800 returns and showed 99% support for the horses and against the Loop Rd. Sandoval County has acknowledged the community support for the wild horses and against the Loop Rd, but has refused a resolution against the planned and requested precursor to this road. This stated Loop Rd pre-cursor was specifically requested by Sandoval County to go to the Northern Placitas neighborhoods through the BLM. Documentation available on whoanm.org and/or upon request.

...Loose Livestock Issue Resolved

Horses in Road Were Livestock, Not Wild Horses

Contrary to the old and incorrect information recently published in the Albuquerque Journal, the white stallion, his two red mares, and their family had already been removed from the Village roads and from Camino de Las Huertas. WHOA and volunteers had performed gentle walking round-ups and had taken them to a Safe Haven at Monero Mustangs. This was accomplished to keep the horses safe and to avoid all of the wild horses from being rounded-up. This was also done to avoid issues for those unaware of their presence on this winding and dangerous road, and to avoid liability for their legal owner.

These horses had legally become livestock in 2002 and had subsequently gotten loose from their owner six years later. Though many have tried to remove it, one of the red mares has retained her halter to this day. Some Placitas call her Halter Top.

Their owner, pictured below, bought the horses in 2002 through the Livestock Board to save them from going to auction. At that time, two other wild horse families had been gathered and purchased at auction by a killer buyer, and most had gone to their demise.

New Home at Monero Mustangs

The eight horses have been released to an acre size temporary holding pen at Monero until they can be acclimated; then they will be set loose onto the 4700 acre ranch with other lucky wild ones. Monero Mustangs and WHOA have worked together closely for the last 10 years across areas including legislation, eco-tourism, and immune-contraception for the Wild Ones.

The Monero Mustangs Sanctuary is near capacity but took in our Placitas eight anyway. Please consider thanking them with a small donation or sponsoring one of the 114 horses there, for their winter feed. WHOA has sponsored eight horses, so that the Placitas horses would not impact Monero Mustang's ability to make it through the winter. The Placitas Horses are still available for Placitan sponsorship. This sponsorship is \$250 each/yr. The horses at Monero free range for their feed the rest of the year. Sponsorship includes a free tour, updates on your sponsored horse, and more. At Monero, there are also many friendly barnyard animals for little ones to enjoy.

Sandi Claypool 575-756-8674. www.moneromustangs.org

SPECIAL THANKS - Placitan Community Support

Five land owners opened up their hearts and their lands to allow safe haven for these eight owned horses including: Lois Gonzales & Nolan Benham in the Village, Sandy Polling on RT165, Steve and Darlene Bassett, Terry Abbott, and Carol and Bill Koehler on Camino de Las Huertas. Two other property owners allowed WHOA to haul water from their homes: Jack and Sandy Bates, and Kathleen and Charlie Goodwin. Diamante Equestrian Center loaned out sturdy mobile corral panels (shown below), as WHOA had funds for one corral but needed two. Two Bit Farms (Holly and Ron Mitchell) hauled the horses for half price, and

Placitas Animal Rescue's Gary Miles helped WHOA load the horses and more. Ernesto Lopez (horse trainer/shoer) taught WHOA how to safely load the horses. Maryann Mouton, Betty and Dina Garcia, and WHOA slept in their vehicles helping WHOA guard the horses and even brought us food. Joe and Debbie Battin donated two 100 gallon sturdy plastic stock tanks (shown below). Many from all over Placitas stopped by with hay & water and Manya Metz and Mrs. Green with money. Twelve others, including Wilda Portner, helped with herding and more at all hours of the night. **This effort also cost \$4,750 and was made possible by donations from many caring Placitans. THANK YOU!**

Clockwise: Placitas 8 Owner; Placitas 8 drinking from donated troughs behind panels loaned by Diamante; Monero Mustang Wild One; Placitas 8 grazing at Monero; Monero Goats; Monero Turkey. (pictures by Patience O'Dowd)

