



January 18, 2011

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Welfare Ranchers Form Bogus Wild Horse Committee to Control Mustang Policy**

Chicago (EWA) - When the Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners appointed a group of "wild horse experts" who were all public lands cattle ranchers to the new Feral Horse Committee to oversee wild horse issues, questions arose as to which horses, which issues, and who were the members of this new committee?

It was soon learned that one member of the committee was actually a former mustanger, others were members of various hunting committees for bobcats, coyotes, and other wildlife, and the chairman Mike Stremmer, was actually a mountain lion bounty hunter for Nevada's wildlife commission receiving \$1,800 for each lion killed. It was not clear how these men were qualified in any way to be called experts on wild horses.

Wild horse advocate's fears were realized when an article written by Stremmer stated ranchers should stand on their state-owned water rights because wild horses had no legal "beneficial use" or right to drink Nevada's waters.

In a telephone conversation in November 2010, Stremmer was asked if his plan was to let Nevada's wild horses die of thirst, which he quickly denied, stating that was entirely untrue and to deny Nevada's wild horses water was not the committee's intent at all.

However, now it appears that it was Stremmer's reply that was entirely untrue.

According to a January 14th Associated Press article, [Water use for wild horses questioned by Nev. panel](#), the Feral Horse Committee has drafted a letter to the state engineer to request federal agencies to immediately remove Nevada's wild horses and burros for illegally drinking Nevada's waters.

It seems a plan has been underway for some time to call Nevada's wild horses "feral", and not define them as a wild life species. Information from NDOW regarding "feral horses" was found on a Hunter's Alert site stating that feral horses will be examined as a "stand-alone" issue that will be addressed by the NBWC (Nevada Board of Wildlife Commission). They would create a committee "to develop position statements on habitat destruction by feral horses" and "issue continual position statements on habitat destruction by feral horses impacting wildlife."

Futher, they would "support proposal for creation of a maximum of two (2) horse ranches in Nevada to have a maximum of 1,000 'wild' horses where horses can run free, upon creation, all 'wild' or feral horses must be removed from all other Horse Management Areas statewide."

Obviously, the plans for Nevada's wild horses are going forward as previously planned.

Regardless of state law to recognize wild horses and burros as wildlife, they are a protected species under federal law. According to the 1971 Act, this means **all** unbranded and unclaimed horses and burros. Whether or not Nevada agencies choose to call them wild or feral, they are still federally protected animals, which assures their right to "beneficial use" of water.

The Supreme Court ruled in 1976 (Kleppe vs. New Mexico) that "where state laws conflict with the Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act, or with other legislation passed pursuant to the Property Clause, the law is clear: the state laws must recede ... "

Despite the ranchers' state owned water rights, the horses and burros remain federally protected as "components of the public lands" and are entitled to roam free in areas where they were as of the date of the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971.

This committee is basically asking the state engineer to instruct federal agencies to break federal law.

The committee is scheduled to meet today in Eureka, Nevada.

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*The Equine Welfare Alliance is a dues free, umbrella organization with 134 member organizations. The organization focuses its efforts on the welfare of all equines and the preservation of wild equids.*

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