

Mustang and Burro Trails

On Delmarva

A newsletter by the Delmarva Chapter of the American Mustang and Burro Association

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WH & B Advisory Board Meets in Washington DC

The National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board met at 8 AM in the Jefferson Hotel in Washington, DC on February 26, 2007. The Board meets twice a year in alternate locations and is open to the public. Since Delaware is within easy driving distance of D.C., Eastern States Coordinator, Mark Davis, attended this most interesting meeting.

The committee chairperson was Robin Lohnes, (Wild Horse and Burro Advocacy) , Washington, DC. Other Board members were: Renee Taylor (Livestock Management) Wyoming; Richard Sewing (Humane Advocacy) Utah; Dr. Boyd Spratling (Veterinarian Medicine) Nevada; Larry Johnson (Wildlife Management) Nevada; Dr. Vernon Dooley, (Wild Horse and Burro Research) Wyoming; Gary Zakotnik (Livestock Management) Wyoming; and, Melissa Scott (Public Interest) Tennessee.

The BLM along with the US Forest Service have felt the impact of budget cuts. As pointed out by both agencies the lack of funding impacts heavily on the wild horse and burro program. Figures were given regarding the animals being held in short and long term holding facilities. It was also pointed out that contracts were being initiated to establish additional holding facilities. In addition, information was given regarding the anticipated number of gathers, location, timing and projected number of animals expected to be removed. It was noted that figures regarding the gathers are target figures and not absolute.

There was an excellent presentation on the impact of wildfire on habitat and range ecology. Wild fires impact heavily on the holding capacity of the areas effected . When fires destroy the forage greater numbers of animals must be removed. Lands require different amounts of time to recover depending upon the species of vegetation involved. This recovery process is dependent upon the aspect (East, West, North, South) as well as the elevation of the land. Aspect and elevation both play an integral part in the amount of precipitation that a site receives and it is readily understandable that there will be differences in the time it takes for a burned over area to recover. Leaving animals on burned over areas could significantly extend the period of recovery as well as the risk of invasion by noxious species.

Patti Colbert of the Mustang Heritage Foundation made an excellent presentation regarding Foundation activities. Most notable is the Extreme Mustang Makeover scheduled for September 2007. There are to be a series of 6 programs regarding wild equine on the Wild World of Horses to be aired on RFD TV during prime time.

Following the meeting there was a round table discussion that included Advisory Board members and guests. Mark was able to speak about the activities of the Delmarva Chapter AMBA , the New England Chapters and the newly formed Virginia Chapter.

A Strange Dichotomy

A strange dichotomy exists in the Department of the Interior. While the law protecting wild equine applies to BLM lands and US Forest Service lands; those lands administered by the National Park Service or the Department of Fish and Wildlife are exempt.

After the California Desert Protection Act in 1994 millions of acres of land previously administered by the BLM were transferred to the National Park Service, leaving all wild equine on those lands unprotected and undesirable.

There are about 150 burros in the Clark Mountain area in the northwestern Mojave Desert that must be removed. This particular herd of burros is unique in that they are pink. The excuse for the removal of the burros is to improve habitat for the desert tortoise. Add into this mix is the reintroduction of Bighorn sheep (with trophy hunting permits going as high as \$65,000 or more) and the income from cattle grazing permits. The fact that the burros and the tortoises have co-existed for 150 years is conveniently ignored. While the burros on Clark Mountain are on BLM land, the springs that sustain them are now in National Park territory and having the burros wander over to NPS land to drink is not permitted. As a result, the poor little burros have to go! The National Park Service which maintains all national parks and national monuments seem to have the idea that only indigenous species should be allowed on their lands. They essentially consider human encroachment, concessions, hotels, and cattle indigenous, but not wild equine.

A group called "Public Lands for Americans" is trying to get a lawsuit going in federal court that will permit the burros to get water from the National Park Service Lands. The costs for this are high and at this writing, I have no further information about this group.

AMBA, as a non-profit corporation, is not permitted to lobby Congress. However, individuals can certainly write to their congressmen and express their objections. It makes no sense whatever that the PL92-175 reads in part " It is the policy of Congress that wild free-roaming horses and burros shall be protected from capture, branding, harassment or death; and to accomplish this they are to be

considered in the area where presently found as an integral part of the natural system of public lands" applies only to BLM and US Forest Service lands but not to National Park Service or Fish and Wildlife lands. You may also express your objection to this burro removal from the Clark Mountain area by writing to Steven J. Borshard, California Desert District Manager, 22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, Ca 92553.

NEWS & NOTES

The 2007 Mid-Atlantic Wild Horse and Burro Show will again be held at Tailwinds Farm in North East, Maryland on September 15-16. Check the web site for class lists.

A new chapter of AMBA has been formed in Virginia. Kim Horn of Goldvein, VA is the Chapter Secretary. Congratulations and we wish you every success in your efforts to promote adoptions.

The New England Chapter will again have a booth at the "All Things Equine" event in Burlington, Vermont on April 28-29. Contact person is Brenda Hedges, Vermont State Coordinator.

Two Delmarva Chapter members, John Lofland and Alycia Hovey "took the plunge" for the Special Olympics in January and February. John, as "Pa Swill" dressed in red long johns, with bar of soap and scrub brush in hand, plunged into the Chesapeake Bay in 36 degree water. Alycia was one of another group that took the Polar Bear plunge into the Atlantic Ocean. Brrrr!

The Delmarva Chapter will hold its spring fun show on May 20 at Dill's Auction near Felton, Delaware. This show is open to all. Contact Alycia or Mark for more information.

<p>If you have not paid your AMBA dues, please remember to do so. The only means that the National Office has to sustain itself is through the dues of its members. Thanks.</p>
