

# The Travesty That Could Have Been Prevented At Muddy Creek

COLDEN, NY, USA, August 13, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Fifteen miles south of Emery, Utah, 283,400 acres comprise the Muddy Creek (MC) Herd Management Area (HMA), home to a modest herd of America's Wild Horses. Historically and currently, livestock grazing permits are allowed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on this land that was reserved as horse habitat by the 1971 Wild And Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act.

"Water is life, nothing can survive without water. The BLM has failed to protect the wild horses and burros who call MC HMA home. They have deliberately let the ranchers 'do whatever they want.' They are aware that these horses will die without intervention, yet they refuse to act." said Janelle Ghiorso, Oregon Wild Horse Organization (OWHO).



Siphon equipment left at Muddy Creek pond where ranchers haul water away to water their cattle or their alfalfa fields and leave horses to die.

"The BLM has, for years, allowed the grazing permittees to break the law. They have allowed the capture, harassment and death (per the 1971 Wild Free Roaming Horse And Burro Act) to go unpunished and have turned a blind eye to these violations. They have allowed the grazing permittees to pump, store and divert water from MC to water their alfalfa crops. The BLM performs emergency helicopter roundups when the horses are in bad shape. The BLM, mandated to protect the wild horses and burros is doing the exact opposite.", as observed by OWHO.

Erik Molvar, wildlife ecologist, Executive Director of Western Watersheds Project and expert author of countless articles and books on western public lands, stated, "The BLM permits the

livestock industry to make water developments by tapping into natural springs and water tables and putting them into troughs. The livestock industry can then shut off at their whim when their livestock aren't present, pursuant to their legally-filed water rights under state law, even draining tanks so the water that once was freely available at springs and seeps is safely locked away so native wildlife and wild horses can quietly die of thirst alongside desert bighorns, mule deer, jackrabbits, and every other species of native herbivore can die off quietly while no one is watching, clearing the range for even more livestock. They not only refuse to haul water to wildlife when they have allowed the cattle ranchers to use it up or remove the water to a different location, they also harass and arrest members of the public who attempt to provide water for the wild ones."



Horses form strong bonds and attachments. The foal is trying to comfort the mare and looks like he or she attempted to push her out, succumbing to the mud and the mare's fate, resigning himself to only comforting her which led to his or her demise.

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*Erik Molvar*

Molvar has stated previously that cattle, which are an invasive species, are “ecological misfits in the arid west.”

Heather Hellyer, wildlife photographer and observer of the Muddy Creek herd management area, added, “The Wild Horses needed water to survive and the BLM didn't truck it in. The Muddy Creek situation was brought to the BLM's attention by an advocate, who asked if the BLM would haul

water to the horses and wildlife, the answer was, ‘absolutely not.’ I have been there in the past and I've seen water troughs, the ranchers and cows use, turned over so they cannot collect water.”

The Utah BLM this week stated that they killed 2 horses because they had suffered dehydration so severe they could not recover, and went on to say, “While not currently trucking in water, if the situation arises where animals need water to survive, the BLM will take action. We remain committed to the health and safety of the wild horse population and other wildlife in the MC HMA. Our efforts are focused on monitoring and providing necessary aid to ensure their well-being. For more information, please contact the BLM Price Field Office.”

In an interview on ABC 4 Utah, Gus Warr, BLM Utah State Office Wild Horse and Burro Branch

Chief, stated "The things the public wants to bring up is that they really want us to act immediately and start hauling water to Wild Horses and that is something that, as an agency, we typically do not do. We have done it in the past, but that is an artificial water source that potentially could disrupt the natural migratory behavior of them animals and we don't want the horses or wildlife to become dependent on the BLM hauling water. We manage millions of acres with a limited staff and we do appreciate any public input."



Horses grieve as intensely as humans do. This mare and foal came seeking water at the same location just feet away from the mare that was killed 3 days earlier.

In response to Gus Warr's statement regarding concerns over changing "natural migratory behavior", Britta Hesla states: "The mud-hole that pulled in and created trauma and suffering for the mare and two foals was a natural water source within their natural migratory pattern. Therefore, trucking in water to that exact location would not have disturbed any migratory pattern for the horses. In summary, Mr. Warr's statements are unwarranted and unfounded."

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We reached out to the Utah BLM office and Jordan Davis, acting field manager for Utah BLM, for a statement, they did not respond.

"Nonprofit organizations are demonstrating that they are effectively supporting western land herds without any taxpayer burden.", said Britta Hesla, legislative liaison, certified neuropsychologist trained in the trauma brain of horses.

Please call your Congressperson and Senators and tell them your thoughts on the use of your tax dollars supporting the BLM Wild Horse and Burro management program.

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