

Office of the Governor

July 9, 2008

Dear Newsweek Letters Editor:

I am responding to an interview with Deanne Stillman regarding the history and management of wild horses that was published recently on Newsweek online.

Wyoming's large wild horse population is second only to that of Nevada. Wild horses are magnificent animals and have a place in our history and culture, but to ensure their long-term survival, it is important that they be managed properly.

For years, the wild horse herds in Wyoming have grown beyond the ability of their ranges to support them. In 2003, the State of Wyoming filed suit to require the BLM to reduce horse populations to the appropriate management levels required by federal law and to keep them there. This is necessary to protect the State's rangeland and wildlife resources.

Your interview with Ms. Stillman leads readers to believe that the land can support many more wild horses than the current population. That is not the case. Wild horses are not native to this continent, and as such have no natural controls short of starvation when the population outstrips its habitat. They can increase at more than 20 percent per year, doubling in population in just 4 years.

According to the Bureau of Land Management, the current appropriation of \$37 million is insufficient to maintain the existing high levels of animals in holding.

One proposed alternative is to stop roundups, which would violate federal law by allowing the population to grow unchecked and would cause environmental and economic harm to the State of Wyoming, not to mention the suffering of the horses themselves when starvation occurs.

The BLM is faced with tough choices regarding how to deal with those horses for which no adoption demand exists. But allowing the wild populations to grow out of control would violate federal law and is unacceptable to the State of Wyoming.

Wyoming is proud of its wild horses, but like other wild species, they must be managed properly to ensure their long-term survival in balance with the habitat, other wildlife, and the other multiple uses of the public lands.

Best regards,



Dave Freudenthal
Governor

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