

To: Ben Masters[benmasters88@gmail.com]
From: Skipwith, Aurelia
Sent: 2017-08-27T18:22:46-04:00
Importance: Normal
Subject: Re: Ben Masters - WH&B Summit - Wildlife Management Chair
Received: 2017-08-27T18:23:13-04:00

Hi Ben,

It was a pleasure to meet you. I appreciate your message and will pass your comments along. Thank you.

Aurelia Skipwith
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW, Room 3148
Washington, DC 20240
(202) 208 5837

On Sat, Aug 26, 2017 at 1:06 PM, Ben Masters <benmasters88@gmail.com> wrote:

Aurelia,
Great meeting you at the Summit. Please take a moment to read this email and feel free to share with Secretary Zinke.

I've dedicated the last 7 years of my life towards finding a sustainable path forward for the Wild Horses & Burros that doesn't involve an ecological travesty to our public lands. I've created a documentary, Unbranded, to inspire wild horse adoptions that appeared on Netflix and won Audience Awards at film fests across the world. I've raised over \$100,000 for the Mustang Heritage Foundation, have personally adopted 7 wild horses, and have inspired the adoption of over 200 Wild Horses that I know of. I have ridden a mustang from Mexico to Canada through our public lands, spent 4 years studying Wildlife Management, and spent 4 dedicated months with ecologists, biologists, and scientists trying to understand Great Basin ecology and how the Wild Horses fit in. I currently sit as the Wildlife Management Chair on the WH&B Advisory Board.

There is something very important that you need to understand. There needs to be a lethal management tool in the WH&B program. Period. Without one, the program will continue to get worse and we jeopardize the health of 31.2 Million Acres of Land, an area the size of 15 Yellowstone National Parks. The problem cannot get fixed with permanent sterilization, fertility control, or any available method. To get to AML, there has to be a lethal method.

As a lover of public lands, a lover of wild horses, and an individual who has dedicated my life to conservation, I beg you to make the hard and unpopular decision to put ecosystem health as priority over the short term gratification of "saving" individual wild horses.

After studying the WH&B program, I believe that the most publicly acceptable method of

lethal management is to destroy the horses in short term and long term holding and to donate the carcasses to be used in zoos and animal shelters. Their death can sustain life.

We are at a tipping point on the WH&B program. Right now we still have time to get the program on track. But if this administration fails, we'll be looking at well over 100k+ horses on the range and it will be too far gone to try and manage. We will then be forced to accept natural regulation and the destructive ecological consequences that entails. The science is there, the data is there, and euthanizing excess animals is not novel. Our society does it to dogs, cats, horses, bison in Yellowstone, elk in Rocky Mountain Park, and the list goes on. Our public lands deserve better, our threatened and endangered species deserve better, and the horses deserve better.

Make the right choice. Prioritize ecological health.

Here is a series of 4 articles I wrote for National Geographic that details the reality of the WH&B Controversy. Feel free to use it to get people up to date if you'd like.

1. Wild Horse Wilder Controversy: bit.ly/wildhorsecontroversy
2. Ecological Consequences: bit.ly/ecologicalconsequences
3. PZP and short film "Wild Horse Resolution": bit.ly/equinebirthcontrol
4. Wild Horse Management, or Not? The Options. bit.ly/wildhorseoptions

I'm here to help.

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Ben Masters
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