



American
Wild Horse
Conservation

BLM Wild Horse Adoptions: A Lifeline or a Pipeline to Slaughter?

SEPTEMBER 21 | PRESENTED BY AMELIA PERRIN, SR. COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, AWHC



Wild Horses: Integral to America's Cultural Fabric



- Wild horses and burros are federally protected by the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and burros Act of 1971
- Only other species to be protected by federal law like this is the Bald Eagle
- Now over 70,000 wild horses and burros are found in 10 Western States



Current State of Wild Horses and Burros



The Bureau of Land Management (BLM)'s management is costly and cruel.

- This year 18,000 wild horses and burros will be rounded up
- The price tag is \$157M taxpayer funds for FY23
- The BLM's holding system is overburdened
 - Over 62,000 wild horses and burros are currently languishing in holding
- This is an unsustainable system



Enter: The Adoption Incentive Program

BLM'S ADOPTION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

Wants YOU!

Don't worry — it'll be fine!

EVERY YEAR MAKE UP TO **\$4000**

for doing absolutely nothing!

CLAIM YOUR WILD HORSE (OR 4!) TODAY

Please ...

just take them ...

- The AIP was implemented in 2019
- Pays adopted \$1,000 to adopt up to four wild, unhandled BLM animals
- All adopters sign, under penalty of prosecution, they will not knowingly sell or transfer ownership to a person or organization that intends to slaughter the animal
- AWHC knew this program would result in disaster for wild horses and burros

Investigation Findings

- Over 2,100 wild horses and burros documented in kill pens
 - 855 were able to be identified by BLM brand
 - FOIA records prove that **70.5%** of identified animals in kill pens have been adopted through the AIP
 - Groups of related individuals are defrauding the system and raking in upwards of **\$82,000** of tax payer funded incentives
 - Tip of the iceberg
-





U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

OWNER/SHIPPER CERTIFICATE
FITNESS TO TRAVEL TO A SLAUGHTER FACILITY
(Please type or print in ink)

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 0579-0160. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 5 min. per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information.

FORM APPROVED OMB NO. 0579-0160 1964S00161

TIME HORSES LOADED ON CONVEYANCE: 9:00 AM DATE: 03/26/2019 CITY AND STATE WHERE HORSES WERE LOADED ON CONVEYANCE:

VEHICLE LICENSE NO. AND DRIVER'S NAME: [REDACTED] NAME OF AUCTION/MARKET:

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE: [REDACTED] TEXAS [REDACTED] CONSIGNEE (RECEIVER/DESTINATION) NAME: [REDACTED]

AREA CODE & TELEPHONE NO.: [REDACTED] AREA CODE & TELEPHONE NO.:

CHECK THE BOX THAT INDICATES THE FOLLOWING IS TRUE FOR ALL THE HORSES ON THIS CERTIFICATE

Pregnant mares are not likely to foal (give birth) during the trip. Horses are able to bear weight on all 4 limbs. Horses are able to walk unassisted.

Foals are older than 6 months of age. Horses are not blind in both eyes.

TAG PREFIX	Tag NO.	COLOR DESCRIPTION						BREED/TYPE					SEX			BRANDS Tattoos, etc.	REMARKS Include existing conditions
		Bay	Grey	Blk.	Pinto	Chestn.	Other	TB	QT	Draft	Pony	Other	Mare	Stal	Geld		
[REDACTED]																	

HORSES HAVE HAD ACCESS TO FOOD, WATER, AND REST FOR A MINIMUM OF 6 CONSECUTIVE HOURS IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO LOADING.

SIGNATURE: [REDACTED]

HEREBY AUTHORITY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE INFORMATION IN THIS FORM IS COMPLETED BY THE SIGNER AND THE INFORMATION IN THIS FORM IS NOT TO BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE. FALSIFICATION OF THIS FORM OR KNOWINGLY USING A FALSIFIED FORM IS A CRIMINAL OFFENSE AND MAY RESULT IN A FINE OF NOT MORE THAN \$10,000 OR IMPRISONMENT FOR NOT MORE THAN 5 YEARS OR BOTH (18 U.S.C. SECTION 1001).

SIGNATURE OF OWNER/SHIPPER (certify that the information contained in this form is true and correct to the best of your knowledge): [REDACTED]

CANADIAN FOOD INSPECTION AGENCY (CFIA) EST. DATE TIME

DIRECCION GENERAL DE INSPECCION EN FRONTERAS (DGIF) EST. OISA CD. JUAREZ. CH. DATE 26-MARZO-2019 TIME

VSFO (Rev. 10-01-2002) Partial #1 Page # 000001

The Use of FOIA

- AWHC regularly files FOIA requests on:
 - Brands identified in kill pens
 - Communications with BLM related to auctions
 - Adoption records
 - Filed litigation 3X to obtain records
- Filed FOIAs with various state Depts of Ag
- Filed FOIAs with the USDA



Inspiring Change

- AWHC's investigation's was the basis for a New York Times exposé
 - Congress was outraged
 - BLM enacted two sets of reform to the program, but both fall short of true protections for wild horses and burros
-

The New York Times

Wild Horses Adopted Under a Federal Program Are Going to Slaughter

The bureau has refused to provide lists of adopters. But an informal network of wild-horse advocates has pieced together what is happening by using donated money to outbid kill buyers at auctions. That way, they spare mustangs from slaughter and obtain title papers that detail the horses' ownership history.

The Impact on Rescues

- The AIP has forced smaller, privately funded rescues to shoulder the consequences of the BLM's mismanaged program
 - Influx of wild, unhandled horses and burros into the rescue market
 - Many rescues may not be set up for wild horses and burros
 - AWHC's grants program has funded the rescue, vet care, and transportation of rescues as well as provided capacity building grants
-





If Not AIP Then What?

- Invest in responsible adoption and sale programs
 - Abandon the cash component of the AIP, offer vet vouchers
 - Investigate and prosecute violations
- Work with rescues to place older, or disabled horses and burros
- Prioritize in-the-wild conservation solutions like fertility control





Questions?

amelia@americanwildhorse.org



Photo by Sandy Sisti