

## Managing wild horse herds with limited resources

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One of the challenges of controlling a wild horse (*Equus caballus*) herd, on public and private lands, is the lack of resources whether it be personnel, time, or budget. Wild horses can be found on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Forest Service (USFS), National Park Service (NPS) and State owned lands or a mixture of those listed. Wild horses can also be found on private land owned or managed by a non-profit organization.

A form of management is PZP (porcine zona pellucida) Immunocontraception which when injected into mares causes the production of antibodies which interfere with fertilization and thus prevents pregnancy (Lui et al. 1989). The vaccine can be delivered remotely by a dart once it is mixed with an adjuvant. This process can be done by trained government personnel or trained volunteers.

Volunteers working with the government agencies can come from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) which are often non-profit groups already advocating for a herd in the area. A few examples are Friends of Mustangs working with the BLM Grand Junction field office, Little Book Cliffs Wild Horses in Colorado, Friends of a Legacy working with the BLM Cody field office, McCullough Peaks wild horses in Wyoming and Wild Love Preserve with the BLM Challis field office in Idaho. We work with 18 groups which mainly assist the BLM with wild horse PZP immunocontraception.

Local groups are passionate and have a strong interest in the wild horses. They work hand in hand with the BLM (or other agencies) under carefully crafted management plans, to achieve a common goal of reducing round-ups and having a healthy, well-managed herd. The NGO volunteers its time and energy to get the horses identified, treated with PZP, collect data and help educate the public about the project. The agency facilitates the work of the NGO to the extent it can. The advantages of this model are all stakeholders can be involved, lessening of adversarial relationships, and the volunteers help reduce the costs to the government agencies (and in turn the taxpayer).