



February 8, 2012

Mr. Bob Abbey, Director
Bureau of Land Management
1849 C Street NW, Rm. 5665
Washington DC 20240
Phone: 202-208-3801
Fax: 202-208-5242

Dear Mr. Abbey,

I am writing on behalf of the American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign, a national coalition of more than 45 organizations, to object in the strongest of terms to the recent appointments to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board. When considered in conjunction with appointments from 2010 and 2011, it is apparent that the BLM is stacking this citizen advisory board with representatives of special interests that stand to profit from the capture and slaughter of America's wild horses.

Particularly objectionable is the recent appointment of Callie Hendrickson, an outspoken advocate for horse slaughter and lethal management of America's wild horses, to the "Public Interest" position on the board. At a time when [public opinion surveys have reconfirmed](#)¹ the American public's strong opposition to horse slaughter, Ms. Hendrickson's appointment to represent "general public interest" is, frankly, appalling.

Ms. Hedrickson, director of the White River and Douglas Creek Conservation Districts in Colorado, which are dominated by ranching interests, has a history of anti-mustang positions and in favor of slaughter. In fact, she will be a featured speaker at the [United Horsemen summit](#)² in Oklahoma, which is being organized to plan strategy for resumption of horse slaughter in the U.S. She has also:

- [Lobbied for removal of wild horses](#)³ from public lands;
- [Endorsed the destruction](#)⁴ of "excess" wild horses and the unlimited sale of captured mustangs for slaughter;

¹ <http://www.aspc.org/Pressroom/press-releases/020112.aspx>

² http://myemail.constantcontact.com/PRESS-RELEASE--Dr--Temple-Grandin-among-speakers-at-2nd-International-Summit-of-the-Horse.html?soid=1103685263837&aid=FZ_vGWm1i2g

³ <http://www.wildhorsecoalition.com/images794/GatherListLetter.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.wildhorsepreservation.org/news/wp-content/uploads/advisory-boardmember-flyer.pdf>

- [Testified in favor of](#)⁵ anti-wild horse legislation;
- [Criticized wild horse advocates](#)⁶, including Madeleine Pickens, and Oprah Winfrey for featuring their cause;
- [Supported legislation to block](#)⁷ environmental and animal protection organizations from filing lawsuits.

Indeed the [official position](#)⁸ of Ms. Hendrickson’s organization is that *“The WFRHBA provides for the sale of excess horses. We support BLM selling horses to the highest bidder and not keeping horses in long-term holding facilities providing a \$40 million savings to the taxpayer and provide a revenue stream to the BLM.”*

Not only is this position not representative of the general public, but also it is at odds with the Obama Administration’s stated position on wild horse management. More troubling, we understand that the present “public interest” member, Janet Jankura, applied for a second term, but was rejected. During her tenure, Ms. Jankura appeared to take her role as a public representative seriously, particularly when it came to how the board and the BLM were considering public comments.

Also troubling is the reappointment of Boyd Spratling to the “veterinary medicine” slot. As the past president of the Nevada Cattlemen’s Association, his is yet another voice for the livestock industry on this board. We are aware that at least one qualified equine veterinarian applied for this position.

The recent livestock industry appointments to the board follow last year’s appointment of Jim Stephenson to represent “Natural Resource Management.” Mr. Stephenson manages wild horses for the Yakima tribe and advocates for slaughter as a management tool. The Yakima have been at the forefront of lobbying efforts to restore horse slaughter in the U.S. for domestic and wild horses. As expected, as a member of the Advisory Board, Stephenson has advocated for the BLM to institute a policy of lethal management for wild horses removed from the range.

In 2010, the BLM appointed Paul Durbin to represent “Wildlife Management” interests on the board. Durbin is a member of three hunting organizations that lobby for the removal of burros and wild horses in order to increase forage for big game animals as well as the hunting of horses and burros to “cull” the herds. (See these articles for more information: [Horseback Magazine](#)⁹ and [Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation Op-Ed](#)¹⁰.)

⁵<http://www.leg.state.co.us/Clics/Clics2011A/commsumm.nsf/b4a3962433b52fa787256e5f00670a71/c6a0545ff3d9b1d687257880006c4675?OpenDocument>

⁶<http://news.gather.com/viewArticle.action?articleId=281474979365212>

⁷http://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=242096332511852&id=87179323886

⁸<http://library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1103685263837-46/WHB+AdvBrdComments++conservation+dist.pdf>

⁹<http://horsebackmagazine.com/hb/archives/1192>

¹⁰<http://themustangproject.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/press-release-rocky-mtn-elk-foundation-jan-15-2010.pdf>

Mr. Abbey, you have promised to deliver change to the federal wild horse program, yet all that has been seen is more of the same. In the next few months, your agency will have removed so many wild horses from public lands that the number of mustangs stockpiled in government holding facilities will surpass 50,000. As the BLM removes more and more horses from the range, the pressure to slaughter them will continue to grow. The American public is strongly against slaughtering America's wild horses, but the agenda of the BLM, as evidenced by its stacking of the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board, is certainly open to question. Indeed, just four years ago, the BLM was undergoing detailed planning for the slaughter of wild horses in BLM facilities.

The BLM's attempt to portray Ms. Hendrickson as a representative of the public is disingenuous and must be immediately rescinded in place of a nominee who truly represents the interests of the American public, which supports humane and fiscally-sound wild horse management and overwhelmingly opposes horse slaughter.

Thank you for your consideration.



Suzanne Roy
Campaign Director
American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign
Tel: 919-697-9389
Email: sroy@wildhorsepreservation.org

cc: Acting Deputy Director (Programs and Policy): Neil Kornze, nkornze@blm.gov,
Chief of Staff: Janet Lin, janet_lin@blm.gov