

A different kind of wild horse sanctuary

By Larry Hyslop



Horses on the National Mustang Association sanctuary

Elko County has the Northeastern Nevada Wild Horse Eco-sanctuary, sponsored by Madeline Pickens' Saving America's Mustangs. Barclay, Nevada, has a horse sanctuary sponsored by the National Mustang Association (NMA). These groups approach a horse sanctuary much differently.

The NMA is quite proud of the fact that they have never asked the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for any money. As a matter of fact, they pay the BLM grazing fees for some of their privately-owned horses to graze a public land allotment. The BLM offered Saving America's Mustangs the same type of arrangement but Ms. Pickens preferred to be paid to care for BLM horses.

The NMA began in 1965 and bought a ranch that already had a grazing permit set up for horses. As the domestic horses died off, they brought in gathered wild horses. Today, they care for 65 geldings and mares. Their maximum number of horses is considered to be 72 on 640 acres of private land, including 26 horses that spend six-months on a grazing allotment of 7,700 acres.

Their sanctuary horses all carry the BLM freeze brand. Some were adopted directly from the BLM. Some were bought, such as a program through the Ford Motor Company where the company offered horses for \$2 a head but gave back \$100 per head to the adopters. The NMA bought 10 geldings and 10 older mares through that program. Today, most horses come from people who adopted a BLM horse but could not keep it. In such cases, the NMA asks for a donation but does not require it.

All operating money comes from donations from group members. They have an office in Cedar City, Utah and maintain a web site at nmautah.org.

June Sewing is the Executive Secretary of the NMA and also a member of the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board. "We want viable horses on healthy rangelands", June said. The group carries this idea beyond their sanctuary. They have worked with the BLM to improve springs and reseed burned ground on Herd Management Areas in both Utah and Nevada. They have bought materials to bring water to wild horses at the Nevada Wild Horse Range. They gave \$100,000 to develop the Gunnison Prison Wild Horse Program in Utah, where inmates tame wild horses. They work with the Sulfur Herd on Utah's Mountain Home Herd Management Area, located in the Needle Mountain Range. These horses still hold many of the Spanish Barb traits.

When I asked June about the Northeastern Nevada Wild Horse Eco-sanctuary, she said that program will not help alleviate the BLM's money problem since that program is asking to be paid only slightly less than the cost to keep horses in short-term holding facilities.

Elko Daily Free Press, "Nature Notes", 4/27/2013
© Gray Jay Press, Elko, NV

Return to [Elko Nature Notes](#)