

Equine Welfare Trust Fund ~ Karen Herman, PhD, Sky Mountain Wild Horse Sanctuary

What if we get the challenge of health for our equines and our environment right?

What if together, the New Mexico legislature and our communities, tribal nations, and equine organizations work for equine health, the health of our environment, and balance for the future?

- NM has a strong network of equine rescues and sanctuaries licensed by the NMLB and is leading in innovations for on-range management for wild and free-roaming horses.
- A snapshot of work for equines in our state – 13 starving free-roaming horses were rounded up by the NMLB September 2023 – one of the 13 with her foal.



- Several of the 12 licensed equine organizations in NM collaborated to successfully bid on each of the 13 horses, and this mare and foal came to Sky Mountain Wild with 1 additional mare.
- We invested in three months of daily care and skilled veterinary medicine worth thousands of dollars, narrowly avoiding euthanasia for this mare to restore her health. This was an extreme situation requiring a lot of time and funds; often, wild horses we take in go right into sanctuary.

We all hold differing perspectives on animal welfare, and investing in saving the lives of animals such as this mare is impractical at best, to some of us.

I invite us to honor multiple perspectives and to hold the larger view that addressing the suffering of animals and preventing degradation of our environment are worthwhile investments.

We can prevent suffering and ensure animal health in cost-effective ways when our animal welfare organizations have the staffing, facilities, and funding to intervene earlier. Specific to wild and free-roaming horses, we can help the range recover exponentially faster the more quickly we can intervene for these animals.

We are living climate change in our organization's work for free-roaming and wild horses, as are so many of us here in New Mexico who are tied to the land. We also see the power of working together for range, wild and free-roaming horses, and all wildlife that share the land.

The Equine Welfare Trust Fund is an opportunity to invest for today, tomorrow, and for our next generations for healthy range and to reduce suffering for horses. As we see here, the cost of not acting is starving animals and degraded land.

We ask you to fund this Trust Fund to build on the foundation we already have in place so that together, we scale up work for equine health, our environment, and resilience for both in the future.



Sky Mountain Wild Horse Sanctuary
www.skymountainwild.org