

and other visitors to the state.

In addition state government is requested to develop advertising and other tourist-related information featuring the wild horses of New Mexico

Significant Issues

GFD reports m Management of wild horses has some possibility of conflicting with wildlife management. Eliminating round up of wild horse with helicopters, particularly during foaling season, helps alleviate concerns of disturbance to wildlife species, especially ungulate species, during calving or fawning seasons. Depending on the location of the wild horse territories and the number of horses in each herd, there is a possibility of competition for habitat between wild horses and native ungulate species.

TD does not commonly engage in the development of events, nor does it usually take an active role in the planning of such events. It, however, actively promotes and advertises numerous events throughout the state with the intent to attract tourist to New Mexico.

New Mexico started out with twelve national wild horse territories but now has only three territories. The wild horse population of New Mexico on federal lands in 1973 was over six thousand, but currently the total wild horse population of New Mexico on federal lands is under four hundred.

Wild horses of Spanish colonial descent are part of New Mexico's living heritage and history, but they are endangered and may become extinct in New Mexico. There are increased efforts in the State to ensure the preservation of the descendants of those horses who came to the new world with the conquistadores, one means being DNA testing of wild horses and removing Spanish-line horses to separate preserves.

Like the buffalo, wild horses are emblematic of the old west, and it is the image of wild horses running free across the plains of the west that lives in the hearts and minds of Americans. It was with this idea in mind that the United States congress recognized that these living symbols of the historic pioneer spirit of the west were fast disappearing from the American scene and passed the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 to protect wild horses.

The wild horse is part of New Mexico's enchantment and essence and an integral part of the Indian, Hispanic, ranching and farming cultures. Although tourism is the second largest industry in the state, the national wild horse territories in New Mexico are not advertised by either the federal or state governments and the State, in particular, is missing an opportunity to draw thousands of tourists from all over the world who are intrigued by the history, culture and art of the American west;

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

This bill will require the redirection of some TD personnel to engage in activities not currently assigned, such as development of events. It might be possible to contract with people experienced in developing and promoting this type of event.

DW/yr