

Youth Get Involved

Did you know that there are still herds of wild horses that roam free on the vast open range of America's public lands? Sadly, our wild horses are being rounded up to be adopted or sold. During round ups, horses not only lose their freedom, but they are usually separated from their family groups. As if our wild horses didn't already have enough to deal with, a very recent change in the law now threatens thousands and thousands of wild horses.

The law states that all wild horses over the age of 10 and any horses that have not been successfully adopted after three tries will be sold at public sale yards and auctions to the highest bidder. These older wild horses have been sold for as little as \$1.00. The law has also changed so that wild horses and burros that are sold can be used for commercial processing (that means they can be processed for food in other countries or used in dog food production).

Just before Thanksgiving 2004, a Senator from Montana, Senator Conrad Burns, made a change to the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act. Senator Burns undid over 30 years of federal protection for America's wild horses. This Amendment is now known as "The Burn's Amendment" or section #142 on the 2005 Appropriations Bill.

Return to Freedom is working to change this law so that we can protect America's remaining wild horses.

What can you do to help?

Often, young people feel there is little they can do to help causes that they believe in. But you know what? Wild Horse Annie proved how much young people could do to help wild horses. There *are* things you can do that would help Return to Freedom!

***Organize a letter writing campaign**

***Organize a fundraising event to raise money to help protect wild horses**

***Volunteer at Return to Freedom, American Wild Horse Sanctuary**

***Sponsor a Horse or Herd at Return to Freedom**

Who Was Wild Horse Annie?

Velma Johnston, better known as Wild Horse Annie, and children all across the country were instrumental in establishing the first laws to protect wild horses in America. Johnston began a grassroots campaign that involved mostly school children. Young people from all across America sent letters to newspapers and legislators which attracted enormous attention, outraged the public, and made people aware of the issue. As public attention grew, some of Johnston's critics began to make fun of her and call her "Wild Horse Annie."

One day in 1950, Velma B. Johnston was driving in Nevada and noticed a truck with blood dripping from the back. She followed the truck and discovered that it was carrying horses to a slaughter house.



Johnston began to conduct her own research into how wild horses were rounded up by "mustangers"—ranchers and hunters that captured wild horses for slaughter. It was then that she became aware of how badly wild horses were treated.

Determined to make a difference, Johnston began a grassroots campaign that involved young people all across America. They sent letters to newspapers and legislators and attracted enormous attention. The public was outraged at the treatment of wild horses.

No matter what her critics did, she continued her fight—and newspapers continued to publish articles about the exploitation of wild horses and burros. In January 1959, Nevada Congressman Walter Baring introduced a bill prohibiting the use of motorized vehicles to hunt wild horses and burros on all public lands. The House of Representatives unanimously passed the bill which became known as the ***Wild Horse Annie Act***. The bill became Public Law 86-234 on Sept. 8, 1959.

However, this law did not include Annie's recommendation that Congress begin a program to protect wild horses and burros. Public interest and concern continued to increase and with it came the realization that federal management was needed.

In response to public outcry, the Senate unanimously passed a law on June 19, 1971. It became known as ***The Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971***.

Wild Horse Annie knew that young people could make a difference. At Return to Freedom, we know that as well. That's why we have started a program where your class can help us to help wild horses in America.

Youth Take Action!

In 1971, the President and Congress received so many letters from young people, who were concerned about wild horses, that they passed a bill called **The Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act**. This law was supposed to protect our wild horses and keep them safe and free on our public lands. Recently, **Congress changed that law and our wild horses are no longer protected.**

More than 8000 wild horses are in danger of being slaughtered because of this change in law. But there is good news! There are bills in Congress that will prohibit the slaughter of any horse, wild or domestic. The American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act prohibits the slaughter of horses in the United States. This bill is referred to as **HR 503** in the House of Representatives and **S 311** in the Senate.

Please write your Representatives and Senators, and ask them to support these bills. Young people can make a difference! Remember Wild Horse Annie and the children that helped pass The Wild Free-Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1971. You can do it! Now it's your turn to speak.

You can write to your representatives in Congress by addressing them as follows:

Write to you Senators:
The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, D.C 20510.

Write to you Representative:
The Honorable _____
United State House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Below is a sample letter:

Dear Senator/Representative _____,

I am writing to let you know that I care about America's wild horses and want to see them remain free in their rightful home, our vast public lands. As a kid, I am constantly reminded by adults of the importance of being responsible and I think that rounding up wild horses and allowing them to be slaughtered is not a responsible solution. Please support HR 503 in the House, and S 311 in the Senate.

In 1971 American kids spoke out and the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act was passed. Now my generation is speaking out on behalf of our wild horses, to remind Congress that kids still care about wild horses and want to see them protected. Please write to me to let me know where you stand on this issue.

Thank You,

Note: Be sure to sign your name, and include your address so that they can write back to you!

Return to Freedom

Youth & Classroom Sponsorship Application Form

Return to Freedom is dedicated to saving the American Wild Horse
as we create solutions to protect their freedom, diversity and habitats for generations to come.

Yes! My Class Youth Group or Individual would like to sponsor a horse
that lives at Return to Freedom!!

Be sure to fill in all requested information. Only fully completed forms will be accepted.

Date _____ Name: Teacher Leader Parent _____

Age or Grade Level _____ Total # of students in class or group _____

School, Group or Individual Sponsor Name _____

Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Which horse do you want to sponsor?

Maza Zi

Yellow Knife

Buckwheat the Burro

I/We are enclosing our first contribution of \$_____.

Please bill my credit card for \$_____. Name on Account _____

Account Number _____ Security Code (on back of card) _____

Exp. Date _____

Please briefly tell us why you or your group wants to sponsor a horse for Return to Freedom:

Where did you hear about Return to Freedom?

Please have your parent, teacher or group leader sign this form:

Signature _____

E-Mail Address _____

Please mail your completed application to:

Return to Freedom
PO Box 926
Lompoc, CA 93438

Return to Freedom is a non-profit 501c3 organization