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Trail rides at the Wild Horse Sanctuary. Photo credit: Shana Cassidy

Hello Friend of the Sanctuary,

The days are warming up and the spring grass is coming in. Besides providing a respite from rain and mud, spring means that the wild ones can indulge on sweet spring grass. It also means that we can reduce our feeding for a while – leaving hay in the barn for summer and fall.

The warmer weather also brings exciting developments to the Sanctuary. We are delighted to announce the return of our trail rides! Traverse the acres where the mustangs roam freely, see them interacting in their family bands and with nature. Availability for rides is somewhat limited, so check out the information on this page.

This past winter, the Sanctuary's Board of Directors outlined a plan to replace fencing in some critical areas on the property. Secure fencing protects the horses and burros in our care. It also allows us to pursue sustainable land management practices by cultivating native grasses in certain areas and allowing other areas to rest. We have mapped out the program but need your help to make it a reality. Can you help with the expense of new fence posts and wire? Can you help in demolishing the existing fence, prepping the land for new posts, and installing the new fencing? Please consider donating to this important project and view volunteer opportunities on page 4. Your support is critical to our success.

Speaking of volunteers, please see the article on Alaina Welsh, a 'next generation' volunteer. Volunteers are the heart of the Sanctuary, allowing us to run the 5,000-acre ranch with minimal paid labor. Many of our volunteers have been with us for decades, others are newer (and perhaps younger). We are grateful for all volunteers and are particularly seeking volunteers in the 20–40-year range. Are you interested and available? Do you know someone who is? Please contact WHS volunteer coordinator Liz Juenke at info@wildhorsesanctuary.org or 530-474-5770.

We are so grateful for your support. Because of you, our herd is thriving. We work tirelessly to make the range land safer and more sustainable for future generations of mustangs and burros with nowhere to go. Thank you again for your help.

Best,

Elizabeth Palmer
President, Wild Horse Sanctuary

Back in the Saddle Again!

We are thrilled to announce that trail rides at the Sanctuary will begin again in June 2024.

The format will be a bit different than in years past as it's our goal to make viewing wild ones from horseback accessible to more people. Call 530-474-5770 or email info@wildhorsesanctuary.org to learn more and reserve your space on a two to three hour trail ride in an intimate group setting led by experienced docents who are eager to guide you through nature's majesty, which IS the Wild Horse Sanctuary.

From Dianne

Dear Friends,

Thank you for asking about me! How grateful I am to have so many friends, as well as volunteers and directors, who care and are willing and able to do all the necessary tasks that I used to do but I'm no longer able. Many have asked what I am doing these days and where I am.

I'm very happy to say I still live here at the Sanctuary in the same house I have lived in for 41 years. And, I am enjoying the same beautiful views of horses out my windows as I am writing to you now. However, instead of being the one driving the feed truck or flaking the hay – now I watch as others do these jobs. As I wait for my first knee replacement surgery, I'm planning for the gardening that awaits my recovery. Also, I've been able to take a few trips to visit family and friends – things I wasn't able to do so readily when I was the Managing Director of the Sanctuary.

I have to say though, the most gratifying feeling at this stage of my life is appreciation for the wonderful supporters who have remained faithful to my vision for the horses and the Sanctuary – you – and our current directors who are doing a fantastic job of caring for all the horses' needs here.

Thank you all and please come visit if you are able! I can spend more time visiting with you now...

As always, warmest regards,

Dianne



Dianne and her cousins visit Slab City in the Sonoran Desert.

Mission Accomplished! No More Foals.

In the December 2023 newsletter we called out "castrated the very last stallion living on the Sanctuary" as one of our accomplishments in 2023. And, what a big accomplishment that was! We began our efforts in 2015 and completed them in 2023. Because the horses have 5,000 acres to roam and some have chosen to live in areas where food and water are sufficient to sustain them, we don't see every horse up close. We DO hike, ride, and drive the entire property to check on the well-being of all, but getting studs 'in' for castration took some time and doing! It's important to share that every castrated stallion is reunited with his family. The herd dynamics at the Wild Horse Sanctuary were not affected.

Over the years, we've been asked why we ever allowed foals to be born at the Wild Horse Sanctuary, which is a valid question. Here we share the rationale and some history.



Former stallion, Antonio (4th from left), reunites with his family after castration.

- When the first 80 horses were rescued in 1977, every male was gelded.
- Much concern had been raised about future survival and genetic viability of wild horses on public land. Hence, we began allowing some stallions to have harems. It is important to note: The horses and burros here at the Wild Horse Sanctuary truly self-select their family bands as they would in nature. Stallions have always chosen their mares and geldings from their own bands based on their preferences. We've never corralled or pastured horses together based on our preferences.
- We were the first organization to pioneer research with the University of California at Davis on reversible infertility in mares with the hope of giving horses a better life in the wild. That research led to the PZP vaccine, which is now being used around the world on upward of 50 different species of animals. PZP research would not have been possible without active stallions at the Wild Horse Sanctuary.
- The Sanctuary has also hosted various behavioral studies – to study horses in a native habitat for natural behavior, allowing reproduction is necessary.
- Foals born at the Sanctuary were offered for adoption to effectively manage the herd of approximately 300 wild horses and burros. These horses are wonderful ambassadors for the American Mustang. Adopters have shared stories about their mustangs serving as ranch and trail horses, therapeutic riding partners (children and veterans), and a number have been shown in dressage and jumping. Several are even in our saddle string of trail horses today!
- Everything the Sanctuary does is for the benefit of wild horses here as well as providing a model and valuable information to improve the quality of life of wild horses everywhere.
- Times have changed and the Wild Horse Sanctuary changed with them. There are more horses in government holding pens than ever. We are now well-positioned to take in even more in need of a permanent wild and free home.

How you can help

Visit our website for more information:
wildhorsesanctuary.org

Make a donation

No amount too small! Use the donation form on the back page or donate online.

Planned Giving

A gift through your will, trust, or retirement plan will help the Wild Horse Sanctuary continue to provide a safe haven for these iconic symbols of the American West.

Volunteer Spotlight: Meet Alaina Welsh!



Alaina, Kenzie, and Julian enjoy hiking and climbing trees together.

Alaina began volunteering at the Wild Horse Sanctuary in 2006 when she was 11 years old. She came with a family friend and worked alongside the adults. Now, a young adult herself, she's able to come to help as often as possible and boy do we appreciate her!

Alaina will do any job asked of her and steps up for some of the less glamorous work here at the Sanctuary, but her favorite job is feeding the wild ones. Over the years, Alaina has come to know many of the wild horses and burros who call the Sanctuary home and feeding is the perfect time for her to check in with her favorites. Alaina, an accomplished equestrian, has also helped us assess, acclimate, and condition new saddle string horses. And, during the summer of 2023 she and her boyfriend, Julian, collaborated with other volunteers to construct the new stage used for open house entertainment. Alaina said, "Seeing Dianne's face once the stage was complete was wonderful! Her vision brought to life."

When asked about a favorite memory at the Sanctuary, Alaina shared that she and other interns bottle fed and tended to the wounds of a foal whose mother was killed by a mountain lion. The foal was also injured, and the interns worked around the clock feeding the baby every two hours and keeping her wounds clean. They named her Yara, which means butterfly because she had a butterfly pattern on her face, and they felt like the name symbolized her spirit. Yara healed quickly that summer, was adopted out and is thriving.

One of the things Alaina is most enthusiastic about outside of her job is riding horses. She's been riding for 20 years, both competing and training young horses, and could not imagine life without them. She says, "I love horses for their quiet acceptance of who we are, for their willingness to learn and trust, and for all the other life lessons they taught me." One of the most valuable lessons learned from horses is how to manage stress and her emotions in a stressful

situation. When your horse is nervous you must be the calming presence. Alaina shared, "I find myself employing this mindset often when I am in a situation where I need to remain calm. I channel the feeling that I have when I'm helping my horse to stay calm."

Alaina is a second-grade teacher at an elementary school in the San Francisco Bay Area. Most of the kids in her classroom are from low socioeconomic families, most are not fluent in English, and many have hard home lives. Alaina notes, "There are so many crossovers between horses and kids, and it has been so cool to see the strategies I have learned for collaborating with horses, apply to helping my kids as well. The most important thing to me is that my kids come to school and know they have a safe, inclusive, consistent place where they can count on me. My job is so rewarding but it's also exhausting so having the Sanctuary as a place where I can go and work and lose myself in the world of wild horses for a weekend has been incredible."

When asked what she'd say to someone considering volunteering at the Sanctuary, Alaina replied, "I would say without hesitation, it can change your life! When I was younger it was a place where I was given responsibility and freedom to get jobs done and expected to have them finished at the end of the day. I learned the value of hard work and the satisfaction of completing a task, no matter how hard it was, how hot it was outside or how long it took. The Sanctuary is a place where life is slower and less complicated, which leaves room for self-reflection and self-discovery in the work we do and the adventures we have. There is a magic that I will never be able to put into words. I think of it as a sanctuary for horses and humans. The horses are happy and thriving there and humans can, too! I've met people from around the world and made lasting friendships through my volunteerism. I'm thrilled that Julian, and my pup, Kenzie, love the Sanctuary as much as I do."

Donate your unused gift cards

Do you have unused gift cards? Donate the balance to the Wild Horse Sanctuary! Visit the [How You can Help](#) page on our website for details.

Shop our online store

Logo t-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs, water bottles, tote bags, ball caps and visors available in a wide array of colors and sizes.

Volunteer

Whether you are a horse person, love outdoor projects, or like working on ranch projects, we would love to hear from you.



2024 Spring Work Parties!

Do you enjoy fresh air, physical activity, and working with fun people for a good cause? Boy, do we have opportunities for you! Winters at the Sanctuary can be rough. We've got a lot of winter clean up in front of us: brush clearing and burning, and fence maintenance and repair are highest on our 'to-do' list. People of all ages and ability levels are invited to help. Students, scouts, and church groups often have service project goals or requirements. Might you consider volunteering with us? College groups, we welcome your support. Please refer to the 2024 calendar of events in this newsletter for April, May, and June dates.

Calling All 'Young People'

Founded in 1978, the Wild Horse Sanctuary here in Shingletown, CA is the first and longest running wild horse sanctuary in the United States. With our founder and dedicated ranch manager living on the premises, a strong board of directors, and a committed group of seasoned volunteers working to protect and preserve America's wild horses, THIS IS THE PLACE TO BE! Many of our supporters have been helping for years – through financial donations as well as their time and talent. We are looking for the 'next generation' of volunteers to help carry the Wild Horse Sanctuary into the future. Check us out! Like Alaina, featured in this newsletter, you may just find it magical.

Events

Year Round: guided foot tours*

Year Round: internship opportunities*

April 18, 19 & 20: work party*

May 17, 18 & 19: work party*

June 28, 29 & 30: work party*

June and July: summer trail rides*


* For details or to sign up call: 530-474-5770 or email info@wildhorsesanctuary.org





September 28:

Wild Horse Sanctuary Open House

Seeking volunteers, vendors, sponsors & demonstrators

For details, call 530-474-5770 or email info@wildhorsesanctuary.org



 P.O. Box 30, Shingletown, CA 96088
  info@wildhorsesanctuary.org
 www.wildhorsesanctuary.org
  530-474-5770
 501(c)(3) Tax ID 95-3611770

Wild Horse Sanctuary Contribution and Order Form

Yes, I want to help!

Enclosed is a check for:

- \$50 to feed one unsponsored horse for one month
- \$150 to feed one unsponsored horse for three months
- \$600 to feed one unsponsored horse for a full year
- \$110 for one mineral supplement tub
- \$55 for one dewormer block
- \$18 for each calendar (includes S&H)

Contributions are tax deductible #95-3611770

Name _____

Address _____


City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

 **Please make checks payable to the Wild Horse Sanctuary**
Mail to: P.O. Box 30, Shingletown, CA 96088

 **Online:** Donate or purchase merchandise at
www.wildhorsesanctuary.org

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Protecting and Preserving Freedom for America's Wild Horses