



December 2024

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## 2025 calendars

Beauty and majesty through her eyes and camera lens....

Erin Crossman shares her artistry, which beautifully captures the essence of the wild horses and burros living at the Wild Horse Sanctuary. Only \$18 and free shipping. Order today!

Calendars are available online at:

[wildhorsesanctuary.org/store](http://wildhorsesanctuary.org/store)

All proceeds from this calendar go directly to the Wild Horse Sanctuary.



Our 2025 calendar features 12 stunning color photos.



2025 calendar cover

Hello Friend,

We've all heard the saying; nothing is constant but change.

Over four decades, the Sanctuary has seen many changes. Even more noteworthy, however, are the many aspects of the Sanctuary that, blissfully, remain constant: The rugged beauty of the terrain, the sunrise, the owls and the wildflowers, the kaleidoscope of horses streaming out of the trees for dinner, the commitment of the volunteers who show up on the most beautiful of days and the nastiest, and the steadfast donors who make it all possible. It is the perpetual tranquility of the Sanctuary, I believe, that allows us to embrace change.

Speaking of change, in this issue, you'll read how we said goodbye to our wonderful Wild Horse Camp, the site of much comradery and fabulous meals for 30 years. The structures are gone, but the memories are undiminished. Please share your memories on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/WildHorseSanctuaryShingletown](http://www.facebook.com/WildHorseSanctuaryShingletown).

Even as we said a tearful goodbye to the original Camp, we made plans for Wild Horse Camp 2.0. Built of reclaimed materials from the beloved cookhouse and cabins, the new Camp will be much closer to the ranch. This proximity will allow us to connect people with the healing power of the wild horses and nature in more ways than were possible when Camp was remotely located. Check out the full Camp article on page 4.

We are pleased to announce that the Sanctuary welcomed 21 wild mustangs in 2024 (page 2). These latest horses, from different areas in Nevada, Oregon, and California, bring our total to 40 new horses in a two-year period. That means 40 more wild mustangs who will live out their lives roaming freely on our 5,000 acres. You have been introduced to each of them in recent newsletters; we would love to introduce them to you in person (a visit this spring?).

We are continually grateful for our volunteers, who enable us to make the most of your donated funds. Get to know volunteer April Stratton and new board member Sarah Lockwood, each profiled in this issue.

Through careful stewardship of your support, we have completed numerous projects all designed to ensure the health and security of the wild ones in our care. Please see our lookback on 2024 (page 4). We are excited about the opportunities 2025 will bring, and hope that you will be part of the future for the wild mustangs and burros who call the Sanctuary home.

Best regards,

*Elizabeth Palmer*  
President, Wild Horse Sanctuary



# From Dianne

Dear friends,

Years ago, one of our volunteers shared her personal reflection about wild horses with me. She wrote what I've always felt so beautifully. I'd like to share those reflections with you.

"The emotions evoked by the wild mustangs cannot be compared to those we feel for even our most beloved cat or dog. Their size, power and graceful movement uniquely represent the magnitude of their beauty. They demand environmental health on a large scale, yet they are capable of surviving, even under the most difficult circumstances. If we look, we find that they provide a reflection of our own most basic life struggles: the need to feel safe and secure, to be in control, and to exist harmoniously within a social structure. Losing them would be our tragedy; they cannot be replaced by other species. Diversity of species and overall herd health will be required for long-term survival. We should not view their existence as a burden to us. Rather, it is not only because of their historical contribution but the ways in which they continue to contribute to us today that we cannot afford to allow their numbers to dwindle."

Please come visit us if you can. Enjoy the magnificence of our wild herds in person. I am confident you will be inspired by their beauty and power as I continue to be.

– Dianne



Dianne enjoying the beautiful view.

## Wild Things, You Make Our Hearts Sing!

In September, October, and November, we welcomed twenty-one new Mustangs to the Sanctuary to live forever wild and free! Welcome Kota, Georgia, and Skeeter (WHS wait list), Spitfire (Devils Garden), Ladybug, Gemini, Dahlia, Texas, Rich, and Tina (Dream Catcher Wild Horse Sanctuary), Family band led by gelding Starbuck and his mares Rosie, Tansy, Kizzy, Stacy, Party Girl, Rosebud, Kit, Blue Mama, Lahaina, and Baby Jewel (South Reno 25/Wild Horse Connection). All lived together on a 100-acre parcel to give them time to acclimate to each other and the rhythm of the Sanctuary. All were released together on November 16. What a remarkable sight!

P.S. most need sponsors. Can you help?!



Evening arrival for the South Reno 11



Release day for 21 new residents!

### *How you can help*

Visit our website for more information:  
[wildhorsesanctuary.org](http://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: April Stratton

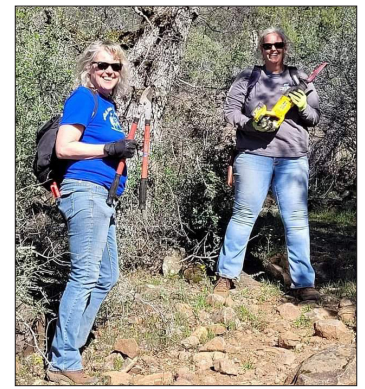
April Stratton was born a 'horse crazy girl' and has had horses since she was four years old. At age 11, she began cleaning pens at a local Appaloosa ranch in trade for riding lessons and began training professionally at age 14 under her instructor's guidance.

April started volunteering at the Wild Horse Sanctuary shortly after attending an Open House in August 2012. Almost immediately, she was recruited to serve as a backup rider for our two- and three-day trail rides. Riding with guests on the Sanctuary, getting them to camp, and ensuring all enjoyed their visit was April's favorite 'chore' and a bucket list dream come true. April says she loves all aspects of volunteering; from feeding, to sorting, to cleaning pens, clearing trails, and completing the daily chores. Working with other volunteers gives her a sense of comradery and accomplishment. She said, "Coming home exhausted from a day working at the Sanctuary is one of the best feelings ever! I love evenings by the campfire with my Sanctuary friends and looking up at the dark skies."

April loves the Virginia range horses who call the Sanctuary home; especially the South Reno 11 who joined us this past October. April shared, "Velma Bronn Johnson (Wild Horse Annie) lived and fought the battle in that area. Having some of these horses at the Sanctuary is exciting for me! Also, the area is near and dear to my heart as my father, before he passed away, lived in Carson City for many years and we would go out 'spotting' horses on the Virginia range and in Virginia City."

April lives in Redding, California with her husband of 38 years, Bob. They have three great children and two beautiful granddaughters, ages 2 and 3. She likes to think the girls will be the next generation of volunteers! April gives props to Bob for "putting up with my horse mania;" she has two horses of her own and sponsors three mustangs at the Sanctuary (Picasso, Oreo, and Blue Mama). She is grateful Bob ensures all Sanctuary vehicles and equipment get quality tires and repair (he works at a local tire store). April is looking forward to retirement soon so she can spend more time with her family hiking and paddleboarding and volunteering at the Sanctuary.

April says she feels lucky to volunteer AND sponsor horses. She believes sponsorship is a wonderful way for those who cannot volunteer in person to make a significant difference in the lives of the horses who call the Sanctuary home! Thank you, April, for all you do!



April (left) clearing trails with Liz Juenke.

# Director Spotlight: Sarah Lockwood

We are thrilled to introduce the newest member of the Wild Horse Sanctuary Board of Directors, Sarah Lockwood.

Sarah was invited to the Sanctuary in 2016 to consult on soil sustainability and pasture management. She is a professional engineering geologist and works for a geotechnical consulting firm in Santa Rosa, California. She visited with Dianne and quickly determined that our efforts were well established, and we were doing all she would have recommended. So, her interest turned to gentling young mustangs in the adoption program.

Sarah introduced the Sanctuary to a mentor of hers with expertise in mustang gentling and enjoyed several years of the Sanctuary hosting her mustang gentling clinic to prepare the horses for domestic life away from the Sanctuary. She came back at least once a year to volunteer at the clinic and for social visits between 2017 and 2022. Sarah adopted her Mustang, Denver (named after John Denver) out of the clinic in 2019 and spent several months visiting the Sanctuary twice a month, getting Denver ready to move home to Santa Rosa. During that time, she developed friendships with many other volunteers and board members. Sarah and Denver really enjoy competing in local Trail Obstacle Challenge shows and recently joined the Petaluma Riding and Driving Club Drill Team.



Patrick, Denver, and Sarah.

When asked what she likes most about being involved with the Sanctuary, Sarah shared, "I love the organism that is the land and the horses evolving together through the seasons under the stewardship of the board, staff, and volunteers. I love how so many people come from all over the world to visit and volunteer; how many are touched by the place, the energy, and the passion. I like what the Sanctuary, the horses, and the land light up in people. I love coming back to support the place that birthed Denver, with whom I am living all the horse dreams I had as a little girl."

Sarah's interests vary. She is a 4th degree black belt in taekwondo, a nationally certified instructor and teaches at a dojang in Windsor, California. She's incorporated her martial arts training and background into her horsemanship. Sarah says, "The heightened awareness of one's energy, emotions, body positioning and movements that martial arts develop becomes like an accent or nuance in the way I interact with horses and people."

Sarah and her daughter are HUGE Taylor Swift fans and enjoy attending her concerts. Sarah loves baking and cooking and has happily gone down the sourdough starter rabbit hole. She lives in Sonoma County, California with her two teenage children Jessica and Patrick; her Sanctuary-born mustang, Denver; border collie, Stevie Nicks; orange tabby cat, Morris, and her six chickens.



Sarah and Stevie Nicks help with fencing.

## 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

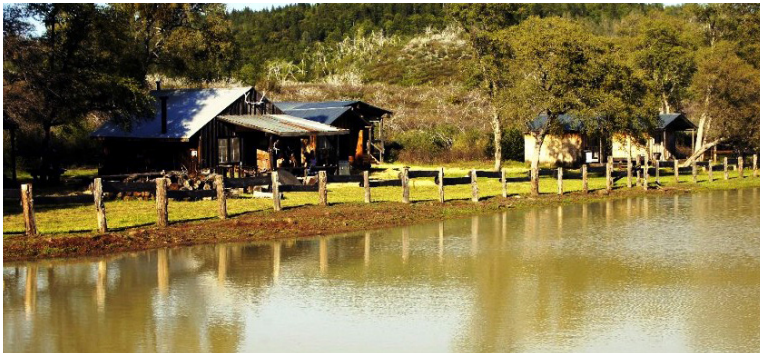
Whether you are a horse person, love outdoor projects, or like working on ranch projects, we would love to hear from you.

# Camp: The End of an Era

For over 30 years, guests escaped the routine of everyday life for a two- or three-day trail ride among the wild horses and burros living at the Sanctuary. After a day of riding the trails created by the wild horses, guests arrived at Wild Horse Camp, for a relaxing evening, which included sharing stories from the day around the campfire, watching horses graze near the vernal lake, enjoying a hearty cowboy barbecue dinner, star gazing, and then retiring to their cozy frontier style cabin.

Wild Horse Camp was a dream of co-founder, Dianne Nelson, which became real with the help of family members and volunteers. Over the last several years, maintaining Camp in the current location has become very difficult and unsafe. Because of vandals, squatters, liability concerns and fire risk, the Wild Horse Sanctuary Board of Directors made the extremely hard decision to disassemble Camp. Volunteers carefully dismantled each cabin and the cookhouse salvaging as much material as possible. All material was transported 'down the hill' and is now staged for use when we rebuild. It will take time, but we WILL rebuild!

On the day volunteers returned for the final clean up, all reflected on their memories at Camp. We shed a tear, we celebrated memories, held space for new beginnings, had lunch at the buffet table and burned broken boards. Camp holds MANY special memories for MANY people near and far and they will live forever.



# Looking Back on 2024. Looking Forward to 2025.

Thanks to you, our wonderful supporters, we accomplished SO MUCH in 2024. Below is a list of highlights:


- Received 21 wild horses
- Secured 400 tons of hay, 230 tons of rice straw, and 72 mineral supplement tubs: \$99,000
- Replaced one mile of fencing, repaired 1/4 mile of fencing: \$7,000
- Major and minor repairs and maintenance on heavy equipment and vehicles vital to feeding, seeding, loading hay and rice straw, maintaining safe fencing and fire abatement: \$38,640
- Disassembled camp: salvaged wood siding, roofing materials and mementos for use in rebuilding camp in its new location.


## Looking forward to 2025!


The horses and the Sanctuary need YOU! We are in the process of planning workdays for 2025. Please follow us on Facebook and check our website for more information. Below is a list of upcoming projects. Can you help by volunteering or donating to support our efforts?


- Brush clearing and burning
- Wood cutting
- Trail clearing
- Rebuilding camp



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 [www.wildhorsesanctuary.org](http://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

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

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[www.wildhorsesanctuary.org](http://www.wildhorsesanctuary.org)

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*Protecting and Preserving Freedom for America's Wild Horses*