



Pryor Mountain
WILD MUSTANG CENTER

FALL 2019 NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 385 • 1106 Road 12 • Lovell, Wyoming 82431

2019: A Year of Bachelors and Babies

Reflecting back on 2019 brings up immediate highlights of the exciting antics of the bachelor stallions and the precocious “cuteness” of the foals. Each year we have similar stories, but this year seemed to provide an extra dose of both on the mountain and the Dryhead areas.

The Bachelors

The bachelors are those stallions who do not have a family band of their own. They can be young or old and add a great deal of action and other interesting behaviors to the wild horse world. The bachelors of 2019 represent three distinct groups. The first are the older stallions who had been band stallions at one time, but through the natural changing of the guard, have found their way back into the bachelor world. Due to the social nature of horses, it is rare to see them alone. However, these older stallions seem to be as equally comfortable as “lone stallions” as they do in the companionship of other bachelors. In contrast are the young bachelor stallions who have moved on from their natal bands. These stallions tend to hang out with other bachelors and can always be counted on for high-paced action. Even the well-established band stallions can often be seen sparring with the bachelors. The third type of bachelors are those just on the edge of becoming band stallions. These stallions attach themselves to a particular band and “dog” them closely; just waiting for the opportunity to take the lead. A couple years ago, this type of behavior was seen by the young bachelor stallion, London, who, for some reason, attached himself to veteran stallion, Baja. Now in 2019 London has a nice band of mares, including the remaining members of Baja’s band, along with two foals. This summer similar situations played out with Naolin continually on the periphery of Garay’s band, Oro a constant threat to Nodin/Navigator, and the ongoing competition by Orlando and Miocene for Killian’s band. So whether on the mountain or down in the lower Dryhead area, the bachelors brought a lot of action and interest to the summer of 2019.



This type of playful action, as shown by Quaid and Oklahoma, was typical of the young bachelors in

The Babies

The foals are, perhaps, the most endearing part of the wild horse world. On the other hand, the foals can bring heartache as the mortality rate can be as high as 50%. The 2019 foal season began with a new one born to the aged mare, Waif. This foal did not survive long which made for a tough beginning. However, after that, fifteen more foals were born, and defied the statistics, with each surviving through those first fragile months of life. The foals are simply charming and easily capture the heart of wild horse watchers. They are playful, curious, and extremely cute. From the first hours of birth, they have to be up and ready to run to keep up with the band. On a daily basis, they have to persevere through the weather extremes from cold and wet to hot and dry. The foals spend much of their time sleeping in their beds of wildflowers and sagebrush. During their waking times, they follow closely beside their mothers, checking out the world around them. This year all the foals were named with the letter “T.” This serves as a reminder of their birth year in 2019. These young ones are a colorful collection of colts and fillies. They are a fine representation of the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse herd.



Tawa was born in mid-August. He and his family live in the Dryhead/Sykes area.



Tapaderpo kicks up his heels with pure joy on a warm day in late June.

Making a Difference...Hope Ryden

Hope Ryden was truly an individual who made a difference for the Pryor Mountain Wild Horses. In fact, in a 1984 article from the Bozeman Daily Chronicle, it was stated about the Lovell, WY people, "Many townspeople say there would be no mustangs in these mountains were it not for Ryden and the public outcry she gave the animals in 1968 when the BLM threatened to auction off almost all of the herd."

Hope Ryden was a blend of passion and drive. She had passion for the conservation of wild animals both in North America and around the world. This passion was fueled by a drive to make a difference through her courageous activism to impact change for animals. Among these were mustangs...beginning with the Pryor Mustangs. Hope came to Lovell, WY in 1968 as an ABC correspondent to report on the plight of the Pryor horses. Local residents and ranchers had formed the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Association in opposition to the BLM's proposal to remove all the wild horses from the Pryors. At that point in 1968, the situation had come to an impasse. It was then that ABC sent Hope Ryden to the area to do a story. Hope conducted interviews to learn both sides of the story. This led to an ABC news broadcast on July 11, 1968 which catapulted the Pryor Horses into the nation's attention. This, in turn, led to the establishment of the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range as the first public horse range in the United States.



*Hope Ryden
August 1, 1929—June 18, 2017
Photo shared by Project Coyote*

Hope's work was instrumental in saving the Pryor Horses. In addition, the Pryor Horses wove their way into Hope's heart. From that point on, she visited the horse range on a yearly basis, always with her camera and a pen in hand to photograph and document the horses. She stayed in close contact with local friends including Lloyd and Royce Tillett and Reverend Floyd Schwieger. These friends provided transportation and companionship up the rugged Tillett Ridge Road (Burnt Timber Ridge) to the top of East Pryor. As time went on, Reverend Schwieger would take her up the mountain and leave her there for days to camp alone. What a contrast from her life in New York at that time! She said when asked why she continues to come back to the remote Pryor Mountains year after year, "I only know I get hungry for the horses, the country, and the people. One reason is, I know these horses and I want to see how they are doing." It was a different world back then with the wild horses. Through time they have been very accustomed to human visitors. But back at that time, Hope found them to be very skittish and spooky when approached by humans. In an article in the Christian Science Monitor (Feb. 11, 1982) she said, "Eventually, I found that they would accept me if I first let them know I was there and then quieted down and stayed put. So I started singing to them from a long way off, as I approached the herd." She continued with this humorous anecdote "A local newspaper interviewed me about what I was doing up in the mountains, and I happened to mention this. Well, the story came out, and you can guess what the headline read: 'She sings to wild horses.'"

Hope served as an honorary member of the Mustang Center Board of Directors and stayed informed of the horses and BLM management decisions. Hope kept up with her Lovell friends, John & Lynda Nickle until her later years. John stated that in their frequent phone calls she always wanted to hear news about the horses. As John said, "She loved the Pryors and she loved the horses."

Hope carried on this type of passion and drive for other animals. She used her photography and writing skills to author and illustrate books and magazine articles featuring other North American animals such as coyotes, bobcats, eagles, and Florida Key Deer. Her list of accomplishments is long including the Joseph Wood Krutch Award given to individuals who have made a "significant contribution toward the improvement of life and environment on the planet."



*My Old friend Lonesome at Age Seven with his First Mares
Whenever I think of wild horses, I remember Lonesome.*

The photo and words, from Hope's book, Wild Horses I Have Known (1999) capture the love she had for these horses.

Hope Ryden died on June 18, 2017. However, a legacy of this magnitude will live on. Through organizations like ours, she carried on a ripple effect to best ensure her areas of passion will be supported. Hope's Estate, through her spouse, John Miller, is making arrangements to ensure her work will continue, both by transferring the copyrights to her numerous works and by providing financial support to the charities and projects she cared about, including the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center.

2019 on the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range Moving onto Winter...

The Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range is a land of four distinct seasons. Through their many years on the Range, the wild horses have adjusted to the seasonal changes. This change is quite apparent as the seasons change from summer to fall and then from fall to winter. The last months of 2019, gave a glimpse of both new life and death in the harsh conditions of this time of year.

It seems that September 2019 had all four seasons in one month. The month started out with a beautiful blue sky. The mountain horses spread across the upper elevations enjoying the full water of both Mystic Pond and Krueger's Pond. Grasses were dry, but nutritious and filling. The Dryhead horses became nearly invisible during September, despite high visibility through the rest of the summer. Several of the bands found what they needed hidden away on Sykes Ridge. During this time of year, wild horses have one goal in mind...to fatten up for the upcoming winter months.

One sad note at the beginning of September was the loss of stallion, Jemez. This handsome stallion of the Dryhead, lost his valiant battle to survive a leg injury. He will remain a symbol of both courage and fragility of life in the wild. Mid-September hit with a wintry vengeance. Cold, wind, rain, and snow pushed the horses from the upper elevations down seeking shelter from the storms. The horses are well prepared with their heavy coats and their historical knowledge of how to endure through the extreme weather conditions in their Wyoming/Montana home.

By October the upper elevations were pretty much closed off to the horses by a thick blanket of snow. This caused the horses to disperse into remote areas where they are largely unseen by human eyes. It doesn't take much of a hill or ravine to hide a horse and provide shelter from extreme weather conditions.

On the last day of October, a young foal was born to the mare, Jasmine, in Doc's band. While this presents some tough obstacles for a young foal, a strong mother and a supportive band can help it come through to next spring.



Broken Bow and Oklahoma find forage through the November snow.

While there are some Novembers when balmy fall weather keeps the alpine meadows open to wild horses and visitors, this was not the case in 2019. The horses are set in their routines that will carry them through the next few months until spring grasses and warm weather re-appear.



On the first day of September, Hickok's band enjoys the warmth of the afternoon sun.



Hamlet's band summers in the alpine mountain regions. By mid-November his band was on Turkey Flats, one of the lowest parts of the horse range.

2019 Herd Demographics

The Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range straddles the border between Montana and Wyoming. It encompasses over 38,000 acres of land ranging from lowland deserts to high alpine meadows. Each year the number of wild horses is influenced by factors such as weather, predation, and birth/death rates. The chart below shows the number of horses in a two-year time span. The population has remained very stable during these years with the difference in the number of surviving foals. In 2018, twelve foals were known to be born with only 8 surviving. By November 2019, fifteen of the sixteen foals born have survived. A study of these age groups shows a higher number of mares than stallions which is most significant in the 16

Age Range	November 2018			November 2019		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Total Horses	92	70	162	97	71	169*
21 and older	11	2	13	12	2	14
16-20	15	7	22	15	4	19
11-15	21	15	36	21	15	36
1-10	43	40	83	44	41	85
Foals	5	3	8	5	9	15*

* Jasmine's foal gender unknown at this time, but included in totals.

2019 at the Mustang Center

By Elena Garcia

This summer at the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center was very successful. Once again, Lynda Nickle took the lead at the Center. Her husband, John, was never far from the Center either. Lynda was joined by interns Kendra Price and Elena Garcia. We had visitors from all 50 states and 36 international countries. This added up to around 4,044 people who were interested in learning more about our beautiful horses. We discover that more and more people have become fascinated with these beautiful, cultured creatures each year. Our visitors find the story behind the mustangs and the Center to be interesting and they love to learn more. Along with sharing our story, the people who come to visit share their stories with us. We love hearing why they traveled all this way, their funny traveling mishaps, and other stories they feel like sharing.



Lynda Nickle and Elena Garcia continue to work at the Mustang Center for limited hours through the winter.

These horses create bonds between people. That was the dream of Reverend Schwieger and John Nickle when they envisioned the Mustang Center.

PryorWild Tours 2019

2019 was an exciting year on the mountain! This marked the sixth year of PryorWild, a tour company that is owned and operated by Steve & Nancy Cerroni. PryorWild provides visitors with an exciting and unique opportunity to observe the Pryor Mountain Wild Horses in their summer home on the alpine meadows. Tour season began on May 13 and ended on September 23. We traveled up the rugged road nearly 70 times. As one guest said, "The trip is half the adventure," as we climb from the desert lowlands and through the forest to get to the top of the mountain. This summer we enjoyed the company of nearly 300 people from 34 states and 8 international countries. Every day on the mountain is a treat as we enjoy the horses with new guests and those that return for another adventure with the Pryor Horse.

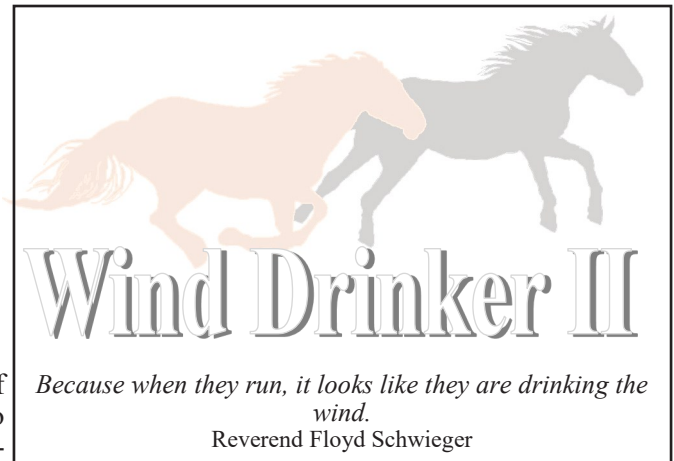
*Make your plans now to join us on a
2020 PryorWild tour!
Hurry...we are filling up fast!*



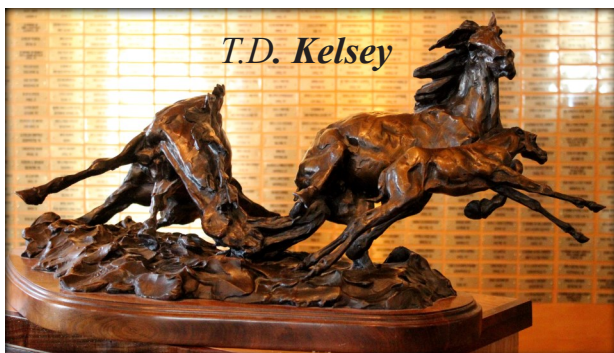
The Return of the Wind Drinker!

We are excited to announce the fundraiser, Wind Drinker II! One year ago we finished the Wind Drinker 1000 fundraiser as we reached our goal of 1000 gifts of \$100. The culminating activity was the drawing for the table-sized sculpture, "A Family Matters" by T.D. Kelsey. The winning ticket was from Bill & Linda Miller of Miller's Fabrication. They surprised us all by donating the sculpture back to the Mustang Center with the hope that it could help carry on the work to support the horses. After a recent visit with the Millers, we knew it was time to begin Wind Drinker II.

The premise of the fundraiser is the same. We will seek 1000 donations of \$100. For each gift of \$100, the name, address, and phone number will go on a ticket. Once we have reached the goal of 1000 gifts, we will hold another drawing for the beautiful sculpture.



A Family Matters



Make Your Donation Today!

The Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that is fully supported by donations, gift shop sales, and small grants. In order to continue on with our work to preserve and promote the Pryor Mountain Wild Horses, we depend on the generosity of people who share our concern for these animals. Check the Mustang Center webpage to see how your donations will help support the Pryor Mustangs. **Please use the enclosed form to make your donation today!**