



Pryor Mountain
WILD MUSTANG CENTER

FALL 2020 NEWSLETTER

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

2020 - WHAT A YEAR!

2020 has been quite a year! Coronavirus hit with a vengeance, changing our lifestyles in unimaginable ways. Who would have thought of a world with face masks, social distancing, and the constant shadow of testing positive? Then came the protests, riots, and a presidential election. Yes, it has been quite a year. The Fall 2020 Newsletter looks back at how this corner of the world with the Pryor Mountain Wild Horses has fared during this time. Despite the challenges and changes, the overall goal of the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center is to carry on to work for the future of the beautiful wild horses just outside our front door.



Phoenix, The Oldest Horse- Age 28

FOCUS ON THE WILD HORSES

Looking back through a year of photographs shows a thriving group of horses that adapt well to the everchanging and extreme conditions of the land and the weather. From a bird's eye perspective, not much about the life of the horses has changed through time. They continue to utilize their range of just over 38,000 acres. Both the mountain horses and the Dryhead (lowland) horses carry on their lifestyles of seasonal changes. The population of horses has increased on the last three years due to an increase in the foals' birthrate and a decreased mortality rate. Visitors to the horse range are often surprised to see such a healthy group of horses with their good body weight, sleek & shiny coats, and naturally maintained hooves. One must look closer to see the changes that happen throughout the year. This year a two-page insert has been added to the newsletter to better inform our readers about the horses in 2020.

Age Range	November 2019			November 2020		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Total Horses	98	71	169	104	75	180
21 and older	12	2	14	12	1	13
16-20	15	4	19	13	3	16
11-15	21	15	36	25	21	46
1-10	44	41	85	46	43	89
Foals	6	9	15	8	8	16

WORKING TOGETHER

The Mustang Center strives to work collaboratively with the Federal agencies who oversee the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range. In 2019, the BLM and the Mustang Center established a formal agreement that defined collaborative objectives. As part of the agreement, the Mustang Center shares data regarding the demographics of the horses, collects samples to use for genetic testing, and monitors/maintains water developments. During 2020, the Mustang Center, along with a dedicated group of volunteers, has worked towards each of the defined objectives. In addition, to the BLM, the Mustang Center is working with Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area on projects that will better educate and protect the wild horses that live in that part of the horse range.

The Mustang Center keeps well-informed on BLM management decisions. In April 2020, the BLM issued a scoping notice for a new herd management plan. The scoping notice defined ways to manage the herd to meet the requirements of the Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1972. After a thirty-day public comment period, the BLM has been working on the next draft. This will also be open for public comment. The Mustang Center will keep you well-informed of this and provide feedback to help make substantial comments to the BLM.

LYNDA NICKLE – FRIEND TO THE PRYOR MOUNTAIN WILD HORSES

The Pryor Horses have lost a great friend. Lynda Nickle died unexpectedly at her home on Friday, September 4, 2020. She was 78 years old. Lynda was a Southern girl, born in Mississippi. She and John moved to Lovell, WY in 1963. They loved their new home in Lovell and became a solid part of the community. Despite these many years in the West, Lynda's Southern background was always evident through her mannerisms and Southern drawl!

Lynda gained her interest in the Pryor Horses and the Mustang Center through her husband, John, who has been an advocate for the horses since the 1960s. She was right by his side throughout the whole process of the construction of the home of the Center from the groundbreaking to the grand opening. For many years, Lynda has been the face of the Mustang Center.

Chances are if you visited the Mustang Center during these years, Lynda would meet you with a friendly greeting and boundless enthusiasm to share information about "her" beloved horses. Lynda has not only been the face of the Mustang Center, she has been the backbone as well. Through the years she has volunteered countless hours to keep the Center's operations running smoothly. It is quite impossible to imagine the Mustang Center without the steady presence of Lynda Nickle. As her family stated, "What started as John's vision, became Lynda's passion."

In June of 2020, Lynda was diagnosed with cancer. She faced this challenge with optimism and courage and had just had her first treatment to help her on a road to recovery. However, this was not to be as Lynda died peacefully in her home with husband, John, and daughter, Terry, by her side. A gathering for Lynda was held at the Mustang Center at on Thursday, September 10, 2020. This was a quiet event where Lynda's family and many friends from Lovell and the surrounding area gathered to pay their respects. In a private ceremony, the family scattered Lynda's ashes on the horse range....one of her favorite places to be. In lieu of flowers, the family asked that donations be made in Lynda's name to the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center to help support her legacy of work on behalf of the wild horses. This created an outpouring of donations from Lynda's many friends and family members. The Mustang Center sincerely thanks each one of you who generously made a donation for Lynda.- These funds will be carefully used to benefit the Pryor Horses in a way that would best reflect Lynda's long time passion.



CHANGING DUTIES

The death of Lynda left a hole in our hearts, but also a hole in the operation of the Mustang Center. In response, we've done some re-organization of personnel in order to best carry on the goals of the Center and ensure a seamless transition. Board member, Jason Beal, agreed to step up to the position of board chairman. Jason has served well as a board member for many years. He brings a strong educational background and career experiences to the helm of the Center. Jason replaces Nancy Cerroni as she moves to the position of Director of Operations. She and her husband, Steve, will handle the day-to-day operations of the Center and the facilities. John Nickle will continue in his role as vice president. Kate Allred will step in as secretary/treasurer. Matthew Dillon will remain on the board as well. Diane Granger stepped in at a critical time when Elena Garcia headed off to college. Diane resigned from the board in order to work at the Center part time. In addition, Kristen Grant willingly took on the position to work in the afternoons. The goal was to keep the Mustang Center operating as normal as possible – the way Lynda would have liked it.



Let us know...If you would like to go "paperless" and receive future Newsletters through email; write to us at:
pryormustangs00@gmail.com

2020 - A YEAR OF CHALLENGE

2020 was a unique year that brought unforeseen challenges to the Mustang Center. A large part of this was due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Even small-town Lovell, WY was not immune from the challenges presented by this unprecedented event. While our county was largely isolated from the virus at the first part of the year, both the Mustang Center and the tour business, PryorWild, were forced to change operations to meet state and county regulations. The summer of 2020 brought change of a different nature to the Mustang Center with the loss of our friend and director, Lynda Nickle.

PRYOR MOUNTAIN WILD MUSTANG CENTER

The year at the Mustang Center started out in a typical fashion with a quiet “off-season” taking care of the building and our resident horses; making sure that all was well during the cold winter months and into the spring. As March approached, there was uncertainty if the Center could even be opened. Wyoming, like the rest of the world, was shutdown. By mid-May, state and county regulations began relaxing. A business plan was written and accepted to re-open the Center following the updated guidelines. Lynda Nickle boldly stepped up to the plate and opened the doors to the Mustang Center. She was joined by recent Lovell High School graduate, Elena Garcia, to share the Pryor Horses with the public. The two didn’t let masks and other precautionary measures diminish their enthusiasm. As normal, they welcomed each visitor into the Center and took the time to answer questions about the heritage and history of the Pryor Horses and explain where they would most likely find them out on the Range. It was mid-summer when Lynda’s illness began the next big change. This was the height of the visitors to the Center. Elena didn’t hesitate to take the reins and single-handedly took care of the work at the Center while Lynda continued to handle her bookkeeping duties from home. Change continued in mid-August when it was time for Elena to move off to her new life at college. At this point, we had to quickly find someone who could keep the doors open to continue greeting visitors to carry on the work of the Mustang Center. Diane Granger, a longtime board member, stepped in and took on the morning duties, while Kristen Grant, worked the afternoon hours. At the beginning of September, Lynda’s unexpected death forced a major change. The board restructured to try to fill the enormous void of her loss and carry on with the mission of the Mustang Center to help preserve the future of the Pryor Horses.



The pandemic certainly impacted the numbers of visitors during the summer of 2020. In a typical summer, around 4,000 people come from every state in the US and a large number of international countries. This year, the number of visitors was cut in half. These visitors came from nearly every state but only a few international guests stopped by.

For more information about the Mustang Center go to www.pryormustangs.org

PRYORWILD TOURS

Since 2014, the Mustang Center has worked hand-in-and with PryorWild Tours. This provides visitors an opportunity to view the large group of horses that spend their summer in the alpine part of the wild horse range. The tour season of 2020 was definitely altered by the pandemic. Due to restrictions, tours did not begin until June 1. At that point, tours began with precautionary measures, including the use of masks, limiting guests in the vehicles, and no meals provided were in place. However, the wild horses in their beautiful land provided the same unforgettable experiences despite the restrictions. There was no pandemic, it seemed, to these magnificent horses. It was business as usual for them, with their wild activities. The number of tour guests was definitely impacted with about half the number of a usual summer. Our visitors did represent 26 states from most regions of the United States. It was noticed that a number of the guests were from nearby states who were looking for a last minute get-away. Our biggest change was the loss of virtually all of our international guests, who reluctantly cancelled tours with the hope of trying again next year! Many international guests as well as our United States guests that cancelled this year, have already booked for 2021!



For more information about the PryorWild Tours go to www.pryorwild.com

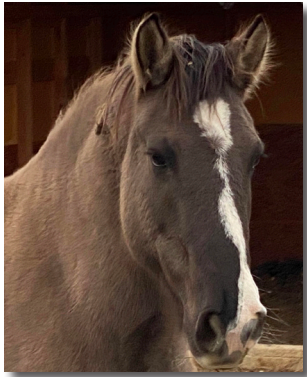
The Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center is dedicated to preserving the future of the wild horses of the Pryor Mountains.

The Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center is a public, nonprofit 501(c)(3) educational institution. The work of the Center this year and into the next are provided to meet the major guiding purposes of the organization to inform & and educate visitors about the dynamics of the Pryor Mountain Wild Horses.



THE MUSTANG CENTER:

- Maintain operations of building and facilities.
- Have knowledgeable staff to inform the public about the horses and where to best view the horses on a daily basis.
- Enhance the information provided by the Center through new and updated displays.
- Produce unique, one-of-a-kind products focusing on the beauty and unique characteristics and lifestyles of the Pryor Horses.



Mercuria

MUSTANG CENTER WILD HORSES: The Mustang Center has three adopted Pryor Horses, Stiles, Mercuria, and Paquita residing in our 12-acre pasture. This gives them a safe, home to live and provides a living exhibit to showcase the color, conformation, and behaviors of Pryor Horses. The use of donations makes it possible to fund the objectives to care for the horses and their home at the Mustang Center:

- Purchase of hay to get the mustangs through the winter months.
- An emergency situation with an underground water leak required complete installation of a new water system.
- Fence off an area of the pasture for a drylot. This will allow better pasture growth and the ability to grow our own hay for future use.

OUTREACH:

- Presentations for school and community groups. In the fall of 2020, we had the pleasure of hosting Cooke City Elementary School (Montana) and the Lovell Elementary School 5th Grade!
- A commitment to update and improve the Mustang Center website.
- Communicate with public questions and concerns through email and phone calls.
- Best utilize social media, primarily FaceBook, to provide up-to-date photos and information for the national and international community.

PRESERVE THE FUTURE OF THE PRYOR MOUNTAIN WILD HORSES: The Mustang Center works towards the future of the wild horses on the Range through work with the Federal agencies responsible for the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Management:

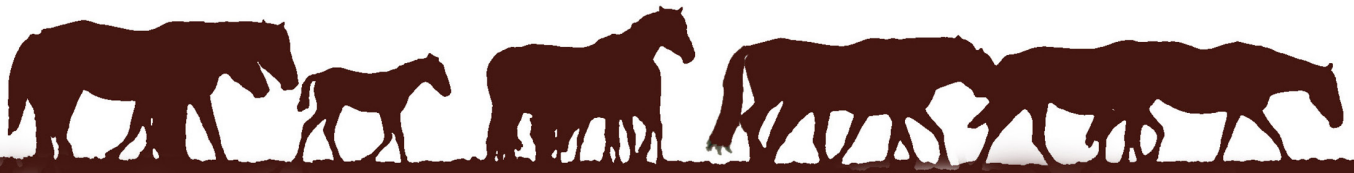
- Stay well-prepared when BLM management decisions are pending:
 - Maintain a variety of records to document herd demographics.
 - Educate and inform the public of major components of the proposed plan.
 - Develop and submit thorough and relevant comments in response to BLM management proposals.
- Utilize a volunteer group to meet the agreements with the BLM:
 - Monitor the ten water developments across the horse range.
 - Organize and implement a DNA study using fecal samples.
- Continue collaborative efforts with the staff at Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area on suggested projects.



Doc's band drinks at a water guzzler on Burnt Timber Ridge

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS AND ASK FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT THAT ALLOWS THE MUSTANG CENTER TO CARRY ON THE WORK TO PRESERVE THE FUTURE OF THE PRYOR MOUNTAIN WILD HORSES.

Jason Beal, John Nickle, Matthew Dillon, Kate Allred, Steve & Nancy Cerroni, Elena Garcia, Diane Granger, and Kristen Grant



PRYOR HORSES - A YEAR IN REVIEW

THE EARLY YEARS

Life for all wild horses is filled with challenge starting with their births. In March, the first foal of the year was born. The foal, a male, was named Uinta to begin the first of 16 foals born in the “U” year. Every single one of these foals is alive at this point in the year. The mares bond quickly with the young foals. The mother, along with the other mares in the band, form a network of support to protect and nurture the little ones. The young horses tend to stay with the family, or natal, bands throughout their two first years of life. It is as two-year olds that change begins. This year, Sophia, the two-year old daughter of Garcia and Greta, joined up with stallion, Banjo Paterson. Silver Bow, at the same age, remains with her mother, Quillan. Colts, Stillwater, Sorcerer, and Sirius remained with their natal band as two-year olds during 2020. Meanwhile at the same age, Shoshone, Sentinel, and Sundance ventured out into the bachelor world.

LIFE AS A BACHELOR

It is a big change in the lives of the young colts as they move into the bachelor world. From that point on, life’s adventures truly begin in the role of bachelor stallion. The bachelors are those stallions, young and old, who do not have a band of their own. The bachelors range in age from the two-year olds to Mescalero, at age 21. Currently, there are 26 bachelor stallions on the mountain and in the lowland area called the Dryhead. In some cases, the bachelors remain alone. This is typically true of the older bachelors like Mescalero, Bolder, and Cappuccino. At times, these lone stallions join temporarily with the bachelor bands to satisfy their innate need for companionship, but most often they stay solitary. Many days in 2020, gave moments of action as the bachelors engaged in everything from playful sparring to full-out battle with band stallions.

Band stallion, Nodin/Navigator goes strong against bachelor stallion, Jupiter.



DIANE’S STORY

Diane Granger of the Mustang Center, spent most every early morning this summer out in the Dryhead. She witnessed amazing scenes with the seven foals born in that area. Listen to her story...



Umatilla & Unity

This has been a crazy year. Not working most of the year has given me the opportunity to visit the Dryhead almost every day. I’ve enjoyed all the babies this year from the first glimpse of Uinta to the last baby on the Dryhead, Ursula. How about Phantom’s little orange babe, Unity? The best fun was watching Johnston’s and Fools Crow’s bands intermingle. Baby Uushawata would go visit Unity and Umatilla. She was so intrigued with them. She’d go off and join their band until Mama Niobrara would look up as if to say, “Not again, where’s the kid?” She’d give a whinny and the baby would come back a runnin’.

SATELLITE BACHELORS

In 2020, several bachelors played roles as satellites to band stallions. For some unknown reason, a bachelor will attach itself to a family band and hover around the edges of the group. At first, the second stallion “dogs” behind the band which causes pressure on the band leader. Through time the two seem to form a truce with more interaction and less confrontation occurring. This can be a win-win situation as it gives an extra line of defense for the band stallion and is and a source of companionship for the bachelor.

Naolin has spent the past few years in the shadow of Garay’s band. Orlando has been a boisterous adversary to Killian for years as well. The stallion can be a former band stallion as in the case of Galaxy. For much of the year, Galaxy has trailed right along with Mica’s band which was previously part of Galaxy’s large band. Galaxy and Mica have formed a tentative truce. Galaxy seems quite content to just be close to his former mares.



BANDS & BAND INTERCHANGE

The family band is central to wild horse society. Consisting of a stallion, one or more mares, and offspring, the bands work together to meet their basic needs for food, water, shelter, protection, and companionship. Currently there are 27 family bands with 5 in the Dryhead/Lower Sykes area and 22 in the mountains. The band stallions range from the oldest, Doc, at age 17, and the youngest, Quasar, at age 4. The average band stallion is 10 years old. The size of the family bands range from Banjo's band of 2 to Irial's band of 11. On the Dryhead, Johnston has the largest band of 9. This is a fun band to watch with three 2020 foals. The average band size is 5. In the last couple of years, there has been a changing of the guard with the younger stallions boldly taking on the veterans. During the early months of the year, Bolder, Cappuccino, and Grijala lost their bands. It was tough to watch the downfall of Horizon this summer as the events played out in plain sight for several days. His large band was divided between Gringo and Nickle. This created a division between the very bonded mares as Juniper and Talia were separated from the other mares. Horizon received some serious injuries. With time and solitude, he was able to return to the wild horse society as a bachelor. On the Dryhead, Hickok became a target of the younger stallions. His pressure largely came from Oak and Parry, but by the end of the summer, it was Quasar who was able to step in and gain Nova, Prima, and the young Uinta. Intellectually, interchange is good for the genetic shake-up of the horses. The heart level is a different matter as injuries, separation, and sometimes even death are the results of such events.



Horizon in September

THE END OF LIFE AND BEYOND

In late January, a first big change of the year occurred with the loss of Jackson, the coyote dun stallion. At the age of 22, he took his final walk up a hill on Burnt Timber Ridge and laid down in his final resting spot in his mountain home. Jackson lived a long and successful life as a Pryor Stallion. Living beyond the age of 20 is a rare accomplishment for the stallions. They live a life of challenge from the time they leave their natal bands as early as yearlings. Right now, only one stallion, Mescalero, lives beyond the age of 20. This is not true for the mares as it is not unusual for them to live past twenty. At the age of 19, Blizzard, too, found his final resting spot in 2020. His sore and arthritic knees led him back to his home ground on Mustang Flats. More often than not, the bodies of the deceased horses are not found. At about the same time that Jackson died, his mother, Broken Bow, faded away. In that same general time period, the mare, Waif, and stallion, Tecumseh, at ages 23 and 22 respectively disappeared. While there is grief at the passing of these legends, there is a victory as they lived a long, wild life.

Stay current with photos and stories of these very special horses through the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center Facebook page and website:

www.pryormustangs.org

