



Pryor Mountain  
WILD MUSTANG CENTER

# FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER

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

## THE FOUR SEASONS OF 2021

While four seasons aren't unusual for the Pryor Mountains in most years, 2021 showed an above-normal intensity at times. The Pryor Horses are well-equipped to deal with the seasons by changes in their coats and body conditions. Their knowledge of the land allows them to utilize the resources to find food, water, and shelter during the most inclement weather.

**WINTER:** February 2021 entered with pure, classic winter weather with extreme temperatures, howling winds, and blizzard conditions. February's average temperature in the Lovell, WY area was among the coldest in the last 126 years with extreme cold hovering well below zero. Along with those, February precipitation was also higher than in most other years. By then, the horses' coats had thickened and lengthened. In addition, the horse has a mechanism to raise hairs to add even more insulating power to shield their bodies from the cold. Both mountain horses and lowland horses are found in the lower elevations during cold spells like this one.



2/7/2021: A day well below zero.



4/12/2021: Venus

**SPRING:** Even before the official first day of spring, the wild horse range was bursting with new life. Melting snow and occasional precipitation starts the growth of vegetation. By June 1, the mountain horses had made their way to the top of the mountain. Life carried on as normal, with the horses enjoying the early grasses that would replenish their body conditions. Foals began appearing, which always brings excitement to the range and promise for the future.

**SUMMER:** June weather hit with an unusual intensity, with both high heat and low precipitation. June's average temperature was the second highest on record. June's average precipitation was the lowest on record, with less than a tenth of an inch compared to the typical average of over an inch of

rain. July continued the blast of summer, earning the highest average temperature on record with, once again, low precipitation. The horses continued to fare well during these harsh summer months, however, the patterns of the mountain horses and the lowland horses changed as they roamed more than normal across the wild horse range.



8/7/2021: Relief at Krueger's Pond



10/1/2021: Seneca in Fall  
Photo by Diane Granger

**FALL:** By September, fall colors were fully evident with dried grasses and vibrantly colored trees and bushes. Two foals were born in early October bringing the total of live foals to 15. At that same time, the first blast of winter hit the horse range. East Pryor Mountain was covered in a thick blanket of snow. By mid-October, fall returned which allowed the horses to disperse across the range in their quest to build up their store of winter fat. Fall will transition once again into winter. This is not an easy time for the wild horses with all in search of food and protection from the elements. It is not an easy time for horse watching either as the horses know all the secret hiding places to help them get through until the circle of seasons brings them back to those first blades of spring grasses.

Weather statistics from the *Western Regional Climate Center*

# THE MUSTANG CENTER - MOVING FORWARD

2021 has been quite a year for the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center. In 2020, we, along with the rest of the world, wrestled with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. In September of that year, Lynda Nickle, long-time director of the Mustang Center, died, leaving us with the loss of a beloved friend and a wonderful ambassador for the Pryor Horses and the Mustang Center. At that point, the Mustang Center Board of Directors appointed Nancy Cerroni as the director. Entering into 2021, Nancy, along with her husband, Steve, joined forces with the Board of Directors to make sure that Lynda and John Nickle's work would carry on.



Steve & Nancy Cerroni



Mustang Center & Horse Facility  
Photo by Trudy Midas

The Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center opened its doors in 2007 to serve as a gathering place where people could come to learn about the beautiful wild horses of this area. To our knowledge, this is the only non-profit organization with a dedicated facility to support and preserve a herd of wild horses. The Mustang Center facilities consist of a log cabin, along with 12-acres of fenced pasture, corrals and shelter for the resident horses. Through board discussions, steps were taken to maintain and update the facilities to prepare for the 2021 season.

The log cabin houses two sections: an education center and a gift shop. This year the educational displays were updated to better inform the public about the history, colors, and behaviors of the horses. In addition, a large screen TV was installed that presents beautiful and current videos of the Pryor Horses in their own environment. The gift shop has been updated to include new counters, operational systems, and an expanded variety of horse-related products. We continue to create our own unique products that showcase the beauty of the Pryor Horses. An online store is in the planning stages. In the meantime, email us if you are interested in any products: [pryormustangs00@gmail.com](mailto:pryormustangs00@gmail.com)



Mustang Center Gift Shop  
Photo by Trudy Midas

This year, over 4000 people stopped into visit the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center. Visitors came from nearly every state. This year the international visitors picked up slightly with visitors from nine countries. The Center was well-represented by staff members, Diane Granger and Kristen Grant, who answered questions, and offered suggestions on where the Pryor Horses have most recently been seen. The Mustang Center truly has become a gathering place for the Pryor Horses.

**We are in winter hours...the best way to contact us is through email:**  
**[pryormustangs00@gmail.com](mailto:pryormustangs00@gmail.com)**

## MEET NEW BOARD MEMBERS!



The Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center welcomes new board members to join in our mission to preserve the wild horses of the Pryor Mountains. The members were designated by the existing board as individuals with knowledge and talents that will make them assets to the Mustang Center. Watch on our website to learn more about each board member: <http://www.pryormustangs.org/about-us/>.

### Board Officers:

- Jason Beal, President
- John Nickle, Vice-President
- Kate Allred, Secretary/Treasurer

### Board Directors:

- Matthew Dillon
- Joann Almlof
- Amanda Bennion
- Dan Coe
- Scott Hayworth
- Georgette Lewis

## PRYORWILD TOURS

Tour business is booming! Interest in the PryorWild Tours continues to be strong working hand-in-hand with the Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center.

The 8th year of tours was filled to capacity

even with some of Mother Nature's setbacks. Through the years our guests have found it thrilling to not only experience the wild horses, but also the entire Pryor ecosystem. Our tours take us from the desert lowlands to the summer mountain meadows that are a life-blood to so many of the horses. We invite you to inquire about tours for the 2022 season. Contact us and we will help plan a PryorWild adventure of your own.



**For more information about the PryorWild Tours:**  
**[www.pryorwild.com](http://www.pryorwild.com)**





To the West-Robertson Draw Fire



7:00 pm-Crooked Creek Fire

## FIRE ON THE MOUNTAIN

Tuesday, June 15, was a day to remember the old adage, "Where there is smoke, there is fire." By that time, summer patterns were falling into place. The mountain horses had made their way to the rich meadows so important to their livelihood. Most of the snow had melted. Wildflowers were beginning to show their colorful blooms. But on this day, the normal events of the Pryors were altered by giant plumes of smoke to the east and west. To the east was a fire on the Crow Reservation. To the west was a fire on the Beartooth Mountains. Both were quite a distance from the Pryors; and therefore, no threat to the wild horses or their mountain home.

It was only later in the evening, from a view from Lovell, that yet a third plume was visible on East Pryor. This started out as a small, wisp of smoke from the top of that mountain. In just a short length of time, the plume had erupted high into the sky with flames clearly visible from the Big Horn Basin. This one, unlike the others, held the potential to impact the Pryor Mountain Wild Horse Range.



To the East-Buffalo Pasture Fire



8:45 pm-Crooked Creek Fire

By Thursday of that week it was learned that the fire was burning just to the west of the horse range. However, there was still a chance that the slightest change in wind could jeopardize the range. As a precautionary measure, the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management closed all roads to the public to access the alpine areas of East Pryor and the wild horse range. This was understandable, safety is always top priority. It wasn't easy though to know this was the height of wildflower season, the height of foaling season, and exciting blasts of stallion action that often can only be seen in June.

Sixteen days later the road closure up Burnt Timber Ridge was lifted. The fire was still burning, but the decision was made to keep only the Pryor Mountain Road closed which was in closer proximity to the fire. The discovery of the day, you might ask, was that despite the chaos of the fire, life just carries on. The horses surely had to have an awareness of the fire, yet nothing seemed to faze them, they just tended to their business. Bands changed. One of the most noticeable was that Chief Joseph had succeeded in usurping Knight in the battle for Nimbus/Encore and Tor. It could be perceived as a surprise that 20 year-old Bolder, took charge of Miocene's band. Bolder was acting in normal mustang style and showed his true spirit. When the danger of fire passed, there was a wonderful sense of exciting normalcy with sparring stallions, playful foals, horses running, horses grazing, horses carrying on their lives in the Pryor Mountains even under the shadow of a fire burning just to the west. Why? Because that is what wild horses do.



### THE MOUNTAIN'S SECRET

Climb up the mountain and there you will see,

Wild horses that run to be free.

Wind blowing through their manes.

Galaxy, Doc, Tor - and so much more.

You get a great treat when you see,

Phoenic, Irial Encore, and Bolder.

Go up the mountain,

Find all the old and new secrets.

The mountain is great and you can see

Things you would never believe.

IT WAS THE GREATEST TIME EVER!!

Poem & Photograph by

Cassie Haag - Age 10 - First Visit to the Pryors

## PRYOR HORSES - KEEPING COUNT

Age Range	Fall 2020			Fall 2021		
	Female	Male	2020 Total	Female	Male	2021 Total
<b>Total Horses</b>	104	75	180	113	79	192
<b>21 and older</b>	12	1	13	16	0	16
<b>16-20</b>	13	3	16	14	4	18
<b>11-15</b>	25	21	46	23	22	45
<b>1-10</b>	46	43	89	50	48	98
<b>Foals</b>	8	8	16	10	5	15

### 2021 BIRTHS

#### NAMES START WITH V

V-1 : (Dece)	Virginia City Sue (F)
Venus (F)	Vesuvia (F)
Voyager (M)	Valhalla (M)
Vermillian (Dec)	Valor (M)
Viho (M)	Ventura (F)
Vivianna (F)	Violet (F)
Vaquera (F)	Valentina (F)
Victoria (F)	Vesper (F)

F-Female M-Male Dec-Deceased



Vesper

***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 Mustang Center helps carry out our mission on behalf of the Pryor Horses. The Mustang Center has four defined purpose statements that guide the work of the organization. *The Mustang Center depends on the donations of the public to make this work possible.*

**THE FIRST THREE PURPOSE STATEMENTS FOCUS ON PROVIDING INFORMATION AND EDUCATION:**

- *Inform visitors of the historic significance of the local mustang herd.*
- *Provide visitors with an unforgettable experience, viewing live mustangs in a magnificent setting.*
- *Educate visitors to learn about the dynamics of a mustang herd, the social interactions within individual bands, and the mustang's place alongside other species.*

**The Mustang Center provides opportunity to fulfill these statements through the following:**



**THE MUSTANG CENTER:**

- Maintain and improve operations of building and grounds.
- Have knowledgeable staff inform the public about the horses and best daily viewing opportunities.
- Collaborate with PryorWild to provide tours to the top of the mountain.
- Update and improve the educational displays.
- Produce unique, one-of-a-kind products focusing on the beauty and unique characteristics and lifestyles of the Pryor Horses.

**MUSTANG CENTER HORSES:**

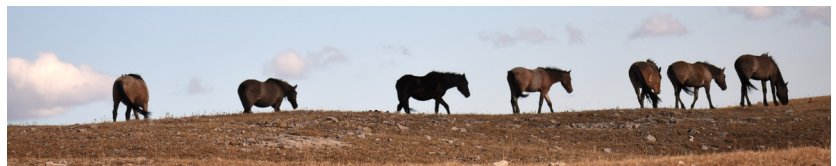
The Mustang Center has three Pryor Horses, Stiles, Mercuria, and Paquita residing in our 12-acre pasture. Donations make it possible to:

- Purchase hay to get the horses through the winter months.
- Install secure gates to ensure safety.
- Create a drylot area that extends the pasture for grazing and hay.
- Develop and display outside exhibits to showcase characteristics of the Pryor Horses.

**EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH:**

- Develop and share presentations for school and community groups.
- 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.

**Purpose Statement #4: WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM) AND THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TO PRESERVE AND PROMOTE A GENETICALLY VIABLE HERD OF WILD HORSES IN THE PRYOR MOUNTAINS:**



- Maintain a comprehensive database to document herd demographics.
- Discuss pending BLM management decisions. Inform the public and provide substantial comments to the BLM in response to the proposed plans.
- Utilize a volunteer group to meet the agreements with the BLM (i.e., monitor water developments across the horse range and continue the ongoing DNA project.
- Continue collaborative efforts with the staff at Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area on joint projects.

**WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS AND ASK FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AS WE WORK TO PRESERVE THE FUTURE OF THE PRYOR MOUNTAIN WILD HORSES.**

*Jason Beal, John Nickle, Matthew Dillon, Kate Allred, Joann Almlof, Amanda Bennion, Dan Coe, Scott Hayworth; Georgette Lewis Steve & Nancy Cerroni, Diane Granger, and Kristen Grant*