



*Spirit of the Ancients*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**7/14/22**

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# **FOREST SERVICE KIDNAPS ARIZONA ALPINE WILD HORSES**

Rapid City, South Dakota – On behalf of the International Society for the Protection of Mustangs and Burros (ISPMB), the FR Law Group of Phoenix, Arizona served the U.S. Forest Service for declaratory relief on June 28th to stop the removal of the wild horses that have been living in the Apache side of the Apache-Sitgreaves Forest for over 100 years.

In defiance of the lawsuit, the Forest Service, Alpine Ranger District, has removed the first group of wild horses from the Apache Forest in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. The organization was granted an immediate temporary restraining order from the court to stop the sale of these horses that are destined to be sold to the highest bidder, meaning slaughter.

The Department of Justice has refused to allow ISPMB access to these horses to determine the condition of these animals after illegally removing them from their homeland. These horses facing ‘sale for slaughter,’ are no doubt facing even more deplorably frightening conditions in their own eyes.

ISPMB’s president, Karen Sussman, understands the horror that these horses are now facing with their removal. “Wild horses, when undisturbed from roundups, develop very strong family bonds. To witness this separation is heart wrenching and the Forest Service will separate the families. This separation no doubt will be the first time since these animals left their natal bands. The stallions will be placed in a separate pens while their mares will be in different pens. The stallions will be crying for their mares and mares will be screaming for their stallions,” says Sussman. “Undisturbed wild horse herds work together for the good of the entire herd.” Sussman has witnessed family bands living together for their lifetimes.

ISPMB has filed further legal action to stop the further removal of the Alpine horses and is asking that that these horses be declared as wild and free-roaming under the 1971 Wild Horses and Burros Act of 1971 and that these captured horses be returned to the forest. These magnificent Alpine wild horses are descendants of those animals who lived wild and free on our continent since being reintroduced in the 1500s. Wild horses are native to the North American continent.

ISPMB is the oldest wild horse and burro organization in the United States. The only organization to manage in conservation entire herds of wild horses and has studied and observed their behaviors over 20 years. ISPMB was also the motivating force, along with its first president, Velma Johnston, known affectionately as Wild Horse Annie, in getting the 1971 passed through Congress. This law passed with a unanimous vote by Congress. The American people want justice for their beloved wild horses.

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