

Sanctuary in the Chico area sought for the Sheldon Wild Horse herd.

The Mustang Project is currently caring for 56 of the horses removed from the Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Although the horses were on the land before the area was considered a wildlife refuge, they are considered a non-native species by US Fish and Wildlife, and the entire herd is targeted for removal.

The horses' lineage can be traced back to the time before the Civil War when they were rounded up and shipped east for use by the military. These horses were used in wars in the U.S. and Europe from Civil War times all the way through WWII. Because they are not "protected" under the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act, and there are no holding facilities for these horses, USFWS uses contractors for their disposition. The Mustang Project applied for a contract when there was concern that at least one of the contractors allowed some of the horses to enter the slaughter pipeline.

"When the horses first arrived and were in the corrals," says Tracy Mohr, founder of The Mustang Project, "some of the horses were curious and would come up and eat out of our hands at feeding time. Not Ziggy. First he tried turning his rear and kicking at us. Then when that did not scare us, he would charge us with ears back and teeth bared. We're so happy to see him out grazing and roaming and enjoying his freedom again." Currently the horses are being boarded on a ranch in Stonyford, which according to Mohr, is not cost effective.

The Mustang Project is searching for land in the greater Chico area to create a sanctuary where the horses will be able to live out the remainder of their days in safety and freedom. The Mustang Project is looking for at least 80 acres, but an ideal property would be at least 200 acres. The property does not need to be fenced, although fencing and cross fencing/corals would be a plus. Other desirable features would be a well, barns and a habitable house or mobile (fixer ok), or a well, septic and power for a mobile home. Property should be easily accessible to the public, and less than an hour to Chico. The Mustang Project is looking for a donation of property, but would consider a lease-purchase or purchase. Donations toward purchase of a property are gratefully accepted.

"The average age of the horses received," says Mohr, "is 15-25 years old. These horses have lived their entire lives out on the range and are not adoptable. Without this sanctuary they would

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most likely end up going to slaughter, where many of the horses ended up in the past.” A few younger horses with leg or eye injuries were also received, according to Mohr. “These horses are absolutely amazing. Each one has a unique personality and it has been a great experience getting to know all of them. We are so very glad we made the effort to save them. What a perfect Christmas it would be to find land for a sanctuary.”

In addition, The Mustang Project has launched its annual hay drive with a goal of raising \$67,200.00 to feed the horses for the upcoming year. Donations can be made through Razoo:

www.razoo.com/story/Sheldon-Hay-Fund

. Donations can also be made through PayPal following the link from their website.

Press release provided by the Mustang Project. For more information, please visit: www.themustangproject.org/sheldon-horses.html

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www.facebook.com/TheMustangProject

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