

Colorado animal sanctuary to open 22,450-acre horse refuge

<https://www.9news.com/article/life/style/colorado-guide/wild-horse-refuge-colorado/73-b982e2ae-02df-4fad-bccc-a1742be6e783>

By Alexander Kirk, Feb. 8, 2023

CRAIG, Colo. — Five years after purchasing thousands of acres in southern Colorado, The Wild Animal Sanctuary has announced the acquisition of land in northwest Colorado.

The Colorado non-profit organization said it has purchased 22,450 acres of land near Craig to establish the Wild Horse Refuge.

Spanning 29 square miles, a landmass larger than Manhattan, the sanctuary said the refuge will serve to rescue and protect hundreds of wild horses.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary said the refuge is being created in response to wild horse round up operations conducted in 2021 and 2022 by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The round ups were conducted at Colorado's Sand Wash Basin and Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Areas (HMA).

"No one wanted to see these amazing creatures being disturbed in any way, let alone rounded up and shipped off to far away locations such as Cañon City, Colorado," The Wild Animal Sanctuary said in a statement. "Once there, the horses are held within a Federal Prison Facility where they wait for months on end wondering if they will ever be free again.

"Unfortunately, for the vast majority of the captured horses, they will never again feel the wind in their face as they are destined to be moved from one corral to another - both at the hands of the government - and at the hands of limited space horse facilities or private citizens.

"Yet, for some, there is a unique opportunity to regain their freedom through the love and support of those who want to protect and restore their wild spirit."

The sanctuary said the newly created refuge features rolling hills, canyons, native grasses, sagebrush, juniper trees, and water from Lay Creek.

The land was formerly operated as Rio Ro Mo Ranch, a large cattle ranch and breeding operation, but will now be dedicated entirely to wild horses.

There are plans to provide a home to as many as 500 wild horses.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary operates its main 1,214-acre facility in Keenesburg, northeast of Denver.

In 2018, the sanctuary opened 9,752-acre facility in southeast Colorado near the town of Springfield, called The Wild Animal Refuge.

A third facility located near Fort Worth, The Wild Animal Sanctuary: Texas, formerly known as International Exotic Animal Sanctuary (IEAS), was put under control of the Colorado sanctuary in 2020.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary Acquires 22,450 Acres of Land for Newly Formed Wild Horse Refuge Property

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-wild-animal-sanctuary-acquires-22-450-acres-of-land-for-newly-formed-wild-horse-refuge-property-301731745.html>

CRAIG, Colo., Jan. 26, 2023 /PRNewswire/ -- The Wild Animal Sanctuary, A Colorado Non-Profit Corporation, announces the recent acquisition of a large parcel of land located in northwest Colorado not far from the historic town of Steamboat Springs. With more than 22,450 acres of land spanning across 29 square miles, this contiguous parcel of land represents a landmass larger than Manhattan Island.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary purchased the land for its newly created Wild Horse Refuge, which will serve to rescue and protect hundreds of Colorado's native wild horses, which are also known as Mustangs. The Refuge is being created in response to the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) wild horse round up operations which began in early 2022 and were done within Colorado's Sand Wash Basin and Piceance-East Douglas Herd Management Areas (HMA).

The land, which consists of rolling hills and canyons covered in native grasses, sagebrush, and juniper trees, and features Lay Creek meandering through a large portion of the property, will be the perfect habitat for wild Mustangs to live and roam freely.

Due to its vast size, the newly formed Refuge is already home to an array of native wildlife, such as varmints, mountain lions, bobcats, deer, elk, pronghorn, dove, sage grouse, geese, duck, golden and bald eagles. The land was formerly operated as a large cattle ranch and breeding operation but will now be dedicated entirely to saving Colorado's native wild horses.

Formerly known as the Rio Ro Mo Ranch, The Wild Animal Sanctuary plans to carry on the tradition of being an excellent land steward as it becomes one of the largest free roaming wild horse sanctuaries in the United States. As the Refuge moves forward in the coming months, there are plans to rescue and provide a life-long home to as many as 500 head of wild Mustangs.

The Wild Animal Sanctuary has been rescuing captive wildlife, horses, and many other species of animals for more than 43 years and currently operates three other facilities for rescued animals. With a 1,214-acre facility located near Denver, CO, as well as a second 10,000-acre facility located in southeast Colorado near the town of Springfield, and a third facility located just west of Fort Worth, TX; total acreage for the organization now amounts to more than 33,000-acres.

Denver is located 4.5 hours southeast of the newly formed Wild Horse Refuge, while Salt Lake City, UT is 4 hours to the west. For more information about The Wild Animal Sanctuary or its Wild Horse Refuge, visit WildAnimalSanctuary.org or WildHorseRefuge.org.

SOURCE The Wild Animal Sanctuary

<https://www.kktv.com/2023/02/02/proposed-bill-colorado-would-prevent-horse-slaughter-human-consumption/>

Jason Fabrizius: “We’re going to have to move” if SB23-038 passes.

By Jenny Huh

Feb. 1, 2023

DENVER (KKTV) - Colorado lawmakers are putting forth a bill that would protect the state's equine -- horses, burros and mules -- from being slaughtered for human consumption.

The Prohibit Equine Slaughter for Human Consumption bill would criminalize any involvement in a horse becoming food for people. This includes slaughtering or exporting horses for slaughter.

Colorado Voters for Animals, a nonpartisan nonprofit that helped develop the bill, tells 11 News that horses are often exported to foreign countries, most often Canada and Mexico, for slaughter and consumption.

While it's not necessarily illegal to kill horses for consumption here in the U.S., all meat sold commercially must first be inspected by the Food Safety Inspection Service agency under the USDA. There's no such federal inspection process for equine.

11 News spoke with Senator Sonya Jaquez Lewis (D) and Representative Lorena Garcia (D), co-sponsors of the bill.

“Horses are an icon of the American West,” Jaquez Lewis explained. “We cherish our horses, we don't eat them.

These lawmakers say they hope horses can be rescued and sent to a “second market.”

“Our surveys have showed, over 90 percent of these horses are still adoptable,” Jaquez Lewis said. “Just because they can no longer herd cattle doesn't mean they can't have other duties.”

“Horses that can no longer carry riders, horses that are now too old to be active on farms and ranches, can also serve in mental health areas,” Garcia added. “They can be service equine in assisted therapy.”

But the law may not benefit all. Some Coloradans rely on the export of horses and worry the proposed bill could affect business.

“Honestly, if this bill passes, it'll be the worst thing ever happened,” said Jason Fabrizius, owner of Fabrizius Livestock, a northern Colorado kill pen.

Under this legislation, Coloradans such as Fabrizius could be fined at least \$1,000 and charged a class one misdemeanor. Legal punishments increase with each offense, and people eventually may no longer be able to own or care for equine.

Exporters such as Fabrizius say livestock are livestock.

“We've been in this business our whole entire life,” Fabrizius said. “It was business. It always been business.”

Lawmakers say they don't know how many horses in Colorado this bill would impact. According to the USDA, in the past month, more than 800 horses across the country have been exported to Mexico for slaughter.

The Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee will discuss the bill Thursday afternoon. If passed, Colorado would join California, Illinois, New Jersey and Texas as the fifth state with this ban.

11 News will track the bill's progress and provide updates.