

TESTIMONIAL

Carson National Forest, NM, 2005

By Dana Kulick

My husband and I recently took a trip to New Mexico. We live in one of the many subdivisions popping up everywhere in the state of MO. I, along with many other people I know, have always wanted to see wild horses. Being able to see such beautiful animals that have been such an important part of American culture thrilled me. When we got to New Mexico, we were told about a few small herds that were located in national forests, but that it would be hard to spot them. We were then told that our best chance to see them was in Carson National Forest. It was the largest herd left in that area with around two hundred.



As we drove down this dirt road, I was so excited to finally get to see a wild horse. I was expecting small, skinny, raggedy horses, but what I ended up seeing were magnificent horses that would excite any horse lover out there. We drove down into a big open canyon. It had the atmosphere of Yellowstone National Park. The only thing that was out of place were these big gas wells everywhere I looked. I couldn't understand why these were in a national forest to begin with. Isn't a national forest supposed to be enjoyed because of the untouched wonders of the land itself? I guess there were two things out of place. Along with the gas wells there were trucks going back and forth to these wells. Some were big and yellow and others were white with orange flags on the back. Off the main dirt road there were smaller dirt roads leading to the wells. There were so many I lost track trying to count them. Here we were twenty some miles down this narrow dirt road and the only thing we were worried about was getting hit by these trucks that barreled down the road! The trucks never slowed down or stopped when they saw us.

There was one nice man there who was a mechanic who worked on the wells that stopped. He lived on a ranch not far from there and said how he drove that road all the time and watched the horses on a daily basis. Along with warning us about the trucks that stop for nothing, he talked about the horses and gave us tips where to find them. He said how these were of Spanish decent. He also said that another bloodline of horse was released here to change the face structure of the Spanish bloodline (what for?). We were told not to go off the main road. If we did we could easily get locked in because there were small gates on the roads leading to the wells. One moment they were open and the next they were closed. We spent all day driving up and down this canyon looking at horses and for them; I couldn't understand why we were the only ones there. If only more people knew about this place where seeing wild horses was almost guaranteed, I'm sure we would not have been the only ones. What an awesome opportunity for so many different areas of capitalization. My first thought was people would pay money to be given a chance to see these horses surviving in the wild so well. If someone could study and oversee these herds flourishing in their natural habitat, they could record important data for the future of the last few wild horses in the U.S.

That day we got to see four herds. They ranged from five to ten in each small herd. The colors varied from buckskin, painted, black, white, and brown. There was one stallion to every herd that watched every move we made as we tried to photograph them. There were

foals that nursed and ran around without a care in the world. It was so neat to know these were animals that have been wild for hundreds of years. My excitement was mixed with sadness because we were also told that the government wanted to take several of these herds out of this canyon. My thoughts went to foals getting trampled on during a round up and stallions being killed because they are untamable.