



Sanctuary, Education, Advocacy and  
Conservation

# Annual Report

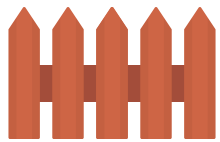
2016

[www.returntofreedom.org](http://www.returntofreedom.org)

# SANCTUARY

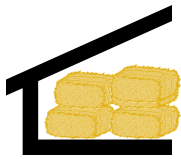


**379** wild horses & 46 burros live at our Lompoc & San Luis Obispo sanctuaries.



## 6 new shelters + fencing improvements

Six new shelters and fencing improvements were completed to secure protection from the elements for our growing population of senior horses.



### BUILDING A HAY SHELTER!

RTF's American Wild Horse Sanctuary needs a 48' x 48' hay cover that will protect hay from the rain while increasing safety and efficiency. RTF's current 50-year-old wooden barn is too cramped to meet our hay storage needs. A steel, open-sided structure built on concrete in an easily accessed area will give us safer, more efficient storage that is less vulnerable to rain and fire. In addition, greater air circulation will make it less likely that hay will grow mold and ferment in damp weather and make easier the unloading from semi-trucks and loading for daily use hay bales by our sanctuary's small staff. The new structure will also be erected in a designated "safe zone" with better protection in case of fire. It will allow us to buy hay at lower prices during and after the growing season, rather than later in the year when hay supplies dwindle and prices climb.



## 2 RESERVOIRS

Created 2 new reservoirs for water conservation infrastructure at both sanctuaries to collect and store more water, building on the heels of the grants from the ASPCA and Santa Barbara Foundation in 2015 which allowed us to pick up donated water for the sanctuary--saving tens of thousands of \$ in water purchases.

# ON THE RANGE

RTF is in development on a new cooperative project to apply innovative solutions we have modeled at our American Wild Horse Sanctuary for wild horses and burros on the range which will save

This minimally invasive model was designed to keep wild horses and burros on the range where they belong.

# MILLIONS TAXPAYER \$ ANNUALLY

## established wild horse CONSERVATOR PROGRAM

MOVED **65** WILD HORSES AND **16**  
BURROS TO SLO-SPRINGS RANCH

SAVING \$25,000 IN MONTHLY HAY COSTS

**11 RESCUES**  
**4 FAMILY REUNIONS**  
**7 ADOPTIONS**

**106 PLACEMENTS  
SECURED BY RTF**

We reunited 3 stallions with their original mares and relocated 10 bonded horses from capture to release at RTF's Sanctuary. RTF secured placement for 106 neglected wild horses as part of an ongoing large scale collaborative rescue effort.

## REUNIONS

### Silver King & Grace



### Sarge & Promise



### Galahad & Hope





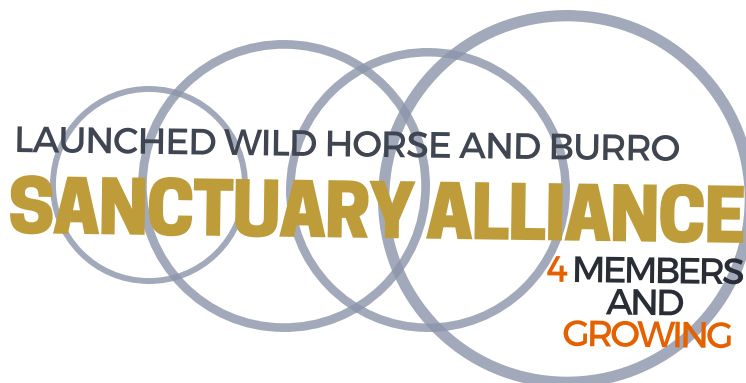
**prevented 540  
wild horses from  
going to auction**

Always looking for ways to conserve donor funds, we found ways to cut our expenses in half, allowing us to expand our other work and refocus staffing needs.



## RESCUE

RTF was pivotal in gathering support to repay two counties in South Dakota for fees the state incurred from impounding 887 horses. The state was scheduled to sell the horses at auction on December 20, 2016 to recoup their costs. We were able to gather the resources to pay the county's fees and stop of the sale of 540 horses at auction where many would go to slaughter, raising over \$300k for the effort.



2016 was the first year we were able to offer a 50% match from the Gates Foundation using the GlobalGiving.org platform for our "Run the RTF Sanctuary for a Year" project. We're proud to be the only domestic cause and animal welfare organization ranked in the top 15 among 3,207 internationally scoped projects.

The Wild Horse and Burro Sanctuary Alliance (WHSBA) is a coalition initiated by RTF and co-founded in a collaborative effort by Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary, Lifesavers Wild Horse Rescue, and Habitat for Horses, to provide support to wild horse and burro sanctuaries to increase communication, discuss solutions for management concerns, planning for emergencies and emergency support, as well as a host of issues that arise on a daily basis when operating a sanctuary for wild equines.



# EDUCATION

## MONTECITO BANK AND TRUST

## ANNIVERSARY GRANT AWARD

Created two celebrity hosted Public Service Announcements:

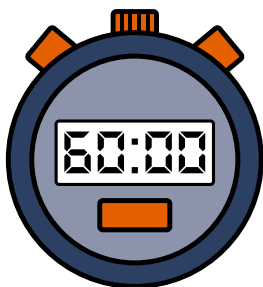


Wendie Malick  
Actress, Advocate and Honorary Board Member

## WENDIE SPEAKING UP FOR WILD HORSES MALICK ELLE FANNING



## 11 IN RESIDENCE WORK STUDY 3,584 HOURS



## DAY VOLUNTEERS

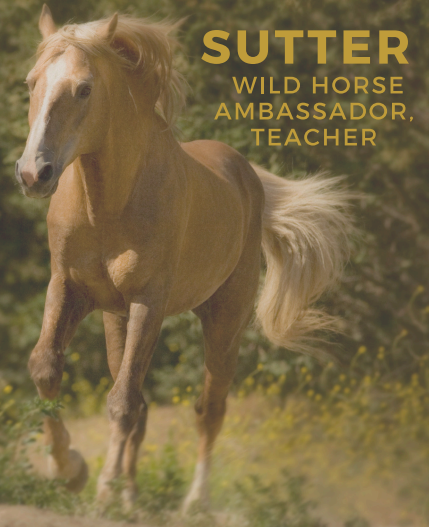
47 ADULTS  
13 YOUTH  
1,200 HOURS

## VOLUNTEERS

## ASPCA 2016 HORSE OF THE YEAR AWARD



## SUTTER WILD HORSE AMBASSADOR, TEACHER



The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals on Nov. 17 recognized as its Horse of the Year Sutter, a 30-year-old palomino stallion who lives at RTF. President Neda DeMayo and Josephine Blossfeld, a recent in-residence volunteer at the sanctuary, accepted the award during the ASPCA's annual Humane Award Luncheon in New York City. The event recognizes



Neda DeMayo with retired Senator Bob Dole

animal heroes who have demonstrated extraordinary effort as well as individuals who have shown great commitment to animal welfare. DeMayo used the opportunity to speak about how Sutter's story of suffering early in life remains emblematic of the tens of thousands of wild horses and the

need for a dramatic shift away from roundups and long-term government holding facilities and toward humane, on-range management. Sutter was also featured in The New York Post and on local television stations KSBY and KCOY.

ASPCA Horse of the Year Award statue and ceremony program



## OUR REACH

We hosted more than **453** adults and **53** children through on site tours, programs & events facilitating direct contact with the natural world and horses and burros to deliver a better understanding of everything from herd behavior to the role of horses in our shared cultural heritage to the challenges facing wild horses still on the range and in government facilities.



271,600 page likes, 39,000 weekly engagement, **1.2M** monthly reach



1,690 followers



7,537 followers

Subscribers: **39,000**

News posts: **216**



Return To Freedom, Wild Horse Sanctuary and Preservation

December 19, 2016 · 🌐

Today's #HorsefortheHolidays is Galahad (center).

U.S. Bureau of Land Management contractors captured this stallion at the Silver King Herd Management Area in Northwestern Nevada's Great Basin on Oct. 3, 2010.

Galahad's lead mare, Hope, suffered a serious head wound as helicopters chased their family band over dangerous ground. ... [See More](#)



Love Comment Share

You, Irene Vejar and 2.8K others

Top Comments

556 shares



Write a comment...



Return To Freedom, Wild Horse Sanctuary and Preservation Love the photo and story? Please 'Like' our Facebook page!

Like · Reply · 13 · December 21, 2016 at 3:23pm



Return To Freedom, Wild Horse Sanctuary and Preservation In addition to Galahad's sponsorship page in the post above, you can find more RTF wild horses and burros to sponsor here: <http://bit.ly/2hS5jm2>



Reuniting Wild Horse Families

RETURNTOFREEDOM.ORG

Like · Reply · 17 · December 20, 2016 at 3:20pm

View more comments

2 of 150

*History*

*PZP*

*BLM #s*

## WILD HORSE AND BURRO RESOURCE GUIDE

Pat Fazio, Ph.D., began working on a comprehensive Wild Horse and Burro Resource Guide as part of our suite of learning tools and resources for wild horse supporters of all ages.

# ADVOCACY

## ADVOCACY IN ACTION

**50%  
GROWTH**



Our **ADVOCACY IN ACTION** program engages and empowers people of all ages through direct experience with wild horses at the sanctuary, on the range, witnessing roundups and meeting with their legislators.

Policy reform, advocacy, and selective litigation are fueled by RTF's Wild Horse Defense Fund.

Supported humane observers to cover **6** of the 10 helicopter roundups and leveraged information to improve the viewing and handling of wild horses during roundups by contractors. In addition **4** RTF volunteers attended roundups.



Petition opposing roundups has attracted more than 52,000 signatures, exceeding RTF's goal.

## WYOMING CHECKERBOARD

### LITIGATION WINS

In October, Return to Freedom and its co-plaintiffs prevailed in a pair of precedent-setting cases before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit. In the first case, the 10th Circuit threw out a lawsuit by the State of Wyoming to compel the Bureau of Land Management to remove hundreds of wild horses from BLM-managed public lands within the state. The court held that the BLM is not required to remove wild horses from public lands just because their populations exceed outdated population limits. In October, Return to Freedom and its co-plaintiffs prevailed in a pair of precedent-setting cases before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit. In the second case, the 10th Circuit ruled that BLM

violated both the Wild Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act and Federal Land Policy Management Act. The court found that in 2014 the agency illegally treated public lands as private when it rounded up wild horses in Wyoming's Checkerboard region: a 2 million-acre area of alternating blocks of public and private land. BLM conducted the 2014 roundup after reaching an agreement with a ranching association to remove wild horses from the entire Checkerboard in order to them from roaming onto private land. The court's ruling caused the cancellation of a planned fall 2016 Checkerboard roundup.

**Of the two rulings the following outcomes further validated two of five of Return to Freedom's proposed solutions outlined in our Wild on the Range Campaign:**

- Manage our public lands for all Americans and not a small group of ranchers that benefit from taxpayer-subsidized grazing on our public lands.
- Commit to a long-term holistic management plan to humanely manage wild horses and burro population growth on the range, using proven PZP fertility control when necessary, as recommended by the National Academy of Sciences in 2013.



# CONSERVATION

## Our Living History

Due to new genetic testing we conducted in 2016, we have discovered that one of our herds DNA takes them back to the Caspian horses which date back to **3,000 BC**. We have collected hair samples from our early Spanish Colonial horses for new genetic testing to further document their heritage, health, and herd diversity.



### 379 Wild Horses and 16 Burros live at Return to Freedom's Wild Horse Sanctuaries in California:

**Lompoc:** 245 wild horses, 30 burros  
**San Luis Obispo:** 65 wild horses, 16 burros  
**Alturas:** 69 mares

No births

Deaths: 1

Rescues into sanctuary: 11

At training: 9 (readying for adoption)

Adoptions from sanctuary: 6

Ready for adoption: 4

## EQUINES

Most mares with stallions at Return to Freedom (RTF) receive an intramuscular injection, either hand injected or via dart gun, of immunocontraceptive once every nine months.

The vaccine, porcine zona pellucida (PZP), and necessary adjuvant are ordered through the Science and Conservation Center (SCC), the conservation arm of Zoo Montana in Billings. Kim Frank, of the SCC, advises the program at RTF. The vaccine and adjuvant are mixed on-site, following protocol developed by the SCC. Mares are darted, usually at feeding time, by a trained and certified handler. Darts “pop out” of the muscle after hitting their target and fall to the ground. There is little behavioral reaction to the dart and mares usually return to eating within a minute or two. The darts are then retrieved and tested for whether they were successful in delivering the vaccine; darts purchased from PneuDart are transparent, so success of vaccine delivery is immediately assessed. The entrance point of the dart into the tissue and muscle may sometimes lead to the development of an abscess (which drains and goes away in 2 to 3 weeks) or a granuloma (a small area of tissue damage due to inflammation, such as from an infection). Granulomas may be reabsorbed, or they may become permanent “bubbles” of hard tissue.

Data is maintained by Celeste Carlisle in each mare’s written chart and in an Excel database off-site, backed up on Dropbox. Data is also emailed to Kim Frank to be kept at the SCC. This report focuses on PZP at the ranch during 2016. However, to analyze the effectiveness of PZP as it pertains to efficacy of PZP use at RTF, data from 2015 must be compared to births in 2016.

### Mares Darted in 2015

A total of 22 mares were darted with PZP in 2015. Only mares kept with intact stallions were darted in 2015. Due to space and resource constraints at the Sanctuary, non-responder mares are now only kept with geldings or studs who have received vasectomies. There were no births at RTF in 2016.

### PZP Efficacy 2015 – 2016

22 mares were dosed in 2015: Willow (SU-4F) Blondie (SU-9) Cinnamon (SU-10) Drea (CAL-1) Estella (S1) Luna (CAL-2) Paloma (N1-D) Pearl (CAL-2D) Red Bird (SU-12) Red Wing (SU-11) Sierra (S2) Tahoe (S3) Bristol (M5-H) Sophie (M4-H) Mystic’s Diamond (M3-H) Stella (SU-7F) Sasha (CER-1) Alenka (M7-HK-O) Ama (M2-N) Juno (M6-P) Belina (M2-GO) Bonnie (M3-JP)

RTF's PZP efficacy for 2016 was 100%. Future Management and Data Concerns There were no births at RTF in 2016, and most births from previous years were from "non-responder mares": mares who have been receiving the PZP vaccine for more than 3 years but who have continued to become pregnant either ever year or every other year. Non-responder mares have been removed from housing with intact stallions.

### Mares Not Darted in 2015

Mares at Return to Freedom who are not currently turned out with an intact stallion are not darted as it is not necessary. Mares who have received PZP for 7+ years and have NOT had a breakthrough foal have also been removed from further PZP administration, as there is no need (in general, 5-6 years of continuous, successful birth control will result in a high-enough antibody level to continue protection from fertilization for the remainder of the mare's life). Nine (9) Sulphur Springs mares (Sis Sis, Shuwa, Emilita, Dawn, Maya, Viola, Stella, Bonita, and Sasha) are with stallions, but were not darted because of conservation purposes. They still have not foaled. Willow has also been removed from future darting.

### Mares Darted in 2016

The following 15 mares were boosted in 2016: Willow (SU-4) Ayashi (N1-DG) Bree (C2-E) Drea (CAL-1) Paloma (ND-1) Tahoe (S3) Bristol (M5-H) Sophie (M4-H) Mystic's Diamond (M3-H) Mystic's Magic (M2-H) Alenka (M7-HK-O) Ama (M2-N) Sugar/Valley Ma/White Mare (BH-1) Belina (M2-GO) Bonnie (M3-JP)

The following three (3) mares were started and boosted in 2016: Amber (SU-7FR) Storm (CAL-2Q) Epic (ARM-1)

Abscesses and Granulomas  
None noted.

## THE HUFFINGTON POST



Wendie with Return to Freedom Founder, Neda DeMayo and Stuart, her wild mustang from the Chalice Herd.



Sutter

Dec. 2, 2016, BLM caught in middle of wild horse conflicts, Wyoming Public Media Statewide Network

\* Refers to court case in which RTF is a co-plaintiff.

Nov. 30, 2016, 45 favorite animal charities, The Huffington Post

Nov. 28, 2016, Inside ASPCA Awards Luncheon-Bob Dole Tells Donald Trump to Get a Dog, Haute Living

Nov. 28, 2016, ASPCA Honors 2016 Humane Award Winners, Pet Age

Nov. 28, 2016, Charity Spotlight, Chronicle of the Horse

Nov. 21 Wendie Malick, Cowgirl Magazine

• Mention and image of Neda DeMayo and Wendie Malick in Wendie Wilkinson's six page feature

Nov. 13, 2016, These are the heroic animals awarded by the ASPCA, The New York Post

Nov. 9, 2016, Sutter the Mustang Named Horse of the Year, HorseChannel.com

Nov. 4, 2016, Formerly wild stallion named "Horse of the Year", KSBY

Nov. 1, 2016, Bodegon still life by Melinda Littlejohn, Cowboys & Indians

Oct. 26, 2016, 'No ambiguity': Court tells BLM it cannot treat public land as private, Casper (Wyo.) Star Tribune  
\* Story refers to court case in which RTF was a co-plaintiff.

# PUBLICITY c o n t ' d

Oct. 21, 2016, Lompoc horse recognized as ASPCA Horse of the Year, KEYT

Oct. 21, 2016, 'Whatever they are called, Fort Polk horses are wild', Beauregard (La) Daily News

Oct. 18, 2016, Return to Freedom, Cowgirl Magazine  
• 3 page feature on Return to Freedom and Neda DeMayo



Oct. 14, 2016, Court: Feds broke law in wild horse roundup, Casper (Wyo.) Star Tribune

• Story refers to court case in which RTF was a co-plaintiff. RTF is not specifically named.

Oct. 11, 2016, Federal appeals court in Denver dismisses lawsuit calling for wild horse roundup in Wyoming, The Denver Post

• Story refers to court case in which RTF was a co-plaintiff.

Oct. 11, 2016, In major decision, 10th Circuit rules Wyoming can't force BLM to remove wild horses, Casper (Wyo.) Star Tribune

• Story refers to court case in which RTF was a co-plaintiff. RTF is not specifically named.

The Washington Post

Energy & Environment

**Appeals court: Roundup not required for overpopulated horses**

By Mead Gruver | AP October 11 at 4:18 PM

CHEYENNE, Wyo. — A federal appeals court ruled Tuesday against

Oct. 11, 2016, Appeals court: Roundup not required for overpopulated horses, Associated Press

\* Story refers to court case in which RTF was a co-plaintiff. AP story appeared in numerous publications / on websites, including The Washington Post.

Oct. 9, 2016, Wild Horse Advocates Sue BLM For Wyoming Roundup, The North Country Gazette (New York)

Oct. 6, 2016, Advocates Push For Halt To BLM Horse Removal, Law 360

Oct. 5, 2016, Wild Horse Lovers Say Neigh to BLM Roundup, Courthouse News Service

Oct. 4, 2016, Wild Horse Advocacy Group Announces Checkerboard Lawsuit, SweetwaterNow.com (Wyo.)



FEATURED

**Hay donated for starving wild horses on South Dakota ranch**

Oct. 4, 2016, Hay donated for starving wild horses on South Dakota ranch, Rapid City Journal

\* This sidebar story appeared in other publications, including The Globe Gazette (Mason City, Iowa)

Sept. 23, 2016, In fight over Wyoming's wild horses, advocates see test of public land stewardship, Casper (Wyo.) Star Tribune

• Story refers to court case in which RTF was a co-plaintiff.





# EVENTS

## August 14, 2016 "Tonic of Wildness" Beckmen Vineyards, Los Olivos, CA



### Opening Day "Wild Horse and Wildflowers" May 7, 2016

### Volunteer Days 2016

January 30

February 27

March 26

April 30

May 28

June 25

July 30

August 27

September 24

October 29

## November 8, 2016 "The Last Ride" The Jefferson, Los Angeles, CA



Collaboration By: JOAN SCHEIBEL / VICTORY TISCHLER BLUE  
CHEVROLET, 2015  
Photography Printed On Canvas / Acrylics / Graphite / Framed In Acrylic / 35 X 39 inches

### The Last Ride

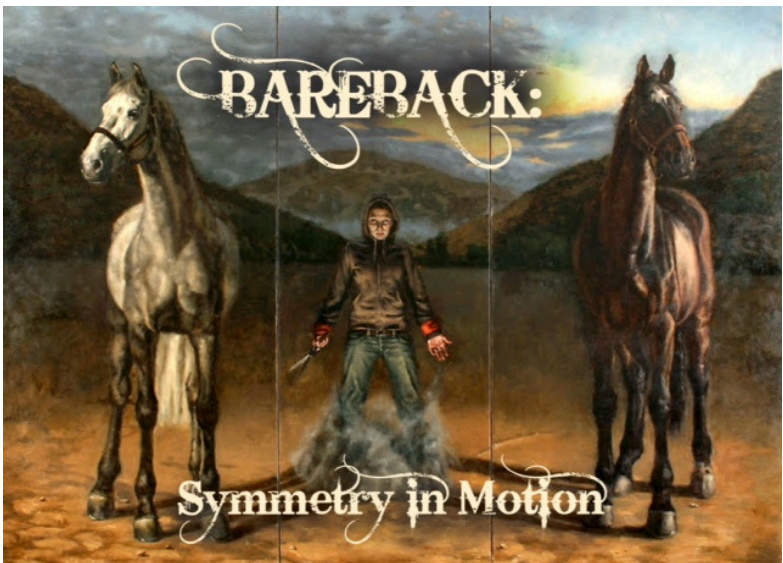
collaborations and individual works by

**JOAN SCHEIBEL & VICTORY TISCHLER BLUE**  
November 5 – 13th, 2016

Please join us for the Opening Reception  
Saturday, November 5th from 4 – 8 PM

Michele Gan's New Venue **THE JEFFERSON**  
3921 West Jefferson Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90016

**PLEASE RSVP (Guest List will be at the door)**



## September 17, 2016 Studio C Gallery, Los Angeles, CA



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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### WILD HORSE AND BURRO WILDERNESS PRESERVE

ELISSA KLINE  
CHARLIE ECKBERG

# FINANCIALS

## EXPENSES

TOTAL EXPENSES **\$1,337,231**

TOTAL INCOME **\$1,230,027**

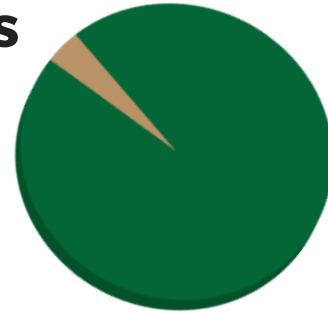
NET ASSETS **\$2,015,984**

\* Estimates are based on  
unaudited financial statements.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

**Grants**

4%



**Individuals**

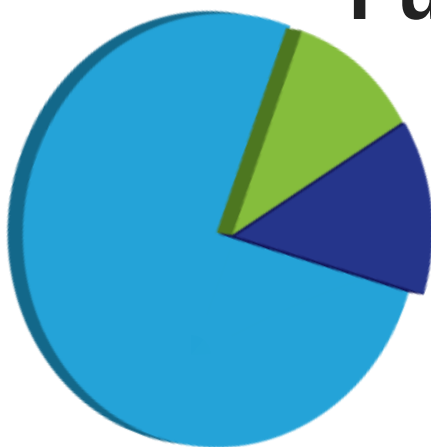
96%

**Fundraising**

11%

**Operational**

13%



**Programs**

76%



P.O. Box 926, Lompoc, CA 93438  
(805) 737-9246

Return to Freedom is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the freedom, diversity, and habitat of America's wild horses and burros through sanctuary, advocacy, education, and conservation, while enriching the human spirit through the natural world.