

From: **Max Vasher** <maxvasher@gmail.com>

Date: Tue, Feb 7, 2023 at 12:01 PM

Subject: Support and Thanks for Your Stance on Wild Horse Feeding

Dear Commissioner Bruch,

I recently read an article in the Sandoval Signpost about The Sandoval County Commission's unanimous decision to propose an Ordinance to restrict the feeding of wild animals (the wild horses in particular) in the Placitas area. I wanted to write and thank you for proposing this common sense legislation. I also wanted you to know that this letter of thanks does not come from a constituent that does not like the horses. On the contrary, I hope to see the wild horses as part of the magic and joy of living in this area well into the future, but not in the way that has recently developed.

I have lived in Placitas for over 30 years. I went to Graduate school at UNM, built my house and opened my architecture practice right here in Placitas. I have always loved the fact that we share this land with wild horses and would enjoy seeing them persist in this area as they have for over 500 years. However, I have noticed over the past few years that some people have taken to regularly feeding the wild horses as though they were domestic animals. Commissioner, you sum the wild horse situation up quite succinctly when you stated that Placitas has a people problem not a horse problem. I have a neighbor that I have had to confront on numerous occasions about daily feedings. I've explained to them that occasional feeding in extreme hard conditions has been the norm in this area for years, but unfortunately, they, as some others in the area, have decided to continuously feed these wild animals. In my neighborhood, the consequences of my neighbor's excessive feedings have included the following:

- a) Excessive piles of horse manure at all the surrounding neighbor's properties, on the roads and within the arroyos of our neighborhood.
- b) Destruction to the plantlife and hillsides on all surrounding properties.
- c) Increase of pest species like rodents that nest and feed on the manure.
- d) The destruction of my bird feeders that were helping to sustain the local, less invasive species like quail and migrating birds.
- e) Increase of tragic traffic accidents in the immediate surrounding area.

Over the past 30 years I used to rejoice at the occasional wild horse visits, but the excessive manure and trampling of my property as the horses come through for regular feedings is... well, let's just say it's less than neighborly. At one point, the arroyo adjacent to where my neighbors feed the horses and adjacent to my wellhead was several inches thick with manure which turned into a deep disgusting cesspool after a good rain filled the arroyo. Upon request on various occasions, the neighbor has cleaned out the arroyo, but it often requires a tractor to do so and the manure is simply transferred and dumped into another arroyo.

The wild horses have survived for hundreds of years on this land and should continue to do so. In years past, most Placitans have engaged in responsible actions in regards to caring for the wild horses. Recently however, a handful of people have created a problem for not just their Placitas neighbors but for the wild horses as well. I realize that those feeding the horses do so from a place of kindness and reverence for the animals - I respect that and share the reverence for these animals. Unfortunately these same people have not further considered the bigger picture and the bigger problem that they are unwittingly creating for both people and the horses themselves. Because of the circumstance that has been created by overfeeding the wild horses, I am in complete support of an Ordinance banning the feeding of these majestic animals for their own good and the good of all other living creatures here in Placitas.

With Great Thanks,
Max Vasher