



# Placitas WILD

P.O. Box 5004, Bernalillo, NM 87004

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

Michael Eshleman  
Sandoval County Attorney  
1500 Idalia Rd. Building D  
PO Box 40  
Bernalillo, NM 87004

February 17, 2023

Dear Mr. Eshleman,

The ordinance as written will exacerbate the problem without any alternatives provided. Once food is withdrawn, the horses will disburse throughout the whole community. The horses have been a "problem" since I moved here. It comes to the forefront every few years and garners much vitriol. Inattentive drivers are the real threat to the horses in my opinion. And this ordinance does not address that.

In my 20 plus years here I recognize that in Placitas it is the rule rather than the exception that a few folks here demand all others comply to their wishes and make our community a quiet, restful place to retire or live near impossible.

Three horse preserve groups who operate in Placitas where their adopted horses are confined and do not roam have gotten together to offer a solution. The expertise of several of the women who operate these facilities is extraordinary. They have worked with horses a combined 50 years and know domestic horse behavior and that of the free roamers.

Based upon a similar situation in an east coast outer bank community Placitas residents invited a woman to Placitas to speak on how her community solved a similar "problem". That talk was 12 years ago, and the Church was packed. Her community had free roaming horses too, but they also had annual influx of tourist to the coast that made their situation even more taxing than ours.

They set up communal feeding stations in out of the way areas where the horses came to eat. They formed a small committee of likeminded folks who wanted the horse to remain in the area, but also wanted to keep them and the humans safe. The committee ask for the funding individuals were spending on food for the horses to be pooled to support the community feeding stations and planned and executed a robust signage and educational program. Long before they formed a 501c3, they operated the feeding stations with volunteers, did public outreach and education. It worked. Our three preserve boards suggest the same be done in Placitas.

We have already found one 40-acre piece of land way out near BLM lands to use as a station and suggest a couple more all located along the norther border of Placitas be found. There is an application that could help locate unused uninhabited parcels and their owners to get permission to set up a feeding station. When in place if we could direct everyone feeding personally on the south side of 165 to stop it would reduce the incidences of horses crossing 165.

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The 3 groups making this suggestion cannot do this alone. Our hay bills have risen 45% this year. And we continue to keep all our horses contained out of the communities at a huge personal expense. We cannot take on more for the community, but we can provide guidance and education on how communal feeding stations should be operated, what to feed and one member of our combined group has volunteered to set this up and oversee its operation.

We do expect things to be worse before they get better even under this plan, however if we act soon, before grass and orchards distract the horses while we try to direct them to the new feeding areas it could be effective.

Drivers need to have additional reminders to watch for horses on the road. If we were to install a few electronic signs that warned drivers horses were near the road in the 4 mile "danger zone" along 165 at night that could avoid a driver horse accident where the human is the fatally. Something like the crosswalk lighting used in Bernalillo at the Range with motion detectors triggering flashing lights is certainly do able and effective.

We have spoken to Commissioner Bruch about the feeding stations. I think she has at minimum thought this might be an intermediate answer to the problem while Senator McKenna tries to do something permanent.

Sincerely,  
Sandy Johnson  
Co-Founder  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Placitas Wild