**CVPC Meeting May 9, 2023**

Location: Carson Valley United Methodist Church

Note Taker: NJ Thompson

[Disclaimer - I am no Sandra Silva when it comes to note taking. I have attempted to summarize Mary Cioffi's presentation - but may have some errors in my reporting. Mea culpa in advance to those who know far more than I regarding the PNWHA and Fish Spring Band.]

**Attendees**

·      Joe Clements - President

·      Dennis Cook

·      Wendy Whyman

·      Michael Chan

·      Ken Struven

·      Jean Desliets

·      Sue Roaldson

·      Robin Grueninger

·      Kimberly Burchiel

·      Connie Peters

·      Sherri McGee

·      Bob Fores

·      Mary Kay Kaluza

·      Steve Davis

·      Sandy Jonkey

·      Michael Chan

·      NJ Thompson

·      Dan Day

·      One visitor (referred by Kim Hunter Steed)

**Speaker – Mary Cioffi – President of Pine Nuts Wild Horse Advocates**

<https://wildhorseadvocates.org>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=pine%20nut%20wild%20horse%20advocates>

Mary Cioffi presented information regarding the wild horses, primarily the Pine Nuts Band located in the Carson Valley/Pine Nut Mountains area.

The PNWHA focus is:

* To “educate the community about our program and partnership with the BLM, and other agencies and organizations that work to maintain the horses, in their native wild habitat.”
* ​To “act as a go between when wild horses visit residents who prefer that horses stay off their property.”
* ​To “host local meetings and events that raise awareness and financial support for the efforts to maintain the population, health and safety of the Pine Nut Mountain horses.”

**Herd Control is one of the primary functions of the PNWHA**

Herd size is one of the big contentions between wild horse advocates, ranchers, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the federal government agency authorized to administer millions of acres of public land and the wildlife and plants on it. Often BLM and private land are contiguous to each other and/or intermixed and unfenced. BLM is specifically authorized to administer and wild horse on public land via The Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 and subsequent amendments.

**The method of assessing herd size and determining optimum herd size varies.**

* Per the PNWHA there are 78 horses and 1 foal in the Fish Springs Band
  + 60 of 78 were born on this range and they are tracked in the WHIM database.
  + There is usually adequate food and water on the range for the band and in the dry months water is trucked to a location for the horses. In 2023 the supplemental water will be placed in multiple locations to minimize impact on the range land.
* Per BLM the “public” land in the Carson Valley/Pine Nuts is only capable of sustaining an “11” horse herd

Thus, the PNWHA has undertaken an active fertility reduction program involving darting the mares with birth control vaccines. The fertility cycles are tracked in WHIM.  As a result of this program, the herd has been reduced by 90%. (BLM disagrees with this number stating the herd size is over 200.) In the spring of 2023, only two foals were born and it appears that one of them has disappeared, likely taken by a predator, such as a Mountain Lion.

**Fertility Reduction Program**

* Each Darts costs about $35 per shot
* Vaccine – lasts a year
  + Allows mare to continue to cycle (Preferred by Pine Nut advocates)
  + BLM prefers other ones that do not allow the mares to come in heat
  + PNWHA starts darting the mares around 8 months of age last year. Assuming you can find the right mare on the day you go out to dart.
* Dart guns are gas charged rifles and the target is the mare’s rump muscle
* The dart gun’s maximum range is around 37 yards
* The Dart has a has powder charge that mixes the vaccine and adjuvant upon impact with the target
* BLM has a rule that darts cannot be left on the range, so the “darter” spends a lot of time picking after her/himself

**Increase the Amount of Private Land where Wild Horses Roam**

* PNWHA is working with the American Wild Horse Conservancy LLC (AWHC) (<https://americanwildhorsecampaign.org>)­ to purchase land in the Pine Nuts. The program is called the Fish Springs Conservation Area and fellow photographer John Humphrey’s is the Land Manager. This is a major conservation effort to preserve land, wildlife and horses in the west and specifically, Douglas County.  It is being addressed on many levels with multiple stake holders involved. AWHC is working at a national level with BLM. Individuals are purchasing land parcels. Chris and Camille Bently have donated over 3000 acres to AWHC.
* The Fish Springs Band is even receiving commercial notarity with Blukota Spirits (<https://blukotaspirits.com>).  Some of JT Humphrey’s photos of the Fish Spring Band horses are on the gin and vodka labels. The owner thought they’d get a couple of hundred orders for their gin and vodka.  Well – 2000 orders were placed.  Check out the website and order some spirits. A portion of the sales goes to the PNWHA.

**Tidbits of info tossed out by Mary regarding the bands in the Pine Nuts**

* The bands in the Pine Nut live here year round
  + The bands gather in the Fish Spring Range in the first week of March for an annual “meet and greet”
  + Then they leave and spread out across the range
* BLM – took Blondie band this spring. Money was/is begin raised to send them to Freedom Range Sanctuary
* BLM – On a day-to-day basis the PNWHA has a good working relationship with BLM. (It’s just those large issues like herd size that are hard.)
* Washoe Lake Horses – are on state land – BLM doesn’t control that band
* Carson River is a dividing line for jurisdiction over bands. On his side of the river – it is BLM, on the other side of the river, non-BLM.
* WHIM Database contains:
  + Darting schedule
  + Birthday
  + Photos
    - Horse
    - Whirlmark on each horse is unique (their fingerprints)

Goal – no foals until we can protect the ones we have from Roundups

Compensatory Breeding as a result of the interruption of natural range breeding and comingling is resulting breeding at younger and older ages by the mares and more frequently.

Horses are fairly camera friendly

**Photo Contest**

May Contest Theme: Stairs

Judge: Mary Kay Kaluza

**First Place:** "Morning Light on the School Stairs" created by Connie Peters

**Second Place:** "Around the Curve" created by Tom Monti

**Third Place:** Stairs to River Road" created by Michal Chan

**Honorable Mention:** "Symmetry" created by created by Connie Peters

All of the contest photos will be viewable on the [carsonvalleyphotoclub.org](http://carsonvalleyphotoclub.org) website.

**Upcoming Field Trip**

**Steve Davis – May 13thCarson River Park – opportunity to view and photograph birds**

* Carson River Trail (Carson City)
* 8 AM Meeting Time in the parking lot – 1 to 2-hour walk along the Carson River
* Just past Silver Saddle Ranch turn onto parking lot on Carson River Road
* Please confirm with Steve that you are attending the outing. ([davis.family@mac.com](mailto:davis.family@mac.com))

(Not going Stillwater – long drive and not much out there besides pelicans)

**Upcoming Photo Events in the Area**

* Big Mamas Car Show – Lampe Park on May 21, 2023
* Carson Valley Hot Air For Hope Balloon Festival
  + Fri, May 19 – Sun, May 21
  + Lampe Park, 1324 Waterloo Ln, Gardnerville, NV
    - Friday night glow
    - Saturday/Sunday going up early

**CVPC June 2023 Meeting**

Sierra Chef Dinner for club members on June 13th – 4:30 PM ish (more info to follow)

Club approved a $200 donation to the Nature Conservancy for hosting the exhibit at Whit Hall in April.

Pine Nut Wild Horse Advocates will be the $75 recipient of the May speaker’s fee.

That’s All Folks