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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On August 10, 2010, Laura Leigh, filed a Motion For Reconsideration of Denial of Plaintiff's Order to Show Cause Re: Contempt brought against Ken Salazar, Secretary of the Department of the Interior, Bob Abbey, Director of the BLM and Ron Wenker, Nevada State Director of the BLM in Nevada District court. The legal actions are supported by Grass Roots Horse, a citizen action group.

The original Motion on Contempt of Court charges levied against the BLM was denied, but a recent law change made it possible for it to be re-filed under the new standard of law. The Motion filed yesterday cites newly discovered evidence of the Defendant's violation of the court's previous order to uphold the plaintiff's First Amendment Rights to observe and report on the Bureau of Land Management in regard to the "gather" ("gather" is the BLM euphemism for roundups) and removal of wild horses in Owyhee Herd Management Area. The latest filing also addresses the Defendant's sworn testimony in open court that a 'water emergency' existed and that an 'emergency' roundup had to take place, or horses would die. This testimony resulted in Judge Larry Hicks lifting the Temporary Restraining Order he had put in place to halt the Owyhee gather until he could hear legal arguments in the case.

The original lawsuits were brought about to postpone the Owyhee, Rock Creek and Little Humboldt wild horse roundups until six weeks after foaling season, the time frame of which was set forth in BLM's Wild Horse and Burro Program Handbook, which outlines the management protocol for wild horse removals. The BLM was violating its own time table for these roundups, as foaling season, according to their handbook, goes until June 30, and in fact, recent observers to the rangeland report numbers of foals still to be born in late July-early August. The BLM uses helicopter driven stampedes to move wild horses to trap sites where they are captured. Newly born foals as well as young foals are stampeded alongside late term pregnant mares and adult horses.

The lawsuit also asked the court to uphold the Plaintiff's First Amendment Rights. When Judge Hicks lifted the TRO on the basis of BLM testimony that a water emergency was present in Owyhee, national Director of the BLM, Bob Abbey immediately gave the order to begin roundup operations. Members of the press, public and the plaintiff Laura Leigh were unable to witness the beginning of the gather operations during which time 228 wild horses were stampeded over miles of rough terrain in scorching conditions and captured, all in the span of 150 minutes because the BLM had closed public land.

To date, 36 horses have perished as a result of the Owyhee roundup alone. While BLM states their website is "the most accurate source for gather related statistics," two of the deaths went unreported until a field observer photographed the remains of the dead horses.

"If you do visit the website, be sure to have a calculator handy since the simple math often does not add up. Since there were no observers to what happened in Owyhee, no verifiable account of the actual numbers of wild horse deaths exists" said Nancy Babcock of Grass Roots Horse.

When Laura Leigh arrived in Owyhee, accompanied by two individuals, they were barred entrance to the roundup site. Declarations of the individuals as to what transpired were filed along with the newly filed Motion.

"I have already received information that the same intimidation tactics used on us in Owyhee, are being used on advocates in Twin Peaks roundup, said Laura Leigh.

Photos and documentation of the area have been filed showing that in fact the range appears exactly the same as it normally does this time of year, nothing out of the ordinary was found by independent observation.

“We had expectations that the BLM will answer that the roundup is over, therefore the case does not need to be heard,” said Leigh “So we filed with new information. The tragedy of what happened out there has to be brought to light. Just because the roundup is over does not mean something horribly wrong did not occur. This needs to be looked at. It is now sitting on Judge Hicks’s desk and I pray for this agency to be held accountable.”

Laura Leigh is an artist, author and journalist who is best known for her work in documenting wild horses. She is the founder and director of Herd Watch, a citizen group that monitors the actions of the BLM and the Wild Horse and Burro Program. Full reports documenting range conditions in herd management areas and the condition of the horses themselves are conducted by Herd Watch with a meticulous eye for detail.

To read the legal filings, donate to the legal fund, or volunteer, please visit www.grassrootshorse.com where there are links to the best sites with more information on the wild horse issue.

www.GrassRootsHorse.com

<http://grassrootshorse.com/legalactions.htm>