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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Complaint seeking Declaratory and Injunctive Relief was filed September 22, 2010 in regard to the proposed Silver King Wild Horse roundup to be conducted in Nevada by the Bureau of Land Management. The action is brought by Laura Leigh, a credentialed photojournalist and videographer who had been among other members of the press who were singled-out during previous wild horse roundups, which the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) euphemistically calls "gathers."

She was precluded access to areas where other media or press, who were hand-selected by BLM, were permitted unfettered access to observe and to report. In addition, access that would allow press and public to observe the health and well-being of the horses after they were captured was either denied or severely limited.

"Without a free press able to operate as intended by our First Amendment Rights, our system of democracy fails. And it is failing now. This agency (BLM) is doing everything it can to impede the process of informing the public of its actions and all activities. From the necessity to FOIA documents (filing a request for information through Freedom of Information Act) to actual activities on the ground, the BLM goes through tremendous gymnastics to control content of what the public knows and can see. "That's not democracy, this is something else." said Plaintiff Laura Leigh.

These recurring actions and conduct by BLM in regard to allowing public access as well as not openly accounting for the handling of the horses from the point of their capture to their ultimate disposition, have been consistent and well documented and are the basis for the complaint filed yesterday, which seeks to ask the court's help in ensuring it does not happen again, and that a system of transparency and accountability is put in place and enforced. A jury trial has been requested.

The BLM and the Department of Interior published their intent to close public lands for the duration of the Silver King wild horse roundup, and that they would allow only two public observation days, both to be on Tuesdays, throughout the entire three week operation. The Hon. Larry R. Hicks recently ruled that closing public lands during roundup operations and limiting public and press access were prior restraint's on First Amendment Rights.

"The Press was protected so that it could bare the secrets of the government and inform the people. Only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government. And paramount among the responsibilities of a free press is the duty to prevent any part of the government from deceiving the people" *Justice Hugo Black, 1971*

This legal action is supported by Grass Roots Horse, a nonprofit equine welfare charity with a focus on citizen action and grass roots level involvement. "This legal action has needed to happen for a long time, said Lisa Owen of Grass Roots Horse. "Sunshine is the best disinfectant and the public has every right to ensure the welfare of the wild horses and burros at all times and to demand that accurate records on each and every horse or burro be maintained throughout. The public must have unquestionable assurance that the care and treatment of the wild horses and burros are based with the best interests and welfare of the horses and burros in mind, especially since taxpayers are footing the bill for it. We have more than a vested interest in not only the fate of the wild horses and burros from capture onward, but throughout their lives. It is only fitting that a jury trial has been requested."

The legal filings can be viewed at www.grassrootshorse.com