

**1 – Wild Horse History and Management  
CSU Extension Internship Proposal  
For College of Liberal Arts Faculty**

Faculty: Leisl Carr Childers  
Department: History

Extension Office: Retta Bruegger, Regional Specialist, Range Management, Western Region, Grand Junction

Other Potential Partners\*: Jim Dollarschel, Herd Manager, Grand Junction BLM Field Office, Grand Junction  
Sarah King, IUCN/SSC Equid Specialist Group, Colorado State University, Fort Collins  
Zebulon Miracle, Museum of Western Colorado, Grand Junction  
Callie Hendrickson, Conservation Specialist, West Slope Region Colorado Soil Conservation Board, Grand Junction  
Colorado Mesa University Rocky Mountain PBS, Grand Junction

\* Including, but not limited to those named here.

Project Introduction

Wild horses and their management is one of the most nationally controversial public lands topics. Although most wild horse herds roam the ranges of Nevada, Colorado is home to the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range<sup>1</sup> near Grand Junction, which was created in 1973, two years after the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act placed feral equines under federal protection. Debates over wild horse management often pits local residents against tourists, ranchers against wild horse advocates, and make the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the agency charged with overseeing the animals, the target of everyone's frustration. The arguments are usually centered on how to manage herd size. As recently as Fall 2018, the BLM and wild horse advocates tangled over the latest plan to reduce the herd size through roundups and fertility control measures.<sup>2</sup> But the City of Grand Junction sees the wild horses as tourist attractions and these controversies can be disruptive to visitation.<sup>3</sup> In this situation, Grand Junction and the BLM could benefit from a better understanding of the history of the range's creation, the herd's management over time, and the larger context of wild horse management in the late twentieth century.

Internship Description

This internship will be conducted during Summer 2019 in conjunction with the Extension office in Grand Junction and partners at CSU and within the BLM to develop and deploy an historical interpretation of the Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range for use in public programs. Specifically, the intern will research the history of the range's creation and the management of the herd, and develop an interpretive plan for educating visitors about the herd, the range, and their connections to the community. Through this internship, the intern will train in the method of historical inquiry and the practice of public history interpretation.

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<sup>1</sup> Little Book Cliffs Wild Horse Range Website, <https://www.blm.gov/programs/wild-horse-and-burro/herd-management/herd-management-areas/colorado/little-book>.

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Brown, "Clash Over Wild Horses Heats Up as Herds Reach Highest Numbers in Program History," *Colorado Sun*, September 27, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> "View Grand Junction's Wild Horses," Grand Junction Colorado Website, <https://www.visitgrandjunction.com/view-grand-junctions-wild-horses>.

### Internship Learning Outcomes

In this internship students will:

- Conduct primary source research and interviews with stakeholders;
- Develop historical context and narrative;
- Create an interpretive plan for public audiences based on historical evidence.