

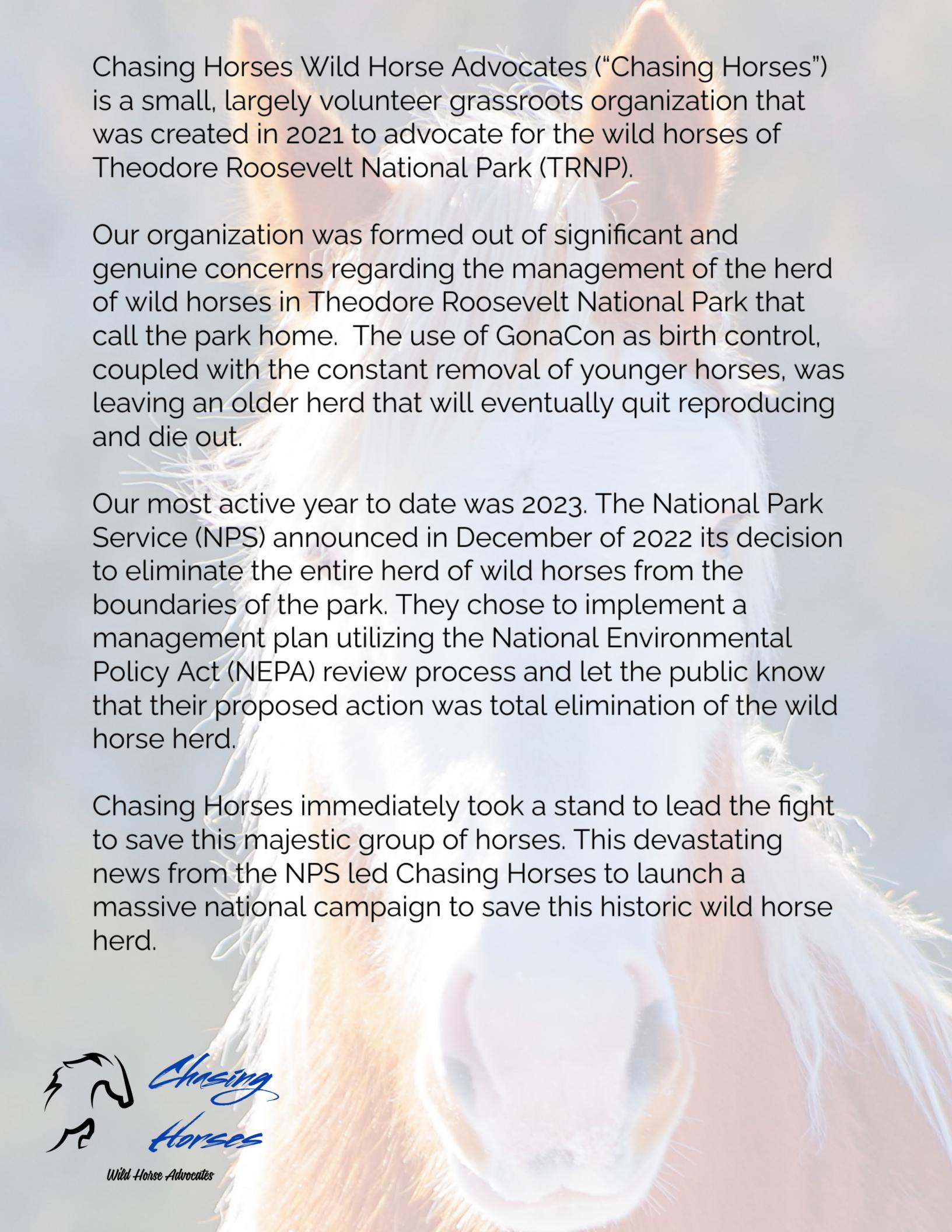


# Chasing Horses

*Wild Horse Advocates*



**2023 ANNUAL REPORT**



Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates ("Chasing Horses") is a small, largely volunteer grassroots organization that was created in 2021 to advocate for the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP).

Our organization was formed out of significant and genuine concerns regarding the management of the herd of wild horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park that call the park home. The use of GonaCon as birth control, coupled with the constant removal of younger horses, was leaving an older herd that will eventually quit reproducing and die out.

Our most active year to date was 2023. The National Park Service (NPS) announced in December of 2022 its decision to eliminate the entire herd of wild horses from the boundaries of the park. They chose to implement a management plan utilizing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process and let the public know that their proposed action was total elimination of the wild horse herd.

Chasing Horses immediately took a stand to lead the fight to save this majestic group of horses. This devastating news from the NPS led Chasing Horses to launch a massive national campaign to save this historic wild horse herd.

# Outreach and Education

In 2022, Chasing Horses engaged with 76,000 people through our social media outlets that include Facebook and Instagram. One year later, in 2023, that number rose to 729,000 people.

We've also added regular blog posts to our website to educate our followers about Chasing Horses work on behalf of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park wild horses. This has resulted in our website traffic increasing from 15,930 followers in 2022 to 72,027 followers in 2023 – a 452% increase of followers for our small grassroots organization!



Chasing Horses ran successful ad campaigns on social media to educate and encourage our supporters to participate in the public comment periods that were mandated through the NEPA process for the proposed wild horse management plan.



These ads generated over 1 million ad impressions and contributed heavily to the over 44,000 individual comments that were received in 2022 and 2023 by Theodore Roosevelt National Park throughout their Environmental Assessment Process.

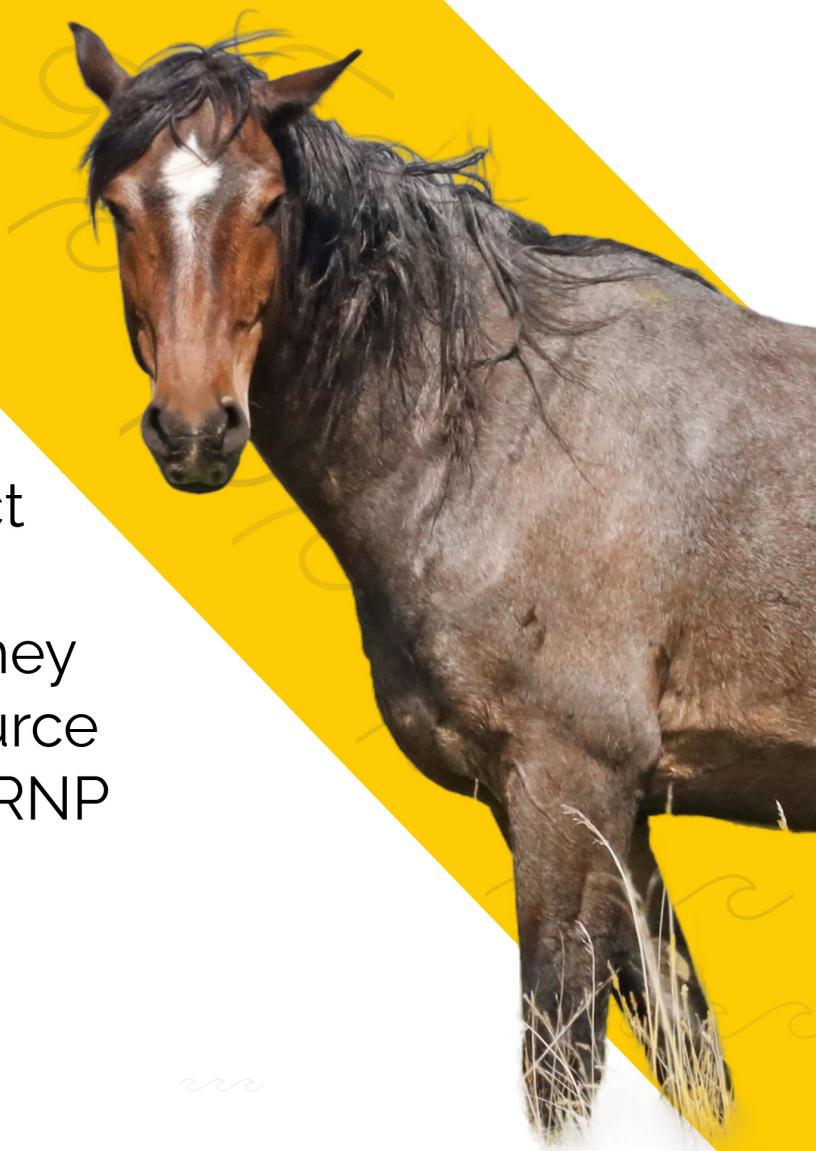


Chasing Horses started hosting "Horse Talks" via Zoom (a video conferencing platform) as a way to help our followers communicate with leaders and experts in different areas about the history, science, advocacy and state legislation. Fifteen different "Horse Talks" were held on Zoom in 2023. These recorded videos were uploaded to our YouTube channel for free public viewing.



# Press

Reporters regularly contact Chasing Horses' President Christine Kman because they regard her as a trusted source of information about the TRNP wild horses.



Christine also appears frequently on local North Dakota news and radio stations to update the public on the current status of the TRNP wild horse and the NPS's plans for them.







# Lobbying and Legislation

Chasing Horses is the leading voice in advocating policy changes in the management of the TRNP wild horses at the local, state, and federal levels. Our accomplishments include the following:

- We drafted and introduced legislation requesting that the horses be allowed to stay in the park to our North Dakota State Legislators for the 2023 session. This included writing the initial legislation, finding sponsors and co-sponsors, and testifying before the North Dakota House and Senate committees.

Our hard work and dedication paid off in April of 2023 when the Senate Concurrent Resolution SCR-4014 passed unanimously in the North Dakota House and Senate. Chasing Horses was invited to be a part of the ceremonial signing of SCR-4014 by Governor Doug Burgum. President Christine Kman received the signed copy of the resolution from Governor Burgum in April of 2023.

- Chasing Horses collaborated with the City of Historic Medora and the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation (collectively called the MHA Nation) to draft and pass their own resolutions asking that the horses be allowed to stay in their home at the Teddy Roosevelt National Park.



- Our organization hosted a rally in Medora, ND where advocates from all across the country came to speak publicly and give a message that was recorded and delivered to NPS Superintendent Angie Richman and Regional Director Herbert Frost stressing the importance of allowing this iconic group of wild horses to remain in the park.
- We worked closely with U.S. Senator John Hoeven's Office, adding language to the National Park Service's Interior Department Appropriations' Bill that strongly suggested that the horses be allowed to stay in their natural habitat and home.
- Chasing Horses collaborated with the State Historic Preservation Office to set the precedent to establish that the horses be found historically significant through their Section 106 Review Process. We explained this aspect of the Historic Preservation Act to our followers, giving them timely actions to take as part of our successful advocacy.

# Billboard



To help raise awareness about the TRNP wild horses amongst travelers going to Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Chasing Horses installed a billboard on West I-94.

The Save Our Wild Horses Conference in Washington D.C. in April of 2023 invited President Christine Kman of Chasing Horses to speak. She also utilized her time in the U.S. Capitol to personally lobby over 200 members of Congress and raise awareness about the plight of the TRNP wild horses.

Additionally, Christine Kman is regularly called upon to consult with wild horse advocates to help replicate our success with the TRNP herd for other wild horse herds across the country.



Senator  
John  
Hoeven



Senator Kevin Cramer

Congressman Kelly Armstrong



Wild Horse Advocates



Christine has also worked hard to establish and maintain relationships with many North Dakota local, state and federal legislators.



# The Future



Chasing Horses has a long-term vision of building and operating a wild horse sanctuary in Southwestern North Dakota. Our first step is to conduct a feasibility study for this endeavor. This study will include detailed information on all aspects of planning, building and maintaining the sanctuary long-term. This proposed sanctuary could serve a dual purpose:

First, the sanctuary would be a permanent home for some of the Nokota Horses currently owned by Frank Kuntz in Linton, ND. The Nokota horses were bought by Frank Kuntz and his late brother Leo from TRNP in the 1970's-1990's. Their intention was to preserve this unique breed of horses before the park introduced new blood and changed the genetics of this herd.

Second, the sanctuary could also provide a permanent home for horses that TRNP, according to their population objectives, deems necessary for removal from the herd. Under the current NPS guidelines, Chasing Horses, as a nonprofit with an educational purpose, would be allowed to give horses culled from the park a forever home in the sanctuary. The sanctuary could also include the reintroduction of the Nokota horses in the park if it is decided that their genetics would help improve the health of the herd.

# End of the Year Status

As a recap, in 2022, Theodore Roosevelt National Park narrowed the choices down to three alternatives under the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) umbrella. The three options they were considering were:

- The first, and their proposed action, was to eliminate the entire herd quickly.
- The second option was to eliminate the herd over the course of 10 years.
- The final alternative was their “no action” alternative which would allow 35-60 horses to remain in the park (there were just over 200 wild horses in the park at the end of 2023).

At the end of 2023, Chasing Horses was expecting a decision in the first half of 2024 from the park on the current management planning process.

Once a decision is reached, Chasing Horses plans to work for permanent protection for this herd so we never have to go through the threat of their removal again. Since Theodore Roosevelt National Park is managed by the federal government, federal legislation is the only way to ensure and preserve the longevity and safety of this majestic herd.

History shows us that if we do not use the momentum we have gained over the last two years to solidify permanent protection for this herd, it will only be a matter of time before TRNP park management decides to eliminate the herd again.

Chasing Horses plans to use the relationships we established with local, state and federal legislators in North Dakota to work to make federal protection for the TRNP herd a reality. We understand that this process will take years to complete, but plans are already underway to realize this arduous but necessary task.

With our strong and committed supporters, we are confident that we can save and preserve the Theodore Roosevelt National Park's wild horses for generations to come.





*Wild Horse Advocates*

Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates is a 501(c)3 organization that was formed in January 2021.

EIN#86-1262476

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