

National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board Member Biographies

Wild Horse and Burro Research

Dr. Ursula Bechert, DVM, Ph.D. Waldport, Oregon

Term Expires: 01/11/2024

Dr. Bechert currently serves as the Director of Graduate Programs for the College of Liberal and Professional Studies in the School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania. She received her DVM from Washington State University in 1991 and her Ph.D. in Animal Sciences (reproductive endocrinology) from Oregon State University in 1998. She has served on numerous national and international panels and committees in related disciplines and has over 30 papers published in peer-reviewed journals and books. She has extensive practical experience as a veterinarian, researcher, instructor, and academic leader, demonstrating exceptional communication and relationship-building skills. Dr. Bechert is serving her first term on the Board.

Natural Resource Management

Mr. James French Winnemucca, Nevada (Vice Chair)

Term Expires: 01/11/2024

Commissioner French has spent more than 40 years involved in the management of wildlife on public lands in north central Nevada. Over the course of his career, including 32 years as a biologist with the Nevada Department of Wildlife, he developed a unique understanding of wild horse and burro issues, and has worked with diverse groups to develop land management plans on county, state, and federal public lands. Since 2011, he has served on the Humboldt County commission, Nevada Association of Counties (NACO) board of directors, National NACO Western Interstate Region board of directors, NACO public lands and natural resources state and national steering committees, the Humboldt River water authority board of directors, the Nevada State Land Use Planning Council. He has contributed to the development of public lands policy, resource management plans and herd management plans for over three decades. He has worked collaboratively with county commissions in 16 counties, as well as the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BLM, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and governments in six states. Commissioner French is serving his second term on the Board.

Public Interest (Equine Behavior)

Ms. Tammy Pearson. Minersville, Utah

Term Expires: 01/11/2024

Ms. Pearson serves as a Commissioner for Beaver County, Utah. Commissioner Pearson has more than 40 years' experience as a public lands rancher in Utah and has worked closely with countless organizations focused on public lands issues. She is a founding member of the Path Forward, Free Roaming Equids and Ecosystem Sustainability and Wild Horse and Burro Summit coalitions looking to address the critical issue of wild horse and burro management and population control. Commissioner Pearson has spent many hours in Utah and Washington, D.C., educating elected leaders on the ecosystem impacts of wild horses and burros, rallying local and national stakeholders to improve methods of controlling wild horse and burro populations. She studied Agricultural Science at Utah State University. Commissioner Pearson is serving her first term on the Board.

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Wild Horse and Burro Advocacy

Ms. Celeste Carlisle Esparto, CA (Chair)

Term Expires: 08/25/2025

Ms. Carlisle is an enthusiastic collaborator with more than 12 years of field biology and equine management experience, most notably serving as the Biologist and Science Program Manager for Return to Freedom, a private sanctuary for wild horses and burros. Collaborating with various stakeholders, Ms. Carlisle played a pivotal role in the creation of a detailed proposal for wild horse and burro management that was presented to the BLM and the U.S. Congress in 2017. She and other wild horse advocates also participated in a meeting with Interior Secretary Zinke to discuss the goals and objectives for sustainable management of wild horses and burros. Ms. Carlisle earned a B.S. in equine animal science from Oregon State University and a B.A. in biology from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Ms. Carlisle is serving her second term on the Board.

Veterinary Medicine

Dr. Tom Lenz, DVM Louisburg, Kansas

Term Expires: 08/25/2025

Dr. Lenz, an equine practitioner for more than forty years, is a leading mind in the field of equine science, specifically equine reproduction, and equine welfare. Beyond his vast veterinary qualifications, Dr. Lenz is also the founding chair of the Unwanted Horse Coalition – a broad alliance of equine organizations under the American Horse Council that works to educate the horse industry about unwanted horses. In addition to a veterinary medical degree, Dr. Lenz earned a M.S. in equine reproduction and is board-certified in theriogenology (equine reproduction). His practical approach to understanding ‘the unwanted horse,’ equine reproduction and animal welfare is an asset to the Advisory Board. Dr. Lenz is serving his second term on the Board.

Public Interest (with Special Knowledge of Natural Resource Management)

Dr. Barry Perryman, Ph.D. Lander, Wyoming

Term Expires: 08/25/2025

Dr. Perryman has been a passionate, thoughtful, and well-received writer and advocate for the responsible stewardship of Western public lands for more than two decades. As an educator, Dr. Perryman collaborates with various stakeholders to teach best management practices and encourage conservation and the responsible use of our public lands. Dr. Perryman has served on numerous appointed councils; organized and facilitated meetings populated by a diverse spectrum of public interests, and continuously served as a wild horse and burro expert source for national print and broadcast media outlets. Dr. Perryman earned a Ph.D. and a M.S. in Rangeland Ecology and Management from the University of Wyoming and earned a B.S. in Agronomy from Abilene Christian University. Dr. Perryman currently teaches Rangeland Ecology and Management at the University of Nevada-Reno, where he also serves as the Department Chair for Agriculture, Veterinary and Rangeland Sciences, college of Agriculture, Biotechnology and Natural Resources. Dr. Perryman is serving his second term on the Board.

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Humane Advocacy

Vacant

Term Expires: TBD

Livestock Management

Vacant

Term Expires: TBD

Wildlife Management

Vacant

Term Expires: TBD