

## **Donkey Rescue Group to Relocate Burros from Death Valley**

DEATH VALLEY, CA – Burros from Death Valley National Park will soon be moving to new homes. The National Park Service has entered into a five-year agreement with the Texas-based nonprofit Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue to capture 2,500 burros from Death Valley National Park and relocate them to offsite adoption facilities and sanctuaries.

“Burros are not part of the natural California desert ecosystem,” said Mike Reynolds, superintendent of Death Valley National Park. “They damage springs and vegetation. They compete for food and water with native animals, such as desert bighorn sheep. In addition, they are a safety hazard to visitors on park roadways. With this partnership, we have created a win-win situation for the burros, the park, and taxpayers.”

Relocations will be done through a public-private partnership with minimal cost to the government. Peaceful Valley’s burro project at Death Valley National Park is entirely funded by private donations, foundation grants, and corporate sponsorships.

Mark Meyers, executive director of Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue, said, “Our main objective is to protect our Wild Burros. If they must be removed, we want to ensure that it is done safely with as little stress possible.”

Peaceful Valley will use humane methods to capture burros. One method is to bait burros into a temporary pen with water or food. Wranglers on horseback may also drive the animals into temporary corrals.

Peaceful Valley will transport burros to temporary holding facilities before transferring them to a training facility. Trainers will work to prepare the burros for adoption.

Park Service officials expect the relocation effort to begin in late May.

Wild burros are present in many areas of the Mojave Desert. Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue also has plans to relocate burros from Fort Irwin National Training Center and Mojave National Preserve.

Unlike the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service is not directed by the Wild Free Roaming Horse and Burro Act of 1972 to maintain a population of burros. Death Valley National Park’s 2002 General Management Plan, which went through extensive public review, calls for removing all burros from the park to protect water quality, riparian ecosystems, native plants, and native animals.

Burro populations have increased greatly in recent years. The last burro roundup in Death Valley National Park was in 2005.

*Death Valley National Park is the homeland of the Timbisha Shoshone and preserves natural and cultural resources, exceptional wilderness, scenery, and learning experiences within the nation's largest conserved desert landscape and some of the most extreme climate and topographic conditions on the planet. About two-thirds of the park was originally designated as Death Valley National Monument in 1933. Today the park is enjoyed by about 1,300,000 people per year. The park is 3,400,000 acres – nearly as large as the state of Connecticut. Learn more at [www.nps.gov/deva](http://www.nps.gov/deva).*

*Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue is a nonprofit organization, founded by Mark and Amy Meyers in 2000. It is the largest organization of its kind and has rescued over 9,000 donkeys so far. Peaceful Valley currently cares for over 3,200 donkeys in 30 locations across the country. Learn more at [www.pvdr.org](http://www.pvdr.org).*

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