



News Release

Forest Service

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Forest Service Law Enforcement Collaborates on Investigations into Horse Deaths

Springerville, AZ – October 17, 2019 – For Immediate Release. Members of Law Enforcement and Investigations (LE&I) from the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNFs), along with Navajo and Coconino County Sheriff's Offices recently investigated three separate incidents involving deceased horses.

On September 18, one horse was found and confirmed deceased on the Sitgreaves National Forest. Forest Service LE&I and a necropsy expert conducted an investigation. This investigation is ongoing.

On September 30, two domestic deceased horses were discovered on Capps Ranch Road on the Sitgreaves National Forest. While the incident occurred on National Forest System land, the horses were private property of the respective horse owner, therefore, State agencies, Arizona Department of Agriculture (Arizona Livestock) and the Navajo County Sheriff's Office (NCSO) performed the investigation.

On October 4, one deceased horse was found on the ASNFs that appeared to have been killed by a predator, such as a mountain lion or a bear. A Forest Service equine specialist and a necropsy expert conducted the investigation. This investigation is ongoing.

On October 11, the NCSO arrested a suspect in the domestic horse shootings and is currently sharing information with Forest Service LE&I. Forest Service LE&I is diligently working through the investigative process to determine or rule out any possible connections to other incidents.

The ASNFs values our law enforcement partnerships with the Navajo and Coconino County Sheriff's offices, and Arizona Game and Fish. Any person who maliciously causes the death or harassment of any wild free-roaming horse or burro shall be subject to a fine of not more than \$2,000, or imprisonment for not more than one year, or both.

Please pass all tips to the NCSO tip line at 1-800-78CRIME. If the public encounters an injured or deceased horse they are urged to contact the Black Mesa Ranger District at 928-535-7300 to report it immediately.

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