

## Opening the gates to wild, surrendered, or abused horses

Written by By Rachelle Nones Sun Correspondent  
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### Equine horse rescue adds crucial acreage

Wild, surrendered, or abused and neglected horses often find their way into the Four Corners Equine Rescue, a non-profit organization located in Aztec, New Mexico. Rescues are trained using the Natural Horsemanship philosophy of training without fear, pain, or forced submission—an ideal method for wild horses or horses wary of humans due to prior abuse or neglect.

“Usually the horses are thin and haven’t been taken care of,” FCER CEO Debbie Coburn said. “We get a lot of our horses from the New Mexico Livestock Board. They pick up the stray horses and if they can’t find the owners, the horses come to the rescue. We also take in owner surrenders. About 60% of our herd is wild. Those usually come from the New Mexico Livestock Board.”

Due to an ongoing drought in the Four Corners region during the past eight years, wild horses have been under exceptional stress to survive.

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“There’s not enough grass to go around. There is conflict between the cattle and the horses and since the horses aren’t making any money, they lose. We are the only rescue trying to take care of this problem. There is not another rescue until you get to Albuquerque,” Coburn said.

In 2018, FCER purchased two additional acres of land less than a half mile away from their main property. Completion of the work required to develop the property’s facilities and pasture was set for the summer of 2023.

Despite setbacks and challenges presented by COVID-19 lockdowns during the past two years, major construction work, including the installation of pipe fencing, has progressed. Currently, volunteers are needed to help with painting, welding, moving panels to create temporary pens, setting up irrigation, and planting grass in the pasture.

Upon completion of the new facilities, FCER will be able to provide more rescues with a safe and secure space in which transformational healing can take place.

Opening the gates on a new property is a great step forward, but Coburn believes there is a genuine need for public education on proper horse care and additional resources. She mentioned Albuquerque’s Animal Protection New Mexico as an excellent resource for horse owners requiring emergency feed, humane euthanasia, or gelding assistance.

“People need to have resources available to help their horses,” Coburn said.

For more information about the Four Corners Equine Rescue, go to the website [fourcornersequinerescue.com](https://fourcornersequinerescue.com).

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