

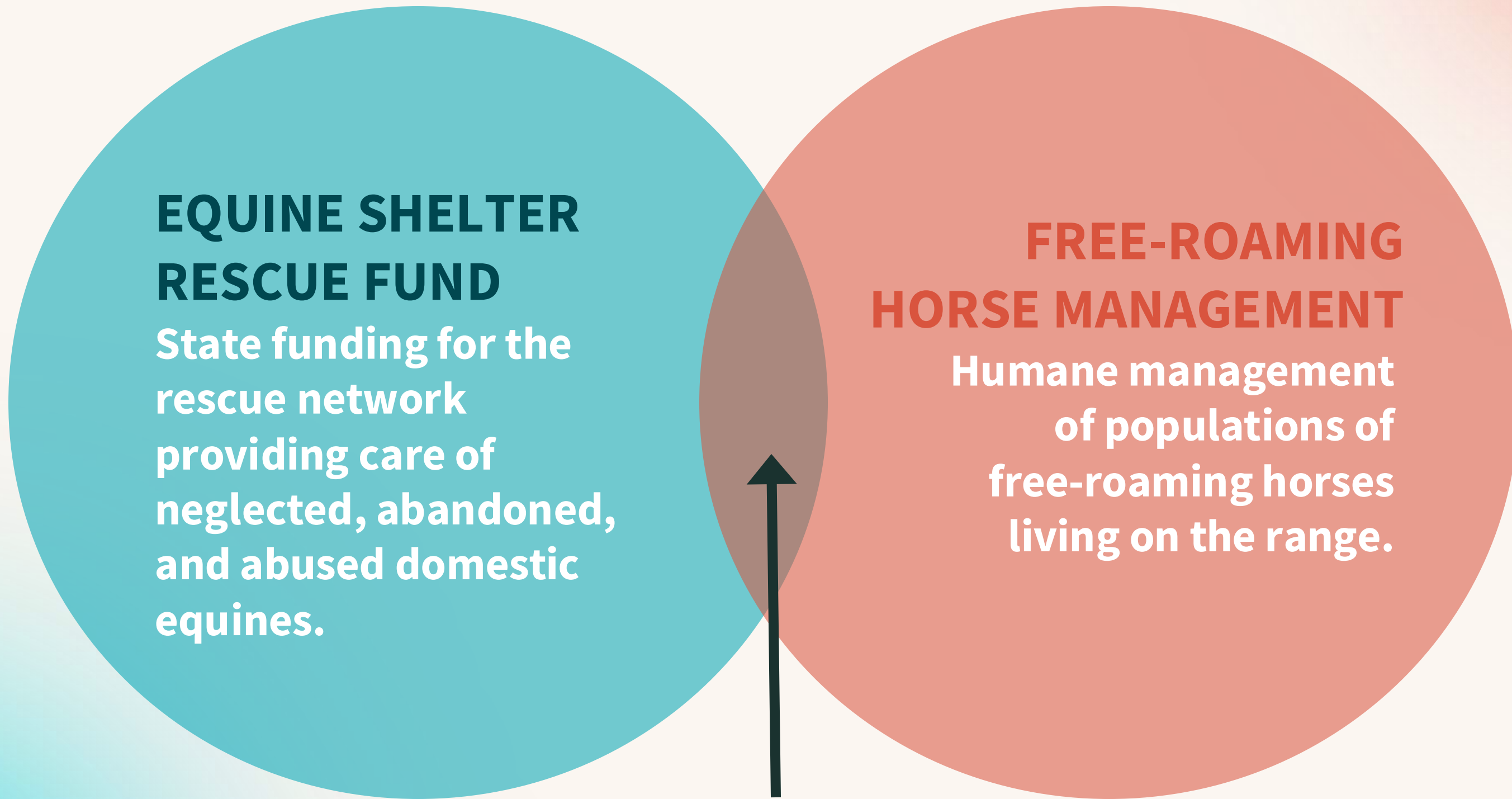


EQUINE SHELTER RESCUE FUND + FREE-ROAMING HORSE MANAGEMENT

Presented by: Nina Eydelman, Chief Program & Policy Officer – Equine & Wildlife

Water & Natural Resources Interim Committee • September 2026

TWO DISTINCT EQUINE ISSUES



Free-roaming horses removed from the range and relocated to rescues

AGENDA

Equine Shelter Rescue Fund

- The Problem
- History of the Fund
- Proposed Legislation

Free-Roaming Horse Management

- The Problem
- The Solution
- Proposed Legislation



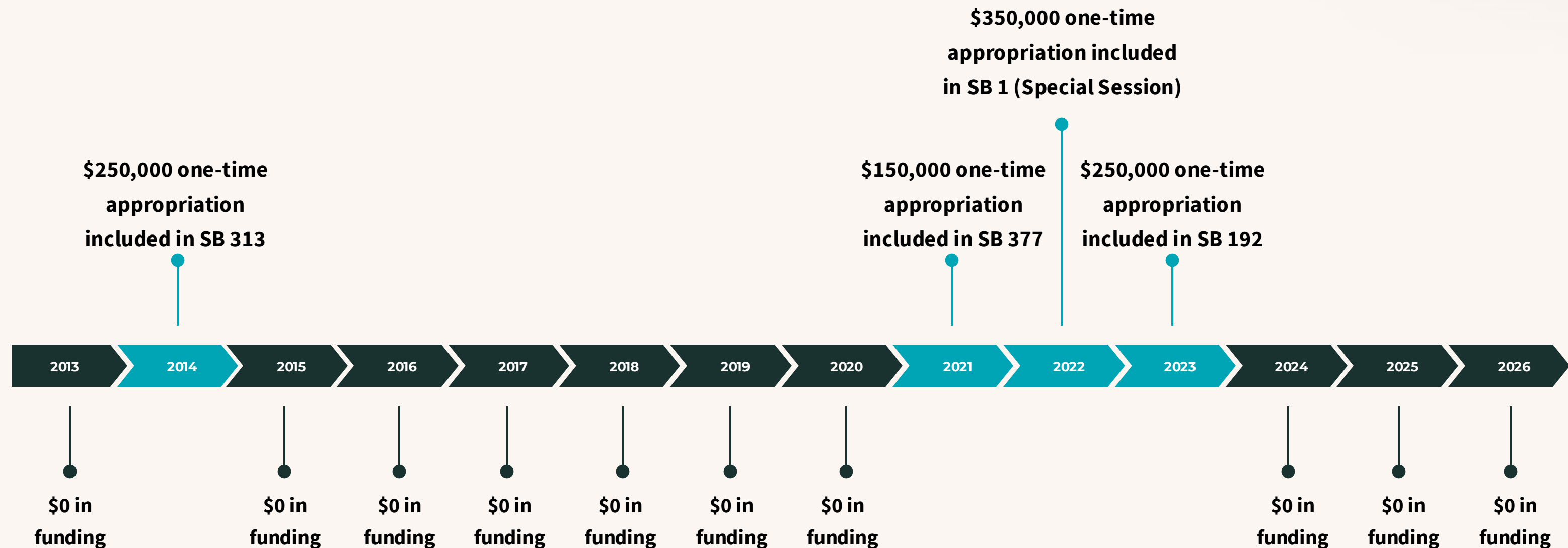
EQUINE SHELTER RESCUE FUND

THE PROBLEM:

- **No government-run equine shelters in New Mexico.**
- **Nonprofit equine rescues care for the state's homeless, neglected, and abused equines.**
 - **Without these rescues, the State would be responsible for these animals.**
 - **~50% of rescues' intake comes from law enforcement.**
- **Care needs: feed, veterinary & farrier, training, shelter, facility upkeep.**
 - **Rising care costs → more strain on equine owners → more strain on equine shelters.**
 - **More homeless equines than shelter capacity.**
- **2013: NM legislature established the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund to support these essential services.**
 - **Administered by New Mexico Livestock Board.**

EQUINE SHELTER RESCUE FUND

- No reliable, substantial funding.
 - Tax check-off donations are minimal (typically around \$10K /year).
 - Legislative appropriations for only 4 out of the 14 years of the Fund's existence.



PROPOSED LEGISLATION

THREE-PART SOLUTION:

1. Move administration of the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund to the NM Department of Agriculture.

- The Department of Agriculture has greater capacity to administer the Fund.
- The Livestock Board continues to oversee registered equine rescues.

2. Increase accountability for taxpayer dollars.

- Strengthen application & reporting requirements.
- Competitive RFP process.

3. Meaningful appropriation to the Equine Shelter Rescue Fund: \$1M annually.

- Increase the State's overall sheltering capacity.
- Encourage more equine rescues to register with the Livestock Board.



FREE-ROAMING HORSES

THE PROBLEM:

- Thousands of free-roaming horses on degraded range amidst ongoing drought.
- Imbalance on the range used by industry, other animals, and free-roaming horses contributes to range degradation.
- Result: conflicts with agricultural interests, vehicular collisions, hardship for other wildlife, suffering of horses.

In June 2024, this underweight and injured free-roaming horse was filmed by a resident in Ruidoso.



A Placitas resident crashed into a free-roaming horse in March 2025

FREE-ROAMING HORSES

THE SOLUTION:

- Roundups and removals are costly, controversial, and ultimately ineffective.
- Solutions must address the underlying cause of population growth: reproduction rate.
- Prioritize on-range management with fertility control but allow targeted removals when necessary.
- Ensure humane treatment, safe placement, and protection from slaughter for horses.



PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Creates a framework that allows for tailored local solutions with three key components:

- **Experts:** Only qualified horse experts may manage free-roaming horses.
- **Governments:** Governments contract with experts to implement herd management for local communities.
- **Humane Standards:** Enforceable requirements for the humane handling and disposition of horses.

Empower Experts to use ALL humane tools to manage herds:

- **Fertility Management:** Contraception for mares, castration for stallions.
- **Rescue or Retirement:** Placement at a registered equine rescue.
- **Relocation:** To land with sufficient capacity to support horses.
- **Humane Euthanasia:** For suffering horses with untreatable conditions.

Questions?

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