



September 11, 2019

Muriel Uqualla-Coochytewa, Chair
Havasupai Tribe

Dear Ms. Uqualla-Coochytewa,

I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 6.5 million members and supporters worldwide regarding grave concerns about many of the horses and mules used for packing gear on the Havasupai Trail, a situation which is harming the tribe's reputation both here and abroad.

PETA eyewitnesses found that animals—some of whom had sores and scars—were forced to carry heavy loads up and down the steep trails, sometimes slipping and reportedly even falling. The [video footage](#)—along with recent eyewitness accounts that were reported to the Bureau of Indian Affairs earlier this year, including just last [month](#), when a dead horse was simply discarded in the middle of the trail—reveals an endemic problem that needs to be addressed immediately and comprehensively. Recent reviews on [TripAdvisor](#) show tourists were horrified at the abuse they witnessed. One traveler wrote: “I witnessed horrific cruelty and neglect of these Havasupai horses ... tied while overloaded with supplies and gear for several hours with no shelter or shade from the intense Arizona sun, no water, bloody burns and untreated wounds from abrasive ropes and pack lines.”

This summer, an eyewitness found equines with sores on their torsos, noses, and abdomens and scars along their backs and abdomens. One was missing half of an ear. Some mules and horses limped or had overgrown hooves, and several appeared underweight, including a young horse whose ribs were visible. Animals were confined to trash-filled pens, while others were tethered without shelter. One horse on a 4-foot-long tether was apparently left without water on three consecutive days.

As you know, horses and mules are pushed to carry heavy loads up and down steep trails, including a grueling 2,450-foot climb at an incline of up to 19 degrees. The eyewitness saw animals struggle—they were tied together with ropes, causing those in the back of the pack to be abruptly yanked forward. Sometimes loud music was played for the amusement of the wranglers, causing the animals additional distress.

Another eyewitness, who visited Havasupai this winter, was told by a wrangler that horses trek in rain, snow, and floods. Mules slipped on the icy, muddy trail, and many animals were whipped and finally left sweating and panting after the arduous journey. One wrangler admitted that mules sometimes fall off the side of the trail, saying, “It's unfortunate ... but yeah, it happens.”

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Eyewitness accounts of horse deaths, neglect, and suffering along the Havasupai Trail continue to pile up. A comprehensive plan to address this systemic problem is desperately needed. May we hear back from you as to what will be done, and when? Thank you.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracy Reiman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tracy" being more prominent than the last name "Reiman".

Tracy Reiman
Executive Vice President