



SAVE'S MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of SAVE is to end the starvation and abuse of the pack animals on the Havasupai reservation; to elevate these animals to their rightful place in the Havasupai culture and all cultures as sentient beings that deserve compassionate care and respect for their service to human beings.

These horses, mules and donkeys have been subjected to the most horrifying treatment imaginable by a number of members of the Havasupai Tribe. Many of these animals live a tortured life that ends only when they drop dead due to extreme abuse in the form of exhaustion, starvation, dehydration, or untreated injuries - and often all of the above.

THE PROBLEMS

The pack animals at Supai are routinely starved, beaten, overloaded, rigged with inappropriate tack, whipped, blinded in an eye, worked while injured, and kicked unmercifully. Their owners often force them to gallop up and down a rugged, narrow, and steep 9-mile-long trail carrying over-sized loads over thousands of feet of elevation change. They are commonly tied together tightly using a "come along" rope around the neck - the sole purpose of which is to strangle them if they do not keep up.

At the trailhead and highway's end known as Hualapai Hilltop, there is no water, no food, and no shade for the pack animals. They are frequently tied to a railing so short they cannot move their heads. Temperatures during summer frequently exceed 100 degrees. They can be tied there with pack saddles on for hours - *sometimes days* - according to eye-witness accounts.

Horses frequently collapse on the trail due to malnutrition, dehydration and exhaustion. Horses that fall or falter are beaten and kicked in an effort to make them get up. Along the trail there exists scattered evidence of dead and dying animals including trails of blood, skeletons, parts of half-eaten legs and burned bodies. Pack animals that don't rise back up to their feet may be left, collapsed on the trail, to be eaten alive by feral dogs. Other are shoved off the side of the trail or burned.

Tribal wranglers do not bother to train these animals to do the job of a pack animal. Nor do they wait until an animal is old enough and sufficiently developed physically to perform such demanding work. A common approach, for example, is to kick one of an animal's eyes out to "make them more



cautious on the trail." In short, every conceivable method of inflicting pain and suffering to these pack animals is used by some members of the tribe instead of appropriate training.

Tribal authorities do nothing to stop nor change these abusive practices. Third-party outfitters do nothing to exert a positive influence for diminishing these abuses. Instead, they continue to book trips and make tens of thousands of dollars off the raw backs of these horses, mules and donkeys. Federal authorities have looked the other way for years. And travel writers have penned - and continue to publish - glowing articles about the blue-green waterfalls of Havasu Canyon, neglecting to mention how uninformed tourists can all too easily become unwitting accomplices to this enormous level of suffering.

SAVE'S POSITION

For decades now, many individuals and organizations have entered the Havasupai Reservation to try to bring about change to help these abused pack animals. Veterinarians, animal welfare groups and church groups have provided vet services, supplies, and sometimes feed. Yet these well-intended efforts have produced no significant change. This is because, unfortunately, these individuals and organizations simply continue to repeat their partial efforts without ever addressing the overwhelming issue of abuse.

Such partial efforts cannot be successful without including the strategies that SAVE endorses. The prevailing philosophy of all these other groups and individuals is to enter the region and provide free help, but to tread lightly so as not offend the Tribe in any way. These misguided do-gooders consistently avoid mentioning, let alone condemning, the abuse. They avoid criticizing anything the Tribe does, or fails to do, regarding their animals' welfare. The idea behind this half-hearted strategy, we now know from witness statements, is the hope or expectation that over time relationships will be built with the Tribe, as will mutual trust. And when that finally happens, they believe, one can begin to educate Tribal members to adopt more humane standards of care.

What's wrong with this approach?

Decades of abuse later, the Supai pack animals are still enduring and eventually succumbing to the same kind of hideous treatment. SAVE agrees that for a long-term solution to succeed, the Tribe must become a willing partner. The issue is how to get the Tribe to the point where they *become* that willing partner. It is clearly established at this point that continuing to throw good money and goodwill to the Tribe produces nothing in return with regard to the welfare of the pack animals. Only sustained negative publicity will work: exposing the horrors of how these pack animals are treated is what will threaten the Tribal livelihood based on serving the needs of tourists. Negative publicity - and a diminution of the immense amounts of money paid by tourists as Tribal fees - will get their attention. To reiterate, as history has shown, nothing else will.



Therefore, the more the general public is educated about the realities of what is happening on the Supai Reservation, the more evidence and complaints from tourists, and ultimately legal prosecutions, will result. Convincing visitors to the Canyon to practice responsible tourism by not using these pack animals under any circumstances - or, better yet, not to visit the Supai Reservation at all - will tell the Tribe that this abuse is no longer acceptable.

No organization has done for Havasupai pack animals what SAVE is doing. We have created a place, through the internet, that allows tourists to help expose the abuse and the abusers, as well as the entities that profit from the use of the pack animals while completely ignoring their suffering. We ask the public to send us their photos, written eye-witness accounts, and any other evidence they have of abuse. We advise people on how to make formal complaints to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and we actively push for federal prosecutions of Havasupai wranglers who abuse their animals. SAVE is always looking for additional ways to bring this problem to the attention of tourists and to anyone who writes about Havasu as a tourist destination. We believe all of these strategies are essential to eliminating the abuse.

Because many of the abused pack animals are used to haul supplies into Supai Village strictly for the benefit of the 500 or so Native Americans who live there - and not for tourists - such abuse can continue even with a diminution of tourism, and be blamed by the Tribe as a consequence of their "poverty."

To really stop the abuse forever, several processes and changes must occur on the Havasupai Reservation among Tribal members who use pack animals.

How can this problem of abuse be ended in the longer term?

SAVE has put together a comprehensive list of changes needed as the minimum requirements to establish the humane care and operation of pack animals in Supai. Note that neglecting any one of these needed changes will result in failure. *None are optional.*

THE SOLUTIONS

SAVE has identified the following vital changes and programs needed for pack animal use and welfare at Supai in the Grand Canyon:

1. All pack animals must be **freeze-branded** with an individual number for reliable identification.
2. Every pack animal must be provided adequate nutrition and appropriate medical care by its owner, based on physical criteria set by [American Association of Equine Practitioners](#) (AAEP).



3. To be working, pack animals must be in a **healthy and uninjured condition** as based on physical criteria set by AAEP and/or by other reputable pack animal operations, such as [Xanterra](#), for example, working pack animals within Grand Canyon National Park.
4. An appropriate government or reliable Tribal **inspector must be on hand to inspect each pack animal daily** in the village of Supai a) prior to any pack or riding animal heading up to Hualapai Hilltop, b) up any other route out of Supai, or c) down to the Havasu Falls Campground. The animals, identified by their freeze brands, should then be cleared for use if healthy, or instead banned from use if their physical condition does not meet work criteria set by AAEP.
5. A second appropriate government or reliable Tribal **inspector must clear each pack animal once it reaches Hualapai Hilltop or any other exit canyon route from Supai for compliance** that each specific animal, identified by its freeze brand number, was cleared as fit for duty by the inspector in Supai that day. Working pack animals that arrive at Hualapai Hilltop and were banned from use by the inspector in Supai must be confiscated from the owner or user. Other additional penalties might apply, such as fines, loss of pack permit, etc.
6. All pack animals should be **walked along the canyon trail to and from Supai**, NOT forced or allowed to run.
7. Hualapai Hilltop must be provided with the following for all pack animals that arrive there:
 - Sufficient **water** (and sufficient time spent at the Hilltop in which to water)
 - Sufficient **feed** (and sufficient time spent at the Hilltop in which to feed)
 - Sufficient **shade** (this require building ramadas, at the least)
 - **Corral(s)** of ample size to allow all pack animals to move freely while resting and not working, instead of being tethered to a rail or tree.
8. **A schedule of 2-3 days off for each pack animal per week** must be instituted as a standard operating procedure such that pack animals are not overworked. The government or Tribal inspector must have in his or her possession a copy of this schedule to ensure compliance.
9. Overworked or chronically injured horses, or horses too old to continue working as pack animals, must be retired to a sanctuary, NOT worked to death on the trail, sold to a slaughterhouse, abandoned in the village, etc.
10. Wranglers and/or pack animal wranglers must acquire and use **appropriate tack** on all pack animals such that the animals' spines, withers, hips, legs, etc. are not abraded, bruised, or otherwise injured while working or resting.
11. **Sufficient penalties** must be exerted upon those persons who circumvent and violate the above criteria set for the welfare of pack animals, being prosecuted under the statutes currently existing for abuse and/or neglect under Arizona and Federal Laws.



12. **Educational programs** for all handlers and wranglers of pack animals must be instituted as soon as possible in several areas:

- How to care for pack animals by providing appropriate nutritional quality and quantity of feed.
- How to recognize incipient Injuries and/or Illnesses in pack animals such that they are not being worked while injured or ill.
- How to train pack animals positively (via natural horsemanship methods), so as to avoid resorting to starving and/or beating them or kicking their eyes out. The primary "training method" in Supai all too often seems to have relied upon starving and beating pack animals to the point where they lose their spirit, instead of positively training them as pack animals, as is done by wranglers working for Xanterra, for example, in the Grand Canyon.
- How to tack up and load pack animals such that the animals will not be working while in pain or injured. One idea would be to seek a team of volunteer wranglers currently working for one of the mule concession companies at the North or South Rims of Grand Canyon National Park to act as trainers in a one-or-more- day seminars. Wranglers working out of Supai who attend such seminar(s) and subsequently show proficiency in Grand Canyon- proven techniques can receive a card or certificate of proficiency signed by the same Grand Canyon volunteer wrangler-teachers. (Note: at first, depending on where these courses are conducted, they may require an armed "escort.")
- Natural horsemanship training in how to become a partner with pack animals instead of a "master" relying on force, abuse and starvation to convince the animals to do their jobs.

13. A **course** should be taught in the Supai primary school which focuses on humane treatment of all animals, humane training of animals, and the ethics of animal ownership (as well as the legalities of animal treatment). This would be a possibly essential start in steering the "animal culture" in Supai away from rough treatment and gratuitous cruelty and toward a more enlightened and humane perspective into the future.

14. **Mechanisms** must be set into place **to reliably and routinely ensure compliance** by wranglers operating on Havasupai land. For the benefit of the pack animals they employ, these wranglers must routinely make use of all facilities, supplies, feed, shade structure(s), water, and veterinary care, etc. made available by the Tribe or by any Tribally-sanctioned outside donor agency. Consequences of denying pack animals proper, appropriate and routine access to the above-mentioned goods and services should include significant penalties and/or punishments to the offending wrangler(s) AND owners of the animals affected. Additionally, consequences to those same parties must be incurred for the beating, whipping, kicking or other means of administering pain to pack animals as "management" tactics. Penalties to repeat offenders should include the permanent loss of any right to operate pack animals on Havasupai land, and should perhaps also include permanent confiscation of the pack animals.