

April 2, 2014

San Diego Historic Board

Dear Sirs and Madams,

This letter is in reference to the horses of the Coyote Canyon herd. I have examined photographs of the horses, and they are consistent with a Colonial Spanish origin. This type of horse is now very rare in North America, which is ironic given its pivotal importance in the history of both Europeans and Native Americans.

Conserving this genetic type has become an ever increasing challenge lately, as this type has been supplanted by later introductions of horses from Northern Europe. The original type is now quite rare, so that herds such as the Coyote Canyon herd that are being managed for conservation have become increasingly important to the survival of this genetic resource.

The role of this horse in the history of California was especially significant, and what was once a numerous breed has now been reduced to a mere handful of horses. Without support and action, that handful will drift to extinction and with it the heritage of contributions that the breed made to Hispanic, Anglo, and Native American cultures that shaped California.

Designating these horses as a cultural heritage will help in supporting their conservation, and could significantly reverse their slide to extinction.

Sincerely,



D. Phillip Sponenberg, DVM, PhD  
Professor, Pathology and Genetics  
Technical Advisor, The Livestock Conservancy

