USU Extension 4-H Members Kick Off Wild Mustang Challenge

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04/10/2018

April 6, 2018

USU Extension 4-H members will pick up wild yearling mustangs and wild burros to kick off the 2018 Wild Mustang Challenge on June 9.

Every year the Bureau of Land Management gathers wild horses and burros and attempts to find them new homes. The BLM partnered with USU Extension 4-H youth programs to provide training for several of these young horses. For the Wild Mustang Challenge, youth and leaders in 4-H clubs will have 100 days to work together to train the horses in preparation for the trail challenge at the Utah State Fair.

The Wild Mustang Challenge is a mutually beneficial program, with the BLM managing wild animal populations and 4-H members learning valuable skills and raising money for their clubs.

For the first time ever, the Wild Mustang Challenge will include wild burros in addition to the wild mustangs. “We’ve seen the incredible things the youth have done with the mustangs and are eager to see what they can do with a burro,” said Kim Christensen, Utah 4-H Mustang Program Coordinator.

The Wild Mustang Challenge is a great way for youth to learn teamwork and develop practical skills, according to Christensen.

“The experiences and transformations that take place over these 100 days are remarkable,” Christensen said. “We watch youth grow into confident leaders who lead not with words but feelings, thoughts and actions. Creative problem solving begins to consume their thoughts, and suddenly the project is no longer about winning that Grand Champion ribbon but creating a future for their new best friend.”

Money earned from adoptions at the Utah State Fair will help support the 4-H clubs.

Any youth interested in the Wild Mustang Challenge must be a registered 4-H member with horse experience or have an approved designated mentor. Additionally, participants must pass all facility requirements from the BLM, including sufficient space, shelter, fence heights and transportation. All applications will be reviewed by a committee including 4-H and BLM representatives.

Approved applicants will meet at the Wild Horse and Burro Festival in Farmington on June 9 where they will pick up their yearling mustang.

For more information, visit http://utah4h.org/projects/ag/horse/mustang.

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