



BLM NEWS



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Lacey family discover joy of Wyoming wild horses

The sun glistens on the pristine surface of Upper Jade Lake, a little piece of heaven nestled in the Shoshone National Forest above Dubois, Wyo. Stoic cliffs stand guard over the lake and pine trees below.

Upon a steep hill adjacent to the lake, five riders appear silhouetted by the noon-day sun. A lone rider from the group descends the hill, her mustang covering the rugged terrain without hesitation.

“There were five of us, and she was the only person who didn’t have trouble with her horse going down that hill,” said Brian Lacey, recalling how his daughter held on as the wild horse he had adopted several months before deftly descended the difficult hill. “He just turned sideways and went down that hill like he’d been doing it every day. The rest of us fought our (domesticated) horses all the way down.”

“I learned he’s a really good mountain horse,” said Ashlee Lacey, Brian Lacey’s sixteen year-old daughter and proud owner of a wild horse, Peanut. “I just thought, ‘Well, that’s cool.’ I can take him anywhere I want.”

Lacey, a native of Wyoming who’s lived in Dubois for seven years, adopted his first wild horse in March of 2000 at the Wyoming Honor Farm in Riverton. The Bureau of Land Management developed a partnership with the Wyoming Department of Corrections in 1988 to

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train wild horses in preparation for adopting them. Inmates at the Wyoming Honor Farm facility work with the mustangs for up to three months. Having received various levels of training, the horses range from being approachable by humans to being ready for riders.

Lacey and his family enjoy the companionship of their wild horses, taking them on long pleasure and trail rides in the surrounding countryside of Dubois.

“We didn’t even go down intentionally to buy a wild horse. I just took my son to take to the horse sale.” Lacey laughed, “This horse came through and I really liked the looks of him and so I bought him.”

Lacey has since adopted a wild horse, Aladdin, for his granddaughter, Kimberlee Lacey.

“These two wild horses have just been like you raised them from colts. They’ve been willing to learn anything you teach them,” Lacey said. “I imagine all the wild horses are like that as long as you have the time and patience to deal with them.”

As for Kimberlee, Brian said, “She’s going to grow up with Aladdin. She’s two, and he’s two - and she calls him, ‘Two.’ I think they can become a really tight, bonded pair if they grow together.”

Lacey stressed that patience is a key element in both training and understanding a wild horse. Taking that advice, Ashlee spends much of her time with Peanut and Aladdin, regularly brushing and rubbing the horses down. Her time spent is well rewarded.

“She goes out there and is able to walk up to that wild horse laying down in the middle of the corral and sit down on his side and pet him. And he doesn’t even get up. He just lays there. I’ve never seen that out of any horse,” Lacey marveled. “Ashlee and this horse have bonded to the point that she trusts this horse better than our ten year-old domesticated horses.”

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Ashlee added, "I think you can trust these wild horses more than you can trust a domesticated. It's like having a colt no matter how old it is. You know it hasn't been somewhere where its been beaten or anything."

Lacey, who has adopted five horses in all, plans to continue adopting and training wild horses. "We've enjoyed working with them. They're an inexpensive way to wind up with some really good horses. We've got two and three-thousand dollar horses who won't do anything more than that one, Peanut, I paid a hundred-and-twenty-five dollars for. All they need is time - time to work with them."

Editor's Note: The Bureau of Land Management and Wyoming Department of Corrections will be holding a wild horse adoption at the Wyoming Honor Farm in Riverton on July 28. Gates will open at 7:00 a.m., and the public may view the horses and register for the adoption until 9:15 a.m. The adoption will begin at 9:30 a.m. For more information on adopting a wild horse, please call (307) 352-0302. The Wyoming Honor Farm is a minimum security correctional facility for adult male felons and is administered by the Wyoming Department of Corrections. No firearms, alcohol or dogs are allowed on the grounds, including in vehicles.



Kimberlee, Brian Lacey's granddaughter, rides Aladdin, a wild horse adopted at the Wyoming Honor Farm, regularly with adult supervision. Lacey says, "She's two, he's two, and she calls him 'Two.'"

Brian Lacey leads his granddaughter, Kimberlee, on Aladdin - a Wyoming mustang Lacey adopted at the Riverton Honor Farm.





Brian Lacey's daughter, Ashlee, rides Peanut, a wild horse her father adopted at the Wyoming Honor Farm. After her experience with Peanut, she says she trusts mustangs more than any other breed of horses.