

Long Term Systemic Abuse of Horses & Pack Animals on the Havasupai Reservation



March 2019



Supai, Arizona

Supai is located at $36^{\circ}14'13''\text{N}$ $112^{\circ}41'21''\text{W}$ at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, and is the capital of the Havasupai Indian Reservation in Coconino County. This village is home to approximately 500 tribe members.

Tourism is the main source of revenue for the Havasupai Tribe, which receives more than 20,000 visitors annually. The Tribe requires visitors to reserve a fee-based permit to access the land beyond the trailhead at Hualapai Hilltop.

The trail to Supai is approximately 8 miles long, and descends approximately 2,000 feet. The campground is an additional 2 miles. It can only be traveled on foot or with horse or mule assistance. A helicopter service is available as an alternative mode of transportation.

Source: Wikipedia



Reservation Economy

The Havasupai Reservation is largely dependent on tourism as the primary revenue generator for the Havasupai Tribe and individual tribe members. Each year, over 20,000 visitors hike, ride horses, or fly by helicopter the 9 miles into the canyon where the Havasupai Indians live. Tourists from around the world come to Havasupai to see this remote Indian village tucked away in the Grand Canyon, to see the last U.S. Mail mule train in the country, to see the turquoise blue water and travertine pools of Cataract Creek, and to see the beauty of Navajo, Havasu and Mooney Waterfalls, and to camp, swim and play in this unbelievable setting.

Tourism provides revenues for the Havasupai Reservation, and the Havasupai Tribe is actively engaged in the tourism business. There are also small businesses owned and operated by tribal members. Some tribal members engage in part-time micro-business activities such as the production and selling of arts and crafts to visitors.

The Havasupai Tourist Office and the Havasupai Lodge can make arrangements for packing mules service.

Source: Official Website of the Havasupai Tribe (before the website was taken down)
<http://www.havasupai-nsn.gov/tourism.html>



The images you see here do not represent “isolated” incidents of abuse, nor are they the result of ignorance or poverty, as some might have you believe. This abuse is long term, ongoing, and systematic. It is torture. And it is deliberate. The abuse of the pack animals owned by the Havasupai tribe has been excused by apologists and ignored by 3rd party outfitters who make a great deal of money booking these horse and mule supported trips into Havasu Canyon in the Grand Canyon.

Havasupai's popularity with tourists is growing. Travel writers ooh and aah over it, but more trips mean more abuse of more horses, mules and donkeys. Some tourists ignore the animals' plight because they are on vacation. Many just look the other way. Most travel writers say nothing in their articles about the abuse. The shocking pain and suffering these pack animals are subjected to, day in and day out, cannot be allowed to go unnoticed by anyone. Their wounds are not invisible. The blood dripping from their bodies is not invisible. It spatters the trail.

These pack animals need everyone to pay attention to their suffering. Every witness must to speak up, make formal complaints to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and to the Havasupai Tribe. People must practice responsible tourism. That means DO NOT, under any circumstances USE THE PACK ANIMALS. Not for carrying your gear, not for carrying yourself.

The solution relies upon the public. Anyone considering a trip there must know about the abuse AND they must also know that using the pack animals for their trip makes each and every tourist an accessory to the crimes being committed against these creatures. Every travel writer who puts out a recommendation to go there and use the pack animals should be held accountable by the public. Third party outfitters who are profiting from offering these trips and not lifting a finger to do anything to stop this suffering should be held accountable by the public.

Many people familiar with this situation, including SAVE, know that this abuse will not end until the tribe, and others who profit, feel a negative economic impact. *Make* them feel it. Make everyone who is in a position to help stop this abuse feel the pressure.

The price paid for shooting selfies and playing in the pretty waterfalls is paid by the horses, mules and donkeys---in beatings, starvation, dehydration, injuries and, inexorably, death.

THEY SHOULD NOT SUFFER FOR YOUR VACATION

www.HavasupaiHorses.org



christin f
Tempe, Arizona

Level 4 Contributor



35 reviews



14 attraction reviews



29 helpful votes

“Animal abuse ruined it.”

●●○○○○ Reviewed October 27, 2015 via mobile

Yes, the campground and waterfalls are amazing, and I wish I left with a better feeling about the experience.

The **abuse** of the pack animals is unreal, and I'm completely shocked at reviews that claim they didn't see a thing. Several mules had open bleeding wounds on their underbellies which left blood trails on the rocks throughout the canyon. I never once saw any of the horses or mules fed or given water.

At the hilltop as we were about to head home, we found a mule laying on it's side bleeding from it's neck and head and left to suffer for hours before it died. They left the poor thing right in plain sight and next to campers cars.

I would never return after seeing what these people are capable of. Besides, the amount of money they charge to camp is way beyond normal fees, \$160 for two people for two nights. That doesn't include the helicopter or mules.

Visited October 2015

[Less](#) ▲

Helpful?



13

[Thank christin f](#)



[Report](#)

[See all 3 reviews by christin f for Supai](#)

[Ask christin f about Havasupai Indian Reservation](#)

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC.



"Nope. No. Not worth the trauma of wanton animal abuse."

●○○○○○ Reviewed June 6, 2016

Went to Havasupai to enjoy what I thought would be the trip of a lifetime. The emaciated horses and mules, the wounds on their tired bodies, and the fact they were standing the hot sun for hours, no water or food, was enough to render any "beauty" there utterly null. I would never go back.

Visited October 2015

Helpful?



6

Thank Sui_Generis94



Report

[Ask Sui_Generis94 about Havasupai Indian Reservation](#)

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC.



History of Abuse & Neglect

Horses, Mules and other Pack Animals

For over 40 years, visitors to Havasu Falls have been reporting on the neglect, abuse and cruelty against the horses and other pack animals at the hands of tribe members. SAVE has collected eyewitness statements going back 25 years.

These reports have accelerated greatly since the advent of social media. A quick Google search yields hundreds of reports and photos posted by visitors from all over the world.

On the following pages you will find a sample of the many witness statements posted on various locations around the web such as TripAdvisor and Yelp. Many of these statements have identifying and contact information.

Visitors report seeing dead and dying pack animals on the trail.

I have been to Havasupai five or six times and have always carried my own gear in and out (luckily for me and for those poor animals). However, one of the trips we did witness that one of the horses had fallen and was literally left on the trail near the trailhead at the top with a possible broken neck (was laying on its side with blood coming out the mouth and nose). We were extremely surprised of the neglect and took it upon ourselves to bring the poor animal water, but was really expecting them to either put it down or help it up to heal, and no one paid any mind to the poor horse. - Mark Barringer



I hiked there about two years ago and there were actually two horse that had collapsed along the trail and were set on fire to burn there carcasses. I will never go back because of the way they treat their animals.

- Dee Dee Lepper





weho69er
los angeles

Level 2 Contributor



8 reviews



30 helpful votes

“Heartbreaking abuse”

Reviewed August 18, 2014 via mobile

A group of friends and I just returned from a week long trip to Havasupai. I was compelled to write an review regarding our experience. The place is truly magical. The falls, the river and the land was spectacular. Although the hike in and out was a bit of a challenge, we had a great time. Our last day hiking out of Havasupai left us with some heartbreaking images of the packing mules being horribly abused and beaten. The mule drivers pelted them with rocks, beat them with rods and punched them to get them moving along the route. When the last set of mules arrived with our gear, one mule collapsed from exhaustion. The driver began kicking him in the torso and the head to try and get the animal up which made the animals condition worse. He laughed and made jokes about animal cruelty. People unloaded it's crates and tried to give the mule some water. We left wondering if the poor thing survived. I'll reconsider ever returning to Havasupai. Their primary source of income is tourism but how can anyone morally give money to people that have no respect or compassion for these creatures. Please do read other reviews on Tripadvisor about others' witnessing this. Truly devastating!

Less ▲

Helpful?



27

Thank weho69er

Report

[Ask weho69er about Havasupai Indian Reservation](#)

This review is the subjective opinion of a TripAdvisor member and not of TripAdvisor LLC.

April 24, 2018 at 11:17:22 AM MST

Susan, I went to Supai with a group of friends about 20 years ago. We all rode our horses and I rode my favorite mule April. This was my first and only time to visit this beautiful place. Only time because I won't go back because of the terrible abuse of the horses. Ill fitting saddles and pack saddles, improper padding, back sores, and very under fed horses and mules.

Frank H. Windes

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Visitors have seen overloaded and exhausted pack animals being whipped, kicked, hit, beaten with rocks and forced to continue to the point of collapse.

I went to Havasupai and witness a poor animal overloaded to the point it was collapsing, the owner took a large rock and started smashing its head to try and force it to move, sickening. I reported to authorities and nothing has been done thats 15 years ago. the abuse is acceptable down there. I never use those poor abused horses. needs to be consequences put in place - La Lokioka via TripAdvisor

I have been there and seen these severely undernourished horses and mules. On my way up, an individual was leading a pack down, tied together. The horses were struggling on one steep switchback. Rather than stop until they were sure footed, this man kept whipping them to continue. Three started to and nearly rolled. The guide ignored and pulled them on. It was frightful as it looked as though there would be a terrible tragedy with horses rolling down the switchbacks, all tied to one another! I was horrified by the lack of concern this man had for his "pack".

- Elizabeth Hill Stevens



Visitors report pack animals being forced to RUN up and down miles of sandy wash and rocky trail, even in the extreme heat of summer, and then forced to stand in the sun at the hilltop area, sometimes for hours, with NO WATER or SHADE.

I asked the guides if the horses needed water and he said, "You don't worry about them." I felt so sad and sickened the way they were treated. We carried all our gear, both ways. But u will never ever go there again and support the cruelty of the animals.

- Kay Lewis Lee

Visitors report tribe members laughing and making jokes at the plight of injured and suffering animals, and also punching, hitting, kicking, whipping and beating them with rocks.

*I've been a few times and seen some cruel stuff, one horse had a hernia so bad it's insides were hanging out his behind and they were loading the horse up to run it down. I asked the native dude about it and pointed it out to him **and he started laughing and said " hahaha do you have a bandaid. "***

- Richard Bishop

Visitors encounter suffering and dying animals.

I was there a horse was ran so hard that it was ran into side of hill, hit its head and died.



We were walking down and it lay dying on the trail. I inquired about some things but was worried about saying anything while I was down there. I did write a review about the animal abuse on their website. I would certainly be willing to testify about the abuse of the horses and dogs. I hope that something can be done. - Donna Canada-Durenberger

We went to Havasupai in July

2014. On the hike in (7/11/2014, an extremely hot day), we came across a hoof and ankle bone (see photo). A bit later, we saw a horse that seemed to be in bad shape. She was lying on her side in the blazing sun (even though there was shade not that far away). She would go to stand up but then flop back onto her side. She did this several times. This was right near the trail and in clear view of anyone going by. At that time, we knew very little about the animal abuse in Havasupai, and we have no personal experience with how horses behave, but we were suspicious so we documented what we saw (see photo). When we hiked out two days later (7/13/2014, also an incredibly hot day), we encountered what we are pretty sure was the same horse: Female, with the same markings, very close to where we had seen her the first time. She was dead and grotesquely bloated, with dried blood running from her mouth and nose to form a congealed little stream and puddle (see photo). The poor animal had died right on the main trail (we had to walk, gagging, around her), which means that various people involved with the tribe (passing through leading trains of horses) must have seen her dying or dead over the course of three days, and done nothing to help. While the corpse was definitely the worse thing saw, we were deeply upset by the condition of the animals in the village as well. All of them were emaciated, many of them were tied to posts in the sun on short tethers with no access to water, and almost none of the enclosures had any shady spots. It's two years later now and still I literally cannot talk about what I saw there without crying.



TripAdvisor “Horrific Animal Abuse, but a beautiful place”

User name: Liburtee, Denver CO Reviewed April 8, 2015 (edited for length)

You have to walk through the entire village before you reach the campground and it is a disgrace to the beautiful land. The people there live in absolute squalor. There is trash everywhere and it has a striking resemblance to the projects in more urban areas of the U.S. They are absolutely miserable, including those that you check-in with. You get a very unwelcoming feeling there. There are dogs everywhere, just running around, not sure if they are strays or belong to someone. In addition, there are horses that are so malnourished you can see their ribs and their corrals are covered in their own feces. That is just the tip of the iceberg with the animal abuse.

Mules are used to bring people's packs and equipment down into the canyon. They are tied up at the rim in the AZ heat without any water and then are expected and forced to make the 10 mile trek to the campground. They are tethered together, which means if one goes down or trips, the rest of them are affected. This happened during our stay and I cannot get the image out of my head. Horses are also used for these treks and all of those dogs sometimes follow these trains of animals 10 miles down and 10 miles up with no water in extreme heat. A horse tripped and fell on the trail and supposedly broke its leg and was being dragged by the rest of the mule train. We did not believe this story when we heard it, but we when we made our way back to the hilltop, we witnessed it first hand. We practically tripped over a saddle and blankets and stopped to look around. What we saw was a horse, barely alive, lying on its side, looking at us. His eyes were open and he was taking shallow breaths and his ears were twitching. There was nothing we could do at this point. He was left there to die a painful and lonely death in the pathway that every single tourist travels past and will witness.

Many pack animals have open wounds from cinch straps and ill-fitting saddles and packs.

“Pack Mule Abuse” Reviewed October 26, 2015 TripAdvisor

The pack mules/horses carry 4 X 30 lb bags up and down the canyon which is about 10 miles in the hot sun. They don't get water or rest time and are visibly malnourished. You could see the abrasions and scars under their belly, legs and behind, where the straps hold.

***I ran into two backpackers who showed me a video of a horse with a broken ankle and another who was screaming as it struggled to get up with a broken back. These animals are overworked and left to die.** I will admit the place is absolutely beautiful and understand the economy of the Havasupai people is driven by tourists and the pack mule service, but the treatment of the animals is heartbreaking. There is a way where you can regulate the weight limit and amount of trips ran per day so that you don't drive your animals to premature death.*

Alyssenoel -Los Angeles, California



TripAdvisor October 2014 sassam55 San Francisco, California

"Animal Abuse" Reviewed October 26, 2014

*This trip would of been of 5 stars if it wasn't for the way the Mules are treated. Most people don't realize how hard they work to transport people backpack and camping supply. **I saw one with a broken leg, left there to die on my way down the canyon and an other one having a heat stroke on my way back... the native didn't even bother to give it any water when they got to the top.** I've grown up with horses and know what I am talking about, this was very serious. This is very sad considering how much money we paid for the service. If I would of known I would of carried my own gear into the canyon, which I highly recommend for you to do so you don't feel guilty like I did.*

*I took a trip down about a year ago and at that time a horse collapsed on the switch backs on our way up..likely due to being over worked and the heat. **It was horrifying but the guide basically just rolled him down the switchbacks.** I cried the remainder of my climb because it was such a tragic and heartbreaking sight -- Irma May*

TripAdvisor M G San Diego, California Level Contributor 9 Visited May 2014

Some hikers choose to turn around when they encounter emaciated, injured, dead or dying animals on the trail and in the village.

Tripadvisor "Terrible, depressing. " Reviewed November 5, 2015 via mobile

*My husband and I heard about this place looking through an REI trip calendar. We then talked to a friend who had been here years ago and loved it. So we made a reservation without doing much research ourselves. But two nights before we were supposed to set out down to the falls I read some reviews about how bad the animals looked and started to get a bad feeling. I was hoping the reviews were exaggerated, so we went away. Big mistake. We arrived at 5:30am to the parking lot. **There were about 6 emaciated horses with terrible hoof cracks standing around in very poor fitting saddles. It had snowed most of the night and they had no shelter, water, or food.** On our way down we passed a lot of trash (toilet paper, soda cans, beer cans, beer bottles, more beer cans, diapers, the worst excuse for a saddle blanket I've seen), a **severely emaciated, saddled horse (or mule) standing off to the side with a glazed over look of impending death, and a dead, rotting horse.** We turned around about 4 miles in to the hike because I couldn't enjoy myself knowing how badly the horses were being treated. Perhaps their owners don't know any better, but we shouldn't support them in their ignorance. When we got back to the top we fed a couple horses our apples and one of the stay dogs some eggs, but that's only a drop in the bucket. I'm sure the falls are gorgeous. But nothing is beautiful enough to cover up the ugly surrounding this place. Visited November 2015 Britany L*

The photos below are a string of pack animals that were found frozen, injured, dead and dying after being abandoned by packer Leland Joe one night in Jan of 2010. Two college professors from AZ who came upon this grisly scene sent the tribe a letter and receipt they had found which proved who owned them. Nothing was done, and in April of 2016 the same man, Leland Joe, was arrested and charged with multiple counts of animal abuse. This is just another example of the way the tribe has ignored the abuse.

Photos by Mathias Kawski



“...he told her it was common practice that they knock an eye out ...”

*I witnessed a young man sitting on a horse just hitting the horses head with a rope, seemingly for fun. When we got back to the village, I decided to fly out with the helicopter.. common as people just like me, get over exerted.. between that and the animal cruelty, we just wanted to get out of there.. when we got in a German couple with their daughter, about my sons age were in there, the daughter was crying.. and the mother told me she had witnessed an Indian knocking the eye out of one of the horses. The mother was outraged and approached the man, **he told her it was common practice that they knock an eye out to keep the new ones from trying to flee from the trail, apparently the horse is more cautious with one eye.. the parents were horrified.** They like us, had planned to stay several days, but left as soon as they saw what was going on. I told them that we had witnessed not only animal cruelty but seemingly an indoctrinated tribal way of behaving truly cruel, beyond neglect.. by the way, the mules and horses in all*

*national parks are in good shape and it is ignorantly cruel and a non- accepted practice to knock a horses eye out in any way for any reason. when we got out I called the local authorities they told me that the tribe did not fall under local jurisdiction (US laws) and there was nothing they could do. **When I got back to California I wrote the tribe's chief, from an address I found online. There was of course no reply.** -- Lisa Morgan*



Jarrod N Heather Chambers We hiked out and witnessed a terrible horse incident. A young less experienced horse was tied to an experienced one. The younger one spooked during a whipping from the handler and backed off a ledge. The experienced horse tumbled off a cliff to its death. The younger horse landed on a ledge, breaking it's back legs. The handler had no remorse for the youngster and left it 'to the @\$%& coyotes'

Like · Reply · Message · Yesterday at 3:13am



Jarrod N Heather Chambers We have pictures

Like · Reply · Message · Yesterday at 3:14am

Mrs. Chambers on ledge with injured mule. Dead horse below her.



The (mule) on the ledge was older and had a bad limp prior to the incident. The horse handler (wrangler) and the pack of horses (about a dozen) passed us on the hike out. We noticed the dark horse (mule) had a bad limp and commented on it.

The handler tied it to the younger, stronger horse. The old one couldn't make the last stretch so he whipped it causing the younger horse to rear up and plummeted down (to its death).

After some great struggle and some help from my wife and I, we got (the mule) it to its feet.... I had no way to put it down short of pushing it off the cliff. I heavily contemplated doing so but we decided to comfort it instead. Broke our hearts. We were met with great disrespect from the handler.

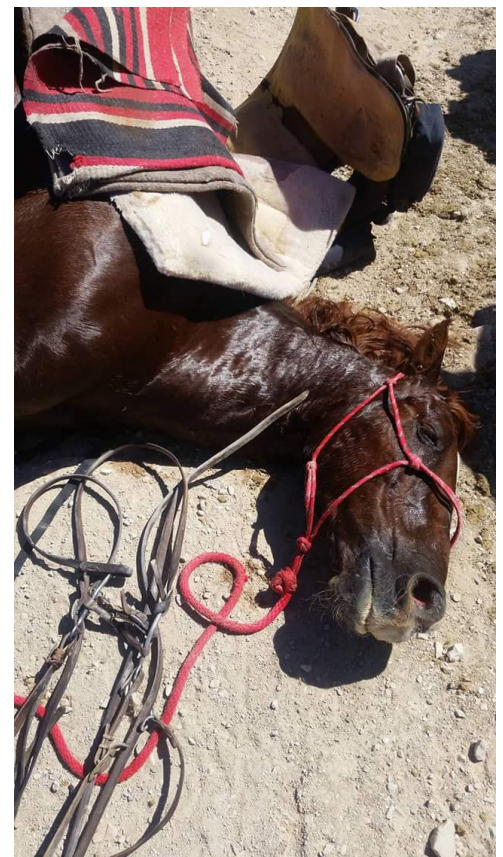
Sadly, I don't know the outcome of the mule. I'm certain that it died. I contemplated a mercy kill as I have assisted suffering animals b4, but the only way I could figure was pushing it off the cliff and I just couldn't bring myself to do it. I was also concerned about falling from the ledge myself. We petted it for about an hour and then went home.



Many tourists including children have been highly traumatized by what they have witnessed. These witnesses include people from all professional backgrounds, including veterinarians. The incident below occurred July 6th, 2017. Hikers Cindi Anderson-Hall, adult daughter Courtney Hall and Courtney's daughters came across this horse on the switchbacks on their hike out. When they first encountered this horse it was still standing, fully saddled, sweating profusely and breathing very hard from being run up the trail. (there is a video of this).

“ My 2 young daughters, my mother and myself witnessed collapse and abuse of a horse on our 5/5/17 trip to Havasupai. This poor guy was saddled and tied in the hot sun on the switchbacks on our trek down. Plenty of shade with room for people to still walk past not even 100 yards in front of and behind him. He was visibly heaving in the sun, POURING sweat. We have video. We tried giving him water, which he wouldn't take. As we walked away we saw him collapse as the rider kicked him and yelled at him, pulling his reins to get him back up. The rider then pulled the saddle and bridle off, exposing all of his saddle sores. We walked back yelling at him asking him why he was tied in the sun. He was cussing at us and told us he does it all the time and was just taking a rest. This was a horrible experience for my young daughters. They cried and cried. We have pictures of all of this “

-Courtney Hall



The tribe member who rode this horse to the point of collapse was identified by a BIA officer, and witnesses gave statements, but no charges were ever filed.



Animals rescued March 2018 during HSUS trip



Left: this horse was left saddled with packing gear for 7-10 days and was found with maggot infested wounds.

Below: starving young horse that had to be euthanized just days after rescue.



April 19th, 2018

SAVE received the following photos this afternoon from some hikers who were in Havasu Canyon on 4/19/18. After the horse collapsed, the owner tried getting it up to its feet. When that failed, HE KICKED THE ANIMAL IN THE FACE.



The horse was found and relinquished to the BIA about 10 days after this incident. He was found to be emaciated and in his late teens per the veterinarian who treated him.



Rob White

I was there, he gave it one swift kick to the bridge of the nose with the sole of his boot. The guy who took the photos was not shooting at the time, as the wrangler did not look pleased with the camera.



3h **Angry** Reply Message



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Action Begins

In early April, 2016, **Susan Ash (co-founder of Stop Animal Violence-aka SAvE)** met with the U.S. Attorney in Flagstaff, two BIA officers and an FBI officer. Shortly after that meeting, federal authorities went into Supai and arrested Leland Joe. He was charged with two felony counts of animal abuse and two misdemeanor charges. His four horses, in deplorable condition, were seized and taken to a local humane organization. All of them eventually recovered—after 6-12 months of intensive veterinary care— and were placed with private adopters or equine sanctuaries.

This action by federal authorities dispels the myth that nothing can be done. Jurisdiction is complicated and is a patchwork of federal, state and tribal laws, but legal action can be taken. Additionally much can be done in the court of public opinion. For decades now tourists have been coming out of Havasu Canyon appalled by the abuse they have seen. Many have called tribal authorities, the police and the BIA, to no avail, so they usually gave up in frustration. S.A.V.E has changed this. Now people can contact us and we can, in turn, make this information public and get it to media outlets. This is very important in terms of creating the necessary changes. The Tribe has basically ignored complaints up to this point because they thought they were immune. There was no organized effort to make all the outrage heard and to expose the complicity of guide companies like REI Adventures, Wildland Trekking and others who are profiting handsomely off the backs of these abused and starving animals while looking the other way.

The last issue concerns the efforts of organizations and individuals who have been volunteering their time and resources to try to alleviate some of the suffering. Many of these people and others think the only way to make progress is to offer help and to cooperate with the Tribe. On paper this looks reasonable and in fact, is what SAvE tried to do as well. These attempts were met with silence. There is no question that a cooperative effort would be the best option. However it is important to remember that this approach has been tried for over 40 years, with no significant change in the level of abject misery and suffering these animals have experienced.

Sustained public pressure and legal action against the Tribe and public exposure of outfitter practices must be used to force change. Education and supportive services can and should be offered as part of the development of a new cultural attitude. This will take time and education, but it will not be accomplished if the Tribe has no incentive to change. White people coming in and offering help does not change the culture of abuse.

Hayduke—June 2016

This horse was purchased from a tribe member Cecil Watahomigie—a well known abuser— by a private individual. With the assistance of Susan Ash and SAVE, he was trailered to a local equine sanctuary. Sadly, despite intense farrier and veterinary intervention, Hayduke died a few weeks later due to a combination of extreme starvation and sepsis brought on by severely abscessed hooves. Cecil Watahomigie was NEVER CHARGED for the horrific abuse of this animal, and continued to participate in the pack animal business with underweight animals. Watahomigie was later charged by the US Attorney's office in Flagstaff for starving and mistreating another horse. The tribe made a last minute back-door deal to take over his case and therefore keep it out of the Federal justice system, and was then put on “probation.”



Summer 2017

This horse was witnessed collapsing under the weight of too many loaded ice chests by a veterinarian. She reported that the horse was gotten on it's feet and then immediately loaded up AGAIN with the same gear. This horse was carrying gear belonging to one of the multiple 3rd party outfitters that contract with the tribe to carry the gear of their customers.



OUTFITTERS ARE COMPLICIT.

SAVE wants this horrible abuse to end. We have always offered solutions. Solutions exist. The tribe has the financial resources to make and enforce changes. The outfitters have a moral responsibility to stop trying to distancing themselves from this abuse. Solutions do not come out of denial. The outfitters need to put pressure on the tribe to take the proper measures to ensure proper care of the equines used as pack animals. Clearly, one of those measures needs to be monitors outside the tribe to ensure the horses are fit healthy enough to work (properly hydrated, fed, vet and farrier care and rest).

OUTFITTERS ARE COMPLICIT. They take NO responsibility for the horrific conditions of the pack animals despite the fact that they are making a fortune on-off the backs of these poor animals. Many of these horses are small Mustang breeds, some the size of ponies, often too young to work and significantly underweight. Also note that there is no adherence to the so-called weight limits.-The tribe has NO SCALE, so how can they adhere to the often quoted weight limit of 130 lb per animal?

WILDLAND TREKKING: \$1340/person When asked about the condition of the pack animals on a WT trip last year, guide Kurt Haston answered: “ Mules are more like camels. They don’t need to drink or eat as often as horses.”

ARIZONA OUTBACK ADVENTURES: \$1,345/person; extra \$75 for horses to carry 15 lb. extra gear per Employee “Paul” - 300 lb. person can ride for extra \$135 each way & rider is on their own with no guide. (So much for the weight limit but they will charge more).

360 ADVENTURES: Employee “Jill” stated that a 12 yr old can use a pack horse with no weight limit @ \$75 round trip. Employee “Bruce” said it’s an extra \$135 to carry a 250-300 lb. person; personal gear carried down for \$65 round trip; sleeping bag is extra \$45 and horse will carry

DISCOVERY TREKS: \$1,050 (camping) and \$1350 (lodging); per employee “Joe” : 200 lbs. person is \$100 extra each way

WEIGHT LIMIT PER HORSE AS STATED BY THE OUTFITTERS and the Havasupai tribe:
Per Havasupai Tribe: 130 lbs. (no scale in village or hilltop)

****UPDATE**** In late 2018, the tribe announced that 3rd party travel companies aka outfitters are no longer being allowed starting Jan 2019. While this decreases the volume of large and heavy items such as ice chests and cookstoves, the tribe members who own and operate the packing business still have no scales to weigh gear and there is still no enforcement of the purported 130 lb weight limit per animal.



SAVE MISSION STATEMENT

The sole purpose and mission of SAVE is to end the abuse of pack animals on the Havasupai Reservation in the Grand Canyon.

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 than SAVE. We have created a place -on 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.

