

Faith in Action: Wild Love Preserve

Andrea Maki, October 2011

Faith. Faith is a living, breathing action. It is a way of life. It is an understanding that all things are purposeful, including those challenges which take us to the edge, and sometimes over. The greater the "why" becomes, the greater the trust, or faith, in the whole and the fact we are always right where we need to be, learning those lessons which need to be learned. Wild Love Preserve is faith in action and constant motion.

I live in a sustained jump, often tested. The stronger the wind, the stronger the tree. My life has always been one of truth, action, perseverance, consideration of the whole, and trust in the Universe. My intent has always been to promote positive energy, awareness, compassion and action. I am guided by a deep appreciation of life's interconnectedness. We are all of the same energy, simply in different packages - whether you or I, the animals, birds or trees, the water or wind - we are literally the same. This awareness gives rise to great compassion and mutual respect for all living things. One does not harm that which one respects, for it is understood one only harms oneself in the process, and in turn impacts the whole.

Animals are our teachers, man has much to learn. Humans are not superior to all else. The belief that man sits atop a pyramid of life, here to do as he pleases, has brought us to the state we are in today. At the extreme cost of the whole, many two-leggeds are disconnected and concerned only with their own immediate needs and desires. They fall short of understanding that humans are but a mere part of the whole and that within that whole lies a very delicate balance. The magic of life lies within a sacred circle. As humans we have a responsibility and we have a choice. Life requires our participation, to fully engage. To walk this earth must not be taken for granted. It is our responsibility to protect and care for the land. To respect the earth and all its inhabitants, acting with conscience and awareness. It is vital that we learn from the past and apply that knowledge in a positive manner moving forward.

I am an animal person. Wild horses speak to all that I am. Their strength, beauty, perseverance and eternal belief, resonates with my truth as an active part of my being. In June 2005 I traveled to Southern California to photograph wild horses for a new body of artwork, a continuation of my 1999 Wild Horse series. It was then I learned of the devious actions of Senator Conrad Burns (MT), a former livestock auctioneer. In November 2004, during the late night hours, he attached a rider to the 2005 US Appropriations Bill, which went unnoticed by other Senators. The subsequent passing of this bill officially gutted the 1971 Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burro Act, opening the door for our (wild) horses to be sent to slaughter and instigating the trafficking of wild horses to benefit private enterprise.

Upon learning of this critical state of affairs, my own artwork (career) was put on hold as I focused on the self-created "Wild Horse Project" to promote support and awareness - driven by a passionate dedication to help right a wrong and do what I could in the efforts to save our wild horses. This ever-evolving project launched with a self-designed and published 2006 calendar featuring black and white photographs, titled "In the Spirit of One - To Save the Wild Horses". As a gesture of awareness with a personal request to act responsibly, I sent a signed calendar to every Member of Congress. In addition this project has resulted in various bodies of wild horse artwork, including pieces created for auction to benefit the cause, traveling art installations, greeting cards, published writings, and now Wild Love.

In late March 2010, the Wild Love Mission was set in motion when my dog, Kiowa, and I traveled to Ketchum, Idaho for her surgery. I had hopes of spending time with the regional Wild Challis Herd, photographing for new work while Kiowa recuperated. That was not meant to be. However, thanks to a wondrous series of "coincidences" I did find myself amidst the intense magic of some of these regional wild ones, just not in the wild. I quickly understood this was not to be about photographing for new artwork. Something much larger and Universal was unfolding.

As fate would have it, on April 1, 2010 Wild Love was born of this purposeful, "chance" encounter and a promise made, eye to eye, heart to heart, with 21 wild mares, most pregnant, from a 2009 government (BLM) roundup. They have come from the wild, speak for the whole, and take us back to their specific home in the wild under evolved circumstances. In response to this promise made and critical need, I have established non-profit status and am creating Wild Love Preserve as a unique and sustainable wild preserve in the Northern Rockies dedicated to protecting our iconic wild mustangs in their native habitat, while preserving this wild ecosystem as a whole, now and for countless generations to come. The intent is to create an expansive protective corridor in an existing Herd Management Area (HMA) on our wild public lands. This HMA exists as such because it is the native home to numerous bands of wild horses, however this same public land is also divided into multiple grazing parcels for private ranching outfits to graze their livestock. This wilderness has been their home for centuries, yet this American Icon is now in peril at the hand of man and timely action is needed before these majestic beings become but a distant memory.

Wild Love Preserve is dedicated to the greater good of our wild planet, which carries on long after we today, travel elsewhere. This is not a fenced wild horse sanctuary. Due to the logistics of our unique location, this specific working intent goes direct to the source in the wild and works towards solutions which put an end to the inhumane helicopter round ups and displacement of our wild horses and their families in the first place. There are other responsible ways to approach this situation which do not require their removal in this manner. While the earth and its inhabitants are not for us to "own", respectfully speaking, these are our wild horses, our wild public lands and our heritage. Many are unaware of this dire reality in which wild lives are paying the ultimate price and are equally unaware that these roundups and long term holding facilities are funded by American taxpayers.

Wild Love's interests lie in working with the Bureau of Land Management and local ranchers in a new light. While opinions are varied, differences heard, Wild Love Preserve believes that by working together we have an opportunity to create something new, special and lasting. Together we have the ability to turn a page in the history books. The time is primed, good will and energy are abundant. The foundation has been laid, progress ever-evolving. Vital funding is the only critical component missing and therefore causing delays in key negotiations with the BLM. Paramount floodgates will open with proof of ownership on our target property/operations base, thus sponsors and donors are actively sought, along with avenues to market the Wild Love Brand products created to directly support the cause. Wild Love Preserve is truly about all of us, a reflection of our humanity.

To learn more about Wild Love Preserve visit www.wildlovepreserve.org.
For more about Andrea Maki visit www.andreamaki.com.