Thankfully one of KMA’s strongest Presidents, Rowland Cheney, had the foresight to interview Ron Harding in 2006. What resulted is a fun dialog between two of the greats in Kiger Horse History and two of the men who helped form the Kiger Mesteño Association.

The Men in the Interview.

**Ron Harding**—Was the First Wild Horse Specialist for the Oregon BLM, and he was a horse lover through and through—which is not a qualification the BLM requires. But Ron’s love for horses pushed him to go above and beyond for the wild horses of Oregon, and he served all the herds well. This interview is the story of one of the groups change to those herds—the Kiger Mustang. Ron believed the stories the old cowboys told about Spanish horses that were still in the Oregon back country, and he went out to find those horses. We are very lucky he did. The first group of he found came from Beatys Butte and the BLM found others that matched the characteristics and gathered those in as well. These horses were not called anything in particular at first, but when it was decided that they would be put in an area near the Kiger Gorge the tract was designated as the Kiger HMA,¹ and at that point the horses came to be called the Kigers².

**Rowland Cheney** — was a renowned fine artist who always had a love for horses and an artist’s appreciation for the grace and beauty of the Baroque horse found in the paintings of the great artists. He also was fascinated by the primitive form, coloration and mystical quality of the horses depicted in ancient cave painting and a penchant for the old west and its partnership with the horse.

Ron Harding loved these horses and there are snippets of footage such as this of him enthusiastically describing the Kigers we all love.

http://www.opb.org/television/programs/ofg/segment/wild-kiger-mustangs/#.VHptBM-Bxto.facebook
Imagine his enthusiasm when, on a family vacation, he found these newly gathered Kiger Mustangs—a combination of the grace of the old world horses, the coloration of the primitives and the romance of the Wild West. Standing before him were beautiful duns with uncontrolled manes and tails and beautiful knowing eyes. These horses were an artist’s dream and Rowland’s love for the horse he found compelled him to great service for the Kiger Mustang. He, an exceptional artist, depicted the Kiger Mustang—for the US government brochures, for the KMA logo, the KMA awards and buckles and he way even contacted to depict the Kiger Mustang for the Breyer Company immortalizing the Kiger and placing it in the homes and hands of many young equine enthusiasts.

But his most breath taking depictions of the Kiger may be Cheney’s depiction in bronze. Cheney was a remarkable sculptor and with passionate skill his artwork echos the grace, power and spirit of the Kiger we love today. KMA is very proud to call him one of our founders and mentors. Here is a link to a video that was made when Rowland was President of KMA.

Sculpture
Title:Brio Condido
Medium: cast bronze
Size:12 inches including black granite base
Patina:Classic brown
Edition #6/20

https://www.youtube.com/watch?t=12&v=AjTdTVbFZGA

1. Contrary to some information out there the Kigers do not actually live in the Kiger Gorge nor were they discovered there. The Kigers came from a variety of herds and these Spanish horses have been moved to a tract of land named for the Kiger family who ranched in the region.
2. When the BLM started to manage the Riddle Horses for similar characteristics they too were called Kigers even though they do not share the same range, they are of the Spanish type.
TRANSCRIPTION OF AUDIO-TAPED CONVERSATION
BETWEEN MR. ROLAND CHENEY AND MR. RON HARDING

(Transcription requested by Roland Cheney)

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GERALDINE L. HARPER, CSR #6866

ORIGINAL
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ORIGINAL
** MR. CHENEY: Oh, do I? 
** MR. HARDING: Yes.
** MR. CHENEY: Well, I'm recording now and I think that's probably what's the matter. It's a --
there's a mic on the -- on the machine, also. But can you hear me okay?
** MR. HARDING: Yeah.
** MR. CHENEY: Okay. All right. Great. I was afraid this wasn't gonna happen. I got panicky this morning. Okay. Listen, the main questions here are --
and you understand you're being recorded and everything?
** MR. HARDING: Right.
** MR. CHENEY: Okay. How was the Kiger herd discovered, Rod?
** MR. HARDING: Well, it kind of goes back before the time they were found and this was in 1974,
and -- and there was a guy named Bob Bailey, most people called him "Beetle" Bailey, but his dad was an old horse runner, Tom Bailey, and him and his dad used to run horses down on the south end of Harney County and I --
from the time I arrived here, in like August of '74, I begin to ask the question: Are there any Spanish Mustangs left, {Inaudible}, the same question as Beetle, and knowing that he'd probably know, if anybody did, and
he said: "Well, there used to be the dunn horse down by
the Oregon end country, which is down next to the
Nevada-Oregan line. And they called them the Orianna
mustangs and they were dunn horses and he said if
there's any of them left they would be on Beatty Butte,
and I asked him why they would be there and he said
well, because there wasn't any fences there and it was
so rough they couldn't run them and so they didn't
bother them over there.

And so, like I said, that was in '74, and then in
1977 we gathered Beatty Butte with aircraft and the
first three trailer -- truckloads that came in, we had a
lot of packy -- Spanish-Mustang-type horse and there
were a lot of different colors, grays and bays and --
but they all had lined backs and ear markings and most
-- most of them -- a good many of them had the stripe on
the legs and whatnot.

But we chose the dunn factor because it's the most
primitive color that we have probably, {Inaudible} as
far as we know today, so {Inaudible} the color back on
the horses, and certainly we couldn't identify the other
colors of the horses as being very strong through the
Spanish Mustang, and so that's why we came up with the
dunn-backed horse. But when the horses came in from
Beatty Butte I yellowed the best ones out of the bunch
and bunched them up, and the mares in one bunch and the
studs in another, and went to town and I talked to Bill
Phillips, "Willie" Bill Phillips, and anyway then we
talked to Chris Vosler and of course they didn't have --
they probably just thought I was imagining things, but
anyway when we went out to the horse corrals, then we
just stood there and everything was kind of quiet and
then everybody just went to jabbering, because we knew
what we had.

And at that particular moment we probably didn't
know what we was gonna do with them, but then later Bill
Phillips, we were in the process of going together, the
East Kiger Herd Management Area, and Bill talked to
Chris Vosler, the district manager in Burns BLM, and
suggested that we gathered all of East Kiger horses and
put these dunn horses back in there.

Well, we did just that and we did keep two horses
out of East Kiger that are pretty typle, and I think
there was a total of 21, the records can bear that out,
I believe. So there was two out of East Kiger and 19
out of Beatty Butte and of the 21 there was two
stallions with back -- each Kiger -- one which we called
Musteneo, which was the smaller of the two stallions,
and then there was another dunn stallion, a really nice
horse, that went back -- maybe even a better horse than
Musteneo.

But Musteneo, with his long mane and whatnot and tail, he was kind of a class act and he was a pretty proud little horse, so people came to look at him more than they did the other stallion. But anyway, we put four two-year-olds, as I recall, back on -- or put them on -- not back on, we put them on Riddle Mountain and two mares. And if my memory serves me, there was a blue roan mare, and I'm not sure, but I think it was a black mare, and then we turned -- there was one red roan in that bunch that we turned into the East Kiger, that was a red roan mare in that bunch.

So that was kind of the initial start of things and we did -- weren't able to gather Riddle Mountain over time completely and cull out everything. I don't think that got cleaned out until the last gathering that I was involved in on Riddle Mountain, which would have been about -- I think it was 1995, and we had gathered down quite a bit, but there was still a small band of horses running in there for a considerable period that we didn't want in there because they weren't -- they weren't tied in, they weren't Beatty-type horses that we gathered off of there.

And so that was kind of the game and then time went and -- but anyway, I had Beetle Bailey come out to the
corrals on that first go-round when we gathered them
horses off of Beatty Butte, and he said -- he said that:
"Those are the horses." He said: "There's no question
about it." So what I'm talking about is the Orianna
Mustang.

MR. CHENEY: Right, right. That must have
been exciting to kind of know that.

MR. HARDING: Yeah, so any -- it was kind of
neat because, you know, today that wouldn't happen,
because we didn't have -- those people aren't around,
some of them today: Bob has passed on. But anyway,
then I guess after that we had such a small gene pool,
and I think anybody that was around then would agree
that that number of horses was a pretty -- pretty small
gene pool to be dealing with, and we were concerned
about in-breeding, and so we talked it over, Bill and I
did, and whatnot, Phillips, Bill Phillips I'm talking
about, and decided that maybe we -- if we found any
other typie horses that we would return them back to the
Kiger.

And then we got -- gathered up -- I think it was a
sequence, I'm try to get it right here, I believe we
gathered at a place called the Potholes, which was not
identified as a herd management area way back then.
There was several horses in there, I don't know, maybe
30 head or so, and we gathered some dunn horses off of there that really had a lot of characteristics that you look for in the Spanish Mustang, but now they were young two-year olds, as I recall, and we turned three of them on Riddle. We turned a horse -- I'm not sure if we caught the horse called Adolf, his registered name is Adolf, I don't think we caught him right away. It might have been another -- a little later down the road, but we turned the horse out of the Potholes into what we call Smith Creek area, which is part of the Kiger --

MR. CHENEY: Uh-huh.

MR. HARDING: -- Herd Management Area.

MR. CHENEY: Uh-huh.

MR. HARDING: And so back up to these three stallions we turned loose on Riddle; we gathered them two years later. They didn't appear, from just their actions and whatnot, to be dunn stallions, but they had gotten more -- gotten to be a little heavier boned and a little heavier muscled than we like to see in the Kiger Mustangs, so we just pulled them out and adopted them out and --

MR. CHENEY: These are the ones from the Potholes?

MR. HARDING: Huh?
MR. CHENEY: These are the ones from the Potholes?

MR. HARDING: Then Adolf, we caught him and we took his offspring over to Paisley.

MR. CHENEY: Oh, okay.

MR. HARDING: And, unfortunately, those horses got locked up in a pasture and the water was turned off inadvertently and they starved to death for water.

MR. CHENEY: Uh-huh.

MR. HARDING: That was over in Lakeview District. But Adolf, I returned him -- I was gonna put him in the East Kiger part of the Kiger Herd Management Area and I did turn him loose, but he only stayed there about 60 seconds and -- not over -- not over two minutes he run and jumped -- I watched him, because no one was spooking him or anything -- but he run and jumped the fence and got back into Smith Creek. And we inventoried later -- as I recall, that year we inventoried in the wintertime the whole Kiger Herd Management Area -- and did see Adolf and he was by himself. And to my knowledge, Adolf never did gain any more mares and then the next year we started missing him. I don't know whether he wintered and died or what, but we never saw him again after we saw him when I turned him loose on the inventorying the following winter, so --
MR. CHENEY: So that was around '96 or seven?
MR. HARDING: No, that was way back.
MR. CHENEY: Oh, that was way back.
MR. HARDING: Yeah, that -- we're talkin' way back. I don't know how far way back.
MR. CHENEY: Yeah.
MR. HARDING: But the records would bear out it would have probably been, I'm guessing, in -- somewhere around the early to mid-'80s.
MR. CHENEY: Okay, okay.
MR. HARDING: And then I don't know what year it was we gathered -- we kind of got started on this KMA thing.
MR. CHENEY: Uh-huh.
MR. HARDING: And got it to going. And I told the guys, I think Littleton was involved, Manford, maybe Elwin, I'm not sure who all; it was just a handful that decided that there ought to be a registry, a private registry for the Kigers, so we can keep -- it can be kept pure, so to speak --
MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.
MR. HARDING: -- for a time. But then during this process I told these guys, I said, you know: "We're gonna be gathering horses that's gonna set the group, set the Kigers, but will be very similar to them,
and because we have such a small gene pool, it's my intent to put these horses into the Kiger herd." And that's how come we did the -- early on we did put these few back.

But anyway, we gathered the Sheep Head somewhere along there I know -- I wish I could get the total sequence (Inaudible), but we gathered the Sheep Head and there was a bunch of horses that was really typie in there and I -- I -- I don't know the number that I gathered out. This was the time that Teacup's mother -- what I believe to be at least a half sister, Teacup's mother's full sister was put back into the Kiger --

MR. CHENEY: Hmm.

MR. HARDING: -- as far as the Kiger Herd Management Area. Teacup I'm thinking was born in the corral, if my memory serves me right.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah, I think I've heard that; I think so.

MR. HARDING: And -- I mean it's all -- all this stuff is a matter of record; a search of the record would show when everything happened. But -- so whenever these horses come in I gathered out some of them that was pretty nice horses and -- that I wasn't going to turn back on the range. And I called these guys that were involved, and early on, and they -- in the KMA and
they came -- and if I remember right, they drew lots amongst themselves for the first stakes and whatnot, but at any rate I remember they -- they chose the various horses out. And I think Benny Banks got a mare and colt out of that bunch.

MR. CHENEY: That's off the Sheep Head's horses?

MR. HARDING: Yeah. And I think -- I think Elwin Wine -- I don't know if he got one then or he ended up with one of them; in fact, I remember that. But I don't know who -- there was some others and I don't recall who got those. But it was kind of -- and I'll take responsibility. I don't feel bad about what we did, about putting the -- the other than Beatty Butte horses on Riddle and Kiger, because I think anybody would have done the same thing, looking at the gene pool that we had, and not knowing.

MR. CHENEY: Absolutely.

MR. HARDING: That's kind of the way I looked at it. So -- and so it's probably at the encouragement, my encouragement that these guys adopted those Sheep's Head horses and of course we didn't -- I don't know why it kind of hung; the BLM was calling them the found horse and I think that name kind of stuck.

MR. CHENEY: Uh-huh.
MR. HARDING: There's been a lot of people come in later that disagreed with that kind of thing and put the pressure on the BLM not to return other horses back in the -- in the Kiger and Riddle --

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: -- with them, what was out of the original bunch. And -- which had already had some -- they'd influenced some by my return of horses to the Riddle. But because of the public pressure we quit doing that and then it picked up and the next thing I know I hear squabbling amongst the troops, so to speak; and the KMA and -- and it was mostly from people that were not in the program early on.

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: It was from people -- some that really didn't understand what the BLM was up against was a small gene pool and I think -- if -- I'll just have to say it the way I feel.

MR. CHENEY: Might as well.

MR. HARDING: I've been intimately involved with a lot of different breeds of horses since I was a little kid. If you look into the other horse registries that have been successful, they were always looking to improve what the stock was. Now what was -- by doing that, that's kind of what we were doing with the found
horses. But there was these people that didn't like the
idea of putting the found horses back in the herd, nor
having a registry. I really believe that they didn't
understand --

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: -- what was going on in the
fullest. There -- the thing that I was fixin' to say
is: People today, and this is a very important point I
think to make when you're talking about Spanish
Mustangs, regardless of what registry they're in, is the
fact that originally Spanish Mustangs continued, through
the years, to be a mixture of horse breeds, and a lot of
people don't understand that. They talk -- they might
like to talk about pure Spanish Mustangs, and what is a
pure Spanish Mustang?

Well, if you look back in history when the Spaniards
came to the Americas, be it north or south, they brought
horses with them to raise and to actually -- it's my
understanding to ship them back to Europe for sale even,
but they were Andalusian, they were Garanéo, they were
Sooria, they were Spanish Barb. And these horses
escaped and there was no fences to confine them, and so
they mixed, and so there was a mixture of breeds that
made up a Spanish Mustang. Now, the only way you can
make a horse pure, so to speak, in any breed, is to
breed them the way they should be bred and keep them sort of isolated.

Now what does these other registries do? The largest registry probably in the world is the American Quarter Horse Registration. The last count I heard, they had 350,000 members; that's a lot of folks breeding horses and riding horses. And it's well-known that the Thoroughbred breed of horse has been used in the Quarter Horse breed over the years to improve blood lines. And if you get into the Paint Horse registry, which is a rather large registry now, you'll find them breeding Quarter Horse and Thoroughbreds into their lines to improve.

Now what am I getting at? I'm getting at: It's no different than putting found horses in the Kiger Mustang registry.

MR. CHENEY: Did some of the found horses -- you mentioned Paisley, how about Palomino Butte, did a few of them come from there, also?

MR. HARDING: No.

MR. CHENEY: No, okay.

MR. HARDING: And I've heard that again and again. Now I have put Kiger horses in Palomino Butte, because Palomino Butte did have the dunn factor.

MR. CHENEY: Okay.
MR. HARDING: It also had the Palomino horses in there. We had a lot of dunn horses in there, and I think you'll find today there's still a lot of dunn horses in there, but we did not do the converse, and I've heard that story told.

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm, uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: And it's a fabrication that's bad, I think --

MR. CHENEY: Okay.

MR. HARDING: -- or it could be just somebody believes that happened and -- and wasn't involved. But I guarantee you, the records -- and you can go back and talk to anybody that's ever worked with me or for me in the Wild Horse Program and they will tell you that I was adamant about keeping records straight and right and truthful.

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

MR. HARDING: And I guarantee you can go through the records and search the files and you'll find that there was no Palomino Butte horses back there.

MR. CHENEY: Not at least put on there by the BLM. Now they could have registered them and entered them into the -- into the Kiger KMA registry.

MR. HARDING: That I will not even -- I've heard so many tales about what's been done between KMA
and --

MR. CHENEY: Right.

MR. HARDING: -- and the registry that Greg Littleton has that -- that I find it hard to place stock in a lot of things that's being told, you see.

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

MR. HARDING: And I think that at best -- you can't change what's happened in the past. I mean, you can talk about it all you want to, until kingdom come, but you're not gonna change it.

MR. CHENEY: Right.

MR. HARDING: All you can do is go from this day forward. And so yeah, there's found horses in the registries, but then the question arises: "Should we -- how should we keep track of them?" "Should we keep track of them?" "Shouldn't we keep track of them?" On and on it goes.

For a time -- if you're looking at other registries, they had a -- I like to look at the Quarter Horse thing because I've probably been more involved with -- well, the Quarter Horse and Paint Horse registries more than any other breeds, but I have been around a lot of Thoroughbreds, {Inaudible} of course. But anyway, the Quarter Horse registry, you know, they -- as they were breeding they would cross a Quarter
Horse with a Thoroughbred and then they had a -- an appendix horse. An appendix horse was simply a way of tracking the cross.

MR. CHENEY: Right.

MR. HARDING: And then what would happen, then they would take that appendix horse, if it was a mare, and they -- she had to have three foals that passed inspection by their bonafide inspectors, you see.

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: And if all the colts passed inspection, then the mother would become a registered horse. Well, I'm -- and then they had a horse that was tentative, and I think that the tentative horses were the colts out of that mare, was the way it went.

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: So that's the way they were tracked. And -- but once -- once -- my understanding's once the mare became a permanent mare then the tentative foals would be --

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: I think that's the way it went; I'm not positive on that.

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: And I don't think the tentatives -- well, they might have had to go through and do the
three-foal thing with the females, but the stud -- it
seems like ten -- had to produce ten colts that passed
inspection. Now don't hold me to that; you'd have to go
talk to a Quarter Horse people. But that went on for
years and years and years, and I think there's still
some of that going on.

So I mean there's ways of doing it without fussing
and fighting over what's right and what's not, is to
make a plan and to go forth. What {Inaudible} came back
a lot right now, and in the past, is the fact that there
was a -- there was factions within the group that were
arguing all the time instead of trying to come to common
ground, which several people have tried to come to
common ground and have not succeeded because there were
factions within the group that would not --

MR. CHENEY: Right.

MR. HARDING: -- meet on common ground and
say: "Hey, we're going forth and this is what we're
gonna do." Instead, it was: "Well, should we keep them
in?" "Should we not keep them in?" {Inaudible} fight
over it, and that's the very reason I withdrew and
haven't been really actively involved in the KMA; I
don't need fussing and fighting.

MR. CHENEY: Well, by golly, I think that's a
neat explanation of exactly what has gone on and where
the animals came from.

Do you recall, has anybody ever said how long the original Orianna group had kind of run together?

MR. HARDING: Well, that would be -- I hear different stories. And Helen Davis, it seems like to me, did some research. She's an elderly lady right now, you know, but I've heard in her earlier days -- and I don't know whether Helen can recall, could recall her -- she might be able to recall the research that she did, but there was a -- I'm trying -- I'm trying to conjure up what it was that she told me. It seems like there was a -- and I don't know who owned Roaring Springs at that time, but there was a Mexican guy or Spanish guy, whatever his name was, that come out of California and brought some dunn horses --

MR. CHENEY: Hmm.

MR. HARDING: -- and run on the south end, which when I'm talking south end this is -- this is what I understand was part of what is now Roaring Springs.

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: I don't know that to be total fact. Now, how much was recorded, it may be recorded in some book somewhere that -- when all that came about. I don't think Pete French had anything to do with it, but it was way back there. It might even been before Pete
French, but I really, to be honest about it, I don't think that -- that I would be fair in saying a given time or -- I think she knew the name.

MR. CHENEY: Oh, for heck's sakes. Well, I'll check that out.

MR. HARDING: But, I'm -- that's as I remember it, but that's been years ago --

MR. CHENEY: Sure.

MR. HARDING: -- that I heard that story. So, you know, I mean where's the Orianna Mustang? They might have been there -- well, if you go back when Peter Skeen Ogden came into Harney County, if you read the Snake River Journal, Peter Skeen Ogden, they came in here looking for furs, you see --

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: -- and they did, in fact, capture a wild horse, tied it to a tree, and it choked to death during the night and he said the men made good use of the carcass, and we know that his people -- his trappers were pretty hungry there --

MR. CHENEY: Yeah.

MR. HARDING: -- [Inaudible] and so it leads you to the thought that they consumed the horse for food. But even at the Lewis and Clark, 1803 to 1805, when they came down the Columbia River, recorded
thousands of houses being in the valley, so I mean we're
talking horses that'd been here a long time.

MR. CHENEY: Right.

MR. HARDING: And if they were there, they
were here.

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: You know, I mean it's pure and
simple, because there was no fences to stop them; they
went as they will and as the authority dictated, you
know.

MR. CHENEY: I just wondered if some of the
early ranchers had talked about it.

MR. HARDING: Well, they -- you'd have to go
-- there is history that's recorded if you did research
into the remount service.

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: Because the U.S. Government
wants this area to begin to be settled; they brought in
-- they brought in Thoroughbred studs, which they would
turn either a stud colt out of these highbred stallions
loose in the wild, and probably some of the stallions
themselves the government gave to the ranchers probably
were turned loose, but do I know that they would gather
the horses then and -- the Mustangers would and they
sold the suitable horses to the U.S. Government for
remounts. And so there is some history there, if it was researched.

    MR. CHENEY: Right.

    MR. HARDING: And it's probably a matter of record somewhere in the U.S. Government's archives -- but you know where that'd be, I wouldn't know.

    MR. CHENEY: One more --

    MR. HARDING: I know my dad at one time had a horse and raised a colt out of a -- that was by a stud named Barbagin that was a remount stud, and this was back in the '40s.

    MR. CHENEY: Yeah. Well, do you think that the essential nature of the Kiger herd has been significantly altered from the addition of these horses that we're talking about, these additional horses?

    MR. HARDING: No, no.

    MR. CHENEY: No, not a bit.

    MR. HARDING: No, because I wouldn't put them in there if they didn't fit the bunch.

    MR. CHENEY: Right.

    MR. HARDING: And the guys that were involved in the KMA wouldn't have wanted them.

    MR. CHENEY: Yeah.

    MR. HARDING: You know, they wouldn't have adopted found horses, so to speak, and introduced them
into KMA. And of course the whole fallacy, I think, of
the whole thing is the fact that they talk about pure
Spanish Mustangs, you know --

MR. CHENEY: Yes, that's right.

MR. HARDING: -- they talk about pure Spanish
Mustangs, and the best we can do is talk about the type
of horse that we've seen that originated from several
different breeds and --

MR. CHENEY: Exactly.

MR. HARDING: -- the question becomes, because
they were run wild on the range and doing this, that,
and the other, we don't know exactly what happened.
There's people propagate -- propagated -- oh, in the
'50s, '60s and '70s they propagated the idea that the
Spanish Mustang was a Spanish Barb and went to the
bones --

MR. CHENEY: Right.

MR. HARDING: -- the vertebra and all that
stuff, and it's a proven fact that a lot of other breeds
had that one less vertebra, you know, like the Arabian
and whatnot.

MR. CHENEY: Right.

MR. HARDING: But they were more than Spanish
Barbs, it's obvious they were more than Spanish Barbs
because --
MR. CHENEY: Well, I think it's wonderful that
your vision, even then, allowed this -- this breed to
be, I don't know, isolated and developed and held
together.

MR. HARDING: Yeah, yeah. It went back a long
way when I was a young man, and not in high school; I
would save my nickels and dimes, because we were poor,
and I'd buy a Western Horseman and I'd read about all
the horses that I could and Aloe Belsky, from Ely,
Nebraska, would advertise in the Western Horseman
Spanish Mustangs and cow dogs. And I kind of got
interested in it, you know, in reading these little ads
that he'd place, you know, in the Western Horseman for
-- to sell these Spanish Mustangs. And I, in fact, got
a picture -- he left it for me and I picked it up one
time in Texas and I've got it hanging on my wall, and I
{Inaudible} -- and it looked very much like the original
Kigers. So we've changed and refined them, not by --
and when I say changed, it isn't by -- I don't feel that
it was by the introduction of other -- those early
horses, it was changed by selective breeding. I mean,
you know, you can't --

MR. CHENEY: Right.

MR. HARDING: -- you select for a type and
that's essentially the type that KMA is breeding for and
use as their model; that's kind of what I selected over the years for type.

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: And some of the things that I didn't want to happen was to get the horses too big or too small.

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: You don't want a bunch of little pony-sized horses, because those kind of horses are pretty much worthless to anybody. So you can take any breed of an animal and select -- selectively breed them and come out with what a desirable -- desirable traits.

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

MR. HARDING: It doesn't matter whether it's bovines or equines or whatever. I mean, we look at some of these breeds of cattle, as I look back and look at what the Hereford was when I was a kid, or the Angus, it isn't anything like it is now; it's a larger breed, because they selectively bred that way. And I think that's up to the breeder to -- yeah, you need parameters, but I don't think any horse breed is really ever selected for, say: "These horses can't be" -- well, there might be some that I'm not aware of -- "but they can't be over so many hands high." Maybe the little mini horses --
MR. CHENEY: Yeah.

MR. HARDING: -- would fit in that category.

But I'm not aware that people selected for a given height of horse or given weight, things of that nature; there's always parameters, you know, and they maybe even go beyond the parameters somewhat if you really look into it. And so, you know, to -- to pursue something like putting, I don't know, guidelines that would say: Well, this horse can't be over 15-2 or something --

MR. CHENEY: Right.

MR. HARDING: -- under 13 hands or something, I think would be foolish to pursue something like that.

MR. CHENEY: I think -- I think many breeds do incorporate those -- those size limitations, just like standards on dogs.

MR. HARDING: I don't know. I know there are standards, but I looked into them and I don't see it in the Quarter Horse breed, I don't see it in the Thoroughbred breed; Paint horses don't.

MR. CHENEY: Oh, that's interesting.

MR. HARDING: I don't see it. There may be breeds of horses that do, of horses that do, but I can't really recall any of them, you know. I mean --

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: -- Thoroughbreds, they can be
way up in there past 17 hands; you've got to get a box
to get on them, you know.

MR. CHENEY: Right, right.

MR. HARDING: So I don't know --

MR. CHENEY: Okay, but just select for their
own use.

MR. HARDING: You've got it, Roland. If you
think about it later, I'd be more than happy to answer
to the best of my ability. I think --

MR. CHENEY: As far as I can tell, Ron, I
think we've just about covered everything that I've
heard.

MR. HARDING: Well, you know, the one thing
that I'll say is that integrity is worth a lot, as far
as I'm concerned, and being honest, and I think anyone
who has known me and worked with me over the years knows
that the truth is very important. I've always said the
truth will set you free, so I've got -- I've got no axe
to grind by proposing something that isn't really the
truth.

MR. CHENEY: Right, absolutely. And I think
it's been -- you've done a real service, you know, to
the horse world.

MR. HARDING: Well, I still get concerned
because -- and the reason I get concerned is because I
know within the Bureau there isn't very many folk that
has the passion to carry this thing on, you know.

MR. CHENEY: Well, I think that's one of the
wonderful contributions that Warburton made, is that he
saw your interest and vision and helped it to develop.

MR. HARDING: And he did.

MR. CHENEY: To continue.

MR. HARDING: And he did, you know.

MR. CHENEY: Yeah.

MR. HARDING: I have to give him a lot of
credit for that, he allowed me to. And so even before
him, when we really got started, Chris Vosler, you know

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: -- they didn't -- they listened,
they didn't give me a lot of guidance, but they listened
to what I had to offer and gave me the leeway to pursue
a vision, you know, because -- and I think, you know, if
-- if a watchful eye by organizations like KMA is not
kept on these herds, you could see that an individual
coming in sometimes that wasn't real knowledgeable on
what needed -- needed to be done out there, you could
lose the whole thing.

MR. CHENEY: Absolutely could, yeah.

MR. HARDING: Because the herds aren't that
large, they really aren't that large. I won't get into
that because I -- I have some real feelings -- strong
feelings there, but I think where you've got -- and that
-- and that too goes almost without saying, the reason
that we did the Riddle thing is so if something ever
happened to the Kiger, of course, {Inaudible} over in
the Kiger Herd Management Area then we'd have the Riddle
horses to replace --

   MR. CHENEY: Yes.

   MR. HARDING: -- or vice versa, you know

{Inaudible}

   MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

   MR. HARDING: -- the small herds that we have.

   MR. CHENEY: Right. Because they really are a
very delicate balance that has to be maintained.

   MR. HARDING: And I think it's important right
now, Roland, to really be looking at, because there's
some state laws that have gone into effect, not
pertaining to horses, but pertaining to bears and
cougars, which the bears are not known to be where --
where these horses are, there may be some on the -- in
the Riddle -- the vicinity of the Riddle Herd Management
Area. I wouldn't say yes or no there, simply knowing
that the Kigers' habitat's there, but there's been no
reports, as far as I know, of bears {Inaudible} in the
area of the {Inaudible} the Kigers and whatnot.

MR. CHENEY: Right, so we got a --

MR. HARDING: But the cougars definitely have been there, they're increasing in numbers, because the State of Oregon has said no -- "No running of cougars with dogs," and so this slows down the hunting of the cougar and -- and it's well-known in this area that cougars are on the increase, simply by the numbers that people are killing.

MR. CHENEY: Right, right.

MR. HARDING: And certainly a cougar is very capable of taking bulls down and humans and full-grown horses.

MR. CHENEY: Right, absolutely are, could, yeah.

MR. HARDING: And it's something that we say: "Oh, it's not gonna bother," but I guarantee you, if there's something -- if the deer herds have diminished, which they have, most people feel that, that they have at the hands, so to speak, of the cougars, and there's no prey there, and so they're gonna prey on the next thing that comes around and I know that the {Inaudible} down there, they have {Inaudible} some of their horses {Inaudible} in the area.

MR. CHENEY: Right.
MR. HARDING: So, you know, the energy put forth bickering with one another, I think the energy should be put forth in keeping track of what's going on, you know, out on the range and whatnot.

MR. CHENEY: I agree. And you know what, Ron? At this point we're running out of tape and so I think it's about a good spot to sign off and say thank you.

MR. HARDING: Well, I know when you turn me on, it's hard to turn me off --

MR. CHENEY: It's wonderful.

MR. HARDING: -- about the past. But you know, there's one thing in that book that you bought --

MR. CHENEY: Yes.

MR. HARDING: -- which said: "We didn't pollute the Kiger herd"; that is kind of not totally true, because we didn't pollute the Kiger herd after the public begin hollering at us --

MR. CHENEY: Uhm-hmm.

MR. HARDING: -- you know, [Inaudible], so that really is what that point is --

MR. CHENEY: Well, and even when you did put the horses in, the found horses, they were typie horses that -- that seemed to fit your -- you fetal type.

MR. HARDING: Yeah, other people would say that's when we [Inaudible].
MR. CHENEY: Yeah, I know.

MR. HARDING: I mean, they're there, so I mean -- is the BLM was squabbling amongst themselves, you know?

MR. CHENEY: Right.

MR. HARDING: It just went on from -- from there, so --

MR. CHENEY: Right

MR. HARDING: It's been very good speaking with you, and like I say: If you need something, there will be some questions come to your mind --

MR. CHENEY: Yes, there will, and I'll --- I'll get back to you. And I sure thank you again, Ron.

MR. HARDING: That's okay.

MR. CHENEY: Okay, so long now.

(This concludes the transcription of this audio-taped conversation.)

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