

**Subject:** Animal Law Program  
**From:** Bruce Smith <Bruce.Smith@du.edu>  
**Date:** 2/23/2026, 5:09 PM  
**To:** afr <equus@red-shield.org>  
**CC:** Justin Marceau <Justin.Marceau@du.edu>

Dear Frank:

We are grateful for the support provided by the Center for Contemporary Equine Studies for the Animal Law Program at the Sturm College of Law.

Attached please find a report detailing (1) activities funded through the Center for Contemporary Equine Studies Fund and (2) additional non-funded activities undertaken by the Sturm College of Law to advance the well-being of equines. We have also attached a copy of the Program's most recent annual report.

As you will see, charges to the Fund were made during 2023-24 to support the salary, benefits, and travel of Carter Dillard (in his then-directorship role) in relation to his engagement with you regarding proposed equine-related initiatives. No charges have been made to the Fund since summer 2024.

Sincerely,

Bruce

Bruce P. Smith  
Dean and Professor of Law  
University of Denver Sturm College of Law  
2255 East Evans Avenue  
Denver, Colorado 80208



— Attachments: —

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CCES_ Sturm College of Law_ Animal Law Program_.pdf	153 KB
Animal Law Program Annual Report 2024-2025.pdf	11.9 MB



CCES Award Number: 20733238  
Award Recipient: University of Denver  
Project Title: Sturm College of Law Animal Law Program  
Date of Award: August 31, 2023 (amended July 12, 2024)  
Funded Amount: \$250,000

1. *Please describe the progress and accomplishments resulting from your award during the last year.*

In August 2023, the Center for Contemporary Equine Studies ("CCES") pledged \$250,000 to the University of Denver ("DU") to create the Center for Contemporary Equine Studies Fund ("the Fund"). The original purpose of the Fund was to support the Animal Activist Legal Defense Project ("AALDP") at the Sturm College of Law ("SCOL") with respect to work relating to the well-being of horses and other equines. In July 2024, the parties amended their original August 2023 pledge agreement to designate SCOL's Animal Law Program as the entity authorized to access the Fund. Pursuant to the terms of the parties' amended agreement, the Fund is to be used by the Animal Law Program for purposes that advance the well-being of equines, "including, without limitation, supporting (1) the right to speak freely about the well-being of equines; (2) the capacity of individuals to document instances of equine cruelty; (3) efforts to rescue equines that have been the objects of abuse and neglect; and (4) initiatives focused on rehoming equines to settings congenial to their flourishing and thriving."

During 2023 and 2024, Bruce Smith (Dean of SCOL), Professor Justin Marceau (Director of the Animal Law Program), Professor Phil Tedeschi (then-faculty Director of DU's Institute for Human-Animal Connection), and Carter Dillard (then-Director of Strategic Initiatives of AALDP) worked with the Director of CCES to identify and prioritize a set of projects designed to advance the well-being of equines. These efforts included, without limitation, e-mail, telephone, and Zoom communications with the Director of CCES; in-person meetings, including travel to California; and the preparation and submission of one or more formal proposals and gift agreements.

Promising areas of focus that emerged from the parties' course of discussions included:

- 1) Supporting the rescue of abused and neglected horses;

- 2) Investigating and addressing the slaughter of horses, in collaboration with organizations such as the Animal Rescue Mission and Animals' Angels;
- 3) Challenging BLM grazing permits and wild horse policies;
- 4) Addressing blood and serum horse farming in South America and elsewhere;
- 5) Enhancing whistleblower protections for individuals who disclose equine abuse;
- 6) Challenging FDA approval of equine-based products;
- 7) Launching additional legal challenges to the use of *ejiao* in traditional medicines, foodstuffs, and beauty products;
- 8) Developing and filing legal challenges to restore healthy climates and natural habitats for equines around the globe that are threatened due to human encroachment;
- 9) Challenging (with partners like Animal Wellness Action and the Equine Land Conservation Resource) the "humane-washing" and related "green-washing" associated with the treatment of equines and their habitats;
- 10) Assisting animal protection organizations in passing local laws that protect equines;
- 11) Supporting animal photojournalism – an emerging genre of photography that chronicles the suffering of nonhuman animals – through a proposed Animal Photojournalism Project ("APJ Project");
- 12) Launching a public event series designed to identify the key social, cultural, ecological, legal, political, economic, demographic, and other threats to equines, and to determine the most compelling theories, strategies, and tactics for responding to those threats; and
- 13) Establishing a permanent collection of books, articles, archival materials, and data relating to equine protection (including materials currently maintained by CCES) to be made available to individuals and organizations interested in equine protection.

As detailed in Table 1 below, \$91,596.76 was charged to the Fund during 2023-24 to support the salary, benefits, and travel of Carter Dillard, in his capacity as then-Director of Strategic Initiatives of AALDP, in advancing collaboration with the Director of CCES regarding equine-related issues. Ultimately, SCOL and CCES could not reach alignment regarding programmatic priorities. Thus, additional equine-related work conducted pursuant to the commitment has been paused. No charges have been made to the Fund since August 2024, and a balance of \$158,403.24 remains.

Original Commitment	\$250,000.00
2023-24 Charges	-\$91,596.76
FUND BALANCE	\$158,403.24

Despite the above-described pause in charges to the Fund, the Animal Law Program has continued to advance a robust set of initiatives relating to advancing the well-being of equines. SCOL engaged a prominent expert in equine protection to develop a proposal for a novel center for equine studies designed to address critical issues of equine law and policy, including, without limitation, the treatment of working equines, horses engaged in racing and performance, free-roaming horses and burros, zebras, donkeys, and equines destined for slaughter. Elements of the proposed center include the development of curricular offerings addressing various aspects of equine law; the expansion of externships with equine protection organizations; the creation of one or more equine-oriented legal clinics; an equine-focused Master’s program; and the launching of a law journal dedicated to issues of equine law and policy.

The Program also advanced the following activities, among others, relating to equine protection through institutional funding sources:

- 1) Hosted a lunchtime talk with Jennifer Best (Wildlife Law Program Director of Friends of Animals), who has successfully litigated cases preventing the roundup and removal of wild horses;
- 2) Organized volunteer days at Luvin Arms Animal Sanctuary, home to several equines who have been saved from neglect;
- 3) Augmented our curriculum in the area of equine protection, including coverage of subjects such as the Wild Free-Roaming Horses & Burros Act;
- 4) Supported students engaged in research relating to equines;
- 5) Advised students regarding equine-related externships;

- 6) Connected students with advocates working on equine-related issues.
- 7) Participated in conversations and planning sessions with working groups, NGOs, elected officials, and political appointees related to both domesticated equines and wild horses; and
- 8) Explored possibilities for direct legal representation of individuals engaged in equine protection efforts.

2. *What are the implications of the APJ Project? Please include details of anticipated innovation and advancements in the education and practice of equine animal law, with a timeline for implementation of the proposed course curriculum of the Animal Law Program.*

The APJ Project seeks to establish the intellectual foundations and practical framework of animal photojournalism and to expand and deepen practical training in the field. Prior to the pausing of Fund activity, we had planned a high-profile conference at DU designed to draw national and international attention to the field; an approach to training animal photojournalists in allied subject areas relevant to their practice; and a sourcebook designed to educate and support future animal photojournalists. The APJ Project has been largely suspended in the absence of alignment regarding future usage of the Fund.

3. *Describe any challenges, or delays, in meeting the objectives of your proposed activities. For example, issues caused by staff recruitment, procurement, research space provision, technical issues, financial constraints.*

Although SCOL remains committed to enhancing the protection of horses and other equines, SCOL and CCES have not reached alignment on a vision or on programmatic priorities.

4. *Have any faculty or staff/personnel been funded through this award during the last year? If yes, provide details including the name and role of the individual(s) who received the salary or stipend if applicable.*

As noted above, the Fund supported the work of Carter Dillard (then-Director of Strategic Initiatives of AALDP) in relation to equine protection during 2023-24. No personnel-related expenses have been charged to the Fund since summer 2024.

5. *Has the University and/or any other funding sources contributed to support development of the work funded by this award?*

SCOL has received funding from a variety of sources to support its Animal Law Program, including the AALDP. The Animal Law Program also receives support from SCOL, including in the areas of marketing and facilities usage.

6. *What does the faculty of the Animal Law Program plan to do next? Please detail any plans that emerged directly from the activity funded by CCES's award. This can include follow-on funding applications, collaborations, publications, academic workshop/conference presentations, [and] engagement with policy makers/governmental officials relevant to equine legal protection.*

During the recently concluded 2024-25 academic year, as set forth in the accompanying annual report, the Animal Law Program expanded its scholarly impact, deepened student and community engagement, and contributed to legal and policy reforms protecting nonhuman animals. Among other initiatives, the Program:

- Launched the Animal Law Scholarship Digest, which tracks emerging trends and debates across animal law and related disciplines;
- Led the development of a comprehensive Animal Law Research Guide for students, practitioners, and advocates;
- Offered a survey course in Animal Law, a course in Federal Wildlife Law, and the Animal Agriculture Accountability Project, the latter in collaboration with Yale Law School;
- Provided guaranteed summer public-interest fellowships supporting students working in the fields of animal advocacy, policy, and litigation;
- Supported alumni pursuing careers in animal rights, wildlife protection, and companion animal law;
- Hosted an Evening Speaker Series and a set of Lunchtime Career and Advocacy Talks featuring leading scholars, litigators, and advocates;
- Engaged students in hands-on community events, including visits to animal sanctuaries and festivals;

- Supported and participated in the oral argument of the Nonhuman Rights Project before the Colorado Supreme Court;
- Submitted comments in Colorado that helped secure stronger protections for reptiles and snakes; and
- Provided written testimony supporting legislation to ban octopus farming in Massachusetts.

The Animal Law Program's Director, Program Manager, faculty affiliates, fellows, and partners intend to pursue additional research, presentations, collaborations, governmental engagement, and funding initiatives during the 2025-26 academic year and beyond.

*7. Please tell us any comments you wish to add regarding this CCES award; the conduct of the participants; or procedural difficulties you may have encountered.*

The Animal Law Program is grateful for the commitment of the CCES and remains committed to advancing the well-being of horses and other equines. SCOL is hopeful that the parties will reach alignment on a vision and set of programmatic priorities that would permit future usage of the Fund in furtherance of equine-related work.

*8. Lastly, in the unfortunate event that the APJ Project was terminated prematurely, please explain why and to what alternative use the Award was redirected administratively to further both the original purpose of the Award and the expressed shared interest of DU Law School in furthering equine legal protection.*

As noted above, the APJ Project has been largely suspended in the absence of alignment regarding future usage of the Fund. With this noted, the Animal Law Program remains prepared to advance initiatives designed to enhance the well-being of horses and other equines that are consistent with the Fund's purposes.