

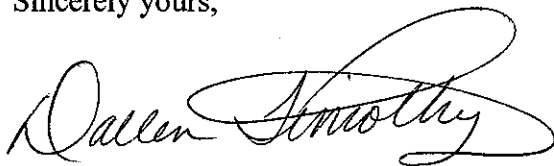
March 9, 2014

To whom it may concern:

I am pleased to write this letter to affirm my support for the conservation of the donkeys of Bonaire. On a personal note, I have visited Bonaire, where I had the opportunity to observe the donkeys first hand. In my opinion, they are an important part of the local heritage of Bonaire and certainly create part of the charm of the island. From my professional viewpoint, the donkeys are a critical part of the identity of the island and reflect important periods of history. They are in fact inextricably linked to the colonial heritage of Bonaire. As such, it is my professional opinion that the most prudent action related to this important element of the Bonairean cultural heritage, is not to eliminate the donkey population but rather to preserve it for future generations as an important marker of Bonairean patrimony.

While I understand certain concerns about the impacts the donkeys may have on the island and its population centers, the importance of the animals and their story should not be ignored by the government of Bonaire or its people. Protecting the donkey population is closely aligned to the goals of UNESCO in its efforts to protect natural and human heritage. I strongly recommend that the Bonairean government, the Bonairean people and the government of the Netherlands reconsider the consequences of any actions in relation to the destruction or preservation of the island's donkey population. The residents should work in tandem with local authorities, national advisors, and international bodies (e.g. UNESCO) to devise ways of meeting everyone's goals of preserving this crucial heritage while protecting the island's ecosystem/aesthetics and its human population. I firmly believe that a commonsense solution can be reached in this urgent matter between all interested parties, and it would behoove the island and its people to formulate a practical solution that limits the impacts of the donkeys, while simultaneously protecting them as a salient element of Bonaire's cultural heritage to preserve local identity, maintain a sense of community pride, and enhance the island's tourism potential.

Sincerely yours,



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