

# Neighbors perplexed about dead coyote

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Where is the carcass of the coyote that was shot in Meyers and who shot it? Those are the questions that are still not answered.

Jeff Morales discovered the dead animal Jan. 22 on his routine walk with his dog.

“The blood trail intersects my existing trail,” Morales told *Lake Tahoe News*.

At first he thought it might have been a Husky that was killed because he just saw a pile of fur. He took his dog home and came back with a camera to document what he saw. This was after he made a series of phone calls to El Dorado County Sheriff’s Department, El Dorado County Animal Control, California Department of Fish Wildlife and Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care.



Who killed a coyote in Meyers and took the carcass a day later is a mystery.

Photo/Provided

Lt. Robert Gerat with Animal Control looked around a little

that afternoon according to Lynn and John Setnor whose house is the closest to the trail of blood, but reportedly didn't find anything. Gerat told *Lake Tahoe News* his agency has no jurisdiction over this incident. "No laws were broken that we enforce," he said.

Blood was visible Jan. 27 beginning about 100 feet near the Setnor property on Ottawa Drive, with it becoming more prominent where the animal likely ran farther into the forest from its aggressor before eventually collapsing and dying.

The Setnor property is surrounded by California Tahoe Conservancy land on both sides and national forest in the back. It is not fenced, so it looks like acres of open space.

John Setnor and Morales had a conversation last Wednesday, with Morales telling him about the coyote. Their recollections of the dialog as told to *Lake Tahoe News* are similar. They live in the same neighborhood. What is different is how well they say they know each other. Morales says they wave and are cordial. Setnor said he didn't know who Morales was when he was behind his house.

They agree Setnor was on his back deck with a gun. Setnor says the only gun he owns is a BB gun. He's not a hunter. He offered to let sheriff's officials search his home for weapons, though they declined to do so. Setnor said he had the gun because there had been suspicious people on his street.

Morales said from his vantage point he could not tell what kind of gun Setnor had.

Neither John nor Lynn Setnor have ventured to see the bloody trail. Walking on the slick area is not something they want to chance, especially with John Setnor having a surgically repaired leg. They vehemently deny having anything to do with killing the coyote, professing their love of wildlife.

When Morales was going back to the area the morning of Jan. 23

he ran into sheriff's Lt. Pete Van Arnum so he offered to show the lieutenant the body. But when they got to the spot the coyote was not there.

Morales said there was no evidence of it being dragged off. Only large bootprints were left in the snow – and the animal's blood.

"It appears someone with boots removed the coyote," Van Arnum told *Lake Tahoe News*. "If someone had taken the coyote legally, they could be entitled to the pelts. There is no evidence Mr. Setnor took it."

Van Arnum also does not believe Setnor killed the animal.

It is presumed a gun left the large hole in the side of the coyote's neck. But what type is hard to say because no official has looked at the carcass.

As for the legalities, coyotes may be hunted in the Lake Tahoe Basin with a permit and a shotgun, Van Arnum said. However, U.S. Forest Service regulations prohibit discharging a firearm of any kind within 150 yards of a house or building. This would have been that close.

Van Arnum said the odds of finding the culprit are not very good.

"If nothing else, all this uproar about the incident will probably keep someone from doing it again in that area," Van Arnum said. "Obviously, it was very close to a residential area. We don't want people shooting guns in residential areas."