

Judge rejects Nevadans' bid to dispose of excess mustangs

By Scott Sonner, AP

A federal judge on Thursday threw out a lawsuit filed by a coalition of rural Nevada counties that wanted to force the government to sell or otherwise dispose of tens of thousands of mustangs in U.S. holding facilities.

U.S. District Judge Miranda Du in Reno ruled in favor of wild horse advocates who said the effort backed by the Nevada Farm Bureau Federation was organized by ranchers who want a bigger share of forage for their livestock. They said it would have forced the sale of federally protected mustangs for slaughter.

Du said in a nine-page opinion dismissing the lawsuit that it was an unsubstantiated, broad attack on the Bureau of Land Management's overall wild horse policy effective in 10 western states. She said the suit lacks specifics needed to order BLM to round up more horses and get rid of the ones the agency says it already has gathered in compliance with the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act.

The Nevada Association of Counties filed the suit against the U.S. Interior Department in December 2013 and asked for an injunction to force BLM to immediately roundup excess horses on public lands, determine statewide population levels every two months, "sell or dispose of" excess animals in government holding, and "stop interfering with Nevadans' water rights," Du wrote.

"Plaintiffs essentially ask the court to compel compliance with the act and refashion the federal defendants' management of wild horses and burros in Nevada," she said. She cited a 1990 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in a Utah case that she said established they "cannot seek wholesale improvement of this

program by court decree.”

BLM also had asked the judge to dismiss the case. Du said that motion was moot now that she’s granted the dismissal sought by the American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign, Reno-based author Terri Farley and wild-horse photographer Mark Terrell of Dayton, Nevada.

“The frivolous bid by cattlemen to roundup and slaughter America’s iconic wild horses to clear the public lands for commercial livestock grazing has now been soundly rejected by the federal court,” said Suzanne Roy, director of the American Wild Horse Preservation Campaign.

The case had made the BLM and horse advocates rare allies in a larger, ongoing legal battle over the mustang roundups that the horse advocates argue are illegal and should be stopped. Nevada Bighorns Unlimited had sided with the Farm Bureau and the rural counties.

Lawyers for the BLM said in their motion to dismiss the case in January that they agreed with the ranchers’ contention that current herds are overpopulated and threaten the ecological integrity of the range, much of it suffering from multiple years of drought. But they said the agency is hamstrung by budget cuts, and a congressional ban on the sale of excess horses for slaughter has pushed their holding facilities to the brink of capacity.

BLM estimated that as of March 3 there were 40,815 horses roaming BLM lands from Colorado to California – nearly twice as many as the agency maintains the range can sustain. More than 47,000 mustangs that have been gathered in recent years remain in holding facilities – an estimated 31,250 in long-term pastures and 16,203 horses in short-term corals, according to the BLM’s website.

Yappy Hour for people-dogs benefits ACT

Animal Coalition of Tahoe is putting on a Yappy Hour for people and their four-legged family members.

The April 8 fundraiser is from 5-8pm on the patio at Base Camp Pizza in the Heavenly Village in South Lake Tahoe.

A percentage of the food and drink sales go to ACT. ACT raises funds for a spay-neuter program and the animal shelter.

Snippets about Lake Tahoe



A mama and her cub play in the Tahoe Keys this week.
Photo/John Adamski/Copyright

- Tahoe's bears are out and about. They are playing and wandering the neighborhoods.
 - Tahoe is on FlipKey's list of top winter destinations.
 - As part of North Lake Tahoe's SnowFest, the 11th annual I-Did-A-Run at Tahoe Donner Downhill Ski Area raised \$2,775 for the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe.
 - Tahoe City Public Utility District is seeking bids to replace two tennis courts at Kilner Park. Estimated cost is \$240,000.
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Pollen in Tahoe triggering allergic reactions

By Kathryn Reed

That runny nose and cough may not be a lingering cold. It could be allergies.

There is no “allergy season” per se, just peak times for certain allergies. With plants beginning to bloom sooner than normal in the basin, people are experiencing allergic reactions to them. How this affects an individual all depends on what one is allergic to.

The pollen count in the Lake Tahoe Basin has been on the rise with the arrival of an early spring. According to Pollen.com, South Lake Tahoe is expected to have a pollen count of 8.8 today, which puts it in the medium-high zone. Sunday it could hit 10 and Monday 11.3 – both in the high category.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says 8 percent of the people in the United States suffer from seasonal allergies – that is about 40 million people.

“The most common plant allergy in South Lake Tahoe is pine pollen. Other common allergies are dust and pet dander,” Ronald Roth, a board-certified otolaryngologist at Barton Ear, Nose, & Throat, told *Lake Tahoe News*.



Plants, flowers and trees
are blossoming and blooming
in Lake Tahoe. Photo/LTN

Pollen is the main allergen of hay fever.

One way to help curb the problem is to stay inside and try not to bring pollen indoors. But this can make people feel like a shut-in. It also means not opening windows to have a fresh breeze.

While plant allergies are seasonal, dust allergies can be a year-round problem. However, dust and fungus allergies are more common in winter, according to Roth.

“If you experience allergies, try an over the counter medication. Decongestants such as Claritin or Zyrtec, or nasal spray, including Nasacort, can relieve allergy symptoms for some people,” Roth said.

He offered these tips:

- Wash your pets.
- Change your air filters.
- Buy down-proof pillowcases and protectors.
- A HEPA air filter can also make it easier to breathe.
- If you're seeing persistent symptoms, contact your primary care provider for a prescription medication or for other treatment options.

Symptoms include:

- Runny nose
- Congestion
- Headaches

- Cough
- Throat irritation
- Post nasal drip
- Ear itching
- Ear fullness or congestion.

Allergies treat everyone equally. Men and women of all ages are susceptible to being allergic to something.

Opinion: What happens if a school abolishes homework?

By Karin Klein, Los Angeles Times

Citing the lack of evidence that homework does much if anything to improve academic performance in elementary grades, a principal in Manhattan notified parents that there would be no more after-school assignments for the public school's students.

And then came the rebellion – not from teachers, but from parents, according to the website DNAinfo. They threatened to transfer their children to another school. Some said they were finding online sources of homework for their children.

They were not convinced by the explanation from Principal Jane Hsu at P.S. 116 about the negative effects of homework on young children, including “children’s frustration and exhaustion, lack of time for other activities and family time and, sadly, for many, loss of interest in learning.” Instead

of doing homework, she suggested, children should spend their time on activities that had been found to do more for their academic and social and emotional development. Not television (to which I'd add—not computer face time). But free play (if there are many around who remember what that is). Reading stories or books of their choice.

Read the whole story

Nev. bill would mandate later school start, ethnic study class

By Riley Snyder, AP

Nevada school districts are opposing a bill that would push back school start times and require an ethnic studies course in order to graduate from high school.

Democratic state Sen. Tick Segerblom is the primary sponsor of SB211 and testified on the bill Thursday in the Senate Education Committee.

Segerblom said the bill would require Nevada high school students pass a course in ethnic studies focused on sensitivity to all nationalities and races. The majority of high school history classes are narrowly focused on the achievements of white Americans, he said.

“It’s for people of color to be able to learn ways to be prideful of their heritage,” Segerblom said. “The world is not just Columbus coming over here.”

A number of school district lobbyists testified against the mandate, saying they supported the concept but feared that more graduation requirements would lead to longer school times. Republican state Sen. Scott Hammond, a teacher at Indian Springs High School, said he was concerned about adding more mandates for teachers.

“It seems like every year there’s something else that comes down the pipe that they want us to get in the child’s head,” he said during the hearing.

The proposal would also require classes to start no earlier than 7 a.m. for elementary schools, 8 a.m. for middle schools and 9 a.m. for high schools.

Republican bill co-sponsor Sen. Becky Harris said the bill would give students additional sleep and more flexibility in scheduling extracurricular activities before school.

The American Academy of Pediatrics issued a policy statement in 2014 saying that a large percentage of teenagers don’t get enough sleep and recommended that school districts move back their start times.

Clark County School District lobbyist Nicole Rourke said the district is running a pilot program experimenting with different start times for schools. The price of expanding bus routes and hiring additional staff to comply with the changed start times could cost the district up to \$80 million, she said.

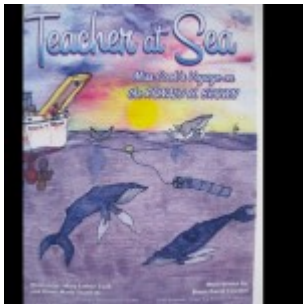
Segerblom said he’s willing to work with the districts to alleviate their concerns but that the ideas were solid. “It’s just a question of whether we can afford to do it, and money is always a problem in Nevada,” he said.

Oceanography comes to life in children's book

By Kathryn Reed

I may have never liked science, but if a book like “Teacher at Sea: Miss Cook’s Voyage on the Ronald H. Brown” had been around when I was a kid, maybe it would have piqued my interest.

What is so fun about this book is that Miss Cook is a real person. At least at the time when this was published in 2005 she taught eighth-grade Earth science in Arkansas. In 2004 she



was NOAA’s teacher at sea on board the agency’s ship Ronald H. Brown.

The beautifully illustrated (Bruce David Cowden) book is published by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It follows Cook’s time while she was on the research vessel.

While this may not sound like a kids book, it is. The science contained in it is at the middle school level. The pictures could entertain much younger children, but the information will be over their heads.

I don’t know how well this book would go over with middle schoolers because it very much looks like a children’s book. Maybe it would be OK for sixth-graders. It definitely appealed to a middle-aged woman who never did well at science. And for

little ones, the pictures will captivate them and might spur them to get excited about oceanography.

In the back is a glossary of scientific words that range from life vest to radiosonde to barnacle. There are also Internet resources listed for teachers, parents and students.

The book was co-written by Cook and Diane Marie Stanitski.

The art – and science – of forecasting wildfires

By Kate Schimel, High Country News

In the midst of fighting a wildfire, predicting the future is a matter of tracking invisible forces: gust fronts, storms, air columns. While firefighters battle the flames on the ground, fire experts look for signs that the weather or the wildfire might shift. They follow storm tracks, watch weather models and study the fire's path.

Their attempts at prediction begin even before the first plume of smoke rises. In regional centers around the West, forecasters determine the risk of wildfire and brief fire managers on where they should have teams ready to go.

For the Rocky Mountains, that task falls to Tim Mathewson, a 20-year veteran of weather forecasting. "It's a tough science," Mathewson said. "There's a lot of ingredients that help determine whether there's a big fire today."

For example, in 2012, much of the Rocky Mountain region was dry. Figuring out where a chance ignition might blow up into a large-scale fire was tricky. At one point, teams were staged

and ready to go in four of the five states Mathewson watches.

Read the whole story

Selfie stick bans increasing worldwide

By Greg Keller, AP

“Selfie sticks” have now been banned at a French palace and a British museum, joining a growing list of global tourist attractions to take such measures.

The devices are used to improve snapshots, but critics say they are obnoxious and potentially dangerous. Officials at Palace of Versailles outside Paris, and Britain’s National Gallery in London, announced the bans Wednesday, saying they need to protect artworks and other visitors.

Other places that have put limits on the selfie-stick craze:

France

Unlike Versailles, the Louvre and Centre Georges Pompidou art museums have not banned selfie sticks – yet. The Pompidou – the contemporary art museum whose exterior of colorful tubes and scaffolding looks like a building turned inside out – is studying what, if anything, needs to be done about the phenomenon, Le Monde reported.

Musee d’Orsay, which houses an Impressionist art collection, bans not just selfie sticks, but any photography whatsoever.

Italy

Rome's Colosseum banned selfie sticks last month as a security measure, both for the objects on exhibit inside and for the 16,000 daily visitors to the 2,000-year-old monument.

"The twirling around of hundreds of sticks can become unwittingly dangerous," Colosseum spokesman Christiano Brughitta said.

Two American tourists were arrested last week after carving their names into the Colosseum's wall – and then taking a photo with a selfie stick.

United States

The Smithsonian museums in Washington banned selfie sticks last week. Cameras and pictures are still allowed, but selfie sticks, tripods and monopods are not. Smithsonian officials say this is a preventative measure to protect visitors and museum objects.

Other U.S. museums that ban selfie sticks include the Art Institute of Chicago, the Detroit Institute of Arts, and New York's Museum of Modern Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Austria

Vienna's Albertina, one of the city's top art museums, prohibits selfie sticks. Museum spokeswoman Sarah Wulbrandt says visitors must check-in the sticks before entering.

Britain

Besides the National Gallery, some English soccer teams have banned the selfie stick from their stadiums.

The National Portrait Gallery, adjacent to the National Gallery, says the sticks are allowed, but "anything that may prove disruptive is reviewed on an ongoing basis." The British Museum is "currently reviewing" its selfie-stick policy.

Some art-lovers praised the idea of a ban.

“If you go into an exhibition, surely the purpose is to see what is on show and not to take umpteen photographs of yourself?” said Bill Doig, a retired doctor visiting the National Portrait Gallery.

Brazil

Soccer stadiums in the South American country have also banned selfie sticks because of their potential use as weapons in fights between rival fans, police say. Selfie sticks were also banned from Brazil’s recent Carnival parades in Rio de Janeiro.

Wise finishes second in World Cup halfpipe

By USSA

TIGNES, France – The final stop of the FIS World Cup halfpipe tour wrapped up under the lights in Tignes, France, with David Wise (Reno), Alex Ferreira (Aspen) and Brita Sigourney (Carmel) all snagging podium spots and Wise walking away with his first crystal globe as the halfpipe tour title winner.

A much anticipated men’s final lived up to its hype with Wise taking an early lead and continuing to increase his score by landing a right double 1440. The crowd thought he had nailed the win, but on the last run, Canadian Mike Riddle outdid Wise to win the World Cup, knocking Wise to second place. X Games bronze medalist, Ferreira claimed third, stomping a clean first run.

“It always plays out interesting at the end of the season for the World Cup title,” Wise said. “There’s so much that goes into it. It’s not just one event. It’s not just one run. It’s the whole season. So to come down with the crystal globe for the first time in my career is an amazing feeling.”

Gus Kenworthy (Telluride, Colo.) who was also in the running to win the World Cup title in both halfpipe and slopestyle, fell during training and did not start in finals, settling for sixth place. Despite not competing in the Tignes finals, Kenworthy still held on for second place in the World Cup halfpipe title. Kevin Rolland of France took third.

On the women’s side, Sigourney put down an impressive third run to earn third place behind Ayana Onozuka of Japan and Canadian Cassie Sharpe, respectively. Onozuka threw down one of the most impressive women’s runs in history – going higher than most of the men on her second-to-last hit of the night – and won the World Cup title and the crystal globe.

Devin Logan took fifth in the halfpipe finals, which sat her third place in the World Cup title chase for halfpipe. Annalisa Drew (Andover, Mass.) was eighth in Tignes.