



Accusation Made Against Top Official at BLM
8 Las Vegas Now I- News Team
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No Straight Answers From Nevada's Top Wild Horse Official
Nevada's Wild Horses and Burros: Adopt & Protect

A top official in the BLM's troubled wild horse program has been slapped with a criminal complaint.

Suzie Stokke has been accused of threatening a Nevada family that was trying to buy a wild horse. The accusation comes at a time when wild horse groups are planning a major summit to fight back against BLM policies.

You may not remember Suzie Stokke's name, but her face has appeared in several I-Team stories about problems in the beleaguered wild horse program. BLM recently announced that it has no room for more horses in its pens, that it is out of money and that thousands of horses will have to be euthanized. Even when horses in holding pens have keeled over dead by the dozens, Stokke has kept a cheery disposition, earning the nickname Suzie Sunshine.

Stokke's perceived animosity toward wild horse advocacy groups spilled out into the open earlier this month at a horse auction event in Reno. According to a complaint filed with the Washoe sheriff's office, Stokke would not assist a man named Jay Pierce, who was trying to buy a horse.

Pierce is a longtime critic of the BLM. While standing there with his 3-year-old daughter, Pierce alleges, Stokke enlisted the help of two men and threatened she would quote -- have her guys take care of him. Pierce says he felt humiliated and that he was in danger of physical harm. He filed the complaint on Aug. 20 with the sheriff's office. This is not Stokke's first confrontation with wild horse advocates but is the first to rise to the level of a criminal complaint.

Alarmed by plans to euthanize thousands of horses, advocacy groups are planning a major summit to be held in Las Vegas in early October. Range scientists and horse experts have been invited. At a minimum, the organizers hope to stop further roundups, at least temporarily.

"In the big picture, it's crazy to continue to gather horses and stuff them in where there's no room. It

defies the imagination," said Jerry Reynoldson, Horse Summit Organizer.

Plans for the summit are expected to be made public later this week.

You would like to read the full text of the complaint filed against Suzie Stokke. You can view the website being created to promote the wild horse summit by clicking here.

http://www.lasvegasnow.com/Global/story.asp?S=8897615&nav=menu102_2