

Opinion: Nevada – the state that loves to kill things

By Keaven Van Lom

The state of Nevada is rebranding itself as the “go to” state if you detest democracy and love to kill things. With the highest unemployment and foreclosure rate in the country, along with a mammoth meth crisis, Nevada’s good old boy network has cooked up a plan for the decrepit state by tossing out democracy and offering up more wildlife to slaughter in hopes of attaining an economic path of recovery by satiating trophy hunters.

The Nevada Department of Wildlife, whose commission seats happen to be occupied by hunters, kicked off the marketing plan when they added the majestic black bear to the list of hunting trophies to snag in the beautiful state. In an amazing display of abuse of public office, and the thwarting of democracy, the commission passed Nevada’s first bear hunt despite overwhelming public opposition and pleas to Gov. Brian Sandoval to intercede.

Despite polls showing fervent opposition to the hunt, letters to media, nearly 4,000 emails to NDoW on record against the hunt (less than 100 for it), nearly 19,000 anti-hunting signatures flopped on their desks, rallies and so forth, the trophy hunting commissioners took their cue from fascist countries and were able to do what small groups of self-serving, pathological males have always been able to do: what they want despite what the majority wants. The death of democracy now joins the state’s dead, bloodied bears.

As one observer stated, “The commissioners had already made up their minds about the hunt way before any public discussions were brought up and told us when they stated, ‘We’re having

the bear hunt because we can'. If you're a public officer elected or appointed in Nevada, you rule not serve."

A lot of great marketing slogans have come in from citizens who want to help the state attract characters who hate the democratic process and who have, say, a certain amount of bloodlust. Here are some noteworthy ones:

Welcome to the new Wild West. Where random shootings are on the increase and hunting small, unsustainable populations to extinction are encouraged for your entertainment.

Come to Nevada; where real men kill stuff.

Welcome to Nevada; where democracy is as awful as your craps game.

Nevada, your one stop resource: rent a hooker, lose your shirt and kill your share of our unsustainable wildlife. Commit all your sins in just one state! Governor Sandoval has appointed Stevie Wonder to keep an eye on things.

A petition is now circulating to change the iconic Reno arch sign that straddles Virginia Street in downtown Reno. Citizens hope to reword the famous landmark from: "Reno. The Biggest Little City in the World" to "Welcome to Nevada. Have Fun Killing Our Wildlife."

The sign change would certainly be apropos. It's not like eco-tourism or the actual protection of wildlife to live wild and free was ever on the agenda. Nevada hosts animal snuffing groups such as the Safari Club International, killing accoutrement retailers such as Cabela's and Scheels, and Red Rock Hounds for hunting hounds to tree your bears before you shoot them down. Born Free USA, who works to protect wildlife in their natural habitats, and encourage compassionate conservation globally, gives Nevada a D minus as one of the states where cruel body-gripping traps are least regulated. Desert Bighorn Sheep are being introduced in the Virginia

Range for trophy hunting. To do that, plans are afoot to eradicate predators such as mountain lions, and cap underground springs so the area's wild horses can't find water.

Well, the Bureau of Land Management has already made life hell for the state's wild horses. Heck, if you're a wild animal in Nevada, you're as unlucky as a blue hair at a rigged slot.

On a positive note, a local church group is fervently praying that baby Jesus will come to life from a front lawn nativity scene in Reno on Christmas Eve wielding a giant, golden saw. The congregation believes the baby Jesus will then saw the state from the continent and float it over to attach somewhere in the south where animal cruelty and abuse is pandemic. This will help the state feel more at home with their brethren says the group.

Liberals are just hoping the state attaches itself to Washington where democracy has long gone by the wayside, and animal advocates are encouraging cowardly hunters to enlist in one of America's numerous wars and unleash their penchant for violence on something that can shoot back.

Will the new marketing ploy work, or will it send Nevadans packing to states where less blood flows and their voice and opinions actually count? Will they stay and vote out a Governor who turned a blind eye to his arrogant wildlife commission who snubbed a majority and continues to imperil innocent creatures?

Now that Nevada has gone rogue, perhaps Sarah Palin will move in and bring some luster back to the tarnished silver state. After all, Palin can now legally add decapitated black bear and Bighorn Sheep heads to her wall of horrors as well as enjoy some roulette. You betcha.

Keaven Van Lom is a freelance writer living in Truckee, CA. She welcomes your comments at keaven@suddenlink.net.

