

Trapped Incline bear to be returned to the wild

By Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal

A black bear caught in a trap that generated significant controversy in Incline Village will be released back to the wild Friday in a manner experts hope to make as unpleasant as possible.

The decision to spare the captured bruin came in part because wildlife officials aren't sure if it's the same problem-causing bear that prompted them to set the trap in the first place.

"There's enough doubt as to whether this is really the offending bear," said Chris Healy, spokesman for the Nevada Department of Wildlife. "This bear will not be euthanized."

Game wardens set the trap last Saturday after a bear – believed to be a female because two yearling bears were reported in the same area – tore into the side of a house and entered some cars in search of food, Healy said. Such aggressive behavior could justify killing the bear as a threat to public safety under state policy, Healy said.

But the trap quickly generated its own problems associated with people who consider Nevada's approach to dealing with nuisance bears to be overly lethal. Over the weekend, someone illegally tampered with the trap by spraying it with cleaning fluids to keep bears away. Residents of the homes where the bear went on its food raids were subjected to threatening phone calls.

The trap was cleaned up and baited again. On Wednesday night, a bear got caught.

Experts examining the tranquilized animal Thursday were in for a shock. It wasn't a female but a three-year-old, 250-pound male.

Read the whole story