

N. Nevada woman trying to make equestrian history

By Arianna Bennett, KTVN-TV

A Reno woman will attempt to make Nevada history Saturday by becoming the first person to travel the Nevada Discovery Trail solo on horseback.

Over the next four weeks Samantha Szesciorka, her dog Bella and her horse Sage will be alone in the wide-open Nevada desert trekking 450 miles on the Nevada Discovery Trail.

It's an adventure this trio has been preparing for for years.

"I feel really ready. We've been getting gear and training and riding for three years now. So we're about as prepared as you can get," Szesciorka said.

Their path goes from the Utah border in Baker, Nevada to the California border at Lake Tahoe; passing through mountains, deserts, ghost towns and historical sites along the way.

"We have such diversity in terrain in Nevada. I can't wait to just get out there," she said.

It will be a mental and physical challenge, under the hot desert sun in a dry and often hostile environment. But it's nothing these two can't handle. Samantha is an Army veteran who served a tour in the Middle East.

And Sage is uniquely qualified for this adventure – he's a wild mustang. He comes straight out of the Nevada wilderness.

"They are self-sustaining. The strongest survive. And he's one of them," says Bonnie Matton of the Wild Horse Preservation League.

And that makes Sage the star of the trip.

Samantha, along with a dedicated group of volunteers, crew members and activists, is hoping Sage will bring awareness to the issue of wild horses in Nevada and encourage adoption.

"We want to have an adventure, but I also want to show people- 'look what mustangs can do. They're great riding horses. Take it from me, I've ridden one across the state!'"

Szesciorka will have a satellite tracking device with her during the ride so you can monitor her progress on her website.