

Wild horses and the inmates who 'gentle' them

By Steven Kurutz, New York Times

There's a term in the horse world known as "gentling." It refers to working with a wild horse until it becomes responsive to a trainer's commands, meaning that it no longer wants to kick you in the face. If handled properly, it even bonds with its trainer.

Gentling happens every day at the Silver State Industries ranch in Carson City, a 1,100-acre property east of the Carson Range in the vast, harsh high desert south of Reno. Up to 2,000 wild horses are corralled there at any time; a good number are trained for adoption.

The ranch is part of the Northern Nevada Correctional Center, a medium-security prison that also houses minimum-security inmates. Twelve to 15 inmates, most of whom have little or no experience with horses, work under the instruction of a cowboy named Hank Curry. It is the inmates who do the gentling.

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