

# ✓ Animal shelter Facing eviction



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel photos

The fate of this monkey is uncertain pending closure of Jeanne Milewski's American Wildlife Rescue Service.

## Wildlife Rescue ordered to vacate

### Company cites violations of zoning and fire codes

By STEVE PEREZ  
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SCOTTS VALLEY — Time is running out for Jeanne Milewski and her menagerie.

For years, Milewski's American Wildlife Rescue Service has led a noisy existence on a small piece of land off Conference Drive, much of it donated by Kaiser Sand and Gravel Co.

Kaiser, citing zoning and fire code violations, says it can no longer afford to be charitable. In mid-January, the company ordered Milewski off the property and gave her 60 days notice. The deadline has now been set for Monday, April 6.

"I can understand what she's trying to do for the animals, but it puts us in a very, very difficult situation when we start getting citations from the county," said Bob August, manager of Kaiser's Felton plant.

Milewski said Tuesday she has no intention of leaving.

"I guess I'll wait and see what Kaiser does April 6,"



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel

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Milewski tends to the needs of exotics like Cuffy, the mountain lion.



# Wildlife rescue

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she said. "But I'm not planning on moving these animals."

In 1978, Kaiser agreed to let Milewski's American Wildlife Rescue Service, a non-profit agency, use about 2½ acres rent free. The conditions included keeping the property free of rubbish and abiding by government regulations.

Milewski has a small house on her own small plot adjoining the Kaiser property, which comprises the sanctuary. She keeps and cares for some 30 "large mammals" in pens and cages, including wolves, mountain lions and wild pigs. There are also monkeys, and "several hundred" birds ranging from ducks and geese to owls and peacocks.

Many of them were raised in captivity and turned over to her because their owners moved or tired of them, or the animals displayed behavioral problems, she said. Others are permanently injured.

"None of them could ever survive in the wild," Milewski said. "None of them have even seen the wild."

"I have sympathy for what she's doing," August said. "She's always short of money. But the relationship can't continue this way."

He gave the Sentinel copies of violation notices from the county Planning Department and the Scotts Valley Fire Protection District, which stemmed from a visit Dec. 10.

Division Chief Mel Angel said the visit was in response to a complaint from a former tenant of Milewski.

Among the fire violations the officials noted:

- Extension cords used to provide electricity to six trailers.

- Exposed wiring to trailers.

- Large piles of rubbish, trash and "combustible waste material" throughout the property.

They also found zoning violations:

- Five illegal trailers, one of which was occupied, the others used for storage.

- An inoperative vehicle on the property.

- Keeping exotic animals.

Angel said Tuesday the fire violations had been corrected.

Richard Nieuwstad, the county's code compliance officer, said the woman has known for some time her operation was illegal.

"She did actually try to apply and made an appointment," Nieuwstad said. "It's a frustrating process. She got discouraged and dropped the ball after a while."

Milewski said two of the trailers are occupied by men who work on the grounds and provide security.

As for the exotic-animal violation, she said, "We don't fall under any known category, how can we get a zoning permit? They don't have one for wildlife refuges."

"We've written letters telling her what the violations are and she hasn't replied," Kaiser's August said. "We're just really responding to a violation given to us by the county. They wanted to know what we were going to do about it."

The company is also concerned about liability, he said. Although Milewski has an insurance policy, if an animal got loose and mauled someone, "the way lawsuits go, they could sue for the million dollars worth she has, then come after us," August said.

Milewski replied the company should consider donating the land to her cause.

"Since Kaiser is such a large and wealthy corporation, and since they donated 144 acres to the city of Pleasanton, why can't they just donate the 2.44 acres of land to us?" she said.

In an interview Monday, August said the company was adamant about getting Milewski and her animals off their land and has even donated \$1,000 to Native Animal Rescue, a non-profit volunteer organization in Santa Cruz, to help relocate them.

"It's been a uneasy relationship," he said.

Fifth District Supervisor Fred Keeley said late Tuesday he hoped a compromise could be reached and planned to talk to Kaiser.

"It's a very unique situation and I want to make sure she can continue to operate," Keeley said. "She does a lot of good work, I think."

"I don't want anybody to hide behind the county as a reason that she's being asked to leave."