



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

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Navajo Animal Control officer says ‘skinned’ dog was killed by vehicle, not tortured or mistreated

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – A Navajo Nation senior animal control officer said Friday that a “Navajo sheepdog” that was allegedly “skinned alive” had injuries consistent with being hit by a vehicle.

“The dog was not skinned,” Navajo Nation Senior Animal Control Officer Stacy Daw said. “We see a lot of road kills out there.”

Gloria Tom, director of the Navajo Nation Fish & Wildlife Dept., said Ofc. Daw went to the camp site last week, inspected the animal, interviewed people camped there and ascertained that the animal was not skinned as reported in the local media and widely disseminated online through blog reports.

“There were no visible signs of it being tortured,” Ms. Tom said.

Ofc. Daw said the dog – an aged male Basset hound wearing a green harness without tags or other identification – did not appear to be a sheepdog but more of someone’s pet.

She said she was called by Navajo police on Dec. 15 to investigate a report of a dog having been “skinned alive” and left at the Desert Rock Energy Project protester camp. Local media stories quoted protesters opposed to the Desert Rock Energy Project alleging that the dog had been skinned and left to die at the camp as a way to intimidate them.

However, both Ms. Tom and Ofc. Daw said no local reporters have called them to confirm that allegation since the incident was first reported despite having been notified of their finding by the Office of the President and Vice President.

“I spoke to three reporters to tell them about this and there’s been no follow-up story despite alarmist headlines a week ago,” said OPVP Communications Director George Hardeen. “Apparently no reporter has bothered to check out these claims, prior to reporting them or since.”

Ofc. Daw said the dog’s carcass was to be taken to the San Juan Veterinary Clinic in Farmington, N.M., today to have an necropsy conducted to certify its actual cause of death.

She said she arrived at the protesters’ camp with four police officers and two criminal investigators to look into the claim last Friday. She said it appeared the dog had been hit off the dirt road near the camp, was partially paralyzed, and had dragged itself about 20 feet to the road.

“The dog was not skinned. We see a lot of road kills out there.”

– Senior Animal Control Officer Stacy Daw

The only person with information was a non-native named Carleton Tap, she said. Ofc. Daw said it appeared that if people were sleeping at the site when the alleged incident occurred, someone would likely have heard something.

“They said the dog was skinned to intimidate the protesters camped there,” she said. “It looked like it happened off the road but there was no witnesses and no one has come forward.”

She was told the dog belonged to Alice Gilmore. When she went to Ms. Gilmore’s home, she found no one home. She said there were typical-looking sheepdogs in Ms. Gilmore’s sheep corral. She left a note with her phone number but that in the week since she investigated the incident, no one has called her to claim the dog or report it missing.

“The owners haven’t come forth,” she said. “There’s been no contact from anyone.”

Earlier this week, Internet blogs inaccurately reported that Navajo grandmothers were being arrested at the protest site. On Thursday, Navajo Division of Public Safety Director Samson Cowboy issued a statement that no arrests had been made.

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