

## Judge Rules Genesis Wildlife Lease Valid

Written by Steve Frank  
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Judge Marvin Pope has ruled in favor of those running the Genesis Wildlife Refuge in a major point in the dispute between the town of Beech Mountain and the animal rescue group. Thursday Pope issued a ruling in favor of Genesis on the issue of the lease, finding it valid, putting the town's cancellation of the lease in limbo. Last Tuesday, Pope heard arguments from Attorney Larry Price that the lease legally transferred the property to Genesis on January 7, 2000, and that the State of North Carolina mandated the lease valid. Price showed the sequence starting in May of 1999, with the Town Council passing a resolution to enter a lease agreement with Genesis, followed up with a vote on September 14, 1999, with the board voting unanimously to enter a lease agreement. But on April 23, 2012 Genesis received notification to immediately vacate the property and leave everything built. The Town of Beech Mountain claimed the lease was not authorized and the Town did not follow proper procedure, and voided the lease. Genesis supporters claim the town wants the lakefront property for development, and used the tactic to remove them. Price said that there are matters still to be decided in the case, but that with the ruling, the town stands to lose any lawsuit seeking damages for Genesis, forced to close their operation and surrender their facilities. Just what will happen next remains to be seen.