Reaching Out to More Native Nations

In our last newsletter we told you that our native nations campaigns were going in a new direction. What we meant was that we were changing our format to place more emphasis on humane education. What we didn’t know was that 2001 and 2002 might also present some opportunities to also move in new directions geographically—specifically north and south.

That’s right, nearly all of our previous native nations efforts were in Montana and the Dakotas. But this year we have been to Wyoming (see the Wind River sidebar), and have planned events for Idaho’s Fort Hall Reservation. We have some hands-on Alaska events planned for 2001 in addition to the huge spay/neuter event scheduled for continued on page 2.

All these puppies were spayed or neutered at the Crow Nation in Montana.

If You Care, Leave Them There

If you are one of our Montana members, this phrase may already be familiar to you because you’ve seen one of our four statewide public service announcements (PSAs) telling people to think before they rescue an “orphaned” wild animal baby. All too often the young animal doesn’t need rescuing at all, and the human rescuer is actually reducing the animal’s chance for survival.

NRRO was able to bring this issue to the forefront after being awarded a Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks grant through their Living with Wildlife program. The grant allowed us to contract with Lynn Berland, a professional wildlife cinematographer, to compile outstanding footage of wild baby animals that would get people to watch and listen to our message.

Our message is that you should not rush out to capture every fawn, duckling, or other wild baby unless you have watched and waited long enough to ensure that the animal’s parents are either unwilling or unable to provide care. Our brochure that complements the PSA provides tips about how to properly handle such situations. A digital copy of the brochure is located at regions.hsus.org/nrro/programs.asp. We also printed 13,000 copies of the brochure and distributed them to shelters, humane societies, and wildlife professionals across the state.

We, of course, recognize that there are situations in which immediate intervention is needed, such as when a domestic cat catches a rabbit. Every spring NRRO helps in numerous situations involving truly orphaned animals such as ducklings who fall down storm drains. For several weeks last spring our office was the daytime nursery for an orphaned baby bobcat whose mother was killed while crossing the road. The three-week-old kitten needed around-the-clock care until he was weaned and could be transferred to a state wildlife rehabilitation facility for eventual release. But surveys and studies have shown that most baby animals turned into agencies probably were not abandoned or orphaned at all. They were simply discovered by a human and captured. So if you see young wild animals and are not certain that the babies are orphaned, please remember: If you care, leave them there!
Miles “Fly” for Animals

With our regional office serving six large western states, one of our major operational costs is travel expenses. Because of our expanded disaster response program, our Alaska projects, and our special animal rescues, which often require air shipment, we are constantly looking for ways to decrease travel costs. Just this year, NRRO flew veterinarians to serve as expert witnesses and native nations consultants. We transported two rescued coatimundis from South Dakota to an animal sanctuary in Texas. We have also assisted in flying several lost animals back to their owners in neighboring states. Now we are setting up a program in which supporters with frequent flyer miles on Delta, Horizon/Alaska, Northwest, or United airlines can donate any amount of miles to our NRRO travel account. The cumulative effect of these frequent flyer miles will allow us to transport people or animals to events that would otherwise be cost prohibitive. If you would like to find out how you can donate frequent flyer miles to our animal rescue projects, give us a call or e-mail us at HSUSNRRO@aol.com.

Oppportunities To Get Involved

Please visit http://regions.hsus.org to get details about upcoming events. You can also call our office for more information.

- All Animal First Aid and CPR. We are scheduling classes in Montana and North Dakota.
- May 29-June 1, 2001: HSUS National Conference on Animals in Disasters, Radisson Plaza Hotel, Fort Worth, Texas. Meet hundreds of people involved with caring for animals in disasters. Gain valuable information about disaster planning, preparedness, and response as well as hands-on training and much more. For more information, contact Andy Adams at 301-258-3003.
- June 2002: Three-day equine training clinic with Canadian horse trainer Greg Barrington. Will address behavior problems such as the horsemen scoring system for horses and cattle.
- 2002: Animal Wellness Flotilla. We are seeking funding for this multi-week event to provide animal services to remote villages along the Yukon River.

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2002. If we secure funding and sponsors, this will be a multi-week clinic to provide animal services to remote villages along the Yukon River.

This fall NRRO will be cosponsoring an event in Idaho with the University of Idaho Vet School. Our hope is to have another event in Montana. A team will also visit Alaskan areas hardest hit by the last two winter by the salmon shortage and talk to local veterinarians and animal services to remote villages along the Yukon River.

On Ice: NRRO Trains Regional Responders

Earlier this year NRRO continued its tradition of offering unique training opportunities to regional agencies and volunteers by hosting the first ice rescue and hypothermia class tailored for animal rescue situations. The classroom component featured speakers from the veterinary and medical communities and those participating in our Animal Health Assessment Team (AHAT) cases for Animals. We transported two “rescued” animals from Canada, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Montana, South Dakota, and Wyoming, attended the workshop to become certified ice rescue technicians.

NRRO’s volunteer disaster responders and those participating in our Animal Health Assessment Team (AHAT) cases have several other opportunities for training this year. We are planning several animal first aid classes and a rappelling workshop.

We still have several openings for volunteer responders, team veterinarians, and other disaster animal response team or AHAT team members. Contact our office if you’d like more information about these opportunities.

Working at Wind River Reservation

NRRO joined forces with the famous Rocky Mountain team in Wyoming for its first visit to the Wind River Indian Reservation May 28-31. The Indian Health Services, the local 4-H Club, and tribes of the Shoshone and Antoine hosted the event, which included spay/neuter clinics at the community health clinic, Arapahoe, and Ft. Washakie. NRRO, in conjunction with the veterinary professionals, introduced a humane education program to the reservation elementary and middle schools, speaking to more than 800 children about pet care, dog bite prevention, and rabies awareness.

NRRO Sets Paces with Response Trailer

In the past five years the nationwide animal protection community has become mobile. There is a rapidly increasing presence of mobile spay/neuter clinics, mobile disaster response trucks, and mobile cruelty response vehicles. Two years ago our office had the opportunity to obtain a mobile veterinary clinic. We retrofitted the vehicle and dubbed it AHAT for Animal Health Assessment Team. Although AHAT has served us well, we’ve found that it isn’t always the ideal vehicle to suit all our needs. In our region we needed a vehicle that could be quickly outfitted to handle disasters, cruelty cases, or native nations animal wellness clinics. Our solution was a response trailer.

This response trailer is a much more versatile mobile clinic, able to bring more of the appropriate equipment to the scene in a cost efficient and effective manner. The trailer will be busy during August and September at native nations clinics and on display at the National Emergency Managers Conference in Big Sky, Montana.

A 14-foot Wells Cargo trailer with a rear fold-down ramp. This trailer is equipped with three donated gurneys and lots of carts to roll equipment with supplies on or off the trailer to fit the needs of the various events. Inside the trailer are an eyewash station, first aid kits, and mounted tools. Other specialized equipment such as fire-hose inflation animal rescue kits, and a “spider” electrical circuit are installed. There is a small reference library with HAZMAT response, fire fighting, and exotic animal and veterinary reference materials. We also have a set of posters on spay/neuter, various animal services to remote villages along the Yukon River.

Several Gas Anesthesia Machines and autoclaves to mount on the mobile surgery tables, and a cart full of collapsible animal cages to eliminate the need to haul bulker airline crates. In recent field uses such as the Northern Cheyenne animal wellness clinic where the trailer was used to serve cats and their owners, we discovered that air venting equipment and a portable scrub sink had to be installed. We already know, however, that the
Dave’s Dialogue

By Dave Pauli
Director of the Northern Rockies Regional Office

Priorities

Wow! I am increasingly excited every time I sit down to draft an outline for this newsletter to find that we have too many projects and programs to fit into this space. In this issue I had hoped to tell you more about the three-day training event in Valdez, Alaska, (dog behavior/disaster training/pet-loss) and to try to re-emphasize my plea for helping to bring humane education to our region’s classrooms (see form here). But quite a few of our other projects will have to wait for future newsletters.

A regular donor recently pointed out to me that she knew we were always busy, and always working on unique projects, but she wanted to know how we selected which projects to prioritize. That is a great question that really requires a multi-page answer, but I thought she (and you) deserve at least the down and dirty multi-paragraph answer.

When presented with an opportunity, our first questions are:
1) Is there direct animal suffering or neglect that we can help remedy?
2) Can we bring resources or skills to complement other people’s/agencies’ involvement so as not to waste scarce resources or duplicate services?
3) Are there any creative solutions that may not have been tried?
4) Are there realistic objectives that can be met and measured? and
5) Are there resources in our limited budget to allow for this?

If there are positive answers to one or more of these questions, we call an impromptu staff meeting to see how we can be of the most help. Sometimes our involvement is simply writing a well-worded letter or making a series of phone calls. Other situations are huge logistical and budgetary challenges such as our multi-day field projects or legislative campaigns.

Recent examples include a letter-writing campaign to get some county commissioners to change their decision to purchase a carbon monoxide gas chamber for animal euthanasia, and our efforts with an attorney to file an amicus brief on the issue of an agency’s authority to designate ownership of animals through the adoption process. Some projects such as the native nations events really are no-brainers, because there is great need, and we attract tens of thousands of dollars of veterinary services to areas that otherwise would not get them.

I hope this explanation helps a little, and although I know I’ve said it before, we truly cannot get involved in any of these projects without your support. I can absolutely tell you that projects such as our Alaska sled dog emergency food shipment, our disaster responses, and our wildlife rescues simply would not be possible without donations that allow us to react to unplanned emergencies. Thank you again for helping us to help those unable to speak for themselves!

Adopt-A-Teacher Fund

Yes, I want to get more humane education materials into our elementary classrooms for the 2001–2002 school year. I can help by:

☐ Nominating a Teacher(s) for $25 per classroom
Amount enclosed $_____
Teacher Name(s)__________________________________________
Grade Level ______________________________________________
School Name ______________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________
City_________State_____Zip_____

☐ Sponsoring all K–3 classrooms at a school for $100
Amount enclosed $_____
School Name _________________________________
Address __________________________________________________
City_________State_____Zip_____

Please make checks payable to HSUS-NRRO Humane Education Fund.

Your Contact Information:
Name______________________________
Address _______________________________
City_________State_____Zip_____
Phone _______________________________
E-Mail ______________________________

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Promoting the protection of all animals