New Native Nation Program

A Curriculum of Kindness

One of MWRO's goals is to reach out to communities with limited resources to address animal welfare concerns. Native American reservations across the nation face problems stemming from companion animal overpopulation. Compounding these problems are a lack of awareness or interest in animal issues and lack of funding for programs to address them. MWRO, along with other HSUS regional offices, has been working with HSUS Native Nations Coordinator Sandy Grambort to develop long-term solutions to animal problems on reservations. Our overall plan is to bring awareness of animal welfare and public safety issues to Native American leaders. We have offered resources and expertise in involving the community to make decisions and plan for animals. Working side by side with key tribal administrators, a long-term solution to the companion animal problem in many native communities is now within reach.

Many of our country's native nations lack the financial resources to adequately handle the myriad problems that arise because of animal overpopulation. Often

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MWRO Responds to Iowa Flood

The mighty Mississippi River has always lured people to its shores, fascinating us with its vastness and power. For generations commerce flourished along the banks of the Mississippi, but unprepared businesses were often destroyed by the cycles of river flooding. Davenport, Iowa, is a river community that has been impacted more than once by the rising Mississippi River. The spring floods of 1993 and 2001 were the two most recent ones. The Humane Society of Scott County (HSSC) is currently located on River Road in Davenport, literally yards away from the banks of the Mississippi. This precarious location puts the Society and the animals in its care in a most vulnerable position.

In 1993 flooding forced the evacuation of HSSC and the subsequent relocation of their animal shelter for four months. Our office was there to assist HSSC and the community with displaced animals.

This year the combination of heavy snowfall, no “January thaw,” and a rapid spring melt provided ideal conditions for flooding. MWRO monitored the situation along the Mississippi River from northeastern Iowa to southeastern Missouri to ensure that the needs of animals and their owners and caretakers were being met.

Then the spring rains came.

Then the day came when Pam Arndt decided the shelter would once again have to evacuate. Pam said, “The water is now covering our driveway and the river is not clue to crest for several days.” She requested HSUS's help in relocating HSSC's 200 animals.

MWRO Director Amy Suarez contacted HSUS Disaster Director Anne Culver to help coordinate our response. The day after Arndt's request, the HSUS team pulled into Davenport. Arndt had secured a temporary shelter location: a currently unoccupied Denny's restaurant generously donated by the building's owner. The HSSC staff and more than 40 local volunteers met the HSUS team.

There was a bustle of activity; people moved cages, desks, and boxes of records and equipment into donated vehicles maneuvered by volunteer drivers. The

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HSUS crew divided its efforts between the two locations. Anne Culver and HSUS response team member Melissa Forberg and HSUS team member Bruce Earnest assisted at the temporary shelter. Before leaving, the staff displayed a huge banner at the front entrance indicating the Society was ready for business in its new location.

The next day the HSUS team met with Emergency Manager Bergen to discuss county plans for animals during disasters; to update HSUS on predicted river activity, weather, and disaster response plans; as well as to discuss plans for pets owned by those in the most vulnerable neighborhoods. The HSUS suggested improvements in the Scott County disaster plan and offered additional assistance. Staff also met with public relations personnel of the Scott County Health Department to discuss animal issues and how HSUS could help.

The HSUS team toured neighborhoods most vulnerable to flooding to speak with pet owners. Some areas were already flooded. Many people were bunting to homes whose first floors were under water. Team members spoke with numerous residents about animal issues during disasters, especially about disaster planning and evacuation with pets. While speaking with two area pet owners on a flooded street, HSUS crew observed a mask rat own by two kids near 10 feet of water where they were standing, demonstrating that not only were pets at risk but that wild animals were being displaced by the floods as well.

On the last day of the Davenport disaster response, the HSUS team assisted HSSC staff in a pet adopt-a-thon held at the local Petco. The staff of Petco generously donated their grooming services to “spruce up” the animals. One of the most touching moments was when a woman whose dog of 13 years had recently passed away met King, a Belgian Tervuren mix who looked gorgeously similar. The woman remarked how much King reminded her of her old dog. Speaking about her dog brought tears to her eyes as she gently stroked King, who looked adoringly into her eyes. The woman wondered if King knew how to shake hands. She reached out her hand. King immediately responded by placing his paw in her hand. While the woman bent over and hugged King. As King licked her face, the woman said, “I have to have this dog!” Moments like this make all of our efforts worthwhile.

Horse Owners Join Disaster Planning

MWRO has been working with Midwest state horse councils to provide disaster preparedness training for equestrians and their owners. Recently MWRO Director Amy Suarez was invited to join Southwest Missouri State Emergency Management Coordinator Candy Adams in a presentation at the annual Missouri Horse Council Conference in Columbia, Missouri. The session included topics ranging from fitting into a local emergency management network to preventing barn fires.

One of the most memorable portions of this workshop was an impromptu talk by Mary Kaye Murray of Springfield, Missouri, Emergency Management Coordinator. Murray shared the horror of watching her horses perish in a flood. She explained how she possibly could have saved her horses (even prevented the fire) if she had been more prepared. What we all learned was that we should practice safety daily, continually improve our disaster plans, and practice response.

MWRO has developed a curriculum for a day-long, hands-on disaster planning workshop for horse owners. This will include developing a disaster plan for the boarding facility and a simulated barn fire exercise and evacuation. In addition, MWRO is working with the Iowa Horse Industry Council and Missouri Horse Council to sponsor training at Iowa State University and the Humane Society of Missouri’s Large Animal Farm. If you are interested in learning more about disaster planning, or are interested in attending either of the workshops, contact MWRO.

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located in remote areas, reservations often do not have access to veterinary hospitals or animal control agencies as a result. In packs of dogs roam neighborhood streets. Serious, sometimes fatal, dog bites occur frequently, and livestock predation by dog packs is at all time high.

MWRO has been working with Native Americans on Nebraska’s Winnebago Reservation to identify and prioritize local animal problems. The Winnebago Tribal Health Department has addressed conflicts between animals and people on a limited basis. Mona Zuffante, director of the Winnebago Tribal Health Department, contacted MWRO to express her interest in expanding public awareness and safety. The first annual Winnebago pet care event followed as a joint venture between MWRO and the Winnebago tribe, held April 30 at the local fire department.

Garamond and MWRO Director Amy Suarez introduced Zuffante to a new education program. MWRO has been instrumental in developing an animal welfare curriculum that addresses animal issues through Native American history and culture. The new program incorporates successful components used by the Montana Sparrow/Navajo Task Force, the Blackfeet Nation and its Friends of E-mee-ta, and Susan Fadler. Adaptations of traditional tribal storytelling combined with contemporary animal welfare issues teach the value of our animal companions.

This exciting new curriculum promotes ways to improve animal welfare and human safety, as well as kindness to all living creatures. “Through the stories we’ve told a lot of work done on these,” said Zuffante. “I am excited at the potential benefit to our community.” She and Suarez will be working to integrate the program into the Winnebago school curriculum.

Training Wheels in Omaha

The weekend prior to the Winnebago event, MWRO and the Nebraska Humane Society hosted a two-day workshop in Omaha featuring nationally known dog trainer Sue Sternberg. In this workshop dog handlers learned how to evaluate and enhance dog behavior. Sue’s Training Wheels program seemed ideal.

Training Wheels involves reaching out to remote neighborhoods to provide free information about pets. Sue and her trainers drive or walk through neighborhoods and speak with pet owners. They offer advice on basic animal husbandry, medical needs, and training methods. During the two-day workshop, MWRO recruited volunteers from Wayside Waifs Pet Care Services and Nebraska Humane Society of Omaha to assist in the Winnebago event and the budding Training Wheels program.

Zuffante and Sue’s local animal control contractor Curt Koester warmly welcomed Sternberg and MWRO volunteers, advising them of areas that would benefit the most from a Training Wheels visit. While Sternberg escorted small volunteer groups through neighborhoods, MWRO and other volunteers assisted at the fire department by administering vaccines, providing pest dips and shots for free. Each group provided pet owners with free pet supplies (such as leashes, collars, identification tags, treats, and toys) while they demonstrated basic training methods and discussed general health and safety concerns for people and pets.

This event was overwhelmingly positive. In fact, Sue was delighted when she saw a young girl she had spoken with earlier standing on her porch proudly training her dog Black Bart. Sue said, “They’re the future!” This event planted many seeds that will hopefully grow with ongoing care from our office. Next year we may broaden the Winnebago event to include spay/neuter surgeries offered by two local veterinarians.
Halt Hog Factories Campaign

In our last newsletter, you read about our efforts to promote humane sustainable agriculture and support family farmers. Sustainable farmer Tom Frantzen's hog farm was featured on the front page. Now our region is involved in a campaign targeted at exposing the cruelty and environmental damage caused by factory hog farms. Hogs are sentient, intelligent, and social creatures, but they are denied their most basic needs on factory farms. Hog factories cause nearby communities to absorb the costs of human health problems and environmental cleanup efforts. What many people do not know is that according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, taxpayer dollars support hog factory farms through tax exemptions and credits. Subsidies link benefits to acreage. Because most factory farms are owned by large land-owning corporations, the corporations are the primary beneficiaries of subsidies.

Not surprisingly, a broad range of animal protection, environmental, social justice, labor, consumer, faith, and family farm activists have come together to try to put an end to factory farms. Humane sustainable agriculture is a way of farming that is sensitive to the needs of animals, the integrity of the environment, the concerns of family farmers, and the integral role rural communities play in our vital and diverse culture. There is a new type of agriculture on the horizon. With your help, it can replace the horrendous system of factory farming.

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Promoting the protection of all animals