Making the Connection

Unfortunately, violence pervades our culture. From the movies to world and local news, we are bombarded with brutal images daily. It is easy to feel helpless in the wake of so much suffering—particularly when violence impacts so many innocent animals in our midst.

One way The HSUS works to address the issue of violence is through our First Strike campaign, which was developed to raise awareness and educate communities about the well-documented connection between animal cruelty and human violence. Research has shown that cruelty to animals can be a warning sign of other violence. Studies indicate that violent offenders frequently have histories of abusing animals. The FBI has used this correlation for years in profiling serial killers. Law enforcement agencies are learning to recognize animal cruelty as a

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Fighting Animal Cruelty in the Region

Companion animals in Washington and Oregon are protected by some of the strongest anti-cruelty laws in the nation. In both states, animal protection laws prohibit intentional acts of cruelty that cause an animal to suffer physical injury, pain, or death. Unfortunately, animal abuse is still a widespread problem in our region. PNRO actively monitors cruelty cases involving animals and works to ensure strong prosecution of animal cruelty in our region.

Here are just a few of the cases we’ve worked on in the past few months:

- Adams County, Washington: PNRO offers $1,000 reward in the case of a young female dog shot numerous times in the face with a pellet gun and abandoned by the side of the road. The perpetrator of this horrific crime has not been found, but the dog (dubbed Angel by her rescuers) survived her injuries and has been adopted into a loving home.

- Washington County, Oregon: PNRO offers $1,000 reward in the case of four cats who were skinned, mutilated, and killed in the Portland suburb of Tigard. Perpetrators were never found.

- Lane County, Oregon: PNRO contacts the Lane County District Attorney and urges strong prosecution of a 12-year-old boy who shot two horses with a bow-and-arrow. One of the horses died of her injuries, and the second horse miraculously survived. The boy was charged with one count of aggravated animal abuse and two counts of animal abuse.

- Skagit County, Washington: PNRO is working with the police department and prosecuting attorney in the city of Anacortes in a case involving a puppy who was bludgeoned to death last fall with a baseball bat. The perpetrator was charged with second degree animal cruelty and PNRO generated pressure to upgrade the charges to first degree.

- Ochoco National Forest, Oregon: Two wild horses were shot and killed in the Ochoco National Forest in the winter of 2002. PNRO offered a $1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible. The Ochoco Forest Service also offered $1,000, bringing the total reward to $2,000.

PNRO will continue to monitor animal abuse cases in our region and to lobby for vigorous prosecution of the perpetrators. If you have information about an animal abuse case in your area, please contact law enforcement or animal control, or call our office for more information about how you can help.
Oregon’s Cougars Threatened!

The HSUS has joined eight other conservation and animal protection groups in a lawsuit filed in February against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to stop the killing of one percent of cougars in two Oregon regions.

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) plans to kill cougars in two small areas of the state in order to study the effects of cougar predation on elk populations. The proposed study will cost approximately $5.2 million, and the USFWS will provide the majority of the funding.

Please contact USFWS immediately and express your opposition to the study. Here are some talking points:

- Oregon voters have twice approved greater protections for cougars statewide from unfair hunting practices. If this plan was put to a vote, it would never pass.
- Relaying on the results of this study fails to consider the significant pressures from human encroachment and other factors that degrade habitat.
- Elk populations are doing very well throughout the state. Kiling unknown numbers of cougars does not make sense as though we are acting to control the population.
- The Pacific Northwest is home to many animal shelters that are working in creative ways to educate the public and break the cycle of animal abuse. The Seattle Animal Shelter’s Guardian Angels’ Network provides a hotline for citizens to call to report animal abuse. The same program distributes bumper stickers and features bus signs stating: “Stop the silent suffering. Report Animal Abuse.” Such efforts make a difference and send a strong message to the public that animal abuse will not be tolerated.

PNRO works closely with local animal protection organizations, as well as The HSUS’s First Strike team to monitor animal cruelty cases in Washington and Oregon. Our staff communicates regularly with law enforcement, prosecutors, social workers, and the media to publicize these cases. The PNRO and other groups continue to work towards a solution that will protect both wildlife and the public.

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Individual acts of kindness toward animals are the cornerstone of the animal protection movement. Such actions empower us, influence and empower others, and have certainly contributed to the considerable progress that the animal protection movement has made in the past few decades.

But perhaps the most compelling reason to take action is that for many animals, your action is their only hope.

Every day, our office is flooded with phone calls and e-mails reporting animal suffering, cruelty, and neglect. Abandoned cats and kittens struggling for survival in vacant lots and alleyways; bored and lonely dogs languishing in neighborhood backyards; truckloads of bedraggled chickens stacked 10 cages high on their way to slaughter; and wildlife struggling to survive in suburbia. The list goes on.

Animal suffering and cruelty are still all too prevalent in our society. But that's where you come in. Like the couple who stopped to help the lost dog, every day is a new opportunity for each of us to take notice of the animals in our midst who are in need and to act on their behalf. Never doubt that your actions make a difference.

Honoring Legislators

PNRO hosted a reception and award ceremony in Oregon last November at Portland City Hall. This magical evening was shared among 100 HSUS members, supporters, and legislators.

Awards were presented to state legislators who exhibited outstanding leadership on animal protection legislation during the 2001 legislative session. The recipients were Sen. Ginny Burdick (D-6), Sen. Peter Courtney (D-17), Sen. Ryan Williams (R-9), shown above with PNRO’s Lisa Wathne, director. The office is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and is closed on federal holidays.

Contacting HSUS

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Promoting the protection of all animals

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(it explicitly targeted the commercial fur trade) once the initiative passed, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife declared a ban on mole trapping.

A bill was drafted that would have clarified the confusion about mole trapping, but when this bill moved to the Senate for a vote, Sen. Jim Hargrove (D-24) amended the bill so that it repealed the entire initiative. Unbelievably, the Senate voted 38 to 11 to pass this bill.

Voters were outraged. When the amended bill moved to the House, more than 125 citizens—mobilized on two days’ notice—filled the hearing room. One by one, voters provided powerful testimony in favor of I-713, strongly urging legislators to keep the initiative in place.

Citizens across the state flooded legislators’ offices with phone calls and e-mails, demanding that their elected officials honor the voters’ intentions. At the time this newsletter went to print, PNRO was optimistic that the House would quash this attempt to overturn I-713. But we will surely face this fight again in the 2003 legislative session.

Without Your Grass Do

Immediately contact your state legislators to express your opposition to efforts to repeal I-713. To learn how to identify your legislators, contact our office.

Heartfelt thanks go to Reps. Sandra Romero, Hans Dunshee, Mary Lou Dickerson, and Dave Upthegrove, who worked diligently to ensure that the House would not overturn I-713.