NRRO Feral Dog Rescue Project

The Turks and Caicos Islands SPCA (TCSPCA) was facing a serious problem. Located about 600 miles southeast of Miami, this eight-island chain covers 193 square miles. The island's resorts and tourism board demanded local government help control stray dogs (locally called "potcakes," derived from the native islander habit of feeding the dogs the leftovers from the rice pots) who were creating a public safety and health concern.

In response, the government sanctioned a dog-shooting program and was considering a plan to intentionally introduce canine distemper as a way to control the dog population. TCSPCA sent out an international Internet plea for help in stopping the distemper proposal and to seek potential alternatives.

The distemper proposal caught the eye of Montana wildlife veterinarian Mark Johnson of Wildlife Veterinary Resources. Johnson continued on page 3.

NRRO Supports Alaskan Villages

When Alaska joined our region two years ago, NRRO staff knew addressing animal protection issues of the state would be a challenge. Alaska is the largest state (larger than California, Texas, and Montana combined) with the smallest human population per square mile.

The first NRRO Alaskan projects included helping the Alaskan Animal Care and Control Association bring quality training into the state. Last year, we sponsored a canine behavior workshop taught by dog training and behavior expert Sue Sternberg. We also worked to help facilitate networking with local agencies on issues such as animal cruelty, sheltering, and disaster preparedness. In the winter of 2001, we led an effort to bring tons of much needed dog food to the interior villages along the Yukon River.

This contact with remote villagers identified some major needs. Dozens of these interior villages are accessible only by plane, boat, or snowmobile. The only access to veterinary care for many residents is to fly their animals to a population center for treatment. Few villagers even have the option to have their dogs spayed or neutered. Issues such as strays, sick and injured animals, dog bites, and other animal wellness issues are addressed in very few remote communities.

Our office began researching several solutions including projects such as a spay/neuter flotilla (floating spay clinic) and native nation campaigns similar to those in the lower 48. But Alaska state and tribal regulations made it unlikely that we could replicate our efforts to bring in out-of-state clinics or veterinary school teams.

NRRO determined that, pending restrictions, the most effective way to bring services to the villages would be to work with local contacts to sponsor clinics and then recruit Alaskan-licensed veterinarians. In some villages where veterinarians might already make periodic visits, we have issued spay/neuter certificates and developed other incentives to get the people to bring their animals to the vet. Pending funding, we are scheduling at least a half dozen HSUS-sponsored animal wellness clinics in these remote Alaskan villages. For more information, contact our office.

Vet tech Paula Brennan has her arms full. These pups might have been shot had The HSUS not intervened.

Many Alaskan dogs will soon join this one (with NRRO Director Dave Pauli) in benefitting from HSUS-sponsored clinics.
NRRO and University of Michigan School event was due to hard work and outstanding communication with the Bingham County Humane Society Each Health and Human Services Department, Pocatello Humane Society, Pocatello Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Council, Tribal morning beginning at 5 a.m., this gentle children quietly waited for their pets' recovery or health assessment checks.

Opportunities to Get Involved

April 27-29 Spay/neuter clinic on the Duck Valley Reservation, Idaho May 1-3 Humane education clinic, Wind River Reservation, Wyoming May 1-5 Spay/neuter clinics on the Wind River Reservation, Wyoming May 5 Grassroots legislation workshop, Casper, Wyoming May 28-June 1 HSUS National Conference on Animals in Disasters, Radisson Plaza Hotel, Fort Worth, Texas June 7 Livestock cruelty investigation and Henneke scoring workshop, Bozeman, Montana June 8-9 Equine motivational response clinic, Bozeman, Montana June Montana Spay/Neuter Task Force clinics on Montana reservations July/July Spay/neuter clinic on South Dakota and North Dakota reservations Sept/Sept Regional Disaster Animal Rescue Team training, Billings, Montana November Animal control officer 40-hour basic training, Montana Law Enforcement Academy, Helena, Montana

A young grass dancer performs for clinic staff at Ft. Hall Reservation in Idaho.

and for giving our pets the good health they deserve.

A supervised workshops on:
- Ice rescue (Montana)
- Canine behavior (Alaska)
- Disaster preparedness (Alaska)
- Euthanasia technician training (South Dakota)
- Low- to high-angle animal rescue (Montana)

Gave presentations about:
- Feral cats (Texas)
- Disaster preparation (California Wolf Center)
- Animal overpopulation (Philippines)
- Wildlife handling (ZooMontana)
- Chemical capture (Native American Wildlife Society)
- Disaster preparedness (Montana)

Conducted the following field projects:
- Rodent control (North Dakota and Minnesota)
- Tribal humane education (Wyoming)
- Three-day animal wellness clinics in Wind River, Wyoming, and Northern Cheyenne, Crow Nation, and Fort Bellnap, Montana
- Five-day animal wellness clinic in Fort Hall, Idaho
- Seven-day animal wellness clinic on Cheyenne Reservation (South Dakota)
- Feral cat capture at Montana State Prison

Tackled special projects such as:
- If You Care, Leave Them There media campaign
- Tackled the Caicos Islands animal rescue project
- Taiwan five-day field training of local inspectors

Rescued and placed the following animals:
- several hundred dogs and cats, horses, raccoons, coatimundis (3), ducks, chickens, pigeons, peacocks, chinchillas, rats, gerbils, wild birds, guinea fowl, snakes, an owl, and a bobcat.

There’s no place like home.

The HSUS Wildlife Land Trust project with wildlife rehabilitation centers, including American Prairie Reserve, was highly successful and has laid the foundation for expansion of these services. During the implementation of the project utilizing the two local veterinary clinics, more than 250 of the test community’s estimated 1,000 free ranging dogs were altered. About 375 dogs were live captured and either spayed, adopted as puppies, or humanely euthanized. The publicity and public education project also prompted other community residents to collar, confine, and spay or neuter their animals.

After Pauli’s initial help, TCSPCA has continued the humane capture program, and is working with The HSUS and an architect to design the islands’ first animal shelter and expand its public education program. “It is so exciting to be in on the ground floor of this island nation project,” states Pauli. “It is encouraging to see the immediate positive difference this project is making for both animals and people. There were many similarities between this island nation and the NRRO supported animal wellness clinics done on Indian reservations in our western states.” Highlights included the rescue and adoption of more than a dozen puppies who were born in crude earthen pens. These wild-born puppies would have grown up as feral dogs, but with surgery and adoption became “ambassador puppies” to help educate the residents about the value and potential of the islands’ canines.

The Humane Society of the United States
NRRO Regional News
Spring 2002
By Dave Pauli
Director of the Northern Rockies Regional Office

Keeping Up!

Yikes! I cannot believe it is time for another newsletter. As the NRRO staff met to decide what we wanted to run in this issue, we discovered we had more material than we have space, so we want to remind you that you can always find more details and revised dates on the NRRO Web at www.hsus.org/regions.

The other quandary we always have at newsletter deadline time is whether to tell you about recently completed projects or to inform you about upcoming ones. In this issue we try to give you an equal mix with the Turks and Caicos Islands project (2001) and the potentially amazing 2002 Alaskan remote villages project. Any material that does not make the newsletter will also be posted on our Web site.

I know by the time this hits your mailbox, we will be well into a very busy 2002 calendar year. Some events such as our January and February ice rescue training session will have passed by, and we will be preparing for our annual trip to the HSUS's Animal Care Expo.

We are currently scheduling several new events for 2002, such as our first ever visits to the Duck Valley and Nez Pierce native nations of Idaho. We will also be returning for visits to Idaho's Fort Hall, Wyoming's Wind River, and the Northern Cheyenne of Montana.

Other highlights for 2002 should be our equine workshops in Bozeman and the national disaster animal rescue training in September. We may also have a bear biology and bear tolerance workshop in late fall. Add a few dozen cruelty cases, some court appearances, a half dozen legislative lobbying trips, and a wildfire or two, and we don't have many days left in the year!

If you want to know more about what you read either in this newsletter or on the Web page, give our office a call. We enjoy getting your feedback about what animal issues we might address. Again, thanks to each of you for your continued support. You are the ones who allow us to get involved in so many exciting projects that improve the lives of the animals we share this planet with.

NRRO South Dakota disaster liaison Cindy Rische, an animal control officer, uses a harness and guide wire to descend into a canyon. Such training will help her rescue animals in emergency situations.


A variety of students from Montana and North and South Dakota with backgrounds in animal control, fire fighting, and forestry joined NRRO staff in the class that incorporated both human and animal rescue components. Rapelling down a cliff, harnessing, using a cable system to reach the bottom of a canyon, and learning anchoring and rope safety techniques were some of the aspects of this class. NRRO will continue technical rescue training events in 2002 to help our region be disaster and rescue ready. For 2002 technical rescue classes, please visit our NRRO Web site at www.hsus.org/regions, or contact us.

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