WV Shelter Flooded

HSUS responded in July of 2001 to an urgent request for assistance from the Fayette County Animal Shelter in southern West Virginia. The region had experienced widespread intermittent flash flooding for weeks. Thousands of people were impacted as 20 counties were declared federal disaster areas. Tragically, the newly-constructed county animal shelter in rural Fayette County was devastated by a 15-foot wall of water that washed over the tops of the buildings. Only about half of the 100-plus animals inside managed to climb or swim to safety. Staff members watched helplessly from across the raging river, unable to safely cross it for hours. Once the river receded, shelter staff and volunteers were left to care for the surviving terrified dogs and cats at the flood-ravaged facility, in a community already reeling from the human impact of the disaster.

Hours after receiving a call for help continued on page 2

A West Virginia flood victim awaits transport to the temporary shelter The HSUS set up.

Appalachian Spay/Neuter Program in High Gear

The Belmont County Animal Rescue League hosted the first HSUS clinic of the Appalachian Spay/Neuter Program in November at a National Guard armory. The Morgan County Humane Society held the HSUS's second clinic in December at the Banquet Hall of the Stockport Mill Country Inn. Both two-day clinics were a great success, sterilizing more than 150 dogs and cats in total. The 2002 schedule is already filled, with clinics in Athens, Gallia, Jackson, Meigs, and Washington counties. (See page 2 for an inside look at a clinic.)

The idea for the Appalachian Spay/Neuter Program came out of a discussion between GLRO and Southeastern Ohio humane groups in November of 2000. The groups expressed the need to reduce the number of unplanned and unwanted litters of dogs and cats in their communities. Determined to address the problem, the groups formed Southeastern Ohio Humane Organizations (SOHO) and joined forces with The HSUS. Remote Area Medical (RAM), a volunteer veterinary medical corps, completed the team. The HSUS and its partners provide spay/neuter surgeries for the pets of families who could not afford the service.

Volunteer Jessica Foster comforts a patient. Because of the Appalachian Spay/Neuter Program, this dog and thousands of other pets will no longer produce unwanted litters.

As GLRO director, it has long been Sandy Rowland's dream to provide direct assistance to animals in Ohio's Appalachian region. Thankfully, others believed in this dream too. The Kenneth A. Scott Charitable Trust, A Key Trust Company of Ohio, provided start-up costs and HSUS members Andy and Sandy Ross provided funding for the program's first year. With their support and with the ongoing support of countless other HSUS members, the first Appalachian spay/neuter clinic was held.

In a letter to The HSUS following the clinic in her county, Dorothy Metcalf wrote, “We could have never imagined, even a few months ago, that this could have been pulled off with such success.” Cheryl Demetrakis, whose group hosted the first clinic admitted, “I was nervous, but I knew we could do it, and we did! We were all eager to provide this service, but it wasn't continued on page 2
pet owners must meet strict income guidelines in order to qualify for the free clinics. Volunteers for the host organization pre-screen applicants prior to scheduling pets for surgery. Additional funding is needed to expand clinics into 2003. If you would like to support this project, please send the enclosed envelope to make a contribution and indicate that you want it to go toward the Appalachian Project.

1. GLRO Director Randy Rowland discusses the clinic.

2. All animals are examined by RAM volunteers prior to surgery. At this time, pets also receive inoculations and are wormed.

3. Dr. Lembo and a veterinary student prepare Pooh for surgery. After surgery, pets go to recovery where volunteers keep a close eye on their temperature, pulse, and respiration. Volunteers also make sure their patients’ tails are trimmed and their ears cleaned. Pooh was the first pet sterilized through the Appalachian Spay/Neuter Program.

4. RAM Coordinator Tammy Rouse attaches a new rabies tag while explaining Pooh’s post-operative instructions. Each pet owner receives instructions, including emergency contact numbers for local veterinarians. Complications are rare, but they can occur after any surgery.

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from the president of Citizens for the Prevention of Animal Cruelty (C-PAC), the group operating the county shelter, GLRO staffers Natalie DiGiacomo and Linda Reider left for West Virginia. Making directly for the shelter in Fayetteville, the two arrived in time to perform a preliminary site evaluation before dark. Back in Ohio, GLRO Director Sandy Rowland arranged with the Kanawha Charleston Humane Association (KCHAA) to work with HSUS to set up a temporary shelter for the animal flood victims in nearby Putnam County. Another team from HSUS

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until I started calling applicants that I realized how eager these pet owners are to get their animals sterilized. Everyone was so patient and willing to do whatever it took to make the appointment.”

Marla Beaver, whose dog Pebbles was spayed at the Belmont clinic confirmed this. “My pets are like part of the family, but getting Pebbles fixed was just not in the budget. I feel so fortunate to have gotten into this program.” Beaver added, “I was nervous because Pebbles is our baby, but everything was so professionally done, and I was reassured she would be well cared for.”

For all those involved in its conception and delivery, the Appalachian Spay/Neuter Program represents more than preventing unwanted litters. Allen Watt, president of the Meigs County Humane Society and a volunteer at the Belmont and Morgan clinics, was most impressed by the care and attention lavished by the veterinary volunteers. Watt reflected, “It seemed that sharing a moment with pet owners to admire and discuss their dog or cat seemed to bring a new sense of the value and importance of that animal.” GLRO Program Coordinator Natalie DiGiacomo will always remember being hugged by a grateful pet owner who was picking up her cat at the end of the first clinic, providing a perfect ending to a thrilling weekend. Sandy Rowland, the Appalachian Spay/Neuter Program reflects the strength of teamwork, the rewards of dedication and perseverance, and the need to follow your dreams.

headquarters in Gaithenburg, Maryland, traveled to the location of the temporary shelter, a private dog training facility, to retrofit it and teach local volunteers to operate it. Rowland secured donated and discounted supplies and equipment from sympathetic organizations and businesses. Meanwhile Reider and DiGiacomo worked for hours in the debris-strewn Fayetteville shelter, examining each animal, documenting injuries, and recreating identification and background records. They also assisted shelter management in their negotiations with the county and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as they grappled with the task of funding shelter repairs. Late in the afternoon on the day after their arrival, the GLRO team supervised volunteers from nearby animal control departments and the West Virginia State Police as they loaded 42 animals into vehicles for transport to Putnam County. The majority of the animals were eventually adopted by KCHAA into the Charleston community.

HSUS located an experienced manager for the temporary shelter, and when it was running smoothly, the team relocated to Fayetteville to begin the daunting job of surveying the flooded areas of the county for abandoned pets, resterning the animal control program, and locating a site for a temporary shelter for animals needing care. An old rafting company office fit the bill. DiGiacomo and Reider, who had been able to rest up back in Ohio for a few days, returned to Fayetteville, where they met up with a second HSUS team from Maryland. Together, they assisted with the salvage and relocation of usable equipment from the flooded site to the new site. Then, with the input of shelter staff, they developed a floor plan, operational guidelines, and an equipment list for the temporary shelter.

At the end of two weeks, after presenting their recommendations to the county commission, FEMA, and C-PAC, the exhausted HSUS team members headed home. Many hours of assistance and guidance by phone lay ahead, but GLRO felt gratified that their work had contributed to the welfare of the animals of Fayette County for months to come.

Mackinac Island, Michigan. Unfortunately, despite an outpouring of letters from HSUS members to legislators, Gov. John Engler, and Michigan Department of Agriculture Director Dan Wyant, conditions remain substantially unchanged for these quiet beasts of burden. HSUS made another trip to the popular car-free tourist destination in late August of 2001, this time accompanied by a Michigan Humane Society cruelty investigator. Aside from propaganda about

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Carriage horses strain to pull a wagon heavily loaded with tourists up a steep hill on Mackinac Island during August of 2001. Regulation of the hundreds of working carriage horses in the state is sorely needed.

GLRO’s Natalie DiGiacomo and a canine flood survivor in rural West Virginia.

I want to learn how I can help our animal friends and The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS). Please send me information about: Making a memorial donation to honor the life of a pet, friend, or relative. Providing for my pets in my will and in case of emergency. Planning my estate and will to help animals and The HSUS. Using charitable gift annuities and trusts to support The HSUS. Giving The HSUS a gift of stock.

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES

GLRO Regional News

SPRING 2002
By Sandy Rowland  
Director of the Great Lakes  
Regional Office

Doves Targeted Again in Michigan

The war against mourning doves continued in Michigan again this past December when legislators initiated a "back door" attempt to legalize mourning dove hunting. Fortunately the effort was trounced, thanks to quick action by GLRO and the Michigan Humane Society, and timely calls by HSUS members and other dove protectionists to their state legislators.  

H.B. 5478, on the surface, didn't look like a dove hunting bill, but we recognized it as a copy of a similar attempt in Ohio years ago. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Cameron Brown, R-Sturgis, was designed to take the dove hunting bill, but we recognized it as a dove protectionists to their state legislators. H.B. 5478, on the surface, didn't look like a dove hunting bill, but we recognized it as a copy of a similar attempt in Ohio years ago. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Cameron Brown, R-Sturgis, was designed to take the dove hunting bill, but we recognized it as a copy of a similar attempt in Ohio years ago.

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The gentle mourning dove was once again in danger of becoming a game species in Michigan this past fall. HSUS and other groups successfully prevented the thinly disguised legislative attempt.

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Promoting the protection of all animals