

Wyoming Coalition for Animal Protection

Winter 2023-2024

newsletter

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Socially Conscious Sheltering Clever Goats-Clever Goat Rescuers Aerial Gunners and Mesh Condoms Microchip Saves Tyler the Cat Moonsong Malamute Rescue Future of WYCAP?-See last page

Socially Conscious Sheltering - A New Concept

by Pat McDaniel and Sylvia Bagdonas

Recently, WYCAP met with Britney Tennant to discuss the challenges and rewards of being the CEO of Wyoming's largest animal shelter. Britney joined the Shelter as CEO in October 2021 after establishing and directing a successful community supported Cheyenne nonprofit, Black Dog Animal Rescue. A Cheyenne native, Britney is a graduate of the University of Wyoming with an undergraduate degree in Animal and Veterinary Sciences and a Masters in Nonprofit Management. Her insights into shelter operations and philosophy as well as community and government relations offered a glimpse into the role of the shelter within the community.

Since joining the shelter as its CEO, Britney has worked tirelessly to improve shelter operations to reflect the current science, training and best practices in animal welfare/sheltering modalities. She is a champion of the *Socially Conscious Sheltering Movement*, an approach to shelter management that seeks to create the best outcomes for every homeless dog and cat in care as well as in the community. Socially conscious sheltering goes beyond the liverelease rate metric established by No-Kill sheltering. Under this model, Shelter success is defined by 9 tenets. Among others, these include the responsibility to ensure every homeless or displaced pet in a community has a safe place to go, that the Shelter aligns its policies and programs with the needs of the primary community it serves, demonstrates proactive, intentional work to collaborate across organizations, and provides for continuous and ongoing training and development for team members. (For more information about Socially Conscious Sheltering, visit scsheltering.org).



Enrichment for all

The Cheyenne Animal Shelter faces the same challenges all shelters and rescues encounter in Wyoming. Inadequate funding, inadequate staffing levels, political issues, inconsistent values regarding animal care and welfare in the community, and changing public attitudes create daily challenges. Aside from the contract with the city, the shelter relies heavily on community and local business support in addition to a generous pool of donors for their funding.

Britney suggests that shelters are a reflection of the communities in which they operate and the challenges facing low-income citizens. She shared the socio-economic factors that impact shelter pets: there is a



Nail trim after surgery

tendency of affluent individuals to adopt purebred dogs from breeders, while blue collar and the middle class tend to adopt from the shelter. Poverty, inadequate housing, the high cost of vet care and pet food force some to surrender their pets when they can no longer care for them. Also, unregulated puppy mills in Laramie County and Wyoming_contribute extensively to shelter populations when the animals they sell are no longer wanted or are diseased. The high cost of spay and neuter services also contribute to excessive unwanted puppies and kittens in the general pet owner population.

Cheyenne residents will remember the 2023 controversy over the City Council seeking to deny the needed funding increases required by the shelter. The Council in particular could not see the value in programs that mean better outcomes for animals, as opposed to simply housing homeless animals for a limited period of

time and euthanizing them. Also, low pay, low morale, and high staff turnover necessitated salary

increases. A public outcry directed toward the Mayor and the City Council eventually convinced that entity that Cheyenne citizens overwhelmingly demand the Council adequately support animal care and welfare. Current funding levels are still not adequate to support important programs like low-cost veterinary care for the public or robust TNR efforts.

There is a tradition of low salaries and lack of appreciation for people in animal shelter work. The general public does not appreciate what they do – nor do political officials. The fact that Britney considers the shelter workers as social workers speaks a lot for the future. Britney is an example of a new generation of shelter and rescue workers/directors planning to change this sad situation. There are encouraging developments taking place in Cheyenne.

Britney and her staff, as social workers, strive to develop intervention plans with pet owners struggling to keep their pets due to economic hardships.



A hungry customer

Positive community changes include_efforts to create more pet-friendly housing in Cheyenne and a movement to make pets welcome in public spaces. These changes allow more people to own and keep their pets. The Cheyenne Shelter also maintains a pet pantry to help those in need.



Patricia McDaniel is a former Social Worker in Child Foster Care and Adoption. An avid animal advocate, she has been affiliated with Wyoming Coalition for Animal Protection since 2018 and is committed to the organization's mission to promote humane animal protection legislation.

Sylvia Bagdonas worked for the State of Wyoming for 30 years in crime victims' assistance services, tobacco prevention and behavioral health services. Sylvia holds a bachelor's Degree from Colorado State University and a Master's Degree in Psychology, Counseling and Guidance from the University of Northern Colorado.

Her interest in animal welfare evolved from growing up on a farm where ethical treatment of animals was a priority. Factory farms and puppy mills were unimaginable. In the early 1980s Sylvia volunteered with the Animal Care Center in Laramie. From Sherman and Lois Mast Sylvia learned a lot about Wyoming's ineffective animal protection record. Sylvia has always fostered animals. Her interest in animal welfare extends to wildlife, livestock, and companion animals. Sylvia co-founded WYCAP in 2019.

67th Legislature News

by Sylvia Bagdonas

Responding to the designation of February as National Responsible Pet Owner Month, WYCAP planned for interaction activities with legislators at the Capitol on February 14th. On Legislature Animal Welfare Action Day, WYCAP volunteers delivered animal-shaped cookies to the legislators' snack rooms with cards thanking them for supporting animals. It provided an opportunity to thank them for their service and hard work on behalf of animals. Although this legislative budget session was primarily focused on other issues, a few bills did receive the two-thirds required vote in the chamber of introduction to proceed forward.

House Bill 60 - Excess Wildlife Population Change Amendments

This bill, proposing a change to landowner compensation regulations, generated vigorous discussion from many perspectives. Created in the Agriculture Committee, HB60 was an attempt by some ranchers to focus attention on damage caused by overpopulation of elk and other wildlife in some areas of the



Cookies in the Senate break room

state. Although the Wyoming Game and Fish Department already manages a program for damage that game species cause to cropland, livestock, and rangeland, HB 60 suggested that landowners in overpopulated elk areas, for example, should be eligible for 150% of market payments for extraordinary damage to rangeland. Speaking against HB60, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department expressed concern that the proposed bill would rapidly demolish the department's damage fund and impact their self-sustaining budget funded by hunter and angler license fees. The Department also explained it was already working on a plan to deal with wildlife overpopulation concerns. **HB60 died when it was not considered before the cutoff deadline.** Placed on the bottom of the pile, Senator Larry Hicks, Senate Majority Floor Leader, explained the bill presented too many unanswered questions and required more deliberation at another time. Senator Hicks stated a problem with elk in a few areas of the state does not justify the creation of a statewide program. The data does not substantiate it. WGFD said if it became that beneficial to have elk on ranchland, why wouldn't ranchers just keep elk rather than cattle.

House Bill 93 - Animal Reimbursement Program Account

This bill related to agriculture, livestock, and other animals increased the amount the Wyoming Livestock Board may reimburse for any single quarantine of livestock. The bill received affirmative votes at introduction and throughout the committee hearings. **HB93 passed unanimously.**

House Bill 116 - Sage Grouse Implementation - Notice to Landowners

This bill was an effort to require written notice mailed to landowners 45 days ahead of a final recommendation made to the governor that impacts their property. The Wyoming's Sage Grouse Implementation Team (SGI) made a recommendation to include some new land areas in the "sage grouse core area". Some landowners without social media were not advised of the proposed changes to their land. The recommendations limit development, energy production, and general disturbance. **HBn6 passed with unanimous support.**

A Haven of Hope for Rescued Goats and Animals in Wyoming

by Jennifer Clark and Sylvia Bagdonas

Have you ever come across a Goat Reading Program? Imagine walking down the hall at the library, and you're greeted by the sounds of laughter, giggles, and the pure joy of children. As you continue, you discover an unexpected sight – children and goats engaged in reading together. The kids are immersed in books generously donated for this unique purpose. The goats, either attentively listening to every word or playfully assisting the children by nibbling on the pages, create a lively and delightful atmosphere. Laughter fills the air as the children eagerly race to finish each page before the goats can munch on it. It's a scene filled with joy and the shared love of reading. The second component of this Goat Reading Program involves a delightful incentive: for every story, whether it's read aloud, listened by audio, read out loud by someone else, individually read, or even perused in a magazine; each instance counts as one minute of play and joy with our goats. Several elementary schools have enthusiastically joined in this initiative, expressing their desire to further expand the program. The positive impact is evident as students feel motivated to read more, fostering a love for reading within the participating schools.



Goats will eat anything!



Happy kids

Goat reading sessions and other fun activities are part of J&J Second Chance Small Holdings, a Rock River-based non-profit goat sanctuary and rescue that stands as a beacon of compassion, founded by Jennifer and her dedicated daughter, Janna. With a mission centered on rescuing, rehabilitating, rehoming, and providing sanctuary to animals in need, the organization reflects a deep commitment to the well-being of its furry residents. Jennifer's journey, from military service to finding solace in caring for animals, instilled in her the belief that everyone deserves a second chance – humans and animals alike. Janna, diagnosed with autism, discovered profound comfort in the company of goats, shaping her into a passionate advocate for animal therapy.

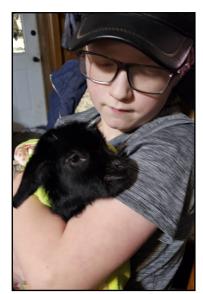
Jennifer grew up on a small farm where she had many kinds of animals. After graduating from school, she served in the United States Army in a few MOSs. While serving in Iraq, Jennifer was injured and has spent quite a while getting put back together. While still dealing with things from that time, Jennifer states, "Animals have saved me in more ways than one and now I want to help save them." When she retired from the military, Jennifer decided that she wanted to return to the small farm lifestyle

that she was raised with. Jennifer is a strong believer that everyone can have a second chance at a life that helps their peace of mind and has found that a lot of

animals also need a second chance in life, especially goats.

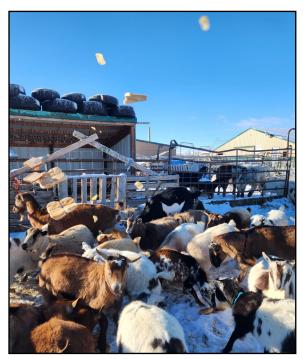
At a young age, Janna was diagnosed with autism, panic attacks, and more. Over the years animals helped her in a multitude of ways. Janna has always found comfort in holding and petting goats when she is having an off day. She will often confide in the goats when she is feeling overwhelmed, and assists in educating others about the goats. We have found this is good therapy for anyone who has challenges. "Goats do not judge...they will listen to the worst and still love you." – Janna.

Jennifer and Janna bring their unique combination of love, expertise, and commitment to creating a safe space where animals receive the care and attention they deserve. Due to this approach, Jennifer often hears a knock at the door from individuals seeking help in providing a safe haven for relinquished animals. This highlights the trust and reputation they have built within their



Wyatt cuddling a baby goat

community. It is a testament to the impact they have had on the lives of both animals and the people who care for them.



Bread delivery means feeding time!

In cases where relinquishment is unavoidable, responsible surrender to reputable shelters or rescue organizations like J&J Second Chance can help ensure the well-being and future adoption of the animal(s). J & J Second Chance Small Holdings requires strict background checks for prospective goat adopters. The rescue requires an adoption fee, application, on-site visit, home visit, and signed contract that the goats will be returned if they are not compatible with the family situation. The sanctuary not only offers solace to goats but has also opened its arms to a variety of animals, including but not limited to miniature cows, miniature horses and ponies, alpacas, llamas, donkeys, pigs, and more. The rescue embodies a holistic approach to animal welfare. Every animal at the rescue receives an annual wellness check and vaccinations from a visiting vet with a cost averaging \$3,500.

Through community engagement and education, Jennifer and Janna aim to raise awareness about the challenges associated with owning these animals and inspire others to contribute to the well-being of goats. J&J Second Chance community involvement includes partnerships with local schools, veterans' centers, and hospitals in Southeast Wyoming. Interactive classes

provided by J&J Second Chance include Goat 101, Goat First Aid, Hoof Trimming, Milking, and so much more.

Jennifer and Janna, the dedicated founders of a vital goat rescue program in the region encompassing Wyoming, Nebraska, Idaho, Utah, and Colorado, tirelessly work to educate communities about responsible pet ownership and provide a haven for rescued goats. As one of seven goat rescues in the area, their program relies heavily on the generosity of donors for survival. Currently facing the aftermath of a fire, they urgently seek volunteers to assist in rebuilding barns and shelters. The goats, eager for enriched environments, require additional playpens and climbing structures such as large tires, giant spools, and various climbing equipment. Beyond physical structures, ongoing food donations remain a constant necessity for the well-being of the rescued goats. Your support in any form – be it time, resources, or donations – will contribute significantly to the continued success of their compassionate mission.

To stay updated and see the fluffy animals check out J&J Second Chance on Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube.

To make contributions to the rescue visit https://www.jjsecondchancesmallholdings.com/. All donations are tax deductible and letters of support can be sent upon request. To lend a helping hand or to experience the joy of visiting the rescued goats, please contact, jjsecondchancesmallholdings@gmail.com, or phone 407-473-2480.

Your support, whether through volunteering, donations, or simply coming by to spend time with the animals, is invaluable to J&Js mission. They look forward to connecting with compassionate



Fundraising

individuals who share their commitment to providing a second chance for these wonderful creatures, making a positive impact on the lives of these goats, and fostering a community dedicated to their well-being.



Janna and Jennifer

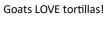


Goats LOVE to climb!















Aerial Gunners and Mesh Condoms

by Donal O'Toole

An interesting vignette played out at the Jan 16, 2024 meeting of the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission.

Rick King, WGFD's chief game warden, made a pitch for a supplemental \$200,000 to kill coyotes and other predators in western Wyoming. Killing predators is somewhere between a rural sport and a local industry in our state. It does not lack for funds. Wyoming's Animal Damage Management Board (ADMB) received \$4.18 M for 2023–24 to manage predators, most of it from taxpayer-sourced general funds. It is ADMB's largest budget to date. The ADMB passes the money to 19 county predatory animal boards, an average of \$220,000 each. Each board has six members from the livestock industry, typically three ranchers and three woolgrowers. Most boards contract with at least one full time trapper. A few, like Converse and Natrona, employ up to three trappers. In addition to coyotes, state and federal funds are used to kill mountain lions, bears, skunks, raccoons, ravens, crows and eagles.



Credit: Google

And, of course, wolves.

Game warden King justified his ask because the harsh winter of 2022–23 caused a further decline of mule deer in western Wyoming. Supplemental money was needed in his view to ramp up predator killing so that depredation of mule deer fawns would be reduced. This was a repeat of an effort to reduce coyote numbers after the harsh winter of 2016–17. On that occasion, \$100,000 was provided by WGFD to the USDA's animal damage control division, euphemistically called Wildlife Services. A total of 177 coyotes were killed at a cost of \$564.97 per animal.

One commissioner asked Mr. King the obvious question:

Commissioner Brocaw: "What bang did we get for our buck [for the \$100,000 from WGFD reserves]?"]

Chief Game Warden King: "We don't have any direct correlation to show that that predator control work created any spike in fawn numbers. We just don't have that data."

Mr. King may not know, but professional wildlife colleagues could have responded more knowledgably. A more honest response from Mr. King might have been: "Not a clue, but that's not my purpose here. Anti-predator subsidies keep the livestock industry and county predator boards off the back of Game and Fish."



Credit: Tim Mayo

It is no accident that the director of Wyoming Game and Fish co-chairs the state's Animal Damage Management Board.

County management boards sometimes act outside the law. Recently, as reported by journalist Mike Koshmrl in WyoFile¹, members of three county predator boards (Lincoln, Sweetwater, and Uinta), were involved in aerial killing of coyotes and bobcats. According to this piece, board members did not think that the USDA's Wildlife Services cut the mustard when it came to coyote culling. They preferred to have private companies do the work, using a combination of aerial gunners, a ground-based team on snowmobiles, and possibly hunters using ultralight aircraft. This violated the federal 1971 Airborne Hunting Act, which sets the rules for aerial hunting over federal lands. One president of a county board was reported to take family members aloft so they could get in some target practice on predators.

In the end, the investigation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service resulted in a slap on the wrist for the three county boards.

Here is what we think we know about the effect of killing coyotes to enhance ungulate populations in western states. One study in south-eastern Idaho (1997–2003) found that the benefits of coyote culling were marginal and short-term, and unlikely to have changed the long-term dynamics of mule deer numbers.² Another, in northwest Colorado, was conducted over three winters. Although coyote numbers were reduced, no change in fawn survival was detected.³ A third study is Utah's ongoing Predator Incentive Program. An estimated 111,025 coyotes were killed across Utah over 10 years (2012–2022), an average of 11,103 annually. Fawn-to-doe ratios fluctuated over the decade. Biologists with Utah's Division of Wildlife Resources have been unable to establish whether the program benefits mule deer numbers statewide.⁴ There is also an ongoing long-term study by University of Wyoming researchers and WGFD biologists to assess the impact of predators on mule deer numbers in the Wyoming Range. It is partly funded by the Animal Damage Management Board. The paucity of good quality, objective studies of the effectiveness of lethal predator control is recognized by professional biologists.⁵

On balance and in most situations, it is likely that coyote populations, which rebound quickly after a cull, have marginal effects on ungulate populations. The major determinant is the severity of winter weather.

One reader expressed surprise to Wyofile after reading in Koshmrl's piece that \$5 million is spent in Wyoming to offset an estimated \$125,000 in predator-induced livestock losses.

He wrote that it makes as much sense as a mesh condom.

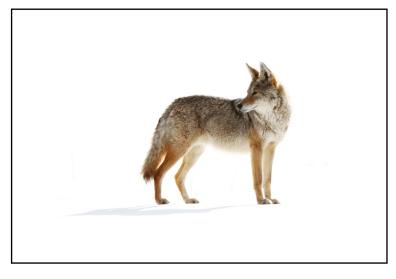


¹Koshmrl, M: Feds probed airborne wolf, coyote gunners in Wyoming, didn't prosecute. WyoFile, January 29, 2022.

⁵Goldfarb B: 2016, No proof that shooting predators saves livestock. Study calls for better science of predator control. Science 353 (6304):1080-108.



Dr. Donal O'Toole has worked as a veterinarian in Wyoming for the past 32 years. Part of his work as a pathologist involves forensic autopsies on starved, neglected, abused and tortured animals.



Credit: Tim Mayo

²Hurley MA et al.: 2011, Demographic response of mule deer to experimental reduction of coyotes and mountain lions in southeastern Idaho, Wildlife Monographs 178:1–33.

³Bartmann RM et al.: 1992, Compensatory mortality in a Colorado mule deer population. Wildlife Monographs 121:3-39.

⁴Anonymous: Utah's Predator Control Program Summary. Program activities and data from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Fighting for the Northern Breeds



by Sabrina Hamner, Moonsong Malamute Volunteer

Moonsong Malamute Rescue (MMR), a registered 501(c.)3, has been assisting Alaskan Malamutes, Malamute mixes, and Huskies since 2004. MMR's area of assistance encompasses Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Utah, and northern Nevada. Moonsong operates with volunteers and solely on donation and limited special grants. In their 20-year history over 400 northern breed dogs have been rescued and rehomed. The people involved are, simply put, the best that humanity has to offer.

The Challenge of the Breeds:

Northern breed dogs (specifically Alaskan Malamutes and Huskies) can be one of the most fun that a person could own. However, they are not the easiest, and at times, not for the faint of heart. These breeds are strong, intelligent, stubborn, working-breed dogs who crave attention, and shed profusely.

The Inuit tribe 'Mahlemiut' originally bred the Alaskan Malamute to look after children and pull heavy loads across short distances. Often confused with Alaskan Huskies, Malamutes actually range between 80–160 lbs., while the smaller, and often nimbler husky, comes in around 40–70 lbs. Generally, both have a high prey drive, and some are not good with small animals, and often don't recall. They can be escape artists or destructive if not given enough exercise. For those lucky enough to experience the love of these breeds, their king-sized personalities, talking, wooing, howling, and their larger-than-life personalities often dwarf these challenges, which are a small price to pay.

The Rescue Challenge:

Our current environment is one of the most challenging to be involved in for animal rescue. COVID changed the pet ownership landscape drastically, with shelters and rescue organizations that were cleared of animals in 2020 due to families spending more time at home, now swimming with strays, surrenders, and abandoned animals. Also, inflation and veterinary costs have skyrocketed, and those who could afford vet care pre-COVID now are struggling to provide for themselves, let alone their pets. Factor in the breed challenges and one can understand how thousands of dogs end up being euthanized each year.



Nanook, a Moonsong alumni

Local municipal shelters and their employees often have to choose which dogs are deemed most adoptable and which dogs due to their breed, age, or lack of interest

from the public must be euthanized. Many dogs available for rescue and adoption are wonderful and healthy animals. Shelters and rescues are teeming with hundreds if not thousands of dogs that need a home. Please consider visiting your local shelter or searching for breed specific rescues when you are looking to find your new family member.

MMR receives multiple requests daily from owners looking to rehome their dogs and from shelters asking them to take dogs that haven't had any interest or are at risk of euthanasia. Unfortunately, dogs are turned away due to a lack of available foster homes.

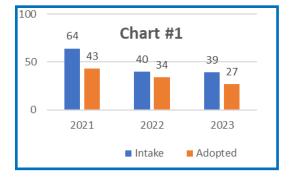


Chart #1 shows the numbers of dogs that have been brought into rescue and adopted in the last three years. Those not adopted remain in foster homes and kennels until they find forever homes. We are hoping that 2024 will reverse the trend of owners surrendering to rescues and shelters, and adoptions will increase. (Up to now, shelters and rescues have been experiencing record low interest and adoptions.)

It is discouraging and heartbreaking having to compete with Craigslist ads, Facebook users selling dogs, backyard breeders, and breeders masquerading as non-profits while profiting off the sale of dogs. Often these dogs don't have health certificates, and have been neglected or abandoned. Any dog that comes from a breeder should have a clause in their contract that states the breeder will take the dog back for any reason and state that the dog must be spayed or neutered within a specific time frame.

In 2017 Moonsong was involved in a case in the Gillette, WY area where 12 pedigree Malamutes were surrendered to our care by a transient breeder who would charge clients several thousand dollars per dog. The breeder had approximately fifty dogs on the property, most living in filth and feces in small cages, campers, and other flimsy enclosures. Many of these dogs required extensive vetting and some didn't live past the age of five or six due to health issues. Sadly, this is not unique and was only one of many breeder seizures and animal hoarding cases that Moonsong has been called in to assist.

The Rescue Solution:

What is the best solution to these problems? First, adopt, don't shop. There are innumerable northern breed dogs in animal shelters and rescue organizations across the U.S. Rescuing one dog makes room for another, and not only blesses the animal/adopter pair, but those who cared for the animal in the interim. Second, always spay or neuter your dog. Not only does this prevent unwanted litters and decrease the homeless unwanted pet problem, but it also results in a healthier and calmer pet. Third, if you are unable to take in an animal, by fostering or adopting, please consider volunteering or donating. The joy you will experience helping save a dog that otherwise may be euthanized cannot be expressed in words. Fourth, write your local city council members, county commissioners, and senators and representatives and ask that laws be enacted to discourage breeding, that fines and legal consequences of abandoning, cruelty, neglect, breeding without health certifications, and not requiring spaying and neutering to be enacted. Finally, don't forget the younger generations and that by leading by example can we effect change in our communities.



Seth

The Local Boys:

Moonsong currently has two dogs ready for their forever homes (or foster homes) right here in our wonderful State of Wyoming; Casper, Wyoming to be exact. These beautiful husky/malamute mixes have been in Moonsong's care since the summer of 2023. While not a bonded pair, they do enjoy the company of other dogs and would love nothing more than to have a yard to run free in, an active household, and a warm lap to lay on (oh and don't forget those scrumptious bully sticks!) Please consider fostering or adopting one of these sweet boys. You can see our adoption requirements and



Spike

complete an application through our website https://moonsongmals.org/adopt/adoption-information/. If you're interested in volunteering or donating, please email rescue@moonsongmals.org. Moonsong is always looking for foster homes. We pay 100% of all expenses - kennels, crate, foods, treats, beds, etc. Learn about fostering and complete an application here https://moonsongmals.org/foster-volunteer/.



Wyoming Coalition for Animal Protection



About WYCAP

WYCAP is a 501 (c)3 grassroots organization dedicated to helping all animals in Wyoming through education, training, and legal advocacy.

Vision Statement:

Wyoming Coalition for Animal Protection (WYCAP) is a grassroots organization of dedicated citizens confronting animal abuse, cruelty, neglect, exploitation and abandonment through legal advocacy, collaboration with community-based programs and statewide organizations, public education and training. We strive to elevate the state's national standing so that public policies and laws demonstrate the values of keeping animals safe and healthy. We promote science-based best practice standards of care and prevention strategies in order to reduce the economic impact to communities responding to animal abuse, cruelty, and criminal offenses.

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Would you like to volunteer? Or receive our Newsletter?

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Thank you for your support!

WYCAP MAY HAVE TO CLOSE UP SHOP!

Working board members needed now!

- Secretary—record minutes of meetings
- Treasurer—it's an easy job as we have very little money
- Website manager—need someone to keep website up to date
- Fundraising expert—or amateur; we need money to stay afloat

What we're looking for in prospective board members:

- Experience working with domestic pets, wildlife, or livestock
- An awareness of and interest in the ethical treatment of animals
- Belief in the WYCAP Mission (see About WYCAP) and its potential to perform useful public services
- Provide input on legislative, legal advocacy, and public outreach matters
- Interest in advancing animal welfare issues in the state
- Willingness to respond to action alerts via emails, letters, phone calls, or social media
- Willing to serve as an ambassador and local contact in your community