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## Focus on Animals

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Special thanks to the staff  
and volunteers at the  
Montana Wildlife Center.

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# Focus on Animals

THE FOUNDATION FOR ANIMALS ANNUAL REPORT NEWSLETTER ▲ 2010 - 2011 EDITION



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## MONTANA WILDLIFE CENTER: THE EAGLE FLIES AGAIN

There have been many successful wildlife releases after animals have been rehabilitated at the Montana Wildlife Center, but this year was unusual. A beautiful mature Golden Eagle received at the Center in March was suffering the effects of having ingested lead, probably from scraps left behind by hunters. After several months of intensive care, he was taken back to the ranch from which he originated. When released, he lifted his wings and flew to a high rock

face. Within moments he was joined by his mate, much to the amazement and delight of the release crew.



The staff and volunteers at the Center strive to make every rehabilitation end successfully, with a release back to the wild the ultimate goal. If an animal can't be released because of injuries or habituation to humans, the Center makes every



Volunteers were busy this past summer weaving used fire hose into hammocks and swings for the smallest bear cubs. The hammocks provide the cubs a safe, comfortable place to play and sleep. Fire hose was donated by the Lewis & Clark Volunteer Fire Dept.

effort to place the animal with a suitable wildlife facility (see photo of "Absarokee" on page 2).

This year, the Center cared for well over 100 animals in a wide range of species, from eagles and bears (both Grizzly and Black bears), to kestrels and baby porcupines. As the number of birds being rehabilitated increases, so does the need for the 100-foot flight cage that is included in the long-term plans for the facility. 🐾

## ADOPT-A-SPECIES PROGRAM 15 YEARS AND GOING STRONG

The Adopt-A-Species program, now in its 15th year in Helena-area elementary schools, has grown to include activities that allow students to teach others about wildlife. There are also traveling educational trunks, each focusing on a particular species, so that participating schools have a ready source of materials for the particular Montana species their school has chosen for the year.



Touching the wildlife exhibits was encouraged at the Adopt-A-Species "outdoor classroom" Carla Wambach set up during Earth Awareness Week in April.

"Living with Wildlife," the theme for the 2011-2012 school year, focuses on how humans and wildlife can successfully coexist. Ambassador birds from the Montana Wildlife Center captured students' attention at fall kickoff assemblies. During the school year, "hands-on" presentations for individual classrooms are also available, including Carla Wambach's "Feather Fest" (about Montana's birds, with real feathers and bird mounts), "Snowshoe & Wildlife in Winter" (field trips sponsored by Montana Discovery Foundation), and "Hides, Furs & Facts" (with pelts provided by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks).

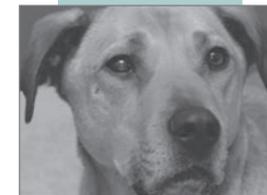
Program partners include FFA, Helena National Forest, Montana Wildlife Federation, MT Discovery Foundation and MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks. 🐾

Students learn the importance of birds to Native Americans and early settlers in Carla Wambach's "Feather Fest" presentation, one of several available to elementary schools participating in the Adopt-A-Species program.

"Shredder" has a bird's eye view of students at an educational school assembly while perched on the arm of Don Eisenmenger, a volunteer with the Montana Wildlife Center.



Photo courtesy of Helena Independent Record, Eliza Wiley



## THE FOUNDATION'S 2012 CALENDAR A STORY BEHIND EVERY PET

The Foundation for Animals 2012 Rescued Pet Calendar is new and exciting! The colorful wall calendar is filled with beautiful photos by Helena professional photographers Kitty Brown, Michelle Lashaway and Roger Mathis. The heartwarming stories feature Montana pets that were given a second chance for happiness and a loving home. All 15 animals have exceptional tales to tell, like Honey, a 20-year-old horse looking for a caring home; Lightening, the feral kitten whose heart was finally won over by the kindness of humans; and Roger, the dog that had been fending for himself in the mountains most of his young life.

Calendars sell for \$15 each at participating stores and veterinary offices (see enclosed list of sales locations). They make great gifts, too. Proceeds support the Foundation's domestic animal assistance programs. 🐾

Lightening, Honey and Roger are some of the 15 rescued pets whose photos and stories are in the Foundation's 2012 photo wall calendar now on sale.

Wildlife photos courtesy of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Jessa Aramaki, sp@ttlewildlife.com

### EDUCATION CENTER OPEN AT "MONTANA WILD"

The Education Center at "Montana Wild" opened in spring of 2011. A part of Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP), "Montana Wild" has already drawn hundreds of visitors of all ages and abilities.

The Education Center there focuses on exploring Montana wildlife and the outdoor experience, from open-air trails and activities to indoors where there are conservation and wildlife exhibits, a living stream with fish native to Montana, and a classroom/wet lab. "Montana Wild" also houses FWP's Conservation Education office, which offers programs year round for children and adults.

The facilities are open to the public from 8 – 4:30 Monday-Friday (except holidays). For information about upcoming programs and other activities that are part of "Montana Wild", call 406-444-9944, or access website fwp.mt.gov. 🐾



Maize Dzialal

Meet the newest ambassador animal at Montana Wild. "Fluffy", a porcupine found dangling by her umbilical cord from a bale of hay, was raised by a family in central Montana. When she became too large to handle, they called the Wildlife Center which provided her a home and a job -- Fluffy has been a hit in her appearances at educational programs.



Photo courtesy of Montana Dept of Fish Wildlife & Parks, Just A Minute, grantkand.com

The Wildlife Center was home to a young cougar this summer. "Absarokee" was found at about 4 weeks of age wandering along a road in south central Montana. The finders called MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks who referred them to the Wildlife Center. The Center's staff enjoyed watching this little kitten grow prior to placing him at the New York State Zoo in Watertown where he joined another cougar from Montana.

**Wildlife Center Wish List**  
**To donate, first call 406-444-9942:**  
 16-gigabyte flash drives  
 Freshly caught fish  
 Surplus game meat (not ground, smoked or seasoned)  
 Micro centrifuge  
 In-house lead testing kit  
 Cold sterilization pack

### FOUNDATION GRANTS BENEFIT WILDLIFE

- \$10,000 for the real-time webcam project for bear enclosures at the Montana Wildlife Center.
- \$1,000 for ear-tag radio transmitters that will allow Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks to monitor bear cubs for up to two years after rehabilitation and release from the Center.
- \$5,000 for materials to be used in jungle gyms that will provide enrichment and opportunities for critical-skill development for bear cubs that are being rehabilitated.



Dianne Nickman

FFA Chair Kelly Kuntz presents a \$10,000 check to Lisa Rhodin, coordinator of the Montana Wildlife Center, and Thomas Baumeister, executive director of Montana Wild, both of Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks. The donation was used in the development of a webcam system that allows visitors onsite to view the bears at the Montana Wildlife Center.

### SPAY AND NEUTER: IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO FOR PETS

Since 1992, the Foundation for Animals has dedicated nearly \$101,000 to spay-neuter efforts in Montana through our spay-neuter certificate program and through grants to organizations that offer low-cost clinics to pet owners who otherwise could not afford to have their pets altered. This year, FFA contributed \$3,000 to spay-neuter efforts: about \$1,000 directly through FFA's certificate program, and \$2,000 through grants that support low-cost public clinics (\$1,000 each to Lewis & Clark Humane Society/Spay Montana, and Helena Area Friends of Pets/Montana Spay Neuter Task Force).



Dianne Nickman

A pet owner registers at the check-in table for dogs.

When FFA's certificate program started in 1992, few spay-neuter clinics were available to the public. More recently, ongoing low-cost public clinics in the Helena area have allowed pet owners more options for having their animals altered before unwanted litters occur.

Some situations still require immediate assistance. The Foundation remains committed to reducing pet overpopulation in every possible way, and so our certificate program remains an important tool in that effort by making assistance available when a pet requires surgery at a time or place outside of scheduled public clinics. For information, call 406-443-6532. 🐾



Dianne Nickman

A volunteer checks on a dog awaiting surgery.



Dianne Nickman

Jaden, 5, comforts his dog Wahya at HAFoP's spay-neuter clinic.

### Ongoing Spay-Neuter Clinics in Helena

The Spay Montana program of the Lewis & Clark Humane Society offers low-cost spay-neuter clinics in Helena every 6 to 8 weeks. Developed for pet owners who would not normally be able to visit a private veterinarian office, clinic costs are \$25 per cat, and \$35 per dog. Rabies vaccinations are also available at \$5 per shot yearly. For information or to make an appointment, call Spay Montana at 422-8224, or the Humane Society at 442-1660.

The Helena Area Friends of Pets (HAFoP) offers twice yearly spay-neuter clinics coordinated with the Montana Spay and Neuter Task Force. Available to low- and fixed-income pet owners, clinics are usually held in October and April. Their main focus is Lewis & Clark County, but help extends to surrounding counties. Their year round voucher program is used between clinics, as needed. For information, call 465-0009.

Total Dynamic Balance Veterinary Clinic (TDB) works with Wild Cat Conservators to provide a donor-assisted, co-pay spay-neuter service. For information, call 442-0188. TDB also works with Petco of Helena to offer a low-cost vaccination program the first Saturday of every month. A portion of the proceeds are donated back to Petco to further spay-neuter efforts to curb pet overpopulation. 🐾

### PROJECT MALAMUTE



To help meet expenses related to the recent rescue of 161 Malamutes in Montana, the Foundation contributed \$1,000 to the Lewis & Clark Humane Society toward the care of the dogs. The owner of the dogs currently faces multiple counts of animal cruelty. 🐾

### EMERGENCY FUNDS PROGRAM BENEFITS ANIMALS, LARGE AND SMALL

This program was designed by the Foundation to help animals and people. The economic downturn has made it even more difficult for some pet owners to provide emergency veterinary care. A beloved pet is often considered a family member, and sometimes a pet is the only family a person has. This program helps low or fixed income pet owners meet unexpected expenses.

Since our last newsletter, FFA has provided almost \$2,000 in assistance. Since 1992, FFA has dedicated over \$63,000 to helping animals in critical need. 🐾



Dianne Nickman

"Shamus", a little therapy dog, needed veterinary care for a leg wound. With help from FFA's Emergency Funds program, Shamus was treated and recovered quickly.



Dianne Nickman

"Squirt" was adopted from an animal shelter after he had been rescued from a collector of over 140 cats. Assistance from FFA's Emergency Funds program made it possible for Squirt to receive the veterinary care he needed. Now Squirt enjoys being the only cat in a loving home.

### JUDY FENTON

For nearly 20 years, FFA advisory board member Judy Fenton has volunteered thousands of hours as coordinator of our certificate program. She also helped develop the program.

Judy's commitment to improving animal welfare has spanned more than 30 years. She served on local and state levels with many organizations, including the Lewis & Clark Humane Society and Helena Area Friends of Pets. Working with Federated Humane Societies of Montana, she helped shape its merger with Montana Animal Control to become the Montana Animal Care Association. She also found time to own and operate the boarding kennel that she and her husband Don owned.

Judy plans to move to Billings. We're very pleased that she will continue to serve as a member of the Foundation's advisory board from her new home.

The Foundation was deeply saddened to hear of the death of Judy's husband, Don, November 8, 2011. He will be greatly missed. 🐾



Dave Fenton