

Focus on Animals

THE FOUNDATION FOR ANIMALS ANNUAL REPORT NEWSLETTER ▲ 2011 - 2012 EDITION



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A BANNER YEAR AT THE WILDLIFE REHAB CENTER More Wildlife Get A Second Chance

Things are hopping, flying and climbing at the Montana Wildlife Center this year. At last count, the facility had cared for 317 animals in 2012, including 24 black bear cubs and 23 species of raptors.

Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks responded to an unusually high number of bear calls in 2012 due in part to a short berry season. Come spring 2013, the wildlife rehabilitation center will have a bevy of healthy black bear cubs to release back to the wild. Prior to hibernation, the cubs spend their days at the center foraging for food and scrambling up and down the new jungle gyms, building muscle and developing vital skills they'll need to survive in the wild.

In addition to rehabilitating and releasing a wide variety of injured and orphaned wildlife, the center uses their Ambassador Animals (animals that cannot be returned to the wild) to reach groups of all ages through programs presented on site and in schools. Recently, the center applied for an Eagle Exhibition Permit in hopes that both



Photo courtesy of Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks. Jesse Varnado Photographer (jvsnh@montana.gov).

Nothing could be more fun for cubs at the wildlife center as exploring nooks and crannies of their new jungle gyms. The jungle gyms were designed by volunteers from Robert Peccia & Associates in Helena. Many businesses donated materials and the Foundation For Animals helped fund the project.

a Golden and a Bald Eagle can be featured in the center's ambassador wildlife program.

Experienced sub-permittees across the state allow more animals to be reached and their needs to be addressed more quickly. The center is also working with the University of Montana to document amounts of lead and mercury found in several raptor species and provides specimens and information for a predator study headed by Dr. Erick Greene. 🐾

RAPTOR REHABILITATION EFFORTS TAKE OFF Construction of Larger Flight Enclosure Planned

The wildlife center is establishing a reputation for successful rehabilitation of raptors as more eagles, hawks and owls are brought to the wildlife center. Most birds have wing and leg injuries due to collisions with vehicles or entanglements in barb wire fences.

To help meet the needs of recovering raptors, four new bird enclosures have been built. A large flight room, an important component in rehabilitating large raptors, is planned for next year. If you would like to help with the fundraising campaign to build a flight room, send your donation to the Foundation For Animals, PO Box 389, Helena, MT 59624. 🐾



Photo courtesy of Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks. Jesse Varnado Photographer (jvsnh@montana.gov).

An injured bald eagle is being transported to the wildlife center for rehabilitation.

SUCCESSFUL BEAR CUB RELEASES RECORDED

Since 2010, 28 black bear cubs have been released with radio transmitters so they can be monitored for proper behaviors such as adequate denning, ability to locate appropriate food sources and avoidance of people. Both late fall and late spring releases were utilized and cubs weighed from 50 to 150 pounds (average 85 pounds). Only three of the 28 cubs died - one was euthanized due to injuries and two died on land where mandated hunting seasons do not apply.

A Very Little Bear

The smallest cub at the wildlife center weighed only 12 pounds when he arrived in mid-October (usual weight at that age is 35-50 pounds). After surgery for an intestinal blockage caused by the orphan's survival diet of bark, stones and plant debris while on his own, he is now thriving and should be ready for release in the spring. 🐾

Photo courtesy of Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks. Jesse Varnado Photographer (jvarnado.com).



The littles cub at the center develops climbing skills on the recently installed jungle gym.



Photo courtesy of Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks. Dawnie Niekman Photographer.

Volunteers perform many jobs at the wildlife center. In the past year over 6100 hours were donated.



WILDLIFE CENTER WISH LIST

The wildlife center can always use your old (but not frayed) towels, sheets and blankets. Ten and twenty-gallon aquariums in good shape can also be put to good use as small enclosures. Call Lisa at (406) 444-9942 to arrange the best time to deliver donated goods. 🐾



Photo courtesy of Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks. Mike Cornett

Montana's First Lady, Nancy Schweitzer, cut the ribbon at the dedication of the new "Montana Wild" education and visitor center. Representatives from Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks and the Foundation For Animals celebrate the completion of the project.

"MONTANA WILD" DEDICATION Our Wildest Dream a Reality

Montana's First Lady, Nancy Schweitzer, cut the ribbon at the new "Montana Wild" education and visitor center in Helena in the fall of 2012. Representatives from the Foundation For Animals (FFA) joined Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks (FWP) employees and volunteers in celebrating the opening of the facility.

It all began in 1992 when Vince Yannone, then FWP's conservation educator, requested funding from the Foundation For Animals (formerly Mikal Kellner Foundation for Animals) for a new bear enclosure needed at the old wildlife shelter on Custer Avenue. That appeal quickly grew into a major fundraising campaign to build a new center that would give injured and orphaned wildlife the best possible chance for a return to the wild. The master plan also included an education and visitor center. A unique private/public partnership between FFA, FWP and the Helena Forest Service was formed to carry out the project. Later, the Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks Foundation was created and participated in the fundraising campaign.

In 2002, the Foundation turned over the land and wildlife rehabilitation facility to FWP. Now, with FWP's completion of the education and visitor center, the master plan is complete.

Many deserve credit for making the dream a reality, including the FWP Conservation Education staff, wildlife center volunteers, FFA special event committees, corporate and private non-profit grantors, FWP Foundation grants and the many dedicated FFA donors. We hope you are as proud and excited as we are to celebrate the center's completion.

Montana Wild is what we had envisioned and then some. Already, it's been the site of 400 events and meetings, 46 outlying school districts have visited (serving 5,885 youth) and the Outdoor Festival drew 300 participants. If you haven't visited Montana Wild yet, please do – you will be pleased at what has been achieved with your support.

Photo by Dianne Nickerson



“Sammi” a therapy cat received veterinary care with assistance from FFA. Sammi is a unique cat; if her owner stops breathing during the night due to a medical condition, Sammi is trained to alert her by licking her face until she is awake and breathing. Holding Sammi is Samantha who is in a cat costume for Halloween.

“Tigger Blue” appears to be smiling after receiving veterinary care with assistance from FFA. Tigger Blue was rescued during a bitter snowstorm. Shown here with his owner and Dr. Newman of the Animal Center.



Photo by Dianne Nickerson

EMERGENCY FUNDS BENEFIT PETS AND PEOPLE

A beloved pet is often considered a family member and sometimes a pet is the only family a person has. Paying the full cost of unexpected veterinary expenses can be difficult or impossible for some low or fixed income pet owners. FFA’s emergency funds program is designed to help pet owners in that situation. Since our last newsletter, FFA has provided \$3,180 in assistance. Since the start of the program in 1992, FFA has dedicated over \$66,000 to helping animals in critical need. 🐾

NEW DOG PARK IN TOWN Everyone Is Excited About “Paw Park”

Plans are underway for a fenced dog park in Helena. The dog-friendly area will be part of Centennial Park which is adjacent to the Helena YMCA. The dog park (recently named Paw Park) will feature interior trails, shade structures and, in the future, agility and recreation stations. Popular nationwide, dog parks allow pet owners to walk and play with their pets in a safe environment.

Development of the dog park is a public/private effort. The Helena City Parks & Recreation Department partnered with a volunteer group to help raise funds. Visit www.facebook.com/PawParkHelenaDogPark for more information. If you wish to make a tax-deductible donation to the dog park fundraising campaign, the Foundation For Animals is accepting donations for the project. Donors will be recognized by the Parks Department at the grand opening planned for spring 2013. 🐾



A design has been submitted to the City of Helena for the planned dog park at Centennial Park in Helena.

Photos courtesy of the City of Helena Parks & Recreation Department

SPAY AND NEUTER YOUR PET It Is the Right Thing to Do

Since 1992, the FFA has dedicated nearly \$103,000 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.

When FFA’s certificate program began 20 years ago, few spay-neuter clinics were available to the public. Now, ongoing low-cost clinics allow pet owners more options for having animals altered before unwanted litters occur. However, some situations still require immediate assistance. FFA remains committed to reducing pet overpopulation in every way possible. Our certificate program remains an important tool in that effort by making assistance available when a pet requires spay-neuter surgery outside of scheduled public clinics. For information call (406) 443-6532.

This year, FFA contributed \$1,890 to spay-neuter efforts in the state: \$390 directly through individual vouchers and \$1,500 through grants that support low-cost public clinics (\$1,000 to Lewis & Clark Humane Society/Spay Montana, and \$500 to Helena Area Friends of Pets). 🐾

Ongoing Spay-Neuter Clinics in Helena

The Lewis & Clark Humane Society Spay Montana program offers low-cost spay-neuter clinics in Helena every 6 to 8 weeks. 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 (406) 422-8224 or the Lewis & Clark Humane Society at (406) 442-1660.

The Helena Area Friends of Pets (HAFoP) sponsors low-cost spay-neuter clinics and offers assistance year round to low and fixed income pet owners to spay-neuter their pet. For information regarding the next public spay-neuter clinic call (406) 465-0009.

Total Dynamic Balance Veterinary Clinic in Helena works with Wild Cat Conservators to provide a donor-assisted, co-pay spay-neuter service. For information, call (406) 442-0188. The clinic also works with Helena Petco to offer a low-cost vaccination program the first Saturday of every month. 🐾

PET CARE AND AWARENESS ADS Ready to Commit to a New Pet?

The Foundation is sponsoring a series of pet care and awareness ads in the pet classified section of the Helena Independent Record newspaper. The educational ads remind those looking for pets to be sure they are ready for the responsibilities of pet ownership, to do their “homework” before choosing a pet, and what to expect after bringing home a puppy or kitten. 🐾

One of a series of educational ads appearing in the Independent Record pet classified section during the holidays.



Adwork courtesy of the Independent Record

Visit our website:
www.FoundationForAnimals.org



Focus on Animals

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ADOPT-A-SPECIES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROGRAM

This year's Adopt-A-Species school assemblies featured a visit from several feathered friends from the wildlife center. "Ninguis" a Snowy Owl, came to the center after colliding with a wire fence and losing the end of his wing. "Qiqik," a Rough Legged Hawk, was injured when she collided with a car, and "Tyler" a barn owl, suffered irreparable nerve damage in her shoulder during a storm. All three birds are unable to return to the wild but help with the center's education programs.

The writing theme for the 2012-2013 school year is "Wild about Poetry." Students are asked to use poetry to share what they have learned in the classroom about their "adopted" species for the school year and the importance of healthy habitat to support Montana's wildlife.

The Foundation For Animals, in partnership with Helena National Forest, the Montana Discovery Foundation and Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks, began the 16th year of the Adopt-A-Species program in the Helena area elementary schools. 🐾



*Photo courtesy of Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks.
Dianne Nickman Photographer.*

"Ninguis," a Snowy Owl, is part of the wildlife center's Ambassador Animal program and helps educate students about birds of prey at Adopt-A-Species school assemblies.