The Certification and Registration of Animal Rescue Groups in Saskatchewan
The Registration and Certification of Animal Rescue Groups in Saskatchewan

Key Learnings

- The need for an animal rescue program in Saskatchewan
- Background research
- The program
About the Saskatchewan SPCA

- Animal welfare organization
- Head office located in Saskatoon
- Do not operate a shelter
- Provincial in scope but NOT “in charge of” other SPCAs and Humane Societies
About the Saskatchewan SPCA

- Established in 1928 by an Act of the provincial legislation
- Humane education in Sunday schools
- Instructional manual for the care of animals
Education. Prevention. Intervention.

2014: Notified the Ministry of Agriculture that we would not be renewing our contract to enforce *The Animal Protection Act*

- *We can better serve the animals and the public by focusing on education and prevention of animal cruelty*
NOW WHAT?
The Saskatchewan SPCA will now focus on initiatives that:

- **promote the humane treatment** of animals,
- **raise awareness** of the human-animal bond,
  and
- **make a difference** in the lives of animals.
The Saskatchewan SPCA:

Vision: To ensure the humane treatment of animals

Mission: To be the provincial voice on animal welfare
Our initiatives
Animal Welfare Conference

Annual conference with speakers from across the province and Canada.

Join us Sept. 23-25 in Saskatoon

www.sspca.ca
Dog Bite Prevention
We support the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog program:

*Program volunteers bring happiness and joy to the sick, the lonely and people in need of comfort*
Established by the Saskatchewan SPCA in 2015

First program of its kind in Canada

Financial assistance for the care of retired police dogs
Stryker K-9 Care Fund

- Shadow was the first dog to receive funding from the Stryker Fund
“The main reason that most police service dogs retire is due to medical issues. Handlers readily accept this financial responsibility, as this is not ‘just a dog,’ but is their partner and a member of their family. This new financial responsibility also governs the emotional decision-making process when it comes to what care can be given. This all takes a toll on one’s human family but thanks to the support from your organization this toll is now minimal.”
Outreach

In This Issue
Third Quarter Stats from APSS
Animal Abuse: Resources for Veterinary Practitioners
Save the Date: Sask SPCA Animal Welfare Conference

This Month’s Contributors
Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan
Canadian Veterinary Medical Association
Saskatchewan SPCA
Outreach

**Emergency planning**

Held debriefing sessions with agencies involved in the 2015 northern fire evacuation

Identified the need to address animal welfare issues as part of local emergency planning
Outreach

- “How do I start up a new SPCA?”
- “My neighbour is not feeding his horse. Who do I call to report that?”
- “Where can I get more information on renting with pets?”
- “I’d like to adopt a dog.”
- “Our SPCA board doesn’t seem to be able to work together.”
Raise Awareness of the Link

THE LINK:
When animals are abused, people may be at risk ... when people are abused, animals may be at risk.
The Animal Safekeeping Survey

Joint project with the Saskatchewan SPCA and STOPS to Violence

Survey results help create programs and services to help the animal and the human victims of violence
The Saskatchewan SPCA is working in collaboration with the provincial animal welfare sector to develop the best possible program for our province.
The Need for Animal Rescue Registration and Certification
Over the years, the Saskatchewan SPCA has been contacted by a number of rescues and SPCAs with concerns about the operation of a few organizations

- Right now, anyone can claim to be a “rescue”
- As we saw when we handled enforcement, some rescue groups are not providing even basic care for their animals.
Numerous complaints over years

2010 seizure of 63 cats, 1 dog, 7 turtles and 1 iguana from Elrose, SK home

“Overflow shelter” in her private dwelling which complicated rights of entry

Pled guilty under APA

2 year provision to allow inspection on 48 hours notice, no limit on number of animals
Richard and Sherri Goddard

66 dogs

- Assorted breeds but most bully types
- Voluntarily surrendered dogs to an AB rescue
- Plea deal under the *Animal Protection Act*
  - no more than two dogs for 5 years
  - inspections without a warrant
Unnamed Rescue

- ~70 dogs of all kinds
  - Unsure of exact #
  - Never charged…
Our goal: Create a voluntary program to register and certify animal rescue groups in Saskatchewan.
Reaction from the public:

- “I think it's an awesome idea!”
- “We need this program - the sooner the better for the animals!”
- “Great idea. I know some run as a rescue and claim they vet the dogs and they really aren't vetted. Hopefully there will be a standard of providing people with papers from the vet them as proof.”
Reaction from the public:

- “Most rescues that I am familiar with do have a minimum standard, actually...a higher standard than most humane societies. Then again, there are some that are so iffy, one wonders if they are even legit. Glad to see this coming. The good rescue groups will embrace this, you will only get negative [comments] from those who know they should not be in the rescue business.”
Background Research
Other programs

Michigan Rescue Certification Program

Program goals:

- Save more lives at shelters
- Encourage more collaboration between rescues and shelters
- Establish best practices and a Code of Ethics
- Advance Michigan to become a no-kill state
Other programs

Michigan Rescue Certification Program

- All-breed rescues
- Purebred rescues
- Dog-only rescues
- Cat-only rescues
- Small companion mammals: rabbits, ferrets, hamsters, gerbils, guinea pigs, mice, rats
Other programs

**Michigan Rescue Certification Program**

- Committee review of applications
- Evaluated against criteria
  - If needed, request additional information
  - If rescue does not meet criteria, an explanation is given
  - Opportunity for change
- If criteria is met, recommendation for approval
Michigan Rescue Certification Program

- Grievances can be filed against certified rescues
  - Must be accompanied by documentation
  - Cannot be initiated via anonymous phone call
- If the grievance is warranted, certification can be revoked
Other programs

Michigan Rescue Certification Program

Resources for rescues:
- Rescue Certification Program Book
- Best Practices Handbook
- Application Checklist
- Online Application
- Model Documents
Other programs

Michigan Rescue Certification Program

*Best Practices Handbook:*
Animal Care Standards and Related Protocols
Animal Records
Medical Protocols
Spay/Neuter
Behavior Euthanasia
Identification/Licensing
Foster to Adopt
Organizational Standards
Other programs

Michigan Rescue Certification Program

*Best Practices Handbook:*

Insurance

Financial Records

Operational Standards and Legal Requirements

  - Animal Intake: strays and rescue animals
  - Applications, Manuals, Contracts, Criteria, Job Descriptions
  - Adoption Program
  - Volunteer Program
  - Foster Care Program
  - Adoption Events

Training/Educational Resources
Other programs

Michigan Rescue Certification Program

*Michigan Certified Rescue Organization Code of Ethics*

- **Animal Bill of Rights**
  - Address all known illnesses promptly, do not adopt out sick animals

- **Rules of Conduct**
  - Sterilize all healthy dogs and cats prior to adoption

- **Adopter Bill of Rights**
  - Fully inform potential adopters about health and behavioural history of the animal

- **Donor Bill of Rights**
  - Provide information on mission, use of donations, board members, etc.
Other programs

- Michigan Rescue Certification Program
- Virginia Federation of Humane Societies Rescue Certification Program
Other programs

Virginia Federation of Humane Societies Rescue Certification Program

“The VFHS Rescue Certification Program began, not as a benchmark to membership, but rather as a way of supporting rescue groups and fostering partnerships between rescues and shelters.”

- Some shelters were reluctant to release animals to rescue groups which they do not deem “legitimate”
Other programs

Virginia Federation of Humane Societies Rescue Certification Program

- 2-year certification
- Rescues must meet minimum state standards
- Gives rescues the tools to succeed:
  - guidelines
  - sample policies and forms
- Trained volunteers do on-site field visits
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<tr>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>NSF</th>
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<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drinking Water</td>
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<td>Water for drinking shall originate from a potable source.</td>
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<td>Durable, non-toxic water receptacles provided and secured in a fixed position or are of a non-tip design.</td>
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<td>Animal Housing—Temperature/Ventilation</td>
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<td>comfortable for each animal. Each building and enclosure provides adequate ventilation for each animal.</td>
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<td>Animal Housing—Maintenance and Sanitation</td>
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<td>Floors and walls of enclosures, buildings, and runs are clean, dry, and sanitary.</td>
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<td>Animal Housing--Suitability</td>
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<td>Animals are maintained in quarters that prevent escape, protect them from injury, and safeguard them from being stolen. Provisions are made for the separation of animals according to species, sex, age, and temperament as needed.</td>
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<td>Crate/Kennel/Cage Size</td>
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<td>Enclosures are constructed and maintained to provide sufficient space for each animal to turn freely, and easily stand, sit, and lie in a comfortable position.</td>
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<td>Food Preparation</td>
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<td>Food preparation/storage area adequately equipped. Equipment and utensils are made of easily cleanable, non-corrosive, and nontoxic materials. A sink with hot and cold water is provided for cleaning equipment and utensils.</td>
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Other programs

Virginia Federation of Humane Societies Rescue Certification Program

- List of certified rescues listed on VFHS website so that shelters and ACO’s around the state can verify their certification.
  - The certified rescues are able to go anywhere in the state to pull animals without having to complete forms and submit documents.
Models for the new program

NFACC (National Farm Animal Care Council) process for the development of Codes of Practice for farmed animals

NFACC process:
- Consensus-based decision-making
- Multi-stakeholder participation
- Public Comment period
- Takes into account the best science available for each species

For full details, see http://www.nfacc.ca/code-development-process
Possible models for the new program

SPCA Certified

- Developed by the BC SPCA
- Farm certification and food-labelling program
- Goal is to improve farm animal welfare standards in Canada
- Independent, third-party animal welfare certification
Possible models for the new program

COR (Certificate of Registration)

- Widely used in the construction industry
- One common audit instrument utilized across the country
- Promotes positive workplace behaviour and practices
- Voluntary but certification commonly required to bid for public and private sector construction projects
Program resources

- ASPCA Shelter Care Checklists
- ASV Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animal Shelters
- Best Management Practices for Animal Shelter and Rescue in the Province of Alberta
- CVMA Code of Practice for Canadian Cattery Operations
- CVMA Code of Practice for Canadian Kennel Operations
Our program
Our goal: Create a voluntary program to register and certify animal rescue groups in Saskatchewan.
Benefits:

- The rescue is able to demonstrate they are working to provide the best possible care for animals
- There is improved communication between shelters and rescues
- Potential donors & supporters can more easily identify reputable rescue groups
- The welfare of rescued animals is improved
Establishing the program: our work plan

We’re starting with a blank page.

- This is not “our” program: we are the organizers
- It’s a collaborative effort involving stakeholders in the animal welfare sector
Establishing the program: our work plan

- Sept. 2015: Announce our intention to spearhead this initiative

- 2015-16: Research other programs

- January 2016: Issue invitations to Working Group members

- January 2016: Communicate with stakeholders
  - Continue to update our list of stakeholders

- March 2016: Meeting #1 of Working Group
Establishing the program: our work plan

- **Program audits**
  - Will onsite inspections be conducted? If so, who will conduct on-site inspections?
  - How often will inspections be conducted?

- **Finances**
  - How much will it cost to operate the program?
  - Possible program funding sources: donations, grants, other

- **Communication/promotion of the program**
  - Stakeholder
    - Incentives to participate?
  - Public

- **Continuing education for stakeholders**

- **Other**
Establishing the program: our work plan

- Develop program resources
- Implement the program
- Evaluate the program
- Continued development of the program
Working Group Meeting #1

- March 18, 2016 in Saskatoon
- In attendance: (One representative from each organization)
  - A cat rescue
  - A dog rescue
  - A smaller shelter (10 or fewer employees)
  - A larger shelter (more than 10 employees)
  - Saskatchewan Veterinary Medical Association
  - Animal Protection Services of Saskatchewan
  - Saskatchewan SPCA
  - ALSO a meeting facilitator
Working Group Meeting #1

- “Get to know you”
- Neutral facilitator
- Positive tone
Work on a vision, a code of ethics, and general practice guidelines

Creation of two committees:
  - Ethics
  - Certification guidelines
Next meeting: June 16

Reports from the Ethics Committee and the Certification Guidelines Committee

In future, there will be opportunities for sharing information with all stakeholder groups
The Saskatchewan Program

- Code of Ethics
- Standards of care
- Best practices
- Other guidelines
- Certification process
In Closing…

Registration and Certification of Animal Rescues

- Timelines: to be developed by the working group
- This will not be a quick process
  - Much work to do
  - Many voices to be heard
- Goal is to take the time necessary to do it right
The Registration and Certification Program for Rescues: a win/win/win

FOR THE ANIMAL WELFARE COMMUNITY:
- The rescue is able to demonstrate they are working to provide the best possible care for animals
- Improved communication between shelters and rescues

FOR THE PUBLIC:
- Potential donors & supporters can more easily identify reputable rescue groups

FOR THE ANIMALS:
- The welfare of rescued animals is improved
Questions?