

SONOMA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY 2017-2018 REPORTThe Evacuation and Sheltering of Animals
During the Firestorm of October 2017**SUMMARY**

In October of 2017 the citizens of Sonoma County watched in horror as large swaths of our community burned. News reports highlighted the terrifying evacuations and escapes of many households. Additional news reports, town hall meetings, government and community agencies continue to highlight the struggles of the families who lost everything and the almost incomprehensible task of rebuilding homes and lives in the face of such devastation.

There has been less reporting on the plight of companion and other animals that were also impacted by the firestorm. Hundreds were evacuated and sheltered during the fires. The Civil Grand Jury chose to investigate how these events unfolded and report on the effectiveness of the planning, preparedness and implementation of animal disaster response.

For this report, the Civil Grand Jury studied the evacuation and sheltering of small companion animals and horses in Santa Rosa and the surrounding rural area. Other communities throughout Sonoma County also faced the challenge of safely evacuating their animals and we acknowledge their efforts and successes. Unfortunately, it is not possible to know the total number of pets and large animals that died during the firestorm.

The Civil Grand Jury investigation focused on Sonoma County Animal Services, a division of the County's Department of Health Services; and the Sonoma County Event Center at the Fairgrounds, a quasi-governmental agency; and their respective roles during the firestorm. The investigation also considered the roles of mutual aid responders, non-governmental animal organizations including the Humane Society of Sonoma County, the Sonoma County Horse Council, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the California Veterinary Medical Association and many dedicated community volunteers. The Civil Grand Jury recognizes that staff and volunteers responded heroically to the call to action and provided critical resources during the emergency. Many worked tirelessly throughout the fires to ensure that as many animals as possible could be brought to safety.

The investigation uncovered some deficits. The Fairgrounds had no disaster plan or staff disaster preparedness training in place prior to the firestorm, and this led to some confusion and disorder in the early phase of the animal sheltering operation. Animal Services was well-prepared for most emergencies but lacked some critical resources, including an adequate alternative source of power, fire protection equipment, and functioning radios for mutual aid staff. Additionally, the structure of the County Emergency Operations Center and the related Health Services Department Operations Center created inefficiencies in Animal Service's ability to respond.

40 The County lacks a comprehensive animal emergency response plan that identifies a lead
 41 department to coordinate the response to an emergency. Following the fires, Animal Services,
 42 the Fairgrounds and several non-governmental animal organizations have begun to develop
 43 formal protocols for a county-wide animal disaster response. Dedicating staff time and financial
 44 resources to animal disaster preparedness through planning, training and practice are essential
 45 elements in preparing for the next emergency.

46

47 GLOSSARY

48

GLOSSARY

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Acronyms

50

DHS Department of Health Services, County

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AERP Animal Emergency Response Plan

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EOC County Emergency Operations Center

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DOC Department of Health Services Emergency Operations Center

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FOP County Emergency Operations Plan

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SFMS Standardized Emergency Management System

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NIMS National Incident Management System

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CVMA California Veterinary Medical Association

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CEO Chief Executive Officer

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MAC Mobile Animal Clinic

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FEMA Federal Emergency Management Agency

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ICS Incident Command System; also name of FEMA disaster training courses

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MOU Memorandum of Understanding

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64 BACKGROUND

65 This is a self-initiated investigation by the 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury.

66 The safety and value of animals warrant attention and response during an emergency. Animals
 67 play a significant role in the quality of life in Sonoma County, providing both companionship and
 68 income to their owners. Animal owners as a population are at greater risk during an emergency,
 69 as they often will not evacuate unless their animals can leave with them. A study of risk factors
 70 for “evacuation failure” was conducted and reported in 2001 for Yuba County, California,
 71 following a flooding emergency. It found that the risk of evacuation failure increases with
 72 increasing numbers of pets.

73

“Particularly relevant to the evacuation of pet owners is the

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strength of the human-animal bond, the perceived risk to the

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owners and their pets, the time and resources needed to evacuate

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animals, and facilities for the housing of evacuated animals...If

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owners anticipate being separated from their pets or being turned

78 *away from public shelters because of their pets, they may refuse*
 79 *to evacuate...The more pets a household owned, the higher the*
 80 *risk of household evacuation failure....*

81 A 2014 report by Sonoma State University conducted for the Sonoma County Horse Council
 82 stated:

83 *“Sonoma County is home to 26,000 equines. The equine industry generates*
 84 *\$613 million annually for Sonoma County businesses, supports over 7,700 jobs,*
 85 *and provides over \$11 million in annual local tax revenues for Sonoma County*
 86 *governments from direct spending on equine ownership totaling \$464 million.*
 87 *There are ripple effects on Sonoma County that add to the equine industry’s local*
 88 *economic footprint.”*

89

90 **METHODOLOGY**

91 The Civil Grand Jury interviewed representatives from the following organizations:

- 92 • Sonoma County Animal Services
- 93 • Sonoma County Events Center at the Fairgrounds
- 94 • Sonoma County Department of Health Services
- 95 • City of Sonoma
- 96 • Sonoma County Horse Council – A non-profit organization founded in 1993 to promote
 97 the health and well-being of horses, and to support horse-related activities in Sonoma
 98 County.
- 99 • Humane Society of Sonoma County – Founded in 1931, “[a] locally-founded, donor-
 100 supported non-profit organization dedicated to bringing people and companion animals
 101 together.”
- 102 • Private citizens
- 103 • Newspaper articles, web articles, radio shows, and other public media

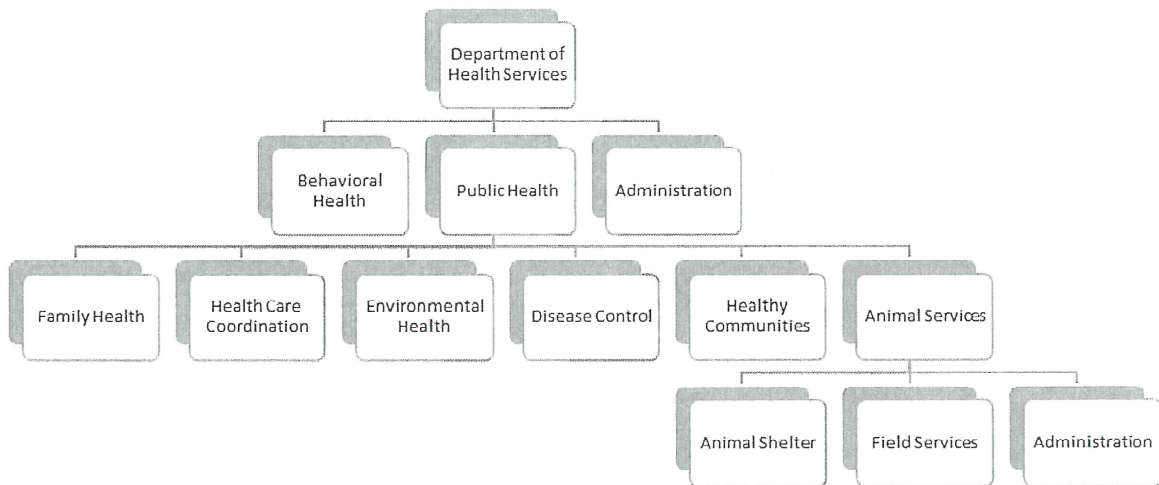
104 Additional organizations researched included:

- 105 • California Veterinary Medical Association – One of the largest veterinary medical
 106 associations in the nation. Founded in 1888, it is based in San Francisco. Their Medical
 107 Reserve Corps is a volunteer group of veterinarians that responds to requests for help
 108 with animals when disasters strike.
- 109 • American Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals – A national non-profit
 110 organization, founded in 1866 on the belief that animals are entitled to kind and
 111 respectful treatment from humans, and protection under the law.
- 112 • Forgotten Felines – A local non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and
 113 improving the lives of feral cats.
- 114

115 **DISCUSSION**

116 SONOMA COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES

117 The Sonoma County Department of Health Services (DHS) is comprised of three major divisions:
 118 Behavioral Health, Public Health and Administration. The Public Health Division oversees six
 119 separate programs, one being Animal Services. Services are provided over a large geographical
 120 area, including all unincorporated areas of the County, and through contracts with the City of
 121 Santa Rosa and Town of Windsor. The annual budget for 2017-18 was \$6.5 million, with the
 122 majority of the funds allocated from the County General Fund. Animal Services accepts
 123 community donations of cash and materials, which can be used to supplement their budget and
 124 help cover costs.



125

126 *Figure 1 – A portion of the 2017 Sonoma County Department of Health Services Organizational Structure*

127

128 Animal Services is divided into three operational units: the Field Services Division, the Animal
 129 Shelter, and Administration. When Animal Services was first established, there were two field
 130 supervisors to administer the Field Services Division. Following a county reorganization in 2010,
 131 Animal Services was transferred from the county Department of Agriculture to the Department
 132 of Health Services (Figure 1). At that time one field supervisor position was eliminated. During
 133 the fires, there were thirty-five full-time staff positions budgeted but only thirty-one staff
 134 members available to respond during the firestorm. The department is left short-handed when
 135 there are vacancies, vacations, or medical leave because there are no replacement staff.

136 Emergency Planning and Training

137 Animal Services was well-prepared for most emergencies. They had a disaster response plan in
 138 place, called the *Animal Care and Control Division Animal Emergency Response Plan for Official*
 139 *Declared Emergencies* (AERP), dated December, 2011. This Plan has been revised periodically
 140 over the years as Animal Services gained further experience through their participation in
 141 various emergency responses such as the Valley Fire in Lake County in 2015, and the periodic
 142 floods on the lower Russian River, most recently in 2016.

143 Sonoma County Animal Services was also in the process of developing an *Animals in Disaster*
 144 *Service Worker Volunteer Program* intended to support Sonoma County by coordinating non-
 145 governmental organizations and the private business sector to build, sustain and improve the
 146 capability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural or man-made disasters that
 147 affect animals.

148 In addition to the AERP, Animal Services contracted with a consultant from UC Davis to assist in
 149 developing an addendum to the County Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) titled *Animals in*
 150 *Disaster Response Plan, an "Annex"* to the EOP. The document was in an updated draft form
 151 and, although not formally approved, was successfully implemented during the firestorm. Its
 152 purpose is to assist local jurisdictions in planning for animal evacuation and sheltering before
 153 disasters happen in the County. It would standardize protocols and practices throughout
 154 Sonoma County government, direct the overall coordination of resources, and identify key

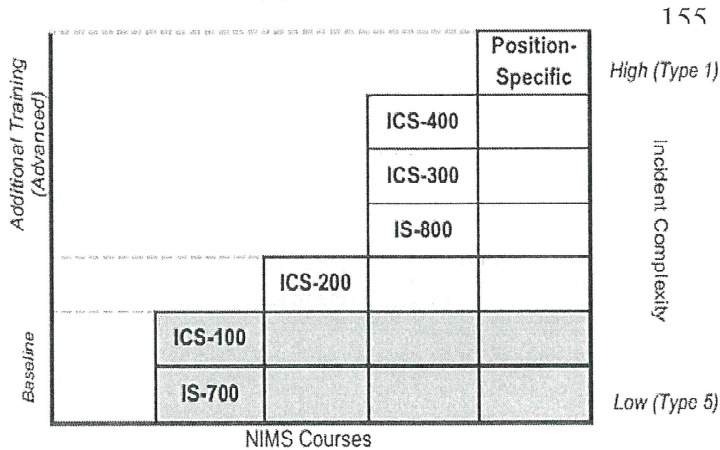


Figure 2-ICS Training Levels

155 players and resources. It would also ensure consistency with the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and the National Incident Management System (NIMS), used nationwide for disaster planning. Completion of the *Annex* is expected by the end of 2018.

The Animal Services management was fully trained and experienced in emergency response. Managers had completed the "Introduction to NIMS" and "Introduction to the Incident Command System" courses (IS-700 and

169 ICS-100,) offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and more advanced
 170 FEMA courses as well (Fig. 2). Many line staff were not yet fully trained. With no official time set
 171 aside for them to attend ICS training classes, staff is left to find the time in the midst of their
 172 regular duties, or do it on their own time. As part of the annual county training, Animal Services
 173 participates in the Great California Shake-Out Earthquake Drills, held state-wide every October
 174 18.

175 Field Officers carry additional responsibilities and often work in conjunction with law
 176 enforcement and firefighters when responding to service calls. Under section 830.9 of the Penal
 177 Code, "Animal control officers are not peace officers but may exercise the powers of arrest of a
 178 peace officer as specified in Section 836 and the power to serve warrants as specified in Sections

179 1523 and 1530..." including the use of firearms. Specialty training for these powers is required
180 for the Field Officers.

181 SONOMA COUNTY EVENT CENTER AT THE FAIRGROUNDS

182 The Sonoma County Event Center at the Fairgrounds (Fairgrounds) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit
183 event business, and is also a quasi-governmental agency. The Fairgrounds receives no funding
184 from the County to operate and maintain the property. Instead, revenues come from building
185 and grounds rentals, as well as parking fees and food and beverage sales, from the County Fair
186 and other events. The organization is governed by a fifteen-member Board of Directors
187 appointed by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, with twenty-seven full-time staff
188 headed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO reports to the Fairgrounds Board of Director
189 and works with the County's General Services Department. There are approximately thirty
190 temporary workers, but during the Sonoma County Fair as many as 600 temporary staff are
191 hired.

192 Emergency Planning and Training

193 The Fairgrounds is in the event business, and they responded to the evacuation and sheltering
194 of animal as a large event. Their staff frequently deals with animals through agriculture-related
195 events such as FFA and 4-H activities, the County Fair, and horse racing. They commonly deal
196 with large crowds, and can quickly set up and remove the contents of large buildings. However,
197 Fairgrounds staff do not generally play an active role in the care of animals.

198 Although there had been attempts in the past to develop a written emergency plan, the
199 Fairgrounds did not have one when the fires struck, and there was no requirement for
200 emergency training for the staff. Additionally, the Fairgrounds did not have a formal plan for the
201 evacuation of the Fairgrounds' site itself, should it be threatened or damaged in an emergency,
202 nor was there a formal plan identifying alternative evacuation sites for animals should the
203 Fairgrounds be unavailable during a disaster.

204 THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

205

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207

208

*"Where are we supposed to go with all our animals?
Have they opened the Fairgrounds?"*

209

210

911 Caller to REDCOM at 10:45 pm on October 8, 2017

211

212 Animal Services

213

214 The staff began to arrive around 1:00 a.m. on October 9 as the Tubbs Fire advanced within two
215 miles of the Animal Services facility on Airport Boulevard. The county-issued phones and
216 computers were not working due to the power outage caused by the firestorm. This limited the
217 amount of information immediately available.

218 There were ninety animals housed at the Animal Services shelter facility the night the firestorm
219 broke out. The staff took action to prepare these animals for transfer since an unknown number
220 of animals would soon arrive. Using their personal cell phones, which worked intermittently, the
221 staff contacted shelters in nearby counties that quickly responded. All animals that could be
222 moved were safely transported out of the area without issue.

223 The shelter employees worked out of their cars and service trucks, or sat at outdoor tables.
224 Staff used personal cell phones that were charged in their cars. Animal Services had a “disaster
225 trailer” for use in the field during emergencies, and it contained a small generator that they
226 could use. It was designed to power a small trailer and could only produce enough energy to
227 allow the shelter workers to function. It would take three days to get a sufficiently powerful
228 generator brought in and full power restored. Power to the area would not be restored by PG&E
229 until the following week.

230 Animal Services Field Officers had communication with law enforcement and fire personnel
231 through their county-issued radios. During the first two days, the Sheriff and Fire Departments
232 along with the County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) passed along the service requests for
233 Animal Services assistance. On normal service calls, Field Officers are at risk for accident or
234 injury from animals. During the October firestorm, field officers were escorted behind the fire
235 lines by law enforcement without the protection of fire safety gear to perform various rescues.
236 Normal operations would typically have thirty to fifty calls a day, but by the third day of the
237 firestorm Animal Services was receiving over 300 calls a day. From October 10 to November 10
238 the total number was over 3,600 calls, compared to 1,700 calls during the same period in 2016.
239 From the first day of the firestorm, the shelter was open twenty-four hours a day.

240 The Animal Services Field Officers received an increasing number of requests to conduct welfare
241 checks on animals that had been left behind in evacuated areas as it was safer for the animals to
242 shelter in place. Food (provided by donations) and water were transported to the evacuated
243 homes, rural barns and pastures. Because of limited space at the Animal Services’ shelter to
244 store the donations, the County Department of Agriculture/Weights & Measures opened their
245 nearby building for use. The close proximity of the building and supplies proved to be an
246 invaluable asset to the rapid response of the Field Officers.

247 The County Emergency Operations Center was activated at midnight on October 9 and Animal
248 Services initially reported to this command center. However, when the Department of Health
249 Services’ (DHS) emergency response activities are too large or complex to be managed at the
250 County Emergency Operations Center (EOC), DHS opens a Department Operations Center (DOC)
251 to coordinate their department’s response. This process was begun in the early hours of
252 October 9, and staff began to arrive at approximately 6:00 am.

253 Animal Services was required to report to the DOC and lost direct access to the EOC. The change
254 in reporting structure added difficulty in receiving up-to-date information, delayed resource
255 requests during these critical hours, and slowed or impeded Animal Services’ emergency
256 response

257 This organizational structure complicated Animal Services’ emergency response in a few ways:

- 258 • The additional layer of review that all Animal Services resource requests had to go
259 through led to misunderstandings. Clarity and urgency were lost, and some requests
260 went unfilled.
- 261 • Equipment and supply needs could not be ordered directly or purchased nearby;
262 requests were forwarded to Department of Health Services to do the ordering. This led
263 to delays both in ordering and delivery. Items were often delivered to the Department
264 of Health Services office and had to then be transported to Animal Services.
- 265 • The 2014 Department of Health Services *Emergency Action Plan* did not address Animal
266 Services. However, there was a Site-Specific Addendum that adds the Animal Services
267 physical plant facility and staff but contains no direction for field personnel or
268 evacuation of animals other than if there is a fire in the building.
- 269 • All DOC members are required to take the ICS training classes offered through FEMA. At
270 the time of the firestorm, more than half of the DOC members had not completed this
271 training.

272 The Fairgrounds

273
274 The 2017 Harvest Fair had just ended on Sunday evening, October 8. The staff and workers at
275 the Fairgrounds had disassembled the exhibits in both Finley Hall and Grace Pavilion. On
276 October 9, 2017 at 12:30 am the Fairgrounds received a phone call from an official in Napa
277 County seeking stall space for horses being evacuated from a growing fire in Napa County. The
278 CEO agreed to open the stall area and accept the animals.

279
280 At 2:00 am County General Services relayed a request from the Emergency Operations Center to
281 open the Fairgrounds for animals being evacuated from the wildfires spreading through Sonoma
282 County. The Fairgrounds management called in all available staff. The Fairgrounds staff prepares
283 and maintains the facilities but do not generally have a direct role in the care of animals.
284 However, the Fairgrounds management and staff were responsive to the needs of the owners
285 and volunteers who cared for the animals.

286 Following the emergency notification, Fairgrounds management made sure the gates were open
287 for the arrival of animals. Aston Gate #7 at the south end of the Fairgrounds was the entry point
288 for animals, as well as the large firefighting and support vehicles. Beginning around midnight on
289 the first night of the fire, evacuated animals of all kinds began to arrive. The majority were
290 horses, but alpacas, donkeys, goats, chickens, llamas, sheep, rabbits and cattle also arrived. The
291 initial chaos threatened to make the Gate a chokepoint.

292 Record keeping of horse and owner consisted of strips of duct tape placed on the animal with a
293 scrawled name and phone number. Owners and volunteers with horse trailers courageously
294 evacuated animals, some making multiple trips to the fire-threatened areas as the calls for help
295 came in. Social media, phone and text trees, and email were all utilized to best identify where
296 horses needed to be moved.

297 During the early chaos on Monday morning, volunteers from the Sonoma County Horse Council
 298 took over the admission of horses. The Council remained in this leadership role throughout the
 299 firestorm. Intake of other animals, large and small, was handled by other non-governmental
 300 organizations with assistance from Fairgrounds volunteers and temporary staff.

301 Initially, evacuees were temporarily able to keep their family pets close by while staying at the
 302 Fairgrounds. However, American Red Cross policy forbids pets in most shelters. When the Red
 303 Cross took over operations in Grace Pavilion, no pets were allowed in the facility. Small animals
 304 were moved to Finley Hall, which was designated as a shelter for people with pets. The Animal
 305 Services Mobile Animal Clinic (MAC) and Forgotten Felines MAC were parked by the Veterans
 306 Building. The pets housed in the MACs could be visited by their families staying at the
 307 Fairground's shelter.

308 Animal Services Field Officers were sent to various shelters to assess the animal need. Upon
 309 arrival, veterinarians from the California Veterinary Medical Association were dispatched to the
 310 Fairgrounds and other shelter sites to assist with animal care. Businesses and community
 311 members donated more than sufficient amounts of animal feed, bedding and other supplies.

312 The Fairgrounds staff had radios, which remained in operation. Cell service, as at the Animal
 313 Shelter, was intermittent to nonexistent, largely due to loss of cell towers. By the fourth day of
 314 the firestorm, a temporary cell tower had been erected and full service was restored. The
 315 Fairgrounds never lost power.

316

317 Mutual Aid

318

319 Animal Services called for Mutual Aid on Tuesday, October
 320 10. The first mutual aid agencies to arrive came from Marin
 321 County and the City of Petaluma that same day. Among the
 322 mutual aid agencies that quickly responded to the call were
 323 the animal agencies of Alameda, Lake, and San Mateo
 324 counties; and the cities of Modesto, Palo Alto, Petaluma,
 325 Pleasanton, Rohnert Park, and San Francisco.

326 Mutual aid responders provided much-needed assistance in
 327 the field, although Animal Services scheduled them for day
 328 shifts only. Based on their experience fighting the Valley Fire,
 329 Animal Services believed it was unsafe to ask Mutual Aid
 330 personnel to provide coverage at night due to the destruction
 331 of many street signs, lights and landmarks plus an insufficient
 332 knowledge of the geographic area. Animal Services Field
 333 Officers were able to communicate with law enforcement
 334 and fire personnel through their county-issued radios.
 335 However, when Animal Services picked up a bank of
 336 additional radios for Mutual Aid staff from the Sheriff's
 337 Department, the radios were not operational. This
 338 complicated communication even further.



Figure 3 Mutual Aid Coastal Region

339 Animal Organizations, Community Volunteers, and Donations

340

341 Early on, Animal Services realized that they would need as much assistance as they could get,
342 and reached out to other animal organizations. In spite of the fact that there were no
343 Memoranda of Understanding or formal plans for collaboration, these organizations responded
344 without hesitation.

345 Animal Services first contacted the Humane Society of Sonoma County at 5:30 am that Monday.
346 Upon learning of the firestorm, the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA), contacted
347 Animal Services to have them officially request CVMA help. Once requested, CVMA dispatched
348 their Medical Reserve Corps of at least thirty veterinarians. The CVMA veterinarians came on a
349 rotating basis to set up and operate an emergency medical facility where injured pets could be
350 treated. The National American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals dispatched their
351 Mobile Animal Clinic (MAC) which consisted of a tractor-trailer and twelve staff. This MAC was
352 parked near the animal shelter at the Sonoma County Airport.

353 The Humane Society of Sonoma County was a critical local resource. Animal Services first
354 reached out to the Humane Society on Monday, October 9 as part of their effort to resettle the
355 shelter animals to make space for evacuated animals. The non-profit agency aided Animal
356 Services by administration of a website for over 600 lost and found pets. The Humane Society
357 shelter received a total of 124 animals, including transfers, surrenders and strays.

358 One species requiring special evacuation and care were hobby and decorative fish. Animal
359 Services reached out to the koi community and they responded with volunteers, instructions,
360 feeding and six 350-gallon tanks. UC Davis provided help in catching, transporting and
361 treatment. The rescued fish were housed in the nearby Weights and Measures building.

362 Local businesses, animal organizations, and community members donated more than 50,000
363 pounds of pet food as well as medical and other supplies for the care and sheltering of the
364 animals. Animal Services estimated that more than \$250,000 in cash donations also came in
365 during the firestorm. The Fairgrounds also received generous donations of food and equipment
366 for the sheltered horses and other animals.

367 **COLLABORATION AND DEDICATION TO SUCCESS**

368 Almost every animal brought to the Animal Shelter was returned to the owner; only a few pets
369 died from their injuries while being sheltered. By a month after the firestorm, Animal Services
370 had returned to normal. A total of forty mutual aid personnel had come to assist Animal
371 Services. Marin County, which was the first agency to respond to the initial mutual aid call, was
372 also the last to leave on October 31.

373 The Fairgrounds sheltering operation was closed on October 23 as the number of large animals
374 dwindled. In total, the Fairgrounds had sheltered approximately 500 evacuated large animals,
375 300 of which were horses. Small animals and pets had been housed in numerous shelters
376 serviced by Animal Services, including forty to fifty dogs and cats at the Veterans Building

377 shelter, sixty to eighty at the Finley Building at the Fairgrounds, and forty to fifty at the Finley
378 Center on College Avenue.

379

380 Horses and other large animals at the Fairgrounds were returned to their homes after the
381 danger passed. However, many barns and fences were destroyed, resulting in some animals
382 being moved to locations away from the fires, such as west Sonoma County and Marin.

383

384 The investigation uncovered some deficits in the animal emergency response planning and
385 preparedness that could have informed a more cohesive and perhaps more successful response
386 to the fires. In spite of this, Animal Services, the Fairgrounds, the dedicated community
387 organizations and countless volunteers came together through their collaborative efforts to save
388 and shelter animals. Their rapid and often heroic contributions made a difference.

389

390 WHAT'S NEXT

391

392 Some non-governmental organizations provided extensive and critical support to the evacuation
393 and sheltering of animals. However, reimbursement for their services may be more complicated
394 because no Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between the government agencies and non-
395 governmental organizations were in place prior to a disaster.

396

397 *"Pre-disaster planning should place a high priority on facilitating*
398 *pet evacuation through pre-disaster education of pet owners*
399 *and emergency management personnel."*

400

Yuba County, California Report 2001

401 Prior to the October fires there had been some preliminary discussions between County
402 Emergency Services, the Fairgrounds and the Sonoma County Horse Council regarding animal
403 evacuations. Since then, Animal Services has been working with the Fairgrounds and other
404 animal shelter and rescue organizations to create a defined team of responders for animal
405 evacuations as well as some additional protocol. Projected goals include providing training to
406 Fairgrounds staff on the care and sheltering of large numbers of animals during an emergency;
407 developing Memoranda of Understanding with non-governmental animal shelter and rescue
408 organizations; and providing the *Animals in Disaster Service Worker Volunteer Program* training.
409 Animal Services budget constraints may limit their ability to fully respond when faced with the
410 next emergency or disaster, which is sure to come.

411

412 Health Services is working to implement a new tracking system to ensure that mandatory
413 Incident Command System training is completed by all appropriate Department Operations
414 Center staff and managers. A trained, certified and organized pool of local volunteers and staff is
415 critical, especially before Mutual Aid can respond.

416

417

418 FINDINGS

- 419 F1. The County of Sonoma lacks a comprehensive animal emergency response plan that
420 identifies Animal Services as lead department to coordinate the response to the
421 emergency. *The Animals in Disaster Response Plan; an Annex to the Emergency*
422 *Operations Plan of Animal Services* was intended to accomplish this, was in revised draft
423 form at the time of the firestorm, and was implemented effectively.
- 424 F2. The lack of an alternative power source at the Animal Services facilities, and the
425 malfunction of radios for the use by mutual aid agencies, hampered communication and
426 operations throughout the emergency.
- 427 F3. Animal Services' emergency response was hindered by its assignment to Health
428 Services' Department Operations Center instead of the County Emergency Operations
429 Center. The Department of Health Services lacked a plan to ensure that Department
430 Operations Center members completed the required Incident Command Center training.
- 431 F4. The lack of a formalized Emergency Response Plan and training for the Fairgrounds led
432 to some confusion and disorder in the early phase of the animal sheltering operation.
- 433 F5. Without formal Memoranda of Understanding between the County and non-
434 governmental organizations, reimbursement of costs by FEMA may be more difficult.
- 435 F6. Following the firestorm, Animal Services, the Fairgrounds, and non-governmental
436 agencies have begun to develop formal protocols for animal disaster response, including
437 alternate animal evacuation sites should the Fairgrounds be unavailable. Animal
438 Services has plans to improve the volunteer program to train and certify animal
439 disasters volunteers which will enhance animal rescue capabilities.
- 440 F7. Animal Services is a first responder that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days per week,
441 works in conjunction with law enforcement, and exercises the powers listed under
442 California Penal Code 830.9 including the use of firearms. Animal Services management
443 was fully trained and experienced in emergency response, but much of Animal Services
444 staff lacks Incident Command System training.

445 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

446 The Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury recommends that:

- 447 R1. The Board of Supervisors designate Animal Services as the lead agency for Animal
448 Emergency Planning and Response for Sonoma County, and the County Administrator
449 assign an Animal Services representative to the Emergency Operations Center, by
450 December 31, 2018. (F1, F3)

- 451 R2. The Department of Health Services Director ensure that Animal Services has adequate
452 power, safety and communication equipment available for emergency use by December
453 31, 2018. (F2)
- 454 R3. The Animal Services Director finalize both the draft *Animals in Disaster Response Plan; an*
455 *Annex to the (County) Emergency Operations Plan* and the draft *Animals in Disaster*
456 *Service Worker Volunteer Program* by December 31, 2018. (F1, F6)
- 457 R4. The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator implement an emergency
458 response and training plan for the Fairgrounds, including annual disaster training for
459 regular and temporary staff, by December 31, 2018. (F4)
- 460 R5. The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator enter into Memoranda of
461 Understanding with non-governmental organizations that play a role in animal disaster
462 emergencies by December 31, 2018. (F5)
- 463 R6. Training standards should be enforced by ensuring that the Animal Services Director
464 require that all field officers complete Incident Command System and fire safety courses
465 with an emphasis on animal emergencies, and the Director of the Department of Health
466 Services ensure that all Department Operations Center members complete the
467 mandatory Incident Command System, by December 31, 2018. (F3)
- 468 R7. The Board of Supervisors and County Administrator analyze the current placement of
469 Animal Services under the Department of Health Services, and determine if Animal
470 Services should be reassigned to an agency that operates 24 hours a day, by December
471 31, 2018. (F7)

472 **REQUIRED RESPONSES**

473 Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05, the Civil Grand Jury requires responses as follows:

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|--|
| 474 | R1, R4, R5, R7 | Sonoma County Board of Supervisors |
| 475 | R1, R4, R5, R7 | Sonoma County Administrator |
| 476 | R2, R6 | Sonoma County Department of Health Services Director |
| 477 | R3, R6 | Sonoma County Animal Services Director |

478 The governing bodies indicated above should be aware that the comment or response of the
479 governing body must be conducted subject to the notice, agenda and open meeting
480 requirements of the Brown Act.

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- Sonoma County Animal Services: 2011 “Animal Emergency Response Plan Rev-1”
- Sonoma County Animal Services: “Budget 2016-2017”; Budget 2017-2018”
- Sonoma County Animal Services: February 2018 “Total Calls Per Date and Hour”
- Sonoma County Animal Services: 2016 “Memorandum of Understanding with American Red Cross”
- Sonoma County Department of Health Services: 4/24/2018 “DHS Disaster Completion Tracking-DOC
- Governmentjobs.com/careers/Sonoma/classpecs: 2017 “Animal Services Field Officer I & II”
- Sonoma-county/grancieus.com/pd: October 2014 “Sonoma County Operational Area - Emergency Operations – Draft”
- Sonoma County Board of Supervisor: October 24, 2017 Meeting Agenda Item Summary Report: Mutual Assistance Agreement
- Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury: 2007 Final Report “Sonoma County Employees - Waiting to Be Trained for Disaster”
- Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury: Final Report 2004-2005, “A Disaster Waiting to Happen”
- California Penal Code: Chapter 4.5. Peace Officers [830-832.18]; Stats 1968, Ch. 1222; Sections 836, 1523, 1530
- Sonoma-county.org: September 2013 “DSW/Emergency Management Training”
- Sonoma County Horse Council: December 2017 “The Horse Journal Winter 2018”,
- Sonoma County Humane Society: December 2014 “Basic Emergency Operations Plan - Rev 4”
- Dr. Ted Stashak, DVM, February 2018 “SCH Experience: Large Animals Evacuation Center Sonoma County-Fairgrounds”
- KQED Radio: October 8, 2017 911 Caller to REDCOM

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Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code Section 929 requires that reports of the Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides information to the Civil Grand Jury.