

Welcome to this issue of the Washington State Animal Response Team's newsletter! Find out what the President has to say, what deployments we've been on, where the next meetings will be, and where we'll be with upcoming events, safety permitting. [View this email in your browser](#)



Helping Animals & Their Owners in Emergencies

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In a large animal rescue, much of the more expensive equipment needs to be replaced for safety reasons.

It's only possible because of you.

[Donate](#)

General Meetings

These meetings are held twice annually, in March and September and are open to all, members and non-members alike. Currently, they are virtual Zoom meetings but we may revert to in-person meetings when pandemic

From The President

What We Train For: Making the Best of the Worst



WASART had the opportunity to serve the Tacoma area by setting up and staffing an emergency animal shelter for those with COVID19 who did not have arrangements for their pets.

As our communities have been filled with so much uncertainty resulting from COVID-19, WASART has been mobilizing to help protect some of the most vulnerable among us.

Early last year, WASART was contacted by Pierce County to set up an emergency shelter to house dogs, cats, and possibly other household pets for owners who needed hospitalization. The Sheltering Committee promptly began preparations. With Washington being considered the country's initial hotspot for the virus outbreak, WASART was staged to be at the forefront of this critical response.

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Upcoming Training

March 13, 2021 Base & Operations Support

0900-1700

[Grateful Pine Farm](#)

13620 Old Snohomish-
Monroe Road
Snohomish, WA 98290
(in-person)

April 24, 2021

Transport

0900-1700

[Enumclaw Expo](#)[Center Parking Lot](#)

45224 284th Ave SE
Enumclaw, WA 98022
(in-person)

May 15, 2021

Emergency Animal Sheltering

0900-1700

[Steven's Animal](#)[Sanctuary](#)

30609 SE 352nd
Enumclaw, WA 98022
(in-person)

June 13, 2021 (TBD or Virtual)

Base & Operations Support (repeat)

0900-1700

September 18, 2021

Base & Operations Support (repeat)

0900-1700

[Foothills Veterinary
Hospital](#)

28512 112th St. E
Buckley, WA 98321
(in-person or virtual)

October 22, 2021

Annual Exercise Setup & Planning

0800-1800

additional volunteers including some non-WASART individuals pitched in to help assure that the new shelter would be safe and hospitable for our animal friends. With the shelter set up and ready, the committee took the opportunity to provide some just-in-time training to teach volunteers basic animal handling, animal intake, and housing, as well as the intricacies of working in this urban shelter.

In light of several events that have unfolded over the last year, I'd like to take a quick moment to stress the importance of all volunteers everywhere, in whatever capacity they serve, focusing not just on their physical health and fitness for duty, but on their psychological and emotional fitness during this time as well. Responder Alliance is an organization committed to advancing the national conversation on stress injury formation and recovery in responders of all types. The link to their page below provides resources on responder stress resiliency. These resources include podcasts on radical ideas to change mental health, tips on handling coronavirus anxiety, and recordings with Laura McGladrey, founder of Responder Alliance.

An especially heartfelt thanks to all our dedicated volunteers for stepping up during a vulnerable time to help animals and people affected by this crisis. Please keep in mind that we, as first responders, need to consider our own physical and mental fitness as equally important to the critical mission that we perform.

Responder Alliance resources:

<https://www.responderalliance.com/responder-resources>

<https://www.responderalliance.com/covid-19-resources>

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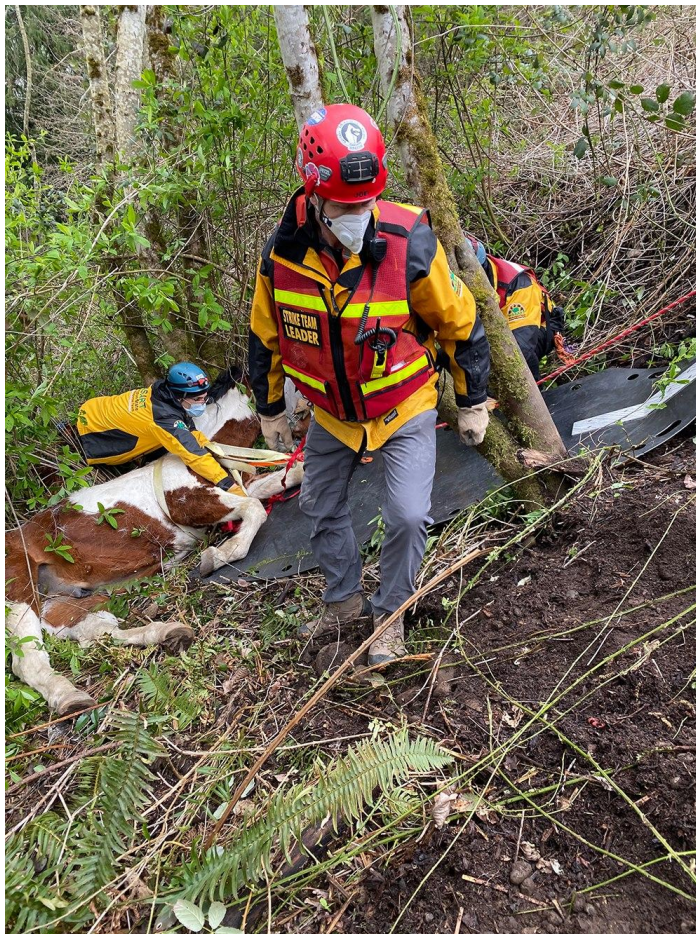
Les Schwab Hall
45224 284th Ave SE
Enumclaw, WA 98022

Encore Subject Stranded Down a Slope

Upcoming Events

August 22, 2021
Open House (free)
1300-1500
[King County Regional Communications & Emergency Coordination Center \(RCECC\)](#)
3511 NE 2nd Street
Renton, WA 98056
(in-person and virtual)

October 23, 2021
Annual Exercise (free)
0800-1800
[Enumclaw Expo Center](#)
Les Schwab Hall
45224 284th Ave SE
Enumclaw, WA 98022



Just as nice the second time -- Buster waited down a steep incline for us to rig his rescue from the same tree as his previous rescue.

Did you know we're often available to talk to your group about WASART or disaster prep?

Mission Statement

To help animals and their owners through disaster preparedness, education, and emergency response.

On April 3, 2020 at approximately 10:30 AM, WASART's messaging service received a call for assistance with a horse down a slope in Orting. The name sounded familiar and as the team assembled on site around noon, the location seemed familiar as well.

Buster evidently forgot [his lesson from three years earlier](#), the first time WASART's Technical Rescue team had to help him out. For the second time, this

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Buster's owner called WASART to report that Buster was slipping down a steep hill, back facing downhill and legs pointed uphill, and he was not able to right himself and the owners, who had a rope and halter on him, but were unsuccessful at stopping his gradual slide farther down the hill.

By the time WASART members arrived, Buster found himself 50' down the hill, stopped only by two trees. He was still recumbent, with his back against the trees and legs pointed uphill. Beyond the trees that stopped Buster, the slope grew steeper and it was a long way to the bottom. The hill was covered with blackberry bushes and trees and responders set to work on clearly a path for Buster's ride up the hill and removed Buster's blanket to permit rigging.

Aside from Buster's precarious position, this rescue would provide additional challenges for WASART members, as it was the first group response following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, with institution of new safety guidelines for all involved. It was the teams first experience with face masks and the fogging of safety glasses that came with them. It was the first experience with keeping physically distanced when possible, making for an interesting and educational day.

The team split: one to get Buster secured onto the rescue glide, one to set up a rigging system on top of the hill, and a third to clear brambles from an old roadbed partway up the hill. The plan was to cocoon Buster on the glide then pull it straight up the hill, passing across the roadbed. If that proved too difficult, the backup plan was to raise Buster up to the roadbed and use that as a less steep path to the top but that presented other challenges that made it the less favorable option.

An on-scene veterinarian lightly sedated Buster. The team fitted him with a head protector, webbing, and ropes and positioned and secured Buster on the glide. This proved a challenge given that this all took

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snapped the rigged pulley system to front of the glide, and the slow haul to the top began. Some adjustments had to be made along the way, but the team was able to haul the glide straight up the hill to level ground at the top, then along a grassy area to the middle of the yard.

Released from his restraints, and with some encouragement, he finally rolled to his hooves, no doubt happy to be safe and not much worse for the wear.

We haven't been called back for a third go-around, so the assumption is that old Buster now stays away from this hill, though if he needs us, we'll be back.

Read about Buster's first response with us on our webpage. <https://wasart.org/wasart-stories/buster-horse-tripod-lift/>

Read more about this response, including some of the technical details here:
<https://wasart.org/wasart-stories/buster-horse-down-a-slope/>

The Newsletter's Been on Hiatus But We Have Not

While the newsletter had a break, we've been busy and our adaption and resiliency skills have gotten a workout. Training is different now, and we are careful during responses, since the pandemic requires different safety procedures. We've had some challenging rescues and responses and we've had the support of both the state employees and local law enforcement we work with. See the 2020 Wrap Up below for more detail on our activities.

As vaccines get distributed, we are looking forward to seeing each other again to share a hug at training or an extra bottle of water on the trail. This has been a

trail, at training, and most of all, help the animals and their owners in emergencies.



Volunteer Michael C. brings a kid to safety.

2020 Wrap Up



Responders work on attaching equipment to Tango, a horse that had trouble standing.

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but that did not stop our four-legged family members getting into their usual difficult situations. We responded to 30 deployments during the year involving exhausted/injured dog pack-outs in the mountains, dogs trapped down ravines, ornery cow escapees, and horses needing assistance to get to their feet, and on one memorable night, some very young goats stuck on the side of a hill. While a number of these deployments were in King County, our assistance was also needed in Pierce, Snohomish, Lewis, and Whatcom counties. As in the past, we partnered with our Search & Rescue friends and Fire Department personnel on several of these rescues.

In total, our responders donated nearly 5,000 hours of their time and travelled nearly 35,000 miles to aid our animal friends. Quite a few of those hours and miles were from one of our very dedicated members who responded many times from her residence in Sequim, WA. The value of their donated hours, based on 2019 values from independentsector.org, was \$238,305. While the donated miles and hours are impressive, the satisfaction gained by the responders in rescuing these critters is priceless. More about one of our 2020 rescues, that of Buster the horse, is posted elsewhere in this newsletter.

On February 6, 2021, WASART celebrated its 14th anniversary after being co-founded by Gretchen McCallum and Greta Cook in Enumclaw, WA in 2007. It has morphed from an initial focus on providing trained volunteers to setup and operate temporary emergency sheltering for animals in emergencies, to becoming a unique organization providing technical animal rescue throughout Washington State. To date, WASART is the only nonprofit organization providing this service in Washington. WASART remains a 100% volunteer organization. We are proud of what we have accomplished in the past 14 years and we look forward to providing our services to our animal communities for many years to come.

water rescue whether it is because dogs are stranded on a sand bar in the middle of the river, or a horse is partially submerged in mud in a pond. These water-involved deployments require training that differs somewhat from that needed by WASART's other specialized team, the Technical Rescue Team (Rope). Our newly formed Technical Rescue Team (Water) has acquired sets of personal protective gear and other equipment. Monthly training has been instituted with advanced training tentatively scheduled for April 2021, and acquisition of a suitable boat, kayaks, trailers, etc., is being researched.

Adjusting to COVID-19



The pandemic has disrupted most of our lives: work, play, family ties, shopping...everything. WASART has had to make adjustments as well.

Some very fancy tap-dancing by an extraordinarily talented IT team of Michaela E., Leo N., Josette H, and Jennifer O'N, with assistance from other worker bees, was needed. It was necessary to transition our usual in-person annual fundraiser, *Raise the Hoof: Paws up for Animals*, to a virtual platform. On August 29, 2020, our loyal and supportive donors again came through for us with in-kind donations as well as item purchases. We raised nearly \$25,000 which will be

Rescue Teams.

In addition we've had to make other changes. Meetings are now done online and maintenance tasks are completed with as few people as possible. Trainings are done virtually, with in-person segments limited as much as possible. (More amazing work by both the training committee and IT team.) Despite the challenges, we continue to respond when animals are in trouble. Masks are always worn, and social distancing practiced.

From the Training Director

New Training Info and Precautions



While the pandemic restrictions brought a cessation of WASART's 2020 training program, the hard-working WASART Training Committee put the down time to good work by laboring to transition its typical in-person trainings involving animal handling, litter handling, etc., to virtual online presentations. Now, however, our training program is back in full swing for 2021 and we will offer in-person training as much as possible, depending on restrictions, with the option of going virtual if needed.

Our first training offering for 2021 is our in-person [Base & Operations Support Training](#) on Saturday, March 13th from 09:00 to 17:00 at Grateful

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member must pass several online segments as well as this one day, in-person training. The online training provides a better understanding of WASART's mission, goals, and requirements. The in-person segment offers a full day of fun learning and hands-on animal handling with dogs, horses, and other animals. The learning environment will provide you with a quick entry into the world of WASART and our goal of helping animals and their owners during emergency situations. The training will provide attendees with the basics needed to be helpful during a deployment and the opportunity to learn more about WASART and in which area within WASART you would like to participate.

Many of WASART's senior members and committee leaders will be on-site to educate folks on the basics of deploying on a rescue and the duties that you can participate in as you learn our rescue methods. Attendees will learn about how animals behave under stress, management protocols, and unpacking the required technical gear by preparing for a simulated deployment. You will get to learn about mechanical advantage, rigging, and rescuing animals in tough situations. There is a wide variety of duties during a deployment and you will learn best by deploying with us, but you need to pass Base & Operations first, so don't delay! [Register](#) now for our Base & Operations Support Training so you can help animals and their owners during times of emergency! See you at training!

Kimberly Taylor
Training Director

WASART NEWS is a publication of the Washington State Animal Response Team (WASART) published bi-monthly. WASART is an all-volunteer, 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization. Mail us at: WASART, P.O. Box 21, Enumclaw, WA 98022.

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