

2014 WASHINGTON STATE ANIMAL RESPONSE TEAM ANNUAL REPORT



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Mission

Helping Animals and Their Owners - through disaster preparedness, education, and emergency response

Integrity

We are above reproach in our commitments, and both morally and legally responsible for our actions and decisions.

Education

We are dedicated to sharing knowledge and technical expertise to inform and train members and the broader community.

Teamwork

We recognize the strengths in our team, priding ourselves on respectful collaboration with each other, and partner organizations.

Professionalism

We strive to demonstrate respect, credibility, honesty, accessibility and ethics in the delivery of everything we do.



Volunteerism

We have a personal commitment to participate to the level we can, and believe in our purpose as a service organization.

A Message from the President



Dear Supporters,

2014 was a remarkable year of growth for WASART. The year was filled as always with our extensive and intensive training programs, well attended by many new members. Our membership has continued to grow, with still more knowledgeable and experienced people finding challenge and reward in our animal rescue work. We were called out throughout the year for multiple dog rescues or searches for missing dogs in Whatcom and Snohomish Counties, and for a downed horse in King County, all of which were technically difficult. Our Technical Rescue Team (TRT) was challenged numerous times, and always performed in outstanding fashion. These deployments continued to solidify our working relationships with several Search and Rescue organizations, fire departments and law enforcement agencies.

We further enhanced our standing with emergency response authorities around the state when we were called out in July, first by the American Red Cross and then by Chelan and Okanogan Counties, to establish emergency animal shelters in both Chelan and Okanogan in response to the disastrous Carlton Complex Wildfires. A total of 32 different WASART members responded over a period of 12 days, expending nearly 2,600 hours and driving 13,000 miles. This was WASART's first emergency sheltering deployment in which we were the lead organization, and our first deployment in Eastern Washington. It was a very valuable experience with many lessons learned for the future.

Our work during the wildfires impressed more than just the authorities. As a result of our work, the Snoqualmie Tribe, Noah's Wish Foundation, Merrill Lynch, the Seattle Foundation and numerous individual donors gave us more than \$80,000 to enhance our capabilities and carry on our work. I'm still awed by this generosity, and we're working hard to use the donations well. We've used some of the money to acquire a badly needed third rescue vehicle, as well as a new, articulated horse manikin that will greatly facilitate our training for large animal rescue. These purchases will further enhance our status as perhaps the foremost animal rescue training organization in the region.

Finally, WASART continued to support national animal welfare organizations by sending a member team to a deployment across the country in response to a request from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). This represented the sixth time that WASART has deployed teams in response to an ASPCA request.

2015 has already presented several animal rescue challenges, and we know more will come. We'll continue to train to be ready, and welcome the opportunity to address them.

Bill Dugaard,
President

Year in Review

154

members

14% ▲

66,923

miles

16% ▲

10,214

hours

8% ▲

97

requests

for assistance



WASART purchased over

\$40,000

in critical equipment, including a new rescue vehicle, an articulated horse manikin for training, a generator, and set of new heavy duty rescue ropes.

The Carlton Complex Fire burned

256,108 acres

in Eastern Washington where
WASART established

2 emergency animal shelters

in Chelan and Okanogan Counties.



The Technical Rescue Team responded to one of our most technically challenging deployments to date atop a

275 foot waterfall

at Wallace Falls State Park Washington where a Black Labrador dog disappeared over the falls.



Deployments

We get dozens of calls for our Technical Rescue Team (TRT) to assist with animals over cliffs and stuck on ledges every year and 2014 was no different. But no matter how many times we deploy to these calls, each one brings its own challenges, both technical and emotional.

Fats - Wallace Falls, WA



In May, Fats, a Black Lab/Great Dane mix was out hiking with his owner when he disappeared from the trail near Wallace Falls in Gold Bar. One side of the trail had a cliff with a 275 foot drop and the dog presumably fell. WASART was originally called out that night to help the owner search for his dog, however, the Snohomish County Sheriff's SAR Office determined it was too dangerous to search in such a treacherous area for the dog who almost certainly did not survive the fall, and WASART stood down.

In the days following the disappearance, Facebook posts from the owner and other members of the public caused the event to go viral and there were as many as 40 members of the public on the trail at a given time, launching their own search efforts. Due to the increasing interest and ongoing safety concerns for the public, the Snohomish County Sheriff's Office redeployed WASART to conduct a technical area search to definitively prove that the dog was no longer near the scene of the original incident.

Teams rigged up and went over the cliff at three locations. Fats was not found, nor was the body of another dog who had gone over the cliff in the same location a month previous, but responders were able to establish Fats was not injured or stranded. Although this was not the happiest of outcomes for Fats' owner, he was thankful to know that his dog was not suffering in the elements.

While WASART does not generally do the search aspect of "search and rescue", this deployment was critical to public safety. Much of what WASART does is not only about putting forth effort to rescue "just a dog", but to also use our technical skills in a safe manner to serve humans who would put themselves at risk to save their animals.

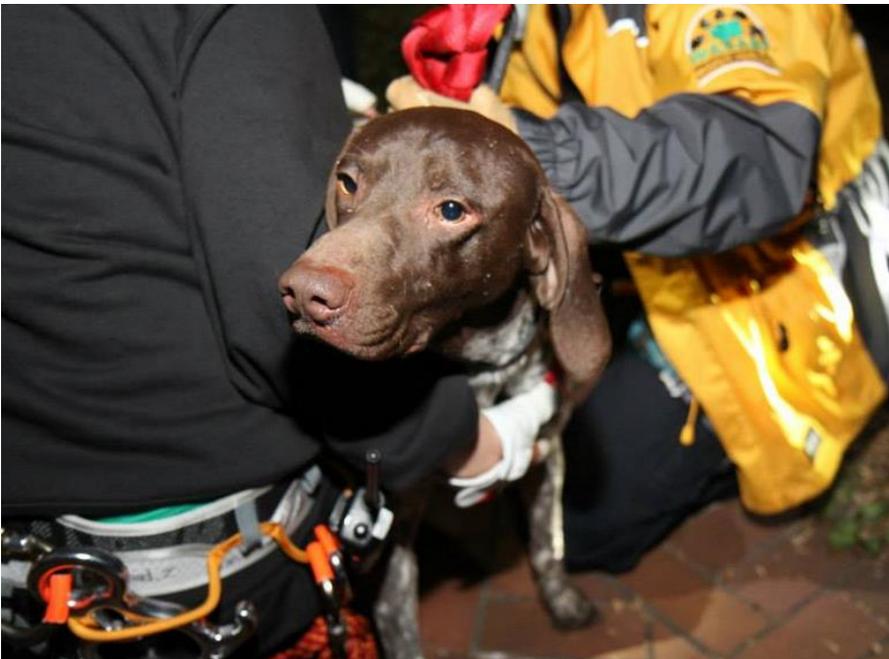


Emmett - Tulalip, WA



On a Friday morning in June, residents near the ocean bluff in Tulalip heard howls and barking. Throughout the day, residents were able to see that a dog was stuck on a ledge part way down a steep cliff. Realizing the dog was unable to self-rescue, a resident called 911 to report the issue. The Tulalip Fire Department and Marysville Fire Department's technical rescue team, and Snohomish County requested assistance from WASART.

When WASART arrived on the scene, the dog was 175-200 feet down the cliff face and the fire department was unable to reach him, as he was timid and extremely fearful. After some discussion, the fire department agreed to demobilize and allow WASART to re-rig a new system in a new location. The Tulalip Fire Department stayed on scene to help haul on the ropes. A WASART member of the Technical Rescue Team (TRT) who is also a veterinarian, rappelled down to the dog and after more than 20 minutes was able to gain his trust enough to muzzle and secure him to be raised. Once secured, Dr. Kelli and the dog made the ascent back up the cliff. He had some scrapes, and was unable to put full weight on his front paw but was otherwise uninjured. He was offered treats and water and was transported to the Everett Animal Shelter by Animal Control.



The dog we now know as Emmett was reunited with his owner, who saw pictures of his missing dog on the WASART Facebook page. Ironically, he'd been walking the neighborhood looking for Emmett, and although he noticed the fire trucks and commotion, he couldn't have imagined it was all related to his missing pet. Thanks to the multi-organizational and tightly collaborated effort, this was a happy ending indeed!



Azara - Whatcom County

Azara, a nine year old, Red Siberian Husky, had been missing almost a week in the rugged old growth area of Welcome Pass Trail in Whatcom County, after slipping out of her collar on a hike. After 6 days of searching the area, her owners, with the help of Marley the pitbull's barking, found Azara at the bottom of a ravine and trapped under a log in a pool of cold glacial water. They were able to free the non-ambulatory, weak and hypothermic husky, wrap her in an emergency blanket and drag her some distance but it became clear the terrain would make it impossible to get her back up on the trail.

That's when the owners called 911, resulting in the deployment of WASART and Summit to Sound Search and Rescue. After the long ascent, reaching Azara in the ravine at dark, rescuers improvised by putting the near lifeless dog in an empty backpack and hauling both her and the SAR rescuer to the trail. Transporting her into a soft litter to negotiate the switchbacks across and down the steep 3,000 foot descent, they arrived at base camp in the early morning hours. Azara was immediately transported to the emergency vet in Bellingham. Azara recovered from her hypothermic condition with some minor scrapes and eventually starting eating, drinking, and walking on her own. Her owners shared that, "Azara, is on strict orders from the vet to avoid wilderness areas."

Gemma - A Rescued Horse Pays It Forward



In May 2013, WASART responded to help rescue a Norwegian Fjord who had fallen seventy feet. WASART worked with a number of other agencies to retrieve Gemma over two long arduous days. The rescue was one of our most technically difficult, involving the rigging of a horse on a narrow ledge, the lifting of her to a steep incline, and then helping her up the embankment she'd fallen down.

This year, Gemma's owner decided to lend Gemma to the Alatheia Riding Center, a riding center that serves disabled people of all ages via equine therapy. The riding center favors Norwegian Fjords, citing their easy-going natures in helping their clients, who so far have ranged in age from 3 to 74 years old. Great job, Gemma!



Wildfires

With over 250,000 acres burned, 2014's Carlton Complex Fire was the biggest in Washington history. Over three hundred homes were burned, and many more families were displaced during the response. Many of these families had animals, and so WASART was asked to set up and operate a companion animal shelter aside the Red Cross Shelter in Chelan County. Our first guests escaped during evacuation and were later found running along the fire line. When their owner carried them in, they were suffering from smoke inhalation and covered in ash. After some quiet time in a cool room, and some cold water, they became the happy pups you see here outside the Chelan County Emergency Animal Shelter.



Nearby, Okanogan Country was being hit the hardest with new and growing fires and it was clear they would need assistance. As the effort in Chelan was going well, WASART made the decision to split the teams and send some volunteers to help set up a small and large animal shelter at the Okanogan Fair Grounds.



Altogether, the response for both Chelan and Okanogan Counties lasted from July 18-29. Volunteers worked 2,582.5 hours, and logged a total of 13,906 miles.



The environment at the Okanogan emergency animal shelter was hot and very smoky, but it was the high winds that won the battle with our Intake tent.

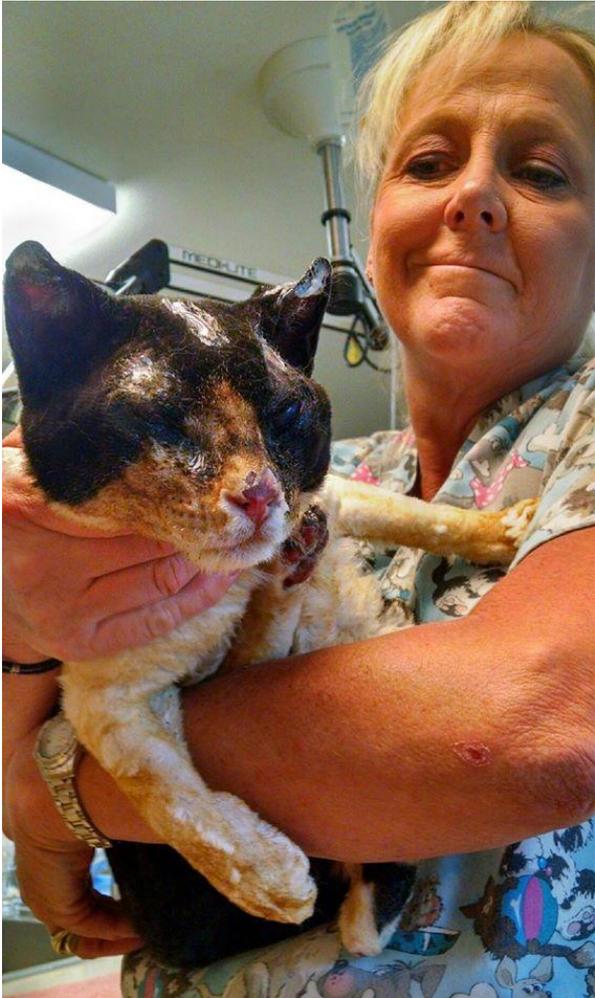


The National Guard offered their assistance with moving donations of hay at the Okanogan Fair Grounds. Here they take a break with some of our cutest residents.



What do you do with literally tons of donated hay? Keep it dry! Here, some of our dedicated volunteers brave the much needed rain.

The response in its entirety was challenging in that trained WASART members lived mostly on the west side of the mountains, and having people who could travel away from their families for days at a time was difficult. WASART's efforts were noticed in the form of donations and grants to help with the Carlton Complex Fire response, as well as future responses. To aid in the preparedness for future disasters, WASART will be traveling to Okanogan County in April of 2015 to provide free emergency animal sheltering training to animal welfare and county volunteers in the area for the upcoming fire season.



One of the notable stories to come out of the fires was that of Alta, a burned cat who was found by some concerned citizens near Alta Lake Golf Course. They brought the cat to the WASART emergency animal shelter in Chelan County. Incidentally, Dr. Shelton, a local vet from Lake Chelan Veterinary Hospital, had just stopped by the shelter WASART was running to offer his services to help any burned animals. When the finders brought the burned cat to the shelter, WASART called Dr. Shelton. The cat's owner was eventually found but she had lost her own home during the fire and couldn't care for the cat any more. She released the cat to the people who found her, who adopted her after a long stay at Dr. Shelton's Vet Clinic. She was named Alta, is doing very well and has her own Facebook page, Alta Kitty.



This was a truly amazing and heartbreaking deployment for WASART and our volunteers. It was the first opportunity for us to take the lead on establishing and running not one, but two emergency animal shelters. The outpouring of support from the communities in Eastern Washington was overwhelming, especially from those who had lost everything themselves. We are grateful and honored to have had the opportunity to help.

Training

A major part of what makes WASART unique among animal welfare organizations is our deep commitment to training our members to respond to animal emergency situations, both wide-scale disasters and individual animal emergencies. Whether for setting up and operating emergency animal shelters, rescuing animals in jeopardy from natural disasters, or trail-side falls, we emphasize hands-on training with live animals whenever possible, and bring the perspective of instructors who are experienced in a wide variety of emergency situations.



We offered over 10 various training sessions with over 100 attendees, from new members to partner organizations from as away as Canada and across the Pacific Northwest. Attendees were exposed to hours of animal handling techniques, technical rescue skills, emergency shelter setup and trailer operation. We also offered sessions to introduce members to the WASART Technical Rescue Team, radio communication, as well as the ins and outs of coordinating a deployment. We know that the more we can share our skills, the better off animals in peril can be saved. Plus we love to do it!

Significant Donors

In addition to hundreds of generous contributors who allow WASART to serve the animals of this community, 2014 graced us with some landmark donations in response to our Eastern Washington Wildfire response and ongoing rescue work.

THANK YOU

President Bill Dugaard meets with Elders of the **Snoqualmie Tribe** to accept their generous donation.

\$50,000



At the height of the WA wildfire response, **Noah's Wish** was one of our first large contributors.

\$15,000

In the cutest fundraising event in 2014, **Peyton, Alexia, Analise, Karson, & Marcella** sold lemonade to raise their gift.

\$103



The **Seattle Foundation** and the **Wildlife Support Charitable Trust** each gave generously to WASART.

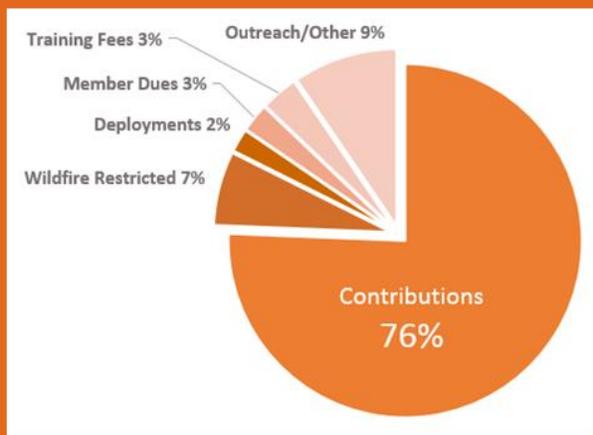
\$5,000

Special thanks to **Serious About Fitness** for their Resolution 2014 proceeds.

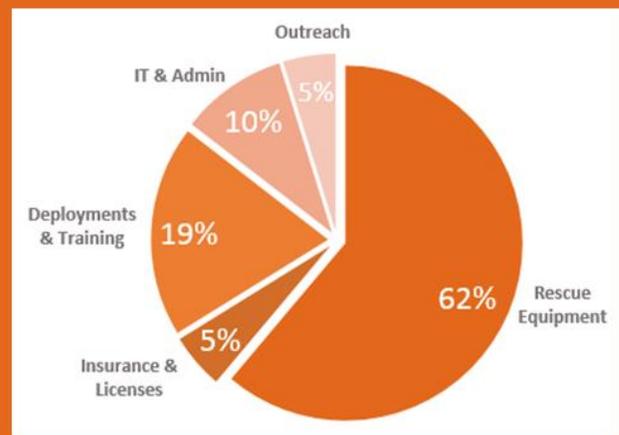
\$2,300

Financial and Donor Summary

		2014	2013	% Change
ASSETS	Current Assets	\$ 79,887.75	\$ 28,406.44	181%
	Fixed Assets	\$ 27,923.49	\$ 11,723.49	138%
	Total Assets	\$ 107,811.24	\$ 40,129.93	169%
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	Total Liabilities	\$ (1,253.90)	\$ (433.35)	-145%
	Total Equity	\$ 109,065.14	\$ 40,563.28	169%
	Total Liabilities & Equity	\$ 107,811.24	\$ 40,129.93	169%
TOTAL	Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 107,811.24	\$ 40,129.93	169%



Raised \$110,619



Spent \$29,453

85% Program Spend Ratio

Many of our significant contributions were received late in the year, and as such, respective spending will be included in the 2015 Annual Report.

Board of Directors

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