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Welcome to this issue of the Washington State Animal Response Team's monthly 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. [View this email in your browser](#)


[www.washingtonsart.org](http://www.washingtonsart.org)

Helping Animals &amp; Their Owners in Disasters

- [Disasters, Current and Future](#)
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- [2018 Training Dates](#)

## From The President

### Disasters, Current and Future



*Attendees of the NASAAEP Summit on animals in emergencies and disasters learned about various topics like the recent hurricane responses, barn fire prevention, and compassion fatigue.*

As the wildfires rage in California, we at WASART send our very best to the First Responders and all of those impacted by the devastation, including of course, the animals.

Our Public Information Officer Michaela Eaves and I just returned from the NASAAEP (National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs) conference in Mississippi. This was my first time at the conference, and I found it to be extremely beneficial with learning opportunities from fire safety, flood response, responder psychological first aid, infectious diseases, and so much more. Several times, I heard speakers talk about the importance of 'collaboration and cooperation' in emergency responses, and WASART is certainly a proponent of both of these. In many of the talks, it was evident that collaboration and cooperation were imperative to a successful, or at the very least, a less stressful, outcome. One thing that I especially appreciated was the openness that all of us are still learning valuable lessons and making improvements at almost every response, and are willing to share those with other responders.

As someone who celebrates Winter Solstice, I find peace and hope this time of year. Even with all the challenges facing us, my wish for you and yours is that peace

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

**March 14, 2018**

[King County Office of Emergency Management](#)

3511 NE 2nd Street  
Renton, WA 98056

**June 13, 2018**

[Shoreline Fire Department](#)

17525 Aurora Avenue N  
Shoreline, WA 98133

**September 12, 2018**

Location TBD

**December 12, 2018**

[King County Office of Emergency Management](#)

3511 NE 2nd Street  
Renton, WA 98056

The General Meetings are held from **7 p.m. - 9 p.m.** The first hour is spent on WASART business and the final hour is a mini-training or discussion session on a subject of interest to members. And, of course, some social time, too. All General Meetings are open to the public and everyone is invited to attend.

### Upcoming training

Register at  
<http://bit.ly/WASART2017>

**February 10, 2018**

**Open House (free)**

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Location TBD

**March 3, 2018**

**Base Support (f/k/a Fundamentals)**

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location TBD

**March 4, 2018**

**Operations Support (f/k/a Animal Handling & Assessment)**

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location TBD

**April 7, 2018**

**Emergency Animal Sheltering**

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Location TBD

**May 19, 2018**

**Technical Support (f/k/a Technical Animal Rescue - Awareness)**

Location TBD

**June 2, 2018**

**Transport**

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Enumclaw Expo Center  
45224 284th Avenue SE  
Enumclaw, WA 98022

**August 26, 2018**

**Open House (repeat)**

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Location TBD

**September 15, 2018**

**Base Support (f/k/a Fundamentals) (repeat)**

9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

and hope find their way to you.

In peace,

*Shawndra Michell*

President

### Skagit River Flood Endangers 14 Equines



*Fred K. of Summit to Sound SAR/WASART opens a gate to check on horses at a flooded property.*

As many of us sat comfortably enjoying Thanksgiving with friends and family, WASART received a call that multiple horses were trapped in flooding pastures in Skagit County and were in danger of drowning. Because of the dangers inherent in water rescues, we knew we needed expertise for which we were not yet trained. (Six inches of water can sweep someone away. It takes only 18 inches to carry a car away.) We called on Whatcom County's water team from Summit to Sound Search and Rescue, who are always incredibly gracious with their time and resources. We love working with STS – they are great people, very experienced, and a number of their swift water technicians and boat operators are horse people as well as members of WASART. This deployment evolved into a multi-day rescue that involved many WASART and STS members, as well as anxious friends, neighbors, and family members.

On the first evening, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, WASART arrived in Mt. Vernon to begin evaluating the situation. In response to our request for assistance, STS arrived shortly

Location TBD

**September 16, 2018**  
**Operations Support (f/k/a**  
**Animal Handling &**  
**Assessment) (repeat)**  
9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.  
Location TBD

**October 20, 2018**  
**Annual Exercise (free)**  
9:00 a.m. 5:00 p.m.  
Enumclaw Expo Center  
45224 284th Avenue SE  
Enumclaw, WA 98022

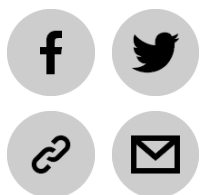
**Outreach Events**

No registration required.  
Stop by and say hello!

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.



thereafter, bringing three boats and nine responders. On site as well were a number of concerned neighbors, along with a couple who brought their own boat. The number of equines involved was unclear, but it was finally determined to be 14, several of which were stallions. This complicated the rescue, as stallions can be difficult to handle.

Thanksgiving night was dark, and floodwaters lapped at our feet as we stood on the road. There were some lights in the distance, and the sheen of water in between. Water rescue is already dangerous in the best of conditions, and this rescue was compounded by additional hazards. Fertilizer, petroleum, and waste contaminated the water, and road signs, downed electrical wires, and barbed-wire fences beneath the surface compounded the risks. In addition, debris in the water was carried by a healthy current.

After safety, our main task as rescuers is to not make the situation worse. We discussed swimming the horses out if necessary, but it would not be the optimal solution. There was a large chance of getting a boat or horse caught on barbed wire, and the path out was long which would be a risky swim for a cold, hungry, and exhausted horse.

We decided to send operators in boats to evaluate the situation. The boaters navigated by following lines of power poles toward distant lights. As they scouted the area, operators heard the sound of an exaggerated current. They couldn't see the source, but it was a red flag for the rescuers. They did not feel it was safe to continue in the dark.

After their return to base, additional options were discussed. The floodwaters were expected to crest the following day, and begin receding. It was decided that the best option was to return the next morning under daylight conditions, though there was a possibility that STS would be deployed elsewhere, leaving WASART on its own.

The next day, November 24<sup>th</sup>, was a clear day with little rain. Before WASART deployed, we had a knowledgeable local contact assess the scene. Based on her report, we felt we should respond to provide what help we could. We again requested the assistance of STS, and they deployed with a number of responders and boats. WASART's Task Force Lead for the day brought experience in both military and civilian water rescue operations. Two operators with drones were also available.

Using data relayed by the drones, the boats checked locations where the horses were stranded. Rescuers were able to move the horses to higher ground and provide them with feed. The water level had decreased to fetlock-deep by that point. It is not ideal to have horses standing in water of any depth, but our risk assessment suggested it would be safest to shelter them there rather than try to move them farther. Since the water level was receding rapidly by this point, we felt this was the best solution, and the safest for the horses and people involved.

WASART and STS members eventually departed the scene, confident that the horses were safe and receiving care, and that no lives had been lost to the flooding. We had an extraordinary number of offers from the community: boats, horse trailers, places for the horses to stay, and helping hands. This is the core of what makes the volunteer

work we do amazing. Whenever the situation is dire and people and their animals are in danger, the community pulls together with care and concern. We can't imagine what it means to the people in need of assistance, and we can't tell you how grateful we are for the experience.

Here's video from the drone. It shows the water levels, and 30-seconds in shows the water feature that made the current sound hazardous the first night.

video. <https://www.facebook.com/austin.breckenridgewsu/videos/10155232311207756/>

KIRO's live feed from a helicopter – most of this is from the operation on Friday. The people in red jackets are from Summit to Sound Search and Rescue's Water Rescue Team.

<https://www.facebook.com/KIRO7Seattle/videos/1859449174074827/> (Link may not work on mobile.)

***About the other organizations involved:***

Thank you to the Skagit County Sheriff's Department for trusting us to conduct this operation.

Summit to Sound Search and Rescue is Whatcom County's search and rescue team. Like us, they are an all-volunteer nonprofit and depend on donations to continue. They drove quite a ways, twice, hauling multiple boats and could certainly use help with gas if nothing else. If this story or service is important to you, you may donate to them

here: <http://www.summittosound.org/>

Follow STS on their Facebook page

here: <https://www.facebook.com/SummitToSoundSearchRescue/>

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**Summit Promotes Disaster Prep Networking**



*Left to right, Dr. Kathleen Becker (Häst LARge Animal Rescue Equipment), Michaela Eaves (WASART), Jim Danner (Larrco) say goodbyes at the end of the NASAAEP Summit in Gulfport, MS.*

WASART sent two members to Gulfport, MS, to attend the [National Alliance of State](#)

[Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs \(NASAAEP\) Summit](#), a conference on managing animals during disasters.

The conference, which took place from Dec 5-7, was attended by people who are not only experts in the field of handling animals during disaster response but work in the field as well. There were a number of veterinarians and scientists and most attendees worked for governmental organizations such as the USDA and the Department of Agriculture, including our own fantastic Washington State Department of Ag personnel. Also in attendance were some national nonprofits such as the [American Humane and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals \(ASPCA\)](#), who was also a sponsor of the event.

Presentations included subjects such as responses to this year's devastating hurricanes, sheltering large animals in unprepared jurisdictions, preventing barn fires, and compassion fatigue. We were especially interested in Dr. Dick Green's presentation about the [ASPCA's continuing response](#) to the aftermath Hurricane Maria left on the island of St. Croix.

We noticed a great example of cooperation and teamwork in seeing the close relationship states in the Southeast have with each other. They've worked together so often that when one or more of their number is affected by a hurricane, they know they can count on their neighbors to help with disaster management challenges.

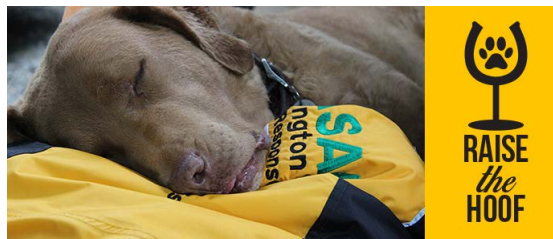
The highlight of our time in Gulfport was seeing people we interact with that are vital to the progress in safety and response we make as a team. The first, Dr. Rebecca Gimenez of [TLAER](#), is an educator and someone we've taken large animal emergency response classes from. We've learned a lot from Dr. Gimenez and were pleased to be able to catch up with her.

The second people we were excited to see were Jim Danner of [Larrco](#) and [Dr. Kathleen Becker](#). Larrco manufactures some of the equipment we use, and represents a majority of the other manufacturers we purchase from, including Dr. Becker. Meeting Dr. Becker was especially exciting for us, since she's the designer and manufacturer of some of our most important equipment including our bipod/tripod and the Becker sling, which we use to rig and attach a large animal to the bipod/tripod for lifting or securing for movement in some other way. Dr. Becker is both a veterinarian and an engineer and is constantly working on great new equipment to save lives and keep rescuers safe.

It was a great event, attended by people who truly want the best for animals in any situation and we feel fortunate to have had the opportunity to attend.

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**Raise the Hoof Fundraiser March 24, 2018**



**March 24, 2018**

The Washington State Animal Response Team cordially invites you to our very first annual fundraiser, Raise the Hoof, celebrating past and future rescues. We have a fun afternoon planned and hope you can make it!

- Wine and catered vegetarian appetizers
- 50/50 Raffle
- Auction of experiences and items
- Wine pull
- Guest speaker Julie Anderson
- In beautiful Titlow Park

[Titlow Lodge](#)

8425 6th Ave  
Tacoma, WA 98465  
4 pm-7 pm • \$45

Questions? [event@washingtonsart.org](mailto:event@washingtonsart.org)

\$40 before March 7, 2018

\$45 after March 7, 2018

\$50 at the door

Buy tickets here:

<https://raisethehoof2018.brownpapertickets.com/>

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## 2018 Training Dates



Some of our classes have changed names to better reflect what their function is. If you previously took Core, Animal Handling & Assessment, and Technical Animal Rescue, you do not need to take the newly named Base Support, Operations Support, and Technical Support.

**Technical Rescue** – Monthly, contact the [Technical Rescue Chair](#) for info.

**February 10, 2018 • Open House (free)**

1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., Location TBD

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9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Location TBD

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45224 284th Avenue SE  
Enumclaw, WA 98022

**Register:**

<http://bit.ly/WASART2018>

P.S. We have exemptions for veterinarians and search and rescue members. Check with the [Training Director](#) for details.

WASART NEWS is a publication of the Washington State Animal Response Team (WASART) published on or about the 15th of each month. 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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