
WASHINGTON STATE
COMPANION ANIMAL
LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS
2014

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PURPOSE

Hans and Cindy Koch have engaged the author, a philanthropic advisor, to produce this landscape analysis focusing on the status of companion animals, shelters and/or rescue organizations in Washington State counties. The Kochs' ultimate goal is for Washington to become a No-Kill state for healthy and treatable animals as defined by the Asilomar Accords¹ — meaning animals in area shelters and rescues are not euthanized because of space if they are healthy or have treatable medical or behavioral conditions. To aid in moving toward this goal, this document includes an analysis of existing regional animal welfare conditions, current gaps in services, and potential solutions to address those gaps and to decrease the number of euthanasias in Washington.

This document provides an executive summary, detailed findings and proposed recommendations for the Kochs' and potential funders' further engagement. It will help readers understand the distinct challenges regional animal welfare agencies face, as well as some of the efforts being undertaken by local organizations to improve the landscape.

¹ Asilomar Accords: <http://www.asilomaraccords.org/definitions.html>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inspired by the efforts of Best Friends Animal Society and Maddie’s Fund to create a No-Kill nation, the Kochs underwrote research to examine the issues contributing to the high number of companion animals euthanized annually in Washington and identify strategies to reduce this number. (2012 data placed the number at approximately 21,000;² however, animal welfare industry experts agree the number is likely closer to 30,000 since data reporting and collection is inconsistent across regions.) The Kochs are committed to playing a role in preventing healthy and treatable animals from being euthanized and, to that end, have identified the following strategies that support their overarching mission:

ACCESSIBLE LOW-COST SPAY/NEUTER SERVICES

Lack of access to low-cost spay/neuter services in urban centers and rural communities contributes to the overpopulation of dogs and cats, increased shelter intake numbers, and the subsequent euthanasia of healthy and treatable animals. Shelter intake reduction strategies are paramount to decreasing the number of animals euthanized annually, and low-cost spay/neuter programs for owned and shelter animals as well as feral, aka community cats, are an integral part of the equation.

SPAY/NEUTER MOBILE UNITS AND TRANSPORT PROGRAMS

Many underserved rural communities faced with poverty and geographic isolation lack both physical and economic access to low-cost spay/neuter services and veterinary care. Spay/neuter mobile units and transport programs bridge the gap in providing services to residents of underserved, rural communities and their pets. Several transport programs (detailed within the Findings section) have demonstrated that when a mobile or transport service is available, pet owners will utilize it.

² Washington Federation of Animal Care and Control Agencies: 2012 Animal Population Survey

ANIMAL RELOCATION AND TRANSPORT PROGRAMS

Animal relocation and transport programs focus on saving lives by transporting animals from shelters/rescues with too many animals and too few adopters—often in geographically isolated areas with limited resources and higher euthanasia rates—to shelters/rescues with space for additional animals and larger adopter pools. These programs have reciprocal benefits for the sending and receiving agencies and also provide potential adopters a wider variety of pets to choose from.

DATA COLLECTION

As animal welfare agencies, coalitions and communities move toward a No-Kill environment for healthy and treatable animals, the lack of consistent, accurate and transparent data impedes the ability to identify at-risk target populations and develop programs that will effectively solve the problems. Animal welfare industry leaders agree that data collection must move to the forefront so statistical information can drive effective solutions.

CREATION OF A STATEWIDE ANIMAL INVENTORY DATABASE

Although numerous animal welfare agencies participate in relocation and transport programs, comprehensive statewide communication is lacking between the approximately 150 agencies in Washington. Using the ASPCA's Moving Animals Places (MAP) program as an example of a database solution, the creation of a statewide animal inventory database would allow shelters to identify the location of surplus animals as well as shelters/rescues that need animals and could receive them. Technology experts and database administrators are required to execute this strategy.

CREATION OF A CENTRALIZED HOLDING FACILITY FOR ANIMAL TRANSPORT

To assist in the transfer and relocation of animals throughout the state, a centralized holding facility located in central or south central Washington could serve as an invaluable resource. Utilizing data from the statewide animal inventory database, sending and receiving shelters could transfer animals to such a holding facility where dedicated shelter staff could temporarily care for animals while they await transport to the receiving agency.

EVALUATION OF PUBLIC POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Washington State laws, in conjunction with appropriate city and county ordinances, lay the foundation for animal protection and services within the state. Field research revealed wide variances in city and county ordinances, legislation, funding and services. For example, breed-specific legislation (BSL) for pit bull type dogs and the lack of trap/neuter/release (TNR) ordinances for free-roaming/community cats contribute to the euthanasia of healthy and treatable animals. (Breed-specific legislation (BSL) is the blanket term for laws that either regulate or ban certain breeds of dogs in the hopes of reducing dog attacks³. TNR is a management technique whereby free-roaming cats are humanely trapped, sterilized by a licensed vet, vaccinated against rabies, and returned to their original habitat.⁴) In order to move towards a No-Kill state, the thorough review and ongoing monitoring of city, county and state public policy and legislation is required.

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS AND HUMANE EDUCATION

Raising public awareness about the importance of spaying and neutering companion animals and community cats, and elevating the public's perception of animal shelters and pets, will play significant roles in reducing animal overpopulation, increasing shelter adoptions, and decreasing euthanasia of healthy and treatable animals. Humane education—teaching adults and children the importance of compassionate care for animals—also plays a vital role in improving the condition of companion animals both in the immediate and long-term.

³ ASPCA: <https://www.asPCA.org/fight-cruelty/dog-fighting/breed-specific-legislation>

⁴ Best Friends Animal Society: BF Cat Initiatives FAQs

FINDINGS

In order to assess the condition of companion animals in Washington, the Kochs underwrote and participated in interviews with and/or traveled to 49 animal welfare agencies in 18 of Washington's 39 counties, including two animal welfare agencies in Oregon. (See Appendix A for table showing animal welfare agencies by county and region.) This field research, along with guidance from well-respected local and national animal welfare shelter administrators and leaders, data from the Washington Federation of Animal Care and Control Agencies' 2012 Animal Population Survey (hereinafter referred to as the Animal Population Survey), and agency-specific data laid the foundation for the statewide findings identified in this report.

The Animal Population Survey provides information on trends in the animal shelter system in Washington State. The survey includes 53 responses from animal welfare agencies representing 24 counties in the state, and survey results can be used to determine trends within geographic locations.⁵ Although leaders in the animal welfare industry agree that data collection, reporting and analysis are essential to addressing the euthanasia of shelter animals⁶ a lack of comprehensive and consistent data collection and reporting currently exists. For purposes of this analysis, survey data is referenced when a significant number of agencies in a geographic region reported data.

This report also refers to live release rates and euthanasia rates. Rates are calculated using data from a specific agency or the Animal Population Survey. The sources are referenced with footnotes. Live release rates incorporate a formula that calculates the percentage of animals that leave shelter facilities alive through adoption, return-to-owner, or transfer to another agency.⁷ Referenced

⁵ Washington Federation of Animal Care and Control Agencies: 2012 Animal Population Survey

⁶ National Council on Pet Population Study and Policy, Statement on Keeping Statistics
<http://petpopulation.org/keeping.htm>

⁷ ASPCA Professional: <http://www.aspcapro.org/live-release-rate-and-animals-risk>

euthanasia rates represent total euthanasias, as data has not been differentiated by Asilomar definitions—meaning all euthanized animals (healthy, treatable, manageable, unhealthy and untreatable) are included in the statistics.

WASHINGTON STATE SUMMARY BY REGION

The Washington State Summary by Region section of this report outlines the observations, findings and conclusions reached during our year-long research and investigative field trips. This section illuminates the condition of companion animals in 8 of the 10 regions of Washington, identifies those regions/counties in need of resources, and offers solutions to fill the existing gaps.

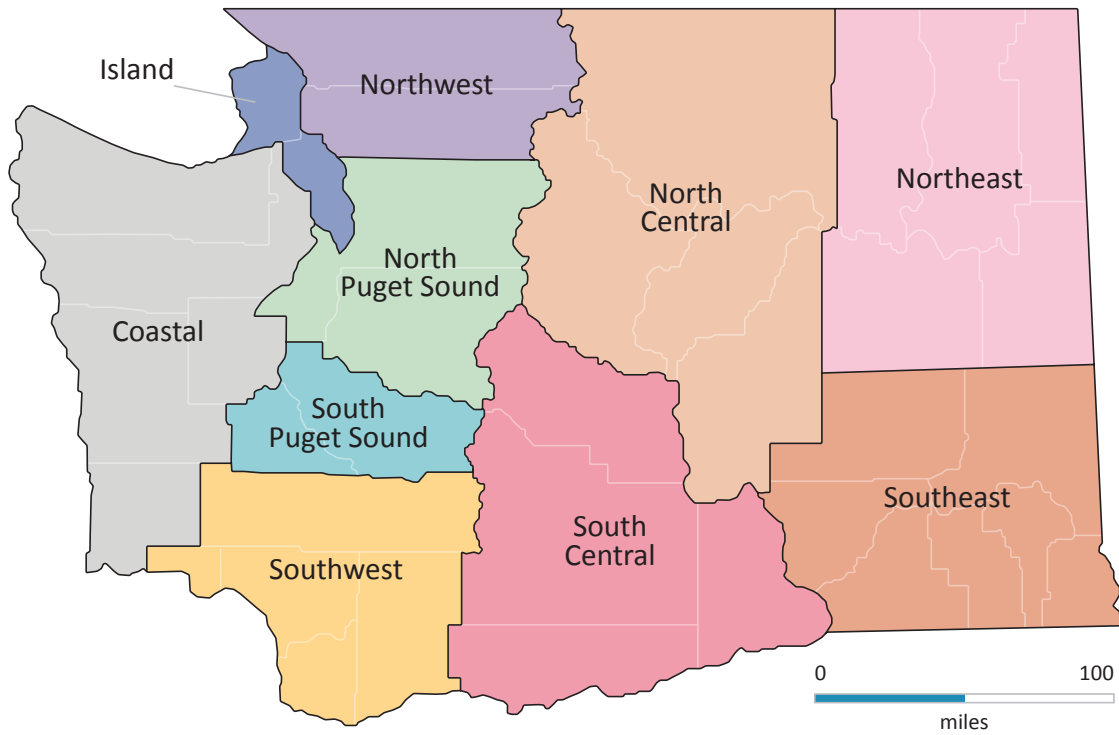
Washington State, with an area of 71,362 sq miles, has a varied landscape both literally and figuratively. The Cascade Mountain Range creates a geographic separation between urban and rural communities as well as a political, cultural and social divides. Differing mindsets east and west of the mountains are reflected in the prevailing attitudes toward companion animals and the resources available to assist pet owners and communities at large.

60% of Washington state residents reside in the Seattle Metropolitan area, which represents only 8% of the state's geographic footprint.⁸ Within the state, there are large, geographically isolated areas of land with small populations, limited resources and above-average percentages of the population living below the poverty line. As a result, companion animal services and resources in these areas are minimal if not non-existent.

⁸ Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_\(state\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washington_(state))

The map below is included to assist with identifying the regions referenced in this report.⁹

Note: We toured 8 of the 10 regions excluding the Island and Northwest Regions.



⁹ Access Washington: Washington Maps: <http://access.wa.gov/topics/visiting/maps>

COASTAL REGION

The Coastal Region is made up of five counties: Clallam, Jefferson, Mason, Grays Harbor and Pacific.

Field research included visits to Clallam, Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties and meetings and/or tours with representatives of 13 animal welfare agencies: Aberdeen Animal Control, Friends of Forks Animals, Grays Harbor County Animal Control, Grays Harbor Spay/Neuter Project, Harbor Association of Volunteers for Animals (HAVA), Harbor Rescue, North Beach PAWS, Ocean Shores Animal Control, Olympic Peninsula Humane Society, PAWS of Grays Harbor, Peninsula Friends of Animals, Spay to Save, and Welfare for Animals Guild (WAG).

The Coastal Region is comprised of small cities, rural areas and Native American tribal lands. Four of the five counties are economically distressed.¹⁰ The most populated counties (Grays Harbor and Clallam) have 19.4% and 17.5% of people living below the poverty line¹¹ respectively and city and county resources are at a minimum. As a result, small rescues and shelters dot this region, indicative of attempts to address the needs of animals and pet owners within their communities—specifically, the lack of accessible, low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary services and the proliferation of community cats. The majority of regional shelters/rescues take in less than 500 animals per year with the exception of the Olympic Peninsula Humane Society, which took in 1,612 animals in 2014.¹²

Considerable efforts are being made by local shelters and rescues to offer periodic spay/neuter clinics, subsidize spay/neuter voucher programs, participate in trap/neuter/release (TNR) efforts for free-roaming/community cats, and offer transports to Olympia or Tacoma where low-cost services are consistently available. Peninsula Friends of Animals in Clallam County is a leader in low-cost

¹⁰ Employment Security Department: <https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports>

¹¹ United States Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/interactive/>

¹² Olympic Peninsula Humane Society: 2014 Statistics

spay/neuter efforts for owned animals and community cats and has underwritten the costs of sterilizing approximately 7,000 animals in the last 10 years. In spite of the admirable grassroots efforts taking place, the community continues to be faced with minimal—if any—access to consistent low-cost spay/neuter services. As a result, the region faces overpopulation, especially of community and stray cats.

COASTAL REGION SUMMARY

Access to consistent, low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary services is paramount for this area. Mobile units should be considered for geographically isolated areas and residents of Native American tribal lands, but are not necessarily a substitute for establishing permanent, accessible veterinary care. Spay and neuter strategies should include an emphasis on TNR programs and, if using a mobile unit, take into account space restrictions and how that impacts the ability to alter large dogs and pregnant animals. Additionally, relocation and transport programs are integral to addressing the proliferation of cats in this area.

Continued efforts should be made to work with tribal land representatives to promote and provide low-cost or free veterinary services to residents. Currently, The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association-Rural Area Veterinary Services (HSVMA-RAVS) provides free veterinary services on an annual basis to residents of the Quinault Indian Reservation in Grays Harbor County. Spay to Save, a mobile unit providing low-cost spay/neuter, vaccine and microchip services, operates in Clallam County with monthly clinics at the Makah Indian Reservation. Additional targeted and consistent low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary services, in conjunction with the periodic efforts noted above, are required to reduce the euthanasia rates of healthy and treatable animals in this region.

NORTH PUGET SOUND REGION

The North Puget Sound Region is made of up three counties: Snohomish, King and Kitsap.

Field research included visits to Snohomish and King Counties and phone interviews, meetings and/or tours of eight animal welfare agencies: Everett Animal Services, Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Project, Homeward Pet Adoption Center, Pasado's Safe Haven, Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), Regional Animal Services King County (RASKC), Seattle Humane Society, and The N.O.A.H. Center.

Primarily a metropolitan area, the North Puget Sound Region contains sizable resources for low-cost spay/neuter services and animal transport programs, as well as a demonstrated commitment to cooperation between animal welfare agencies. Anchor organizations such as Seattle Humane Society, Regional Animal Services King County (RASKC), Seattle Animal Shelter, Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), Everett Animal Services and The N.O.A.H. Center play a critical role in ensuring that healthy and treatable animals leave the shelter system and are adopted.

Organizations responding to the Animal Population Survey revealed that over 38,000 animals were received in the region with live release rates of 93.9% for King County, 94.3% for Kitsap, and 89.6% for Snohomish.¹³ These rates exemplify the work being accomplished by regional organizations—not only in the ability to adopt out animals, but also to act as resources for the smaller organizations east of the mountains that have been able to transfer animals to the region. Survey data also reflect that over 28,000 low-cost or free spay/neuter surgeries were performed by regional animal welfare organizations including Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Project and Pasado's Safe Haven. In spite of this, opportunities exist to improve euthanasia rates for cats (community and stray) and pit bull type dogs, given the breed-specific legislation (BSL) in the cities of Everett, SeaTac and Enumclaw.

¹³ Washington Federation of Animal Care and Control Agencies: 2012 Animal Population Survey

The North Puget Sound Region also includes several Native American tribal lands. Research and field trips to other regions with tribal lands (specifically Clallam, Yakima, Okanogan and Stevens Counties) revealed a consistent lack of access to low-cost veterinary services for tribal members and their pets, and increased rates of parvo on the reservations. Based on these observations, it may be surmised that tribal members and their pets in the North Puget Sound Region face similar issues. Research should be undertaken to factually determine the condition of companion animals on North Puget Sound Region tribal lands for a comprehensive understanding of animal welfare issues in the area.

NORTH PUGET SOUND REGION SUMMARY

Interviews with animal welfare agency leaders and data from the Animal Population Survey reveal a robust animal welfare community with high live-release rates, a collaborative mindset, accessible low-income spay/neuter services, and significant transport/relocation programs. However, continued efforts should be made to implement TNR programs for areas with significant community cat populations, and critical thought should be given to how BSL in three cities impacts pit bull type dogs in this region.

Additionally, the implementation of programs providing accessible low-cost veterinary care for underserved communities may benefit animals and pet owners on Native American tribal lands. Programs such as The Humane Society's Pets for Life (PFL) and the HSVMA-RAVS program not only close service gaps by providing access to veterinary care, but incorporate an educational component by engaging the community in the care of their animals and, in the case of PFL, training and mentoring other animal welfare organizations within the area to provide similar services.

SOUTH PUGET SOUND REGION

The South Puget Sound Region is made up of two counties: Pierce and Thurston.

Field research included a visit to Pierce County with tours of the Humane Society Tacoma & Pierce County, Northwest Spay & Neuter Center and Pasado's Pierce County Spay Station.

The South Puget Sound Region has a population of about 1 million people and is home to Tacoma, the second largest city in the Puget Sound area and the third largest in the state.¹⁴ High population density is reflected in the number of animals received by the Humane Society Tacoma & Pierce County, the state's largest animal welfare agency. Over 10,800 animals were received in 2014.¹⁵

Similar to the North Puget Sound Region, Pierce County boasts a spirit of cooperation between agencies and a considerable amount of resources for accessible low-cost spay/neuter services through organizations like Northwest Spay & Neuter Center, Pasado's Pierce County Spay Station (providing free sterilization services), the Cinderella Fund, and the Humane Society of the United States' Pets for Life¹⁶ program, to name a few. Northwest Spay & Neuter Center, a leader in spay/neuter services for this area, performed 13,744 surgeries in 2014 and, utilizing its transport program, picked up and returned animals from seven other counties to be altered at their Tacoma facility. Strategic and targeted group efforts have contributed to a decrease in Pierce County animal overpopulation, and live release rates for Humane Society Tacoma & Pierce County have improved from 49% in 2009 to 80% in 2014¹⁷.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in the South Puget Sound Region, especially in outlying Pierce and Thurston Counties. The area contends with community and free roaming cat

¹⁴ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacoma,_Washington

¹⁵ Humane Society Tacoma & Pierce County: 2014 Statistics

¹⁶ Humane Society of the United States: <http://www.humanesociety.org/about/departments/pets-for-life/>

¹⁷ Humane Society Tacoma & Pierce County: 2014 Statistics

overpopulation and euthanasia as well as extended lengths of stay for pit bull type dogs in the shelter system. Breed specific legislation (BSL) for pit bull type dogs in Auburn and a ban on pit bulls in Buckley (both in Pierce County) contributes to a shelter's placement challenges when attempting to adopt out these types of animals.

SOUTH PUGET SOUND REGION SUMMARY

Continued efforts should be made to promote and provide accessible low-cost spay/neuter services to the general public as well as targeted TNR efforts to address the overpopulation of community cats. Similar to the North Puget Sound, serious consideration should be given to how BSL in Auburn and Buckley may contribute to the euthanasia of healthy and treatable pit bull type dogs. Transport and placement programs should be considered to increase a dog's chances for adoption, while BSL is in effect.

SOUTHWEST REGION

The Southwest Region is made up of four counties: Clark, Lewis, Cowlitz and Skamania.

Field research included a visit to Clark County and a tour of the Humane Society for Southwest Washington (HSSW). Information below pertains primarily to Clark County and HSSW.

Clark County is an anomaly in this region as it is significantly larger in human population than other nearby counties. It is adjacent to a metropolitan area and has a lower percentage of people living below the poverty level (12.5%) compared to Lewis County (19%) and Cowlitz County (16%).¹⁸ Clark County has a progressive mindset regarding animal welfare with an active volunteer rescue community and a County-commissioned Animal Advisory Board responsible for making recommendations to the County regarding the animal control program and code updates. HSSW serves Clark and Skamania Counties and is the largest animal welfare organization in the region, caring for over 6,000 animals in 2014.¹⁹

Due to HSSW's proximity to the Portland Metro area, the shelter is part of the Animal Shelter Alliance of Portland (ASAP), a coalition of Portland/Vancouver-area animal shelters and organizations (including veterinary medical associations) working to end the euthanasia of healthy, treatable animals in local shelters. Although HSSW's current transport/relocation partners are located primarily in the Portland Metro area and in California, efforts are underway to expand partnerships to shelters in South Central Washington.

HSSW has had a significant improvement in its live release rate from 40% in 2006 to nearly 88% in 2014,²⁰ and the organization's live release rate for dogs (93%) is indicative of its placement efforts. The problem in Clark County, as with so many others across the state, is overpopulation and high

¹⁸ United States Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov/did/www/saige/data/interactive/>

¹⁹ Humane Society for Southwest Washington: Overview and Assessment

²⁰ Humane Society for Southwest Washington: Overview and Assessment

euthanasia rates for cats, the community's lack of receptiveness to TNR programs, and the lack of financial resources to implement this strategy.

SOUTHWEST REGION SUMMARY

HSSW's placement, spay/neuter and transport efforts, in conjunction with those of volunteer rescue groups, have led to substantial improvements for animals and their owners in Clark County, with community cats as outliers. Public awareness campaigns about the importance of TNR are vital to building consensus within the community and with elected officials. Best Friends Animal Society's Cat Initiatives program may provide some valuable information in this regard.

For a comprehensive understanding of the Southwest Region, additional research should be conducted to ascertain the condition of animal welfare in Lewis and Cowlitz Counties and to determine the accessibility, if any, for low-cost spay/neuter services and the number and types of animal welfare agencies servicing these counties.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION

The North Central Region generally is defined as including Chelan, Douglas and Okanogan Counties. The Washington State Department of Transportation also includes Grant County.²¹ For the purposes of this report, Grant County is included in this region.

Field research included visits to Chelan, Okanogan and Grant Counties with interviews, meetings and/or tours of eight animal welfare agencies: Colville Indian Reservation's former Animal Control Officer, Grant County Animal Outreach, Linda Timentwa (animal welfare advocate), Nourishing Hand Equine and Dog Rescue, OK Snip, Okanogan County Animal Control, Omak Animal Control, and Wenatchee Valley Humane Society.

We also toured the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association Rural Area Veterinary Services' clinic (HSMVA-RAVS) while it was stationed on the Colville Indian Reservation. HSMVA-RAVS operates primarily in the Western United States although there are two international RAVS locations. Staff and volunteer veterinary professionals and students drive to geographically isolated Native American tribal lands and set up **full service** veterinary hospitals in community centers, gymnasiums and longhouses. The RAVS field team spent a week on the Colville reservation, three days at Inchelium and two days at the Omak Longhouse. The five-day clinic provided free services for 308 animals—less than the normal patient load of 350-600 animals due to wildfires in eastern Washington necessitating the change of clinic location at the last minute. It should be noted there was a much greater demand for services than could be provided in this time period.

Washington's North Central Region is comprised of counties with large land areas (Okanogan County being the largest county in the state²²) that are geographically isolated and hard to access. This rural region is made up of farming and ranching communities with the Colville Indian

²¹ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Washington

²² Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Okanogan_County,_Washington

Reservation, primarily located in Okanogan and Ferry Counties, covering 1.4 million acres.²³ The population is racially diverse including Caucasian, Latino and Native American peoples with differing ideologies about companion animal welfare. It should be noted that 21.7% of the population in Okanogan County is living below the poverty line, whereas the weighted average for the region is 17.6%.²⁴

Although there are some very real challenges with migrant workers leaving animals behind at the end of the harvest season and a lack of TNR resources and efforts in this region, Wenatchee Valley Humane Society (WVHS) plays a pivotal role in supporting Chelan and Douglas Counties (and an auxiliary role for Okanogan and Grant Counties) while Grant County Animal Outreach (GCAO) works to support Grant, Lincoln and Adams Counties. The 2014 live release rates for WVHS and GCAO were 81%²⁵ and 85.4%²⁶ respectively. Both organizations would benefit from additional financial resources to help subsidize low-cost spay/neuter services for pet owners and to implement TNR programs to help reduce euthanasia rates for cats. In addition, Grant County Animal Outreach is seeking and would benefit from non-profit management mentorship.

Okanogan County, however, lacks a cohesive companion animal welfare strategy, leaders to implement a plan, a bricks and mortar facility to shelter dogs and adequate animal control services for such a large land area. The County Animal Control Officer is responsible for issues primarily related to livestock and large breed animals. The Animal Control Officer for Omak (population 5,000) handles animals exclusively within city limits and there is only one Animal Control Officer covering the entire 1.4 million acres of the Colville Indian Reservation. Animals euthanized on the reservation, primarily by gun, are generally not reported. In 2013, the Animal Control Officer

²³ The Confederate Tribes of the Colville Reservation: <http://www.colvilletribes.com/facts.php>

²⁴ United States Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/interactive/>

²⁵ Wenatchee Valley Humane Society: 2014 Statistics

²⁶ Grant County Animal Outreach: 2014 Statistics

euthanized 500 animals —a significant decrease from 1100 in a prior year. These deaths were not reported or accounted for by any monitoring agency.

NORTH CENTRAL REGION SUMMARY

It is imperative to identify animal welfare leaders and an advisory board, develop a business plan, and establish an animal shelter in Okanogan County. Until formalized steps are taken to address this gap, efforts in this county by small rescues and volunteers, although commendable, are surface solutions to the inherent problems in the community: animal overpopulation, inconsistent transport/relocation programs, lack of TNR efforts and inhumane euthanasia methods.

The entire region is in need of access to sustained, low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary services via clinic and/or mobile units, and efforts should be made to increase public awareness regarding the importance of spaying/neutering owned animals. Spay/neuter strategies must include TNR efforts and the ability to alter pregnant animals and large dogs.

Finally, transport and relocation programs are critical to shelters in this area. In 2014, Grant County Animal Outreach transferred 48% of the 2,309 animals it received.²⁷ Shelters in this region should be equipped with transport vehicles, and existing transport/relocation programs with shelters throughout the state should be maintained and enhanced, space permitting.

²⁷ Grant County Animal Outreach: 2014 Shelter Statistics

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

The South Central Region includes four counties: Kittitas, Yakima, Benton and Klickitat.

Field research included visits to Yakima and Benton/Franklin Counties with tours of the Yakima Humane Society (YHS) and the Tri-Cities Animal Shelter. Having toured only two locations in this region, the information below pertains primarily to Yakima County and the Tri-Cities area. It should be noted that Yakima County is the second largest county in Washington State,²⁸ and the city of Yakima and the Tri-Cities area (Kennewick, Pasco and Richland) are the largest metro areas of this region.²⁹ Reflecting human population densities for these areas, the projected number of companion animals (approximately 114,000 in Yakima County and 119,000 in Benton and Franklin Counties)³⁰ is relevant as there are minimal, if any, low-cost spay/neuter services in this area.

Yakima County is a rural, agricultural area that includes the Yakama Indian Reservation and Yakima (Army) Training Center. The majority of the county's diverse population is comprised of Caucasians, Latinos and Native Americans³¹ with 21.1% of the population living below the poverty level.³² Breed-specific legislation (BSL) is pervasive in more cities in Yakima County than any other county in the state.³³ The Tri-Cities area, located in Benton and Franklin Counties, has BSL in effect for two of its three cities: Pasco and Kennewick.³⁴ Moreover, the Tri-Cities Animal Shelter grapples with a unique decision-making system requiring three city councils to weigh in on budgetary matters

²⁸ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yakima_County,Washington

²⁹ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Washington

³⁰ American Veterinary Medicine Pet Ownership Calculator: <https://www.avma.org/KB/Resources/Statistics/Pages/US-pet-ownership-calculator.aspx>

³¹ United States Census Bureau: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53/53077.html>

³² United States Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/interactive/>

³³ Dogbite: <http://www.dogsbite.org/legislating-dangerous-dogs-washington.php>

³⁴ Dogbite: <http://www.dogsbite.org/legislating-dangerous-dogs-washington.php>

affecting the shelter. In addition to significant animal overpopulation (detailed below) the geographic, demographic and legislative composite of the area contributes to low live-release rates: 71% at YHS³⁵ and 67% at Tri-Cities Animal Shelter based on 2014 data.³⁶ (Note: cats accounted for approximately 93% of euthanized animals at the Tri-Cities Animal Shelter.)

The biggest issue facing this region is animal overpopulation due to the lack of accessible low-cost spay/neuter services for owned pets and community cats. Data from YHS reflects an increase in live release rates from 27% in 2003 to 71% in 2014,³⁷ yet the shelter has had an increase in animals entering the system – 7,631 in 2014. YHS’s transport partnerships with shelters west of the mountains have been key in improving their live release rate, but partnerships are only part of the solution. It also should be noted that—similar to the North Central Region—abandoned animals left behind by migrant farm workers at the end of the harvest season contributes to the area’s overpopulation.

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION SUMMARY

Access to low-cost spay/neuter services coupled with awareness campaigns about the importance of spaying/neutering is imperative for this region. This is a densely populated area with BSL in effect, differing ideologies regarding companion animal welfare, and an inordinate number of community cats.

To this end, YHS is poised to lead the spay/neuter efforts in this area and open a high-volume, high-quality, low-cost spay/neuter clinic. YHS participated in the Feral Cat Spay/Neuter Clinic mentorship program and has been accepted by the Humane Alliance to participate in their strategic training

³⁵ Yakima Humane Society: 2014 Shelter Statistics

³⁶ Tri-Cities Animal Shelter: 2014 Shelter Statistics

³⁷ Yakima Humane Society: 2014 Shelter Statistics

program, National Spay/Neuter Response Team (NSNRT). As of this writing, YHS is a recipient of a 2015 Koch grant to subsidize the establishment of a spay/neuter clinic.

The Tri-Cities Animal Shelter is the only open-admission shelter in the Benton-Franklin Counties area and must take in all animals regardless of age, behavior and/or medical conditions. In 2014, the Tri-Cities Animal Shelter took in 2,635 animals.³⁸ This shelter is in dire need of a clean-air isolation unit (if not a new facility) as well as funds and expertise to implement a TNR program for community cats. Both of these needs should not be overlooked if the live-release rate, currently at 67%, is to improve.

³⁸ Tri-Cities Animal Shelter: 2014 Shelter Statistics

NORTHEAST REGION

The Northeast Region is generally referenced as including five counties: Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, Lincoln and Spokane.

Things to note:

1. Analyzing this region and including Spokane County is somewhat misleading. Spokane County is the fourth-most populous county in Washington,³⁹ and the City of Spokane is the second largest city in the state behind Seattle. Spokane City and County have dedicated financial resources, physical shelters and low-cost spay/neuter services to support animals and the community and, in this regard, is an anomaly in the region. That said, Spokane animal welfare agencies play an important role in providing support to neighboring counties. Interviews with Spokane shelter directors, however, revealed a continued struggle with community cat overpopulation in the city and county.
2. Ferry and Stevens County residents tend to think of themselves as a “tri-county” area made up of Okanogan, Ferry and Stevens counties or Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille counties. Both “tri-county” areas are large and geographically isolated, have high poverty levels and lack much-needed county-generated revenue due to the minimal number of businesses and privately owned land; both areas contain Native American tribal lands and large expanses of national forest.

Field research included visits to Ferry and Stevens Counties with meetings and/or tours of four animal welfare agencies: Colville Animal Control, Colville Pet Rescue, Colville Valley Animal Sanctuary and Forget Me Not Animal Shelter. Phone interviews were conducted with Spokane

³⁹ United States Census Bureau: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/53/53063.html>

County animal welfare agencies: Spokane Humane Society, Spokane County Regional Animal Protection Service (SCRAPS) and SpokAnimal.

Similar to the North Central Region, Ferry, Stevens and Pend Oreille Counties are mountainous, rural and geographically isolated with Native American tribal lands in Ferry and Stevens Counties. This area includes some of the poorest counties in Washington. Stevens tends to have one of the highest unemployment rates in the state,⁴⁰ and Ferry and Pend Oreille Counties (although sparsely populated) have 22.1% and 19% of people living below the poverty level respectively.⁴¹ The social, political and economic framework of the region contributes to an arrested companion animal welfare mindset, a negligible amount of county resources dedicated to animal welfare, and a lack of low-cost spay/neuter services—barring the existing programs offered by local agencies.

Despite these conditions, there are several organizations providing needed animal welfare services in the area—specifically Forget Me Not Animal Shelter (FMNAS) in Ferry County and Colville Valley Animal Sanctuary (CVAS) in Stevens County. Although 2014 intake numbers for FMNAS and CVAS (200 and 734 respectively) are minimal in comparison to other counties, both shelters reported live release rates of 99%. FMNAS cites 10 years of concentrated spay/neuter assistance to low-income residents of Ferry County (subsidizing over 1,100 surgeries since 2004) as key to its having lowered its intake. Because of their successful rural sheltering work and limited access to donor bases, both organizations are on-going grant recipients of a Microsoft Employee Grant program.

Stevens County Cat Care (SCCC), the only low-cost spay/neuter organization in the area, plays a crucial role by providing low-cost services for owned cats and free services for community cats. Since its inception in 2006, SCCC has altered over 10,200 cats.

⁴⁰ Employment Security Department Washington State <https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports-publications/regional-reports/county-profiles/stevens-county-profile>

⁴¹ United States Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/interactive/>

NORTHEAST REGION SUMMARY

To truly address the needs of animals, pet owners and the community, consistent low-cost spay/neuter and veterinary services must be made available for all companion animals. Stevens County Cat Care has a successful track record in organizing and implementing low-cost clinics for cats only. Thought should be given to augmenting or replicating its program to include canines. Additionally, a mobile unit or the utilization of a community center with the ability to alter large dogs should be considered if a permanent facility can't be established.

Given the “tri-county” area’s geographic isolation and limited human population, transport/relocation programs should be maintained and—space permitting—enhanced by shelters west of the mountains and in Spokane. (It should be acknowledged that Spokane shelters play an important role in supporting the “tri-county” area.) Ideally, local shelters would be equipped with vehicles to participate in the transport of animals to receiving agencies and the travel to larger cities for specialized veterinary care in all seasons.

Finally, the lack of county-specific animal welfare ordinances in Stevens County in conjunction with nonexistent funding for a County Animal Control Officer and absence of a County-owned shelter to house animals, contributes to an environment rife with opportunities for animal welfare issues to go undetected and unaddressed. It is important to consider the political landscape, including the lack of county-generated revenue to fund mandates, if progress is to be made.

SOUTHEAST REGION

The Southeast Region is comprised of seven counties: Franklin, Adams, Whitman, Walla Walla, Columbia, Garfield and Asotin. As referenced earlier, Franklin County has been included in the South Central section of this report.

Field research included: a visit to Adams County Pet Rescue; a meeting with Dr. Bryan Slinker, Professor and Dean of Washington State University (WSU) College of Veterinary Medicine; and phone interviews with Whitman County Humane Society and Blue Mountain Humane Society in Walla Walla County. This section of the report focuses on Adams, Whitman and Walla Walla Counties.

Whitman and Walla Walla Counties are somewhat similar in makeup: both have populations greater than 40,000 people; contain colleges and/or universities; and have dedicated animal shelters, animal control officers and spay/neuter assistance programs within the largest cities. Adams County, by contrast, has a population of approximately 19,000 people,⁴² a small animal shelter (although a new facility is nearing completion), one code enforcement officer responsible for animal control in the Othello city limits, a part-time officer for the City of Ritzville (population 1,832), and no low-cost spay/neuter services.

Adams County is a rural, agricultural area made up primarily of Caucasian and Latino people with approximately 18% of the population living below the poverty level.⁴³ Similar to Yakima and Chelan Counties, migrant workers are part of the county's fabric and Adams County Pet Rescue (ACPR) (the only shelter in the county) grapples with an influx of abandoned dogs at the end of the harvest season. Throughout the year, the shelter also receives significant litters of puppies. ACPR is primarily an outdoor facility and in 2014 took in 785 dogs⁴⁴ and the occasional cat. Like so many

⁴² United States Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov/did/www/saige/data/interactive/>

⁴³ United States Census Bureau: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states>

⁴⁴ Adams County Pet Rescue: 2014 Statistics

smaller shelters and rescues east of the mountains, ACPR relies on transfer partnerships. In 2014 it transferred 45% of its population.⁴⁵ ACPR is in the final stages of constructing a new facility (with help from an upcoming reality TV show, “Animal House”) and at that time will be able to house at least a limited number of cats. Currently, there are no dedicated low-cost spay/neuter services in the county, facilities to house cats, or organized TNR efforts.

Whitman County, by comparison, has a greater number of resources to address the needs of animals and the community via WSU’s College of Veterinary Medicine and the Whitman County Humane Society, both located in Pullman. WSU plays an important role in the region by providing veterinary services for shelter-owned animals from a network of regional shelters as well as providing all services for Whitman County Humane Society animals. WSU’s reach extends beyond the Southeast Region to the west side of the mountains through its partnership with the Seattle Humane Society (SHS). Currently, through an elective rotation, third year veterinary students have an opportunity to learn their fundamental surgical skills by providing SHS animals with needed spay/neuter surgeries and other medical and surgical care. (Plans are underway for this to become a requirement for students in the near future.) WSU’s veterinary services and Whitman County Humane Society’s low-cost spay/neuter assistance program for owned animals are integral to animal welfare in Whitman County. However, there are no resources or formalized TNR efforts currently addressing the community cat population.

Walla Walla County, the most populous county in the region with an estimated 59,530 people,⁴⁶ is home to three colleges/universities as well as numerous vineyards that contribute to the area’s robust tourism industry. The Blue Mountain Humane Society (BMHS), located on the state line, is the largest organization in the region with an intake of 2,257 animals in 2013.⁴⁷ In contrast to the

⁴⁵ Adams County Pet Rescue: 2014 Statistics

⁴⁶ United States Census Bureau: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/>

⁴⁷ Blue Mountain Humane Society: <http://bluemountainhumane.org/>

majority of shelters east of the mountains, BMHS has an on-site veterinarian, a formalized TNR program, and a dedicated humane education program (with materials in English and Spanish); all of which contributed to a live release rate of 94.2% in 2014.⁴⁸ BMHS also relies on animal relocation and transport programs to achieve this rate. Although BMHS has started to offer low-cost spay/neuter services for owned pets, the veterinary community has been resistant to subsidized services for dogs, resulting in a hole for affordable canine spay/neuter services in the county.

SOUTHEAST REGION SUMMARY

Based on the field research and interviews with university and multiple shelter representatives, particular attention should be paid to Adams County. Without access to low-cost spay/neuter services, this county will continue to be faced with significant litters of puppies and the proliferation of community cats. Relocation and transfer programs are imperative, as Adams County's population cannot absorb the number of animals being reproduced. Completion of ACPR's new shelter will allow for the housing of a limited number of cats: a step in the right direction but not a comprehensive long-term solution. Efforts should be made to identify funding for the implementation of a formalized TNR program as well as a public awareness campaign regarding the importance of spaying/neutering pets.

Whitman and Walla Walla Counties are in better standing than Adams County as a result of slightly stronger economies, the availability of low-cost spay/neuter services and established animal welfare agencies. That said, Whitman County would benefit from the implementation of a formalized TNR program. It may be worth investigating how, if at all, WSU could participate in providing those services.

⁴⁸ Blue Mountain Humane Society: 2014 Statistics

As with the majority of shelters east of the mountains, transport/relocation programs should remain a focus for this region, as these services are integral to eliminating the euthanasia of healthy and treatable animals.

CONCLUSION

Creating a No-Kill Washington (NKWA) for healthy and treatable animals is a complex endeavor. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. The state's 39 counties and numerous cities have differing political agendas and policies, varied animal control agency resources, and distinct geographic terrains. Add to this the different types of animal welfare organizations: municipally run shelters, non-profit shelters, volunteer rescue groups and sanctuaries—each with different missions, sources of funding and modes of operation—and there are numerous issues to consider and complexities to solve. That said, creating a NKWA is possible if sustained, data-driven, multi-tiered strategies relevant to geographic location and needs are developed. If action is taken with the spirit of collaboration, NKWA can be achieved over time.

It should be noted that from a statistical standpoint, the most effective way to move towards No-Kill status is to identify geographic areas with the largest human populations, shelter intake numbers and euthanasia numbers; and focus efforts and resources to reduce the euthanasia numbers in those areas. However, exclusive reliance upon this approach overlooks those Washington state counties with smaller human and animal populations and lower euthanasia numbers that are in desperate need of resources. A multi-pronged approach that supports the needs of these counties along with data-driven strategic efforts may help to: provide near-term relief to isolated animals at risk; sustain the dedicated individuals and organizations perhaps feeling overwhelmed and overlooked; and engage community members in public awareness campaigns about the creation of a No-Kill state and how to get there.

Finally, the research conducted throughout 2014 points to immediate, long-term and on-going funding strategies to decrease euthanasia numbers and move Washington towards a No-Kill status. These strategies, listed below, represent a part of a continuing, comprehensive movement requiring the involvement of animal welfare industry leaders and coalitions, elected officials, animal control officers, veterinarians, schools and community members.

Immediate funding strategies include:

1. Insuring statewide access to low-cost spay/neuter services
2. Expanding spay/neuter mobile and/or transport programs
3. Developing comprehensive animal relocation and transport programs

Long-term strategies include:

1. Creation of a statewide animal inventory database
2. Creation of a centralized holding facility for animal transport

On-going strategies include:

1. Data collection initiatives
2. Evaluation of public policy and legislation
3. Public awareness campaigns and humane education

APPENDIXES

**APPENDIX A
ANIMAL WELFARE AGENCY INTERVIEWS/TOURS**

Animal Welfare Agency	County	Region	On site interview/ tour	Phone interview
Aberdeen Animal Control	Grays Harbor	Coastal	✓	
Adams County Pet Rescue	Adams County	Southeast	✓	
Animal Foster Care	Okanogan	North Central	✓	
Blue Mountain Humane Society	Walla Walla	Southeast		✓
Colville Animal Control	Stevens	Northeast	✓	
Colville Indian Reservation (former Animal Control Officer)	Okanogan	North Central		✓
Colville Pet Rescue	Stevens	Northeast	✓	
Colville Valley Animal Sanctuary	Stevens	Northeast	✓	
Everett Animal Services	Snohomish	North Puget Sound	✓	
Feral Cat Spay Neuter Project	Snohomish	North Puget Sound		✓
Forget Me Not	Ferry	Northeast	✓	
Friends of Forks Animals	Clallam	Coastal	✓	
Grant County Animal Outreach	Grant County	North Central	✓	
Grays Harbor County Animal Control	Grays Harbor	Coastal	✓	
Grays Harbor Spay/Neuter Project	Grays Harbor	Coastal	✓	
Harbor Association of Volunteers for Animals (HAVA)	North Pacific	Coastal	✓	
Harbor Rescue	Grays Harbor	Coastal	✓	
Homeward Pet Adoption Center	King	North Puget Sound	✓	
Humane Society for Southwest Washington	Clark	South Central	✓	
Humane Society Tacoma & Pierce County	Pierce	South Puget Sound	✓	
Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association Rural Area Veterinary Services (HSVMA RAVS)	Okanogan	North Central	✓	
Keystone Animal Rescue (former volunteer)	Okanogan	North Central	✓	
North Beach PAWS	Grays Harbor	Coastal	✓	

Washington State Companion Animal Welfare Landscape Analysis

Animal Welfare Agency	County	Region	On site interview/ tour	Phone interview
Northwest Spay & Neuter Center	Pierce	South Puget Sound	✓	
Nourishing Hand Equine and Dog Rescue	Okanogan	North Central	✓	
Ocean Shores Animal Control	Grays Harbor	Coastal	✓	
OK Snip	Okanogan	North Central	✓	
Okanogan County Animal Control	Okanogan	North Central		✓
Olympic Peninsula Humane Society	Clallam	Coastal	✓	
Omak Animal Control	Okanogan	North Central		✓
Oregon Humane Society	Multnomah	Oregon	✓	
Pasado's Safe Haven	Snohomish	North Puget Sound	✓	
PAWS of Grays Harbor	Grays Harbor	Coastal	✓	
Peninsula Friends of Animals	Clallam	Coastal	✓	
Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS)	Snohomish	North Puget Sound	✓	
Regional Animal Services King County (RASKC)	King	North Puget Sound	✓	
Seattle Humane Society	King	North Puget Sound	✓	
Sevadog	Lane	Oregon	✓	
Spay to Save	Clallam	Coastal	✓	
Spokane Humane Society	Spokane	Northeast		✓
Spokane County Regional Animal Protection Service (SCRAPS)	Spokane	Northeast		✓
SpokAnimal	Spokane	Northeast		✓
The N.O.A.H. Center	Snohomish	North Puget Sound	✓	
Tri Cities Animal Shelter	Benton-Franklin	South Central	✓	
Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine	Whitman	Southeast	(Personal interview off site)	
Welfare for Animals Guild (WAG)	Clallam	Coastal		✓
Wenatchee Valley Humane Society	Chelan	North Central	✓	
Whitman County Humane Society	Whitman	Southeast		✓
Yakima Humane Society	Yakima	South Central	✓	

APPENDIX B
SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Access Washington. Visiting and Recreation.

<http://access.wa.gov/topics/visiting/maps>

Animal Sheltering Magazine. July/August 2014. *LA Stories*.

ASPCA Professional. Moving Animals Places

<http://aspcapro.org/map-0>

Best Friends Animal Society. *BF Cat Initiatives FAQs*

Employment Security Department Washington State.

<https://fortress.wa.gov/esd/employmentdata/reports-publications/regional-reports/county-profiles/>

Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association.

<http://www.ruralareavet.org/>

The Humane Society of the United States. Pets for Life.

<http://www.humanesociety.org/about/departments/pets-for-life>

United States Census Bureau. State & County QuickFacts.

<http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states>

Washington Federation of Animal Care and Control Agencies. *2012 Animal Population Survey*.