



*Every  
animal  
matters*



**We Can  
Help!**

WCAL is ready and able to help animals impacted by the Wine Country fires. Pet rental deposits, medical care for injured animals, fliers for lost pets, waiving of adoption fees, animal trapping and other services are available. Call us at 707-800-5058 or email [info@WineCountryAnimalLovers.org](mailto:info@WineCountryAnimalLovers.org).



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## Historic fire again calls WCAL to help threatened animals



**A horse on Old Lawley Toll Road north of Calistoga enjoys a meal brought by WCAL volunteers during the Tubbs Fire in early October. Volunteers visited the property almost daily during the evacuation to care for horses, rabbits, goats, chickens and cats that were sheltering in place.**

Nearly 5,900 homes burned. At least 22 dead. Those are the human numbers associated with a hellish firestorm that ravaged Wine Country in October, eventually becoming the most devastating blaze in California history.

But there were other victims of the inferno whose fates weren't tabulated. Thousands of animals were also affected by the tragedy, and that's where Wine Country Animal Lovers once again mobilized to minimize the suffering.

During evacuations that lasted more than a week, WCAL volunteers made their way into

restricted areas to check on, care for and, in some cases, capture and evacuate all manner of domestic animals, from dogs and cats to chickens and rabbits.

And in the aftermath of the disaster, WCAL has continued paying for medical care for injured animals, and its volunteers are still tracking lost pets and attempting to reunite found animals with their owners. WCAL is also helping fire victims who are seeking rental housing by paying pet deposits.

"With rental housing in the area so scarce after the fire, the challenge of securing pet-

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# Speaking For Animals



By Pam Ingalls

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## Closer to home, a new fire brings out volunteers and others who love animals

When WCAL was called upon to help two years ago during the terrible Valley Fire in Lake County, never did we imagine more horrific fires would happen even closer to home. Words fail me and I carry a feeling of profound sadness that I haven't experienced since 9/11.

What resonates for me in this difficult time is the advice of Fred Rogers, the children's television pioneer, to "look for the helpers." Since the night of the fire, they are everywhere, and the compassion and caring has been so heartening amongst all the destruction and loss of homes and life, both people and animals. Local heroes risking their lives to save people and animals, individuals, donors, businesses, all stepping up to be helpers in so many ways.

And once again, we see how important pets are to those who lost so much. So many stories — of people who barely had time to get out managing to save their animals; the heartbreaking ones of those who lost animals they were unable to evacuate with; the uplifting ones of animals being found and reunited with their families.

Since the fires, the biggest challenge for pet owners who lost their homes has been finding pet-friendly housing. This is especially true in Sonoma County, which already had a rental market with only a 2.3% vacancy rate. It would be a second tragedy if people who saved their animals were unable to keep them due to a shortage of housing. Assisting people with pet deposits is one way Wine Country Animal Lovers has been able to help people secure rentals that will allow pets.

It seems too little to say, but a heartfelt thank you to all of those who came forward to help people and animals. We are humbled by all the generous donations. WCAL is committed to being there to help people and animals during the long journey of rebuilding. For those who tragically lost animals in the fires, WCAL will waive adoption fees for at least two years. We know you can't replace a loved animal but opening your heart to a rescue animal can be a gift both to an animal in need and to people and families who are healing.



Photo by Marilyn Ferrante

**Caitlynn West and Tara Hendricksen of Calistoga Pet Clinic hold one of the more unusual pets brought to WCAL's free microchip clinic.**

## WCAL holds free microchip clinic

When WCAL acquires a lost pet, the first thing we do is scan for a microchip. If one is present, it's an easy thing to identify the animal's owner and reunite them. But a surprising number of pets are not microchipped, and that's why WCAL hosted a free microchip clinic last summer.

The event, at Calistoga's Pioneer Park, drew a crowd of concerned animal lovers, all of whom can now rest assured that their furry friends can be returned to them if they are ever lost.

Microchip scanners are common. Veterinary clinics, animal control departments, animal shelters and rescue organizations routinely have them, as do many police agencies. If chips are properly registered, a pet's owner can be immediately identified.

At WCAL's clinic, all microchips were registered with owners' contact information, allowing for direct notification if the owners and pets become separated.

Microchipping takes only seconds and is nearly painless. At the WCAL clinic, veterinary technicians from Calistoga Pet Clinic volunteered to do the procedures.

Another incentive to attend was provided by Calistoga Creamery, which distributed free ice cream donated by Three Twins Ice Cream of Napa.



**Maggie Orozco and Sarah Fournier of Calistoga Pet Clinic give a dog a new microchip as a concerned pet owner looks on.**

Photo by Marilyn Ferrante



# *Kitten season goes crazy*



In farming, some years produce bigger crops than others.  
In the animal world, it's the same.

2017 produced a bumper crop of kittens, challenging WCAL's adoption program to the limit. In a kitten season that extended deep into the fall, WCAL found homes for more than 100 kittens and mama cats.



"We've got new kittens arriving in November and that's insane," said Alissa McNair, WCAL vice president who manages WCAL's kitten adoptions.

McNair speculates that part of the reason WCAL was inundated with kittens this year is that warm weather that lasted through October also extended the breeding season. She also thinks that as its reputation spreads, more people are turning to WCAL for help. "We're able to help more so we're getting more publicity and more calls for help because of that," she said.

Many of the kittens and cats adopted out by WCAL this year came from the city of Clearlake in Lake County, which she said has "a severe cat overpopulation issue and no services to handle it."

She said there are many reasons for a large population of homeless cats.

"People move and leave cats behind, people can't care for them, they run away, people give them away as kittens and they get passed around and

never altered – any number of reasons," she said.

Part of the challenge this year was that many of the animals that came to WCAL were sick.

"When we help animals from Clearlake, they seem to be sicker than animals from other areas, especially the youngest ones with developing immune systems," McNair said. "They tend to have ringworm, upper respiratory infections, coccidia which is an intestinal parasite, or all of them together."

By the time cats and kittens are adopted out by WCAL, they are healthy and have been neutered or spayed, vaccinated and micro-chipped.







Destroyed homes became a common sight for WCAL volunteers assisting animals within the Tubbs Fire evacuation zone. Above, WCAL's van is parked at property on Petrified Forest Road, between Calistoga and Santa Rosa, where volunteers rescued a cat. Below, one of many notes left by volunteers alerting owners that their animals had been saved and how they could be reclaimed.

## WCAL responds as firestorm races through Wine Country

*(Continued from page 1)*

friendly housing is even more difficult,” said Pam Ingalls, WCAL president. “Paying pet deposits not only helps people, it helps animals by making sure they can stay with their families.”

The fire began just north of Calistoga on Oct. 8, and immediately, injured animals began arriving at Calistoga Pet Clinic, where Dr. Steve Franquelin cared for them at a discounted rate paid by WCAL. On Oct. 11, however, Franquelin and many WCAL volunteers were forced to leave the area, as fire officials ordered evacuation of the entire town. Burned animals from the clinic were taken to the empty spay-neuter clinic at Napa Humane Society and WCAL board members began coordinating assistance efforts from their own evacuation spots in cities as far away as Napa and Oakland.

“Once we were evacuated we started receiving calls from people who had left animals behind and were worried,” said WCAL Vice President Alissa McNair. “By then, it had been a couple days, so we started compiling a spreadsheet with names and addresses.”

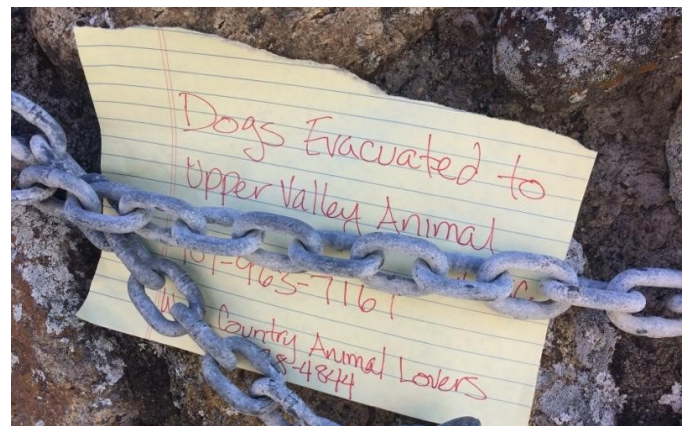
WCAL's people inside the evacuation zone included volunteer Madelyn Davies, who was allowed to cross police lines with Dr. Jeff Smith of Middletown Animal Hospital, who holds a special emergency certification.

“Most of what we were doing was going in and doing welfare checks,” said Davies. “There were a lot of kitties left behind and we were going in and checking on those animals and feeding them.”

Davies and Smith left food for outdoor animals, took notes on what they found at each home and captured a number of dogs and cats, taking them to Upper Valley Pet Clinic, outside the evacuation zone in St. Helena.

WCAL also received a number of requests to assist with farm animals such as chickens, goats, horses and donkeys that

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had been left behind.

“We pretty much got on a circuit where we would go every other day and do feeding and watering,” said Davies.

The assistance work continued for a full week, until evacuation orders were lifted. And then the work of recovery began.

Among the efforts that continues is the trapping of displaced animals, mostly cats. Board member Anne Andersen is WCAL’s designated cat trapper, and she has been so busy since the fire that she has to think hard to remember all she’s done.

“We found Stella,” she said, remembering a cat by name. “Then we found three kittens at a winery, and then a mama cat and a small kitten at a different winery. And then we gave a woman the trap to catch another person’s cat, and since then I have three cats in Knights Valley and three cats in Franz Valley that I’m actively trying to catch.”

Andersen said people are still trapping cats left homeless by the Valley Fire in Lake County two years ago, so she expects her duties to continue for some time.

“This may be an ongoing thing, for the next couple of years at least,” she said.

Although the Tubbs Fire started in Calistoga and it and other blazes eventually burned nearly 600 homes in Napa County, the vast majority of the devastation occurred in Santa Rosa and other parts of Sonoma County, where 5,300 homes were lost. As a result, much of WCAL’s work going forward will be in Sonoma County.

“In Sonoma County, medical care for burned animals and assistance to renters trying to relocate with their pets is going to be expensive,” said Ingalls. “WCAL plans help with every resource we have.”



**After feeding and watering them, WCAL volunteer Madelyn Davies comforts goats on property along Highway 128 north of Calistoga, inside the Tubbs Fire evacuation zone.**



**Medical care for cats burned in the recent Wine Country fires continues to be one of the primary uses of funds donated to WCAL.**



# Cooperation leads to happy ending for sick dachshund

Girlie is a big believer in cooperation between animal welfare groups. She'd even tell you that if she could.

But she can't because, you see, she's a dog.

Even so, it seems likely that Girlie appreciates how her life changed after Sonoma County Animal Services and WCAL joined forces to help her.

A four-year-old Dachshund mix, Girlie was a mess when she came to Sonoma County's animal shelter as a stray. She had two cherry eyes, a physical problem that can lead to severe vision problems. She also had three hernias and a broken tooth. In short, her problems were too severe and too many for a government-funded agency to correct.

Shelter employees didn't want to euthanize her, so they called WCAL.

"I first thought this was an older dog, near the end of her life," said Pam Ingalls, WCAL president. "But when we found out she was only four years old, there was no doubt that we needed to do something."

WCAL transferred Girlie from the Sonoma County shelter and took her to Calistoga Pet Clinic, where Dr.



**Girlie, a four-year-old dachshund, came to WCAL with "cherry eye," hernias and other medical problems.**

Steve Franquelin began treating her.

Meanwhile, WCAL began searching for a foster home to take her while a permanent home was found.

The first call went to Kathleen Rhodes of Santa Rosa, who had adopted another Dachshund, Joey, from WCAL about two years ago. With Joey, Kathleen and her husband, Carl Campbell, already had two Dachshunds, but when WCAL sent a photo of Girlie, that was all that was needed.

"I showed it to Carl and he said, 'How can we resist?'" said Kathleen.

What followed were months of treatments and nurturing. It was a bit of work, but Girlie got along with the other dogs, and from the beginning there was a feeling that she'd found a permanent home.

"The day that we picked her up was Carl's birthday, and so I guess he kind of ended up feeling like she was a birthday present," said Kathleen.

Girlie also got some support from other family members. Kathleen and Carl's daughter and 13-year-old granddaughter live with them, and granddaughter Vanessa fell for Girlie.

"The very first day that we had her, Vanessa was saying, 'Well, it's OK with me if she stays,'" said Kathleen.

It wasn't long until Kathleen and Carl agreed. Now Girlie is a part of their family.

"She's very sweet," said Kathleen. "She kind of works her way into your heart."



**Girlie is now healthy and has a forever home with Kathleen Rhodes, Carl Campbell and two other dachshunds named Fritz and Joey.**

# An animal lover's nightmare: the missing pet

By **Laticia Sahs**

With the recent wildfires in our community, many are reevaluating emergency preparedness for both the 2 and 4-legged members of their family. Knowing that even with exceptional care and caution you might one day face a missing pet crisis is something most pet owners don't want to imagine. However, there are several steps you can take to better prepare yourself, should your pet ever go missing.

## Steps to take now

- Do not allow your pet off leash in unfamiliar areas.
- Install "bounce back" springs on fence gates.
- Consider installing "coyote rollers" or angled fencing for escape artist pets.
- Always have a collar with ID on your pet.
- Experts in the missing pet industry recommend sliding boomerang tags, as opposed to hanging ID tags.
- Collars embroidered with the word "reward" and a phone number are highly recommend.
- If at any point your pet loses their ID tag, write your phone number with permanent marker on their collar, until you can replace the ID tag.
- Consider listing multiple phone numbers on the ID tag, along with an email address.
- Microchips are responsible for thousands of animals being reunited with their families every year. Whenever your pet visits the vet, scan to ensure the microchip is detectable and active.
- GPS collars are excellent resources for extra protection, particularly for escape- or wander-prone animals.
- Keep clear & current photos on file.
- Condition your pet to a particular call/sound/sequence. The best way to do this is to "sing a dinner song" while preparing their food. Should a pet go missing and become difficult to recover, these conditioned songs/sounds could be KEY in recovery efforts.
- Take scent samples of your pets by

rubbing a square of clean gauze against their fur for 30 seconds. Store these samples individually in heavy duty baggies labeled with each pet's name. Refresh these scent samples once a year.

## What to do should you pet go missing

- If your pet runs from you, do NOT chase them. It is very unlikely you will catch them. Follow closely in a car or on foot. If you are able to get their attention, try to get them to chase you. Many dogs will fall for this game. Another option is to use the conditioned "dinner song" while crinkling anything resembling a food wrapper and pretending to eat.
- If your pet goes missing without a witness, do a thorough search of your home and surrounding areas. Ensure they have not become trapped under decks, in crawl spaces, storage sheds or garages.
- If your pet has gone missing within the past 2 hours, start a search spiraling out from their point of escape. If your pet has been missing for more than 2 hours, file a missing report at your local animal shelter ASAP. Within 24 hours of a pet missing, expand out to all shelters within a 60-mile radius of your home.
- The key element in recovering missing pets is an effective community awareness campaign. You want any person entering the area to be repeatedly exposed to the missing pet poster. This ensures when they do spot your pet, they make the connection between the poster and the animal they are seeing.
- Experts in the missing pet industry recommend 11 x 14 laminated signs. While slightly more expensive, these signs will stand up to wind, rain and time, as well as allow drivers on the road to spot them easily.
- Reward? If your pet is friendly and likely to be recovered by a citizen, offering a reward is an excellent way to



**Laticia Sahs is an experienced dog tracker and trapper who has worked professionally tracing missing dogs. She now volunteers for WCAL. She has undergone training with Lost Pet Professionals of Nebraska, a leading network of dog trackers.**

ensure your pet will be reunited with you. It is particularly helpful with desirable breeds. Ensure the reward is significant; think enough for the recovering party to purchase their own animal of similar breed.

- Post in missing pet groups on social media and ask local rescue groups to share your post.
- Change your voicemail to indicate your missing pet situation. Indicate that if you do not answer, you appreciate any information on possible sightings and to please leave a message with a return number. Thank them taking the time to call.
- Keep a log of all sightings. Always ask the following questions:
  - \*Nearest intersection or landmark.
  - \*Approximate time of day.
  - \*What was the pet doing (running, walking, laying down)?
  - \*What direction did the pet head?

**If your pet is being spotted frequently in an area, but you are not able to recover them, contact WCAL. We have a team of volunteers who specialize in recovery of wandering dogs and cats!**





**WCAL board member Anne Andersen holds the cat-trapping map she created with the help of Napa County. Information on where cats were last seen and the owners of properties near those locations allow Anne to develop strategies for finding the stray animals. The map is especially critical in the current situation, in which many typical address indicators such as mailboxes were destroyed by fire. For a more complete story on WCAL's efforts to help both animals and humans impacted by the Wine Country fires, see Page 1.**

## What to do when your pet gets lost or runs away

A tracking expert offers advice on how to find lost pets. See Page 7 of this edition of Compassion, the newsletter of Wine Country Animal Lovers.

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