



**Pierce County Auditor's Office  
Animal Services Division  
Key Peninsula Horse Summit**

*On Friday, August 22nd, Auditor, Pat McCarthy, Director of Pierce County Animal Services, hosted Pierce County's "Horse Summit" in the Key Peninsula. Following is a transcription of the easel notes generated during the discussion groups that night.*

*The purpose of the summit was to identify partners and resources to address the problem of a growing population of intentionally or unintentionally under cared for horses, to educate ourselves, and develop constructive tools for the future.*

***The big question....***

*How do we as a community protect horses by preventing circumstances where Pierce County Animal Control is forced to become involved?*

***Question 1 - In our community, what factors are contributing to these circumstances?***

**A. Economic/Financial Issues**

1. Health Issues (People)
2. Family Issues (Jobs, Moving, Children)
3. Expensive Vet Care/Farrier Services
4. High cost of fuel
5. Feed cost – hay prices
6. Economy – Money

**B. Lack of Education**

1. First time owners and lack of education
2. Lack of information available to owners
3. Lack of information to find resources and lack of information available to complainant
4. Horses left alone to pasture
5. Difference between horse and pony – many ponies are overfed

### **C. Cultural – Generational Changes**

1. Divorce
2. Drug/Alcohol Abuse
3. Lack of time
4. Children having to care for horses rather than adults

### **D. Overpopulation of Horses**

1. Surplus of Animals – No sale market
2. Shelter facilities – Requirements in Pacific NW climate
3. Horse Boarding – Lack of facilities
4. Horses are living longer
5. No Horse Rescue in County and no information available

### **E. Geographic Issues**

1. Lack of forage (food for grazing animals)
2. Lack of space – urban sprawl – property sizes shrinking
3. Weather issues/Shelter issues – what it takes to keep a horse

### **F. Lack of Coordination Between Organizations**

1. Oversight of horse care (Official)
2. Lack of Officer knowledge
3. Need laws allowing Animal Control to intervene sooner
4. Licensing – Most horse owners oppose licensing of horses

## ***Question 2 - Let's brainstorm some solutions!***

### **A. Education Classes**

1. Low or no cost workshops for horse care
2. Breeder Education

### **B. Community Outreach**

1. Information sharing (Informing public about help)
2. More information available on County websites or in County Offices
3. Resource list for help – Resource Sharing
  - a. Feed stores – get feed stores on board
  - b. Poster's for resource list (inform public, feed stores etc.)
4. Welcome packet for new horse owners
5. Realtor training with horse packet – educate them as to what is and is not “horse property”
6. Animal Cruelty Hotline for under cared for animals
7. Owner Help Line
8. Incentives to horse owners
9. Voluntary horse data / totals (How many animals reside in County in case of disaster)
10. Owner accountability for horses

### **C. Affordable Programs/Vet Care**

1. Low cost care facility program (possibly 4H, volunteers, horse organization)
2. Low cost care / low cost Vets / low cost traveling vehicle
  - a. Emergency care/Drop off and housing
  - b. Mobile clinics (teeth problems, worms)
  - c. Community Vet programs
  - d. Vet Co-Op
3. Inexpensive Educational self-help booklet from Vets (\$1 to \$5 charge for booklet)
  - a. Basic feeding/basic care
  - b. Sell booklets at feed stores
4. Micro chip horses
5. Low cost Euthanasia
6. Disposal options (animal)
7. Waste disposal options

### **D. Slaughter Laws**

### **E. Licensing**

1. Opposed licensing of horses
2. Opposed business licensing for stables and breeders

### **F. Rescue Shelters**

1. Review written policy for rescue shelters
2. Establish criteria for rescue shelters
3. Procedure in place to deal with horse mills/babies (like puppy mills)
4. Adoption Services for horses

### **G. Regulations**

1. Laws in place for ACO's to require horse maintenance (develop standards, include exercise)
2. USDA Regulations
3. Information on web - RCW's, Pierce County Code and PALS Code information on web (PALS Community Plan)
4. Own commission / regulates itself
5. No self regulations in backyard breeding
6. No checks on horse owners

## ***Question 3 - What resources or organizations are you aware of that could help?***

### **A. Pierce County**

1. Animal Control Officer's
2. Designate Officer and a substation to the west side of Narrow's Bridge
3. Education campaign before enforcement
4. Could create non-profit rescue organization
5. Create volunteer group for non-profit rescue (similar to Thurston Co.)

6. Horse adoption posting on County website
7. Hope for Horses in Pierce County (Horse Rescue)
8. Noxious Weed Control Board
9. Search and Rescue
10. Dept. of Agriculture Partnership w/funding

**B. Enumclaw and Yelm/Chehalis Stock Auction provide educational packet**

**C. Farm Bureau/WSU/WA Horseman's Directory**

**D. Reinstate Livestock Advisors - WSU**

**E. Conservation Districts**

**F. Horse Breeders Directory**

1. DreamHorse.com
2. Craigs List
3. RescueOnly.com

**G. Horse Clubs/Organizations**

1. Pierce and Mason County 4H
2. Pony and Riding Clubs
3. Silver Spurs
4. Kitsap Saddle Club
5. Horse Harbor Foundation
6. Thunderbird Girls/Purdy Vaulting Team
7. Jerry's
8. Cenex
9. Back Country Horseman
10. Kitsap County Rodeo

**H. Boarding Stables**

1. Sunrise Stables
2. Greenhills
3. Cedar Glen
4. Irish Glen

**I. Local Papers**

1. Gateway
2. Key Peninsula News

**J. Fairs**

1. Kitsap County Fair
2. Key Peninsula Fair
3. Livable Communities Fair
4. Old Timer's Day – Loggers Fair

5. Small Farm Expo – (new effort in Pierce County next year)

**K. Vets and Farriers**

**L. Local Hay Growers/Local Trainers/Local Feed Store's**

1. Del's Feed
2. Valley Feed - Belfair

**M. Internet**

**N. Community Networking**

1. Other horse owners set up phone tree
2. Home Inspection/owner knowledge before obtaining a horse

**O. Dept. of Natural Resources**