

Two easy steps to protect your pets

BY LAURA AHEARN

Friends of the Animal Shelter (FOTAS) invites you to the Jackson County Animal Shelter in Phoenix to volunteer, drop off donations, adopt a pet, or provide a foster home.

But please, we do not want your pet to visit! Earlier this year, four dogs in the shelter came from the Applegate Valley: three stray or abandoned, and one discarded by owners who didn't want to pay the fine for having allowed their beautiful girl to wander for the fourth time.

In partnership with Southern Oregon Humane Society, FOTAS and Jackson County found homes for these four lovely dogs, although the dogs had to deal with the stress of shelter life for up to two months. *Fact:* There is no deadline for killing animals that end up in our shelter. If an animal passes tests for health and behavior and is suitable for adoption, we are 100 percent committed to finding that animal a proper home, no matter how long it takes.

Applegate Valley is an animal-loving community, and pet owners can take these simple steps to avoid losing their best furry friends:

Have a current county license tag on your pet's collar

Oregon law and county codes require that all dogs six months and older receive rabies vaccines and be licensed in the county where the owner resides. Cat licenses, while not mandatory, are available for just \$2 per year for a desexed feline. Get this: On the third Saturday of every month, at the Phoenix shelter, Jackson County residents can have pets vaccinated for rabies and other common diseases for just \$10 per shot and then get licenses on the spot.

County licenses are cheap insurance. If the gate is accidentally left open or the door ajar and your pet gets loose, the license tag tells the world, "I am a loved pet; please help me get home." People who find an animal wearing a license tag almost always contact the county and try to find the owner before the animal even reaches the shelter. And if a dog with a current Jackson County license does end up at the shelter? There

is a "free ride home" and no redemption fee if this is a "first offense."

Recognizing that stray animals don't honor county lines, if a pet wearing a Josephine County tag ends up at the Phoenix shelter, staff will call the licensing office in Grants Pass to get the owner's contact information and work with Josephine County to get that pet back home. But the process can be even more efficient if you...

Microchip your pet

Collars and license tags can be lost or even removed by a petnapper, but a microchip is permanent. Every animal at the Phoenix shelter is scanned for a microchip on intake. If a chip is found, a staff member will access the contact information for that chip and try to track down the current owner. A microchip gets the process started no matter which jurisdiction the animal comes from, so it is important to keep owner contact information updated.

Owners have four days to claim a pet that enters the shelter without ID. Animals with a microchip or ID tag are held for ten days. After that, we get to work on assessing the animal for adoption potential and finding a good, fur-ever home.

Finding homes is a challenging task. How well do FOTAS and the Jackson County shelter do? In 2017, the shelter received 1,801 stray or surrendered dogs; 1,665 were returned to owners, placed in adoptive homes, or transferred to other rescue groups. That is a "save rate" of 93 percent.

Sadly, for cats, only 964 of 1,696 were returned to owners or found homes. This reflects a nationwide pattern: more cats than dogs are euthanized and far fewer are claimed by owners. Can you help us turn this trend around? You'll find the purr-fect kitten at jacksoncountyor.org/hhs/Animal-Services/Adoption/Cats.

For more information, call 541-774-6651 or email fotasjc@gmail.com.

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Laura and husband, Steve, live in Upper Applegate with their 17- and 15-year-old rescue dogs. They walk dogs at the shelter every Thursday.

Clockwise, from top left: (1) "Spottie." FOTAS receives many small senior dogs.

(2) "Xena." FOTAS really needs the community's help to find homes for cats.

(3) "Kendall." Gentle dog abandoned by Applegaters and rehomed after two months.

(4) "Titan." This face says it all.



You wanna pet a skunk?

Fun at the Applegate Partnership Jubilee outreach

BY BARBARA SUMMERHAWK

"You wanna pet a skunk?" asked Jade Keehn, habitat biologist for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW). Jade was volunteering at the Applegate Partnership & Watershed Council's (APWC) exhibit tables at the Cantrall Buckley Park Golden Jubilee celebration that was held on July 14. The little boy she asked nodded with widening eyes as Jade slapped a skunk pelt on the table.

Petting pelts turned out to be a big draw for the APWC at the event, popular not only with the children stopping by the booth but also with parents and other adults. (ODFW has petting pelts available for community outreach and were generous enough to allow the APWC to use them that weekend.) In addition to skunks, APWC had pelts of cougars, otters, foxes, beavers, possums, and even a wolf, which gave a close-up, if inert, view of the wildlife found in southern Oregon. People shared stories about their own encounters with the critters and, in the process, exchanged information and contacts throughout the afternoon.

Visitors also found the Southern Oregon Flyfishers stream table fascinating. This fun hands-on educational tool allows kids and adults to alter the stream channel, build farms, create dams, imitate in-stream restoration, and observe how certain alterations lead to erosion and others protect against degradation.

The APWC was one of many exhibitions of Applegate Valley organizations and groups serving the larger community. Visitors from other exhibits picked up APWC-provided literature, looked at maps of fish passage removal work, and checked out riparian restoration projects. The APWC members staffing the booth were encouraged to develop future outreach and education projects.

One of those projects is to prepare a more permanent kind of traveling educational toolbox to take to other events and local schools.

The APWC was happy to have been a part of the Cantrall Buckley Park celebration and wishes to thank A Greater Applegate and event organizers.



The author, aka "foxy lady," modeling an ODFW fox pelt at the APWC exhibit at the Cantrall Buckley Park Golden Jubilee in July.



Willow tree cuttings were given away at the APWC exhibit to folks who wanted to replant them and watch a stem root at home.

We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Park Enhancement Committee.

If anyone wants to pet a skunk, please feel free to contact the Applegate Partnership at 541-899-9982.

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Kids enjoy the Southern Oregon Flyfishers stream table at APWC's exhibit at the Cantrall Buckley Park Golden Jubilee.

