

Boarding available for horses during wildfires



Sugar Doodle, a victim of the 20,000-acre Dahl fire south of Roundup, is covered in burn cream. As wildfires consume hundreds of square miles in the West, many residents have been given minutes to flee, giving them no choice but to leave livestock to fend for themselves. AP PHOTOS/MATTHEW BROWN

Written by [KARL PUCKETT](#)

A Belgrade-based horse rescue and rehabilitation organization has begun taking in horses and small livestock in Montana and Wyoming that owners couldn't rescue or set free as fires rage across south-central and southeastern Montana.

The problem is, people don't know of the group's willingness to help, said Sasha Hyland, executive director of The Montana Awareness, Education and Equine Rehab Association. The not-for-profit organization, a horse rescue and rehabilitation center with facilities to house more than 400 animals, wants to do more, she said.

"Definitely, in this crisis situation, we've made our facilities available," she said.

The group has taken in 23 horses displaced by fires so far. Some were delivered to the organization's facilities but the organization's staff also is willing to travel to the animals. Hyland suspects hundreds of animals have perished in the fires. Some could have been saved had people known the group was willing to come and transport the animals to safety, she said. Evacuation orders require that people leave right away and they often don't have time to save their animals. Others set them loose. "We've gotten a lot of calls from people who have lost horses who are still looking for them," Hyland said.

The group has begun putting missing animals on its website at www.MontanaAwareness.com.

Hyland recommends not waiting for the evacuation to make arrangements for their animals. "We have transportation ready," Hyland said. "It's a free service. We'll transport the animals back to you."

The group is willing to take small livestock such as goats and sheep as well as horses.

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