

**Pets in the Pines Adoptathon in Flagstaff, AZ** by *Toni Prothero, Education Director, Second Chance Center for Animals*

I've been asked to write an article for the *Vermilion Flycatcher* as a member of the Citizen Stewardship Collaboration Project funded by the Arizona Community Foundation. The non-profit organization I work for recently hosted a community-wide event that demonstrates how stewardship works and how collaboration can help us achieve specific goals.

On May 5, 2007, Second Chance Center for Animals held its first annual Pets in the Pines Adoptathon in Flagstaff. Months of planning came together at Wheeler Park for the six-hour event, interrupted midway by a late-season snowstorm. Rescue and animal welfare groups from around the state came together, in spite of the weather, to find homes for animals and provide information about animal welfare. Dogs were the focus of many groups, and we all rejoiced when a dog from another organization found a home. We knew it meant there was room for one more dog to be taken into a kennel or foster home somewhere.

An event like this is a showcase for how organizations with different approaches to an issue can come together for mutual benefit. Some of the Adoptathon participants are involved in wild and domestic animal rescue: Paw Placement of Northern Arizona, Border Collie Rescue, The House of Rats, Show Low Animal Control, Liberty Wildlife and Second Chance Center for Animals. Some demonstrated the sport they and their dogs are involved in: weight-pulling and mushing, agility, herding and even dancing. Some provide needed services such as health care and grooming. And many who participated, Girl Scouts, music groups, local businesses and private citizens, found opportunities as volunteers to serve a cause they care about. You could say that Pets in the Pines was a "whole animal" event.

Effective stewardship is holistic. One cannot save black-footed ferrets, for example, without including the plants they feed on and the animals they share burrows with. One cannot be a responsible pet owner without concern for the animal's health and emotional needs, or without concern for the problem of pet overpopulation.

Effective stewardship is collaborative. Responsible pet owners rely on the skills and knowledge of health care providers and trainers. Animal welfare organizations rely on the dedication of the scores of volunteers and donors who enable them to pursue their missions. Animal rescue groups often take in animals from other organizations to provide access to a different market. And we collaborate in learning together and from each other. I know about prairie dogs because Habitat Harmony provided education programs for our camps last summer and we provided a venue for them. We at Second Chance Center for Animals have recently learned from the Arizona Mountain Musers how we can use weight-pulling to help provide exercise for some of our dogs.

On May 5, the citizens of Arizona came together for a day of collaboration and stewardship for the benefit of animals. The only uncooperative element was the weather; 30 degrees and snowing! The raptors, turtle and snake brought by Liberty Wildlife from Phoenix had to go home early, but the Native American band "Blackfire" warmed us up, and dogs and cats were adopted, some who had waited many a long day to find their forever home.

Photo Caption: Liberty Wildlife Volunteer & Great Horned Owl at Pets in the Pines Adoptathon. *Courtesy Maria Mitchem, Second Chance Center for Animals Volunteer*