

WINTER 2017



MAINE FRIENDS OF ANIMALS

news

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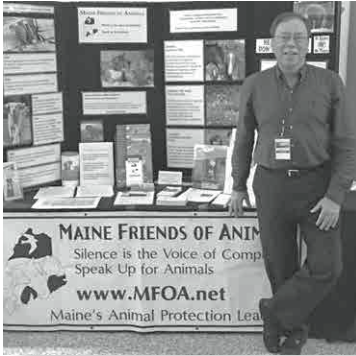


Read about MFOA's animal
protection work over the last 19
years by clicking on Timeline
at www.mfoa.net



COMMENTARY

Small Steps Can Lead to Big Changes By Robert Fisk, Jr.



Early stages of any social movement are met with more setbacks than successes, yet we must not be discouraged as persistence and determination are omnipotent. When we lose, we continue to plant the seeds of change in thinking about how we view and treat animals. When we win, it gives us renewed wind to our sails.

In recent years, our resolve has been tested several times. In 2014, animal advocates lost for the second time a referendum to ban the hunting of Maine black bears with the use of bait, hounds and traps.

In 2013, MFOA sponsored "An Act to Make Post Conviction Possession of Animals a Criminal Offense." This bill would have made owning an animal after conviction of animal cruelty a felony offense, thus creating a much-needed deterrent to further animal abuse. The bill passed in both the House and Senate, but was vetoed by Governor LePage, despite the strong efforts of co-sponsor Sen. Stan Gerzofsky (D-Brunswick) to override the veto.

After a three-year public, media, and legislative campaign, in 2013 MFOA also sponsored "An Act to Prohibit Horse Slaughter for Human Consumption and the Transit of Horses for Slaughter." This controversial legislation was actively and admirably sponsored by Rep. Gary Knight (R-Livermore Falls), passed in the House, but an effort for a conference committee was defeated by Senate Republicans with the Governor's lead.

In 2015, MFOA sponsored (in partnership with Maine Citizens Against Puppy Mills) first in the nation legislation to ban the retail sales of dogs and cats in Maine pet shops; 95% of such sales come from out of state puppy mills, often with deplorable conditions. With the lead of our sponsor Rep. Kim Mohegan (D-Cape Elizabeth), the bill passed in the House and Senate, but again was vetoed by the Governor.

This past year, the IF&W proposed increased trapping seasons for bobcats and beavers. Many animal advocates attended the public hearing and introduced strong evidence against such rule changes, yet Commissioner Chandler Woodcock recommended approval of the extended seasons to the Advisory Committee. Not unexpected. DIF&W, the Wildlife Advisory Council, the hunting and trapping lobby, and often legislators of the IF&W Committee are essentially all the same people. They are philosophically, politically, socially, and financially connected. Until animal advocates can meaningfully engage the non-consumptive users of wildlife (three times as many as sportsmen) to address this dynamic, the advancement of wildlife legislation will continue to be a challenge.

Although the above-noted MFOA bills markedly increased public and legislative awareness and debate, they met a political fate. All these pieces of legislation were important to Maine animals and MFOA invested countless hours, especially given these issues involved simultaneous two-year educational campaigns. Considering the current administrative and legislative environment, we have decided not to introduce new animal protection legislation in 2017. This does not mean, however, that we will not be active in the 128th Legislature. We will, as always, review all legislation affecting Maine animals, support good bills and speak up against bad ones.

We will not be deterred. Animal cruelty perpetrators, horse racing and slaughter, bear hunting in Maine, and puppy mills are issues too cruel in nature to not be re-introduced in the future. The puppy mill bill was first in the nation legislation and almost passed and likely would have with a different administration. We again appeal to our supporters and fellow animal advocates to be patient, understanding that all social causes have stages and changes often come agonizingly slow.

One of MFOA's original bills - almost 20 years ago - was to increase the penalty for animal cruelty to a felony offense. Initially, it didn't even make it out of committee. In the next legislature, it got out of committee, but did not pass. We introduced the bill a third time in 2001 and it passed unanimously in committee.

In 2001, after a highly publicized two-year statewide campaign, MFOA submitted controversial legislation to ban circuses with elephants from performing in the state, which culminated with the Maine House of Representatives voting in favor of the legislation by a wide margin of 88-58. It was the first time in the country any similar legislation had passed in any state body. Unfortunately the circus parent company, Feld Entertainment, Inc. hired lobbyists, and the bill was defeated in the Maine Senate.

This past April in Providence, RI, Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus scheduled its last performance using elephants and closed altogether this January. The 146-year old tradition, which has been deeply ingrained in our culture, ended, 15 years after MFOA's ground-breaking state legislation.

The angst and stress we feel in trying to change how man thinks of other species is far less than that of the animals we try to save. It is paramount in our hills and valleys of progress that we never waiver in our unshakable belief that our cause is just, and the pendulum is swinging our way, albeit too slowly.

We only have to remember what we faced 20 years ago, when the challenges were even greater. Two decades of bringing a wide array of injustices done to animals into public view has given us greater knowledge and understanding of issues and challenges we face today. Much wiser, battle tested and in far greater numbers, we organize for future education, advocacy, endeavors and legislation.

Be an Animal Activist

Do you have a few hours each month to help end animal abuse, neglect and cruelty in your state? Think that one individual's small time commitment cannot help reduce and end needless animal suffering in Maine? You CAN make a difference!

Here's how:

MFOA Volunteer We have a multitude of ways to volunteer, whether periodically writing letters to the editor and your state legislators, assisting at the MFOA offices in Falmouth, hosting a fundraiser, attending a committee meeting at the Capitol, or tabling with the MFOA display and materials. Tabling is an educational outreach that enables you to help get our message out closer to home, either with one of our established events throughout the state or at a new event in your community that you think would provide good exposure for MFOA.

Board Member MFOA is a non-profit, board-driven organization. A member may get involved in a specific, ad-hoc and/or general way. Work is done via email and telephone, with eight monthly meetings annually. Contact MFOA for more information or a Board member application.

Visit our Offices in Falmouth



MFOA Partners With Center for Wildlife



For over 30 years, Cape Neddick's Center for Wildlife has provided medical care, safe sanctuary and humane treatment for sick, injured and orphaned wildlife until they can be released back into the wild. The Center receives 2,000 animals annually from all over New England and also provides educational outreach programs about wildlife and their environments. MFOA has spent 20 years serving as a voice for the humane treatment of Maine's wildlife. These two organizations will be partnering with ongoing communication, promotion, facilitation and enhancement of their dovetailing missions to safeguard animals with the least protection.

To that end, we start our association with the Center for Wildlife by asking all our MFOA members and supporters to look at the Center's Wish List, which includes incidentals such as foods, office supplies, cleaning supplies and other products and necessities. Simply go to the link at the bottom. All these donations save costs that can be used to help the wildlife in need of care. You may drop off your donations at the Center for Wildlife or at the MFOA offices in Falmouth. Please show the Center for Wildlife that MFOA members appreciate what they do.
www.thecenterforwildlife.org/wish-list

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We make it easy for you to take action and help animals. Get on MFOA's ACTION ALERT Updates list. Send us your email address at info@mfoa.net



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Be a part of Maine's leading animal protection organization. Go to www.mfoa.net and click on DONATION.

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MAINE VOICES

Special to the Portland Press Herald

State's propping up harness racing industry makes less and less sense

More money for retired horses would be nice, but perhaps not having retired horses at all is the answer.

FALMOUTH — Colin Woodard's thorough piece ("Casino funds could offer hope for retired harness racing horses," Dec. 18) raises another issue: subsidizing a dying business. Maine's harness racing industry continues in steady decline despite an \$8.44 million taxpayer subsidy in 2015 and similar annual allocations from slot machine revenue since 2005.

The continuous financial outlay is further called into question, given the well-documented checkered history of harness racing, one that includes animal cruelty in which fines are an ongoing cost of doing business, drugging has a long and shady past and overbreeding results in many "surplus" horses being sent to slaughter plants in Quebec.

The life of a harness racing horse is not some bucolic scene. It's often miserable for the horses as racers, and after a short career, typically three to five years, they become unwanted.

As Woodard notes: "It's the uncomfortable secret of Maine's harness racing industry: Each year, some 200 horses end their racing careers at ages 3 to 14, but will live to be 30."

The industry has always needed an outlet to rid itself of animals it deems as unproductive. The article begins with a description of the awful condition of Yankee, a 10-year-old racehorse bound for the slaughterhouse by his previous owner, but saved by a rescue.

With Scarborough Downs likely to close this year (further indication of an industry in free fall), the Maine Harness Racing Commission finds itself with \$3 million of the track's annual subsidy. A proposal to use some of that money for the care of these young, retired

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Robert Fisk Jr., a former state legislator, is president and director of the Falmouth-based Maine Friends of Animals.

horses is long overdue. As Robyn Cuffey, respected re-trainer of racehorses, told Woodard: "I'm still trying to figure out why the people who made all the money off these horses are not putting a dime back into taking care of them afterward."

State Rep. Don Marean of Hollis claims that such a proposal is a "pipe dream" and that any unallocated funds will be diverted to pay the operating costs of the harness racing commission. A Maine Harness Horsemen's Association lobbyist, spokesperson and



board member, Marean also frequently mentions that the commission donates \$5,000 for distressed horses – less than 1 percent of the \$8.4 million subsidy.

This would have been a perfect time for a much-needed public relations boost to embrace a minimal allotment and recognition of the need, but the industry instead showed its real hand again. Marean declared: "The numbers you are getting are fabricated on emotion and the need of some rescues looking for monetary support." It is all about money

– these magnificent animals are treated as a disposable commodity.

Marean, who led the opposition to an anti-horse slaughter bill in 2013, claims in the article, "The entire industry is struggling to stay afloat with the competition from the casinos and ... online gambling." These same sentiments were expressed by Sharon Terry, owner of Scarborough Downs, when she had requested further subsidies for the track.

All of this raises the larger question: Isn't now finally the time for our state legislators to examine the merits (or lack thereof) of the state funneling millions of taxpayer dollars into an outdated, inhumane, discredited and dying industry that has shown a precipitous decline for decades, despite the state's significant financial attempts to revitalize it? Yes, a fund to help retired racehorses would be great, but not having retired racehorses is better.

The harness racing industry's struggles are anything but new. In the early 1990s, the industry was in full panic: Business as measured by the live handle (the total amount wagered on harness racing) was down over 30 percent, from \$45.2 million in 1987 to \$29.8 million in 1991.

The solution to this free fall? Off-track betting parlors: neighborhood pubs for fans to gamble on races by live TV. OTB parlors were touted at the time as the salvation of the harness racing industry, but 25 years later, both harness racing and off-track betting are withering, with revenues down now to just a scant \$4 million.

Then slot machine revenue allocation was implemented to "rescue" the industry yet again. Since it opened in 2005, Hollywood Slots has distributed over \$80 million in slot machine profits to the harness racing industry, directly and indirectly. The infusion of revenue
(continued on page 6)

MFOA Interviews MSSPA

The MSSPA web site states that the Society was originally formed in 1872 to protect the horses which pulled Portland's streetcars and fire engines. How did it evolve into today's largest equine facility in New England?



Marilyn Goodreau and Grace

In the early 1970s, philanthropist Lawrence J. Keddy, the Society's modern day founder, became its president; he and his life partner Marilyn Goodreau revitalized the organization and moved it to its present location on the River Road in Windham. Following a statewide survey of municipal officials to determine how the farm might best serve the needs of Maine animals, the decision to operate a large animal shelter, focused on horses, was made. The rest, as they say, is history.

Where do most of the horses that arrive at MSSPA come from?

Nearly all of the horses at the Society's farm shelter have been seized by Maine law enforcement agents; generally those animals have been abused or neglected and their owners are subject to prosecution for violation of Maine's animal welfare statutes. The MSSPA is the preferred placement for horses who have experienced abuse or neglect. The rehabilitation process here is robust and we devote all necessary resources required to help horses recover to their best potential.

Other than the inability to financially care for an animal, what do you see as causes for neglect and abuse?

In our experience the primary cause for abuse or neglect of horses is a lack of understanding that they require daily care, nutritious feed, fresh water, shelter from the weather, hoof care, and necessary medical attention. Inexperienced or uninformed folks tend to think that horses are quite self-sufficient and can thrive on grass in the backyard during the good weather and a little hay in the winter.

Once the horse has been rehabilitated, what is your procedure / protocol in placing it in an appropriate and caring home?

Our philosophy is that all horses here, once fully recovered from whatever condition brought them to the MSSPA, are available for adoption to the right home or family. We ask that potential adopters complete a preliminary adoption application, which identifies the animal(s) that they might wish to adopt. Once completed, that application goes to the Society's adoption committee. Assuming the application is complete, the match appears to be sensible, references are checked, a pre-placement site visit is scheduled, and the horse is prepared for transport. We often ask potential adopters to come to the farm and spend time handling the horse they wish to adopt. Following a successful placement, Society staff or volunteers will make both announced and unannounced site visits to check on the adopted

animals. We never really cede full legal ownership of the animal because if something unforeseen occurs, we want to be able to reclaim the animal without legal action.

Where are adopters from?

Adopters are primarily located in Maine, though we have also done adoptions throughout New England. We like to be able to easily check on MSSPA horses wherever they go, so there is a preference for local adoptions.

In what ways do you educate the public?

Our education program is delivered in several different venues. We provide guided tours at the River Road farm for groups or individuals. Within the past 12 months, we have hosted more than 250 area school children on field trips that included hands-on with rehabilitated horses, exposure to before/after photos of the rehabilitated horses, and practical lessons in equine hoof and dental care. Society staffers, by invitation, also deliver educational programming to community service clubs and groups. The Society also maintains a social media and web presence that is both informative and engaging.

As Scarborough Downs closes this year, the Maine Harness Racing Commission finds itself with \$3 million of the track's \$8.4 million available annual state subsidy. It has been proposed that if some of that money was used for funding retired harness racing horses, there would be less demand on the shelters. Do think such a fund should be established?

Our board of directors and management team welcome the development or identification of any resources that can be used to prevent equine abuse or address the consequences of not properly caring for horses. Those individuals or industries utilizing horses should be first to provide for the animals from whose efforts they benefit.

What do you envision for MSSPA in the next ten years?

The Society's vision is the elimination of equine abuse and we are working towards it each day. Until the vision is fulfilled, we will continue to receive into care horses who have experienced abuse or neglect and been removed from their abusive owners. We will continue to rehabilitate and re-home them. In fact, the Society has just finished a record-breaking year of successful adoptions, with 14 horses leaving our facilities for families of their own. In the short term, we are planning a capital expansion that will include an indoor arena to provide safe work/play space for the horses all year round as well as an updated space for events, educational activities, and administration of New England's premier shelter for horses. During the next decade, we expect to offer additional programming to the public including equine assisted learning, birding and hiking on the MSSPA's spectacular 124 acre farm, and internships in agricultural enterprise as well as non-profit management.

(Full interview can be found at http://www.mfoa.net/mfoa_press/press/mfoa_interviews_msspa.html)



NEW! MFOA Pet Friendly Lodging Certification



Pet friendly business is good business!

MFOA did some research and found 170 places of lodging in Maine, from large hotels to quaint inns, that allow pet guests. We want to promote these businesses with policies that recognize pets are often considered family members and a visit or vacation without them is not always a traveler's preference.

MFOA sent these establishments a comprehensive questionnaire to clarify their amenities, options, restrictions and fees to help launch our new Pet Friendly Certification program.

Not only do we wish to provide a service to travelers, particularly MFOA members, but more importantly, we want these facilities to realize that being a pet friendly business is good business. MFOA also provides member hotels, motels and inns with ideas in other ways to enhance their animal guests' stay and hence the traveler's enjoyment, business reputation and return customers.

Besides listing the Certification members in our newsletters in the future, they can be found on our website and new flyer which will be available at all our tabling events statewide. Part of this program promotion is to ask MFOA members and supporters to promote these hotels, motels and inns to friends and family visiting or vacationing in Maine.

(continued from page 4 - PPH Maine Harness Racing)

has boosted purses and encouraged horse owners to invest in faster horses, but attendance and money wagered on harness racing have continued to decline.

With so many other significant state

financial needs, it remains perplexing why the state continues to prop up an activity that is outdated, cruel and has drastically faded in popularity. Moreover, no animal that has served mankind so long, so well, so nobly, and in so many capacities, deserves such a fate.

- How you can help MFOA's effort to increase pet friendly policies in Maine:
- Go online at www.mfoa.net/images/stories/petfriendlylodgingquestionnaire_web.pdf and print the MFOA Animal Friendly Certification Form.
- Call hotels, motels and inns in your community and ask what their pet policies are.
- If they do not have pet policies, politely explain why it would be good business to do so and offer to send them the MFOA Certification Form. There is a \$35 annual fee to cover our expenses.
- If they are pet friendly, offer to send them the same form and let MFOA know (207-781-2187 or info@mfoa.net) so the office can follow up.
- Getting them to join MFOA's new program is an opportunity for a profile-raising of a positive business practice. In addition, it helps create more and better places where visitors and pets feel comfortable and safe in a welcoming place. Please consider giving some of your time to help us create a win-win-win for the hotel, the traveler and the animal.

THANK YOU DONORS

Why your membership renewal is money well spent

From revamping the State Animal Welfare Program, addressing the cruelty of coyote snaring and treatment of circus elephants, from establishing our "Dogs Chained for Life" and Pet Club programs, to submitting a State referendum to ban bear baiting, hounding and trapping, from focuses on canned hunting, puppy mills, horse racing/slaughter to the eight pieces of legislation that have improved the lives of Maine's dogs and cats, MFOA has led the way in Maine. Never easy, but tirelessly speaking up for animals

Our nearly two-decade history demonstrates how and why we have become the state's leading animal protection organization. What it does not show is what we have accomplished on a surprisingly small budget. If you review the activity 'timeline' on our website and then our budget, a very strong case can be made for a "good bang for your buck." Like a business, MFOA functions at its best when there is strong, supportive funding.

We are in the serious "business" of reducing and ending animal abuse and suffering in Maine. When you consider where to place your charitable dollars, please consider a donation to MFOA as an investment in an organization that has already shown a capacity of accomplishing much with limited resources.

As engaged as we are, we have no paid staff, operate from a nice donated office space and are driven by a very active volunteer board of directors. Hence, 100% of your donation goes to helping Maine's animals. Your 2017 membership renewal, large or small, will be money well spent.

A few examples of how your donation can help Maine animals

\$15 pays for some office supplies

\$25 pays for a tabling event fee

\$50 pays — the cost of following up on a 'dog chained for life'

\$100 pays the cost for a mailing to the state legislators

\$250 pays for elementary school Pet Club packets

\$500 pays for office support staff to pursue more animal cruelty issues

\$1,000 pays for TV ads supporting animal protection legislation.

We want to thank those who have donated financially to Maine Friends of Animals. We could not list all our donors in the space allowed, but all donations large and small are most appreciated, and are used entirely to make the life of Maine's animals a better one. MFOA is a 501 c3. All donations are tax deductible.

A special thank you to our major donors from 2015-2016

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Silence is the Voice of Complicity – Speak Up for Animals

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Living with Wildlife Beaver – Nature's Engineers

Beavers were almost eliminated from three continents before people realized the value of “nature’s engineers.” According to *Beavers: Wetlands and Wildlife*, hydrologists blame the uncontrolled trapping of beavers in the 1700s and 1800s, followed by intensive drainage for agriculture, for most of today’s major environmental problems in North America, i.e., water pollution, damage from flooding, droughts, erosion, species extinction.

Although beavers are known to cause property damage when they build dams in places that are inconvenient for humans, the ecological and environmental benefits provided by beavers greatly outweigh any “nuisance” issues caused by them. Landowners are often not aware of the value of these animals or of the alternative humane management options available to them. There are many effective methods of managing beavers that are humane, provide long term solutions and enable peaceful cohabitation without the negative ecological and environmental consequences of “management” through killing.

Beavers are our allies in that their dams create mini-reservoirs that keep water on land longer and can alleviate both droughts and regional floods. They are nature’s way to restore fresh water wetlands, our most valuable ecosystem. In addition, these slow-leaking dams create water nurseries for fish and many other organisms.

The wildlife “management” practice of trapping/killing nuisance beavers is inhumane and is not a long-lasting solution, potentially creating more problems long term.

Trapping is inhumane, dangerous, and non-discriminating. “Kill” traps intended to provide a fast death often do not catch the beaver in the right position to kill it instantly. Drowning traps are equally inhumane. Snare traps can eviscerate victims. Trapping beavers is cruel from beginning to end - a horrific death to an innocent animal. Animals other than beavers can fall prey to traps, leading to injury and even death to unintended victims.

Trapping/killing adult beavers leaves behind vulnerable kits. Beaver kits are born between May and June; they stay with their parents for two years to learn survival skills. Trapping “nuisance” adults often leaves helpless kits behind, resulting in death due to predators and lack of survival skills.

Beaver removal is rarely a lasting solution and may impact the environment. Once beavers are “removed” from a pond, others in the area tend to resettle the empty habitat within a year or two. If dams do remain vacant, they will disintegrate. The pond will be drained; fish, amphibians and reptiles will die from loss of habitat. Wetlands and associated environmental and ecological benefits will be lost.



We can co-exist with beavers by utilizing humane, ecologically and environmentally friendly alternatives which tend to be successful, long-term management strategies.

- Spraying the bark and foliage with a taste repellent, such as Ropel and Deer Away.
- Installing barriers around tree bases by wrapping them with heavy wire fencing so the beavers can’t get their teeth into the bark.
- Coating tree trunks with a sand/paint mixture to prevent beaver gnawing.
- Planting other trees. Wildlife 2000, a Colorado-based beaver management group, plants beavers’ favorite trees next to the water, the theory being that if you give them what they really want, they’ll leave your trees alone.
- Installing proven, cost-effective devices, such as beaver pipes, in dams. Road flooding can be solved with methods such as “exclosures” or beaver fences, such as the Beaver Deceiver.

Funding is available to help landowners offset the costs of implementing humane beaver management strategies. The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program provides financial and technical assistance to help conserve agricultural lands and wetlands and their related benefits. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service’s Partners for Wildlife program can provide funding or materials for flow devices to qualified agencies or organizations.

Wetlands are decreasing worldwide; the importance of their preservation is becoming a priority. We need to focus on conservation strategies that preserve our animals, their habitats and our environment. Learning to co-exist with beavers is one effective way we can preserve our shared wetlands and critical ecosystems for ourselves and future generations.