



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION DRIVE – ROOM 104A
SANTA ROSA, CALIFORNIA 95403-2888
TELEPHONE (707) 565-2431
FAX (707) 565-3778

SHERYL BRATTON
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

CHRISTINA RIVERA
ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

NICOLE BERROCAL
DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

MICHAEL GOSSMAN
DEPUTY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

August 20, 2018

The Honorable Gary Nadler, Presiding Judge
Sonoma County Superior Court
Hall of Justice
600 Administration Drive
Santa Rosa, California

RE: Response to the 2017-2018 Sonoma County Civil Grand Jury Report

Dear Honorable Judge Nadler:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above stated Civil Grand Jury Report. The following is the County Administrator's Office response to the Report titled "The Evacuation and Sheltering of Animals During the Firestorm of October 2017".

If you have any questions, or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 707-565-2588.

Sincerely;

Sheryl Bratton,
Sonoma County Administrator

cc: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors
Regina Nellor, Foreperson, Sonoma County Grand Jury

Response to Grand Jury Report

Report Title: The Evacuation and Sheltering of Animals During the Firestorm of October 2017

Report Date: June 20, 2018

Response By: Sheryl Bratton **Title:** County Administrator

Agency: Sonoma County Administrator's Office

FINDINGS:

F1. The County of Sonoma lacks a comprehensive animal emergency response plan that identifies Animal Services as lead department to coordinate the response to the emergency. The *Animals in Disaster Response Plan*, an Annex to the *Emergency Operations Plan of Animal Services* was intended to accomplish this, was in revised draft form at the time of the firestorm, and was implemented effectively.

We agree with this finding.

F2. The lack of an alternative power source at the Animal Services facilities, and the malfunction of radios for use by mutual aid agencies, hampered communication and operations throughout the emergency.

We agree with this finding.

F3. Animal Services' emergency response was hindered by its assignment to Health Services' Department Operations Center instead of the County Emergency Operations Center. The Department of Health Services lacked a plan to ensure that Department Operations Center members completed the required Incident Command Center training.

We agree with this finding.

F4. The lack of a formalized Emergency Response Plan and training for the Fairgrounds led to some confusion and disorder in the early phase of the animal sheltering operation.

We agree with this finding.

F5. Without formal Memoranda of Understanding between the County and non-governmental organizations, reimbursement of costs by FEMA may be more difficult.

We agree with this finding.

F6. Following the firestorm, Animal Services, the Fairgrounds, and non-governmental agencies have begun to develop formal protocols for animal disaster response, including alternate animal evacuation sites should the Fairgrounds be unavailable. Animal Services has plans to improve the volunteer program to train and certify animal disasters volunteers which will enhance animal rescue capabilities.

We agree with this finding.

F7. Animal Services is a first responder that operates 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, works in conjunction with law enforcement, and exercises the powers listed under California Penal Code 830.9 including the use of firearms. Animal Services management was fully trained and experienced in emergency response, but much of Animal Services staff lacks Incident Command System training.

We agree with this finding.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Board of Supervisors designate Animal Services as the lead agency for Animal Emergency Planning and Response for Sonoma County, and the County Administrator assign an Animal Services representative to the Emergency Operations Center, by December 31, 2018. (F1, F3)

Response: Recommendation R1 has been implemented

Animal Services is designated as the lead agency for Animal Emergency Planning and Response for Sonoma County in the Sonoma County Emergency Operations Plan. This role will be clarified and expanded in the future update to the plan during FY 2018/19. An Animal Services representative has been added to the Emergency Operations Center staffing plan.

R4. The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator implement an emergency response and training plan for the Fairgrounds, including annual disaster training for regular and temporary staff, by December 31, 2018. (F4)

Response: Recommendation R4 has not been implemented and may not be implemented in the future

On August 14, 2018 the Board of Supervisors approved a resolution mandating the creation of a new Emergency Staff Development Program to better prepare County staff to function in their role as Emergency Workers. This mandatory training will be tailored to roles staff are likely to play in an emergency, and will include general understanding of the ICS system. The full plan will come to the Board by December 11, 2018. The County will cooperate with the Fairgrounds to coordinate and assist with training as is found to be necessary and appropriate by the Fairgrounds and the County, under the terms of the Agreement between County of Sonoma and Sonoma County Fair and Exposition Inc. While full-time Fair workers are County employees, their appointment and management are under the authority of the Fairgrounds. Temporary and seasonal Fairgrounds employees are not employees of the County. This limits the ability of the County to mandate a specific training plan for these staff.

R5. The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator enter into Memoranda of Understandings with non-governmental organizations that play a role in animal disaster emergencies by December 31, 2018. (F5)

Response: Recommendation R5 has not been implemented and may not be implemented

The County of Sonoma, through Animal Services, will continue to improve coordination with its non-governmental partners. The need for Memoranda of Understanding will be evaluated on case-by-case basis. For example, in the response to Recommendation R3, the Bay Area Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) is using the proven Sonoma County Disaster Response Plan as a template to standardize disaster response plans throughout the North Bay hub of 14 counties. This coordinated effort, which does not make use of Memoranda of Understanding supports the objective of a regionalized disaster response amongst both governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

R7. The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator analyze the current placement of Animal Services under the Department of Health Services, and determine if Animal Services should be reassigned to an agency that operates 24 hours a day, by December 31, 2018. (F7)

Response: Recommendation R7 has not been implemented but will be implemented in the future.

The County Administrator will conduct a management review of Animal Services, in which the assignment of Animal Services within the Department of Health Services and the need for an assignment within an agency that operates 24 hours per day will be evaluated.