

Pet Re-Homing Effort Launched

Groups will try to find homes for thousands of animals displaced by Hurricane Katrina.

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The Three Wishes Foundation, a New Orleans nonprofit animal welfare organization, has begun a national effort this week to find homes for many of the thousands of cats and dogs still on the streets more than a year after Hurricane Katrina battered the area.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans had one of the largest stray animal populations in the United States, with estimates as high as 500,000, according to the Three Wishes Foundation.

Seeking to help alleviate the problem, Three Wishes' re-homing program got underway this week with an initial transport of more than 100 cats and dogs to animal rescue groups throughout Northern California.

"The enormous rescue effort in place during Katrina and immediately after made a significant difference to the lives of many homeless animals, but as the year went on, the situation continued to deteriorate for those left behind," Three Wishes founder Cody Riess said.

"Re-homing is not the entire solution to the problem, but it will help and give many animals a second chance," Riess explained.

Wells Fargo & Company is providing a trailer used to transport horses for the Wells Fargo stagecoach to move the New Orleans animals across the country. Best Friends Animal Society is providing equipment and supplies to assist animals during the journey.

New Orleans-based Southern Animal Foundation is coordinating the effort to ensure that all the animals have health certificates, rabies tags, vaccinations and microchips and are spayed or neutered before leaving the city.

Once in Northern California, the animals are scheduled to be offered for adoption at fairs and other public events.