



# THE SENTINEL

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA STATE AGRICULTURAL RESPONSE TEAM

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## Melbourne Zoo to Offer Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue With Haz-Mat Training



Using slings and ropes for animal transport are not new, as shown in the *National Geographic* magazine photograph from about 1921. What the TLAER training course does is to bring together the latest concepts and equipment in use today.

According to Deb Anderson, the Melbourne Zoo will offer a four-day hands-on Technical Large Animal Emergency Rescue (TLAER) course plus a day of hazardous materials training from May 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. The course runs from all day each day at the zoo, 8225 N. Wickham Rd., Melbourne, FL 32940. For additional information, contact Deb at (321) 254-9453 x 250

[danderson@brevardzoo.org](mailto:danderson@brevardzoo.org). (“On the last rescue day,” Anderson says, “there is a night drill so that day can run from 7:30 until past 11:00 PM. It’s intense!”)

“This is hands on certificate training with Tomas and Rebecca Gimenez,” says Anderson. “The class is designed for rescue personnel, veterinarians, vet techs and zoo keepers and offers a unique opportunity to practice with rescue trained horses and a variety of equipment. The Gimenez not only review accepted procedures but also give participants an opportunity to learn new skills. Their web site at [www.TLAER.org](http://www.TLAER.org) offers further information about their teaching methods and their qualifications.”

A one-day class has been added to the end of the regular TLAER course to teach the decontamination of animals after exposure to hazardous materials. The cost of the course has not been determined.

## Prospective TLAER Course Outline

As this Newsletter “went to press” John Haven, Director of the UF College of Veterinary Medicine, Gainesville, said there were still a couple seats available for the TLAER Course scheduled for the college February 4-7. To inquire about those rare vacancies, check with Haven at (352) 392-4700 x 3154 [havenj@vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:havenj@vetmed.ufl.edu). Below is the tentative course outline (times are approximate):

### First Day

#### Morning

- Introduction: Emergency & Disaster Preparedness
- Basic Concepts in Large Animal Rescue
- Large Animal Behavior/Senses: Normal vs. Stress
- Containment and Restraint (Physical/Chemical)
- HAZMAT Issues
- WMD – TLAER Considerations
- Emergency Decontamination of Animals
- The Incident Command System
- Lg. Animal Veterinarians, Owners, Animal Control
- Emergency Field Euthanasia

#### Afternoon

- HANDS ON AND LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS**
- Introduction to TLAER Rescue Equipment
  - Introduction to Mechanical and Rope Systems
  - Forward Assist, Backwards Drag, Hampshire Slip
  - Manipulation of Live Large Animals
  - Simple Vertical Lift Systems

### Second Day

#### Morning

- Trailer Incident Response
- Livestock Trailer Overturns
- Response to Fire (barn fires, wild fires)
- Agro-terrorism and Foreign Animal Disease
- Disasters and TLAER Response

- Evacuation Planning (Emergency and Disaster)

#### Afternoon

- HANDS ON AND LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS**
- Containment, Handling, Restraint
  - Leading and Loading
  - Trailer Overturn Incident Response Training

#### Starting at Dusk (3 hours)

- Night Search & Rescue Exercise
- Employment of the Rescue Glide

### Third Day

#### Morning

- Water Rescue Scenarios
- Helicopter Operations
- Real-Life Scenario Tabletop Exercises

#### Afternoon

- HANDS ON AND LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS**
- Helicopter Sling Loading
  - Mud Rescue
  - Water Rescue

### Fourth Day

#### Morning

- HANDS-ON AWARENESS SESSION**
- Hazardous Materials Decontamination

## Notes From the December 2007 SART Advisory Board Meeting

The December 5, 2007 SART Advisory Board Meeting was called to order at 10:04, in the Florida Farm Bureau Conference Room, Gainesville, Florida. Here are a few of the items that were discussed:

1. The possibility of funding developing for positions in Food Safety and as statewide SART Coordinator.

2. As there is no 2008 Florida SART Conference, committees are being formed to prepare for a 2009 Conference. Note that the conference must be at a "green" hotel/resort complex. Volunteers are requested for such Conference matters as site selection, speakers, food and beverage, exhibit area, parking, etc. If interested, please contact Joe Kight ([kightj@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:kightj@doacs.state.fl.us)), Tim Manning ([tim.manning@fl.usda.gov](mailto:tim.manning@fl.usda.gov)) or Joan Dusky ([jadu@ufl.edu](mailto:jadu@ufl.edu)). Laura Bevan ([lbevan@hsus.org](mailto:lbevan@hsus.org)) agreed to chair the Agenda Committee.
3. John Haven ([havenj@vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:havenj@vetmed.ufl.edu)) reported on the growth of the Florida Veterinary Reserve Corps and the disaster training courses that the College of Veterinary Medicine has either sponsored or supported including HazMat Training.
4. The March Advisory Board meeting will be held at 10 AM Wednesday March 5<sup>th</sup> at the 41-acre Marion County 4-H Farm, 2232 NE Jacksonville Rd., Ocala, FL 34470 (352) 671-8400. The meeting will begin immediately after a 48-hour live training event held as a "planned, response to a local disaster." The event will test equipment, coordination and procedures across several of the SART disaster response partners.
5. A set of pre-approved press releases needs to be developed to facilitate communication by emergency responders during and immediately after an emergency situation.
6. The initial meetings for the formation of NASAAEP (National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs) were discussed. These meetings will take place January 22-23 at the Gaylord Hotel in Orlando in conjunction with the 2008 North American Veterinary Conference.

### Through the Grapevine

"Non-native species make up 31% (1,180) of all the plants found growing out of cultivation in Florida. These are plants that were introduced to Florida accidentally or for agricultural or landscape purposes and then became naturalized (able to reproduce out of cultivation). More than 120 of these naturalized plants are considered to be invasive to some degree by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council (FLEPPC), and 28 of them are prohibited from possession or sale by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection or the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS)."

Richard P. Wunderlin and Bruce F. Hansen  
Atlas of Vascular Plants  
Institute for Systematic Botany  
University of South Florida



The Southwest Florida Red Cross Chapter's 2007 "Hurricane Bash" raised \$50,000 for local disaster response. 2008's Bash is scheduled for May 17; Mote Marine Laboratory.

Cindy Desmond, Director of Community Education for the Southwest Florida Chapter, American Red Cross in Sarasota reminds us that the Red Cross is always in need of trained volunteers. It seems that almost every day families and communities are experiencing the types of difficulties the Red Cross is designed – and chartered – to alleviate somewhere in the U.S.

According to Desmond, studying the following information is step one to becoming a volunteer.

After viewing the online information, one registers

with the Red Cross and then continues to take disaster-relief courses – Shelter Operations, Mass Care, Client Assistance, Logistics – as one puts the training and education to use in training scenarios and in actual situations as needed. "We can certainly use more shelter volunteers," she says, "and Shelter Operations is only a three-hour additional course."

The chapter has learning materials on line at [www.redcross.org/general/0.1082.0\\_153\\_00.html#orientation](http://www.redcross.org/general/0.1082.0_153_00.html#orientation) - Orientation of the American Red Cross including The American Red Cross Mission and the International Red Cross - Fundamental Principles. A study of this information gives an excellent basic understanding of the Red Cross and its goals.

There is also a fine Red Cross training module titled *Introduction to Disaster Services* at [www.southwestflorida.redcross.org/index.php?pr=Volunteer\\_Information](http://www.southwestflorida.redcross.org/index.php?pr=Volunteer_Information) - with music and video!



Jim Cantore, meteorologist and on-air personality for *The Weather Channel*, was the celebrity guest for Hurricane Bash 2007.

By reviewing these on line materials, one would be well prepared to join the Red Cross as a volunteer and to assist at shelters or food stations during disasters. For additional information contact the Southwest Florida Chapter, American Red Cross at (941) 379-9300 x 226 and visit [www.southwestflorida.redcross.org](http://www.southwestflorida.redcross.org).

### Reminder! A Very Special Quarterly SART Advisory Board Meeting

Not to be missed! The next Quarterly SART Advisory Board Meeting is set for **10 AM Wednesday March 5<sup>th</sup>** at the 41-acre **Marion County 4-H Farm**, 2232 NE Jacksonville Rd., Ocala, FL 34470 (352) 671-8400. *Please note this change of venue!*

The advisory board meeting will begin immediately following a 48-hour live training event held as a "planned, response to a local disaster." The training event is

designed to test equipment, coordination and procedures across several of the SART disaster response partners. SART members David Perry ([perryda@doacs.state.fl.us](mailto:perryda@doacs.state.fl.us)), DOACS ACP Administrator, and John Haven ([havenj@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:havenj@mail.vetmed.ufl.edu)), Director of the College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Florida are coordinating the event.

The meeting will highlight opportunities to become more involved in SART efforts and is truly a "must-attend" for all agencies and organizations that participate in disaster planning and response. It will include a tour of the resources of SART partners that participated in the training event. In addition to the regular business of monitoring Florida's readiness for a disaster, discussion will include an update on the National Alliance of State Animal and Agricultural Emergency Programs – NASAAEP (<http://www.tnavc.org/mynavc/Default.aspx?tabid=257>) – which will have held its formative meeting at the Gaylord Hotel during the North American Veterinary Conference in Orlando January 22-23, 2008.

[Directions to the **Marion County 4-H Farm**: From Interstate 75, take exit #354 and turn east on US Hwy. 27. Proceed about 3 miles to US Hwy 441/301 and turn left/north. It is less than a mile to NE 20th St. (Old Jacksonville Road); turn right/east. It is approximately a mile to the facility.]

## Poster Contest Highlights 2008 Hazardous Weather Awareness Week in Florida



Judging the 2007 poster contest, which was won by Judith Anne Reese, age 10, of Melbourne, Florida

Once again, the American Red Cross is promoting a poster contest for Florida young people in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. Time is now short, because posters must be packed, wrapped flat and mailed to: American Red Cross, 187 Office Plaza Drive, Tallahassee FL 32301. Posters must be postmarked on or before Monday, January 28th and must arrive at the Red Cross office by Wednesday, January 30th. Winners will be notified by telephone. For a complete list of prizes, rules and sponsors, and to view winners of former year's contests please visit <http://redcross.tallytown.com/hwaw.html>.

## Study Reviews Companion Animal Rescue Planning, Highlights Hidden Costs and Effects



A German shepherd dog heart infested with heartworm. The heart is in a jar filled with formaldehyde. The orientation of the heart is sideways, with the apex to the left, and the great vessels to the right. The right ventricle is cut open, allowing the heartworms to be seen at the bottom. (Photo courtesy Joel Mills)

A 2007 issue of the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* featured a research paper from a veterinary group headed by Julie Levy, DVM, PhD, DAVCIM of the UF College of Veterinary Medicine ([levyj@vetmed.ufl.edu](mailto:levyj@vetmed.ufl.edu)). The title was “Seroprevalence of *Dirofilaria immitis*, 43feline leukemia virus, and feline immunodeficiency virus infection among dogs and cats exported from the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricane disaster area.”

Sponsored by the ASPCA, Levy’s team surveyed 1,958 dogs and 1,289 cats exported from Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas between August 20 and



Julie Levy, Assoc. Professor Univ. of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine.

December 13, 2005. Results suggested that companion animals exported from this disaster zone had disease rates similar to animals living there prior to the hurricanes.

While this finding parallels common sense, it strongly suggests that animal rescue groups must be aware of conditions inside a disaster zone prior to an emergency, and the subsequent efforts to redistribute abandoned animals. According to papers published in the *Journal of the Veterinary Medical Association* and cited by Levy, “up to 50,000 dogs and cats were left behind when their owners evacuated.” The destination of the 3,247 pets traced by Levy’s study included 141 animal welfare groups in 38 states and Canadian provinces. (*Dirofilaria immitis* means the highly communicable and deadly heartworm.)

“As an example of the costs involved,” Levy and her team wrote, “the American Animal Hospital Association sponsored adulticide therapy for 725 animals sent to 103 shelters in 39 states and 2 Canadian Provinces at a cost of \$246,106.”

“The 2005 Gulf Coast hurricane disaster revealed weaknesses in planning for a mass disaster affecting companion animals, including the potential for spread of various diseases.”

Levy JK, Edinboro CH, Glotfelty-CS, Dingman PA, West AL, Kirkland-Cady-KD.  
“Seroprevalence of *Dirofilaria immitis*, feline leukemia virus, and feline immunodeficiency virus among dogs and cats rescued from the 2005 Gulf Coast hurricane disaster area.”  
*Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* 2007;231:218-225.

## Big Bend DART – A Ride-Along With Animal Control By Haven B. Cook



Big Bend DART member Haven Cook recently spent a day riding with Leon County Animal Control Officer Walker Mohr to learn about a “typical day” in animal control.

The Big Bend Disaster Animal Response Team (Big Bend DART) has often talked about ways their members could gain more experience dealing with animals and their owners. We decided it might be a good idea to have our members schedule a “ride along” with the Leon County Animal Control officers. I recently rode with one of their Animal Control Officers (ACO) for a shift.

Big Bend DART has forged an excellent relationship with Leon County Animal Control. DART’s mobile cache trailer stays parked in their bay, giving us 24-hour access through our Animal Control phone contact. It’s a partnership that works both ways – since the DART team would be activated through ESF-17 in a disaster, the director of Leon County Animal Control knows the capabilities and resources of our team that are at his disposal.

The ride-along was eye opening. The shift began by completing paperwork on the prior day’s shift, and beginning a whole new stack for today’s work. I was amazed at the amount of territory each ACO had to cover in a day. And I was astounded by the number of calls inundating their office – well over 600 calls a month! Included in the daily paperwork was boxing and mailing a couple of animal heads to be tested for rabies to a laboratory in Jacksonville. Again, I was amazed to learn that this is a frequent, sometimes daily, occurrence. I had no idea that dog bites were so common; no wonder Congress established a National Dog Bite Prevention Week (it’s in May).

I rode with Walker Mohr, an Animal Control Officer and Field Supervisor. After stopping at Traffic Court to drop off a stack of citations, we began visiting the residents on Walker’s list of dog bite quarantines. Walker spoke with each dog owner about the incident, verified paperwork, made sure the resident understood the quarantine process, and got their signatures. Each dog owner he talked to listened politely, explained again what had happened, and asked a few questions. They were all unfailingly polite to Walker, so I began to suspect that this was probably *not* a typical day.

We also answered a call about two dogs running loose, westbound on Interstate 10, so we drove there but never spotted the dogs; then we checked out a barking dog complaint. It was a mild day, but I got a feeling for the variety of things that ACOs face.

Big Bend DART encourages members to volunteer at the local shelter to gain experience in reading the behavior of dogs and cats in sheltering environments. Ride-alongs can provide practical experience in catching loose animals plus give an inside look at how well every animal complaint is documented and followed up.

## Invasive Update

### Old World Climbing Fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*)



↑ Old World climbing fern may be “the most serious threat” to Florida.



↑ Old World climbing fern readily swallows entire trees...indeed, entire woodlands!

This charming fern has a delightful initial appearance, as if it might be a wonderful addition to one’s garden or provide a nesting matrix for small birds or perhaps pay for your attentions with bouquets of lavender flowers. Old World climbing fern, however, does none of the above.

In fact, Old World climbing fern is a most unwelcome newcomer. Introduced through a Delray Beach nursery in 1958, IFAS-UF researchers Kenneth Langeland and Jeffery Hutchinson note its coast-to-coast spread “at an alarming rate.” Included on DOACS Noxious Weed List (5B-57.007 FAC), it may be the most serious threat to Florida natural areas. The infestation has increased from 27,000 acres (1993) to 122,787 acres (2005)!

Originally from the Orient, climbing fern now blankets entire tree islands and clambers over sawgrass in standing water. Native bromeliads are just one of many losers. The fern chokes native vegetation and provides a dense avenue for fire to jump swiftly through tree canopies without touching the ground.



Old world climbing fern can re-sprout from individual leaves and wind-blown spores, and in south Florida, it produces spores year-round. A single fertile leaflet yields up to 28,600 spores, each one capable of starting a new population at a distant location.



↑ A highly specialized moth has been released in select locations to help provide bio-control of Old World climbing fern infestations.

To control Old World climbing fern, spray the foliage with herbicide containing glyphosate and/or metsulfuron methyl, then monitor periodically for re-growth. If the vine extends overhead where herbicide cannot be applied to all the foliage, cut the fronds at waist height and apply herbicide to the lower, rooted portion. Dense populations, usually on public land, are treated by helicopter. [Information on applying herbicides safely is available from your County Cooperative Extension Service.]

Integrated management of Old World climbing fern with prescribed burning, biological controls, mechanical removal, and herbicides is under investigation. In 2005, a potential bio-control moth (*Austromusotima camptonozale*) was released in southeast Florida, but years will be required before its effectiveness is known. Other insects will be released as bio-controls over the next three-to-four years.

[This information was developed by researchers for the Florida Exotic Pest Council [www.fleppc.org](http://www.fleppc.org), Florida Native Plant Society [www.fnps.org](http://www.fnps.org), Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/lygod.html>, the South Florida Water Management District [www.swfwmd.state.fl.us](http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us) and the Institute for Systematic Botany at the University of South Florida [www.plantatlas.usf.edu](http://www.plantatlas.usf.edu).]

### Through the Grapevine

“Over the last 10 years, the emergency community has begun to respond to these types of common incidents [animal emergency rescue] as the public has adopted a ‘911 call does it all’ mentality, and have expressed a need for awareness and operational training in this specialty. There are too many stories of good-intended ‘heroic rescues’ where the animal or its rescuer is injured or even killed during the rescue. Many of the rescue videos shown on TV demonstrate grotesque breaches of safety and technical skills, when viewed by safety officers, paramedics, and rescue experts.”

Drs. Tomas and Rebecca Gimenez  
[www.tlaer.org](http://www.tlaer.org)

## About the SART Sentinel

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If you have a story or photo that you would like to have considered for publication in *The SART SENTINEL*, please contact the Editors.