

Florida Sheriff's Dept. Engages 'Animal Control' Contractor to Shoot and Kill Defenseless and Innocent Escaped Donkey

MILTON, FLORIDA, USA, April 14, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A public outcry over the intentional shooting of a defenseless donkey has sparked national outrage from animal advocates. The shooter identified by a witness as Phillip Hayes, was contracted by the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Department to capture an escaped donkey on the loose this week. Hayes, a member of the local livestock community, was apparently contacted after an initial attempt by a Sheriff's deputy to catch the escaped equid failed.

The result was tragic for the donkey and traumatizing for at least one eyewitness.



Photo Provided by Emmily Girardot



Alaqua

Hayes arrived on scene with no trailer or any other assistance. After trying to use the pressure-and-release technique with his truck, which resulted in the donkey running into the road, the frightened animal was pushed into a more enclosed area with the assistance of a nearby horse and rider. Witnesses say Hayes approached the donkey and fed it by hand, but instead of securing it with a halter and returning the animal to its owner, Hayes pulled a gun and fired a round into its shoulder. With the animal in tremendous pain, Hayes fired a second, lethal shot.

“

I am devastated about the way this incident ended, and I will do everything I can to ensure that something like this will never happen again.”

Emmily Girardot

Emmily Girardot, a local resident and equine enthusiast, witnessed the killing and was horrified by it. She intended to attend an upcoming county commissioner's meeting but was told the commission would not allow her to speak on

the topic of animal welfare.

“This is an image that I will live with for the rest of my life,” Girardot said. “Our community is filled with people who would have been willing to drop everything to come help humanely capture this animal and return it home. I am devastated about the way this incident ended, and I will do everything I can to ensure that something like this will never happen again.”

Other equine activists are equally appalled. “This is blatant animal abuse, and for this situation to occur by someone who was hired by the county and trusted to do the right thing is unimaginable,” said Laurie Hood, founder and president of [Alaqua](#) Animal Refuge in Freeport, Florida. “Our organization, along with others, would have gladly assisted with the safe capture of this innocent animal. There is no excuse for this type of abusive behavior, especially on the taxpayer’s dime.”

“This incident is one of the most egregious exercises of abusive power and animal cruelty we’ve seen in recent years,” said Marty Irby, executive director at Animal Wellness Action. “The Santa Rosa Sheriff’s Dept. and Mr. Hayes must be held accountable for these actions, and we call on state officials, and the Florida Attorney General to investigate the matter in-depth.”

While the Sheriff’s Department conducts its own investigation, outrage continues to grow in the Florida Panhandle as [Santa Rosa’s Press Gazette has documented here](#). [Click here](#) to watch the video and see the photos taken by Emmily Girardot at the scene of the Donkey killing.

Alaqua Animal Refuge is a no-kill animal shelter and sanctuary, located in the panhandle of Florida. As the Southeast’s premier 501(c)3 refuge, Alaqua believes that every abused, neglected and homeless animal deserves a second chance. Committed to providing protection, shelter and care to animals in need, this private, non-profit Refuge also offers a full-service adoption center, educational outreach, and community programs that extend far beyond their geographic location. Since its inception in 2007, Alaqua, led by Founder Laurie Hood, has become a recognized leader in animal rescue, welfare, cruelty prevention, and advocacy. Alaqua is currently in the midst of a relocation and expansion capital campaign to build a one-of-a-kind facility—the first in the United States—on 100 acres. The new facility and sanctuary will allow Alaqua to continue to do the important work of animal rescue and rehabilitation, as well as be an educational and training center for animal welfare advocates as a place that will inspire, empower, and educate others to make change in our society and recreate the model worldwide. To learn more, visit <http://www.alaqua.org/>.

The logo for Animal Wellness Action is displayed in a white box with a thin grey border. The word "animal" is in a large, bold, black serif font. Below it, the word "wellness" is in a slightly smaller, bold, black serif font. At the bottom, the word "action" is in a bold, orange sans-serif font.

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies, and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

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