

Wildfire Response

In the past we have reported on our involvement and response efforts as it has pertained to multiple wildfires in the state. These include both grass fires as well as forest fires. In these situations (whether caused by lightning storms or human error) we have used the terms “**boots on the ground**” and “**logistical support**” to describe our involvement.

On several occasions we have been asked what does those terms mean and what is involved in each area? The following is our definition of those terms. Note: other first responders may have different definitions or groupings of activities to describe their response efforts.

From Joplin’s perspective when we say “**boots on the ground**” we are referring to activities where we are directly involved with hands-on animal rescue and treatment. “**Logistical support**” conversely includes activities that are supportive of the overall wildfire response effort but not directly involved with livestock or companion animal rescue.

Boots On The Ground:

In this area of our response efforts we have historically been involved in four activities.

First is helping owners, other wildfire responders and law enforcement load up and transport animals out of smoke laden areas or out of the paths of the fire.



Secondly we have been involved in rounding up and moving animals out of danger by opening up gates, herding and moving the animals out of danger and into safe areas. In these situations we typically don't have enough transport vehicles, equipment, manpower or time to catch and load up the animals.





In some cases the animals are later rounded up and transported to temporary sheltering environments. In other situations the animals are returned to their owners' property once the danger has passed and the owners take responsibility for the animals' on-going care.

Our third "boots on the ground" responsibility oftentimes includes providing food and water to the animals we have moved to temporary facilities as well as keeping their environments clean and safe until they can be returned to their owners. This can vary from a few days to several months.



(Photo compliments of San Diego Humane Society)

Lastly in the areas of “boots on the ground” we also work with owners, veterinarians and other responders to provide triage services and other related medical care to animals that have been injured, or burned by the wildfires. This includes treatments for dehydration, smoke inhalation as well as burns and injuries suffered during the evacuations and fleeing process.



LOGISTICAL SUPPORT:

When we are working in logistical support of the wildfire responders we are typically helping by transporting necessary supplies to the responders themselves or feed/hay to the animals that have been affected by the wildfires. In some cases this can mean hundreds of bales of hay, pallets full of grain, as well as large amounts of bottled water, food, supplies etc. to support the first responders.



Historically in providing “logistical support” we have also assisted along the fire lines themselves by brush cutting, helping dig ditches and back burning areas, as well as helping pump water out of rivers to temporary holding tanks. These tanks are then used to fill up tankers with water that is then driven to designated areas along the fire line.

In all of these areas of response we are working under the guidance of a command center and working closely with first responders with a wide variety of skills and responsibility.





We are hopeful that this write up provides clarification of our responsibilities and experiences during our responses to wild fires.

We play just a small part in the overall wildfire response area. It truly takes a coordinated effort on the part of many people and groups to keep our grasslands, forests and property safe from the ever increasing danger from wildfires.