

Starting a Sanctuary

Kim Sturla, Animal Place www.animalplace.org

Resources: Starting and running a nonprofit organization

www.nena.org

National Council of Nonprofit Associations is excellent resource. Visit the website to locate a state capture near you.

www.nolo.com

Nolo Press offers an excellent publication (Book & DVD), *How to Form a nonprofit Corporation*; it takes you through systematic process of forming a nonprofit organization. Cost: \$33; website also has numerous articles on nonprofit management posted.

www.idealists.org

Interactive site where you can exchange resources and ideas and locate opportunities. The section on FAQs is a user-friendly excellent resource

www.nonprofitrisk.org

The Nonprofit Risk Management Center; tools, advice and training to control risks

www.boardsource.org

BoardSource offers great resource for building an effective nonprofit board of directors

Fundraising for Social Change – basics for grassroots organizations

By Kim Klein

Resources: Starting a sanctuary

www.bestfriends.org/nomorehomelesspets/pdf/startsanct.pdf

Best Friends – “How to Start an Animal Sanctuary” 19-pages PDF file

http://www.farmanimalshelters.org/shelter_establish.htm

Farm Sanctuary’s site on establish a sanctuary

www.sanctuaries.org

Animal Place site listing all farmed animal sanctuaries in U.S.

www.sanctuaryfederation.org

The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries – a resource and accreditation organization

10 Steps to Starting a Sanctuary

1. Questions to ask yourself

- What animal species do you want to rescue?
- Do you have an expertise caring for these species?
- Are you committed to work a 24/7 schedule?
- Why do you want to start a sanctuary? Can you better help animals by forming a nonprofit advocacy group?
- TIP: Think twice – third and fourth time. Then think again.

2. Get experience

- Visit other sanctuaries and shelters.
- Volunteer with other rescue groups, shelters, and sanctuaries. Learn about shelter operations and about the commitment of time and emotion you must devote.

3. Develop a team

- Identify other committed folks who may want to join in your effort

4. Land research

- Location: where will your sanctuary be located?
- Zoning: regulates how land is used, how many animals and which species are allowed. How is your property zoned?
- Terrain: is it appropriate for the species you wish to rescue?
- Climate: will summer heat or winter cold hamper interfere with quality animal care?
- Accessibility to public for tours or for volunteers
- Proximity to veterinarians or veterinary medical school
- Location of neighbors
- Number of animals the land can accommodate

5. Animal care

- Space requirements of animals – remember this is lifetime care so enrichment is essential
- Housing needs
- Fencing
- Diet
- Medical care: familiarize yourself with the common medical problems; local veterinary resources
- Equipment: stock trailer for transporting animals to veterinarian.
- Security:

6. Administration

- Nonprofit paperwork: set up 501c3
- Board of directors
- Business plan – all principles that apply to running a successful business apply to running a nonprofit organization

- Staff: advertise, screen, train, supervise
- Volunteers
- Animal policies and procedures
- Employee manual
- Safety manual
- Insurance: liability, workers compensation
- Fundraising

7. Finances

- Land purchase: leased land does not provide stability
- Upstart costs: barns, fencing, equipment, tools, supplies
- Capital expenses: buildings, vehicles, databases, computers
- Operation costs (food, bedding, veterinary care, insurance, payroll, taxes, etc.)

8. Programs

- Will you adopt out some of the animals you rescue?
- Will the sanctuary be open for tours?
- What education outreach activities can you handle?

9. Future

- Reliable source of funding: more than 80% of all nonprofit funding comes from individual donors. Developing a donor base is essential for survival.
- Membership program
- Fundraising plan

10. Be realistic of limitations

- Never commit to caring for more animals than you can financially and emotionally support
- Realize that you cannot save every animal that needs to be rescued.
- Accept the time when euthanasia is necessary.
- Grieve over those you lose, but do not dwell on the loss.
- Make your sanctuary a haven not just for the animals - - but also for you and your staff. Everyone, including the animals, suffer if employees and volunteers are burned out, exhausted, or angry at the world for all the cruelty they see.
- Celebrate each life you save

“You must be the change you wish to see in the world”

- Mahatma Gandhi