

Summary of the Report by the Rescue Study Task Group

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WHEREAS there is an urgent need to address various problems with the Committee to Assist Rescue, and its relationship with the GRCA and the Golden Retriever Foundation,

RESOLUTION 00-54

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board immediately appoint a Rescue Task Force to examine the problems, issues and procedures involved with Golden Retriever rescue, the Committee to Assist Rescue and this committee's relationship to the GRCA and the Golden Retriever Foundation...

This is how our committee was born. It began a journey that would last six months, encompass over 1,500 e-mails, hundreds of hours of analyzing history, data and correspondence, and more discussion and debate than the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks! Committed to the premise that there were solutions for the problems plaguing the GRCA and its relationship with rescue, the committee set out to find those solutions.

A report of our findings and proposed solutions was presented to the Board of Directors at the GRCA Mid-Year meeting. The following is an edited and condensed overview of the main points in the task group proposal. The detailed final report will be available from the GRCA Secretary and will be published on the GRCA Web site.

Job descriptions for new positions proposed by the task group and approved by the Board are also included. Members are encouraged to volunteer!! The research to chart this course was the easy part. Teamwork, dedication and hard work will be needed to turn this vision into reality.

What did we learn that rescue groups really want from

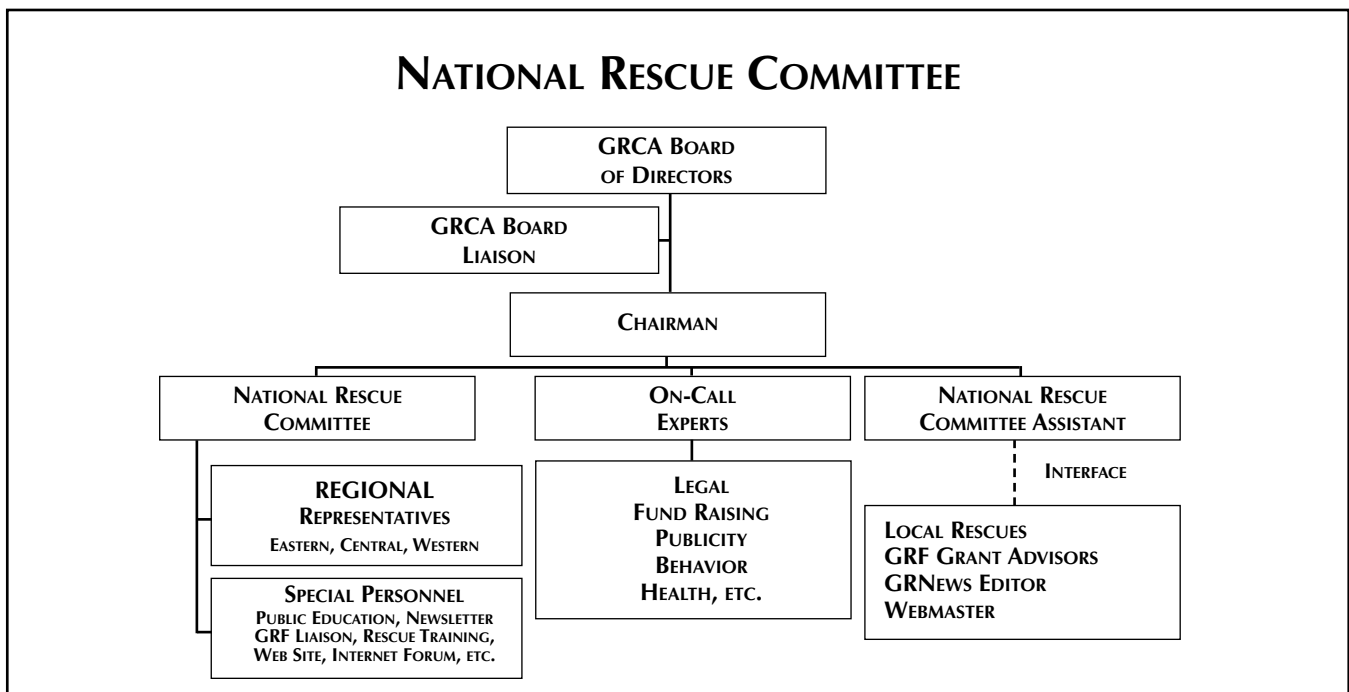
GRCA and the Golden Retriever Foundation (GRF)? Three things. First, they would like recognition and acceptance for their efforts in rescuing Golden Retrievers. Second, the rescue community would like an effective central mechanism to coordinate and enhance communication, exchange ideas, share information, solve problems together, facilitate public education, and develop new tools to improve the quality of service and the efficiency of operations. Finally, rescue groups would like a clearly defined, fair and prompt means to request funding for immediate needs and special projects.

That's a mouthful, but it means that rescue groups don't want to be governed; they want GRCA and the GRF to make their hard job easier.

The task group began by recommending a GRCA Bylaws change to officially endorse rescue as an objective of GRCA. Voting on this change will give the membership an opportunity to make rescue comparable to breeding and competition in GRCA concerns, but not of more importance. It obligates GRCA to make a public and permanent commitment to rescue and gives notice to AKC that parent clubs consider rescue a significant part of their stewardship of the breed.

The next step was to propose standards for acknowledgment and receipt of support by rescue groups. The task group developed guidelines for rescues to become either "affiliated" with or "recognized" by the GRCA. These guidelines make the process of obtaining funds and other assistance more streamlined, more fair and very clearly defined. To continue to allow local rescues the greatest freedom in their local operations, we did not propose membership in GRCA.

All the research yielded a long list of tasks and goals that can best be handled at the national level, so the task group proposed a National Rescue Committee (NRC) for GRCA, composed of a chairman, two representatives from each



region, and some specialized personnel. A panel of on-call experts will assist the NRC. Just a few of the jobs the NRC will face include providing advice to local rescue groups on finances, legal matters and management; networking and mentoring among groups; and publicity of local rescue programs, fund-raising efforts and special events. The NRC will also develop and distribute generalized materials for public education, internal rescue training, fund raising and public relations. Clear procedures for rescues to follow to make use of these services will be worked out by the NRC and published. Finally, the NRC will advise the GRCA Board of Directors on policy and procedures concerning rescue.

To help the NRC maintain records and to give rescue groups a single point of contact for rescue support, the task group recommends creating an NRC Assistant to manage clerical tasks. This person will handle correspondence, keep contact lists up to date, and distribute reports, surveys, forms and materials.

Exactly what rescue activities the Golden Retriever Foundation should fund was a hot discussion topic. To give the broadest support to rescue, the task group proposed four categories of funding. Type I, emergency medical care, is equivalent to the existing April Fund. It reimburses extraordinary medical expenses for an individual dog, within set limits. Type II, emergency operating funds, would be available in a crisis, such as a puppy mill closing or a flood, when a sudden influx of dogs overwhelms a rescue group's capacity. Both these types of grants will have simple applications and the fastest possible turnaround.

Type III grants subsidize routine operating expenses. For example, a group that treats a large number of heartworm cases could ask for an amount of money per case to offset the cost. Another group might apply for a percentage of their spay/neuter costs. Type IV grants are the familiar infrastructure grants for legal costs, equipment, printing materials, building projects. Type III and IV grants will have set application periods so that the GRF board can budget for them.

The task group's proposal puts all responsibility for processing grant applications in the hands of the Golden Retriever Foundation. To accomplish this in a speedy, efficient fashion, the GRF will create a panel of Grant Advisors to be caseworkers for grant applications. When a rescue group wants to request a grant, it will contact the chairman of the advisory panel. The chairman will assign the case to one of the advisors, who will start a dialogue with the rescue group. The advisor will help the rescue group complete forms and assemble background materials. He or she will present the completed application to the GRF board of directors for a decision. The advisor will also ensure that any follow-up



A painfully graphic example of why rescue clubs are vital to our nation's growing problem with overpopulation. This is Sam (GRRIN 96-43) when he was picked up by humane authorities. He weighed 42 pounds and could not lift his head.



This is Sam today in his adoptive home. Thanks to the loving care of the group who rescued him, he is healthy and his future is as bright as his beautiful eyes.

reporting by the group is submitted properly and on time. The process should improve communications, relieve the rescue groups of red tape and get checks in the mail faster.

Obviously, the GRF doesn't have enough money in the bank right now for all these programs, so the task group is recommending a major fund-raising campaign. Many good suggestions were collected and will be submitted to the GRF board. Prepare to see some exciting new ways to donate in the next few years!

The task group proposed a timeline for immediate proposal of the Bylaws change endorsing rescue as an objective of the GRCA, and the selection of the National Rescue Committee, the NRC Assistant, and the GRF Grant Advisory Panel by the 2001 National Specialty. **There are many opportunities for volunteers to contribute, so contact your Regional Director and offer your services today. The time for action is now!**