



LA RONGE ANIMAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN (SAMPLE TEMPLATE)

**A practical, community-informed approach to
supporting animals during emergency events**

For discussion and adaptation by communities,
responders, and organizations



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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
1. Purpose and Context.....	4
2. Guiding Approach and Core Model.....	5
3. Before an Emergency.....	8
4. During an Emergency.....	12
5. After an Emergency	23
6. Supporting Tools and Systems	26
7. Community and Cultural Considerations.....	32
8. Key Principles and Final Positioning.....	35
9. Conclusion	38
References	39

Introduction

This document is a sample animal emergency response plan developed as a practical template to support communities, organizations, and responders in planning for animal-related emergency response.

It is based on lived experience, observed challenges, and emerging best practices in community-based emergency response. It has not been formally developed in consultation with any specific community, including La Ronge.

This plan is intended as a starting point only. It should be adapted, reviewed, and refined in collaboration with local leadership, emergency management, and community members before being implemented.

It does not replace formal emergency management systems, legal authority, or animal protection processes.

Its purpose is to provide a simple, practical framework that can function under real-world conditions, particularly where resources, coordination, or time may be limited.

How to Use This Template

This document is designed as a sample framework that can be adapted by other communities.

Users of this plan are encouraged to:

- update community-specific information (contacts, locations, resources)
- adapt communication methods based on available tools
- align with local leadership, governance, and emergency management structures
- scale the approach based on available capacity

This plan is intended to be flexible and should be modified to reflect local needs and realities.

1. Purpose and Context

La Ronge and surrounding northern communities face unique challenges during emergency events such as wildfires. In June 2025, multiple fires surrounded the region, leading to rapid evacuation efforts and significant disruption across the community. While people were moved to safety, many animals were left behind without a coordinated system in place to support them.

Local responders and volunteers stepped in to assist wherever possible. However, with limited time, resources, and formal structures, response efforts were often reactive, fragmented, and carried out under high-risk conditions. Decisions were made quickly, sometimes with incomplete information, and often with very few people available to help.

This plan is grounded in that lived experience.

It is not intended to be a comprehensive or perfect system. Instead, it provides a **practical, flexible framework** that can be used in real-world conditions—particularly when capacity is limited, communication is challenging, and circumstances are rapidly changing.

The intent of this plan is to:

- Reduce chaos during emergency response
- Improve coordination of available resources
- Support the safety and wellbeing of both animals and responders
- Provide simple, adaptable tools that communities can use immediately

This approach recognizes the realities of northern and remote communities, including mixed jurisdiction (First Nations, municipal, and private), varying access to resources, and diverse relationships with animals. It is designed to support—not replace—local knowledge, relationships, and leadership.

Above all, this plan is built on a simple principle:

Emergency response systems must work even when conditions are imperfect.

2. Guiding Approach and Core Model

This plan is designed to function under real-world emergency conditions, where time is limited, information is incomplete, and available personnel may be few. Rather than relying on ideal scenarios—such as full volunteer teams, prepared households, or formal agreements—this approach focuses on what is **practical, adaptable, and achievable** during a crisis.

The model prioritizes:

- **Simplicity** over complexity
- **Coordination** over control
- **Mobility** over reliance on infrastructure
- **Action** over perfection

Experience from the 2025 wildfire response demonstrated that centralized approaches—such as relying on a single facility—can quickly become unworkable. In contrast, flexible and mobile response efforts, supported by basic coordination tools, proved more effective in reaching animals across multiple areas.

This plan therefore adopts a **mobile, decentralized response model**, supported by a small number of core functions that enable coordination and reduce duplication of effort.

2.1 Core Response Elements

At its foundation, the plan is built around five essential elements. These represent the minimum viable system required to support an effective response.

1. A Single Coordination Channel

A primary communication platform (such as a dedicated Facebook group) to share updates, receive requests, and provide visibility to the community.

2. A Simple Intake and Tracking System

A centralized method for collecting and organizing requests for assistance (e.g., an online form or structured messaging), supported by a basic tracking sheet to monitor status and reduce duplication.

3. A Small, Defined Response Team

A core group of approximately three to five individuals with clearly understood roles, enabling coordinated action even with limited personnel.

4. An Animal Placement Network

A pre-identified list of contacts—including kennels, rescues, SPCAs, veterinary clinics, and potential foster homes—to support temporary housing and care of animals when required.

5. A Responder Safety Approach

Basic measures to support the safety and wellbeing of individuals involved in response efforts, including visibility, communication, and awareness of environmental risks.

2.2 Operating Principles

All response activities should be guided by the following principles:

- **Prioritization is necessary.** Not all animals can be reached immediately; efforts should focus on those at greatest risk.
- **Systems should support imperfect conditions.** The plan must remain functional even when information is missing or incomplete.
- **Local knowledge is critical.** Community members, neighbors, and local leadership play a key role in identifying needs and enabling access.
- **Documentation supports coordination.** Even simple tracking improves efficiency and reduces missed or duplicated efforts.
- **Safety remains a priority.** Response efforts should not place individuals in unnecessary danger.

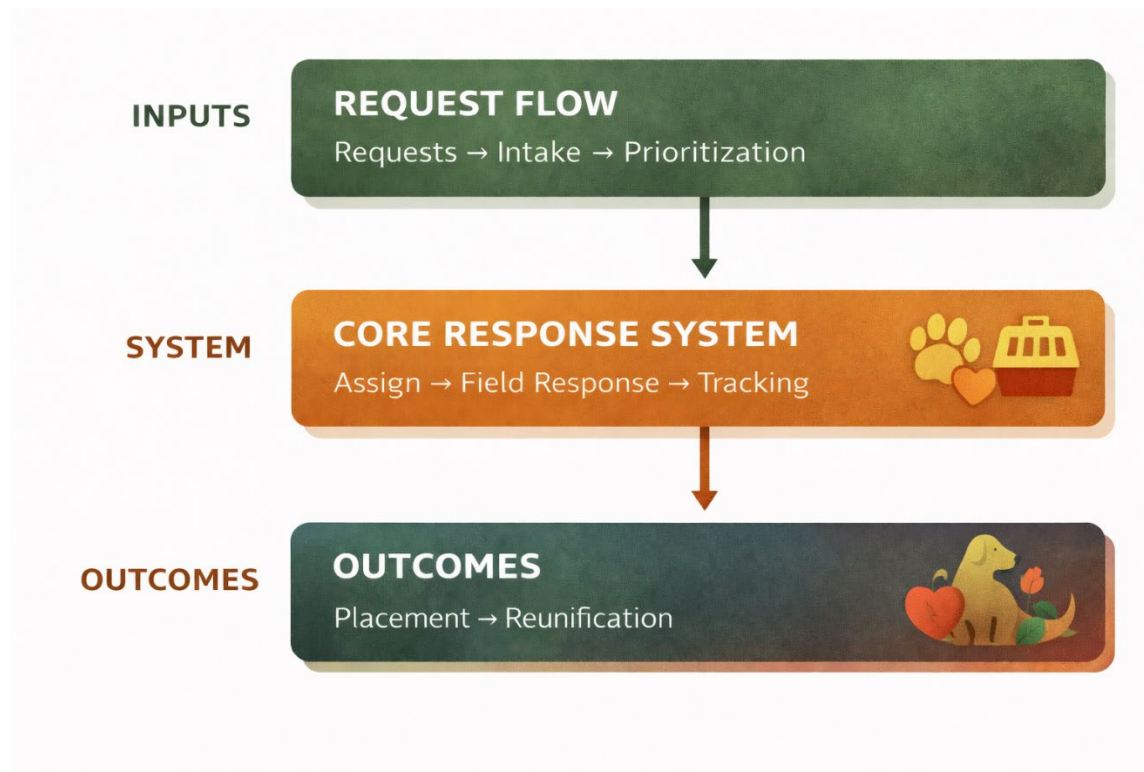
This model is intended to provide enough structure to support coordination, while remaining flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions and community-specific needs.

2.3 System Overview

The following diagram provides a simplified overview of how the animal emergency response system functions as a whole. It illustrates the flow from incoming requests, through coordinated response actions, to final outcomes such as placement and reunification. This model is not intended to represent a rigid or linear process. In practice, response activities may occur simultaneously, and steps may be revisited as new information becomes available.

The purpose of this system is to provide a clear, shared understanding of how requests are received, prioritized, acted upon, and tracked—while maintaining flexibility to adapt to changing conditions.

Figure: Animal Emergency Response System Overview



This overview supports coordination by helping responders and community members quickly understand where their role fits within the broader response system.

3. Before an Emergency

Preparedness plays an important role in improving outcomes during an emergency. However, it is recognized that not all individuals or communities will have the time, resources, or capacity to fully prepare in advance. For this reason, the approach outlined in this plan focuses on **simple, low-effort actions** that can make a meaningful difference if implemented prior to an event.

Preparedness should be viewed as incremental. Even small steps—taken by individuals, communities, or responders—can reduce confusion, improve coordination, and support faster response.

3.1 For Residents and Animal Owners

Residents are encouraged to take simple steps, where possible, to help support their animals in the event of an emergency. These actions are intended to be realistic and achievable.

Suggested actions include:

- Recording basic information about animals (type, number, feeding needs)
- Identifying a trusted contact (e.g., neighbor, family member) who is aware of the animals
- Leaving visible information about animals in the home if time allows
- Ensuring animals have access to water when possible

It is acknowledged that in many emergency situations, individuals may not have the opportunity to complete these steps. This plan is designed to support response efforts even when preparation is limited or incomplete.

3.2 For Community and Local Leadership

Community-level preparation can significantly improve coordination during an emergency, even with minimal effort.

Where possible, communities may consider:

- Establishing a primary communication channel (e.g., a dedicated Facebook group)
- Identifying a small group of individuals willing to support response efforts
- Developing a basic contact list of local resources, including:
 - Animal rescues
 - SPCAs or humane societies
 - Veterinary clinics
 - Boarding facilities or kennels

- Identifying one or two potential locations that could serve as temporary spaces if needed

These actions do not require formal systems or extensive planning, but can provide a useful foundation for coordinated response.

3.3 For Coordinators and Responders

Organizations or individuals supporting animal response efforts may take additional preparatory steps to improve readiness.

These may include:

- Creating a simple intake method for requests (e.g., online form or structured message format)
- Preparing a basic tracking system (e.g., spreadsheet)
- Developing a preliminary contact list for animal placement and support
- Assembling basic supplies such as:
 - Animal food
 - Water containers
 - Leashes or slip leads
 - Gloves and flashlights

Preparedness at this level should remain practical and scalable. The objective is not to build a complex system in advance, but to ensure that a **minimal structure is in place** to support coordination when needed.

3.4 Basic Supplies and Equipment Preparation

Where possible, communities and responders may benefit from preparing a small inventory of basic supplies in advance of an emergency.

These supplies do not need to be extensive or centrally managed. Even modest preparation can improve response effectiveness.

Basic Supplies and Equipment (Example)

Where possible, the following supplies may support response efforts:

Category	Items
Animal Care	Animal food (dry, non-perishable), water, water containers, bowls
Handling Equipment	Leashes, slip leads, kennels or crates (if available), towels or blankets

Category	Items
Safety Equipment	Gloves, reflective vests or high-visibility clothing, masks for smoke exposure
Lighting / Visibility	Flashlights, headlamps
Basic Medical	Basic first aid supplies (for animals and responders)
Tools	Basic tools for accessing yards or removing restraints (when safe)
Additional (Optional)	Kiddy pools or large water containers, animal handling equipment, extra fuel

Supplies should remain practical, accessible, and easy to transport. Even small quantities can support effective response.

Prepared supplies should remain practical, accessible, and easy to transport.

3.5 If You Are Unable to Evacuate With Your Animals

Evacuating with animals is strongly recommended whenever possible. However, it is recognized that in some situations, individuals may not be able to do so due to evacuation conditions, transportation limitations, or accommodation restrictions.

If animals must be left behind, the following actions may help improve their chances of being identified and supported:

- Ensure animals have access to water where possible
- Leave animals in the safest available area
- Leave visible information at the home indicating:
 - Number and type of animals
 - Any special needs
 - Contact information
- Notify a neighbor, family member, or the community coordination channel if available

These actions do not eliminate risk but may assist responders in locating and supporting animals more quickly.

3.6 Key Consideration

Preparedness efforts should be framed in a way that is supportive and non-judgmental. During emergencies, individuals are often required to make difficult decisions under pressure.

This plan recognizes that:

- Not all residents will be able to prepare
- Not all animals can be evacuated in advance
- Community capacity will vary

As such, preparedness is intended to **support response—not determine eligibility for help.**

4. During an Emergency

Emergency response conditions are often fast-moving, unpredictable, and resource-constrained. Information may be incomplete, communication channels may be overwhelmed, and available personnel may be limited. As a result, response efforts should focus on **clarity, prioritization, and coordination**, rather than attempting to achieve comprehensive coverage.

The objective during an emergency is not to reach every animal immediately, but to **maximize impact with available capacity**, reduce suffering where possible, and maintain responder safety.

4.1 Activation and Leadership

This plan is intended to be activated when coordinated animal response support is needed during an emergency event.

Activation may occur when one or more of the following conditions are present:

- an evacuation alert or order has been issued
- multiple reports of animals left behind or at risk are being received
- local leadership, emergency management, or response partners determine that coordinated animal support is needed
- conditions indicate that informal or ad hoc response efforts are no longer sufficient

When this plan is activated, a lead coordinator should be identified as early as possible.

The lead coordinator is responsible for:

- confirming that the plan is active
- identifying the primary communication channel
- confirming who is filling core response roles
- maintaining overall situational awareness
- supporting coordination across responders, local leadership, and placement contacts

Where multiple organizations or informal groups are involved, efforts should be made to identify one primary coordination lead and one shared intake and tracking process.

This does not require a complex command structure. The goal is simply to ensure that responders, volunteers, and community members are working from a shared understanding of who is coordinating the response and how information is being managed.

This snapshot can be used at activation to establish a shared understanding of current roles, tools, and coordination approach.

Item	Current Details
Date / Time Activated	
Lead Coordinator	
Primary Communication Channel	
Intake Method	
Tracking Sheet Location	
Field Responders	
Support Contacts	
Placement Lead / Contact	
Veterinary Contacts	
Notes	

4.2 Response Model

This plan adopts a mobile, decentralized response approach. Rather than relying on a single centralized facility, responders operate within the community using vehicles and transportable supplies. This approach allows for:

- Greater flexibility in reaching multiple locations
- Reduced reliance on infrastructure that may be unavailable
- Faster response to emerging needs

A mobile approach also allows responders to remain adaptable as conditions change, including shifts in access, safety, and communication. Where possible, response teams should aim to be self-sufficient in the field, carrying the supplies and equipment needed to operate without reliance on fixed locations. A small, coordinated team can be effective when roles are clearly understood and efforts are focused.

4.3 Roles and Responsibilities

In many cases, response efforts may involve only a small number of individuals. For this reason, roles should remain simple and adaptable. One individual should be identified as the lead coordinator for each active response period.

Suggested roles include:

Coordinator

- Receives incoming requests for assistance

- Reviews and prioritizes based on urgency
- Assigns tasks where possible
- Maintains situational awareness

Field Responders

- Conduct property checks
- Provide food and water
- Remove or transport animals when appropriate
- Report back on status

Support (if available)

- Assists with supplies, transport, or administrative tasks
- Supports coordination efforts remotely or outside of high-risk areas

Individuals may perform multiple roles depending on availability.

All responders should operate within the coordination structure to support safety and reduce duplication of effort.

4.4 Prioritization

Given limited capacity, prioritization is essential. Response efforts should focus on animals at greatest risk:

Priority 1 — Immediate Risk

- Animals confined inside structures without confirmed access to food or water
- Animals showing signs of severe injury, distress, or medical emergency
- Animals that are chained or confined without access to shelter

Priority 2 — Elevated Risk

- Animals without access to food or water
- Animals with known medical needs

Priority 3 — Lower Immediate Risk

- Free-roaming animals
- Animals that may have access to resources

This approach supports more effective use of limited time and resources.

Priority Summary (Quick Reference)

The following table provides a simplified summary of priority levels to support consistent decision-making:

Priority Level	Description	Examples	Action
High	Immediate danger	Trapped or confined; injured or in distress; exposed to fire, smoke, or extreme conditions	Respond immediately
Medium	At risk	No access to food or water; owner unavailable; conditions worsening	Respond as soon as possible
Low	Stable	Access to food, water, or shelter; contained; no immediate signs of distress	Monitor and follow up

Where uncertainty exists, responders should consider assigning a higher priority and reassessing as more information becomes available.

4.5 Communication and Coordination

Clear communication is critical to reducing duplication and missed requests. A single primary communication channel should be used whenever possible. This may include a dedicated social media group or page where:

- Requests for assistance can be shared
- Updates can be provided
- Community members can remain informed

To support coordination, requests should follow a consistent format, including:

- Address or location
- Type and number of animals
- Relevant details (e.g., access, condition)

Standard Request Intake Format

To support consistent and efficient response, requests should include the following information wherever possible:

Information Required	Example
Address / Location	123 Main St, La Ronge
Community / Area	La Ronge / Air Ronge / LLRIB
Type of Animal(s)	2 dogs, 1 cat
Number of Animals	3
Condition / Concerns	No food or water, dog tied up
Access Information	Backyard gate unlocked

Information Required	Example
Owner Information (if known)	John Doe, evacuated
Contact Information	306-XXX-XXXX
Urgency / Priority (if known)	High
Additional Notes	Dog appears injured

Incomplete information should not prevent a request from being logged or assessed.

Where possible, a simple intake method (such as an online form) can help organize requests more effectively. All confirmed requests should be captured in the intake and tracking system to ensure visibility and coordination.

4.5.1 Communication Guidelines and Boundaries

To support effective coordination, communication should remain clear, consistent, and focused. Where possible, the following practices should be followed:

- Use a single primary communication channel for requests and updates
- Encourage all requests to follow a consistent format
- Avoid duplicate posts or sharing the same request across multiple platforms
- Direct private messages into the main intake process where possible
- Share confirmed information only; avoid speculation or unverified updates

To support privacy and safety:

- Avoid publicly sharing exact addresses unless necessary for response coordination
- Do not share personal contact information without permission
- Be mindful of how information is presented in public forums

Where possible, a designated coordinator or small group should:

- monitor incoming communication
- support consistent messaging
- provide updates to the community

Clear communication supports trust, reduces duplication, and helps ensure that response efforts are directed where they are most needed.

4.6 Access to Properties

Access to properties may be one of the most complex aspects of response. Where possible, access should be obtained through:

- Direct communication with property owners
- Neighbors or family members
- Local leadership or housing authorities

In some cases, responders may be required to make decisions based on available information and community context. Actions should be taken with care and, where possible, documented.

This plan recognizes the mixed jurisdictional realities of the region, including:

- First Nations leadership
- Municipal governance
- Private property ownership

Coordination across these contexts is important, but may not always be formalized during an emergency.

4.6.1 Access Decision Pathway

Access to properties should follow a simple, consistent decision pathway wherever possible. When access is required and not immediately available, responders should:

- 1. Attempt to contact the property owner directly, if contact information is available**
- 2. Attempt to identify alternate access through:**
 - neighbors
 - family members
 - known community contacts
- 3. Where possible, consult with:**
 - local leadership
 - housing authorities
 - property management or landlords
 - emergency management personnel
- 4. If access cannot be confirmed and animals are believed to be at risk, escalate the situation to the coordinator for review and decision-making**
- 5. Document all actions taken, including:**
 - attempts to contact the owner or others
 - who was consulted
 - any decisions made regarding access

In situations where animals are believed to be confined without access to food or water, or are otherwise at immediate risk, these cases should be treated as high priority and reviewed as urgently as possible.

This plan does not establish authority for forced entry. Responders should act within the context of available guidance, local relationships, and safety considerations, and should avoid taking actions that place themselves or others at risk.

4.7 Tracking and Documentation

A basic tracking system is essential to maintaining awareness of response efforts.

A centralized list should include:

- Address or location
- Type of animals
- Status (e.g., not checked, checked, follow-up required, completed)
- Notes or observations

This system does not need to be complex. Even a simple spreadsheet can significantly improve coordination and reduce duplication.

4.8 Veterinary Escalation and Urgent Care

Some animals may require immediate veterinary attention rather than standard transport or placement. Where possible, responders should prioritize veterinary assessment for animals showing signs of:

- severe injury (e.g., bleeding, fractures, trauma)
- difficulty breathing or signs of smoke exposure
- inability to stand or move
- extreme weakness or collapse
- significant dehydration or heat stress
- visible burns or exposure-related injuries

In these cases, animals should be transported directly to a veterinary clinic where feasible, or the situation should be escalated to the coordinator to identify appropriate care options.

Where veterinary services are limited or unavailable, responders should:

- document the condition of the animal
- communicate urgency to the coordinator
- prioritize the animal for follow-up or transport as soon as possible

This plan recognizes that veterinary capacity may be constrained during emergency events. Decisions should be made based on available resources, with a focus on reducing suffering and stabilizing animals where possible.

4.9 Animal Transport and Placement

When animals are removed from properties, arrangements should be made for temporary care.

This may include:

- Boarding facilities or kennels
- Animal rescues or SPCAs
- Foster homes
- Veterinary clinics

A pre-identified placement network can help facilitate these arrangements. Where possible, records should be maintained indicating:

- Where the animal was found
- Where it was transported
- Any identifying information

Placement capacity may be limited or unavailable during emergency events. Availability of foster homes, shelters, or veterinary services may change rapidly.

Where possible, placement should be confirmed prior to transport. When placement is not immediately available, temporary solutions may be required, and coordination with the broader response network is essential.

4.9.1 Animal Identification and Record Keeping

When animals are removed from a property or transported, basic identification and documentation should be completed wherever possible. This supports coordination, reduces duplication, and improves the likelihood of reunification.

At minimum, responders should aim to record:

- location where the animal was found
- date and approximate time
- type and number of animals
- visible identifying features (e.g., color, size, markings)
- a photo of the animal, if possible
- where the animal was transported or placed

Where an owner is not immediately known, a simple temporary identifier (such as a number or label) may be assigned to the animal and referenced in the tracking system.

Where possible, responders should also note:

- collars, tags, or visible identification
- reported owner information

- any known medical or behavioral concerns

Documentation does not need to be complex or time-consuming. Even minimal records can significantly improve coordination and support reunification efforts.

Animal Record and Transfer Log (Example)

The following table provides a simple example of how animal movement and basic information can be recorded to support coordination and reunification:

Animal ID	Date / Time	Location Found	Description (Type, Colour, Markings)	Condition	Photo Taken (Y/N)	Transported By	Destination / Placement	Owner Info (if known)	Notes

Where possible, this information should align with the main tracking system to ensure consistency across records.

4.9.2 Stray, Unidentified, or Welfare Concern Cases

In some situations, animals may be encountered without a clearly identifiable owner, or there may be concerns about returning an animal to its original location.

These may include:

- stray or free-roaming animals with no known owner
- animals without identification or contact information
- situations where the condition of the animal raises concerns about welfare or care

In these cases, responders should:

- document the location where the animal was found
- record identifying features and take a photo where possible
- assign a temporary identifier if needed
- report the situation to the coordinator

Where concerns exist regarding the wellbeing of the animal, responders should avoid making independent decisions about ownership or long-term placement.

Instead, these cases should be:

- escalated to the coordinator
- documented clearly in the tracking system
- referred to appropriate organizations where applicable (e.g., SPCA, animal protection services, local authorities)

This plan does not determine ownership or custody outcomes. Its role is to support safe handling, documentation, and appropriate escalation of these situations.

4.10 Responder Safety

The safety of responders must remain a priority at all times. Emergency conditions such as wildfire smoke, limited visibility, and restricted access can create significant risks. Response efforts should be conducted with awareness of these conditions. For example, wildfire conditions may create additional risks including poor air quality, extreme heat, and reduced visibility. These conditions may impact both animals and responders and should be considered in all response decisions.

Minimum safety considerations include:

- Remaining aware of environmental hazards (e.g., smoke, fire conditions, road access)
- Avoiding entry into unsafe or restricted areas
- Working in pairs when possible
- Maintaining communication with other responders

Basic safety equipment may include:

- Reflective vests or high-visibility clothing
- Gloves
- Flashlights or headlamps
- Masks designed to reduce smoke exposure

Where possible, responders should also **ensure access** to:

- Water and hydration
- Rest periods
- Personal medications (e.g., inhalers, if required)

This plan does not replace emergency services or safety protocols. Responders should defer to fire, police, and emergency management personnel where applicable. Where possible, response efforts should consider rotation of responders to reduce fatigue and support sustainability over extended periods.

4.11 Support Roles

Not all individuals will be able to participate in frontline response. Support roles can provide significant value and should be encouraged. These may include:

- Preparing food for responders
- Coordinating supplies and donations
- Assisting with communication and administration
- Supporting animal care outside of high-risk areas

These contributions are an important part of the overall response effort.

4.12 Key Consideration

Emergency response will not be perfect. Not all requests will be fulfilled, and not all animals will be reached in time. This plan is intended to:

- Improve coordination
- Increase the number of animals reached
- Support safer and more sustainable response efforts

Even incremental improvements can have meaningful impact.

4.13 Navigation and Communication Tools

Navigation and communication tools can significantly improve coordination, particularly in conditions where visibility is reduced or cellular service is limited.

Where available, responders may benefit from:

- Printed residential maps of the community
- The ability to mark locations that have been checked or require follow-up
- Basic zone or area assignments to reduce overlap

In addition, communication tools such as two-way radios may support:

- Coordination between field responders
- Communication in areas with limited or no cellular coverage
- Increased safety and situational awareness

These tools are not required but can enhance response effectiveness when available.

5. After an Emergency

The conclusion of an emergency event does not mark the end of response efforts. Following evacuation and immediate risk, communities often enter a recovery phase that includes reunification, continued animal care, and reflection on what occurred.

This phase is essential for:

- Reconnecting animals with their owners
- Supporting community members and responders
- Identifying improvements for future response efforts

Recovery activities should be approached with the same principles applied during response: simplicity, coordination, and respect for community context.

5.1 Animal Reunification

Reuniting animals with their owners is a key priority following an emergency. Accurate records from the time of rescue, including location found and placement details, significantly improve the ability to reunite animals with their owners.

Where animals have been removed or relocated, efforts should be made to maintain basic records, including:

- Location where the animal was found
- Description or photo of the animal
- Location where the animal was transported

Communication channels established during the response (e.g., social media groups) can be used to:

- Share information about located animals
- Facilitate reconnection with owners
- Provide updates on animal status

Reunification processes should remain flexible and community-informed, recognizing that not all situations will be straightforward.

Animals without confirmed ownership, or those with unresolved welfare concerns, may require additional coordination before reunification. In these cases, reunification should be supported through appropriate organizations or authorities where applicable, rather than informal or immediate return.

5.2 Ongoing Animal Care

Some animals may require continued care following the emergency, including:

- Veterinary treatment
- Temporary housing or foster placement
- Nutritional support

Coordination with veterinary clinics, rescues, and placement partners may continue beyond the initial response period.

5.3 Community and Responder Support

Emergency events can have lasting emotional and physical impacts on both community members and responders. It is important to acknowledge that individuals may experience:

- Stress or fatigue
- Grief related to loss of animals
- Feelings of guilt or uncertainty

Creating space for informal conversation, reflection, and support can be beneficial. This does not require formal programming—simple acknowledgement and community connection can be meaningful.

5.4 Debrief and Continuous Improvement

Following the event, it is valuable to reflect on the response in order to improve future efforts.

This may include:

- Identifying what worked well
- Noting challenges or gaps
- Gathering feedback from those involved

Even informal discussions can help inform adjustments to:

- Communication approaches
- Coordination methods
- Resource needs

Where possible, updates to this plan or supporting tools should be made based on these insights.

5.5 Transition from Response to Recovery

Response activities may shift over time from urgent intervention to ongoing support.

Indicators of this transition may include:

- Reduced number of active requests
- Stabilization of environmental conditions
- Increased availability of community resources

Recognizing this transition can help:

- Reduce responder fatigue
- Reallocate efforts appropriately
- Support longer-term recovery needs

5.6 Key Consideration

Recovery is not always immediate or linear. Communities may continue to experience impacts long after the initial emergency has passed.

This plan recognizes that:

- Not all animals will be reunited quickly
- Not all outcomes will be ideal
- Continued support may be needed over time

Efforts during this phase should remain focused on **support, coordination, and learning**, rather than perfection.

6. Supporting Tools and Systems

The following tools are intended to support coordination, reduce duplication of effort, and improve overall response effectiveness. These tools are designed to be **simple, adaptable, and low-cost**, and can be implemented at varying levels depending on community capacity. They are not mandatory requirements, but rather practical supports that can be used individually or in combination.

6.1 Communication Channel

Establishing a primary communication channel can significantly improve visibility and coordination during an emergency.

A dedicated social media group or page may be used to:

- Share updates with the community
- Receive requests for assistance
- Provide status updates on response efforts
- Support reunification efforts after the event

Where possible, basic guidelines should be established to encourage consistent and useful communication. This may include:

- Providing a clear location or address
- Identifying the type and number of animals
- Indicating urgency where applicable

Limiting communication to a primary channel can help reduce confusion and improve response efficiency.

6.2 Intake Method

A simple intake method can help organize incoming requests for assistance.

This may include:

- An online form (e.g., Google Form), or
- A structured message format used consistently within the communication channel

Information collected may include:

- Address or location
- Type and number of animals
- Access information, if available
- Urgency or specific concerns

Where formal tools are not available, designated individuals may collect and organize this information manually.

6.3 Tracking System

A centralized tracking system supports coordination by providing a shared understanding of response status.

Tracking System Fields (Example)

A simple tracking system can be used to maintain visibility across all requests and response activities. The following fields represent a practical example:

Field	Description
Request ID	Unique identifier for each request
Date / Time Reported	When the request was received
Address / Location	Where the animal is located
Community / Area	Specific community or zone
Type of Animal(s)	Species and description
Number of Animals	Total number
Priority Level	High / Medium / Low
Status	Not Checked / In Progress / Completed / Follow-Up Required
Assigned Responder	Person responsible for response
Access Notes	Gate access, contact info, restrictions
Condition / Observations	Notes on animal health or situation
Action Taken	Food/water provided, animal removed, etc.
Transport / Placement	Where the animal was taken
Last Updated	Most recent update time
Additional Notes	Any other relevant information or observations

This system does not need to be complex. A shared spreadsheet is sufficient if it is consistently updated and used by all responders.

Maintaining a single source of information helps reduce duplication and ensures that efforts are directed where they are most needed.

6.4 Animal Placement Network

A placement network enables responders to identify available options for temporary animal care. A basic contact list can support faster decision-making when animals require temporary placement or care:

Animal Placement Network Contacts (Example)

Organization / Contact Name	Type of Support (Kennel, Rescue, Foster, Vet)	Contact Person	Phone / Email	Location	Capacity / Notes	Availability

This list should be updated as needed during an emergency, as availability and capacity may change.

This may include contacts such as:

- Boarding facilities or kennels
- Animal rescues or humane societies
- Foster homes
- Veterinary clinics

A basic contact list should include:

- Organization or individual name
- Contact information
- Type of support offered
- Any relevant notes (e.g., capacity, limitations)

This network may be informal and can be expanded over time.

6.5 Responder Equipment and Supplies

Basic equipment can support both animal care and responder safety.

Suggested items include:

- Leashes or slip leads
- Food and water containers
- Flashlights or headlamps
- Gloves
- Reflective vests
- Masks for smoke exposure

These items do not need to be standardized or centrally managed, but having access to basic supplies can improve response effectiveness.

6.6 Volunteer and Support Coordination

In addition to frontline responders, support roles can contribute significantly to overall efforts. Coordination may include:

- Identifying individuals available for field response
- Engaging community members in support roles such as food preparation, supply coordination, or administrative assistance
- Maintaining a simple list of available contacts

Volunteer involvement should remain flexible, recognizing that availability may change during an emergency.

Volunteer Roles Snapshot (Example)

Volunteers may support response efforts in a variety of roles depending on availability, skills, and comfort level:

Role Type	Description	Examples of Tasks
Field Responder	Supports on-the-ground response	Property checks, providing food/water, animal transport
Coordinator	Oversees communication and response flow	Intake review, prioritization, task assignment
Intake / Communications Support	Manages incoming requests and updates	Monitoring messages, organizing requests, updating tracking sheet
Transport Support	Assists with moving animals or supplies	Driving animals to placement, picking up supplies
Animal Care Support	Supports animals outside of high-risk areas	Feeding, cleaning, basic care in temporary locations
Supply / Logistics Support	Coordinates supplies and resources	Gathering donations, organizing equipment, delivering supplies
Community Support	Provides indirect support to responders	Preparing food, sharing updates, assisting community members

Not all roles require field participation. Support roles are essential to maintaining effective and sustainable response efforts.

6.6.1 Volunteer and Responder Coordination

Volunteers and community members play an important role in supporting animal response efforts. To ensure safety and effective coordination, basic guidelines should be followed.

Where possible:

- All responders and volunteers should coordinate through the identified coordinator or response team
- Individuals should avoid self-dispatching into areas without coordination or awareness of current conditions
- Field responders should work in pairs or maintain regular communication with others
- All requests for assistance should be routed through the intake and tracking system

Before participating in field response, volunteers should be:

- aware of basic safety considerations
- familiar with the priority approach
- informed of current communication channels

Not all individuals will be suited for field response. Volunteers may also contribute through:

- supply coordination
- transportation support
- communication and intake support
- animal care outside of high-risk areas

These roles are equally important to overall response efforts.

6.7 Property Access Considerations

Access to properties should be approached with care and respect for community context.

Where possible, access may be facilitated through:

- Property owners
- Neighbors or family members
- Local leadership or housing authorities

This plan does not establish formal authority for access, but provides a framework for coordination based on available relationships and information.

6.8 Documentation and Record Keeping

Even minimal documentation can improve coordination and support reunification efforts.

Where possible, responders should record:

- Locations visited
- Actions taken
- Animal descriptions or photos
- Transport or placement details

Documentation does not need to be extensive, but should be sufficient to support continuity and communication.

6.9 Key Consideration

The tools outlined in this section are intended to support—not complicate—response efforts. Communities and responders are encouraged to:

- Use what is practical
- Adapt tools to local context
- Focus on clarity and coordination

A simple system that is used consistently is more effective than a complex system that is not used at all.

7. Community and Cultural Considerations

Emergency response within northern communities must reflect the realities, strengths, and diversity of the people it serves. This includes recognizing that communities are not uniform, and that relationships with animals, land, and emergency response may differ across households and regions. This plan is intended to support community-based response efforts in a way that is **respectful, adaptable, and grounded in local context**.

7.1 Community-Led Approach

Effective response efforts are rooted in local knowledge and relationships.

Community members often have:

- Direct knowledge of households and animals
- Established relationships with neighbors and leadership
- An understanding of local conditions and access challenges

This plan is not intended to replace these strengths, but to support them. Communities are encouraged to adapt the approach in ways that align with their own structures, leadership, and priorities.

7.2 Mixed Jurisdiction and Coordination

La Ronge and surrounding areas include a mix of governance structures, including:

- Lac La Ronge Indian Band
- Municipal authorities (La Ronge, Air Ronge)
- Private residences and property owners

Emergency response efforts often span across these jurisdictions. While formal coordination may not always be possible in real time, awareness of these contexts can support more respectful and effective engagement.

Where possible, responders should seek to:

- Work with available local leadership or contacts
- Respect community protocols and expectations
- Communicate openly and transparently

7.3 Respect for Different Relationships with Animals

Relationships with animals vary across communities and households. Animals may be viewed as:

- Companions or pets
- Working animals

- Community or free-roaming animals

This plan does not seek to define or standardize these relationships. Instead, it focuses on reducing animal suffering during emergency situations and supporting practical response efforts. Approaches should remain flexible and responsive to local context.

7.4 Non-Judgmental Approach

Emergency situations require individuals and families to make difficult decisions under pressure. In many cases, people may be unable to evacuate with their animals or complete preparedness actions in advance.

This plan is grounded in a non-judgmental approach.

It recognizes that:

- People may not have time or resources to prepare
- Evacuation conditions may limit available options
- Decisions made during emergencies are often made under stress

Response efforts should focus on **support and assistance**, rather than evaluation or judgment.

7.5 Community Strengths and Contributions

The 2025 wildfire response demonstrated the importance of community support. Contributions such as:

- Providing food for responders
- Sharing information
- Assisting with logistics
- Offering informal support

played a significant role in sustaining response efforts. These contributions are an important part of the overall response ecosystem and should be recognized and supported.

7.6 Communication and Trust

Clear, respectful communication supports trust within the community.

Where possible, communication should:

- Use plain and accessible language
- Provide clear and consistent information
- Avoid assigning blame
- Encourage participation without pressure

Building and maintaining trust is essential to effective response and recovery.

7.7 Key Consideration

This plan is intended to be **adaptable**, not prescriptive.

Communities are encouraged to:

- Modify approaches based on local needs
- Use available relationships and knowledge
- Build on existing strengths

Effective response is not defined by uniformity, but by the ability to adapt and respond within the context of each community.

8. Key Principles and Final Positioning

This plan is intended to support practical, community-based response efforts during emergency situations. It is not a comprehensive or formal emergency management framework, but rather a **working guide** informed by lived experience and real-world conditions. The following principles provide a foundation for how this plan should be understood and applied.

8.1 Simplicity Over Complexity

Emergency conditions require clear, straightforward approaches. Systems that are simple and easy to understand are more likely to be used effectively than complex systems that require significant time or training to implement. Where possible, this plan encourages:

- Clear roles
- Basic tools
- Simple communication

8.2 Adaptability to Local Context

No two communities are the same. This plan is designed to be adapted based on:

- Community size and structure
- Available resources
- Local leadership and relationships
- Environmental conditions

Users of this plan are encouraged to adjust and modify elements to fit their specific context.

8.3 Function Under Imperfect Conditions

Emergency situations rarely provide ideal conditions. This plan assumes:

- Limited volunteers
- Incomplete information
- Rapidly changing circumstances

As such, the goal is not perfection, but functionality. Even partial implementation can improve outcomes.

8.4 Prioritization of Impact

Given limited capacity, it is necessary to focus efforts where they will have the greatest impact. This includes:

- Prioritizing animals at highest risk

- Allocating resources strategically
- Accepting that not all needs can be met immediately

This approach supports more effective and sustainable response efforts.

8.5 Coordination Over Control

Effective response depends on coordination between individuals, organizations, and community members. Rather than attempting to control all aspects of response, this plan emphasizes:

- Shared information
- Clear communication
- Collaboration across roles

8.6 Support for Responders

Individuals involved in response efforts play a critical role and should be supported accordingly. This includes:

- Recognizing physical and emotional demands
- Encouraging safe practices
- Supporting rest and sustainability

Responder wellbeing is essential to maintaining effective operations.

8.7 Respect and Non-Judgment

All response efforts should be grounded in respect for community members and their circumstances. This includes:

- Avoiding assumptions or judgment
- Recognizing the complexity of decisions made during emergencies
- Providing support without placing additional pressure

8.8 Continuous Learning

Each emergency provides an opportunity to improve. Communities and responders are encouraged to:

- Reflect on experiences
- Identify areas for improvement
- Update approaches and tools over time

This plan is intended to evolve as new insights are gained.

8.9 Final Positioning

This plan is not intended to be a fixed or prescriptive system. It is a **starting point**—a practical guide that can be adapted, expanded, and improved based on community needs and experiences. Its purpose is to support more coordinated, effective, and humane responses during emergency situations.

8.10 Closing Statement

Emergency response will not always be orderly or predictable. Conditions may be challenging, and outcomes may not be ideal. However, even small improvements in coordination, communication, and preparedness can make a meaningful difference.

This plan is designed to support those efforts—by providing a framework that works when conditions are at their most difficult.

9. Conclusion

This plan is intended to provide a practical, flexible framework for supporting animals during emergency events. It recognizes that real-world response conditions are often complex, time-sensitive, and resource-constrained. As a result, the approach outlined in this document is designed to function with minimal structure while still supporting coordination, safety, and effective action.

This plan does not replace formal emergency management systems, legal authority, or animal protection processes. Instead, it is meant to complement existing systems by addressing common gaps in animal-related response, particularly in situations where coordination may be informal or evolving.

It is expected that this framework will be adapted based on local context, relationships, available resources, and community priorities. Collaboration with local leadership, emergency management personnel, and relevant organizations is essential to ensure that response efforts are appropriate, respectful, and effective.

At its core, this plan is built on the understanding that small, coordinated actions—supported by clear communication, simple systems, and shared responsibility—can make a meaningful difference in supporting animal welfare during emergency events.

References

The following resources informed the development of this plan and may provide additional guidance for communities, responders, and organizations supporting animal welfare during emergency events.

This plan is also informed by lived experience during the 2025 wildfire response in northern Saskatchewan, including observations related to coordination challenges, resource limitations, and community-led response efforts.

These materials reflect current best practices in emergency preparedness, animal welfare, and community-based response.

Emergency Preparedness (Canada)

Public Safety Canada

Get Prepared: Emergency Preparedness Guide

<https://www.getprepared.gc.ca>

Animal Emergency Response (Canada)

Humane Canada

National Animal Emergency Response Initiative

<https://humanecanada.ca>

Animal Welfare and Disaster Planning

American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)

Emergency Preparedness and Response Resources

<https://www.avma.org>

Wildfire and Animal Safety

American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA)

Wildfire Smoke and Animals

<https://www.avma.org/resources/pet-owners/emergencycare/wildfire-smoke-and-animals>

Provincial Animal Welfare and Emergency Resources

Saskatchewan SPCA

Animal Protection and Emergency Resources

<https://www.saskspca.ca>

Pet Emergency Preparedness Resources

Saskatchewan SPCA

Pet Emergency Kit Checklist and Pet Information Sheet