



SAFE & SOUND

Northwest sanctuaries give
abused animals a second chance

BY HALEY SHAPLEY
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Judy Woods, founder of
Pigs Peace Sanctuary in
Stanwood, shares a tender
moment with Ethel.



When my sister announced that her one wish for her 20th birthday was to visit a sanctuary for pigs, I thought it was a fun idea.

My mom started planning. My dad was skeptical.

We had to coax him into the car to make the drive to Stanwood's Pigs Peace Sanctuary, but just one oink and he was in love, scooping up carrots to throw to his new friends and sneaking in extra pets through the fence.

We all learned something that day—for one, just how smart pigs are (they're capable of learning on a lateral level, which means they can see something in one situation and then apply that to another). Sadly, we also found out about the many ways pigs can be abused. And hearteningly, we learned how Pigs Peace and other rescue organizations across the state are caring for those creatures without a voice, inspiring me to take a tour of some of Washington's best sanctuaries open to visitors.

PIGS PEACE SANCTUARY

Stanwood

Started in 1994, Pigs Peace came about due to what founder Judy Woods says was a huge unfulfilled need. "When the potbellied pig fad first came about in the '80s, there was a lot of abuse and neglect happening," she says. "They're misunderstood. I just wanted to help people understand the true nature of the animal."

On the tour, visitors get an overview of the picturesque 34 acres, which house about 200 pigs and a small assortment of other animals in need of a home. The stories are often heartbreaking—there's Grace, who was in a bathtub so long that her toenails turned to spirals, rendering her unable to walk; Herman and Arlo, who escaped the farm where their tails had been cut off; and Betsy, who had to rest her head on the body of her dead friend to keep from drowning in the muck she was forced to live in.

Despite these tales, the primary message at Pigs Peace is one of hope. The vast majority of the animals

come here to live out the remainder of their lives, with plenty of space to roam, make friends, and sleep comfortably. They get a second chance at the kind of life Woods believes every living creature deserves.

"If I were a pig, this is where I'd be," a little girl on the tour declares. Watching the pigs with their tails whirring like windmills in excitement at the carrots coming their way, I don't think anyone could disagree.

To visit: Tours are by appointment only and are free; donations are appreciated. Visit www.pigspeace.org for more information about setting up a tour.

PASADO'S SAFE HAVEN

Sultan

When Pasado, a beloved donkey who lived in Kelsey Creek Farm Park in Bellevue, was found strangled to death after being beaten and tortured by three teenagers in 1992, the community went into an uproar. Pasado's Safe Haven, named after the dearly departed 21-year-old park staple, sprang into action.

With a mission to serve animals who otherwise wouldn't have a chance, Pasado's has evolved into a 24-hour animal rescue organization, saving dogs, cats, cows, chickens, turkeys, goats, llamas and a host of other animals from meeting a cruel fate.

Of the creatures who come through their doors, administrative manager and tour leader Jenny Fraley tells our group: "You see them come in and they've just given up—they have no light in their eyes; their heads are down. It's so cool to see after a couple of weeks that they turn around."



"Every day I'm surrounded by innocent animals that have suffered horrific abuse, neglect and abandonment, yet they're so forgiving."

—PASADO'S STACIE MARTIN



Jinkies and sibling Bart (behind her) happily howling away at Wolf Haven International.

MONKEYS, BIRDS & GOATS, OH MY!

Here are three other Northwest sanctuaries worth checking out:

OPR Coastal Primate Sanctuary, Longview, Wash.:

Monkey around on a private tour, offered spring through fall (weather permitting) at this safe haven for primates. Along the way, meet all the residents, hear their stories, and learn about their behavior and personalities. Suggested donation is \$10. www.oregonprimaterescue.com

Cascades Raptor Center, Eugene, Ore.:

High-flying eagles, falcons, owls and more spread their wings at this wildlife center, which aims to help people understand birds of prey. Open for visits Tuesday through Sunday; adults are \$7, teens/seniors are \$6, and kids 12 and under are \$4. www.eraptors.org

Silver Creek Animal Sanctuary, Silverton, Ore.:

Goats galore—more than 80, in fact—and llamas roam the 22 acres, which provide just the right environment for once sick, abused and/or neglected animals. Tours available upon request; \$4 minimum donation requested. www.silvercreekanimalsanctuary.org

Each animal on the 85-acre farm has a distinct personality, a point that's stressed to visitors. At the beginning of the three-hour tour, a video shows news coverage of some of the major abuse situations from which Pasado's has helped rescue animals. Then it's outside for a look at the creatures that call the sanctuary home, including Scout, a hairless, allergy-addled Australian shepherd who makes up in affection what he lacks in looks; Pete the duck, who dribbles a little soccer ball around; and a number of enthusiastic goats who nuzzle visitors while on the hunt for food.

Pasado was more than just a donkey, more than just a community mascot—he was a lifesaver, paving the way for future animals to live out the days that were taken from him too soon.

To visit: Public tours run on the first Saturday of every month from March to December, with special holiday tour dates in November and December. The tour is free, although donations are appreciated. To sign up for a tour, go to www.pasadosafehaven.org.

WOLF HAVEN

Tenino

With fond recollections of howling with the wolves of Wolf Haven as a child, I excitedly head back to the place of my memories, ready to see these animals up close as an adult.

They are as majestic as I remember them, and the mission of Wolf Haven is the same, too: to provide sanctuary for displaced, captive-born wolves; to provide education to people of all ages; and to promote the restoration of wolves, particularly the endangered red and Mexican gray wolves.

Although wolves bear a resemblance to dogs, they can't be domesticated in the same way. "Wolves have their nature within them, and we shouldn't try to change them," volunteer tour guide Judy Schainen tells us. Unfortunately, that doesn't stop people from trying—which is why more than 160 have been rescued by the organization since Wolf Haven's founding in 1982.

The 50-minute tour takes visitors past about 15 wolves; the other 35 or so currently at the sanctuary are kept behind the scenes. Pahana is a crowd favorite, a big gray wolf with a white coat who shares a space with his sister, Mehina. Kept in a trash-strewn cage away from the rest of his family on a farm in Idaho, Pahana never learned how to be a wolf. We watch as he tilts his head to the sky, opens his mouth as if he's about to create a tremendous sound, and then ... silence. Mehina has taught him most of the things he needs to know, but why he doesn't howl remains a mystery. Thankfully, his time tethered to a chain day in and day out has passed as well.

To visit: Wolf Haven is open year-round, with the exception of February. Cost of the guided tour is \$9 for adults, \$8 for students and seniors, and \$7 for youths 3 to 12. To donate, or to find out specific tour information, visit www.wolfhaven.org or call (800) 448-9653. 