



Date: 7/15/2019

VCAS Case #: F191860116

Forensic Veterinary Statement

On Friday, July 5, 2019, I, Dr. Jennifer N. Green, along with the Volusia County Animal Services Director, Adam Leath, toured Journey's End Animal Sanctuary (Journey's End) at 1899 Mercers Fernery Rd, DeLand, FL. As the Veterinarian for the Volusia County Animal Services Division, I provide veterinary forensic medical conclusions on and off scene, triage of live animals, identification and documentation of evidence, evaluation of the scene and the effect on the animals involved, and medical examinations. My background and training is in shelter medicine which includes herd health medicine, high-quality high-volume spay/neuter procedures, and cruelty case investigation.

Inspection Conclusion:

In my professional opinion after touring Journey's End, there are many pressing deficiencies in providing proper care to animals housed there. I witnessed concerns specifically in regards to capacity to care, animal density, animal husbandry, untreated/improperly managed medical conditions, and incomplete medical records. All of these contributing factors are causing animals to suffer in a neglected condition.

The National Animal Control Association (NACA) and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) both recommend a minimum of fifteen minutes per animal housed in a shelter to provide basic care. This allocates nine minutes for cleaning and six minutes for feeding. I counted a minimum of 146 animals on property, which would indicate a need of 2109 hours in order to provide basic care. This means 4.5 staff members are needed (working an eight-hour work day). Ms. Thuot indicated a total of 188 animals on property, which would require 2820 hours needed in order to provide basic care. This calculates to 5.8 staff members needed working an eight-hour work day. Animals requiring additional treatment (intensive medical care) require additional staff time and care allocation. Per discussion with current staff, paid staffing was currently at five total employees; the staffing was deficient in two live-in employees. Volunteers focus on social interactions with animals not on cleaning or routine care of the animals. The current staffing and number of animals in general (but especially special medical need patients) is deficient in capacity in care. Increasing the number of animals housed beyond the capacity to care is unacceptable and causes animals to suffer.

Daily inspection of all animals must be done to identify concerns promptly in regards to housing, care, or services. Per discussions, one staff member is the primary medical person who is responsible for overseeing and administering medications and medical care of patients. A veterinarian technician visits the property once a month to check the housed feline population. However, a veterinarian for small animals has not physically walked the property in a while. Some patients are taken weekly to a private small animal veterinarian; however, the number of animals taken each week is limited. An equine veterinarian and a large animal veterinarian do respond on the property for care of those patients when contacted. During the tour, a large pile of feces was observed in the cat area (Linda's Lair); the staff member cleaning informed me that she was unable to reach the area so was unable to clean it. The feces observed was not recent and was likely accruing for several days at least. Old, dried feces was observed throughout the property on flooring, in beds/boxes, and other areas. Flooring and general surfaces were stained as well. Cleaning protocol was reportedly passed down from prior staff. Current cleaning and sanitation practices are not effective in maintaining a clean and healthful environment for the animals. Current daily monitoring practices and routine veterinary inspections are also delinquent.

The housing conditions for the dogs and cats at Journey's End were inadequate for the animals. The group size of the dogs and cats were too large and did not allow for proper monitoring of the animals. Intermixing of species, specifically dogs and cats, should not occur due to the risk of injury (in general or animals or staff) and stress on felines. Each feline should have a minimum of 18 square feet per cat in group housing. Adequate room should be available for all animals to express normal behaviors. Sufficient resources must also be accessible to include food, water, bedding, litterboxes, etc. Competition and resource guarding should not occur to guarantee access of resources by all animals. The housing both physically and dynamically (group) is unsuitable. The groupings are too large causing crowding (fighting/bullying was appreciated within a group of canines); felines were mixed into groups of canines with some felines isolated to a dog kennel.

Medical records were out of date and deficient. Proof of vaccinations and current treatment plans were not readily available for the majority of animals. Storage and labeling of medications was also deficient with some temperature-dependent medications being stored inappropriately. Expired medications and medications without labels were also seen throughout. Dry food was stored in the same area as cat housing. Multiple bags of dry food were torn and ripped and accessible to the cats, which raises concerns for contamination of feedstuff. Several of the animals have serious health conditions that are not being managed fully. Specifically, the canine, Lionel, does not have a good quality of life; and per prior records, a veterinarian has already recommended euthanasia due to the severity of his conditions. Troubles, a canine, was never observed to move during the entire tour; his quality of life is likely minimal. Daisy, a canine, had a chronic sore that has been under treatment for over two years. Multiple cats were observed with issues that included: Caroline who was knuckled under on the right front; Prince who was down in the rear legs with obvious loss of muscle mass and a damp coat (suspected urine); Bunny Boy who had a thin body condition score and a reported heart condition; and another cat with bilateral nasal crusting and ocular discharge (upper respiratory infection). Porkahontas (female pig) was knuckled under, and Bunny/Clementine (female horse) did not appear to have her Cushing's Disease well controlled. All of the patients demonstrate a serious lapse in providing full medical care to patients in need.

Journey's End Animal Sanctuary is not providing appropriate care to the animals housed there. It is my professional opinion that Journey's End is in violation of the basic definition of a shelter or rescue: a place of protect or an act of saving from distress or danger, respectively. The care delivered is substandard; the

environment is crowded; and the animals are suffering. Immediate changes in operations are imperative to prevent further animal suffering.

Recommendations:

Recommendations are based upon expectations set forth by The Association of Shelter Veterinarians as reported in *Guidelines for Standards of Care in Animals Shelters* as well as clinical experience.

The ratio of patients with and without medical needs to the staff is overwhelming capacity to care. Staffing needs to greatly increase in order to cover the void, or the number of animals on site needs to reduce to cover the void. Per Ms. Thuot, Journey's End's mission is to be a hospice rescue for animals that cannot be adopted; however, a large number of all animals observed would not qualify as "hospice". Therefore, adoption of many of the animals on property could reduce the volume of animals humanely. Acceptance of any new animal should not be considered for the foreseeable future.

Written Standard Operating Procedures are highly recommended. These should include daily operations from hours of operation, cleaning protocols, feeding protocols, walking/exercise protocols, medical protocols (intake, emergent, continuing care), and evacuation protocols. All protocols formulated should be done in conjunction with a veterinarian with experience in managing sheltering environments (herd health medicine) as the needs of these animals differ from individuals in private homes. Routine vaccinations, deworming, and other preventative medications are essential for promoting health in the population. Current rabies vaccination for all dogs and cats and current Coggins testing (horses) should be completed immediately in addition to any licensing requirements. Microchipping of all dogs and cats should be done in order to identify all animals permanently.

Easily accessible and complete medical records for each animal should be maintained and updated with all procedures or medications applicable to the patient. Each patient should have a plan for its long term health. A veterinarian should tour the facility weekly to ensure all animals are in good condition and health and to ensure medical practices are being done properly and within the confines of legal requirements. All canines that paraplegic should have an examination with a veterinarian within the next week to ensure current good health and proper long term treatment plan. The following patients require immediate care with medical plan: Lionel, Troubles, Daisy, Caroline, Prince, Bunny Boy, the black cat (with possible upper respiratory infection), Porkahontas, and all three horses. Specifically, for all three the horses, oral examination with dental floating should be done. Bunny/Clementine should be rechecked for dosage in treatment of Cushing's Disease.

All expired medications or those previously stored improper should be disposed of safely. Any new medications received should be stored as indicated and used solely under the direction of a licensed veterinarian. All food for animal consumption should be kept in a clean, dry environment free from vermin or pests. Any current stock of tainted food should be discarded.

Grouping of felines should not exceed 10 to 12 animals total. The area for this group should also meet the requirement of 18 square feet per cat. Adequate feed, water, and litterboxes are needed in addition to plenty of hiding areas and areas of alternating height. The housing of ear tipped cats should not continue as the purpose of ear tipping is to mark an outside, free-roaming cat as sterilized. Correction of feline overcrowding should be corrected imminently. Grouping of cats with dogs should be discontinued immediately.

Grouping of canines should not exceed 4 to 6 dogs for the safety of the dogs and the caregivers. These dogs must be carefully selected to ensure all dogs get along well with no fighting. Adequate feed, water, bedding, and toys should be provided to reduce competition. Housing of animals that are fearful or aggressive of others (animals or people) should still provide appropriate enrichment. Correction of canine overcrowding and reduction of groups should be completed immediately.

Any patient requiring specific treatment or monitoring must be housed individually to ensure all proper care is done.

Current staff has no formal training in regards to animal husbandry or administration of medical care for animals. Staff should receive training from continuing education venues or from a veterinarian or licensed veterinarian technician in order to learn how to correctly identify concerns, how to administer treatments properly and safely (example: laser therapy), and how to prevent disease spread.

Summary of Inspection:

We arrived on the scene of 1899 Mercer's Fernery Road, Deland, FL, at 9:27 AM. Florence Thuot, founder and president, and a staff member greeted us. Ms. Thuot began a tour of the property as well as told us of the history of the property. Per Ms. Thuot, Journey End's Animal Sanctuary only accepts handicapped animals to live the remainder of their lives out. The organization does not adopt any of the animals out. She also stated that all dogs and cats are sterilized. Ms. Thuot and staff explained that the organization has standing appointments every Thursday at Freiberg Healing Paws Veterinary Clinic (Ormond Beach, FL) and that Dr. Thomas Freiberg is the veterinarian they contact with concerns regarding dogs or cats. He is also a member of their board. Dr. Teri Harty was identified as their primary veterinarian used for the live-stock, and Dr. Lane Adams-Torres was identified as their primary veterinarian used for the horses.

The path from the entrance of the property to the first buildings passed by an enclosure housing two goats and multiple chickens. Staff was unaware of how many chickens were on the property. Staff explained that they attempt to pick up all eggs to prevent hatching; however, they recognize that they are unable to prevent all new chicks from hatching.

The first room toured was named "The Game Room," which was the primary housing area of multiple dogs and cats. The majority of the dogs housed in this area were "wheelchair dogs". The wheelchair dogs were kept in the wheelchairs from approximately 9 AM to 3 PM each day. Additional care required included expressing the bladders of these dogs multiple times per day. The staff explained rotating the dogs for outdoor time based on their housing groups. The Game Room was also identified as the location of medical records for the majority of the canines kept on the property. cursory review of the records showed the majority of patients were lacking in-date rabies vaccines and county tags. Records did reflect some of the patients going to veterinarian clinics. Some records did reflect refusal of care. Four animals housed within The Game Room were of particular concern. First, Iris, a female cat, was found to be housed within a wire dog kennel. She was reported to have had wobblers and heat stroke. Next, Troubles, a tan terrier, was observed to be housed within a plastic child play pen. During the visit, the patient was never observed to move. According to staff, when Troubles does walk, he walks only in circles; he is also deaf and blind. Gitty was a grey and white Terrier mix that required wearing a basket muzzle and multiple staff interventions as he would attack another dog's leg repeatedly. This was noted by staff to be normal, so Gitty "had to be watched." Daisy was a white and brown American Staffordshire Terrier mix that was paraplegic and wearing a diaper and bandage around her caudal end. Daisy would "bunny hop" in order

to move around the room. The staff reported the diaper and bandage were for a wound that she would chew at. Examination of the area found an irregular wound from the tail extending distally along the right caudal leg. The wound was pink to red to black with some yellow crusting, red discharge, and debris adhered. Per the staff, this wound has been under treatment for at least two years. One dog was acknowledged as having no medical issues; he was kept on property as an “ambassador dog to teach the other dogs to jump on the couch.” Approximately eleven dogs and three cats were housed in The Game Room. Staff also reported that Ms. Thuot lives on property and sleeps on the couch within the area at night.

The next area toured was called “Linda’s Lair” and housed solely felines. The complex included a front porch, two rooms, and an outdoor patio. An external wall of the outdoor area directly contacted pens used for three pigs. An estimated one hundred cats live in this area of the complex. Litter boxes, cat trees, food and water bowls were observed throughout. Feces and dirt were observed within hiding boxes, the floor, and the climbing areas of the area. Stained floors and damaged walls were also appreciated. Discussion with staff illustrated that deceased cats had been found before; they were unaware of post-mortem exams having been done. Multiple medications were witnessed with the majority having no prescription label or being out of date. Staff expressed a local veterinary technician comes to the property monthly to examine the cats for testing (Feline Leukemia testing), vaccines, or medical concerns. That technician is then in contact with a veterinarian for advice. Staff described they routinely will contact their veterinarian with concerns in order to have medications filled or use an on-hand medication for another patient. Medical records for the felines were also housed within the same area; review of the records showed minimal updated records since the year 2015. Updated rabies vaccines were not appreciated. One cat was observed within a wire dog kennel. Staff identified him as Buddy (male, grey, domestic medium haired) and described him as having allergies. Buddy required a special diet; therefore, he could not be housed with the group collectively. Several felines with ear tips were also notated (Ear tipping is a normal practice for marking free-roaming/outdoor cats as sterilized). Major concerns observed in Linda’s Lair included: feces/dirt throughout, cats with crimped ears (concern of auricular hematomas), overall density of housing, lack of recorded medical care, and inappropriately stored/used medications.

Adjacent to Linda’s Lair, three pigs were housed. Two female pot-bellied pigs (named Porkahontas and Priscilla) were in one enclosure. Porkahontas’ front left foot was knuckled under. Adjacent to the females in a separate pen was a male, Hampshire pig named Attitude.

The next area examined was called “Sassy’s Room,” which is an area that is typically off limits to public touring. This room housed three cats and three small breed dogs. The cats were placed specifically in this area as they were feline leukemia virus positive. Newspaper was placed on the bathroom floor and a small area of urine observed. The tour continued throughout the property to different areas that are not open to the public. One area (kitchen, dining, den) housed three dogs (Buck, Zoe, and Sadie). Notably Buck had a mass on his right ventrum. Closer inspection was not feasible as Buck was described to be unfriendly to new people. Another area (glass patio) housed two adult dogs. A bedroom housed a single dog (male, tan and white, hound mix) that was reported as territorially over the bed in its room. Another bedroom housed a single dog that was reportedly aggressive to other dogs. Notably, a broken mattress frame and feces were found in the room. Staff explained that normally a “live-in employee” would be assigned this bedroom as their living quarters, but currently no live-in staff were hired on.

The next area examined included a kitchen, dining area, office, and small bedroom. This area housed multiple dogs and cats. A beagle mixed named Dublin was observed to have haziness to the eyes and white discharge. An ophthalmic exam was not performed on-scene. Staff expressed that he had been under treatment for the eyes prior. The patient of greatest concern in this area was named Lionel, a male, black and white Shih Tzu type mix. Lionel remained with his head and dorsal neck ventrally directed. Staff explained that Lionel arrived about two weeks prior and had been diagnosed with a broken neck. He had seen Dr. Freiberg once and was receiving laser treatments by one of the staff members on-site. Medications were Lionel were also observed. Medical records reviewed showed a prior veterinarian had recommended euthanasia due to his condition. Staff was unable to answer inquiries into the long term plan for Lionel. One staff member, Mara Pacheco, identified herself as the primary person responsible for administering all needed medical treatments; she also performs the laser treatments on-site. Ms. Pacheco explained that she was trained by prior staff on how to use the laser machine, which had been donated prior.

Another room toured was a bedroom with multiple cats housed within it (minimum estimation eleven cats). This area was utilized as the storage area for bagged and canned food. Multiple bags were observed to be ripped open and at easy access for the cats to access. Staff confirmed that the cats would tear into the bags. Multiple medications were also appreciated in the room. Not all of the medications observed were labeled for patients and in date. Several concerning patients were noted within this area. Caroline (a grey mackerel tabby) was knuckled under on the right front. Prince (a black domestic short hair) was down in the rear legs with obvious loss of muscle mass and a damp coat. Bunny Boy (a black domestic medium hair) had a thin body condition score; staff reported that he had multiple conditions that required daily medications (heart condition). Another black domestic shorthair with a white locket had bilateral nasal crusting and ocular discharge. She was found resting on a soiled and stained cat tree. Conversation with staff confirmed that the animals on-scene did not have microchips permanently identifying and that some of the animals may be confused with others.

The final room toured inside of the house was a living room that housed a single tan and white American Staffordshire Terrier Mix.

Outside in a room connected to a storage shed, a brown American Staffordshire mix dog named Journey was housed. Close examination of the canine and its housing was not feasible due to the animal's behavior (aggression). Staff explained that Journey was aggressive to both people and animals and required special handling.

Tour of the stables identified a pig and three horses. The fourth pig, a potbellied pig, named Piglet was housed in a building that was a prior chicken coop. The horses on property were: Amber (27-year-old, chestnut, Arabian mare), Bunny/Clementine (30-year-old, bay, Clydesdale-quarter horse mare), and Lucy (20-year-old, chestnut, quarter horse cross mare). All three had negative Coggins Test drawn on 7/26/18. Staff reported all three horses were on special diets (soaked feed) and that Bunny was being treated for equine Cushing's disease. Medications were found in the outdoor barn area that were expired and required refrigeration. Cribbing wear was observed on all of the stables. The horses did have access to pasture for grazing.

Discussions with Ms. Thuot detailed her understanding for capacity on the property to be about thirty dogs and about one hundred thirty cats. Ms. Thuot described the property having a lot chickens (total number unknown), one sheep, two goats, thirty-nine to forty dogs, three horses, five pigs, and one

hundred thirty-eight cats (summation: 188 animals, not including chickens). Five total staff members work at Journey's End. While walking the scene and using a counter, I counted 146 animals visualized.

Photographs taken on scene follow this report.

To a reasonable degree of scientific certainty, the above is an accurate statement of my findings. I retain the right to edit, amend, or alter this report based on any additional information provided to me about this investigation.



Jennifer N. Green, DVM
Veterinarian
Volusia County Animal Care Clinic
Department of Public Protection
Animal Services Division
1250 Indian Lake Rd., Daytona Beach, FL 32124
(386) 295-3226 Phone
jgreen@volusia.org

Photographs

DSC_0041.JPG: Front Patio Area of "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0042.JPG: Cat boxes with debris/waste from front patio area of "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0044.JPG: Walkway connecting front patio (Linda's Lair) to pat patio area wall in right of photo connects to pig pens



DSC_0051.JPG: Felines observed in front room of "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0059.JPG: Doorway in "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0061.JPG: Damaged wall/cabinets in "Linda's Lair"



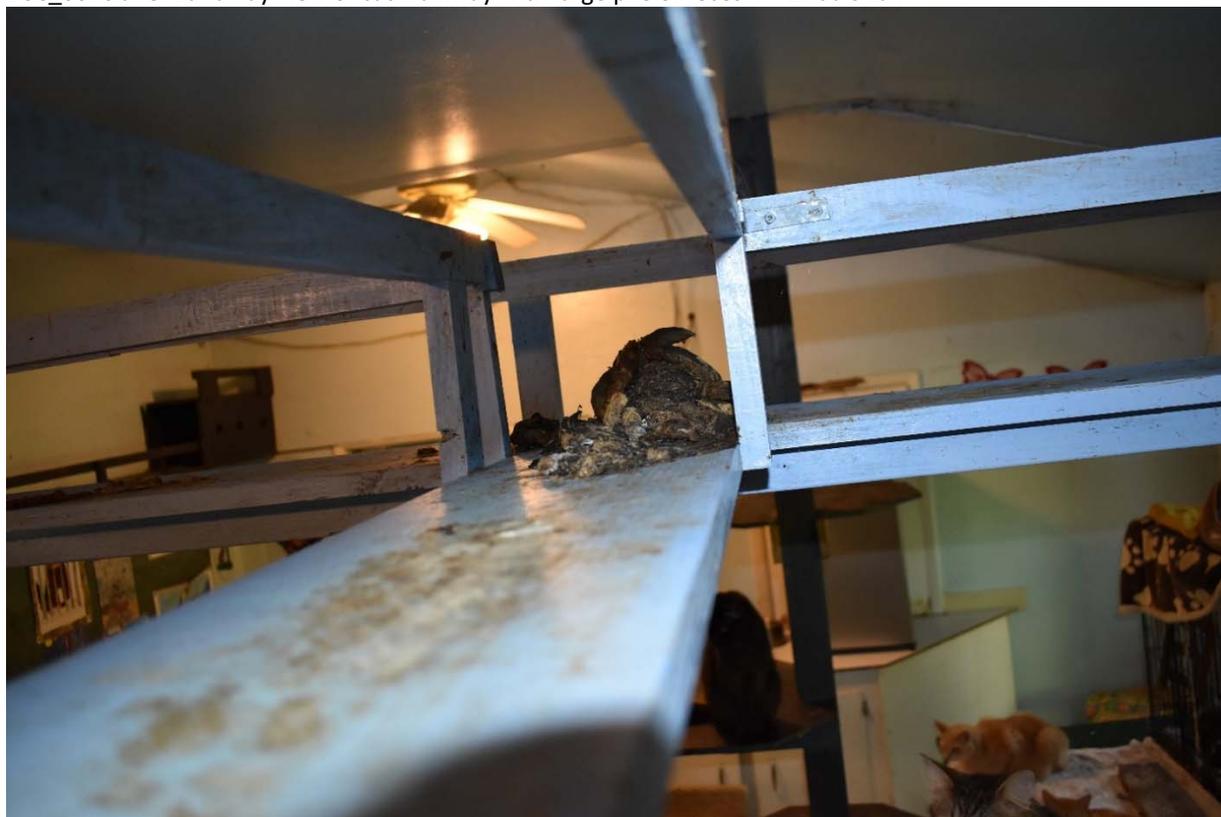
DSC_0065.JPG: Far view of second room in "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0069.JPG: Far away view of cat walkway with large pile of feces in "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0070.JPG: Far away view of cat walkway with large pile of feces in "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0073.JPG: Close up view of cat walkway with large pile of feces in "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0074.JPG: Black and white cat with left crimped ear inside of "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0075.JPG: Damaged walls inside "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0078.JPG: Far away view of catwalk in "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0127.JPG: Bathroom of "Sassy's Room"



DSC_0131.JPG: Food and water dishes in area that housed Buck, Zoe, and Sadie



DSC_0136.JPG: Dog in room described as "territorial of bed"



DSC_0137.JPG: Area housing two dogs



DSC_0142.JPG: Live-in employee room housing a single dog



DSC_0143.JPG: Live-in employee room damage around doors



DSC_0147.JPG: Far away view of room housing Lionel, laser machine on bed to left



DSC_0152.JPG: Far away view of room housing cats and food



DSC_0155.JPG: Caroline with right front knuckling under



DSC_0156.JPG: Prince, down in rear



DSC_0162.JPG: Black cat with upper respiratory signs



DSC_0164.JPG: Medications stored in cat room



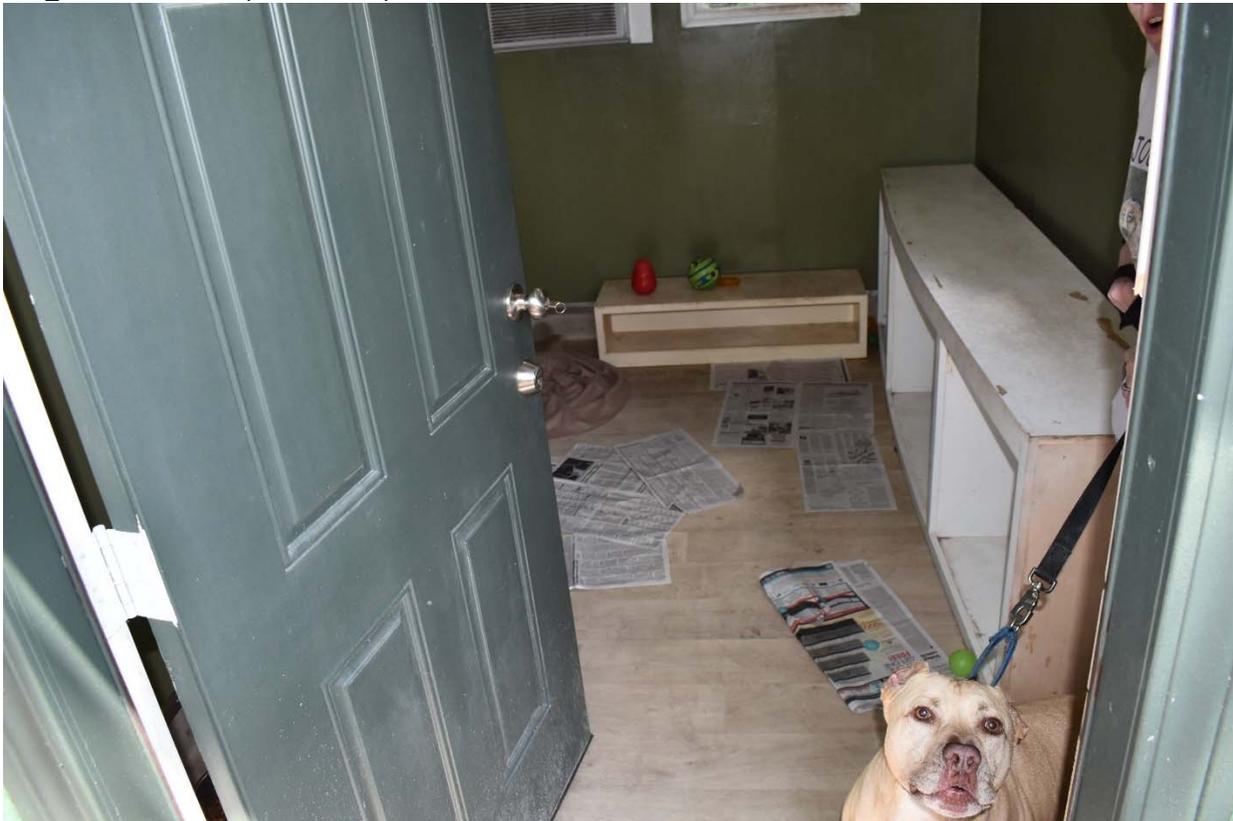
DSC_0178.JPG: Daisy, wound caudal end



DSC_0180.JPG: Solo housed canine area



DSC_0186.JPG: Journey and Journey's room



DSC_0188.JPG: Attitude's pen area



DSC_0189.JPG: Attitude's pen area



DSC_0190.JPG: Attitude's pen area



DSC_0191.JPG: Back patio of "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0192.JPG: Back patio of "Linda's Lair"



DSC_0198.JPG: Interior of horse stall



DSC_0199.JPG: Interior horse stall



DSC_0208.JPG: Ceiling of horse stall/barn



DSC_0216.JPG: Pasture for horses



DSC_0220.JPG: Amber, right flank



DSC_0221.JPG: Lucy, right flank



DSC_0222.JPG: Bunny/Clementine, right flank



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