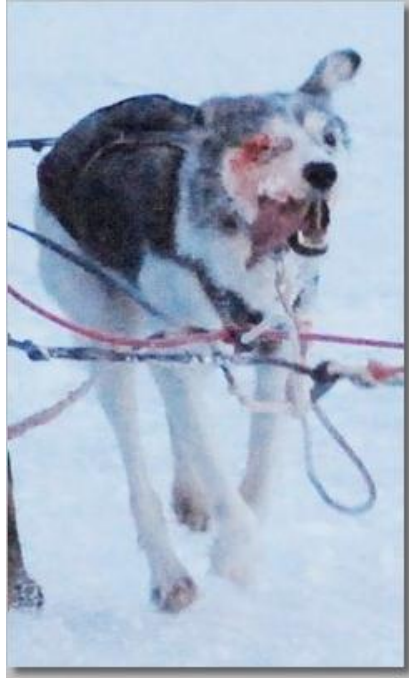


Draft

The Case Against...



Sled Dog Industries

**A Lifeforce Report to End Dog Exploitation Inherited in the
Sled Dog Racing and Tourism Industries**

March 2011

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Introduction

Sled Dog Don'ts! Only the tip of the ice pack!

The reported horrific slaughter of 100 dogs exploited by the sled dog industry is only the tip of the ice pack. There are many more “culled” dogs buried below the blood stained snow across Canada and far too many cruelties within these types of businesses. Some say they are working dogs so regulate it. The BC Sled Dog Industry Task Force stated that their purpose was to learn the sled dog industry could survive in a humane and sustainable way. Lifeforce, the Vancouver based animal rights and ecology organization, say don't treat them legally and morally different than animal companions. Any regulations will not be easily enforced and will not end the tragedies. Industry “guidelines” are not enough. As some regulations would end some of the suffering abolition is the only way that all the inherited cruelties can be stopped.

This case has enraged people worldwide. The industry and some others have claimed that it was an aberration. However, it has revealed the rampant abuses in the sled dog industry and the lack of adequate animal protection. There are no Sled Dog regulations in Canada and no detailed animal welfare standards under the BC Provincial Code.

In this case it was reported that an employee, Bob Fawcett, was ordered to “cull” some of the 300 dog “herd” by Outdoor Adventures of Whistler, BC in April 2010. He had been operating Howling Dog Tours since 2004. At first Outdoor Adventures claimed that they took complete control after the slaughter in May. Joey Housian has now clarified that his Outdoor Adventures was the majority owner of the dog sledding operation at the time of the “cull.”

Regardless of everyone who will be held responsible, for two days Fawcett did report that he used knives to slit throats, and a gun as he grossly wounded many before they died. Afterwards he claimed that he was the victim and received money from WorkSafe BC for “post-traumatic stress disorder. **Here is the WorkSafe BC REPORT > <http://lakotasong.com/48004918-Mass-sled-dog-killing-probed-in-Whistler-B-C.pdf>**

It has been reported that Bob Fawcett was first in Canmore, Alberta. He later opened Whistler Dog sledding in 1999 with a team of Alaskan huskies, a crossbreed of huskies, greyhounds and pointers. In 2007, he had 282 dogs. (<http://www.canada.com/deltaoptimist/news/travel/story.html?id=a45b6720-d04a-453e-8f2f-862ad8a9586a>). It was also reported in the Georgia Straight in 2008 that he had several hundred dogs.

Past Complaints

Howling Dogs Tours – Pemberton Complaint 2000

73 sled dogs belong to Howling Dogs Sled Dogs Company were being kept in crates on the back of two trucks. The crates were only supposed to be used for transport to and from snow sledding jobs, but were being used to keep the dogs in, rather than in proper, permanent kennels.

No Need for Words



Three Dogs

Howling Dogs Tours – Seymour Mountain Complaint November 2008



Seymour Mountain, North Vancouver, BC parking lot.

The man who admitted that he killed the sled dogs says he asked the SPCA to help. The BCSPCA denied that they were asked to take the dogs prior to the killings.

(<http://www.vancouversun.com/news/killed+sled+dogs+asked+SPCA+help+separate+occasions/4206360/story.html#ixz1Cq7wSMWN>). It was also reported that instead of checking out the facility the SPCA believed the company owner who told them after the cull that everything was okay but did not reveal the cull. (MyNorthwest.com)

Outlining the problems with finding homes for sled dogs, the SPCA also said that the dogs can't be found good, safe homes. "I spoke to an animal behaviourist who is also a vet and she spoke with an expert in the [United] States who said [the sled dogs] weren't adoptable," said Drever." (See above Sun article)

In the February 10, 2011 Whistler Question newspaper it was reported that Fawcett is a leader in the industry. They said, "The long time local dog sledding operator who reported to Worksafe B.C. that he shot and stabbed up to 100 dogs in Whistler last April was considered one of the leaders in the industry. Bob Fawcett, who was in the business more than 12 years before reportedly going on medical-related leave last May, told The Question in a 2009 interview that he "helped write the rules" that are currently in place in Canadian dog sledding." <http://www.whistlerquestion.com/article/20110210/WHISTLER01/302109999/-1/whistler/sled-dog-operator-considered-an-industry-leader>

The long history of animal abuses and deception doesn't say much for this industry. This report will reveal the truth of the International dog sledding industry. It is part of the entertainment businesses that continue to exploit dogs and other sentient creatures.

History of Using/Abusing Dogs

Wild animals were domesticated to work and toil for humans. In order to get the right size, shape and temperament to do the jobs dog breeders created a variety of new species. The work-related species evolved into a huge market for self indulgence and profit. As “pet” industries developed other domesticated animals were used in industry including entertainment, eating and experimenting.

Mushers have previously been glorified by the media. Their dirty big secrets are hidden from the public. Killing all the unwanted dogs and puppies is only one of the horrible industry practices.

Fawcett himself was also cross breeding. “Unlike the stereotypical image of burly sled dogs, Alaskan racing huskies are more similar to a sleek Australian blue heeler. In fact, they are a cross between huskies and greyhounds. Since dogsled-racing began in earnest in the 1970s, mushers like Fawcett have constantly sought to improve the breed. The most recent twist is crossing purebred English pointers and huskies, with sprint racing rather than long-distance hauling in mind.” (Georgia Straight, April 2008 <http://www.straight.com/article/embrace-winter-with-ziplines-and-dogsleds>)

Media and Industry Defenders

Media and industry defenders claim that racing represents history. For example, PBS TV promoted the Iditarod as a commemoration of the 1925 Anchorage to Nome diphtheria serum run. However, there are very few similarities between the two events. Half of the 1925 serum run was done by train. Dogs ran in relays for the remaining 500 or 600 miles, with few dogs running over 100 miles. In the Iditarod, dogs run 1,150 miles over terrain far more gruelling than the terrain found on the serum run route.

Not Canadian Culture and Identity

Although these working dogs suffered greatly, it could be argued that in those days there were no other means. However, in most situations, the dogs were not being exploited for entertainment purposes. They were not raced and used for commercial tours. There were no timed races for large financial prizes. The bond between dogs and mushers is one of abuse and exploitation. If mushers cared the dogs would not be forced to run 1,150 miles in 9 to 14 days over treacherous terrain under horrible weather conditions. An analogy can be drawn to the rodeo abuses. The old west days of ranching is not historically represented in the current rodeos for profit. Racing dogs for hundreds of miles for prize money is not part of Canadian culture.

Dr. Ken Lake who heads the Sled Dog Task Force said that in his opinion it is natural for sled dogs to run and with optimum conditions and retirement homes the industry could be justified (BC Sled Dog Industry Task Force meeting February 16, 2011). Well most dogs do like to run but sled dogs are usually chained/tethered on short chains. One foot deep trenches can be created by dogs who repeatedly go around and around. This results in physical and psychological abuses making it a huge job to undo the harm for the thousands of dogs in this industry. In regards to adoption the industry said it could be the “right group” for the “right persons: (BC Sled Dog Task Force February 16, 2011). But still many healthy dogs would be killed.

Dog and cock fighters claim that the animals were bred to fight and love to do so. But the majority of our society are not that gullible and do not condone it. So why would we allow this industry to breed huskies with

greyhounds, pointers and other breeds in an attempt to create a perfect racer. The unwanted surplus of these healthy dogs adds to the numbers that are routinely killed for other reasons.

"Killing unwanted sled-dog puppies is part of doing business, many Alaskan mushers say. One says she prefers to handle the job herself.... she checks her dogs at 5 weeks old for size, appetite and aggressiveness. Then she tries to work with ones that need improvement, testing the pup weekly until they are about 12 weeks old. After she rates the dogs on feet, coat digestive system, angulations of legs, drive and smarts, she culls." (Associated Press in an Anchorage Daily News article titled "Mushers Say Most 'Culling' Not Cruel," October 6, 1991. Anchorage Daily News Archives.)

SPCAs have even taken donations by dog sled racing organizers. This has, no doubt, contributed to the public misconception that racing is "humane".

We cannot change what has happened but we can change what is best for now and the future. Modern technology has made the sled dog of the past obsolete. Mechanized vehicles have largely replaced dog teams as a mode of transport, the demand for working dogs has decreased. We must work towards a just society in which dogs are not treated as commodities to be forced to entertain, forced to race, and forced to work.

Industry Animal Abuse History

The Florida-based **Sled Dog Action Coalition** has asked, "How many cases of sled dog abuse must we show the world before they realize that cruelty is NOT the exception but rather the norm?"

The Animal Legal Defence provides reports proving that the killing of unwanted dogs is standard practice in the mushing industry:

- Iditarod musher John Cooper wrote a story for the *Anchorage Daily News* about getting rid of unwanted puppies by tossing them in a creek;
- Iditarod musher Frank Winkler was charged with animal cruelty for bludgeoning 14 sled dog puppies with an ex handle;
- Dan MacEachen, owner of a sled dog center at Colorado's Snowmass Village, allegedly shot old, injured, and unwanted huskies with a rifle and buried them in a pit;
- Musher Charlie Campbell said to the *Anchorage Daily News*, "I'm definitely going to have to cull some dogs," and "we're going to have to be ruthless about who we keep;"
- Musher Frank Turner told the CBC, "Competitive kennels, or even kennels that may not be competitive but aspire to be, often breed more dogs than they're actually going to be able to keep, afford to keep and pay for the vet bills, the food and all the other associated costs."

Past Legal Seizures

Dog sledding has created international industries from puppy mills to expensive tourist gimmicks... Many Canadians participate in a Canadian/US racing circuit. There are many legal cases. Here are few examples:

1. Samuel Walker of Florissant, Colorado [pleaded guilty in December, 2010](#) to aggravated cruelty to animals. The charges stemmed from a year-long investigation that began in December, 2009 when a tip led authorities to Pawsatrack Racing Sled Dogs. There, [they found 6 dead husky dogs](#), and seized about 100 that were dangerously underfed.

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/02/08/samuel-walker-gets-90-day-n-820180.html?ref=fb&src=sp#sb=1314454,b=facebook>

2. Animal care staff in the Mat-Su Valley worked through the night Monday to remove more than 150 dogs from a breeder's home.

Troopers say nearly all the dogs were malnourished and dehydrated. The animals were shivering and eating snow and their own feces. An additional 22 dogs that had already died were found on the property, apparently dead from exposure, starvation and dehydration. They say there could be more dead dogs on the property.

<http://www.ktuu.com/news/ktuu-130-dogs-seized-from-dog-breed-01102011,0,6009717.story>



The plot of land near milepost 92 where the dogs were bred
(John Norris/KTUU.com / January 11, 2011)

3. Though touted as a death-free Iditarod, there was at least one fatality that is being swept under the rug. 5-year-old Alaskan Husky, Lava, died during the Junior Iditarod on the team of Jeff Holt. Read the attached article to learn more. And thus far in the full-length Iditarod, though no dogs have been reported to have died yet, one dog was lost for nearly five days... Over 200 dogs have already been dropped from their respective teams due to injury, sickness and exhaustion. Some were even pushed to the point of developing pneumonia. (From Sled Dog Action Committee)

[17-year-old's dog dies on the trail: Sled dog racing | adn.com](#)

4. Nov. 17, 2009 (Sainte-Agathe-des-Monts) – Humane Society International and the SPCA Laurentides-Labelle partnered to rescue approximately 100 neglected sled dogs in the Upper Laurentians of Quebec. The owner was unable to care properly for his dogs and released them to the care of the SPCA LL.

Read: <http://lakotasong.com/blog/?p=163>



Photo by [SPCA Laurentides-Labelle](#).

5. BEHCHOKO, N.W.T.—Internationally renowned artist Archie Beaulieu was under RCMP investigation after 44 sled dogs, including a dozen puppies, were found malnourished and had to be destroyed. (October 2008)

A local veterinarian and senior Mountie visited a property here where the dogs were penned. "It had been raining and the dogs were up to their bellies in mud and feces," said veterinarian Tom Pisz, who made the decision to give the dogs lethal injections. "The smell was horrifying." The animals were in a fenced compound that had roughly three doghouses – not nearly enough to shelter them – and there was no sign of food or water, said Pisz. "Some had skin sores and wounds from fighting with each other. Others were limping. The puppies were hiding under scrap wood."

<http://www.thestar.com/News/Canada/article/509315>

6. It is also important to note that, in a 2006 CBC Radio interview with a spokesperson for the Canadian Federation of Humane Societies regarding the 74 dogs who were murdered near Dawson (large contribution to these deaths attributable to the abysmal Yukon Animal Protection Act), the CBC interviewer made the following statement:

Now this raises the question, one last question here, and that is the Yukon is a large dog mushing community and kennels usually entail several scores of dogs. It's a fact that it [dog culling] does occur within a community. I don't think it's something that's discussed a lot, but mushers DO cull animals, and is that provided for with any legislation that you're aware of? [Transcribed interview excerpt, CBC 'Lunch Break' show, June 27, 2006]

7. Eleven abandoned sled dogs in Kasilof were rescued after more than a week without food or fresh water and more than a month without cleaning. Tim Colbath, co-owner of Alaska's Extended Life Animal Sanctuary in Nikiski was called in to rescue the animals after Alaska State Troopers investigated the scene. (March 2005) "On some of them, you can see their spines moving under their skin as they move and breathe. They're really in bad shape," he said.

Read more: [Pet-Abuse.Com - Animal Abuse Case Details: 11 sled dogs abandoned and neglected - Kasilof, AK \(US\) http://www.pet-abuse.com/cases/4230#ixzz1Dn8jsGHR](http://www.pet-abuse.com/cases/4230#ixzz1Dn8jsGHR)



8. Yellowknife (Feb 02/05) - The recent dog slaughter is now a police matter. Police announced Tuesday they were re-opening their investigation into the slaughter of six sled dogs, who were shot in the face last month and dumped near a sewage lagoon outside Yellowknife.

http://www.nnsi.com/frames/newspapers/2005-02/feb2_05dg.html

In addition, the SPCA reported at the Task Force meeting on February 16th that there have been many problems in BC alone. There were two major cases in 2004 and 2006 resulting in convictions. The BCSPCA will submit a list to the Task Force.

Examples:

1. April 17, 2008.

Charges of animal cruelty have been laid against Christinus Camping after the BC SPCA seized 25 emaciated husky-type dogs from a rural property near Likely, B.C. last October. The SPCA also seized nine newborn puppies and four cats during the execution of the warrant. This is the fourth animal cruelty charge Crown counsel has laid against Camping as a result of BC SPCA investigations in recent years.

"It is incredibly frustrating to deal with an individual like this," says Marcie Moriarty, general manager of cruelty investigations for the BC SPCA. "We have rescued nearly 200 badly neglected dogs from his custody, yet he continues to purchase and keep dogs in the same condition." Moriarty says she is hopeful that as each case goes before the courts, the penalties will increase in light of Camping's repeat offenses. "Ideally we are seeking a lifetime ban on owning animals so that he cannot subject more animals to this type of cruelty and neglect." Camping was convicted in December 2007 in the first of four cases and received a \$1,000 fine and a five-year ban on owning animals.



2. **Salmo, BC:** After multiple complaints to the BC SPCA that were brought to the attention of Animal Advocates Society in late 2008, they were told in February 2009 that the dog houses are now raised off the ground. Read complaints to BC SPCA below. <http://www.animaladvocates.com/sleddogs/salmo.php>

3. 2009 Complaint about Blackcomb Adventures Snowmobiles and Unnamed Dog Sled Company

SPCA probes two dog sled operations: Guests say dogs look malnourished; one operator says dogs well fed

Tanner Moody is the contractor Blackcomb Snowmobiles hired this winter to provide sled dogs and do the tours. Moody, who has been in the dog sled business for about 10 years in the Whistler area and in Banff, said his “temporary” kennel, is located in Mount Currie. He has 48 dogs — a small number compared with other local operators.

Eileen Drever, senior animal protection officer with the SPCA, said she’s dealing with a couple of ongoing investigations in regard to sled dogs in the Whistler area and the conditions under which they’re kept. The SPCA has issued orders to operators and failure to comply could lead to legal action under the provincial Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, she said. “The SPCA’s not happy with the way these dogs are kept,” Drever said. She could not name the companies or provide further details because of the ongoing investigations.

<http://www.whistlerquestion.com/article/20090325/WHISTLER01/303259833/1030/WHISTLER/spca-probes-two-dog-sled-operations>

Industry Animal Abuse Races

On the backs of the dogs by a Musher:

"This year's Yukon Quest, even more than most, has got me upset about the kind of people that will seek a semi-suicidal "adrenaline rush," or personal glory, or merely the reassurance that they have balls, on the backs of their dogs.

Ever since I moved to the Yukon in 1993 I've listened to thoughtless couch-potatoes saying to me, "Oh, you've got sled dogs -- are you going to enter the Quest?" And ever since I started looking at this thousand-mile long distance race up close, I've been appalled at its callous disregard for ordinary human -- and humane -- values. I wouldn't touch it with a ten-foot pole. It's promoted as "the toughest dogsled race on earth." Nobody would argue with that assessment. That's not any kind of recommendation in my book! February 14, 2006 http://news.seppalasleddogs.com/blog/2006_02.html

International Enforcement and Regulation Issues

Canadians and those from other countries will attend US races. This International trade makes it further impossible to regulate and enforce. Here are examples of Canadian attending US races.

- a. Beargrease Race <http://www.beargrease.com/follow-the-race/see-who-is-registered/>
- b. Can-Am 2011 Members > <http://can-am.sjv.net/MushBio11.htm>

In the U.S. the industry goes largely unregulated, and mushing is actually exempt from state cruelty laws in Alaska (Alaska Stat. § 11.61.140(e)).

Many competitive mushers enter in the Quest and Iditarod for advertising their names in order to benefit their sled dog tour operations than for a real chance of winning. In 2007 Howling Dog Tours donated to the Alberta International Sled Dog Classic <http://www.canmoresleddogaces.com/canmore-sled-dog-races-registered-mushers.html>

The Races

The exact number of sled dog races and businesses is not known and is somewhat hard to determine. The sites provide some of the numbers. Please note that the lists are incomplete. For example, in BC William's Lake/Quenel race/ Caribou Challenge and Jack Gawthorn Memorial races were not included.

Link to some race sites: <http://www.sleddogcentral.com/racelinks.htm>

Link to some clubs/associations: http://www.sleddogcentral.com/clubs_canada.htm

Link to some breeders: http://www.canadaguidetodogs.com/workingdogs/husky_breeders.htm#bc

1. Iditarod

From the Sled Dog Action Coalition: "At least 142 dogs have died in the Iditarod. There is no official count of dog deaths available for the race's early years. There are no records kept of how many dogs die in training or after the race each year." And:

"For the dogs, the Iditarod dog sled race is a bottomless pit of suffering. Please end your organization's support of this event. Imagine the suffering dogs endure while racing 1,000 miles in the Iditarod with wind-chill factors as low as minus 50 °F, battered by hurricane force winds, over slippery ice, down steep gorges with drops of hundreds of feet, and through icy water with little or no rest. At least 142 dogs have died in the Iditarod, including two dogs on a doctor's team who froze to death in the brutally cold winds. What happens to dogs during the race includes death, paralysis, frostbite (where it hurts the most!), bleeding ulcers, bloody diarrhoea, lung damage, pneumonia, ruptured discs, viral diseases, broken bones, torn muscles and tendons and sprains." For more facts, visit the Sled Dog Action Coalition website, <http://www.helpsleddogs.org>.

Dog beatings and whippings are common. During the 2007 Iditarod, eyewitnesses reported that musher Ramy Brooks kicked, punched and beat his dogs with a ski pole and a chain. Jon Saraceno wrote in his column in *USA Today*, "He [Colonel Tom Classen] confirmed dog beatings and far worse. Like starving dogs to maintain their most advantageous racing weight. Skinning them to make mittens. Or dragging them to their death."

During training runs, Iditarod dogs have been killed by moose, snow machines, and various motor vehicles, including a semi tractor and an ATV. They have died from drowning, heart attacks and being strangled in harnesses. Dogs have also been injured while training. They have been gashed, quilled by porcupines, bitten in dog fights, and had broken bones, and torn muscles and tendons. Most dog deaths and injuries during training aren't even reported."

The following link is about the Iditarod but the facts can apply to many other races.

<http://www.helpsleddogs.org/faq.htm>

2. Yukon Quest

2011: 2 Dead Dogs Known

1. Sled dog dies on Yukon Quest trail

Last Updated: Monday, February 14, 2011 | 7:21 PM CSTCBC News

A sled dog has died on the Yukon Quest trail over the weekend, according to race officials. Alaskan musher Brent Sass carried his wheel dog, Taco, in his basket to the Slaven's Roadhouse dog drop on Saturday evening. Veterinarians there declared the dog dead. A necropsy on Taco revealed "no obvious disease processes or signs of trauma," according to a statement issued Sunday by Allan Hallman, the Yukon Quest's head veterinarian. "At this time the cause of death is not evident," Hallman said, adding that further tissue examination will be completed in two to four weeks.

FAIRBANKS, Alaska - A dog has died in the 1,000-mile Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race. (February 13, 2011) Read more: <http://www.adn.com/2011/02/13/1700146/dog-dies-in-yukon-quest.html#ixzz1DsqRRg2i>

2. Necropsy Reveals Cause of Death for Yukon Quest Dog

Thursday, February 17, 2011 Posted in Alaska News

This year's Yukon Quest has been marred by a series of dramatic and dangerous events. Hugh Neff, who had been the front runner until the notoriously difficult Eagle Summit crossing, withdrew from the race after a windstorm halted his effort, and one of his dogs died.

Results from the necropsy show that the dog, Geronimo, suffered from aspiration asphyxia. Essentially, contents of the stomach got into the dog's lungs and he asphyxiated.

Also:

Dogs in water/two on peak scratched rescued by snow mobiles

<http://www.news1130.com/sports/article/184246--blizzard-loss-of-one-dog-strips-lead-musher-of-yukon-quest-dream>

Yukon Quest and Culling

In 2007, when asked about "culling", Quest race marshal Mike McCowan said "It's not our business," McCowan said. "I mean it's like going up to somebody and saying, 'How do you make your bed in your own house?' That's not our business."

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2007/02/09/culling-dogs.html?ref=rss>.yukonquest.com/site/mushers-and-sled-dog-teams/

Issue of three dogs being killed during 2007 Yukon Quest race:

Sled dog 'Jewel' killed by being dragged to death in harness: choked to death on its own vomit) by runaway dog team. Cause of death of sled dog 'Hope' inconclusive: "The specific cause of death is not apparent upon preliminary examination," said Pasevento from Fairbanks [Continued] his morning. "There are two possible factors that may have contributed to Hope's death. She had stomach ulcers and had aspirated some of her stomach contents."

[Yukon Quest news release]

Sled dog 'Melville' killed: "Melville, a five-year-old male member of Brent Sass' team, had at some point, either prior to or during the race, ingested a piece of fabric or harness," said [head Quest veterinarian Vern] Starks. Any dog can ingest a foreign body, like a ball or a sock. In Melville's case, the object failed to pass through his digestive system and his death was caused by perforation of the intestine."

[Yukon Quest news release]

Information from: Sled Dog Watch

3. Mackenzie Delta sled dog race – May 2007

During an Inuvik dog race in the winter of 2007 a dog had some teeth broken and/or knocked out during the race for unknown reasons.



4. Late 2006 in another Delta community

The dog with the injured eye was taken at a dog race in late 2006 in another Delta community.



Health Issues

In 2001 the BCSPCA policy statement re: dog sledding and racing included health issues as follows: "The welfare of the dogs used in the sport may be compromised by, among other things: indiscriminate breeding; substandard housing; tethering (short chains); questionable feeding regimes leading to malnourishment (to produce lean animals); lack of exercise; racing ill, injured or fatigued animals; stimulative drugs; extreme endurance competition or training; cramped space (in transit); and cruel disciplining."

Alleged Veterinary Care

During the race, veterinarians do not give the dogs physical exams at every checkpoint. Mushers speed through many checkpoints, so the dogs get the briefest visual checks, if that. Instead of pulling sick dogs from the race, veterinarians frequently give them massive doses of antibiotics to keep them running. The Iditarod's chief veterinarian, Stu Nelson, is an employee of the Iditarod Trail Committee. They are the ones who sign his paycheck. So, do you expect that he's going to say anything negative about the Iditarod? Further, it is not humanely possible for 35 veterinarians to examine every one of the 1,000 plus dogs who go through each of the 27 checkpoints at all hours of the day and night. (Source: Sled Dog Action Coalition, www.helpsleddogs.org for more Iditarod information.)

Some of the Health Problems

1. Lack of Antibodies: According to the Jan-Feb 2010 *Journal of Veterinary Internal Medicine*, dogs running in the Iditarod have substantially decreased numbers of antibodies in their systems. Without an adequate number of antibodies, a dog can't fight off infections.

2. Foxtail Seeds: The dogs are even at terrible risk while resting on straw that's been provided by the Iditarod. An Iditarod musher reported that foxtails are sometimes found in the straw. When foxtail grass dries out and becomes straw, the seed detaches easily and sticks to a dog's fur. Foxtail seeds enter a dog's body through the skin, nose, ears, paws, and eyes. And once they enter, they're like a barbed fishhook. A foxtail can go anywhere inside a dog. They have been found inside the brain, anal glands, eyes, ears, jowls, feet, spinal cord and lungs. Foxtail seeds can be life-threatening to dogs.

3. Debarking surgery is very dangerous: "[Dr. Nicholas] Dodman said there is a risk to any surgery, but operating in the vocal cord area is very dangerous because it's hard to administer anaesthetics and there's a lot of blood in the area. Animals may suffer from infections, scar tissue, trouble breathing, and haemorrhaging or aspiration pneumonia from devocalization procedures.

'Some dogs have died in different stages (of the procedure),' said Dodman. 'This is what's called a convenient surgery. Some surgeries are necessary. But this is a cosmetic surgery like ear cropping and tail cropping. You're removing a natural part of a dog.'" (Dr. Nicholas Dodman, DACVB is a veterinarian behaviourist of about 50 in the world.) From David Ertischek, West Roxbury Transcript, June 16, 2009

4. Eating Rocks:

Saturday, October 24th, 2009

Sled dogs eating rocks is a common problem in many kennels and unfortunately, it often leads to death. The following musher quotes were taken from [sled dog central](#).

Some mushers, like the one quoted below, are very nonchalant about the situation:

I had 6 dogs in a litter that are rock eaters; NONE have come back to where they were before the surgery and 2 died. 2 rock eaters in the litter still are top dogs (no surgery).

And in situations like the one quoted below, some dogs don't even get a second chance at life through surgery – they just die on their chains due to ignorant handlers:

Hate to tell you this, but in my experience, once a rock eater is always a rock eater. Lost a sweet little 2 yr. old female while I was at the ISDRA conference in June – didn't think to tell my 'dog sitter' about her being a rock eater – It was just second nature for me to keep her head high when walking her through the part of the yard that has rocks.

From an article in the Associated Press, by Kristie Leong, M.D.:

Although medical conditions should be ruled out, in most cases, none will be found and your dog's habit will be attributed to a behavioral problem. This can be a challenge to treat in some cases. **Another reason for rock eating in dogs is mental problems such as anxiety or stress.** Sometimes simple boredom can even motivate a dog to devour rocks and gravel.

5. Tethering and Chaining: According to the Humane Society of the United States the practice is both inhumane and a threat to the safety of the confined dog, other animals and humans.

With scientific studies to prove it they say:

Why is tethering dogs inhumane?

Dogs are naturally social beings who thrive on interaction with human beings and other animals. A dog kept chained in one spot for hours, days, months or even years suffers immense psychological damage. An otherwise friendly and docile dog, when kept continuously chained, becomes neurotic, unhappy, anxious and often aggressive.

In many cases, the necks of chained dogs become raw and covered with sores, the result of improperly fitted collars and the dogs' constant yanking and straining to escape confinement. Dogs have even been found with collars embedded in their necks, the result of years of neglect at the end of a chain.

Who says tethering dogs is inhumane?

In addition to The Humane Society of the United States and numerous animal experts, the U. S. Department of Agriculture issued a statement in the July 2, 1996, Federal Register against tethering:

"Our experience in enforcing the Animal Welfare Act has led us to conclude that continuous confinement of dogs by a tether is inhumane. A tether significantly restricts a dog's movement. A tether can also become tangled around or hooked on the dog's shelter structure or other objects, further restricting the dog's movement and potentially causing injury."

How does tethering or chaining dogs pose a danger to humans?

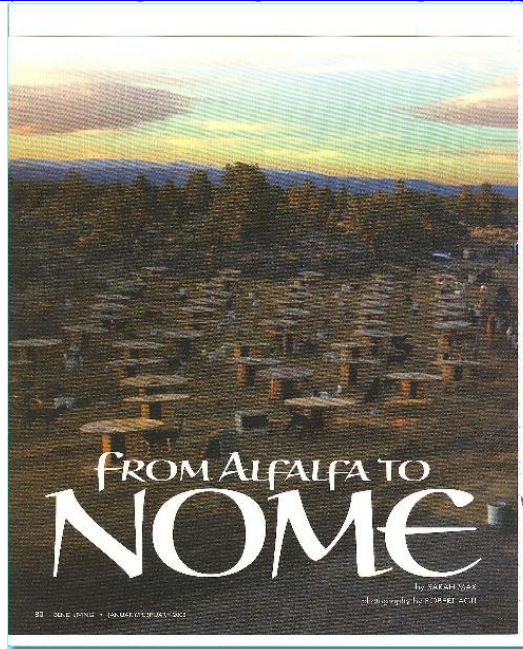
Dogs tethered for long periods can become highly aggressive. Dogs feel naturally protective of their territory; when confronted with a perceived threat, they respond according to their fight-or-flight instinct. A chained dog, unable to take flight, often feels forced to fight, attacking any unfamiliar animal or person who unwittingly wanders into his or her territory.

Numerous attacks on people by tethered dogs have been documented. Tragically, the victims of such attacks are often children who are unaware of the chained dog's presence until it is too late. Furthermore, a tethered dog who finally does get loose from his chains may remain aggressive, and is likely to chase and attack unsuspecting passersby and pets.

6. Inhumane housing/holding



Source: http://sleddogwatchdog.com/sleddogcountry_outside.html



Rachael Sedoris dog yard

(from February 2008 Bend Living magazine)

Oregon musher Rachael Sedoris finds a 'creative solution' for housing her numerous dogs (with discarded telecommunication cable spools)

7. Abnormal accumulation of mucous: "Little information about negative aspects regarding the health of Yukon Quest dogs has been published. However, in 2002, a study in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine reported that 81% of the 59 dogs they examined after one Iditarod had "abnormal accumulations" of mucus or cellular debris in their lower airways. In addition to fluid in the lungs, bleeding stomach ulcers occur, as does general cramping, dislocations, fractures, muscle and tendon tears, tendonitis, dehydration, hypothermia, raw paws, penile frostbite and viruses. Female dogs may run while 'in heat' or during pregnancy; it is common for dogs to vomit or suffer from diarrhoea from the extreme stress (including from their body temperatures overheating) they are forced to undergo, while running long distances."

[Ref: http://sleddogwatchdog.com/yukonquest_yukon_disgrace.html]

8. Cruel Training Practises: Rigorous training schedules includes weight pulling, treadmill running and more. See cruel training information at: <http://www.helpsleddogs.org/remarks-crueldogtraining.htm>

9. Transport Cruelties:

The dogs are crammed into small spaces. Airlines have very strict rules governing the transport of animals on any flight, even short ones. Look at Continental Airlines' guidelines: <http://www.continental.com/web/en-US/content/travel/animals/kennel.aspx> . For example, they require that dogs be able to sit up, lie down and move freely. I don't think the dogs can do these things in those dog crates/trucks.



Ft. Nelson, BC, Canada: Can carry a load of 50 - 56 dogs



Smaller trucks.





Ft. St. James, British Columbia has round pens that could make standing very difficult.



Industry Responses/Policies

1. **Snowy Owl Sled Tours recently formed the Canadian Sled Dog Coalition.** As of February 2011 they have 177 dogs. Here is a picture of their compound.



2. **Mush with P.R.I.D.E. (Participated in the BC Sled Dog Industry Task Force)**

Bob Fawcett was previously the vice president of Mush With P.R.I.D.E., a group formed by mushers in 1991 that claims to have developed sled dog care and equipment guidelines. Last week, the organization's board members voted to remove Fawcett from the board following the news that he was involved in a mass killing of dogs on April 21 and 23, 2010. (Whistler Question, February 10, 2011)

DeeDee Jonrowe helped found the group. Karen Ramstead was present at the BC Sled Dog Task meeting (February 16, 2011). Some of her dogs died in the Iditarod (so did one of Jonrowe's dogs/bled to death during the race.). Dogs are put at terrible risk by racing them in the Iditarod. Ramstead is a dog breeder (North Wapiti Siberian Husky Kennel, Alberta). Racing dogs can get a higher price for them. They advertise "Iditarod Finishing and Best in Show Siberians".

Karen Ramstead's dog Snickers dies after seven hours at checkpoint:

"Snickers, a six and a half year old female in the team of **Karen Ramstead**, died at approximately 11 p.m. on Sunday night in the checkpoint of Grayling. **Ramstead**, of Perryvale, Alberta, Canada, arrived there at 4:06 pm on Sunday with a team of 14 dogs. A gross necropsy will be initiated in an attempt to determine the cause of **death.**" - **Iditarod** Advisory, **Iditarod** website, March 12, 2007

"A gross necropsy was performed on Snickers, a six and a half year old female in the team of **Karen Ramstead**. Preliminary indications showed that Snickers expired as a result of an acute haemorrhage due to a gastric ulcer." - **Iditarod** Advisory, **Iditarod** website, March 14, 2006

From Sled Dog Action:

Mush with P.R.I.D.E. promotes killing dogs: In the section entitled Keeping Your Kennel the Right Size of the Mush with P.R.I.D.E. guidelines, there is a subsection entitled "What to Do With Dogs You Don't Want to Keep." Here they not only advocate killing dogs in cases of deformity, serious injuries, sickness, or old age, but also killing dogs who do not perform as sled dogs and are "behaviourally unsuitable" as pets.

Yukon Quest: 'Media Darling'

"The real problem when it comes to musher dogs is the same as for greyhounds - what to do with the ones that won't run fast enough or are too old to run competitively. No one talks about it but every once in a while someone will be out in the woods and come across a pile of dead dogs, shot in the head, or if they're puppies, necks wrung."

Forum message attributed to Hay River, NWT resident - April 5, 2007

Ref: <http://www.woodenboatvb.com/vbulletin/upload/showthread.php?t=63623>

Veteran musher calls on Quest to confront possible dog culling. Quest Official Claims it is not their business to tell sledders what to do!

Mushers running the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race should have to sign a declaration that they do not cull unwanted dogs and puppies, long-time competitor Frank Turner says.

"Competitive kennels, or even kennels that may not be competitive but aspire to be, often breed more dogs than they're actually going to be able to keep, afford to keep and pay for the vet bills, the food and all the other associated costs," Turner told CBC News in a recent pre-race interview. "If you added up the numbers, there are no way all those other puppies or young dogs are going to be sold or given away to homes. We're just breeding too many dogs."

<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/north/story/2007/02/09/culling-dogs.html>

Mush with P.R.I.D.E. promotes debarking, the mutilation of dogs:

In the section entitled The Dog Yard and Housing, there is mention of debarking and tethering dogs. Debarking is a form of mutilation involving the complete and irreversible destruction of the dog's larynx or vocal cords. This painful surgical procedure leaves the dog permanently defenceless and psychologically damaged.

Mush with P.R.I.D.E. promotes deformity and disease:

In the section entitled Exercise and Training there is a subsection entitled "Weight Pulling." Dogs are specifically bred to perform many tasks including herding, gathering, burrowing, pulling wheelchairs etc., but pulling exceptionally heavy loads is not one of them. Training dogs to pull great weight goes against the dogs' natural instincts. Making them behave so unnaturally involves abusive training that results in harm and deformity to the dog.

Mush with P.R.I.D.E. promotes inhumane kennel practices:

The USDA policy, under the Animal Welfare Act, rejects tethering as an inhumane practice that is not in the animal's best interests. The permanent chaining of dogs is prohibited in all cases where federal law applies. In the sections entitled Tethering Policy Statement and The Dog Yard and Housing, Mush with P.R.I.D.E. opposes this conclusion and encourages mushers to permanently tether their dogs on five foot chains. The USDA has determined that tethering causes many injuries. It eliminates normal dog interactions and severely limits the dog's ability to exercise.



3. Sled Dog Central 2010: Caledonia Classic Results

Megan Routley also participated in the **BC Sled Dog Industry Task Force**. In the February 2010 Caledonia Classic (Ft. St. James) she was scratched due to an injured dog. (Distance 12 Dog (200 miles) 1: Steve Mullen: 29:48:00: 2: Jackie Wepruk: 37:42:00: Irvin Wai: Scratch (Dog Injury) **Megan Routley**: Scratch (Dog Injury)).

Note: Bob Fawcett placed First in one race.

4. Marcel Gobin, Former, Youth Custody Center (Participated in the BC Sled Dog Industry Task Force)

Claimed at the Task Force meeting that he meets all BCSPCA "standard" with his dogs in Iceland. However, the BCSPCA advised him that they do not have any such standards.

5. Frank Turner, Muktuk Adventures (Participated in the BC Sled Dog Industry Task Force)

Also present at the Task Force was Frank Turner, Muktuk Kennels, who has won the Yukon Quest many many times (a 1000 mile Dog sled race over 6-7 days at minus 40!)

Veteran Whitehorse musher and 1995 Yukon Quest Champion Frank Turner was the third team to scratch from the 2007 race. His lead dog has an injured shoulder. Advised by the Yukon Quest veterinary team to drop his lead dog Carter before continuing on the trail

Making Laws or Abolition?

Regulations Mean More Exploitation

Sled dog operators can be in isolated areas, in which makes it hard to enforce rules. In addition, it is also harder for operators to get veterinary care for their dogs or find people to adopt unwanted animals.

If there are regulations it would rubber stamp the sled dog industry as humane. There may well be an increase in breeding, racing, tours and other carnie like events. "Novelty Acts" at the expense of more dogs could increase as part of the exploitive entertainment businesses.

Novelty Acts and Increased Attractions

1. Ski Dogging in which skiers are pulled by dogs.

2. Luxury Tours

Ex. "I can't wait. A sample of the fabled Yukon Quest trail, four men and a few dozen dogs all dedicated to my personal happiness for 10 days of Northern delight. That's my kind of heaven." SPENDING SPREE Mushing guide: \$25,000, Chef-catered meals: \$15,000, 'Sherpa' & _camp gear: \$3,000, Airfare, doggie treats, souvenirs: \$7,000. <http://www.uphere.ca/node/111> (Katherine Fawcett lives in Pemberton, British Columbia, where she and her husband operate a dog sledding business.)

3. Gimmicks such as the Jamaican Dog Sled Team appearances.

4. "Team Enhancement" Courses for "leadership and business".

5. Wolf hybrid "shaman" attractions.

6. "Ghosts" Disney type attractions.

7. Puppy petting attractions.

Legal Precedents

Some of these legal precedents can be used to reduce the harm to sled dogs and other animals in BC. People have supported strong laws that result in bans on many types of animal exploitation.

In the US

Races like the Iditarod [and Yukon Quest] violate accepted standards regarding animal cruelty as is shown by the laws of 38 states and the District of Columbia. These 38 states and the District of Columbia have animal anti-cruelty laws that say "overdriving" and "overworking" an animal is animal cruelty. The California law is typical: "597. Cruelty to animals: (B) Every person who overdrives, overloads, drives when overloaded, overworks... any animal... is, for every such offense, guilty of a crime punishable as a misdemeanor or as a felony or alternatively punishable as a misdemeanor or a felony and by a fine of not more than twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000)."

[Source: Animal Welfare Institute, Animals and Their Legal Rights]

In Canada

1. Ban on Animal Acts/Performance

First bylaws were introduced in Saanich and Victoria, BC. These bylaws included both domestic animals and exotic animals.

2. City Animal Control Bylaw amendments

The Vancouver Parks Board approved a Cetacean Bylaw that would help phase out the captivity of whales and dolphins in the Vancouver Aquarium.

3. No Chaining Bylaws > Choke collars/Tethering Ban

No Chaining can help reduce the physical and psychological suffering of sled dogs and others in BC. Quebec will be introducing legislation soon. See:

http://www.cjad.com/localnews.aspx?articleID=169619&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=facebook

It is recognized that there is debate over socializing these dogs. The SPCA has said that they cannot be (See Past Legal Seizures above). The present chaining of sled dogs makes it difficult to place them in retirement homes.

There is one SPCA program that has attempted to socialize pit bulls. Any success is questionable. In 2008 a "socialized" pit bull was sold and later attacked a little dog named "Buddy" in Surrey. Buddy died from the injuries.

Information from the Animal Advocates site: Re: ANTICHAINING

Opinions from Vancouver's leading dog behaviour experts

<http://www.animaladvocates.com/yard-dogs/>

- Research into the effects of tethering and isolation:
- (a) behavioural/psychological
- (b) physical
- (c) public safety
- **Opinions** from Vancouver's leading dog behaviour experts

US Laws RE: ANTICHAINING

<http://www.peta.org/issues/companion-animals/current-legislation-on-tethering-dogs.aspx>

Humane Treatment of Dogs bylaws that AAS had adopted in BC municipalities:

[In Brief](#) | [Burnaby](#) | [Coquitlam](#) | [Delta](#) | [Lions Bay](#) | [Maple Ridge](#) | [New Westminister](#) | [North Vancouver City](#) | [North Vancouver District](#) | [Richmond](#) | [Surrey](#) | [West Vancouver](#)

4. Dangerous Dog Breeds

Kennel runs/proper enclosures have been recommended for Dangerous Breeds. This is done for public safety and animal welfare concerns.

In places, such as Northern Canada, feral and other dogs from the sled dog businesses have attacked children and others. A recent example, “A four-year-old Inuvik, N.W.T., boy and his teenage babysitter are lucky to have survived a vicious attack by a husky-mix dog, according to animal welfare officials in the northern town. Mason Dillon remains in an Edmonton children's hospital, where he will undergo multiple reconstructive surgeries on his face, hands, scalp, and other parts of his body that were damaged in Saturday's dog attack.”
<http://ca.news.yahoo.com/husky-attack-n-w-t-boy-called-horrific-20110216-131632-101.html>

5. Transport Laws

The transportation laws regarding the transport of animals, such as farm animals, are in need of many improvements. “Work” animals are subjected to immense distress during long hauls, deprived of food/water and/or permanent housing in transport crates.

Air conditioning units in police cars and protective vests are now provided to police dogs. These measures recognize that dogs are not just a police shield. They have rights to be equally protected if exposed to life-threatening dangers. Protection for sled dogs from extreme heat, cold and transport hardships could be provided for under new BC Provincial and/or Federal anti-cruelty laws.

6. Debarking laws

Massachusetts First State to Ban Debarking

Logan's Law (An Act Prohibiting Devocalization of Dogs and Cats). The Bill was sponsored by Coalition to Protect and Rescue Pets.

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/plymouth/topstories/x905703097/Massachusetts-becomes-first-state-to-ban-devocalization-of-dogs-and-cats>

Devocalization *and* declawing have long been banned throughout the UK.

7. Kennel Codes – Guidelines and live there

In the Mataruska-Susitna Borough of Alaska, mushers were able leave their dogs chained and unattended on vacant lots. In August 2010, they passed a law requiring owners or custodians of dog kennels to reside on the property where animals are living.

There are Kennel Codes but these fail to address all concerns.

8. Spay and Neutering Laws

“At least 30 states have passed legislation requiring sterilization of cats and dogs adopted from community shelters. Many state laws charge guardians who choose not to sterilize their animal companions a substantial financial penalty. Laws are stronger in some areas of the country than in others. In New York City, for example,

even dogs and cats sold in pet stores must be spayed or neutered. Rhode Island requires guardians to spay or neuter all cats over six months of age, no matter how they are acquired, or pay a licensing fee. Advocates expect this to reduce the number of animals euthanized in the state by about 65%.”
<http://www.idausa.org/facts/spayneuter.html>

Mandatory spay and neuter laws should be applied to sled dog operators. Regulations recommending better planning and reduced breeding during low seasons needs would be impossible to enforce. It would not reduce the large “herds” issue because breeders want to get the best ones and sell others.

9. Drugs Controls – People and Animal

There is a need for mandatory drug testing of dogs, mushers, dog handlers and race officials.

Animals

The use of anabolic steroids is an issue because dogs are forced to pull trucks and heavy sleds:

"The dogs are pulling sleds totalling more than 400 pounds each. To prepare, teams might pull a truck. No wonder anabolic steroids are an issue." - Greg Cote, Miami Herald, March 5, 2002

<http://www.helpsleddogs.org/remarks-crueldogtraining.htm>

People

Issue of allegations of marijuana use by Yukon Quest mushers during race:

“The Quest, as now becomes obvious, is a mix of celebration and ordeal. At the finish line in Fairbanks, dogs from winning teams will get blood tests for drugs; a microchip injected under the skin of their necks is used for identification. There are no drug tests for the mushers, though. Whether one approves or not, marijuana is very much a part of life in the Far North. And, for some, it's an integral part of the Quest. Nothing like a few hours gliding along under the northern lights and having the brain charged with cannabis, they say.”

“...And by writing about this ticklish question, I do not mean to imply that all Quest mushers are dopers. I know half a dozen who are and I'd guess there are others. They're not all also-rans either. Getting stoned is part of their lives and, oddly, does not seem to leave them in a stupor, as it does the urban pot smokers I know. The only explanation I can offer for this, purely suppositional, is that I understand marijuana to be a mood enhancer. So perhaps these hyperactive mushers only intensify their gusto for living by puffing their pipes. Either that or their drive is so strong it overpowers the tranquilizing effect of the drug. The question these mushers ask each other is not "Do you have any pot?" but "What kind do you have?"

10. Defining Adequate Food, Shelter and Care

What is reasonable and acceptable? Provincial and Territorial laws have huge discrepancies. Animal Legal Defence Fund rated Provinces and Territories and found BC in the middle.

1. Animal Protection Laws of the USA & Canada (5th Edition) compendium: <http://aldf.org/article.php?id=259> (click on the "complimentary download" button and fill-out the quick form). For a range of better examples of laws establishing basic standards of care for animals, see: Oregon (pp 2228-29 in the compendium), Michigan (pp 1406-07), Virginia (pp 2783-84) and Puerto Rico (pp 3152-53).

Ontario's robust standards (pp 16-17) can be found in this advanced compendium: (Contact Lifeforce for PDF)

2. 2010 Canadian Animal Protection Laws Rankings Report: <http://aldf.org/article.php?id=1369> (from this page, you can download the full report and/or reports from other years as well).

11. International Industry

Sled dog racing is an international business. Participants can travel to and from some other countries. The transport of dogs is a major concern.

Although the laws of the land, if greatly improved, could provide protection for the dogs as always enforcement is problematic. Guidelines would not be sufficient. International laws would have to be implemented.

12. Killing/"Euthanasia"

Iditarod kennels acquire and breed many more dogs than can be used in the Iditarod race. The reason for this is simple; it is impossible to predict which dogs will become good racing dogs or for how long a good racer will remain a good racer. Therefore, the kennel owner maintains a large pool of dogs, and ultimately many become unwanted or "surplus."

Shooting dogs is not recommended by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and others. The AVMA states that only "limited use" shall be permitted. This would appear to be appropriate in only emergency situation not the routine culling of sled dogs. Many animals are not killed instantly

The scarce veterinary services in Northern Canada are part of the problem. However, as long as dogs are treated as commodities the mushers will continue to use the most convenient and cheapest methods even if a veterinarian is available. A bullet is cheaper than an injection of a controlled drug. The use of guns to control feral and other dogs is not humane. Even "controlled" culls have ended badly. For example: "Two dogs which received gunshot wounds to the head in separate incidents are recovering at the Saskatoon SPCA, following treatment....Blue was injured in the northern Saskatchewan community of Pelican Narrows. According to Koback, Blue was shot during a cull of feral dogs." <http://ca.news.yahoo.com/shot-dogs-recovering-saskatoon-sPCA-20110224-130802-164.html>

Laws must prohibit the shooting of dogs by guns, bow and arrow etc.. Mandatory injections, with pre tranquilizers for vicious dogs, can be provided by veterinarians and health care technicians. Animal Control could assist.

13. Contracts for Adoption

Recently the Vancouver Parks Board agreed that there should be written contracts to guarantee permanent retirement homes for the animals in the now defunct Stanley Park Petting Zoo. Any adoptee for a sled dog must guarantee in writing that a humane, permanent retirement be provided. No breeding, trade or sale is permitted. No further "work" is also not permitted.

14. Funding for Investigations and Enforcement

If adequate laws could be provided then adequate numbers of full-time animal protection officers, would also be needed. Funding should not be provided solely to "SPCAs" because other BC animal protection societies also provide similar services. Other pounds, organizations and individuals are part of the solution too. They provide investigations, seizures, shelter, adoptions etc.. For example, the Animal Legal Defense Fund is offering a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone engaged in the illegal killing of sled dogs in the U.S. or Canada. Lifeforce will be notified to possibly investigate any reports.

Funding sources could include:

1. BC Lotteries/Casino grants to advocacy groups.
2. Provincial Government Fund.
3. Revenue from fines be provided for Citizen Enforcement. The individual/group that assisted should receive part or all of the fines imposed.
4. Business Licensing revenue should provide funds for inspection of the sled dog and associated industries.

Conflict of Interests:

1. Any BC or other Provincial Lottery Corporation support of sled dog industry. Has the Lotteries Corporation provided funding to local racing or the Yukon Quest?
2. Any BC or other Provincial/Federal Tourism support of sled dog racing.
3. No potential enforcement agency funding from the sled racing and tourism industries. For example, SPCAs certainly have a conflict of interest and a somewhat hypocritical position. In 2008, SPCA accepted money from the organizers/participants in the JACK GAWTHORN MEMORIAL SLED DOG RACE (Caribou area).

15. Races in Provincial Parks and on Crown Land

Races in Provincial Parks and on Crown Lands should not be permitted. It can result in public and musher safety issues, endangerment of wildlife and threats to the dogs. Liability issues would arise.

If permitted there would be a need to follow vaccination guidelines for the protection of wildlife. In addition, coyotes and wolves could carry distemper or parvovirus and pass it on to the dogs. Veterinary requirements would have to include proof of current vaccinations for Distemper, Adenovirus type 2, Parainfluenza, Parvo and Rabies

16. No Pound Seizure

SPCAs and pounds should not sell dogs to the sled dog industries.

17. Public Education

No public money and resources (Provincial, Territorial, Municipal and First Nations) should be used to support and promote racing and sled dog tourism industry. Instead of promoting in classrooms the exploitation of dogs used as sled dogs, it is more vital to teach children about humane education and our responsibility as a society to protect and care for our fellow sentient beings.

There should be no promotion of the sled dog industries in classrooms supported by education authorities including the Teachers' Associations and the Ministries of Education. If there are such discussions, both the pros and cons must be provided in curriculum/teaching guides for educating children.

18. Increased penalties/jail times

Provincial and Federal penalties for animal abusers must be increased under improved laws in Canada.

19. Training Crown Prosecutors

Crown Prosecutors should have special training in animal rights and animal protection laws. Organizations, such as the Animal Legal Defence Fund, can provide guidance.

20. Promoting Animal Rights

Animal welfare supporters usually take the position that the use of animals for eating, experimenting and entertainment should be permitted if measures are taken to reduce the harm. The word “humane” in itself does not necessarily stop pain and suffering. As long as it is presently permitted under law animal welfarists may condone various institutionalized forms of animal exploitation. This could prolong putting a permanent end to the exploitation of dogs and others.

Animal rights supporters believe that many, many currently permitted businesses are not justifiable on ethical grounds. Animal rights people promote the end to pain and suffering not permitting it if it provides monetary benefits to the human animals. Failure to acknowledge the rights of sentient animals is speciesist and is as abhorrent as racism, sexism and other injustices.

The rights of sled dogs and others must be provided in law.

Animal Rights NOT Wrongs

Peter Singer published in 1975, the book "Animal Liberation". This has been cited as a formative influence on leaders of the modern animal liberation movement. The central argument of the book is an expansion of the utilitarian idea that "the greatest good of the greatest number" is the only measure of good or ethical behaviour. Singer argues that there is no reason not to apply this to other animals. He introduced and popularized the term "speciesism", which was originally coined by Richard D. Ryder, to describe the practice of privileging humans over other animals.

Animal Liberation was widely considered within the animal liberation movement to be the founding philosophical statement of its ideas. Singer himself rejected the use of the theoretical framework of rights when it comes to human and nonhuman animals: he argued that the interests of animals should be considered because of their ability to feel suffering and that the idea of rights was not necessary in order to consider them.

In following years the rights of animals have been better defined by others like Gary Francione. Gary Francione is Distinguished Professor of Law and Nicholas de B. Katzenbach Scholar of Law and Philosophy at Rutgers University School of Law-Newark.

In one of Francione's books, **Animals, Property, and the Law**, William Kunstler, self-described "radical lawyer" and civil rights activist, states in his foreword:

"Pain is pain, irrespective of the race, sex, or species of the victim,". This moral concern for the suffering of animals and their legal status is the basis for Gary L. Francione's profound book, which asks, Why has the law failed to protect animals from exploitation? Francione argues that the current legal standard of animal welfare does not and cannot establish fights for animals. As long as they are viewed as property, animals will be subject to suffering for the social and economic benefit of human beings." See:

<http://www.abolitionistapproach.com/books/animals-property-and-the-law/>

"The solution is to abolish the exploitation of animals, not to regulate it. The solution is to recognize that just as we recognize that every human, irrespective of her particular characteristics, has the fundamental right not to be treated as the property of another, we must recognize that every sentient (perceptually aware) nonhuman has that right as well." See:

http://www.abolitionistapproach.com/media/pdf/ARAA_Pamphlet.pdf

The Six Principles of the Abolitionist Approach to Animal Rights is discussed at:

<http://www.abolitionistapproach.com/about/>

Human slavery could have been "regulated" but as a compassionate society we should abhor animal slavery too. The blood money impedes our moral progress towards a just kinder world for all life. Violence towards animals begets violence to people. Serial killers have tortured animals earlier in their lives before their wanton killing of humans.

The Five Basic Freedoms that all life should be entitled to are: To easily stand up, To sit down and lie in normal position, To turn around freely, To run and walk, and To have protection from heat, cold, hunger and thirst.

Animals used in "sports" and tourist attractions do suffer. From dog fighting to horse drawn carriages to dog and horse racing you can't stop the inherent cruelties. It is part of the trade to breed large numbers to find the "best" ones to do the job. No time for pity, sickness, aging, and temperaments. In order to save money it is "taking them out back" to end the misery for the business and animals.

The person alleged to have killed the one hundred dogs was the in charge of "herd control". A "herd" of domestic dogs bred for profits. It is also part of the dog sled businesses to chain them on three to six foot chains for most of the day and withhold food to get the confined dogs to run "free". The cramped truck transport pens are often used for long holding periods. It is to the company profiteers business as usual.

The public should know the truth behind these so called entertainment businesses. They are all like the finally defunct Stanley Park petting zoo. When the novelty or profitability ends the majority of the animal gold are off to slaughter.

Aquariums, zoos, circuses, rodeos, film companies and other animal enterprises all share similar cruelties for to make the money. "Shamu" was one of hundreds of hidden dead orca bodies, at least 8 of the 36 puppies in Snow Buddies movie died, broken rodeo animal bodies are put under a tarp to be shot when the crowds leave, and guard dogs are stored in warehouses. These are only few of the ways that animals are treated as commodities.

Life is usually hell for a "working" dog. Not so pleasant sled bells were rung by those who witness other sled dog abuses. Inhumane treatment of sled dogs has been reported to the SPCA. Dogs used in sled racing can be indiscriminately bred; not provided with humane housing; tethered on short chains; subjected to feeding restrictions to produce lean animals; not given proper exercise; worked while ill, injured or fatigued; exposed to enhancement drugs; force into endurance competition or training; subject to extremely cramped space (in transit); and exploited by cruel disciplining. The psychological and physical abuses that sled dogs endure from constant chaining is only one of many reasons why this industry must end.

It is time to end injustices under the Canadian animal cruelty laws both Provincially and Federally. Politicians are hearing the outcry. Since the dogs were killed as a downturn in one business one politician stated that it is now a black eye to the 2010 Winter Olympics that were held in Whistler. Former Premier Campbell recognized the threat to BC tourism and set up a task force. Rock promoter Bruce Allen believes that will end up as a political cover up. Lifeforce asked the Premier for representation on the task force so the true animal rights case can be made. Lifeforce was invited to participate in one meeting. This report will be provided to the BC Sled Dog Industry Task Force and the public.

If proven guilty, the individual dog killer and all the associated culprits must be fined and sentence to jail time. The individuals and companies must not ever own an animal or animal business again. Fines should go to save the dogs and the horses still being used by Outdoor Adventures!

Lastly, it is the public with moral and monetary power to protect animal rights. They have the political power to elect those who will finally represent animals too. The public will not support those businesses that profit from the animal abuses.

Conclusions

The terms of reference for the BC Sled Dog Industry Task Force review include reviewing responsibilities, regulations, and policy governing the dog sledding industry.

Lifeforce is presenting the animal rights position and the need to greatly improve animal cruelty laws. This will give us the opportunity to bite back at the sled dog racing and "tourism" industry in BC, Canada, the US and other countries. It must end NOT be regulated. Regulations would be impossible to be enforced and won't end the dog abuses that are inherent in these types of for profit, entertainment businesses.

Hopefully, shedding the light on these dog abuses will help others dogs exploited by those with "working class" biases. The mentality of those who continue to treat sentient dogs as commodities for their personal gains will one day be understood as speciesism.

We have the privilege to be able to enjoy the natural wonders of nature and wildlife in British Columbia. Promoting tourism in BC continues with the identity slogan "Supernatural BC". Businesses do not have any justification to exploit animals. Peaceful activities can be found from skiing to snowmobiling to hiking and to boating. Put on the snow shoes or skis for exercise NOT sled dog exploitation. Many mushers have sled dog tour businesses. There is no way of knowing how many unwanted dogs mushers kill or how many dogs are killed and injured in training. Sled dogs should be on the list of tourism don'ts!

It is time to harness the anger and emotions generated by the Whistler sled dog case. We must put those energies towards positive changes to protect the victims of the sled dog industry. It is time for the BC government to take the lead and to ban this industry. If any politicians fail then the majority contingency of animal people will find those who will. One less animal abuse Industry is way less animal abuses.

**"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."
--Ghandi**

Acknowledgements

No Sled Dog Organizations

1. Sled Dog Action Coalition.

<http://www.helpsleddogs.org/mush.htm>

2. Sled Dog Watch

<http://sleddogwatchdog.com>

3. Break The Chains - Save The Sled Dogs for first-hand accounts of Iditarod sled dog abuse and neglect. People need to know the truth behind what the racing industry is hiding.

[Break The Chains - Save The Sled Dogs](#) and www.lakotasong.com

4. Animal Advocates

<http://www.animaladvocates.com>

5. Lifeforce is a Vancouver-based ecology and animal rights organization that was formed in 1981 to raise public awareness of the interrelationship of human, animal and environmental issues. Our campaigns have included:

1. The first Animal Rights Days in the world (Vancouver and North Vancouver)
2. Animal Performance Bylaws (to ban exotic and domestic animal acts and events)
3. Cetacean Bylaw (to phase out the captivity of dolphins at the Vancouver Aquarium)
4. Whale Watching Regulations (to stop the boat traffic harassment of endangered orcas)

See: www.lifeforcefoundation.org

Other

Mackenzie Delta sled dog race photos by:

InuvikPhotos.ca blog and http://sleddogwatchdog.com/inuvik_dog_race_photos.html