



USEF NEWS

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UNITED STATES EQUESTRIAN FEDERATION®

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Call to Action: Southern California Wild Fires Donate Now to the USEF Equine Disaster Relief Fund

By Brian Sosby

Lexington, KY—Over the last few days, the Southern California area has been engulfed in flames caused by wild fires aggravated by the Santa Ana winds. These winds that annually cross the Southern California area have been much stronger than usual, making an already dry area even more prone to catastrophe. These fires have spread quickly over the weekend and ravaged the region.

San Diego County has seen widespread evacuations as a result of the fires. Nearly one-million people have been asked to leave the area as of today. President Bush has declared the situation a Federal emergency. Many evacuees have sought shelter at local community centers and schools, but the largest number—more than 10,000 people—has made Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego their temporary housing.

The situation is particularly difficult for those with large animals. Evacuating and housing horses has its own set of concerns. According to national media reports, the fairground in San Diego County is currently boarding 2,000 horses, with many others finding refuge from the fires where any safe space can be found, including mall parking lots. Some horses have been moved several times due to the widespread fires.

In response to past disasters and in hopes of assisting in future ones, the United States Equestrian Federation established the USEF Equine Disaster Relief Fund and is now requesting contributions from individuals and organizations wishing to assist those in the Southern California area.

Money donated to the USEF Equine Disaster Relief Fund assists equines of any breed that find themselves victims of disasters, including but not restricted to hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, blizzards and fires. The money will be held by USEF in an account restricted for this purpose and disbursed only upon authorization of the USEF Chief Executive Officer.

“During situations like this, it’s imperative that we gather forces to assist in any way possible,” said USEF Chief Executive Officer John Long. “Thankfully, the weather forecasts are good. However, Southern California just experienced the largest evacuation of residents in our country’s history. Of course, that has had an impact on the countless horses that call that part of the state home. The Federation wants to do what it can to assist those horses and owners.”

Donations may be made online at www.usef.org by clicking on the following hyperlink – https://www.usef.org/_AUAIFrames/DisasterRelief/DisasterRelief.aspx. If you wish to contribute to the effort by check, please make it out to the USEF Equine Disaster Relief Fund and mail it to: The United States Equestrian Federation, 4047 Iron Works Parkway, Lexington, KY 40511.

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For more information regarding the USEF Equine Disaster Relief Fund, contact Joanie Morris, USEF High-Performance Communications Manager, at jmorris@usef.org or (859) 225-2052.



The vision of the United States Equestrian Federation® is to provide leadership for equestrian sport in the United States of America by promoting the pursuit of excellence from the grassroots to the Olympic Games. This is based on a foundation of fair, safe competition and the welfare of horses. Embracing this vision, the USEF strives to be the best national equestrian federation in the world.