

Mannar Donkey Management & Welfare

Report #9 Animal Aid Abroad, July 2015



Three day old foal with Australian volunteers at our temporary donkey care center

Increasing numbers of volunteers desire contact with the donkeys and this demonstrates clearly the donkeys' tourism potential. It is hoped that our strategy to pursue social, animal and economic welfare outcomes for both people and animal will ensure the survival, protection and wellbeing of the donkeys well into the future. Animal Aid Abroad supporters continue to stand by us as we journey a path less travelled.

Australian volunteers with donkeys



This month six volunteers from Australia visited Mannar to work for Bridging Lanka specially on our kulam (lagoon) protection work. However it wasn't long before they came regularly to our temporary donkey care center to spend quality time with our donkeys. As usual, the visitors were excited and happy to be with donkeys. Many photos were taken and immediately shared on Facebook. Many 'likes' and comments followed. Angela, one of the volunteers bought 4kg of eggplants to get proper feed time with these lovable creatures.

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Getting the new Mannar veterinary surgeon involved with donkeys

Robin and Kelvin met Mannar's new veterinary surgeon, Dr. B.R.N. Harshani, and asked her to visit our temporary donkey center. She asked us to formalize the request by seeking approval from the Department of Animal Production and Health. At the next meeting the vet confirmed she had received permission to inspect the donkeys once in a month on the first Tuesday at 11am.

Owners of coconut estates from other parts of Sri Lanka are showing interest in buying donkeys so we asked her what was the procedure. A procedure to issue a sales certificate for an equine was developed and involved issuing an animal health certificate, undertaking a vehicle check and gaining permission from the Divisional Secretary.



One more foal added to our numbers

Orson, one of our favourite donkeys, gave birth to a foal. We were so happy and blessed to see another cute foal at our center. The birth coincided with a time when many volunteers from overseas were with us and they fell in love the new arrival. The volunteers' 'motherly' instincts came to the fore as they groomed the young animal and snapped great numbers of photos.

Volunteers in action - <http://youtu.be/XHkiKcwumzw>

Donkey Clinic & Community Education Centre Update



Gaining community support for the donkey facility

After finalizing all the requirements for building approval of the donkey clinic and centre, we visited the Secretary of the Pradesiya Sabha (local council) to smooth the way for the application. He was happy with our submission but asked us to get the support of all the community based organisations (CBOs) in the vicinity. Although taken aback at this request, we set about gaining the desired letters of support. Firstly a community consultation meeting was convened to establish support for the donkey facility.

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Twenty representatives drawn from the Maulavis (Muslim clerics) of the local mosques, the Fishermen's Society, the Youth Club, Rural Development Society, Sports Club, Agrarian Society, etc gathered to hear a presentation about the functions and opportunities of the proposed facility and how it would be linked to long-term village development and employment creation.



The ensuing discussions on the 20th July, were robust at times and raised a number of concerns: "Tourist behaviour is bad so it will spoil our culture"; "The new madrasa (cleric school) is being built nearby so will the sacredness of this site be protected?"; "Isn't there land somewhere else?". The majority thought... "It is a very good idea. According to our religion the love of animals and education is very appreciated so happy to support this project." In the end a local committee was formed to address issues as they arose and consent was given for the project to continue. Al Hathir, the coordinator of the project, then approached each society for a letter of support.

Work commences on donkey clinic site

In anticipation of a positive meeting outcome materials were purchased and concrete block making commenced. A storage shed and electricity connection facility were also completed.



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