



**ROCKY MOUNTAIN
ANIMAL RESCUE**

ADOPTION HANDBOOK

A Reference for Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue
Potential Adopters

We are a registered Canada Revenue
Non-Profit Animal Rescue Organization

Sanctuary/Headquarters located near
Canmore, Alberta

Contact

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www.RockyMountainAnimalRescue.com

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LETTER FROM RORY O'NEILL

Director

To you, the potential adopter....

If you're reading this, it's because you're considering adopting a rescue animal from the Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue - and for that, I would like to say congratulations! There is nothing more rewarding than seeing an animal who has never known the comforts of a house or the love of a person, get a forever home full of love!

There is a lot that goes into the adoption process, which we'll walk you through shortly. But that said, know that you're in good hands.

I've been rescuing and rehabilitating dogs for over 20 years now, and as a professional animal behaviourist, I put a lot of emphasis on matching the right animal to the right person. We use detailed adoption applications to get an idea of your lifestyle, family and routines – and with that information, we can evaluate the compatibility of you and the animal you're interested in. We want to ensure that the animal you adopt will fit right in to your life.

This Adopter Handbook will also give you an overview of our adoption agreement, our policies, and more information on what we do.

Let's get started!

Rory O'Neill
Director & Animal Behaviourist
Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue

OUR PHILOSOPHY

How We Match Pets & Families

Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue has been active since January of 2000 and has developed into a group of dedicated fosterers who provide sanctuary for homeless dogs and cats.

As soon as an animal is taken under our care, we coordinating vetting, rehabilitation and potential adopter meetings. Under the careful guidance of director and animal behaviourist Rory O'Neill, certain animals who display fearfulness, post-traumatic stress or lack of socialization are worked with while the right home is found.

Our adoption application is thorough; when matching a pet to a family, we consider many factors:

- Family members (adults, children, infants)
- Daily routine
- Lifestyle
- Other animals in the house
- Type of housing
- Level of training experience with dogs/cats
- Energy levels

We want to be as certain as possible that bringing your new pet home will be as smooth and easy as possible. This is why we like to follow up with all adopters shortly after the adoption is made – to see how things are going, and if we can help answer any behavioural questions. We truly believe in continuing education for all pet owners, and aim to be your go-to source for all subjects of socialization, daily enrichment, boundaries, discipline, exercise and affection.

QUICK REFERENCE

Dog Adoption Topics

Spay/Neuter

- If a dog has not yet been spayed or neutered due to age, is pregnant, or other reason, you will agree to a **\$150 refundable spay/neuter deposit**.
- An approximate time is given on the Adoption Agreement form. It is your responsibility to follow up for deposit.
- You can complete our Refund of Spay/Neuter Deposit form online (link will be sent to you by your Adoption Coordinator at the time of adoption) and you will be required to upload a **scanned certificate** to receive your refund.
- Alternatively, you can mail in a copy of the certificate with the approval from your Adoption Coordinator.

Training & Basic Understanding of Dog Behaviour

A basic understanding of dog behavior is needed when it comes to helping make the transition to a new home as smooth as possible. We encourage all new pet owners to educate your dog AND yourself on what it means to provide fair and firm leadership, use appropriate corrections and rewards, and to contact an experienced professional for advice if you hit a road block.

We have put together some basic information to help start you off on the right foot.

EXERCISE

When we talk about exercise for your dog, we don't only mean physical – we mean mental too. Be prepared to give plenty of opportunity for your dog to run and play. Also be ready to offer your dog the chance to work that awesome mind of his through training, problem solving and other fun challenges. A dog who is both mentally and physically tired is well-behaved!

SOCIALIZATION

We stress the importance of socializations for puppies and dogs as it is paramount in their development. Meeting other dogs builds their confidence, teaches them about boundaries and appropriate behavior, and makes future meetings with other dogs a pleasant thing for you. Socialization also extends to meeting new people, too, to once again help build confidence and comfort levels. Appropriate forms of socialization include dog parks, walking, day care and more.

If the dog you're adopting has known socialization issues, speak with us about continuing rehabilitation with guidance and one-on-one help from Rory O'Neill.

CRATE TRAINING

This term means training your dog to enjoy and accept being kenneled. Often times, new dogs are trained to go into their crate when you aren't home or at night - however, you must understand that your **end goal** is to limit the time your dog spends in the crate to as little as possible: eventually, you want to be able to leave your dog to roam your house without cause for concern.

The proper amount of time a dog can spend in its crate when crate training will depend on age, breed, and energy level. The time spent in its crate will also dictate the level of exercise it needs daily, as well as the amount of mental stimulation and enrichment it will need.

BOUNDARIES, DISCIPLINE & LOVE

Our goal is to ensure all new pet owners understand the importance of boundaries and discipline. It does no one any favours if your dog is allowed to have the run of the house: to jump up onto couches and beds whenever it wants, sit at your feet in the kitchen when you cook, rush out the moment the door is opened. You will want to establish firm and fair rules the moment the dog comes home – and you will want to remain consistent. This includes ensuring that everyone in the house is following the same rules. You will also want to provide love and affection when all rules are being followed. We suggest clicker training, which you can learn more about at

<http://www.RoryOneill.net>

QUICK REFERENCE

Cat Adoption Topics

Spay/Neuter

- If a cat has not yet been spayed or neutered due to age, is pregnant, or other reason, you will agree to a **\$150 refundable spay/neuter deposit**.
- An approximate time is given on the Adoption Agreement form. It is your responsibility to follow up for deposit.
- You can complete our Refund of Spay/Neuter Deposit form online (link will be sent to you by your Adoption Coordinator at the time of adoption) and you will be required to upload a **scanned certificate** to receive your refund.
- Alternatively, you can mail in a copy of the certificate with the approval from your Adoption Coordinator.

Training & Basic Understanding of Cat Behaviour

A basic understanding of cat behavior is needed when it comes to helping make the transition to a new home as smooth as possible. We encourage all new pet owners to educate your cat AND yourself on what it means to provide fair and firm boundaries, use appropriate corrections and rewards, and to contact an experienced professional for advice if you hit a road block.

We have put together some basic information to help start you off on the right foot.

EXERCISE

When we talk about exercise for your cat, we don't only mean physical – we mean mental too. Be prepared to give plenty of opportunity for your cat to run, jump, climb and play. Also be ready to offer your cat the chance to work that awesome mind of his through training, problem solving and other fun challenges. Cats are highly intelligent and need to USE their mind.

SOCIALIZATION

We stress the importance of socializations for kittens and cats as it is paramount in their development. It is a common misconception to assume that cats are loners: meeting other cats, animals and people helps to build their confidence, teaches them about boundaries and appropriate behavior, and makes future social situations a pleasure.

If the cat you're adopting has known socialization issues, speak with us about continuing rehabilitation with guidance and one-on-one help from Rory O'Neill.

LITTERBOX TRAINING

Bringing a cat home is such a rewarding experience, but there is an adjustment period that takes place – and during that time, proper litterbox training is important. We can help you prepare for this transition and make your cat successful at finding and using his litterbox.

BOUNDARIES, DISCIPLINE & LOVE

Our goal is to ensure all new pet owners understand the importance of boundaries and discipline – with dogs, and especially with cats. It does no one any favours if your cat is allowed to have the run of the house: to jump onto counters and tables, to beg when you're preparing food, to rush out the moment a door is opened. You will want to establish firm and fair rules the moment the cat comes home – and you will want to remain consistent. This includes ensuring that everyone in the house is following the same rules. You will also want to provide love and affection when all rules are being followed. We suggest clicker training, which you can learn more about at <http://www.RoryOneill.net>

BRINGING YOUR NEW PET HOME

Quick Tips

Proper Identification

This is critical, as dogs and cats may be a flight risk until they make the connection that your home as THEIR home. Before you have the opportunity to get an engraved pet tag or similar, you can wrap tape on your pet's collar with your phone number written with a black Sharpie.

DOGS

Unless you have a very small dog, we recommend you buy two collars: a buckle-type with light/bright fabric to hand-write your phone number on, and a martingale collar to guide your dog to where he is supposed to be when taking a walk/run.

For safety reasons, it's better collars are snug rather than loose and that you never take off your dog's collar I.D. (except for bathing), and if pet hasn't already received a microchip, to get one immediately.

CATS

A small, bright collar with your phone number hand-written on it is a good option, or a collar with a pet I.D tag is even better for ease of reading. We also highly suggest a microchip for your cat.

Food & Nutrition

We are frequently asked what to feed the adopted pet. Many pet owners are surprised to find out we highly recommend non-pet food: in fact, we recommend as much "human" food within the appropriate daily amounts as possible (vegetables, fruit, yogurt, spaghetti, toast with butter, and anything you have as your daily meal!)

Our food is much more nutritious and delicious than kibble. Kibble frequently causes cancer, allergies, diarrhea, seizures, and other serious problems. Pets need and want fresh grown fruits and vegetables on a regular basis. It is far more natural

and healthy than pet food, promoted by pet food companies that usually are the owners of slaughterhouses (please investigate, google, what really is in pet food).

For small dogs, we recommend food we eat, and for larger breeds due to cost, recommend kibble mixed with as much of our food as you can provide. Kibble is a cheap way, relatively speaking, to feed a dog, however, our food is far more healthy and desirable to your pet.

On the Subject of Vaccinations

Although Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue fully believes the first set of vaccinations is necessary for cats and dogs, we do not believe they need to be vaccinated annually. We feel pet owners have been exploited and intimidated by the veterinarian clinics and pharmaceutical companies into believing that it is necessary to vaccinate your pets annually – when the truth is most vaccinations last far more than one year and often the lifetime of the pet, and when administered too often, cause cancers and other deadly illnesses.

We encourage all pet owners to make the decision for themselves.

Return Policy

If a pet is not working out for any reason, R-mar absolutely accepts and prefers pets to be returned. We make every effort to make a good match between adopter and pet, however if you want/need to return a pet for any reason, please contact us.

Please note: Rescue and adoption correspondence is highly time-consuming. If you contact us about issues within the first 2 weeks, we will refund the adoption cost minus \$150 for administration and counselling fees.

APPLICATION PROCESSES

- Complete and sign the **Online Adoption Application** with the name of the desired pet you would like to apply to adopt.
- You will receive an autoresponder that will send you a second form: this form request photos of you, your family and your home. This is how we bypass home visits. Please send this requested photos in as quickly as possible, as only once we receive your photos is your application considered complete.
- You will receive a SECOND autoresponder that includes a copy of our adoption agreement. Please keep this email for your records, so that IF and WHEN your application is accepted, you may print and complete the agreement to be submitted to us at the time the animal is picked up.
- Please remember that these autoresponders help speed the application process up but do NOT mean your application has been accepted. You must wait to hear back from an R-mar team member personally.
- **Due to the number of applications we receive, we can only respond to the applications we accept. If you do not hear back from us, you are welcome to email us for a status on your application.**
- When your application is accepted, your Adoption Coordinator will contact you to go over the animal's needs in detail – and help coordinate a meeting.
- In the event that your application is not a match for the animal you're interested in, our Adoption Team will be in touch with other, better matches.
- Within the first 2 weeks of you adoption, you will receive an invitation to share a progress report. This is your chance to let us know how everything is going, if you have seen any behavioural issues come up with your new pet, etc. Remember that we are here to help you and your new pet have the best life possible together!

TRAINING & SUPPORT

Rory O'Neill is pleased to offer all R-mar Adopters special discounted rates for her behavioural consults.

Phone Consult
\$25

Sanctuary Consult
\$150

In-Home Consult
\$200

In order to take advantage of these rates, please book your consult by contacting your Adoption Coordinator.

These consults are for both dogs and cats.

THANK YOU!

If it wasn't for people like you who want to open their hearts and homes to a new, furry family member – there would be a lot more suffering in this world.

A rescue brings so much love and laughter to a household. The adventures you're about to have are endless. The happiness you're about to experience is unlike anything else in this world.

We want to help you find the right forever friend for you, and this was the first step. Let's keep going, okay? Because it's really, really worth it.

Thank you again,
The Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue Team