

NEWS

GREENHILL LAWSUIT ALLEGES EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

Heidy Hollister, a former Lane County Animal Services veterinary technician who then went on to work for Greenhill Humane Society after it took over the LCAS shelter, has filed a \$700,000 suit against Greenhill that says she was subject to “unwarranted criticism and reprimands” and her contract terminated after she complained “that many of the animals were injured, sick and diseased and defendant [Greenhill] did not provide them with adequate or any medication or hygienic care to relieve their pain and suffering.”



MISTER THE CAT WITH FELINE AIDS

PHOTO COURTESY NO KILL LANE COUNTY

Hollister’s suit filed in Lane County Circuit Court on Nov. 9 asks for a total of \$700,000 for claims including wrongful discharge in retaliation for “reporting what she reasonably believed to be criminal conduct” by Greenhill and its vet, Gail Schroder, “by failing to provide veterinary care that a reasonable person would deem necessary to relieve distress of animals due to injury, neglect or disease,” economic damages and severe emotional distress.

LCAS, now 1st Avenue Shelter, had been successfully going no-kill, meaning that adoptable, treatable animals are not euthanized, but animal advocates have criticized Greenhill

for not continuing with the LCAS’s policies and have communicated their allegations of mistreatment and neglect via mass emails cc-ing newspaper and elected officials and via the No Kill Lane County web page (www.nokilllaneounty.org). Hollister was not available for comment and Hollister’s attorney, Claud Ingram, says he does not discuss the facts of his cases with the news media because he says it would waive attorney-client privilege. However emails on the No Kill web page between Hollister and Greenhill discuss the euthanasia of a FIV (feline AIDS) positive cat named Mister that Hollister writes she had arranged a foster home for, and the case of a dog named Oakly, who Hollister writes was slated for euthanasia and so not treated by Greenhill’s vet for crusty eyes and painful ears. Oakly, who also had kidney disease, was later transferred to a senior dog rescue for hospice.

According to the court documents, Hollister began working for LCAS on June 20, 2010, and after Greenhill took over the shelter in the summer of 2012, Greenhill accepted her “as a transferred employee as a veterinary technician” per the contract with LCAS. The documents say that Hollister observed that the care of the stray animals by Greenhill “did not meet the standard of care for animals required by Oregon statutes in that many of the animals were injured, sick and diseased” and allege that Greenhill “did not provide them with adequate or any medication or hygienic care to relieve their pain and suffering.” The documents go on to allege that in July of 2012 Hollister complained about the treatment of some of the animals, or lack of it — because they were to be “euthanized as soon as the holding period expired” and she “should not provide them with medication and hygienic care to ease their suffering.” The documents say Hollister complained to the Greenhill executive director about the substandard care and was ignored.

After Hollister made the complaints, she was “subjected to unwarranted criticism and reprimands” and on Aug. 10, Hollister was notified that her employment was terminated.

Jaelyn Semple, Greenhill’s assistant director, says as of press time the humane society had not been served with the court documents. She writes in an email, “We cannot comment on the aspects of the claim regarding a former employee because that involves a personnel matter, but we adamantly deny all allegations made in the lawsuit regarding the care of the animals. Greenhill provides high quality care to all animals at its shelters, including high quality veterinary care. We are very proud of our dedicated staff, tireless volunteers and exemplary veterinary professionals who work every day to maintain our high standards.” — *Camilla Mortensen*

lighten up

Finally, the elections are over. I enjoyed as much as I could stand of them back in September.

BY RAFAEL ALDAVE

POLLUTION UPDATE

In early September, DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) assessed a penalty of \$1,500 against **SFPP, L.P.** for Clean Water Act violations at its bulk petroleum facility at 1765 Prairie Rd. (just south of Lane Forest Products and north of Maxwell Road). The violations consisted of multiple oil and grease limit violations, and multiple failure-to-monitor violations. The Prairie Road facility is the southern terminus of a 114-mile pipeline from Portland, and has a storage capacity in excess of 700,000 barrels. SFPP elected to pay (and not to appeal) the penalty, which pales in comparison to the nearly \$5.3 million SFPP and associated company **Kinder Morgan Energy Partners LP** agreed to pay in 2007 to resolve liability associated with three California spills.

Also in early September, DEQ also issued a demand for payment of a stipulated penalty of \$300 to **Junction City** for high pollution levels in its wastewater treatment plant discharges. Junction City routinely violates its Clean Water Act permit limits and in 1995 entered into an agreement with DEQ that relaxes permit limits for purposes of DEQ enforcement, and that also provides for automatic penalties for violations of these relaxed limits. DEQ records appear to indicate that Junction City has not paid the \$300 penalty as of press time.

In late September, **Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)** paid the highest penalty so far this year (\$15,668) for a 2012 enforcement action for various violations related to the septic system at the Gettings Creek Rest Area along I-5 north of Cottage Grove.


DEQ has sent numerous Oregon **Walmarts** warning letters for hazardous waste violations, apparently starting with a Roseburg Walmart in February of 2011. Since then, Walmarts in Bend, Coos Bay, Cottage Grove, Dallas, Eagle Point, **Eugene (both Green Acres Rd. & West 11th Ave. locations)**, Grants Pass, Hood River, Lebanon, McMinnville, Medford, Redmond, Salem (two stores), **Springfield**, Talent and Woodburn have received similar letters, with Bend, Hood River and Redmond stores receiving letters in September. DEQ also sent the Corvallis **Home Depot** a letter regarding hazardous waste violations last month, and while Home Depot doesn’t appear as frequently in DEQ’s databases as Walmart, the same Corvallis store was contacted previously (in April 2008) by DEQ regarding hazardous waste violations, as have Home Depots in Albany, Bend, The Dalles, Eugene and Roseburg.

DEQ has a “super-short” public engagement survey aimed at finding out “If you have the opportunities you need to weigh in on environmental issues,” at the following address: <http://wkly.ws/1ds>

DEQ is accepting **public comments** on its draft permit for industrial stormwater discharges from **sand and gravel operations**, quarries, etc. through Nov. 17. For more info, visit <http://wkly.ws/1dt>

Information provided by Doug Quirke and the Oregon Clean Water Action Project

When Pets are Family.



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