

CAMELID WELFARE NEEDS SURVEY

REPORT

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Camelid Welfare Needs Survey Report

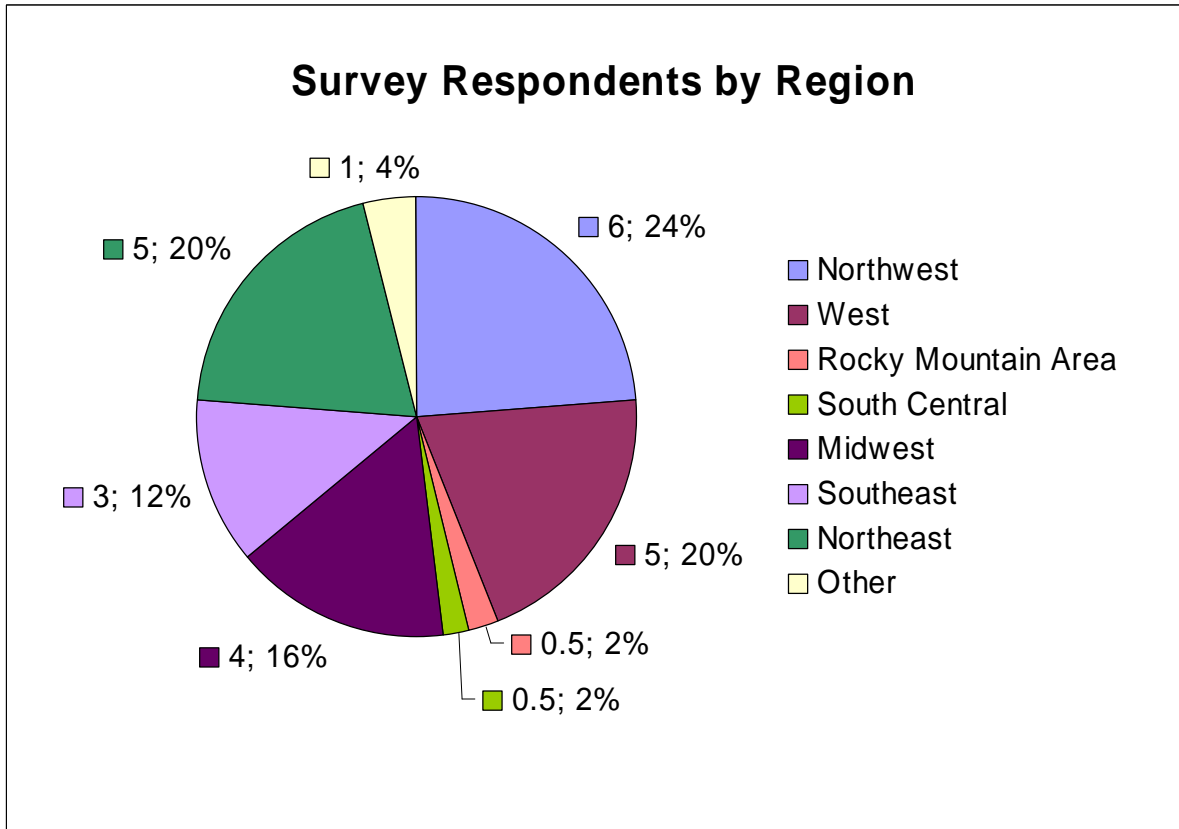
At the end of September, the National Lama Intervention and Rescue Coordination Council (IRC Council) sent out a letter, inviting leaders of local and regional camelid associations as well as various rescue groups and individuals to participate in the “Camelid Welfare Needs Survey.” The purpose of this survey was to gain a better overall picture of rescue and intervention needs across the country and to identify needs that are regionally and/or locally unique.

We wish to thank everyone who participated in the survey. Of the seventy-five letters, delivered via email, we are pleased to report that we received twenty-five responses, covering all regions specified in the survey. Because this survey did not fall into the typical categories of an employee survey where you can expect a 30% - 65% return or a marketing research and customer satisfaction survey that generally generates a 10% - 30% return, we feel that the response of 33 1/3% to our survey speaks well for those involved in rescue.

The results, shown in percentages, were calculated based on the number of ratings for a particular question in relation to the total number of those participating. To give an example, question #4 asked the respondent to assess the number of animals, typical of rescues in their area, with the choices being small, medium and large groups. The respondent needed to rank each group from very high, high, moderate, minimal, to none.

In this case, small groups of animals, ranked as high, received the highest percentage (36% or 9 respondents choosing that ranking). Since the survey sample was small and the distribution of responses not wide spread, it is important to remember that numbers are just that and that no conclusions can be drawn from them alone. It is the individual response to each question that must be examined and the individual comments provided that must be considered when evaluating the overall results.

To that end, while the first part of this report graphically reflects the numerical values assigned to the responses (see charts below) with an explanation where needed, the second part will summarize the individual comments, and the third will point out regionally or locally unique needs as applicable.



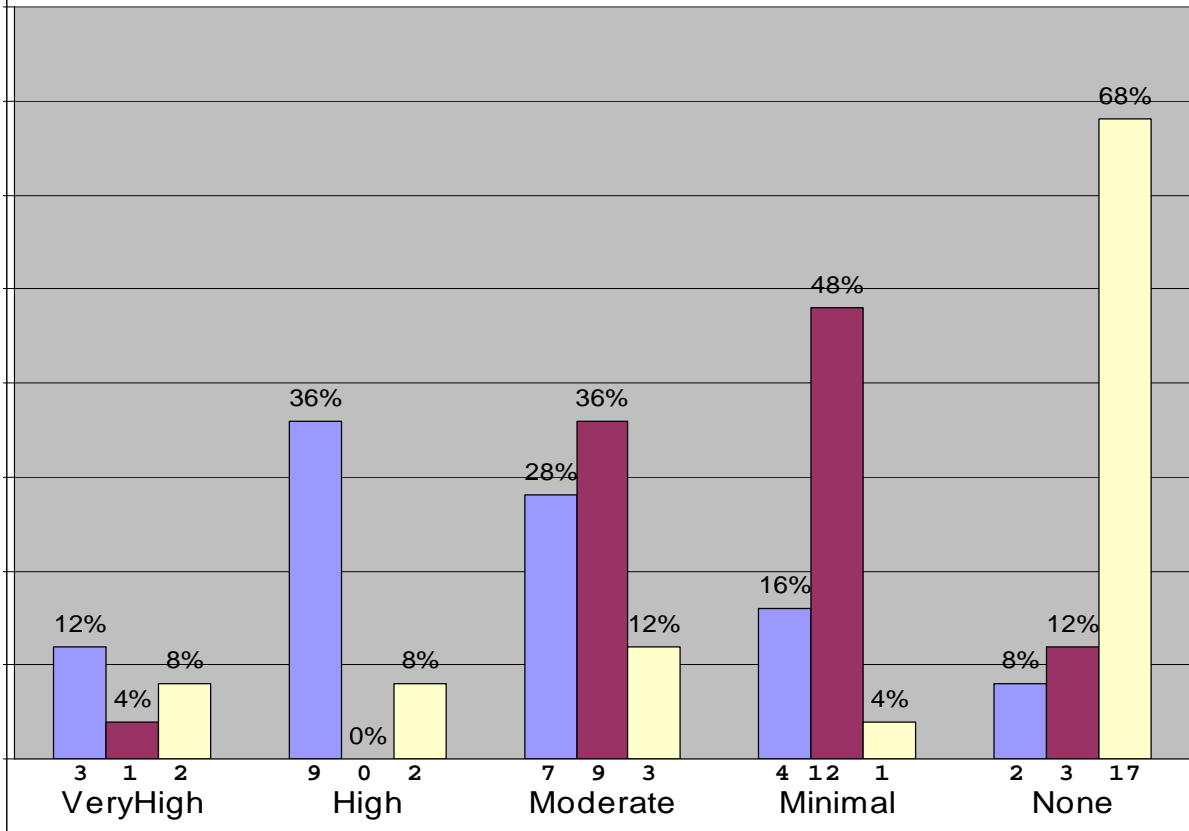
The above pie chart shows the distribution of those responding according to region. Each region has a designated color. “Other” was one of the choices indicated by someone responding from the Mid-Atlantic region. The results shown list the number of respondents as well as the respective percentages. Note: one person responded for both Rocky Mountain and South Central regions on the same survey. The 0.5 value for each region should be taken collectively to mean one person for both regions and not one half person for each.

Each of the remaining six charts consists of two or more sub-categories that were rated, in order of importance, from very high to minimal, to none or not applicable. The numbers listed below the bars of these charts refer to the number of respondents, respectively.

Some of the sub-categories provided for an “Other” response that also needed to be rated. What can be disregarded is where the value of none was given to the sub-category “Other”. Where “Other” is given a rating other than none, comments indicate what that “Other” is. The summary of those comments follows the charts.

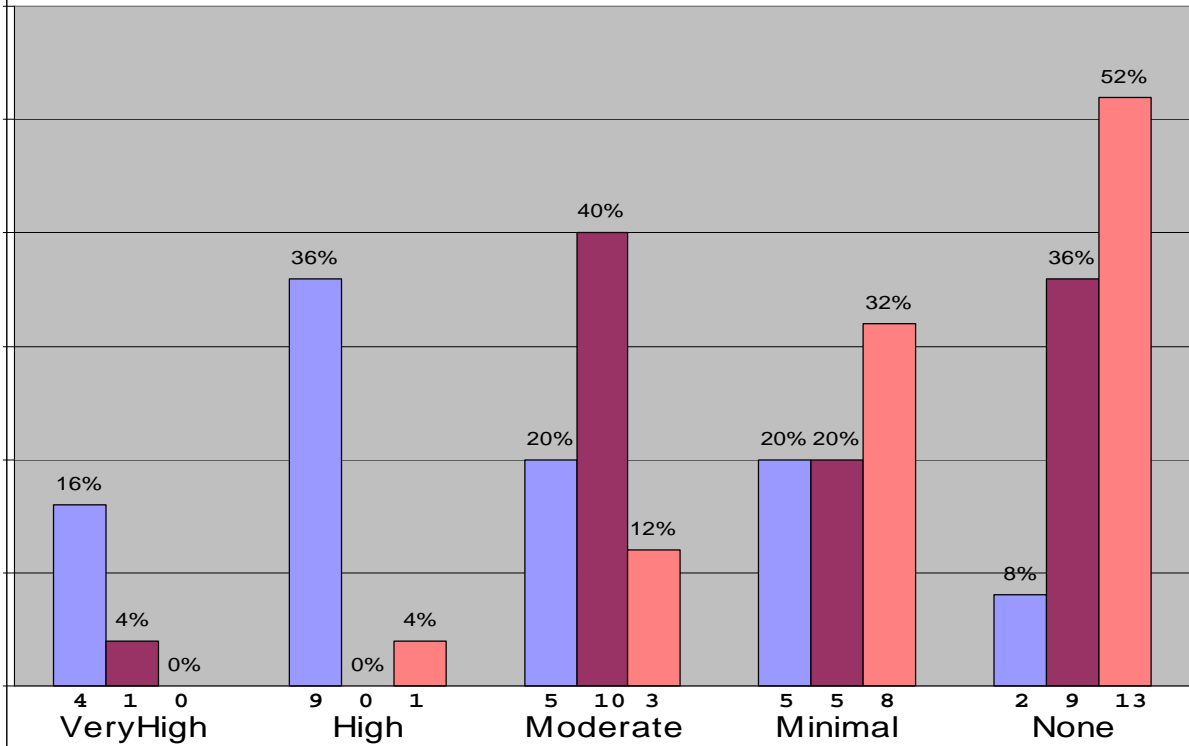
Types of Rescue Situations

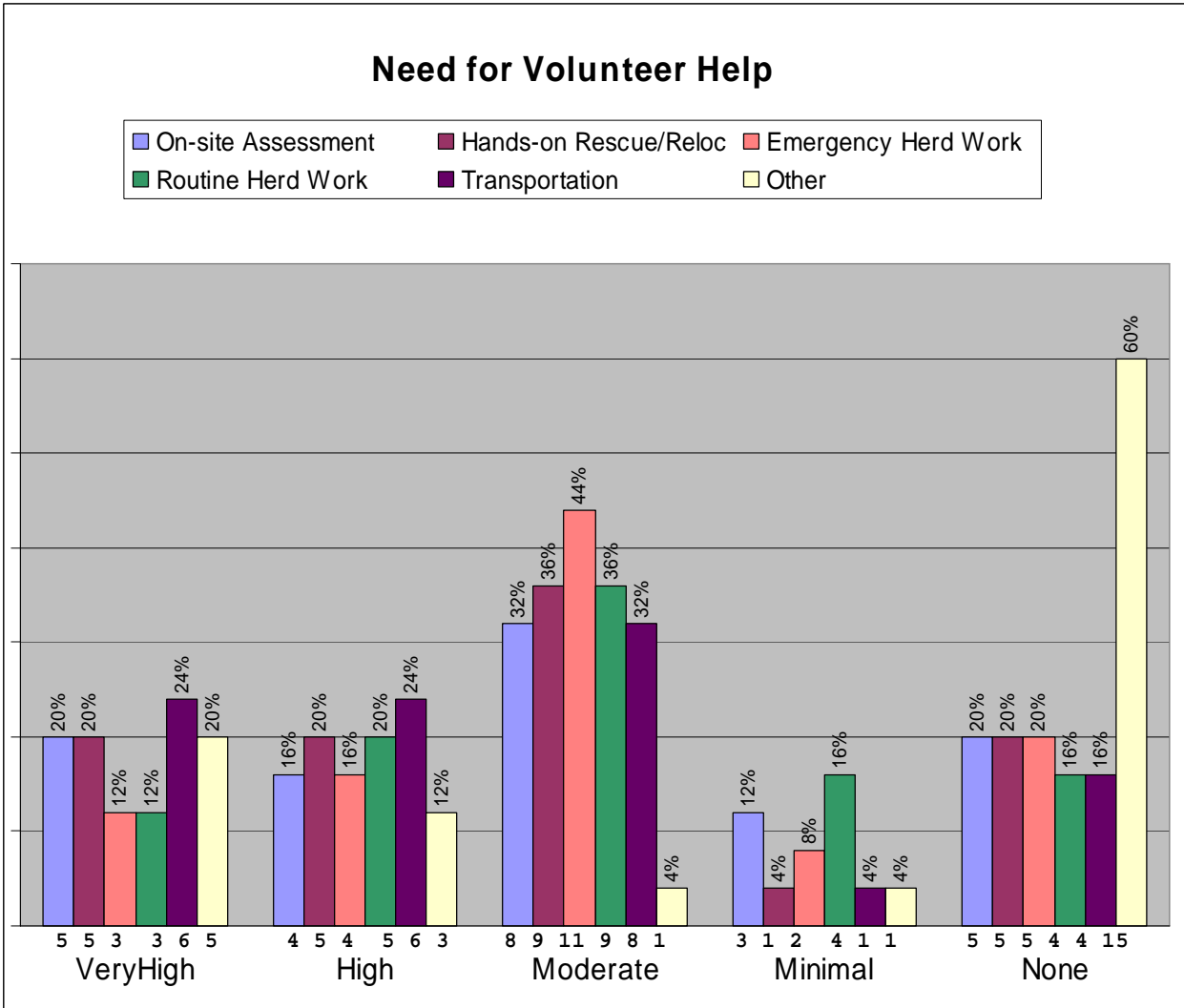
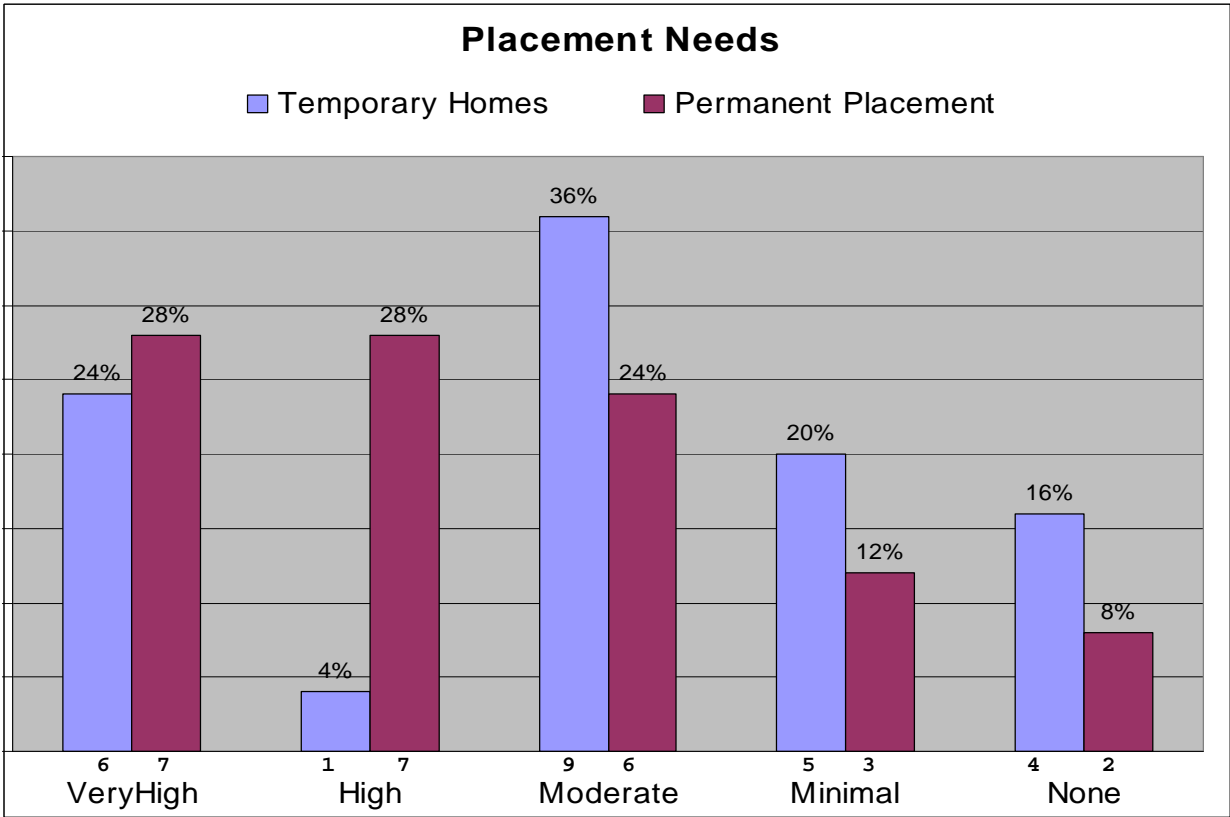
■ Rehoming
 ■ Abuse/Neglect
 ■ Other



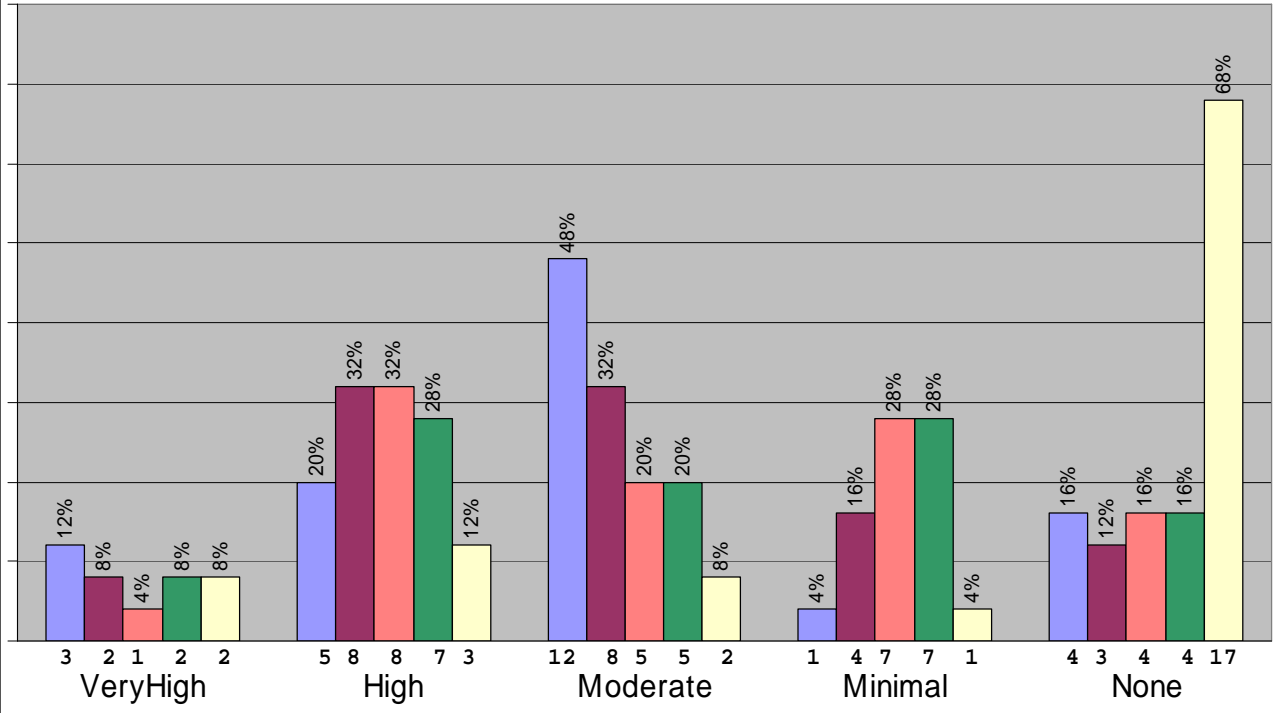
Number of Animals Typically Involved

■ 1-4 Animals
 ■ 6-15 Animals
 ■ 16 or more

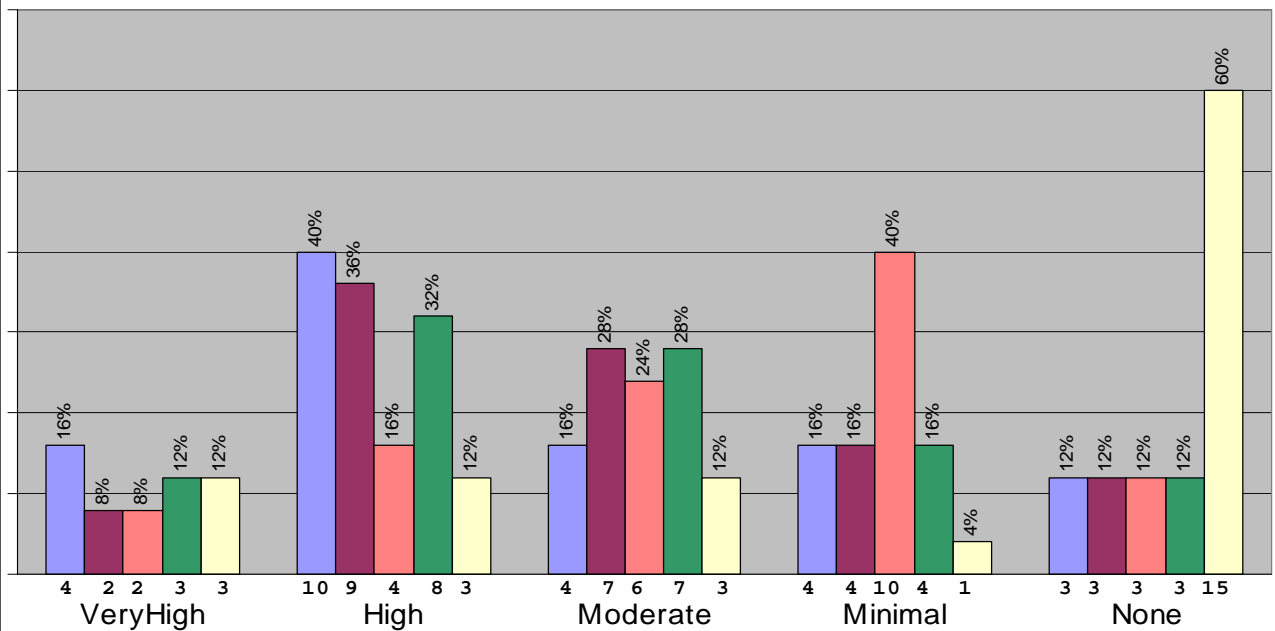




Resource Needs



Funding Needs



Summary of Comments Listed under “Other”

Because not everyone provided comments to the survey, the numbers themselves have less significance than the actual comments included under “Other” and the rating they have been given. Therefore, this summary represents those comments grouped accordingly.

Types of placement other than owner circumstances or abuse/neglect

What was considered to be “*very high*” were situations with animals running loose for extended periods of time, without anyone claiming them and situations involving people who have camelids they would like to give up because they just can’t figure out what to do with them anymore. What was rated “*high*” were those situations where placement is required immediately, a kind of a spur of the moment situation that leaves little time for planning. Animals coming from animal control and local sales yards were considered “*moderate*” with respect to placement needs. One person, because of experience and local contact, has seen a “*moderate*” number of animals reclaimed from the local meat plant but anticipates that this situation will grow both in terms of occurrence and number of animals. Due to the prolonged periods of drought in certain areas of the country, it is expected that there will be more placement needs because of the shortage of hay and, therefore, owners’ inability to provide for their animals. At this time this is seen as a “*moderate*” need but most likely will be on the increase. Although it was considered a “*minimal*” need, the sudden death of an owner was listed as a separate type of placement.

Need for volunteer help

The comments rated as “*very high*” included assistance in fundraising, education, volunteers willing to take animals in general, as well as those who would be willing to provide care and facilities for “special needs” camelids - animals with behavioral and/or medical needs. Assistance with training and the rehabilitation of difficult animals was rated “*high*”. For those people, providing foster care and who also may be new to camelids, it was deemed there was a “*high*” need for qualified mentors to help with the understanding of the basic care and maintenance of these animals. This rating also included the need for contact mechanisms to reach those who are unaffiliated with any camelid organization and making provisions for getting that educational information and materials to sales barns and auctions in order to head off potential rescue situations.

Resource Needs

Need	Very High	High	Moderate	Minimal
Education on all aspect of care		x		
Feed	x			
Fencing	x			
Special supplements			x	
Temporary paddock supplies	x			
Toe nail trimmers	x			
Vet information where needed	x			
Water containers	x			

Funding Needs

Need	Very High	High	Moderate	Minimal
Brochures/display for events		x		
Fundraising Budget for Camelid Org.		x		
Hay/feed *	x		x	
General maintenance *	x		x	
Minerals	x			
Probiotics	x			
Web site presence for rescue		x		
*Some respondents rated hay, feed and general maintenance as “very high” and others rated them as “moderate”.				

The final question of the survey asked for any additional information respondents deemed important. In some cases, people just re-emphasized some of their responses to other sections of the survey. Those comments that provided something that had not been covered can be summarized as follows:

It was considered that one of the biggest issues is the ability to unite the local community to assist in efforts related to education, general awareness and actual rescue efforts since local camelid associations may not be attracting new and younger members. The feeling expressed is that it is just harder and harder to find people to actively assist in the rescue of larger numbers of animals as well as those that have never been handled or have not been handled in a long time. It was also pointed out that while many organizations have no formal rescue policy or stated position, there are members (all too few) of said organizations who are involved and willing to help but tend to be called on over and over, spreading volunteer help thin. It was suggested that a list of more regional contacts be made available to help mitigate this problem. It was additionally suggested that a list be compiled of items useful to hands-on rescue events where volunteer help is minimal and the animals are either running loose or in large pastures and perhaps have had minimal or no training. This person also volunteered to compile such a list.

Summarily, just about everyone indicated that education is the top priority. Since the selling of “fiber/pet” quality alpaca males is becoming more difficult, it was stated that the alpaca community is seeing an increase in placement needs and that education and follow through on general care and maintenance is in demand. A more specific area of education was indicated in the light of the recent southern California fires, namely, the need for integrating emergency preparedness into overall rescue awareness. A comment was made that, while a survey may provide for the more tangible needs associated with rescue, i.e. resources, funding, etc., prevention might be better addressed through education regarding responsibility and ethical standards.

Regional and Local Similarities and Differences

In assessing the similarities among all regions across the country, those items rated “*high*” or “*very high*” are listed as common to all as stated below. Because some responses came from members of the alpaca community, who have not rated some aspects of rescue needs as high as those in the llama community, individual responses within each region needed to be taken into consideration and viewed separately. At best, both similarities and differences had to be generalized. No one category or item within a category could be considered unique to any one region, although the need did appear to be greater for a certain locale within a region. This seems to be peculiar (although not in all cases) to the western part of the country where the land mass is greater, both from north to south and from east to west.

Similarities: the types of rescue situations that all regions seem to have in common are those concerning a need for animal placement due to owner circumstances. All regions indicated that they are dealing mostly with small groups of animals (1-5) in their rescue efforts, with the occasional medium to large groups. The highest need for re-homing is for permanent placement. Some groups indicated that they provide for temporary housing themselves before placing the animals permanently, therefore, mitigating the need for temporary placement. The greatest need for volunteer help is in the areas of actual hands on with the rescue effort and for transportation. This hands-on need translated differently for each respondent with regard to site assessment and herd work, whether emergency or routine, in terms of rating; but a “*high*” need for volunteers in this area was a common theme. Resource needs in common include hay and grain, halters and leads, and medical supplies. Funding is a definite need across all regions, with the greatest need for vet expenses, medical supplies, and transportation reimbursement.

Differences: some needs that appeared to be common also looked to be unique because of the reason given for the need. For example, hay and grain is critical in the Southeast due to the ongoing drought, whereas other regions expressed the need for hay and grain but provided no reason for the need. The need for halters and leads, while a common need, was considered by some a resource need, by others a funding need and by others both. The need for experienced vets was listed by both the Northwest and the West but only for certain areas within those regions, while in the Southeast, the need for experienced vets was indicated as “*high*” to “*very high*” by everyone responding from that region. The respondent for both Rocky Mountain and South Central expressed a “*very high*” need for all areas of volunteer help. Although expressed as a “*moderate*” need, it is this area, too, that indicated that the reclaiming of animals bound for the meat plant was a concern and needed to be watched. Although a separate need for volunteers on the weekend or during the week was not delineated in the survey, it was indicated by a respondent from the Northeast that getting volunteers during the week was more difficult.

In summary, while the differences between regions may appear to be negligible, it must be remembered that these needs are not static and can and will change. Some needs that are seen now as minimal or moderate may at another time prove to be high or very high, depending on the circumstances of the moment. For that reason, it is important for all those involved in the rescue effort to do an ongoing assessment of their individual rescue needs, both of their locale and their region.