



Adopt a Donkey: The Donkey Adoption Option

Don't let preconceived notions of rescue animals keep you from adopting a donkey. A good rescue donkey can provide an equine that suits your needs as well as your means.

By Sue Weaver

If you'd like to have a donkey (or mule) and also do a good deed, adopt one! Hundreds of long ears in rescues need homes and people to love them (people just like you).

Many people think animals in rescues are old, infirm or second-rate survivors of abuse, but that's not necessarily true.

It's not unusual for responsible owners to surrender young, sound donkeys (and sometimes mules) to rescues due to catastrophic life changes such as a death in the family, divorce, loss of income or military deployment.

Courtesy Longhopes Donkey Shelter, Inc.

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[Edward Saddled](#), [Courtesy Sue Weaver](#)[Read more ...](#) [Make Mine Mules](#) [Guard Donkeys](#) Get your copy of [Donkeys & Mules](#), part of the Popular Farming Series. They have to give up their animals quickly, but they don't want their equine friends to go to unsuitable homes or sale barns, so they do the right thing and donate them to a group to be re-homed.

Some rescue-group long ears are, indeed, old-timers and survivors of neglect. When these come into rescue, they receive the medical attention they need to be restored to full health before they're offered for adoption to new homes.

Others, especially donkey jacks, are sometimes surrendered due to behavior issues. These boys are castrated, then kept in knowledgeable foster homes and retrained until they're deemed fit for adoption.

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[What Does the Rescue Organization Do?](#)

When reputable rescues take in donkeys (or any type of equine for that matter), each is carefully evaluated before placement.

They're dewormed, their hooves trimmed and dental issues are addressed, if needed. Each is observed closely over a period of time and his behavior patterns, quirks and eccentricities are duly noted.

The bottom line: By adopting from a reputable rescue, you'll eliminate most of the unknowns. And, if the donkey or mule you adopt doesn't work out for any reason at all, the rescue gladly takes it back.

A rescue is not the place to obtain breeding stock. Every responsible rescue gelds jacks before adoption and females are placed under no-breeding contracts.

Also, paying an adoption fee doesn't mean you own the animal you adopt.

If, at any time you choose not to keep a donkey or mule you've adopted through a rescue, he must be surrendered back to the organization from which he came or to an individual or agency approved by the original rescue.



Courtesy Longhopes Donkey Shelter, Inc. Rescue Me

B.R.R.R.O.
(Burro Rescue-Rehab-Relocation Onus)
P.O. Box 222
Cheney, WA 99004
509-235-2255

Crossroads Donkey Rescue
11649 Jarvis Hwy.
Dimondale, MI 48821
989-426-7942
www.crossroadsdonkeyrescue.com

Donkey Sanctuary of Canada
6981 Puslinch Conc. 4
R.R. 6
Guelph, ON N1H 6J3
519-836-1697
www.thedonkeysanctuary.ca

Longhopes Donkey Shelter
50 S. Dutch Valley Road
Bennett, CO 80102
303-644-5930
www.longhopes.org

Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue
P.O. Box 2210
Tehachapi, CA 93581
877-782-5527
www.donkeyrescue.org

Turning Pointe Donkey Rescue
216 N. Meech Road,
Dansville, MI 48819
(517) 623-0000
www.turningpointedonkeyrescue.com

Maudeen, Courtesy Sue Weaver You must also agree to allow rescue personnel or their representatives to visit the adoptee periodically to ascertain that he is, in fact, being properly cared for.

Adoption is Right for You If: You're unsure of your ability to choose a healthy, well-behaved donkey or mule on your own (rescue agency animals are always carefully vetted prior to placement).

You want to be assured your donkey or mule will be provided for in the event you can no longer keep him (all responsible rescues stipulate that the animals they place in your care re-enter the system if you can no longer care for them).

You're seeking a donkey or mule suited for a specific job (herd guardians are pretested; the soundness and training level of donkeys and mules placed as riding or driving animals has been fully evaluated).

You're a good-hearted person who wants to give a home to a donkey or mule that needs one

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Adopting Long Ears

Each organization's adoption policies differ somewhat, but these stipulations adapted from the Peaceful Valley Donkey



Rescue's adoption application are very typical. Applicants are carefully evaluated to make certain the new home meets the standards set forth by the agency. The agency reserves the right to visit the prospective home prior to placement and to visit placed donkeys as often as necessary to ensure their well-being.

The adoption agreement is made based on the location listed in the application; donkeys can't be moved to another property without the agency's prior consent and may only leave the state under special circumstances.

The agency retains the title for the life of the donkey. Adopters agree that they will not sell, trade or loan their animal for any reason. If the adoption is deemed unsuccessful at any time, the animal must be returned to the rescue.

The adopted donkey can be returned and traded for another if it isn't fitting in with the adopter's other animals.

Adopted jennies cannot be used for breeding. No donkey of either sex will be placed in a home where they'll be used for roping or any other cruel sports.

Because adopted donkeys require equine companionship, if adopters don't already own a horse, pony, donkey, mule or some other type of equine, the agency requires they adopt two donkeys.

Adopters must agree to accept full financial responsibility for the animals they adopt through the agency, including damages caused by the animals in their care.

To adopt, applicants must agree to provide: a 24- by 24-foot pen; a roofed shelter with a windbreak; grass hay fed twice a day (no alfalfa or other high protein feeds); a mineral salt block; paste deworming every three months; hoof trimming as needed; annual vaccines as deemed necessary for the locale.

Sound picky? They are! Agencies want their animals to find good, loving homes.

If you can provide one, contact the donkey rescues listed in "Rescue Me" or visit Rescue Centers for Horses to find a horse rescue in your locale; most of these have donkeys for adoption from time to time.

And the cost to adopt? It varies from group to group, ranging from \$250 (at Peaceful Valley) to \$650 (at Turning Pointe Donkey Rescue).

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Foster Care

Most rescues also need foster homes for animals awaiting adoption.

To foster, you must comply with adoption criteria and agree to provide everyday care and feed at your own expense. In return, most agencies cover emergency medical expenses and give caregivers first chance to adopt.

When You Just Want to Help

Another way to help rescues help donkeys and mules in need is to donate money or items on your favorite group's "wish list." A typical equine rescue wish list might include: Feed, supplements and bedding

Dewormers, vaccines and medical supplies

Blankets, turnout rugs and waterproof sheets

Halters (in all sizes) and lead ropes

Larger items like fencing and building materials

Volunteer labor—always!

About the Author: Sue Weaver and her husband John care for a variety of animals at their hobby farm in the Ozarks.

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