



An offshoot of Peace Ridge Animal Sanctuary for abused and neglected animals

Northeast Equine Sanctuary advances 640-acre safe haven for horses and donkeys in Freedom



Kay Stephens

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Photo courtesy Northeast Equine Sanctuary

FREEDOM—It is perhaps no coincidence that nearly 40 neglected and abused horses and donkeys, and other equines will soon spend the rest of their lives at peace... living in Freedom.

Northeast Equine Sanctuary, a new 640-acre facility in Waldo County, is soon to be in operation as an offshoot of [Peace Ridge Sanctuary](#), a 20-year-old nonprofit that operates multiple licensed



Photo courtesy Northeast Equine Sanctuary

There are 10 fields on the property. Photo by Kay Stephens

Multi-use barn. Photo by Kay Stephens

One of the brand new horse stalls. Photo by Kay Stephens

Inside stall. Photo by Kay Stephens

animal shelters in Maine.

The new Freedom facility is currently finishing up construction of stables and other shelter buildings, along with miles of fencing which will make this bucolic 640-acre sanctuary operational this fall.

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The project has been years in the making according to Melissa Andrews, Director of Development, Humane Education and Outreach.

“Peace Ridge operates an equine rescue operation at the main shelter facility in nearby Brooks, which cares for 500 animals year-round,” she said. “However, the need for equine rescue services has outgrown the shelter space in Brooks, so expansion was necessary. We’ve been working on this expansion for a long time to better meet the need, and with help, we hope to meet substantial goals for the benefit of equine welfare.”



Currently under construction is a multi-use green barn at the top of the hill that has space for an on-site steward who can give 24-hour-a-day care.

“We have some special needs animals, so there is some pasture space out back for them to run and she’ll keep a careful watch on the animals,” said Andrews.

Down further from the multi-use building is a large horse barn space with heated space, wash stalls, and eight individual horse stalls, including office and medical space.

“It will be able to accommodate our current horse population in addition to allowing us to take in horses on the emergency wait list,” said Andrews.

Andrews said there is a great need for equine rescue in Maine. According to internal documentation, most of the rescues come from cruelty and neglect cases, or other emergency situations where horses are in need of rehabilitation including refeeding programs, major medical care, or problems due to old injuries, all of which make immediate intervention necessary — or the animal faces the uncertainty with having no viable place to go, or worse, ends up at the auction house.



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“We are trying to take the crucial step, opening up another shelter, especially for these animals, so we can stop so many of them ending up being passed around with

little care and worsening conditions, which makes ending up at an auction house dangerous,” said Andrews. “At an auction, even horses in good condition can be shipped to slaughter.”



The animals most in need of help, according to Andrews, come from a variety of backgrounds, including irresponsible breeding and summer camp programs, the racing industry, and farms where they are used for heavy work.

The property will also serve the dual mission to support wildlife conservation efforts. The organization has partnered with a number of state-licensed wildlife rehabbers who use the land as an important release site for rehabilitated wildlife. Most recently, a group of 26 juvenile raccoons from Wilderness Miracles Wildlife Rehab were released.


“We are very happy to assist in wildlife care,” said Andrews. “All of the wild animals who come here will enjoy all of this protected acreage.”

According to Founder and Executive Director Daniella Tessier: “This is a project meant to secure a legacy of equine rescue in Maine. With the public’s help, we are building a facility that will be an enduring resource in our state forever, just like our other sanctuaries. Now that the buildings are built, we need to secure operations support from donors, so we can start putting this place to work.”


For more information visit: peaceridgesanctuary.org/northeastsanctuary

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