

On July 8th, 2004 at approximately 3 p.m. I arrived at an area called Sheep Mountain in Badlands National Park just outside of Scenic, SD. When I arrived I saw four canines sitting about 30 feet from one another. There were no trees for shade, no water present, and the ground in the Badlands is hard, white dry soil. Initially I had thought the Officer with the Department of Interior had tethered the dogs to the low-lying vegetation. Upon closer inspection, the dogs' feet were caught in leg hold traps. The traps were made of metal with what appeared to be a thin strip of leather or rubber material where the traps clamped on the leg. This leather was less than 1 cm in thickness. I noticed there was a patch of ground that had matted black fur. The officer indicated that a dog had died and was drug away from the area. He was uncertain how long the dogs had been in the traps. He could only indicate that the animals were not checked within the last 48 hours.

Description of the dogs found are as follows:

1. Larger terrier mix who's breathing was very shallow, lethargic and the pad of the foot was bleeding in the trap. This foot was swollen nearly twice the size of the other front foot.
2. Young 6-7 month old Australian Mix whose teeth were worn down. The dog's mouth and nose was full of soil, this animal also had very shallow breathing, was lethargic and could not walk nor stand.
3. Medium Sized Shepherd mix, teeth worn, unable to determine age of animal. Foot appeared to have serious nerve damage observed through attempts to walk normally.
4. Medium Sized red shepherd mix, teeth worn, unable to determine age of animal, dirt found in nose and mouth, obvious nerve damage again in the animal's trapped foot.

The animals were immediately brought to the Animal Clinic for evaluation. Euthanasia was recommended on the first two animals described above. The two shepherd mixes were put on anti-inflammatory and antibiotic medications. The following day, one of the shepherd mixes had chewed her foot to the point of exposing the bones in her toes resulting in severe infection. This animal was then euthanized. The other shepherd mix was brought to Mt. View Animal Hospital and had her leg amputated. She is currently in foster care while recovering. She is a very well socialized friendly dog who enjoys the company of people.



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