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Horse Helpers of the High Country (Horse Helpers Inc.) is Verified in North Carolina by Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries

February 12, 2012 (Zionville, NC) – The Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS), the only globally recognized organization providing standards for identifying legitimate animal sanctuaries, awarded Verified status to Horse Helpers of the High Country, December 20, 2011.

Verification means that Horse Helpers meets the criteria of a true equine sanctuary/rescue and is providing humane and responsible care of the animals. To be awarded Verified status, an organization must meet GFAS's rigorous and peer-reviewed animal care standards which are confirmed by a site visit and they must also adhere to a demanding set of ethical and operational principles.

"Horse Helpers of the High Country is an important resource for Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee," said Jeannine Alexander, GFAS Deputy Director-Equine. "The High Country is unique in its mix of farming and tourism. Because both industries involve horses, it is particularly important to have equine rescue options," explained Amy Hudnall, President of Horse Helpers of the High Country. She continued, "GFAS verification is very important to us; they provide a standard of rescue best practices, support for funding sources and education, and open a network of resources that would otherwise be unavailable to us. We are appreciative of the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries and proud to have received GFAS Verification."

Horse Helpers of the High Country (HHHC) was awarded a compliance grant by GFAS to help make recommended improvements to meet Accreditation/Verification Standards. Compliance grant funding is made possible through a grant from PetSmart Charities®.

The GFAS Equine Accreditation Program is made possible by generous grants from PetSmart Charities® and The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®.

About Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries

Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries (GFAS) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the sole purpose of strengthening and supporting the work of animal sanctuaries worldwide. The goal of GFAS in working with and assisting sanctuaries is to ensure they are supported, honored, recognized and rewarded for meeting important criteria in providing care to the animals in residence. GFAS was founded in 2007 by animal protection leaders from a number of different organizations in response to virtually unchecked and often hidden exploitation of animals for human entertainment and financial profit. The GFAS Board of Directors guides the organization's work in a collaborative manner. They represent top leadership from Born Free USA, The Humane Society of the United States, International Fund for Animal Welfare, American Anti-Vivisection Society, and National Anti-Vivisection Society. www.sanctuaryfederation.org.

About Horse Helpers of the High Country

Horse Helpers of the High Country, incorporated in 2004 as a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation, serves the northwestern corner of North Carolina, including Avery, Ashe and Watauga Counties as well as Johnson County, Tennessee. Sick, abused, and abandoned horses seized by law enforcement and animal control and those surrendered by their

owners are provided treatment, rehabilitation and a loving home. For more information, visit www.horsehelpersnc.org or call 828-297-1833.

About PetSmart Charities®

Established in 1994, PetSmart Charities, Inc. is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that creates and supports programs that save the lives of homeless pets, raise awareness of companion animal welfare issues, and promote healthy relationships between people and pets. The largest funder of animal welfare efforts in North America, PetSmart Charities® has provided more than \$134 million in grants and programs benefiting animal welfare organizations and has helped save the lives of more than 4.7 million pets through its in-store adoption program. To learn more about how PetSmart Charities is working toward its vision of a lifelong, loving home for every pet, visit petsmartcharities.org or call 1-800-423-PETS (7387).

About the ASPCA®

Founded in 1866, the ASPCA® (The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals®) is the first humane organization established in the Americas and serves as the nation's leading voice for animal welfare. One million supporters strong, the ASPCA's mission is to provide effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals throughout the United States. As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, the ASPCA is a national leader in the areas of anti-cruelty, community outreach and animal health services. The ASPCA, which is headquartered in New York City, offers a wide range of programs, including a mobile clinic outreach initiative, its own humane law enforcement team, and a groundbreaking veterinary forensics team and mobile animal CSI unit. For more information, please visit www.asPCA.org. To become a fan of the ASPCA on Facebook, go to <http://www.facebook.com/asPCA>. To follow the ASPCA on Twitter, go to <http://www.twitter.com/asPCA>.