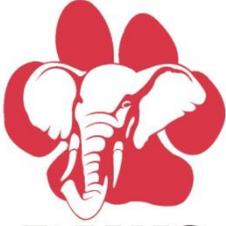


*The Nation's First  
Elephant Sanctuary*



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PERFORMING ANIMAL  
WELFARE SOCIETY

Founded in 1984

PROTECTION  
EDUCATION  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 5, 2013**

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**Opening Night Rally  
Against Controversial Elephant Rides  
To Kick Off Five Days of Protests  
at Nevada County Fair**

**Animal cruelty and public safety concerns  
expected to draw huge crowd**

**Grass Valley, CA** – The [Performing Animal Welfare Society](#) (PAWS) is joining local animal protection organizations and concerned citizens for a special opening-night educational demonstration against elephant rides at the Nevada County Fair, located in Grass Valley, California. More than 100 demonstrators waving informative signs and distributing flyers will kick off five days of outreach, cautioning Fair visitors to avoid the inhumane rides.

**What: Opening Night Rally to Protest Elephant Rides**

**When: 6:00 p.m.**

**Where: Nevada County Fairgrounds, 11228 McCourtney Road,  
Grass Valley, CA, Gate 1**

Despite overwhelming public opposition, concerns about animal welfare and human health and safety, and a [letter signed by some of the world's leading elephant experts and conservationists](#) opposed to elephant rides, the Nevada County Fair board voted last month to retain a contract for the controversial attraction.

“Elephants are large, powerful animals whose wild natures have been suppressed through violent training so they can be used for rides,” said Ed Stewart, president of the Galt, California-based Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS), who has more than 32 years of experience caring for elephants. “Having elephant rides at any event is an accident waiting to happen.”

According to Stewart, who will be attending the opening night demonstration, training for rides involves brutally breaking and training elephants, and controlling them through dominance and fear of pain for the rest of their lives. Handlers use the bullhook, a steel rod resembling a fireplace poker, to prod, hook and strike elephants so they comply



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with every command. The most severe training takes place behind closed doors.

A shocking [undercover video exposé by Animal Defenders International](#) showed Have Trunk Will Travel, the company providing the rides at the Fair, repeatedly striking elephants with bullhooks and using electric shock during training. The company has publicly stated, “We stand by our care and training methods.”

“No legitimate conservationist supports elephant rides” said Stewart. “Elephant rides do not contribute to the conservation of elephants, or to an awareness of their plight in the wild. They send the wrong message about how we treat endangered Asian elephants.”

The Los Angeles County Fair and the Orange County Fair decided not to renew their contracts with Have Trunk Will Travel, and the San Diego County Fair will decide next year whether to continue the rides. The California State Fair also ended elephant rides.

Educational demonstrations will take place throughout the five days of the fair, informing the public about why captive, wild elephants should not be used as carnival rides. Organizations involved in the opening night event and subsequent demonstrations include:

Center for Animal Protection & Education  
Coalition for Animal Welfare & Support  
Performing Animal Welfare Society  
Animal Place  
Scooter's Pals  
AnimalSave  
Rescue For Pet Sake  
Chow's Plus

# # #

*Founded in 1984, PAWS operates three sanctuaries for captive wildlife in Galt, Herald and San Andreas, California, that are home to more than 100 rescued and retired animals, including eight elephants, African lions, bears, tigers and other exotic animals.*

*PAWS is licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. It is accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries, and is rated a 4-star charity with Charity Navigator.*