

Northwoods Humane Society – Deanna Persson, President

Oh say it isn't so!!!!!! Can that really be the smell of skunk? Many years ago when my husband and I owned Wilderness Walk, I was 'skunked' several times. One time, someone had dropped off a litter of baby skunks that their dog had found. Just in handling them a couple of few times, I absorbed the smell. I could not smell it. I went to the elementary school to do a little talk about the humane society and when I walked in, I was greeted with 'ew – skunk. Following this experience, I was due at the shelter to meet the new manager of the Rice Lake Wal Mart (Hayward did not have a store yet) and when I walked in, Alecia Austin, our shelter manager told me I could not be in the building because of the smell of skunk. The meeting was held outside. Another time I was trying to live trap a cat that had escaped from their owners who had been visiting the area a week before. Yes, I live trapped a skunk. I knew what I was to do to prevent getting sprayed, but it still got me. Otters are related to skunks. Henry, our otter was ill. Donna Sheehan, who was my right hand woman at the park, and I went in to Henry's enclosure with the Vet to administer medication. Henry sprayed us. We could not tell that it had happened and she and I left the park to attend an anniversary party. People began to say that they smelled skunk. We continued to pretend we did not notice. I am a skunk fan. They are gentle animals who happened to have a defense mechanism that is noticeable.

So what do you do if your pet comes home with the aroma of skunk? They do not have to have direct contact with a skunk.

Skunks do not want to spray because it takes up to a week for their bodies to restore their spray supply. They will first give their intruder warnings by stomping, hissing, and puffing their fur, similar to an angry cat. It is their last resort to release their spray.

Skunks can accurately spray a distance up to 15 feet. Usually skunk spray is not permanently harmful, but if it is sprayed in the eyes, it can cause severe irritation and possibly temporary blindness. Skunks do not spray each other. The sprayed odor can last up to a month depending on the quantity sprayed.

After a skunk tries hissing and stomping to get rid of its threat, the skunk turns around, form their backs into a horseshoe shape, lift their tail, and release. If you see them in this position, leave immediately.

The skunk spray consists of a chemical called N-butly mercaptan, which is a pungent mix of sulfur-based compounds. The skunk stores the spray in glands positioned alongside its anus, which is why it needs to lift its tail to spray

So what do we do when our pet comes home with the smell of skunks? According to "Dogs for Dummies" and www.safebrand.com here are a couple of solutions. You cannot clip the problem out. The old stand-by is dousing your pet with tomato juice, works well, as does vinegar. Commercial preparations such Zorbx Extra-Strength Skunk Odor Remover. You can also mix 1 quart of 3% Hydrogen peroxide, ¼ cup of baking soda and 1 teaspoon liquid detergent should help to get rid of the smell on people, pets and clothing. If the smell lingers, boil vinegar in a pan. After the vinegar smell wears off, the skunk odor should as well.

Fortunately, I never got a direct hit. I just absorbed the odor – so no tomato juice bath in my past.

Dates to Save:

May 26 – Friday – Dining with Cats and Dogs – Lynn's Custom Meats – 10:30 – 2:30 p.m.

June 15 – Thursday – Art For Animals - Flat Creek Inn – 6:30 – 9 p.m.

July 1 – Saturday – Boulder Lodge – Cardboard Boat Races and Barbeque - Noon