

## Adopt a Donkey – Make a Lifelong Friend

At Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue, our mission is not only to rescue donkeys from abuse, neglect, abandonment and the threat of destruction but also to place them into loving, lifelong homes where they will be cherished as companions. Our donkeys are smart, affectionate, curious, and often downright hilarious. They make wonderful pets for people ready to give them the care, respect, and attention they deserve.

We believe in **setting our donkeys—and their adopters—up for success**. Each donkey is trained using **positive reinforcement techniques** to build trust and confidence. Before they are considered for adoption, they must be:

- Friendly and enjoy human interaction
- Comfortable being caught and wearing a halter and walking on a lead
- Willing to stand tied and pick up all four legs for the farrier

### What We're Looking for in an Adopter

We want every donkey to go to a home that's not only loving but also well-prepared. Some requirements are non-negotiable, and others are goals we encourage adopters to work toward:

#### Must-Haves:

- **You must live on the property** where the donkeys are kept.
- **All donkeys must be kept as pets only.** We do not train or adopt donkeys for livestock guarding, breeding, riding, or working purposes.
- **We do not adopt out single donkeys** unless there is already an equine companion on-site. Donkeys are herd animals and thrive in the company of their own kind.
- **All male donkeys are gelded prior to adoption.** Breeding is not allowed under any circumstances, this includes jennies
- **Adequate shelter** must be available for your region. In all climates, a minimum of a 3-sided shelter large enough to provide shelter for all equine at the same time is required. In colder climates, a fully enclosed barn for protection from snow and freezing winds may be required.
- **Fencing must be safe and secure**—Pens, paddocks, or pastures must provide a secure environment, barbed wire is not preferable.

#### Nice-to-Haves (and Great Goals to Work Toward):

- A **dry lot area** where donkeys can be removed from lush pasture to manage their weight and prevent laminitis
- A **simple handling area or pen** for vet and farrier visits
- Knowledge of **basic donkey nutrition**, such as low-sugar hay and limited treats

### Ongoing Care Expectations

Adopting a donkey is a lifelong commitment to their health and happiness. Donkeys can live up to 40-50 years, we want our adopters to understand the commitment they're making when adopting. Our adopters are expected to:

- Maintain a **donkey-appropriate diet**
- Provide **fresh, clean water at all times**
- Schedule **regular farrier visits** (every 8-10 weeks)
- Ensure **routine veterinary care**, including annual vaccines and wellness checks
- Schedule **annual dental exams** by an equine dental specialist to check for sharp points, overgrowth, or other oral health concerns
- Continue using **positive, patient training methods** to reinforce good, desired behavior and strengthen your bond
- Learn basic **donkey psychology and body language** to understand behavior changes and identify signs of illness early or other potential issues. A sick donkey may become quiet, isolated, stop eating, or show changes in posture and movement. A donkey showing signs of illness is an emergency!

Our donkeys come from a wide variety of backgrounds. While we may not always know their full history, we are dedicated to their physical and emotional rehabilitation before they are placed in a home.

---

### Adoption Details

- **Adoption fee:** \$350 for a single / \$600 for a pair
  - Miniatures and mammoths are rare and priced individually
  - All PVDR donkeys are **vaccinated, health checked, and guaranteed for 90 days**. If your donkey becomes ill within this period, we will work with you to find a resolution or replacement.
-


## Ready to Open Your Heart and Home?

Start by filling out our [Online Adoption Form](#). Once submitted, our Main Office will review your application and connect you with the nearest **Satellite Adoption Center** to your location.

Adoption applications are processed in the order they are received. Only completed applications will be processed so please ensure your application has photos and references included at the time of submission. Submission of an incomplete application will cause a delay in processing. Application processing can typically take up to 10 business days, however, it may take a little longer due to the team being on the road with donkey transports or handling other responsibilities. If you're within or just past that window, we kindly ask for a bit more patience—they will reach out as soon as they're able. We like to give each applicant the thoughtful consideration they deserve, even with the volume of applications we receive.

If you have questions along the way, we're here to help:

 [adopt@pvdr.org](mailto:adopt@pvdr.org)

 **866-366-5731** (Monday–Friday, 9 AM–3 PM CST)

## Tips for Adopting and Choosing Your Donkeys

Adopting a donkey is a special experience—one that can lead to a lifelong friendship. At Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue, we encourage adopters to take their time, keep an open mind, and let **connection—not color—be your guide**.

Here are our top tips for making the right match:

### 1. Meet Them Face-to-Face

Whenever possible, visit the Satellite Adoption Center and **spend time with the donkeys**. Watch how they interact with you and with each other. Many adopters are surprised to find that **the donkey who chooses them** is not the one they initially had their eye on.

### 2. Look Beyond Appearance

It's easy to be drawn to a specific color, size, or coat pattern—but those traits don't reflect personality. The best matches are based on **temperament, trust, and energy level**, not looks. Donkeys are not décor—they're companions.

### 3. Personality Matters Most

Each donkey is unique. Some are playful and bold; others are shy and gentle. Think about what kind of energy fits best with your household and experience level. A good personality fit will make training, bonding, and daily care easier and more rewarding. If you are choosing a companion for an existing equine, choosing a good personality match is vital.

### 4. Consider the Pair

Donkeys form deep social bonds, and we often adopt them out in pairs who already have a strong connection. If you are looking for more than one donkey, a bonded pair may be a great choice for you! However, if you are looking to add to your existing herd, a bonded pair may take longer to also bond with your existing animal(s) and may not be the best choice.

### 5. Be Patient

Donkeys are thoughtful animals. It may take a little time for their personalities to come through, especially in a new setting. They will need even more patience if being introduced to a new paddock mate. Introductions to any new animals should be slow and supervised. Give them space, consistency, and kindness and you'll be amazed by the bond that forms.

---

## Need Help Choosing?

Our team is here to guide you. We know our donkeys well and can offer insight on their personalities and needs. Tell us about your setup, lifestyle, and experience, and we'll help you find the perfect long-eared companions.

## Understanding Our Donkeys: Where They Come From & What to Expect

At **Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue**, every donkey in our care has a story—often one of hardship, survival, and resilience. We are proud to give these donkeys a second chance, and we want our adopters to be well-informed, thoughtful, and prepared to continue that journey.

### Where Our Donkeys Come From

PVDR rescues donkeys from two main sources:

- **Domestic Cases**

These include neglect, abandonment, hoarding, owner surrender, or law enforcement seizures. Many of these donkeys have been handled before, though not always gently or consistently.

- **Wild Burro Rescues**

We partner with government agencies to manage and remove overpopulated or at-risk wild burros from public lands where they are not protected under the Wild Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act. These donkeys have had little to no human interaction prior to entering our system and require careful, patient training.

- **Bureau of Land Management**

We also acquire donkeys directly from BLM holding facilities—specifically intact males who have failed to be adopted at least three times. These animals are often overlooked due to their behavior, age, or simply because they haven't had a chance to show their potential. We save these donkeys with the goal of opening up space at overcrowded BLM facilities, preventing these donkeys from facing destruction due to lack of placement, and providing safe, responsible castration through our partnership with RVETS and our veterinary student castration program. Since we do not view them as “lost causes” these donkeys are given the same opportunity for a new life as any other donkey in our care. They are simply waiting for someone to see their worth and give them a chance.

---

## **From Rescue to Ready for Adoption**

Every donkey that enters our system undergoes a **period of quarantine, medical care, and behavioral evaluation**. Those who are healthy, sound, and show potential for companionship are enrolled in our **Positive Reinforcement Training Program**, where they learn to:

- Halter and lead
- Stand tied
- Pick up all four feet for the farrier
- Trust humans through kind, consistent handling

Only donkeys who meet these standards are made available for adoption.

---

## What We Know (And What We Don't)

While we spend a great deal of time getting to know each donkey, it's important to understand that:

- We **do not know the full background** of most donkeys.
- We **cannot predict how a donkey will react** around:
  - **Children**
  - **Dogs or other pets**
  - **Chickens or fowl**
  - **Goats, sheep, or other small livestock**
  - **Elderly individuals or people with mobility issues**

Donkeys are **naturally protective animals**, especially if they perceive a threat to themselves or their herd. We **do not recommend housing donkeys with smaller animals**, especially without proper introduction, no matter how gentle they seem. Their instinct to defend themselves can lead to unintentional injury.

---

## Setting Up for Success

To protect both the donkeys and the people (and animals) who love them, we strongly encourage the following:

- Always **supervise children** around donkeys, and teach them to respect boundaries.
- **Do not allow dogs** to chase, harass, or approach donkeys unchecked.
- Introductions to new environments and animals should be **slow, controlled, and cautious**.
- Be patient—**donkeys require time to settle, adjust, and trust**.

---

These donkeys have already been through enough. With your care and respect, they can live peaceful, happy lives as beloved companions.

 [adopt@pvdr.org](mailto:adopt@pvdr.org) |  866-366-5731

## Donkeys Are Not Horses (And That's a Good Thing!)

One of the most important things to understand before adopting is this:

**Donkeys are not small horses.**

While they may share some similarities, donkeys are an **entirely different species** with their own instincts, social needs, physiology, and behavior. If you're considering adopting a donkey, it's essential to approach them as donkeys, not as horse-like substitutes.

### **Thinkers, Not Reactors**

Horses are flight animals—they react quickly to danger.

Donkeys are analytical and cautious. If something feels unsafe or confusing, they stop and assess. This is often misinterpreted as “stubbornness,” but it's really intelligent self-preservation.

### **Unique Hoof Structure**

Donkeys have smaller, more upright hooves designed for dry, rocky terrain. They must be trimmed differently than horses and require a farrier familiar with donkey anatomy.

### **Different Diets**

Horses can tolerate richer pasture and grains.

Donkeys are efficient browsers, adapted to survive on sparse forage. Rich food can make them seriously ill. A proper donkey diet is high-fiber, low-sugar, and often includes limited or no grazing.

### **Different Communication**

Donkeys vocalize more, are more expressive with their eyes and body language, and form deep emotional bonds with each other and their people. Understanding their cues takes time, but once you do, they are incredible communicators.

### **Different Physiology**

Donkeys metabolize medications differently, are less tolerant to cold and wet weather, and are prone to obesity and related metabolic disorders if not managed correctly.

---

## Why This Matters for Adoption

If you're looking to adopt a donkey, it's vital to recognize that you are not adopting "a horse with long ears."

You're adopting a highly intelligent, sensitive, loyal, and deeply unique animal that deserves to be treated with the respect and understanding their species requires.

Donkeys aren't less than horses—they're just different. And once you get to know them, we think you'll agree: **different is pretty wonderful.**

## **What If I Can't Keep My Donkeys?**

At Peaceful Valley Donkey Rescue, we understand that life circumstances can change. If at any point you are no longer able to care for the donkeys you adopted from us, **we require that they be returned to our organization.**

We are committed to every donkey for life—and that commitment doesn't end when they leave our facility. Our return policy ensures that no PVDR donkey ever ends up neglected, resold, or in an unsafe environment.

### **If You Need to Return Your Donkeys:**

- Please **contact us as soon as possible** at [adopt@pvdr.org](mailto:adopt@pvdr.org) or call **866-366-5731**
- We will work with you to arrange for their return, either to our main facility or the nearest Satellite Adoption Center
- **Do not attempt to rehome, sell, or give away** your donkey this is a violation of the adoption agreement

We make this policy clear not as a punishment, but as a **safeguard for the donkeys.** Every donkey in our care deserves a home that is safe, stable, and committed. If you cannot provide that for any reason, returning them to us is the most responsible and compassionate choice.