

## Warrant Served for Mayor Who Freed Dogs in Forest

**James Valley of Arkansas faces animal cruelty charges for releasing 10 dogs.**

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James Valley maintains that no crime was committed when he released 10 dogs in a national forest near Helena-West Helena, Ark., where he serves as mayor. An arrest warrant has been served, according to the Phillips County Sheriff's Department, and Valley faces animal cruelty charges.

Both Valley and the city attorney were unavailable for comment Thursday. Shortly after the June 10 incident, Valley said in a phone interview that he believed he did what was right for the stray dogs when he let them loose into St. Francis National Forest.

"We either had to euthanize them or let them go, that's what it boiled down to," he said.

The city was keeping the dogs in makeshift pens at a temporary fenced-in area outdoors at the sanitation department. Valley decided to let the dogs go so they could fend for themselves.

Instead of making an arrest, a deputy notified Valley of his pending court appearance. In addition to animal cruelty charges, Valley could face federal charges for abandoning animals or livestock on public land.