

## Animal Rescue Group Under Investigation

**A California nonprofit animal rescue group could end operations due to an investigation into the organization's finances.**

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Noah's Wish, a nonprofit animal rescue organization that raised millions of dollars in donations in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina could ultimately end operations due to a state attorney general's office investigation into the organization's finances.

According to the Noah's Wish website ([www.noahswish.org](http://www.noahswish.org)), the California attorney general's office last month began an investigation into how the organization spent or accounted for the millions of dollars it raised.

However, when contacted, the office would neither confirm nor deny that an investigation was in progress.

But a statement on the Noah's Wish website dated March 26, 2007, and attributed to the organization's board of directors said the attorney general's office was conducting a civil investigation of contributions to the organization. The statement reads in part:

"The California attorney general has taken the position that certain funds donated to Noah's Wish during this period, and its immediate aftermath, are restricted and may only be used for animal victims of Hurricane Katrina, rather than the animal victims of other disasters or for general disaster preparedness. Noah's Wish disagrees with the attorney general's position ... but is working cooperatively with the attorney general toward a timely resolution of the dispute."

The statement goes on to state that the organization "has set aside the disputed funds and has agreed not to use those funds pending a resolution of the investigation."

Northern California-based Noah's Wish was established in 2002 as a small rescue operation, but raised its profile significantly after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when volunteers rescued more than 1,900 pets and other animals in and around the battered Louisiana town of Slidell.

Before Katrina, the group brought in between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year, according to financial nonprofit records filed with the state. However, \$8.5 million in cash and other contributions poured in after the hurricane, according to financial documents.

No one with the Noah's Wish board could be reached for comment.