

# PREPARE for your PET'S CARE

**THE ROAD MAP FOR SHORT AND LONG TERM  
CARE FOR THE ANIMALS YOU LOVE**



By Debra Vey Voda-Hamilton, Esq.

## Prepare For Your Pet's Care



**Have you ever wondered what would happen to your beloved companion animal if something were to happen to you?**

***Where would they go?***

***Who would care for them?***

***What would their future look like?***



If you are reading this book then you realize things don't always work out as we plan. Accidents happen, disasters like fires, tornados, and floods are becoming more prevalent and frequent, personal or family illnesses occur and life changes for everyone forever. When this happens pets are often inadvertently forgotten, left alone and are helpless to care for themselves through no fault of their own or ours. If we are injured or a loved one is injured all thoughts are on recovery. Thinking about a beloved pet at that moment may be one too many things to deal with for you or your family. No mal-intent meant, yet survival and circumstance may thwart verbal plans from being carried out.

Our life-viewing crystal ball doesn't give us warning when unexpected events will be occurring. Unfortunately, this is the definition of unexpected, no warning. It doesn't tell us when we are going to be delayed, disabled or contract a disease, each of which will take us away from our furry friends for a short or long period of time. We cannot predict when any kind of disaster will strike leaving us unable to care for our pets.

When I first wrote this book, I had just experienced a disabling event in my life. I broke my ankle. It was then that I realized I didn't have anyone set up to truly care for my 9 Irish setters. I had spoken about who would care for them and believed they would just 'know what to do.' When faced with reality I realized, YIKES, that just wasn't good enough.

# Prepare For Your Pet's Care



I decided right there and then, as I spent 8 weeks in a cast, to write this book. I wanted to help other people with beloved pets realize they didn't know what they didn't know! *How a written plan for the short/long term care of their furry children was essential.*

It is imperative that you take the time to read this book through to the end. It addresses a number of things you may not have thought about when you assumed your pets would be cared for by the people you know.

Without one in place, *one written document where all of the directives for your pet are recorded and can be found easily and implemented effortlessly*, your pet's care will be left to the whims of the good Samaritan who steps up to help.

This may be just fine. Yet, how will they know the idiosyncrasies of your pets? The one that is afraid of thunderstorms, allergic to corn or not good with others? *Someone you know or don't know will step in and decide what is best for each of your pets, whether they know the pet or not.*

You may believe - *my friend, family member, neighbor, dog-walker* - knows my pet as well as I do. We have spoken about future care many times. They will do what's best for my pet or decide what to do with my pets. They will do the right thing. I trust them.

**Yet, think about this...** *Wouldn't they appreciate you giving them a written heads-up on the personalities of each dog so they are placed for success? Don't you think they would want your personal insight into each pet so their transition is smooth?*

**They will be grateful that you left them directives to follow** so there is no question what they are to do with your pet(s) in the event you can no longer care for them. *Failure to plan for a pet is planning to fail them and may result in your pets ending up in a shelter, on the street or worse, dead.*

## Prepare For Your Pet's Care



This book is meant to provide you with simple steps to successfully create a plan for your pet. After you read this book you will know how to set up your MAAP plan.

It guides you on how to have 'that difficult' discussion with the people you want and need to ask to care for your pets.

It helps you draw up a realistic plan for your pets, one that is doable. You want to make it easy for the caregivers to follow this plan. In doing so they will know how to take care of everything your pet needs to be healthy and safe.

**Completing the MAAP Plan will provide you with the peace of mind you need for the future care of your pets. You will know your beloved companion will remain safe while you cannot personally care for them.**



## Prepare For Your Pet's Care



I am an attorney/mediator who has owned dogs and horses for 50 years. I love my animals and have shown my dogs to Best in Show and National Wins. They are a huge part of my life. I often think they are my best friends. Like you, I take care of all their needs. I believed I would be there to take care of all those needs forever. *Forever is a very long time and can be derailed in a moment.*

I found out the hard way that believing I had provided for the future care of my pets and actually having that care happen are two entirely different things.

Providing a great life for my pets by my own hand is totally different than assuming, via verbal commitments of friends and family, that kind of care would continue in my absence. It was neither realistic nor enough. What happened to me is not unusual and was the impetus for creating the MAAP plan.

In 2013 I broke my ankle. I was the sole caretaker of 9 dogs. Yet I could not walk for 8 weeks!! How was I going to care for them, walk them, feed them and love them? What would I do if something happened to them??

I thought I had planned for the care of my pets. I had taken the time to select 2 of my good friends to care for my dogs in the event anything happened to me. This of course was if my family couldn't care for them. I had nothing in writing. I just knew these people would intuitively know what to do and come through for me.

What I found out was my family wanted to take care of me, not the dogs. They would care for the dogs if they had to. Yet this responsibility created added unnecessary stress I could have prevented.

A good friend and attendee of one of my MAAP Programs told me my plan allowed her to relieve any guilt her family might feel for either allowing someone else to care for the dogs or to place the dogs if they needed to with the people she had already hand-picked as backups. I thought this was an awesome observation.

# Prepare For Your Pet's Care



We do not always work to make our pet care and/or transition easy on our families. We should!

**How many caregivers do you have lined up?**

I had three verbally queued to take over the care of my dogs if something were to interfere with my ability to care for my dogs.

When my accident happened two of my three alternate caregivers were unavailable. One had just broken her arm two weeks earlier. She could not help. The other was renovating her kennel and didn't have any room to take my dogs. The 3rd was available and able to care for my beloved dogs. *If I hadn't planned with 3 possible caregivers I would have been in a pickle.*



# Prepare For Your Pet's Care



Yet even with three caregivers, I realized I'd forgotten a big piece of preplanning: **written directives of care**. It may sound strange yet most of us care for our dogs by rote. If we don't write down "rote" our dogs may suffer. Mind reading is highly over-rated!

It was then that I realized I probably wasn't the only pet owner who didn't have a real plan for the care of their pets in the event of an unforeseen circumstance.

That was the day I vowed that I would create an easy to use template for a pet care plan that animal lovers could complete BEFORE the disability, disaster, delay, disease, divorce, death happened to ensure they provided for their furry friends.

**This plan not only covers my 6 D's but my family's 6 D's as well.**

If a family member gets sick you will be grateful you setup the MAAP plan. It will slip into place and allow you to stop worrying about the care of your pet so you can care for your recovering family member. **I added this section in 2015.**

My husband broke his shoulder and needed my help 24/7 for at least 3 weeks. Knowing I had people in place, current with the care my dogs needed, who could take care of the dogs while I took care of him was lifesaving.

Did I take care of my dogs? Yes. Was I able to catch my breath and focus on caregiving my husband? Yes. I also knew if I needed a nap or just needed down time a caregiver would be coming over to feed or walk my dogs in my stead.

Only pet owners who have been caregivers can relate to how great it feels to have your pets there to emotionally support you while you are navigating the journey with your loved one and not having to worry about doing the dog chores.

## Prepare For Your Pet's Care



Since I decided in 2013 to show everyone how to set up an effective care plan for their pets, the number of people using the MAAP Plan has exploded. And the amount of information we cover in it has substantially increased, too.

**I call it the MAAP Plan because, like a roadmap, it helps pet owners navigate the journey their pet takes when they cannot care for it.**

I write and update this program as I live the problems myself and through the unique experiences of my clients. There IS a lot of information that your caregivers need to slip easily into your shoes - things that we know about our furkids that just aren't obvious, like:

Who gets along with whom  
Who gets special foods and medications  
Who is a "wash and wear" kind of dog  
*And, so many more....*

**In just a few simple steps, the MAAP Plan will help you put in place a plan that provides for the care of your pets and peace of mind for you.**

**Let's get your pet's MAAP Plan started!**

**Debra Vey Voda-Hamilton  
HamiltonLawAndMediation.com**





# MAAP

## M - Make A Plan

If your pets are to remain safe you will need to write down the directives for how to care for them. Think of it as a roadmap for the caregiver so that they make fewer wrong turns and your pet's care is continued seamlessly.

Without this explicit directive, the people in your life or those you have casually asked to care for your pets in the event of an emergency will not know what is best for your animals.

*If you are simply injured or sick and are expected to recover, wouldn't you recover more easily if you knew your pets were well cared for?*

*If you are unable to care for your pets going forward, wouldn't you want the new owners to know everything they can about this wonderful animal so the transition can be as seamless for the pet as possible?*

This Plan provides you with the tools that will give you peace of mind to speed your recovery and get you back in the saddle sooner or the confidence your pets will be placed correctly.

***Are you an elite breeder? Do you have frozen sperm? Have you considered the long-term care and dispersment of that sperm if you have not used it?***

Think about it. *Will your breed benefit from their ability to use older sperm? Is destroying sperm because you no longer want to spend money to keep it helpful to your*



# MAAP

## M - Make A Plan

*breed? Should you approach your national breed club to start a frozen sperm bank where members can leave their leftover sperm?*

These are things you need to think about when you are making your plans. It is no longer only about the dogs that are alive, but also the dogs that may come after due to your conservation of the breed by freezing outstanding breed dogs.

For an idea of more things you need to think about when making your plan, watch a recording of one of our most recent MAAP webinar on my website.

[HamiltonLawAndMediation.com/maap-blueprint](https://HamiltonLawAndMediation.com/maap-blueprint)

All you need is a pad of paper and a pen to write down the things you will need to consider as you plan for the care of your pet. The video gives you directions so you can remember things you want to include and think of things you may have overlooked.

If you think your family knows how to care for your pet you may be mistaken. Why put the care of your beloved animals at risk or leave it to chance or fading memory?

Be sure to document even the simplest things you do for your pet, such as microchip numbers, baths, nail trimming and heartworm dates in your MAAP Plan.



# MAAP

## A - Appointing A Caregiver

**Who will take your pet if you can't?** This is an age-old question and one we pet owners give short shrift to because we believe it will happen organically. Yes, it might. Family, friends or neighbors may step up and take your pets.

If you are ok with this haphazard manner of pet dispersment, it is ok. Many people think what will be will be and let it be. I will be dead, sick, or disabled. I will have no say nor will I be able to challenge who gets my pet. Why worry about it now, make a plan or ask for people I know to be caregivers? People will step up and my pets will be fine.

If this is how you feel, you may be are right. In many instances, people do come to the aide of someone in need, especially in the purebred dog world.

Yet, are you sure your pet will go to a better place with good people? If you are, great.

Maybe think about sharing this plan with someone you know who has a dog or who has one of your dogs. They may be in a different place and want to have this option. Just think, if they don't make a plan, you may never know where your puppy ends up if it needs a home.

It is always a good idea to have your new puppy buyers recognize the power of planning. You brought this pet into the world, you should assure it will always have a home. It is what separates a purebred dog breeder from puppy mill owner.



# MAAP

## A - Appointing A Caregiver

Having your new puppy owners let you know when/if they can no longer keep your puppy, no matter the age, will enable you to take the dog back and place it or at least know where it goes if they place it.

If you are serious about providing long-term care for your own dogs the plan you make needs to appoint 3 caregivers.

It is best if only one is a family member. If you are injured or sick your family members will want to be with you, caring for you. If they get sick you will be grateful you can call on people to step in so you can care for your loved one. Everyone will appreciate the fact you took the care of your animal off of his or her shoulders.

You may also want to consider a 4th caregiver, one that would keep your dog for life for a fee in a group situation tended by caregivers and never wanting for anything.

These places are setup early so that they would be available for a long-term placement. If it becomes evident that you will not recover sufficiently to care for your pet(s) again, this fourth caregiver would be the permanent solution.

Your first 3 caregivers do not have to be able to permanently take care of your pets, though they could. The fourth would be your safety net. There are currently several places that offer long-term space for your pet purchased early. They are



# MAAP

## A - Appointing A Caregiver

like a hospice, foster home, shelter or rescue. They would take your beloved animal and keep them in a family situation for life or find them a good home if all other options fail.

You would be surprised at how many adult children approach me at rescue and breed events asking me how they can break the news to their parents that they do not want to take their dog/cat/bird/horse.

They have no idea how to manage their aging parents' pets. In some cases, their folks have one or more animals. Parents automatically think their kids will take those animals if necessary. The kids tell me they don't want to, but don't know how to tell their parents.

They usually start our conversation by saying "*Debra please help me tell them NO.*" They are living a lie and the only one it could potentially hurt is the animal.

Parents depend on their kids for the future care of their pets and the kids don't want the responsibility or are unable to oblige. Yet no one mentions it until it is too late. Who suffers? The pet.

**By appointing 3 caregivers, people who know you and know your pets, you create the kind of redundancy that assures a smooth transition of care for your pet.**



# MAAP

## A - Appointing A Caregiver

Have each caregiver sign a document accepting the responsibility of caring for your pet if something were to happen to you. This document stays with you and a copy stays with the caregiver as a reminder that they agreed to help care for your animal.

This way the caregiver easily remembers their promise to provide your animals with the care you directed them to give or facilitate the placement you arranged.

They do this while your family makes arrangements for your care.

It may seem as if redundancy is unnecessary in appointing caregivers, yet my experience has been that when you need them, some caregivers are not available and not because they do not want to help, but their life has altered too, short or long term and they cannot help.

This reminds me to remind you to stay until the end of this book. Checking in with appointed caregivers every year is key. Peoples' lives change, you need to know if they are still ready, willing, and able to care for your pets. It is a yearly check in that is as valuable as the routine battery check of your smoke alarm.

Get more tips by watching the replay video...

[HamiltonLawAndMediation.com/maap-blueprint](https://HamiltonLawAndMediation.com/maap-blueprint)



# MAAP

## A - Addressing The Needs Of Your Pet(s)

**How will anyone know your two horses should not be put out together or that your dog cannot eat beef?**

You need to create a dossier for each of your animals addressing their own unique needs. In the file, you will list their likes, dislikes, medical records and personality quirks. If two dogs should stay together, this dossier tells someone about this desired outcome. If a horse and a goat are inseparable, it lets the caregiver know!

Most people think others will care for their pet the same way they would. Not true in many cases. They can come close. ***But only if you leave them the 'owner's manual'.***

**What do I mean by owners manual? It is the list of things each of your pets needs to live the life you provided for them.**

You have the owner's manual in your head for your beloved pets. If you are not available to share that knowledge, your pet is sunk. It may be true that some of the things you do may not be able to be adequately copied by your caregiver, but at least they know and can try to keep the pets' lives as stable as they can given the circumstances.

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# MAAP

## P - Publishing Your Documents

If you speak to everyone and write up all of the necessary information about your pets you are not yet done. If you don't share it with anyone, it will be as if you made no plan at all. In short, it will do your pet no good. Do not tuck it away in a file, where no one can find it easily. Your pet's future care depends on you sharing this plan. Otherwise, it will remain unknown.

**Make sure you not only give a copy of your MAAP plan to each caregiver but also to every family member, your attorney and veterinarian.** They all need to know you have made a plan and what that plan says. Each party will be grateful to know what is expected of them and who they can call to fill each role.

***I can tell you, children of parents with pets are grateful when they know they are not left to make these decisions alone.***

They know whom to call to care for their parent's pet if they cannot. They appreciate knowing what can and should be done. They are then free to focus on their parent's care. They can check up on the caregiver to assure their parent's beloved pets are being cared for and are comfortable with no guilt. It is an overwhelming process made easy.

Get more tips by watching the replay video...

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## Prepare For Your Pet's Care



# MAAP

You can immediately implement the MAAP plan by watching the four MAAP "How To" videos and completing the templates in the [MAAP Blueprint](#). They walk you through each step you need to follow to assure your beloved companion is cared for, both short and long-term. Your recovery will be aided in the knowledge that your pets are cared for and can stay with you while you mend.

By now I hope have realized the importance of a plan for your pets. If you want to assure your beloved furry child's needs are met, create a MAAP. It assures you that their health and safety will be maintained in the event you are unable to care for them.

In just a few short minutes you can have a MAAP in place. The replay video will help you gather the information you will need to create your own specialized pet care MAAP.

[HamiltonLawAndMediation.com/maap-blueprint](https://HamiltonLawAndMediation.com/maap-blueprint)

Don't leave the care of your pet up in the air. You know them better than anyone. You understand their needs, their personalities, and their unique characteristics. You owe it to them to make sure that their lives continue to be filled with love and happiness.

**If you liked this information share it with one or two of your pet-owning/loving friends. *Share, like and shout it from every social media mountaintop! The animals will thank you.***



# About The Author



Debra Vey Voda-Hamilton is an attorney and mediator who pioneered the use of mediation in disagreements and conflicts involving people and their pets.

One of the greatest misunderstandings comes when people fail to plan for the care of their pet when they no longer can care for the pet themselves due to injury, sickness or death.

Debra created the MAAP plan as a way for pet owners to create the materials necessary for a conflict free transition for their pets no matter what happens to their owner.

She has provided short videos that help people easily understand why they should create a MAAP for each of their pets and how to go about filling out each document to assure the long and short-term care of their pets.

If you want to work with Debra privately on creating the MAAP for your beloved companion [go to Debra's website www.hamiltonlawandmediation.com](http://www.hamiltonlawandmediation.com) and [sign up for the MAAP Blueprint Program](#). You can work with Debra as she helps you make sure your pets are cared for, no matter what happens.

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