

Posted on Thu, Jun. 25, 2009

'Very smart' injured dog rescued after year on run

By LEE LOGAN
Special to the Herald

Poke, a stray dog finally rescued by Underdog Rescue, was taken to an animal hospital in Bradenton to be treated by a veterinarian for a deep gash on her neck.



EAST MANATEE — Even though she was hungry and her tough, old collar was cutting into her neck, a 2-year-old stray pit bull named Poke was afraid of the people who wanted to rescue her.

A woman had spotted the emaciated dog about a year ago living under some old sewer pipes behind a shopping center in Tara. Members of Underdog Rescue began trying everything they could to rescue Poke. But neither they, Manatee County Animal Services nor a professional tracker could coax her out. Friends and relatives said the woman should just give up.

On Wednesday, Underdog Rescue members and a Manatee sheriff's deputy finally saved Poke.

Manatee County Sheriff's deputy Tim Eason and four members of the group found Poke, and Eason shot her with a tranquilizer dart. They brought her to Bradenton Small Animal Hospital for emergency treatment.

"We could only see her from a distance," said Glenda Campbell, one of the founders of Underdog Rescue. "We could never get close to her."

Poke is in bad shape. The underside of her neck has a deep gash from the embedded collar. She also has heartworms and is so skinny that you can see her ribs.

She'll get treatment for the next few weeks, and then will need several months of rehabilitation in foster care. Her rescuers are optimistic that she will be OK with proper socialization.

Poke's ears are nicked up — scarred from when she was a "bait dog" used in dog-fighting matches. She's skeptical of people — her name comes from when she used to poke her head out of a clearing of trees and scamper away when people got close.

She's also clever.

Poke recognized the rescuers' truck and ran away each time they had tried to coax her out of the woods behind the shopping center. She had refused to be lured into a kennel, even if it had a juicy steak waiting in it.

"Whoever is going to end up with this dog, they're going to be getting a very smart dog," said Mary Anne McDevitt, who first found Poke last year.

Underdog Rescue: [More info](#)

Underdog Rescue has a foster candidate to care for Poke. The group also is looking for donations to cover the expected \$400 in medical bills and people to adopt one of 90 other dogs the group has saved.

To contact the group, call 941-776-7370 or visit www.Underdogadopt.com