

# Animal Fighting Investigations

**APRIL 23-25, 2024**

**8AM-5PM**

**COST: \$195 PER PERSON**

**\*REGISTER BY: 3/31/24\***

**\*IF YOUR AGENCY NEEDS FINANCIAL  
ASSISTANCE PLEASE CONTACT WACA**



**RICHARD SAMUELS**

MASTER DEPUTY AND  
VIRGINIA ANIMAL FIGHTING  
TASK FORCE



**A.K. TAYLOR**

INVESTIGATOR AND  
VIRGINIA ANIMAL  
FIGHTING TASK FORCE

## WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

- FEDERAL ANIMAL FIGHTING LAWS
- WASHINGTON STATE FIGHTING LAWS
- LEVELS OF ANIMAL FIGHTING
- PARAPHERNALIA
- REGISTRIES
- ANIMAL FIGHTING INVESTIGATIONS
- ANIMALS AS EVIDENCE

## GUEST SPEAKER

ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL,

SCOTT HALLORAN

WASHINGTON ATTORNEY  
GENERAL'S OFFICE

REGISTER TODAY AT [HTTP://WASHINGTONANIMALCONTROLASSOCIATION.ORG](http://WASHINGTONANIMALCONTROLASSOCIATION.ORG)

[CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING  
COMMISSION](#)  
19010 1ST AVE S, BURIE WA 98148

Richard Samuels is a Master Deputy with the Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office and has been in service for 24 years. Samuels has spent his time in the Spotsylvania County Sheriff's Office as an Animal Control Officer. Samuels has been certified as a National Cruelty Investigator, a Field Training Officer, and a Department of Criminal Justice Services General Instructor and Subject Matter Expert.

Samuels has completed over 1700 hours of training and often lends his expertise in crisis negotiation, electronic surveillance, interviewing and interrogation, and animal fighting to law enforcement throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, as well as other states and federal agencies.

Samuels has been qualified as an expert in animal fighting and cruelty to animals 15 times in the courts of the Commonwealth and once in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York. Samuels is a founding member and current Vice President of the Virginia Animal Fighting Task Force and the current President of the Virginia Animal Control Association.

Samuels has worked undercover and infiltrated large-scale cockfighting operations and through this work several active cockfighter's were successfully prosecuted and a large pit, "Big Blue," was shut down and bulldozed after a federal court order was handed down.

Samuels is the recipient of several awards throughout his service. More recently, in 2019, Samuels was awarded the Humane Law Enforcement Award by the Humane Society of the United States and the National Sheriffs' Association, and the Virginia Animal Fighting Task Force was awarded the Agency of the Year award by the Virginia Animal Control Association in 2023. Samuels is a United States Air Force Veteran who lives in Spotsylvania County with his wife and their cats.



A. K. Taylor has been working in animal welfare for over 20 years. Taylor is the first Animals Crimes Investigator for the Office of the Attorney General in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Taylor assists law enforcement and animal control throughout Virginia.

Ms. Taylor completed her undergraduate studies in Forensic Crime Scene Investigation, she continued her studies and achieved a Master of Science and Post-Baccalaureate degree in Criminal Justice. Ms. Taylor is a Department of Criminal Justice Services General Instructor and a Subject Matter Expert. Taylor is also a Nationally Certified Animal Control Officer.

Ms. Taylor has investigated 100's of animal fighting cases and has been on scene for more than 100 animal fighting search warrants. Taylor has been qualified as an expert in animal cruelty, animal neglect, and animal fighting 22 times in Virginia courts. Taylor has also been qualified as an expert in dogfighting and animal cruelty in two United States District Courts. More recently Taylor was qualified as an expert in dog fighting in a Maryland court.

Ms. Taylor was the honored recipient of the City of Richmond Meritorious Service to Law Enforcement Award in 2006. Taylor also received the Compassion Award in 2004 and the President's Award in 2014 from the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies and was voted one of Style Weekly's Top 40 Under 40 in 2011. In 2019, Ms. Taylor was honored with the Humane Law Enforcement Award presented by the Humane Society of the United States and the National Sheriffs Association.

Ms. Taylor is a regular guest instructor at both William and Mary School of Law and the University of Richmond School of Law. Taylor is a faculty instructor for the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, Crater Criminal Justice Academy, and lends her expertise to Justice Clearinghouse and several other academies serving animal control and law enforcement, to include the Virginia State Police. She is a member of the National Animal Control Association, the Virginia Animal Control Association, the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies, and the Virginia Gang Investigators Association.



## **ANIMAL FIGHTING INVESTIGATION**

**APRIL 23-25, 2024**

**8 a.m. - 5p.m**

PRESENTED BY

MASTER DEPUTY RICHARD SAMUELS, SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

INVESTIGATOR AMY TAYLOR, VIRGINIA OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL SCOTT HALLORAN, WASHINGTON ATTORNEY  
GENERAL'S OFFICE

OUTLINE:

**April 23, 2024**

**Day 1**

I. Introduction of presenters

A. AAG Scott Halloran

B. Master Deputy Richard Samuels

C. Investigator Amy Taylor

II. What is an Animal Fighting Task Force

A. Virginia Animal Fighting Task Force

1. What has the VAFTF done.

III. Federal Animal Fighting Laws

A. When applicable

B. Nexus

1. Agencies

IV. Washington State Animal Fighting Laws Presented by AAG Scott Halloran

A. Washington Attorney General's Office - Animal Crimes

B. Animal Fighting

1. Dog Fighting

2. Cockfighting

3. Other

C. Cruelty to Animals

D. Neglect of Animals

E. Agricultural Animals

**April 24, 2024**

**Day 2**

1. Levels of Animal Fighting

A. Professional/Organized

B. Hobbyist/Dabbler

C. Street Fighters

D. Hybrid

2. Locations

A. Rural

B. Suburban

- C. Urban
- 3. Registries (American Pit Bull Terrier)
  - A. American Dog Breeders Association (ADBA)
  - B. Bona Fide Kennel Club (BFKC)
  - C. World Wide Dog Registry (WWDR)
  - D. Sporting Dog Registry (SDR)
  - E. United Kennel Club (UKC)
  - F. Online Pedigrees
    - 1. Designations
- 4. Publications
  - A. Magazines
  - B. Internet
  - C. Books
  - D. Keeps
    - 1. Dog Fighting
    - 2. Cockfighting
- 5. Paraphernalia
  - A. Dog Fighting
    - 1. Treadmill
      - a. Slat Mill
      - b. Carpet (Belt) Mill
      - c. Electric
    - 2. Catmill/Jenny
    - 3. Swim Tank
    - 4. Spring pole
    - 5. Flirt pole
    - 6. Break/Bite Sticks
    - 7. Rape/Breeding Stand
    - 8. Pit
    - 9. Weights
    - 10 Chains
    - 11. Scales
    - 12. Medications
  - B. Cockfighting
    - 1. Knives
    - 2. Gaffs
    - 3. Muffs
    - 4. Pits
    - 5. Scales
    - 6.Tools
    - 7. Medications
- 6. Housing
  - A. Dog Fighting
  - B. Cockfighting

**April 25, 2024**  
**Day 3**

- I. Animal Fighting Investigation
  - A. Complaint
    - 1. Other agencies
    - 2. Citizen
    - 3. Officer initiated
  - B. Response
    - 1. Duty to act
    - 2. Further investigation
  - C. Preparation
- 2. Investigation techniques
  - A. Surveillance
    - 1. Drive-By
    - 2. Pole Cam/Trail Cam
    - 3. Fly-over
  - B. Prior's
    - 1. Criminal Records
    - 2. Calls for service
    - 3. Veterinary (?)
  - C. Social Media
  - D. Online Pedigrees
  - E. Internet searches
  - F. Past investigations
- 3. Probable Cause
  - A. Dog Fighting
  - B. Cockfighting
  - C. Other
- 4. Places to be searched
- 5. Things to be searched for
  - A. All animals, Alive, Dead, Unborn
  - B. Paraphernalia
  - C. Phones, electronics, "and their contents"
  - D. Other
- 6. Animals as evidence
  - A. On scene
    - 1. Numbering
    - 2. Housing
    - 3. Veterinary
  - B. Off scene
    - 1. Numbering
    - 2. Housing
    - 3. Veterinary
      - a. Testing
      - b. Specialists

- 4. Behavior (dogs)
  - 5. Disposition
- 7. Analysis of electronics
  - A. Cell phones
  - B. Social Media accounts
- 8. Chain of custody
- 9. Experts
  - A. Veterinary
  - B. Animal Fighting
    - 1. Dog Fighting
    - 2. Cockfighting
  - C. Digital evidence
  - D. Other
- 10. Considerations
  - A. State v. Federal
  - B. Media
  - C. Disposition of animals
  - D. Other charges
  - E. Common defenses