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Little Willie On Long Road to Recovery

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Glenwood, IA--A miniature horse faces a long road to recovery after being discovered with his hooves sawed off by a hacksaw. His owner will never again own animals because of a plea deal.



Little Willie, as rescuers call him, was discovered along Highway 275 in Tabor, Iowa by the Mills County Sheriff's Department this summer. He was sent to Hooves & Paws Rescue, where volunteers have been nursing the horse back to health.



Genea Stoops says Little Willie's condition prompted the rescue group to urge for charges against his owner, Richard Lee Schow. In August, Schow was charged with livestock neglect. Right before his trial was set to start on Tuesday, September 14th, Schow made a deal. He will be put on probation, pay a fine and not be allowed to own animals ever again.

As for Little Willie, a farrier comes every month to try to get his hooves back in shape. Right now, he only walks a few steps at a time and with great difficulty. Stoops describes it as walking on his tiptoes.

"It's heartbreaking. We know he's in pain; we can feed him and we can love him and we can give him attention, but we can't take away the pain," describes Stoops.

The next step in Little Willie's treatment includes a cast to help him walk and support his weakest leg.

"The bone is an inch and a half from the hoof wall so there is a chance of course of the leg breaking and that's what we're try to avoid with a cast," according to Stoops. "We were told he will never be able to run or trot, but we just want him to walk without pain."

With plenty of love showered upon him and treats, too, Little Willie is becoming less shy and fearful, although he does get skittish when people are behind him. Volunteers say he loves his treats and armed with them, they can now pet him and put a harness on him without any problems.

He will always have to be treated with special care and he won't ever be able to hang out with other horses, for fear of breaking his leg. Instead, he's been making friends with some kittens.

But Stoops looks on the bright side of things, "His legs are messed up, his hooves are painful but his spirit is coming back which is very good."

If you want to help contribute to Little Willie's care, you can contact Hooves & Paws Rescue at 27821 US Hwy 34, Glenwood, IA 51534.