

## **For the love of nature: Rural neighbors rescue deer from pond (12-30-20)**

In Valley Springs, no animal is left behind. At least that's the case for resident Greg Dougherty, who saw an animal in need and didn't hesitate to get his feet wet—literally.

Dougherty was in the process of selling a truck a few weeks ago when the buyer came back and told him there was a deer stuck in the ice in the pond near his home.

Dougherty, who grew up in the area and graduated from Brandon Valley High School, went to investigate the situation.

"I went and saw the deer in the middle [of the pond], and it changed directions, so I knew it wasn't exactly stuck, but I had no idea what was wrong—if it had a broken leg or something," Dougherty said.

The buyer left, and Dougherty immediately started making phone calls to his family friends, Steve and Matt Swenson, who own a Jon boat, and to the Valley Springs Fire Department.

Members from the fire department broke through ice with the boat to free the deer, who they learned was not injured but was simply cold from the frigid waters. After the deer was out of the ice, it ran off, Dougherty says.

Dougherty and his wife love watching the deer in the area, and he said that within the last two years, they've seen two sets of twin deer. His theory is that the rescued deer was one of those four deer—a two-year-old fawn.

Dougherty also said he got "a nice little battle wound" on his leg from the rescue process after straddling the deer in his attempts to dry off the animal.

He hasn't seen the deer since, but he's confident that it's OK.

"It still had a lot of fight in it."

The rescue, which happened near the Beaver Valley Nature Center, couldn't have happened without the Swensons and the VSFD, Dougherty says.

For Dougherty, the urge to rescue the deer comes from a love of animals and nature.

"I've always loved animals," Dougherty said, who has two dogs and 31 chickens. "I mean, one of these years, it might end up on someone's dinner table, but for right now, I could do my part. Without mother nature, we wouldn't be here."