



Project TNR presents:

Nexus News

Connecting feral cat caregivers across New Jersey



Sponsor Our Strays helps 146 cats so far!

Earlier this year we introduced the Sponsor Our Spays (SOS) Program and invited donors to help subsidize the cost of vetting for feral cats, in order to help our trappers get more done. So far a total of 146 cats have been helped by this subsidy and trappers have received subsidies of \$4,380 to achieve this. We are very excited by the success of this new program and so incredibly grateful to the generous donors who are making it possible. We look forward to its continued success.

The SOS program idea began when a very generous Ms. Cheah decided to pay it forward by helping others achieve the same goals she had with our guidance. In return for her regular donations we sent her updates of which cats were helped as well as pictures. She loved seeing the faces of the cats she helped, and even put the letters up on her gym wall to encourage others to get involved!

Several more kind people responded in this way - wanting to help others as they had been helped, and Project TNR started receiving donations. An idea was born and we received the push we needed to really promote this idea to help more TNR get done.

In our last issue we announced that a very generous donor, Olive Walker, had offered to match



Apartment Complex in Newark

donations received up to \$1,500 over the next 3 months.

In response, we received \$1,700 in donations, of which \$1,500 was doubled! Even \$15 doubled was enough to help vet one cat. Special thanks

go to the Bakers and Ms. Kirchenbauer for their incredibly generous donations.



Industrial park in Newark

All money donated is being rapidly allocated to certified trappers so they may get another colony of cats effectively managed.

We have more trapper applications pending right now and we need your continued support to grant them the help they need!

Ms. Walker has once again offered an incentive! She will double all donations received up to a total of \$500 for the month of October! Any sized contribution helps, just \$30 (or \$15 doubled) ensures one more cat is sterilized, immunized and ear tipped.

All donors will receive a thank you letter with pictures of the cats they have helped as soon as the funds have been used.

Thank you for your continued support of this program. Trappers are welcome to email us for an application for SOS funding assistance at feralcats@aplNJ.org.



Hunterdon Hospital Colony

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Dealing With Feeding Bans

Our Policy Specialist Michelle Lerner weighs in on feeding bans and gives us some tools to how best deal with them. Michelle can be reached by email: michelle.lerner@aplNJ.org or phone: 732-446-6808

When enforced, fines for feeding cats can often range from \$50 - \$300 per cat or per incidence. Feeding bans have never been shown to reduce cat populations or eliminate nuisance behaviors of cats. Moreover intact cats continue to breed despite such bans.



There have been several high-profile cases lately where towns have enacted, or tried to enact, ordinances banning the feeding of stray and feral cats. When this happens, TNR caregivers, trappers, and advocates usually panic, because it can mean fines and even prosecution for caring for a managed colony or even baiting traps. Here are some points to consider. Please contact me if you want any of the supporting documents.

1. Most towns in NJ do not have feeding bans that apply to cats, even if their health officers or animal control officers think they do. Many towns have bans on feeding “wildlife” on publicly owned or managed land. Cats are domestic animals, not wildlife. This is not only true scientifically, but also legally—cats are defined throughout state law as domestic animals, feral cats included. So these types of ordinances simply do not apply to cats.

Moreover, they apply only to public land like parks and municipal offices, not to private property. If someone tells you that it is illegal in your town to feed stray or feral cats, don't just take their word for it—look up your ordinance. Most towns have their code book online. You can also ask the town clerk for a copy. Contact APLNJ if you have trouble finding your town's ordinances.

2. If your town is considering a ban that does apply to cats, find out what the proposal actually is. A “feeding ban” can mean a lot of different things. Do not make any plans based on rumors. Contact the town clerk and ask what is actually being proposed. If the clerk cannot tell you, ask which council person is proposing it and contact that council person to ask, politely and as a concerned resident, what the planned language actually is.

3. Propose a compromise: a feeding ban that exempts (provides an exception for) cats that are neutered and vaccinated. Our first reaction as advocates for animals is to oppose any kind of feeding ban wholesale. But let's think about what we actually want. Like government officials, we do not want feral and stray cats breeding in the streets. We know that a lot of well-meaning people feed cats without providing any other care or getting them neutered, and that the cats breed out of control. Like government officials, we want this to stop.

Officials propose feeding bans out of desperation, not knowing what else to do.

So propose something that will meet everyone's needs. Propose a feeding ban with an exception for cats that are TNR'd, or for cats that are neutered and vaccinated. This will allow TNR to continue without fear of prosecution, and will also provide an incentive for all the well-meaning

feeders to be responsible and TNR the cats. Ask officials to pass an ordinance that encourages private individuals and rescue groups to take steps with private funds to stop the cats from reproducing. The point is to reduce the number of cats and encourage residents to act responsibly, not to punish residents for being compassionate.

One idea is for an ordinance to say it is illegal to feed feral cats unless they are Trap-Neuter-Returned and in a managed colony.

South River has an ordinance like this, and if someone violates it the first level penalty is a warning with instructions to contact a rescue



group for help getting the cats TNR'd within 30 days. If the person does not follow up, there are fines.

Another idea is to simply ban the feeding of unneutered, unvaccinated cats. Berkeley Township has an ordinance like this.

Officials are much more likely to agree to this kind of language than to just scrapping the feeding ban altogether. They want a solution. This kind of solution provides a carrot and stick approach to caregivers to get involved with TNR, which we also want.

4. Educate public officials about why a straight feeding ban without exceptions will not work. Explain that compassionate people will not let cats get hungry or sick, and will go to great lengths to feed cats even under a ban, doing it at night and in other secret ways. No town in NJ or elsewhere has reduced its feral cat population through a feeding ban for this reason. Studies estimate that 1/6 of all Americans feed stray and feral cats. No town has the resources to enforce a feeding ban to that degree. All it will do is push feeders underground so that they do not ask for help.

Moreover, cats will go into garbage, hunt, and find other food sources even if people stop feeding them. And they will keep reproducing.

5. If officials want all cats to be individually licensed, explain that there are other ways to ensure feral cats are neutered and vaccinated. Officials just want to know that

(Continued on page 3)

TNR Group Spotlight - Companion Animal Trust (CAT)

Each issue we like to highlight a group engaged in TNR, hoping to inspire others to promote TNR in their town using ideas from successful groups!

Q1 Nexus News: What was your first step to getting started as a group? **CAT:** The Neighborhood Feral Cat Initiative is a program of Companion Animal Trust which is a 501c3 non profit animal welfare organization located in Jersey City, NJ. The NFCI was started in 2009 to create a public dialogue about the feral cat situation in Hudson County and to provide practical ways to deal with the issue through free Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) training workshops. Knowing the NFCI program could and would not be successful without substantial funding for spay neuter costs, we approached a private donor and asked for a subsidy. We were extremely fortunate to receive the needed funding for our first year. That year we spayed and neutered 500 cats.



funding for the NFCI spay neuter costs has been made possible through grants. We partner with the People for Animals high volume low cost spay neuter clinic in Hillside, NJ to perform the surgeries.

Q4 Nexus News: How many cats have you TNR'd in the past 12 months? **CAT:** As of September 6, 2011, the NFCI program has spayed or neutered 1,200 cats. Going forward through Fall 2011 we will be doing a targeted TNR project of 225 cats and also expect to do an additional 120 general colony cats.

Q5 Nexus News: How do you fund your TNR? **CAT:** Grants from PetSmart Charities (in partnership with the Hudson County Animal League), the ASPCA and private donors. We will also be applying for future funding from Best Friends.



Q2 Nexus News: How does working as a group make you more effective than working independently? **CAT:** The purpose of the Neighborhood Feral Cat Initiative is to enable those who are already feeding and caring for colonies in Hudson County to be able to afford to spay neuter the cats. The NFCI is modeled after the NYC Feral Cat Initiative so we have trained and TNR certified 235 people since 2009 resulting in over 1,200 spay and neuter surgeries to date.

Q3 Nexus News: How have you built resources for TNR? **CAT:** Key resources to make the program work are the free workshops, traps and funding. The workshops are given once a month. Both Neighborhood Cats and the HSUS granted/donated the needed traps. The

Contact CAT:

Companion Animal Trust
Neighborhood Feral Cat Initiative
 Jersey City, NJ 07305
<http://www.neighborhoodferalcat.org/>
workshop@neighborhoodferalcat.org
 201-884-9649



Feeding Bans - cont'd

(Continued from page 2)

cats are vaccinated and will not reproduce. This can be done without individual licensing, which is overly burdensome for feral cats because they cannot wear collars and tags, they cannot all be trapped and vaccinated at the same time of year and have to be given booster shots on a rolling basis, they often have multiple caregivers and individual licenses



would cost too much. Suggest that the ordinance authorize officials to request proof that the cats are vaccinated and neutered. As a last resort, propose colony licensing, with lower fees and rolling vaccination schedules.

Mt. Olive Township has an ordinance with this kind of system. If you need help with any of this in your town, please contact Michelle.

Winter Shelter Ideas and Resources

Part of our responsibility as caregivers for outdoor feral cats is to make sure to provide options for shelter for them. Sometimes, despite our best intentions, they refuse to use those shelters, but we at least need to make sure they have the choice! Here are some tips to encourage your ferals to use your shelters.

Elevate shelters—cats prefer to be up high so they can see everything.

Add a back or side door—cats like options for escape. Yes, you will lose insulation benefits, but using them is better than nothing.



If you added a cat flap over the door for further insulation, try removing it.

Add catnip to the straw inside - it may draw the cats in and make them feel comfortable here.

Figure out where the cats choose to hang out in bad weather. If not your shelters, place shelters near their natural choice of spots.



Pick a spot and then leave them there - cats don't like change. Resist the temptation to keep moving the shelters to try new spots.

Add irresistible warmth with an outdoor heated pad! If you have no power source close by, try a Mylar Thermal blanket - most cats love them.



cozywinters.com/shop/kh-3093.html



Mylar emergency blankets - usually 10 for under \$10 at many places.



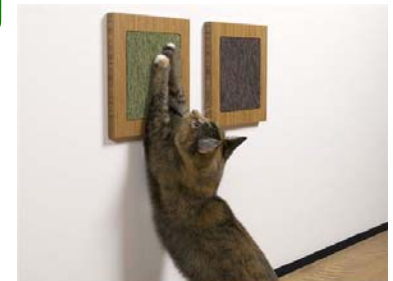
Add toys like a small toy mouse dangling from the doorway—playing also helps cats make “home” associations.

Add a scratching surface to the outside. Cats love to scratch and feel like they are marking their territory sometimes by doing this. Giving them a way to scratch helps mark the shelter as theirs.

Success in numbers! Add MORE shelters! If they have several to choose from, sometimes it makes them more likely to use one!



You don't need a whole village - but the more options the better!



Cat Scratch Wall Art

If all else fails - have faith that you have done your best and provided shelter should the cats need it. If the cats choose to seek shelter elsewhere there is not much you can do about it. Cats are smart - they will use what you have provided if they really need it! Thank you for caring so much for these outdoor cats.

Shelters - Ideas con't

S & D Forts - available for order now!

Forts are 2' x 2' x 1' foot making them easy to conceal, easy to stack, and easy to slide into small spaces. Sturdy construction with ¾ inch, stained plywood, generous 1 inch insulation, and shingled roof allows these forts to be placed in the open, keeping the occupant snug and warm no matter how much the wind blows and the rain pours.

The sturdy roof can be easily removed for cleaning and straw replacement. However, the interior track system fixes the roof securely in place so it will not blow off or get knocked off. Keeping dry means keeping warm. Because these forts are made of wood, they breath which lets the occupant's respiration moisture escape keeping him/her extra dry.

Two or three cats can fit into one fort. To order, email silveris99@verizon.net. Price is \$75.00 per fort, including straw. Please allow time for building.

Pick up in Mercer County.

Mr. Gray's Tee Pee Chalet available for order now!

Mr. Gray adores his Tee Pee Chalet, especially with a platform underneath that provides a 'boardwalk' for him to bask in sunshine on nice days. Chalet is made from pressure treated wood and roof shingles.

The one shown is about 2' x 2' x 3.5'. To order, please email tina@bbfunding.com and allow time for construction. Price is \$100 or more depending on dimensions and whether or not you want the platform.

Pick up in Hunterdon County.



Places to look for instructions on making your own shelters:

Neighborhood Cats:

www.neighborhoodcats.org/HOW_TO_FERAL_CAT_WINTER_SHELTER

Alley Cat Allies:

www.alleycat.org/BuildAShelter

Spay and Stay:

www.spayandstay.org/wintershelter.htm

All About Spay Neuter:

www.allaboutspayneuter.com/shelters.html



Momma Tortie

Memorials

We know how dearly you love and care for your feral cats and when the time comes to say goodbye to one of them it is just as heartbreaking as losing any other animal. We acknowledge your pain and offer a memorial service on our website to those who would like to pay their last respects in this way.

www.aplnj.org/tnr-memorials.php

Thank you to Ms. Pope for inspiring this page and to Momma Tortie.

IDEXX 'Snap' Tests for FIV / FeLV

We have always firmly believed that feral cats showing no signs of illness should NOT be tested for feline aids (FIV) or leukemia (FeLV). One reason is the accuracy of such tests. We have seen and heard many stories of times the tests were incorrect but thanks to a recent post on the SHARE email listserve, we now have a new reason to question these tests for ferals: According to the poster, Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine Pathobiology Diagnostic services says that the Idexx SNAP test can cause a positive result because some cats have a reaction to the serum in the test.

The poster tells of 3 kittens who tested positive on the snap test and subsequently all three cats had two other tests performed—the IFA and the ELISA Symbiotics Virachek. All three cats tested negative on both tests. The College concluded that the cats had reacted to the serum used in the Idexx SNAP test to give a false positive result. Please consider this information before you make any decisions regarding a cat's welfare based on a result from a snap test—and please never make life or death decisions based on a single test result for any cat.



Animal Protection League of NJ
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Englishtown, NJ 07726

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www.ProjectTNR.com
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Fax: 732-446-0227
E-mail:
feralcats@aplNJ.org

*Connecting feral cat
caregivers across NJ*



*Please help us save money.
If you don't want to receive
our newsletter, let us know!*

National Feral Cat Day October 16th

Get involved in promoting feral cat issues this National Feral Cat day! Find an event in your area to join in with or create your own. Alley Cat Allies has lots of ideas for you. We will support any event by providing literature on TNR free of charge.



We can also provide buttons for a fee of \$1 per button which you can sell at your event. Buttons can have any message / design you like that supports cruelty free treatment of ferals.

www.alleycat.org/Page.aspx?pid=388



MATCHING DONATIONS FOR SOS!

Don't forget! For the month of October your donations to our SOS program will be magically DOUBLED yet again, thanks to the gracious generosity of Olive Walker, up to a maximum of \$500!



Have a business* you would like to promote?
Contact us about appearing in our next issue!

AD SPACE AVAILABLE!

Currently circulating to over 700 members!

*Subject to approval - all advertisements must not conflict with APLNJ's cruelty-free philosophy. Fees collected will be used for TNR projects.



Become a member of APLNJ and you can be proud to be a part of one of the most active and effective grassroots animal advocacy groups in the country!

\$20 individual member \$10 student & senior

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Make check payable to Animal Protection League of NJ and send to: APLNJ, PO Box 174, Englishtown, NJ 07726