

Project TNR
NJ's Humane Solution for Feral Cats



Post Office Box 174
Englishtown, NJ 07726
Phone: 732-446-6808
Web: ProjectTNR.com

To Whom It May Concern:

Project TNR assists businesses, apartment or condominium complexes and municipalities with humane and cost-effective feral cat management. We provide information and support for implementing Trap-Neuter-Return, a widely-endorsed procedure in which cats are trapped, vaccinated, and neutered. Kittens and friendly cats are adopted out to good homes. Truly feral cats are returned to their colonies, vaccinated and no longer able to reproduce, reducing both the numbers of cats and the nuisance behaviors associated with mating.

This packet includes the following materials:

- TNR: How Residential and Business Complexes Can Stop Feral Cat Overpopulation
- Support for TNR
- NJ Department of Health and Senior Services: Free-Roaming and Feral Cats
- Letters from apartment complexes highlighting the benefits of TNR

If you have feral cats at your apartment complex and would like assistance planning, implementing, and/or funding a TNR project, please contact Project TNR at 732-446-6808 or feralcats@aplNJ.org. Project TNR provides information, support, and services for TNR free of charge.

Sincerely,

Sandra Obi, Director
Project TNR

The goal of Project TNR, a program of Animal Protection League of NJ, is to introduce Trap-Neuter-Return to communities as the humane, effective and cost-effective method of controlling feral cat populations. Trap-Neuter-Return is a comprehensive program that will result in lower animal control costs, fewer to no births, reduction of nuisance complaints by residents and the alleviation of public health concerns.



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TNR: How Residential & Business Complexes Can Stop Feral Cat Overpopulation

Many residential and business complexes are homes to colonies of feral, or untamed, cats. Feral cats congregate at these complexes because of the availability of shelter, food, water, or other resources that they need. Without proper management, feral cats will reproduce unchecked and may engage in nuisance behaviors such as fighting, howling, and spraying.

There are four options for outdoor community cats that are generally pursued by property owners: 1) ignore them, 2) trap and remove, 3) prohibit feeding, or 4) trap, alter and return. The first three offer no solution. The last does.

The first option, while clearly no solution at all, is the one that is all too often chosen: ignore it and it will go away. Nothing could be further from the truth. Two cats become twenty in no time and the problem just gets bigger and bigger.

The second option, which at first glance may appear to be a solution, has its own shortcomings. First, understaffed animal control departments are almost never able to trap every cat in a colony due to lack of time and financial resources. Any cats that remain continue to reproduce, quickly repopulating the colony as each female can have two to three litters per year. Even if animal control could trap and remove all cats, this would just create a void to be filled by other cats looking for new territory with the resources that they need. These unaltered cats will reproduce and the cycle will continue to repeat itself. And then there is the issue of what happens to the removed cats. Most will be killed at pounds or shelters, as feral cats and kittens over 8 weeks old cannot normally be adopted into homes. Knowing this grim fact, concerned complex residents or workers often try to subvert attempts by animal control to trap the cats, making trapping efforts unsuccessful and creating friction between the community and the town government.

The third option, enacting a ban on feeding outdoor cats, is also one that property owners feel will solve the problem. However, a prohibition on the feeding of feral cats will not guarantee a decrease in the number of cats if there is still a food source available, intentional or otherwise. Additionally, all the laws in the world will not stop kind-hearted individuals from feeding hungry cats. The feeding will continue under cover of darkness and out of sight of management, and the cats will continue to reproduce.

The above three options are the ones most employed by apartment managers, condominium associations and business owners in New Jersey. If they actually solved the problem, NJ would not have its current feral cat overpopulation crisis.

The only workable solution: TNR

The fourth option, Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), is the internationally accepted, effective and humane method of controlling feral cat populations. It is a full management plan in which stray and feral cats, already living outdoors, are humanely trapped, vaccinated, sterilized by veterinarians and evaluated. Kittens and tame cats are adopted into good homes. Healthy adult cats, unsocialized to humans, are returned to their familiar habitat, fully vaccinated and unable to reproduce, under the lifelong care of volunteers. The numbers of cats will be dramatically reduced upfront as kittens and friendly cats are removed for adoption, and will gradually reduce further as the cats naturally die off.

TNR is based on continued colony management and it is this responsible management that helps insure the success of TNR, as caregivers monitor for sick cats whom they can vet and newcomers whom they can alter and vaccinate, or adopt out if they are friendly. The nuisance behavior often associated with feral cats is dramatically reduced including the yowling and fighting that come with mating activity and the odor of unneutered males spraying to mark their territory. Particularly in urban areas, the cats continue to provide natural rodent control.

A comprehensive TNR program, in conjunction with a broad-based education program for residents or tenants, will result in fewer to no births, reduction of nuisance complaints by residents, the alleviation of public health concerns and reduced calls to animal control.

Project TNR encourages all New Jersey residential and business complexes with feral cat issues to explore and implement a TNR program.

Project TNR will provide the following services free of charge:

- Help devise and implement a TNR project to manage cats at your complex;
- Connect you to experienced trappers and animal rescue organizations in your area who may be able to implement your TNR project for you;
- Discuss funding options for free or low-cost spay/neuter;
- Educate residents/renters about the benefits of TNR and the program to be implemented; and
- Hold workshops to train residents/renters in the best practices of TNR.

Please contact us at 732-446-6808 or feralcats@aplNJ.org if you would like assistance.

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Who Supports TNR

Trap-Neuter-Return, or “TNR”, is the only method proven to be humane and effective for controlling feral cat population growth. Using this technique, all cats in a colony are trapped, neutered and vaccinated. Feral cats are then returned to their territory where caregivers provide them with regular food and shelter. Young kittens who can still be socialized, as well as friendly adults, are placed in foster care and eventually adopted out to good homes.

TNR has many advantages. It immediately stabilizes the size of the colony by eliminating new litters. The nuisance behavior often associated with feral cats is dramatically reduced including the yowling and fighting that come with mating activity and the odor of unneutered males spraying to mark their territory. Particularly in urban areas, the cats continue to provide natural rodent control.

TNR is described as an acceptable or preferred method of feral cat management by:

- The National Animal Control Association
- The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services
- The NJ Governor’s Task Force on Animal Welfare
- The New Jersey Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NJSPCA)
- Over 135 NJ municipalities
- The Humane Society of the United States
- The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA)
- Multiple academic studies

Project TNR can provide more information, as well as documentation, on request.

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Free-Roaming and Feral Cats

The Department of Health and Senior Services does not endorse or oppose the concept of establishing properly managed cat colonies utilizing trap-neuter-return (TNR) techniques. However, if a municipality wishes to allow cat colonies, they should develop standards through ordinances for the proper and managed operation of such colonies, based on the guidelines below, that would provide accountability and oversight by the health officer and animal control officer.

Cats are domesticated animals that are not indigenous wildlife in North America. However, over the years some pet cats have been abandoned and become "**feral**". Feral animals are domestic animal species living in an unsocialized or wild state; they are one or more generations removed from a home environment. Feral cats may live in a group or "colony", usually in an area where they find food and shelter.

"**Free-roaming**" cats are those that are not necessarily considered to be feral, but which frequently roam outdoors and interact with feral cats and wildlife. They may be "outdoor cats" with a specific owner, stray pets, feral, or may have originated in one household and are now fed or cared for by other households in the neighborhood.

Given the relatively high rate of spaying and neutering of owned cats, free-roaming cats are the primary source of cat over-population. It is estimated that the number of free-roaming cats in the United States may be equal to that of owned cats, approximately 70 million. If left unchecked, free-roaming cats will breed and their populations increase at locations where they find suitable shelter and food, resulting in environmental/property damage, and public nuisance. Free-roaming cats will hunt and kill birds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians and fish, resulting in wildlife mortality.

Pet cats that are abandoned will not easily fend for themselves outdoors. Unfortunately, most of these cats and their offspring will suffer premature mortality (death) from disease, starvation, or trauma. Many New Jersey animal shelters have difficulty dealing with the large numbers of free-roaming cats that they capture or receive, because most of them are unsocialized, hard to handle and therefore, not able to be adopted into homes.

Free-roaming cats also pose a low but important threat to human health. Zoonotic diseases (diseases that can be transmitted from animals to people) include rabies, toxoplasmosis, ringworm, cat scratch disease and many other diseases. Human injuries (bites and scratches) often occur if feral cats are handled without proper precautions.

The solution to the free-roaming and feral cat situation is multifaceted and includes:

- Public education to prevent abandonment of cats and to encourage responsible pet ownership, spaying and neutering, keeping cats

indoors, and preventing or solving behavior problems leading to abandonment.

- Effective municipal animal control,
- Cat licensing with mandatory rabies vaccination,
- Establishing managed cat colonies in appropriate areas (see below), and
- Prohibiting the feeding of free-roaming cats outside of managed cat colonies.

Managed cat colonies require designated caretakers and a group of dependable volunteers to care for the animals on a regular basis. Spaying and neutering the cats will stabilize the population of the colony, and the colony size will eventually be reduced through attrition. Any cats which may be newly abandoned or dropped off should be transported to the nearest animal shelter for holding and potential adoption or claiming by owners. Cats that appear ill or injured should be captured and given medical treatment. Colonies must be established in cooperation with the local animal control and health agencies, wildlife organizations, humane groups and veterinarians. They should not be established in areas where at-risk wildlife populations could be threatened or where they may pose a nuisance or zoonotic disease risk to the public. The operation of the colony must comply with all State and local laws, rules and ordinances and receive landowner permission.

Trap, neuter and return (TNR) is the non-lethal population control technique utilized in managed cat colonies to humanely capture, vaccinate, identify, and spay or neuter (sterilize) cats. Kittens and cats that are tame enough to be adopted should be sterilized and placed into homes. Adult cats are returned to the colony where they live out their lives under the supervision of the colony caretakers and other community volunteers. Cats will need to be re-trapped periodically to update their vaccinations and receive medical care.

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) defers to local officials to determine the appropriateness of allowing a managed cat colony at a site within a municipality. Municipalities considering managed cat colonies are encouraged to develop standards through ordinance or their regulatory authority to insure these recommendations are developed in a manner that provides an organized community program with proper accountability and oversight by the Health Officer.

State Law and managed cat colonies/ impounding cats: Cats are considered a domestic animal species and are therefore protected under the State's animal cruelty and animal control statutes. With respect to State statutes regarding the impounding of stray animals (N.J.S.A. 4:19- 15.16), NJDHSS would consider a managed cat colony *as described above* to be 'on the property of the owner' and thus not falling under the category of "stray" animals to be impounded. However, if managed colony cats begin to create a nuisance or public health threat, a re-evaluation should be conducted. The managed colony should be discontinued if solutions to such problems are unable to be instituted.

All other categories of free-roaming cats would fall under the above statute, be considered "stray" and be eligible for impoundment by the animal control officer. When an animal control officer is trapping or removing stray cats, it is highly recommended that they notify neighbors about impending action and ask that they keep their cats inside during the trapping period, or ensure their cat's identification with a collar or a name band. Additionally, the telephone number of the animal control officer and/or the holding facility should be provided for nearby cat owners to call if their animals are missing after the trapping.



Address: P.O. Box 476, Netcong, NJ 07857
Phone: 973-347-7711
Fax: 973-347-5987

March 5, 2010

To Whom It May Concern:

Like other apartment communities, Netcong Heights had an uncontrolled population of stray and feral cats for many years. The cats reproduced and created various challenges for us. We tried prohibiting tenants from feeding the cats, hoping the cats would go away. This did not resolve the issue, as the tenants who cared about the cats would not cease feeding them under any circumstances. While animal control was called on a number of occasions, the problem was too large to resolve. Further, the idea of impounded the cats was upsetting to many involved.

Starting last summer, the Netcong TNR (Trap Neuter Return) Project, consisting of a few trained volunteers, began trapping cats and kittens at Netcong Heights. To date, they have permanently removed over 45 kittens and friendly adults for adoption, and have neutered over 70 of the feral adult cats to stop them from reproducing. They have also vaccinated the cats. The volunteers have worked in a very professional manner, consulting with management at every step and reaching out to tenants for information and cooperation in identifying and trapping the cats.

Since the TNR started, we have seen a remarkable difference. There are visibly fewer cats, and the behavior of the remaining cats has changed markedly from being neutered. They no longer fight or mate, so the noise from the cats has decreased. The males, now neutered, have stopped spraying to mark their territory, so complaints about odor have stopped as well. The cats have also stopped roaming, and so are seen less frequently. Shelters and feeding stations were placed along the woods, with the guidance of the TNR group, and the cats now congregate there, away from the apartments, instead of under the decks and near the dumpsters.

We now allow tenants to feed the cats at the feeding stations and will soon insist that the feeding may occur only in those locations. Because there is an option for continuing to care for the cats, the tenants are more willing to cooperate, resulting in more sanitary conditions and fewer noticeable cats. Community relations have also improved. The tenants who found the cats to be a nuisance are happy fewer of them roam and that the remaining ones have stopped engaging in nuisance behaviors. The tenants who like the cats are happy that they are being controlled in a humane manner.

Volunteers continue to trap cats regularly, and they have committed to monitoring the area continuously for any newly abandoned cats or cats who escaped the first rounds of trapping. The goal is to have zero reproduction, to remove all friendly cats that may be abandoned in the future, and to let the remaining sterilized cats naturally decline in numbers.

TNR certainly seems to be an effective way to reduce and manage feral cats at an apartment community, and it has been very helpful at Netcong Heights.

Sincerely,

Netcong Heights Management

September 15, 2008

Ms. Kim Carbone
739 Koch Peak Avenue
Washington Twp., NJ 07676

Dear Kim,

It's been nearly three years since the Board of Directors of Linwood Park approved a TNR program to humanely deal with a growing feral cat population on our property. In that time approximately 50 cats have been trapped, neutered and released and an equal number of kittens have been subsequently rescued and adopted, all thanks to your efforts. The success of this program is no doubt due in large part to your unwavering selfless dedication and devotion to this monumental and frequently overwhelming task. We cannot thank you enough for all that you have done to improve the quality of life here at Linwood Park for both the residents and the poor homeless cats. You have proved that with time and patience TNR can work. "Without any intervention, our colony of feral cats could have easily become a colony of hundreds, but instead it has been humanely reduced to less than 20 cats, who are no longer able to reproduce."

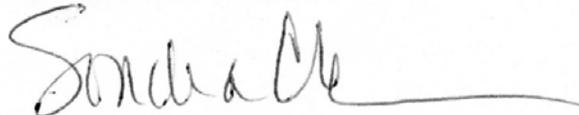
We understand that the rescue organization that you represent, Caring About the Strays, has a major fund raiser coming up this month. In light of that, we would like to make a donation in your name to thank you for all that you have done to help us. Enclosed please find a check in the amount of \$500.

Kim, you are truly an amazing person for all the animal rescue work you do. I once heard that when we get to heaven the animals whose lives we have saved will be the first ones to greet us. If this is true, you are going to get one hell of a reception! Bless you for all you have done and continue to do for the poor innocent creatures who cannot help themselves.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Management and Shareholders of Linwood Park you have my most sincere gratitude and thanks.

Sincerely,

Sondra C. Teichman



Chairperson, Feral Cat Committee

cc: Board of Directors



Buccaneer Trace

March 18, 2009

Attention: Islands Cat Feral Project Melonie Kinert

28 Twelve Oaks Drive

Savannah, Georgia 31410

Re: The Feral Cat Program at Buccaneer Trace Apartments

Dear Melonie:

We are writing to let you know how grateful we are to the Islands Feral Cat program, since your organization stepped in and assisted with the many cats left abandoned or migrated from other Island locations we no longer have a huge issue with unmanaged strays.

This program has greatly reduced the cat population in the apartment complex thanks to the neutering/spade service your program provides, not to mention the many new homes you've located for kittens found and the feeding stations located around the outside perimeter has reduced many complaints from our residents.

We have much gratitude towards Islands Feral Cat Program! We rarely receive complaints from other community guest regarding the cat population. We would highly recommend your program to anyone with an over-population problem.

Best Regards,

Laura Shuman

Community Manager

Buccaneer Trace Apartments





Eastway Development

P.O. Box 29216
Cumberland, Indiana 46229
894-0589

April 4, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

Indy Feral has helped to solve a cat problem of many years duration at our apartment complex.

I am an owner and managing partner of Eastway Development. We own Eastway Court Apartments, a 285-unit apartment complex in Greenfield, Indiana, at the intersection of 600 W. and US 40. The complex is surrounded by farmground. For many years, we have been a "dumping site" for unwanted cats and kittens. Many people feel that if they drop off cats at an apartment complex, surely someone will take them in. Besides, farms are a "natural" place for cats to survive. One summer not long ago we had as many as 80 feral cats wandering our complex. There were, as you can imagine, many complaints from residents regarding the cat situation. The cats were often quite sickly in appearance. There was an odor problem from the cats marking their territory. The cats dug up flowers and howled at night. Dead kittens were frequently found.

Both management and residents worked to find a solution. Several times residents contacted animal control, and attempts made to catch cats were unsuccessful. Flyers were circulated discouraging the feeding of wild animals. This was difficult for some to abide by as they could not bear to watch the innocent animals starve to death. There was talk of poison by some desperate residents, which was alarming as this could put small children and pets at risk.

I learned of Indy Feral through a column in the Indianapolis Star written by Ruth Holladay. I contacted them and told them about our situation. Amelda, a volunteer, set up a time to come out, set traps and transfer the cats for neutering. I was glad to do just about anything to help this situation and was happy to try a humane method. But I have to admit, I really had my doubts that they could get this job done with THESE cats who had outwitted the best.

Fast forward now a couple of years. We have 8 or 10 neutered, very healthy-appearing and immunized feral cats who spend their winters in outdoor shelters provided by Indy Feral. The residents and management are happy that we were able to deal with a huge feral cat problem in a safe and humane way. Since we are surrounded by farmground, we are actually happy to have a few cats, otherwise we could likely have mice problems.

We are grateful to Indy Feral for implementing a Trap-Neuter-Return program. TNR works and provides a long-term and humane solution.

Sincerely,

Brenda Barker, MD

Owner and Managing Partner, Eastway Development LLC
Staff Physician, Clarian Health Partners Volunteers in Medicine

Phone 317-445-5883