



Humane Society of Greater Rochester, P.C.A., Inc.
Lollypop Farm

POSITION STATEMENTS ON COMMUNITY CATS

Approved November 17, 2020

We believe in the humane management of community cat populations that consist of free-roaming, outdoor cats that comprise a mixture of feral, semi-socialized, stray, or abandoned cats. Community cats are found in all areas of the country and tend to gather together in colonies. We are committed to the humane management of community cats by engaging in and supporting Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return and Return-to-Field practices.

Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return (TNVR)

TNVR is a proven humane method that reduces cat populations over time. This is a practice where community cats are trapped by animal advocates for the purposes of spaying or neutering, vaccination, and ear-tipping prior to being returned to their original location or safely relocated to a new location with the participation of the property owner. We pledge to:

- Provide low-cost spay/neuter programs and assistance or incentive programs in conjunction with participating veterinarians to reduce the number of community cats.
- Work with individuals and property owners to identify healthy, free-roaming cats who are successfully living outdoors as candidates for TNVR in order to prevent shelter admission, unless a positive outcome can be ensured.

We do not support the trapping of community cats for the purpose of euthanasia, except in extreme circumstances where an individual animal is suffering from a life-threatening illness or injury.

Return-to-Field (RTF)

RTF describes an approach where healthy, free-roaming cats--who lack identification--are brought to the shelter by community members and then spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and ear-tipped and then returned to the area where they were found.

This kind of program is based on data^[1] showing that only a small percentage of cats who enter a shelter are reunited with their owners or caregiver. Once in the shelter, they may be more susceptible to stress, zoonotic diseases, or risk of euthanasia. Free-roaming cats who appear to be healthy are likely receiving care from someone or from multiple people. Owners and caregivers are more likely to be reunited when the cat is returned to its neighborhood and able to return home on its own.

We pledge to use current industry best practices in determining whether a cat should be held as a stray or is a candidate for RTF.

We support the ability to use discretion when determining the most appropriate positive outcome for a cat at any time by evaluating an individual cat's situation, taking into consideration its health, temperament, or environmental factors such as inclement weather or dangerous surroundings.

We will coordinate with the community/public, animal control agencies, veterinarians, legislators, and the news media to develop an understanding of the unique behaviors and needs of community cats and a unified approach to humane community cat management methods.

^[1] Lord, L.K., et al., Search and identification methods that owners use to find a lost cat. J Am Vet Med Assoc, 2007. 230(2): p. 217-20. <https://bestfriends.org/position-statements#return>