

Return To Field: Animal Shelters and a New Approach to Healthy, Unowned Cats

Scott Trebatoski, MBA, ACO
Director, Hillsborough County Pet Resources Department
440 N Falkenburg Rd, Tampa FL 33619 (813) 612-8443 Trebatoski@HillsboroughCounty.org

R2F -- Examples of Success

CALIFORNIA

Fiscal Year	Live Outcomes (Green)	Non-Live Outcomes (Red)	Total
FY07/08	3,500	6,500	10,000
FY08/09	4,000	6,000	10,000
FY09/10	4,500	5,500	10,000
FY10/11	5,000	5,000	10,000
FY11/12	5,500	4,500	10,000
FY12/13	6,000	4,000	10,000
FY13/14	6,500	1,500	8,000

FLORIDA

Fiscal Year	Live Outcomes (Green)	Non-Live Outcomes (Red)	Total
FY07/08	3,000	9,000	12,000
FY08/09	3,500	8,500	12,000
FY09/10	4,000	8,000	12,000
FY10/11	4,500	7,500	12,000
FY11/12	5,000	7,000	12,000
FY12/13	5,500	6,500	12,000
FY13/14	6,000	0	6,000

TEXAS

Fiscal Year	Live Outcomes (Green)	Non-Live Outcomes (Red)	Total
FY 10/11	3,000	4,000	7,000
FY 11/12	3,500	3,500	7,000
FY 12/13	4,000	3,000	7,000
FYTD 13/14	4,000	0	4,000

***All examples are municipal shelters*

Green = Live Outcomes
Red = Non-Live Outcomes

Why a new approach?

Other traditional models have failed

- **TRADITIONAL ANIMAL CONTROL: Trap & Remove; Catch & Kill** –



- Resulted in 90%+ euthanasia of not only 'feral' but many outdoor cats being cared for including semi-social cats; intake of cats remained same or saw increases over time.

Why a new approach?
 Other traditional models have failed



- **TRADITIONAL ANIMAL WELFARE: Relocation & Creation of Colonies**
- Resulted in large nuisance colonies that created backlash from animal control; longer-term damage was that communities became resistant to new alternatives
- ****public focused only on large examples and nuisances they created.**

Why Return to Field Works

- Once committed to the R2F concept, animal control begins education and nuisance abatement rather than removal
- Decentralized: Traditional large colonies are not necessary (1000s of small groups versus 100s of large)
- No 'vacuum effect' or increase in births to fill the void & attrition experienced
- Underground network becomes 'above the board' and can be utilized to help with education and nuisance abatement
- Additional resources from welfare agencies help offset start costs- ultimately cost of R2F is lower than increasing animal intake #s

Challenges

- Public policy officials
- Veterinary community
- Audubon/Birders
- PETA
- Some public health officials
- Perceived legal issues
- Publicity can actually hurt
- 'Our community is different'
- *Do not eliminate all rules for owned cats!*



Commonly Seen Benefits

- Lower annual intake of cats/Lower Euthanasia
- Less need for cat housing space – new opportunities for shelter
- Actual shortages of cats for adoptions at times – really helps get the long-timers out
- Reduced nuisance calls for animal control officers (with time)
- Greater good will – shelter seen as innovative, life-savers
- Major increase in employee morale & retention

Quick Look at One Success Story:



Results at a Glance

• Cat euthanasia --	2007: 88.6%	2013: 8.5%
• Cat Intake --	2007: 12,082	2013: 4,939
• Cat Sterilization --	2007: 90%/10%	2013: 30%/70% [public/private]
• Budget --	2007: \$5.6 M	2013: \$3.3 M
• Employees --	2007: 72	2013: 38


