

Orange County Animal Services Advisory Board
Free Roaming Task Force
Meeting Summary 5/7/14, 6:45-8:30pm
Prepared by Judy Miller

Members in Attendance: DeWana Anderson, DVM (chair), Aviva Scully, Warren Porter, Judy Miller

Staff in Attendance: Bob Marotto, Animal Services Director

Public Participants: 6 members of the public participated in this open meeting and identified themselves as rescue group representatives (IAR,), community cat colony caregivers, public health & wildlife (Dr. Schopler, DVM; PhD), and taxpayers.

Mr. Marotto & Ms. Scully welcomed the community and provided a general introduction to the meeting and guidelines for public participation.

The Free Roaming Cat Task Force meeting summaries of April 23rd, April 9th, March 26th and February 5th were reviewed and approved.

Meeting Summary

1. Who are we responsible to protect? The public? Wildlife? Cats?
 - Be clear as to the above with the programs & perspectives selected– no one approach will address all of the above.
 - There will be a loss of life regardless of the approach taken, be it wildlife (if TNR) or cats (if euthanasia).
2. Qualify of life and a humane ending of suffering with selective euthanasia.
 - A poorly managed cat colony without rules/support for food, shelter, controls for predators/cars should not be an acceptable management approach.
 - A humane euthanasia for a sick or injured cat is an acceptable option to prevent suffering.
3. There are concerns by cat colony caregivers and rescuers of feral/free roaming cats about “registration”.
 - There are misconceptions as well as mistrust by some citizens of OCAS.
 - If registration occurs where cats are linked to the cat colony caregivers, then these citizens can be held responsible by the county for the costs (licensure, revaccination) and activities of the cats (if leave property, “trespassing”) under their care.
 - There is the potential to come up with a “creative” process whereby cats can be registered in a manner to help address the cost concern of colony caregivers.
4. Tracking/identification of cats using microchips where they can be identified individually is necessary to be able to:
 - hold cat owners accountable for the care of their free roaming cats & abandonment (ie; penalty if found multiple times off owner’s property)
 - track feral/free roaming to revaccinate (public health concerns esp. regarding rabies as one vaccination does not equal lifelong protection), obtain data about the feral/free roaming cats’ – migration, health, disease, & impact on wildlife/community

- Ear notches do not provide the individual identification needed and tattoos can be impractical due to fur growth and need to physically control cat to locate.

5. A multi-faceted approach to the management of feral and free roaming cats is essential so that we don't lose the support of large segments of our community. Attention to be paid to:

- Beliefs/values.
 - Explore programs such as “Pets for Life” who focus on underserved areas and hire teens/people from the community to reach others one on one regarding spay/neuter & care of cats.
 - Work with veterinarians to work with their clients on enrichment strategies for their cats to help owners accept need to keep cats indoors.
 - Cats as the “new frontier” of companion pets – we have catch up work to help people know and accept what cats need and deserve as we've done with dogs. The mindset of cat owners who think of cats and their needs as “indoor cats” vs. “outside cats”
- Supporters of wildlife
- Public health & safety
- Cost: Benefit responsibility
- Cat colony caregivers – sensitivity to their needs & love of cats, training & education for caregiver safety, training and assistance with retrapping

6. Next meeting: June 4th, 6:45pm. This will be a work meeting where the public is welcome to attend & but discussion will be limited to members of the task force

Agenda: Set work plan & calendar

themes and lessons for the taskforce report. In preparation for this work, the members are asked to review the meeting summaries, presentations & resources from the work to date prior to the meeting