

# Trap-Neuter-Return: A Guide for Trapping & Bringing Community Cats to Tails of Hope

Your signature on your Application for our TNR Program and/or Trap Loan Form is evidence you agree to all TAILS OF HOPE terms in this Guide.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction .....                              | 3  |
| Best Practices*                                 |    |
| Alerting the Community & Neighbors .....        | 4  |
| Trapping Practices .....                        | 6  |
| Pre-Surgery Care** .....                        | 10 |
| Post-Surgery Care .....                         | 11 |
| Relocating Feral Cats .....                     | 12 |
| Resources for Education and Understanding***    |    |
| What is TNR? .....                              | 13 |
| What is a Community Cat? (Feral vs Stray) ..... | 14 |
| What is a Cat Colony? .....                     | 14 |
| When to Spay/Neuter a Cat? .....                | 14 |
| More about TNR and the Feral Ear-Tip .....      | 15 |
| Cat Population Growth Pyramid .....             | 16 |
| More Reasons to Spay or Neuter.....             | 17 |
| Waiver & Release Terms .....                    | 18 |
| Summary & Thanks .....                          | 19 |

\*All Best Practices shall be followed.

\*\* Pre-Surgery Care includes the Policies and Protocols list which are acknowledged with your signature as part of your Application for the TNR Program and/or Use Policy list which is acknowledged with your signature as part of your Trap Loan agreement form.

\*\*\*We offer these Resources for Education and Understanding to assist you in having meaningful conversations with members of the community-both those who love cats and those who less-than-love cats, so you can help raise awareness about the struggles and challenges of community cats and the solution of TNR.

## INTRODUCTION

TAILS OF HOPE is a non-profit 501(c)3, low-cost, high-quality spay/neuter clinic. We are always looking for grant funding opportunities which support the Vision, Purpose, Mission, and Core Values of our Organization to ensure continued success and further growth to serve animals and people in our community.

### **TAILS OF HOPE Community Feral Cat Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) Program**

#### **THE PROBLEM:**

- Feline experts now estimate 70 million feral cats roam the United States (source: National Geographic)
- Only 2% of feral cats are spayed/neutered (source: Alley Cat Allies).
- Mercer County's cat problem/number of community cats is growing quickly. A WKBN news story in 2018 estimated that there are easily more than 1,000 community cats in Mercer County.
- The lives of community feral cats are difficult and often lead to abuse and suffering.

#### **WHY THE PROBLEM PERSISTS:**

1. There are too few resources to fund efforts to control the population of the cat's ability to reproduce quickly.
2. Most community cats are found in underserved/underdeveloped/underfunded areas without the awareness or resources to act.
3. Most shelters/rescues will not accept feral cats.
4. Lack of education/awareness about cats-both community feral cats and "owned" cats.
5. The lack of action/responsibility for community cats for all of the above reasons results in quick and vast expansion of community cat overpopulation.

#### **OUR GOALS:**

- TAILS OF HOPE goal is to obtain ongoing funding to provide spay/neuter procedures, vaccine services, trap rentals, and other services for community cats through our TNR program at NO COST to the participants.
- Establish a TNR Network & TNR Action Committee to provide outreach & education to area residents; build a Volunteer Network; build a Veterinary Professional Network; collaborate with other animal groups, TNR groups, local shelters, rescues and fosters; register cat colonies; create a path to make healthy, foster, socialize, and find a "forever" home for stray cats and/or feral kittens; and to procure reliable funding to create a thriving TNR program.
- By accomplishing the above, our goals are to:
  - See a statistical reduction in the number of cats entering shelters/rescues/fosters;
  - See a statistical reduction in the need for animal control services for cats; and
  - See a statistical reduction in the number of cats roaming neighborhoods, abandoned at farms or in other areas.

In order to help us accomplish our goals, **participants in this program must follow Best Practices and abide by Polices & Protocols as described in the TNR Application or Trap Loan Form and in this Guide.**

## ALERTING THE COMMUNITY & NEIGHBORS

A TNR Best Practice includes alerting the community and the neighbors at the location where you will be trapping. Most neighbors will be grateful.

**At minimum, a flyer must be posted and distributed to all neighbors in the community.**

Communication must include:

- A posted alert that you will be trapping, with the date/s and your contact information.
- A strong recommendation to keep their pet cats inside on the days that you trap.
- A request for neighbors feeding the community cats to withhold feeding any outdoor cats for 24 HOURS prior to your trapping date.
- Educate/inform neighbors that feral cats will receive an ear-tip, which is a universal sign that the cat is spayed/neutered so they are not re-trapped and transported a second time.

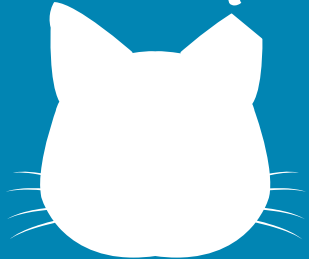

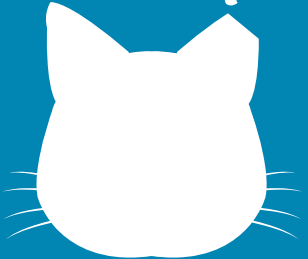

If possible, also have a conversation with the neighbors in the community.

- You may gain valuable information about the feral cat population which you can share with us to help us expand the TNR program and funding.
- Also, find out who has cats and if their cat/s is/are spayed/neutered. If you happen to trap a pet, you may be able to identify them through the communication with the neighbor.
- Cats brought to the TNR program will be scanned for a Microchip. Cats without usable identification will proceed through the TNR services.

**Below is an example of a flyer (2 on one page) that you may make copies of to distribute in communities prior to trapping for your appointment.** If you want to use this flyer, print copies, cut around the edges, and write in your name and phone number along with the date you will be trapping in the neighborhood. You may also request a PDF copy of this flyer to be emailed to you or to pick-up at our clinic. A black and white copy is available for better printing.

If you'd like to make your own flyer, ensure all required information is included.

DOOR HANGER/FLYER EXAMPLE:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>We're helping</b></p>  <p><b>outdoor cats!</b></p> <p><b>Here's How You Can Help, Too!</b></p> <p>Contact Info:</p> <p><b>will humanely trap, neuter and return community cats in your neighborhood on</b></p> <p>Date:</p> <p><b>Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)</b> benefits the cats and the neighborhood. Community cats - also known as ferals - are going to be spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and ear-tipped (the universal symbol of a neutered and vaccinated cat). Back in their outdoor home, they will not reproduce - no more kittens! TNR improves their lives and yours. It is effective and humane. Other approaches for community cats just don't work.</p> <p><b>You can help make this a success!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Keep your pet cats inside</b> on the above date (so they won't accidentally be trapped).</li><li>• <b>Contact us if you are feeding any cats</b> in the neighborhood or surrounding area. The more we know about where the cats eat &amp; spend their time, the more successful we'll be.</li><li>• <b>Don't feed the outdoor cats on the day before trapping</b> (always continue to provide water). Community cats will enter traps only when they're hungry. Move your pet cat's feeding inside on the above date if you normally feed outside. Once this trapping day is over, you can go back to feeding the cats.</li></ul> <p><b>Thank you! Your cooperation is vital to making your neighborhood a better, safer, healthier home for cats and people!</b></p>  | <p><b>We're helping</b></p>  <p><b>outdoor cats!</b></p> <p><b>Here's How You Can Help, Too!</b></p> <p>Contact Info:</p> <p><b>will humanely trap, neuter and return community cats in your neighborhood on</b></p> <p>Date:</p> <p><b>Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)</b> benefits the cats and the neighborhood. Community cats - also known as ferals - are going to be spayed or neutered, vaccinated, and ear-tipped (the universal symbol of a neutered and vaccinated cat). Back in their outdoor home, they will not reproduce - no more kittens! TNR improves their lives and yours. It is effective and humane. Other approaches for community cats just don't work.</p> <p><b>You can help make this a success!</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Keep your pet cats inside</b> on the above date (so they won't accidentally be trapped).</li><li>• <b>Contact us if you are feeding any cats</b> in the neighborhood or surrounding area. The more we know about where the cats eat &amp; spend their time, the more successful we'll be.</li><li>• <b>Don't feed the outdoor cats on the day before trapping</b> (always continue to provide water). Community cats will enter traps only when they're hungry. Move your pet cat's feeding inside on the above date if you normally feed outside. Once this trapping day is over, you can go back to feeding the cats.</li></ul> <p><b>Thank you! Your cooperation is vital to making your neighborhood a better, safer, healthier home for cats and people!</b></p>  |
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## TRAPPING PRACTICES

When you're conducting Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), some cats may be particularly hard to trap. They might be too suspicious of entering the trap, or maybe they keep getting the bait without triggering the trap door. Don't worry—you'll get them!

**WHAT TO DO** | Try these tips from Alley Cat Allies:

- **Get them comfortable with the trap.** Feed trap-shy cats out of unset traps in their normal feeding locations for a week or two before trapping again. Start with the food right by the entrance of the trap and gradually move it closer to the back each day.
- **Use a larger trap.** Cats don't like to feel trapped or boxed in. A larger trap with a taller opening and wider sides can be more inviting to a cat wary of entering an enclosed space.
- **Cover the trap.** By placing a dark towel over the trap, without blocking the door, you create a space that looks dark, hidden, and safe to cats.
- **Try a more exciting bait.** Something extra smelly and tasty, and perhaps out of the ordinary, might pique a cat's interest. Catnip, jarred baby food, canned mackerel, or chicken work well (no onions!).
- **Make a food trail.** Coax wary cats into the trap with a trap of tiny food scraps leading up to and then inside the trap. Gradually increase the size of the bait scraps as you place them on the trigger plate and beyond. Make sure you don't use too much; you don't want the cat to get full before she reaches the trigger plate! You can also try using the smelly broth of canned cat food or meats as your bait trail. When you reach beyond the trigger plate, place food on foil or a paper plate and place it *underneath* the trap; the food will push through and you will not have containers inside the trap.
- **Change the trap's location.** Move the trap to a quieter, protected place so the cat feels safer going into it. The more secluded, and the less people around, the better.
- **Observe habits.** Just like you have paths you walk every day, so do community cats! Be observant and watch for the trails that cats most often take. Note if there's a certain tree or bush they like to sleep under, and what time of day they're most likely to be in a specific area. Set up the traps at these places and times.
- **Use distraction techniques.** Some cats can be guided into a trap with a laser pointer, which you can control from a distance. Or try hanging a piece of cooked chicken from a string above the trigger plate to trick the cat into springing the trigger.
- **Camouflage the trap.** Try covering the trap with natural material like burlap. Then, place leaves, small branches, palm fronds, or whatever is in the natural environment around the top, sides, and on the floor inside the trap. Just make sure your disguise doesn't interfere with the trap door closing! Run a test before setting it up for the real deal.
- **Hide the trigger plate.** A cat may have learned to recognize the plate that closes the trap door and how to avoid it. To keep her from tiptoeing over and around the plate, try covering it, and a bit of the trap floor in front of and behind it, with newspaper or cloth. Or cut a piece of cardboard a little narrower than the width of your trap and a couple of inches longer than the trigger plate. Duct tape the cardboard to the middle of the plate and loosely to the floor of the trap. The cats won't be stepping around that trigger so easily!

## TRAPPING PRACTICES, CONTINUED

- **Put a stick in it.** For cats who have learned to step lightly to avoid triggering traps, slide a stick through the side holes of the trap just in front of the trigger plate and a few inches off the trap floor. The cat will be forced to step over the stick and her paw will land harder on the trigger plate just beyond it, springing the trap.
- **Spring the box trap yourself.** Prop the box trap door open with a stick or a full water bottle with string tied around it. Use enough string so you can hide a few feet away and hold the end of it. When the tricky kitty walks into the trap, pull the string to manually shut the door.
- **Use a drop trap.** If the standard box trap just isn't doing it, try using a drop trap. It's a large mesh box that you prop up and trigger manually with a rope or string. Make sure to set the drop trap on flat ground and to have a partner, as the traps' size makes them awkward to handle alone. Prop the trap up with a wooden stick or a full bottle tied with string, leaving enough string so you can hide a few feet away and hold the end of it. Bait the trap with plenty of food just in case cats you don't want to trap wander in before your target. Don't spring the trap until your target cat is inside; if she sees other cats being trapped, she'll stay away! Once you've sprung the trap and caught the cat you want, immediately place a sheet over it and get a box trap ready. Transfer the cat to the box trap to easier hold and transport her.
- **Lure the cat into a more confined space.** It's easier to trap when you don't have to do it in the great outdoors! Place food into a smaller space you can close in on, like a garage or shed. Hide and wait for the cat to enter, then shut the door behind her. Before you lure kitty in, get the room ready. Clear the space of any possible hiding places, then lean a single large board against a wall. Set up a box trap and hide it behind the board. When the cat is locked into the smaller space, she'll immediately try to find the nearest hiding spot. Since you only left her one option, she'll dart behind the board and possibly right into the trap.
- **Place traps side-by-side.** If your hard-to-trap cat likes to circle around the back of the trap instead of entering it to figure out how to get the food, use that to your advantage. Place two box traps right next to each other, with their entrances facing opposite directions. When kitty circles around one trap, she may walk right into the one set up beside it.
- **Use a mother cat's kittens to trap her.** Kittens are a powerful lure for avoidant mother cats. If you manage to trap her kittens first, put them in a carrier or another box trap and place its door against the back end of the trap you plan to use to catch mom. Place a dark sheet or towel over everything but the entrance of mom's trap. Mom will think she's seeing her kittens through a dark tunnel and will enter her trap to get to them. If it's chilly out, keep the kittens warm by lining their carrier or trap floor with a towel and placing a couple of hot water bottles beneath it.
- **Go high-tech.** If a shy kitten or a mother cat refuses to enter a trap, your cellphone may just help you out. Find a video of kittens meowing and play it on your phone, then place the phone at the back of your box or drop trap. Kittens who are scared and alone may race to join the "other kittens" in the trap. The mother cat may think her kittens are calling for her and enter the trap to find them.
- **Take a break from trapping.** Unless the cat is in need of immediate medical attention, take a break for a week or two. Give yourself and the cat a rest, and then try again. You'll get the cat eventually!

## TRAPPING PRACTICES, CONTINUED

### **WHAT NOT TO DO** | Heed this advice from Alley Cat Allies:

The last thing you want to do while trapping is put yourself or the cats in danger. Even if you're frustrated from failed attempts to trap a cat, **NEVER** resort to the following techniques.

- **DO NOT** use trapping equipment that is not specifically meant for cats. You could injure or even kill a cat with alternate trapping methods.
- **DO NOT** try to catch a cat with your hands. Even the most socialized cat can panic when grabbed, and can scratch or bite you. You can also harm the cat in the attempt if she struggles to escape you.
- **DO NOT** put bowls, plates, or other containers inside the trap. Instead, place wet food on foil or paper plate *underneath the trap*. When you set the trap on top of the food, it will push through the trap so the cat/s can eat. Opening the trap puts you and the cat at risk for injury and escape.
- **DO NOT** withhold food for more than 48 hours before trapping. It's dangerous to a cat's health to go without eating for more than two days.
- **DO NOT** withhold water. This will not help you in your trapping efforts. Instead, you can do harm to cats' health and wellbeing.
- **DO NOT** give up! Be patient, persistent, and clever. If you keep trying, you will get that cat into that trap.
- **DO NOT** leave traps unattended.

Our policy is **ONE TRAP, ONE APPOINTMENT, ONCE CAT**. However,

### **IF YOU CAPTURE MORE THAN ONE CAT IN A TRAP...**

Typically, it will be kittens, not adult cats, that will enter a trap together. Or, it is possible kittens will follow their mother into a trap. But normally they will already know each other and get along.

### **WHAT TO DO**

- If the cats in the trap are getting along, you may bring them together in one trap **ONLY IF YOU BRING AN ADDITIONAL, EMPTY TRAP FOR EACH ADDITIONAL CAT** so we may separate them after surgery. (While the cats come out of anesthesia, they may not see each other so lovingly.)

### **WHAT NOT TO DO**

- **DO NOT** try to separate them yourself. Doing so puts you and the cats at risk.
- **DO NOT** keep multiple cats in a trap if they are not peacefully getting along. Return/release them and try to trap another time.



## TRAPPING PRACTICES, CONTINUED

### IF YOU TRAP A NURSING MOTHER...

A mother cat who is nursing will have swollen and pronounced mammary glands, and she may have less fur around her nipples. Mother cats continue to produce milk even after being spayed. The typical recovery time for spay surgery is between 12 and 24 hours. The mother cat should be returned to her nursing kittens as soon as possible, which your veterinarian can help you determine. Lactating mother cats can be given warmed subcutaneous fluids post-operatively to help aid recovery.

If you trap a cat during TNR that maybe nursing a litter of kittens, follow these steps from Alley Cat Allies to care for both the mother cat and her kittens.

### WHAT TO DO

- **CONTACT US ASAP** to let us know you have a nursing mother for your appointment and you plan to return her outdoors afterwards so she can care for her kittens. We will do our best to adjust the schedule to prioritize a mother's cat spay and get her back to her kittens ASAP.
- **CHECK FOR KITTENS.** If you are able to locate the kittens, assess whether they need your intervention. There are resources available online to help you tell how old a kitten is and what to do if you find kittens outdoors. Kittens 8 weeks old are weaned so try to trap them for a spay/neuter, too!
- **RETURN THE MOTHER CAT TO HER KITTENS ASAP AFTER SPAY.** When you return the mother cat to the exact location where you trapped her, she will go back to her kittens and continue nursing and caring for them. Remember, the best practice for kittens born outdoors is to leave them with their mother. Allow the mother cat, the kittens' best possible caregiver, to care for her kittens in her outdoor home, which is familiar and comfortable to her. Learn more about how to help mother cats and kittens at [alleycat.org/LeaveThemBe](http://alleycat.org/LeaveThemBe).

### WHAT NOT TO DO

- **DO NOT** take the mother cat out of the trap to try to exam her.
- **DO NOT** release her from the trap. Now that she has experienced being trapped, she may become trap-savvy and extremely tricky to re-trap in the future. This may be your only chance to help get her spayed.

## PRE-SURGERY CARE

Pre-Surgery care begins when trapping commences.

**Participation in TAILS OF HOPE's TNR Program or Trap Loan requires a signed acknowledgement prior to appointment confirmation and adherence to the Pre-surgery Care requirements as outlined in this Guide and the TNR Application or Trap Loan Form.**

- **DO NOT** trap any cats until cleared for services and have confirmation of an appointment.
- Follow **Best Practices** outlined in this Guide and the **Policies & Protocols** outlined in the TNR Application or Trap Loan Form.
- Bring feral cats to the clinic in **HUMANE CAT TRAPS ONLY**. (No pet carriers, boxes or collapsible traps.)
- Ensure each trap is **lined with newspaper**, and newspaper only. (No blankets, towels, sheets, bowls, plates, food cans, etc.) Follow tips in this guide to feed cats without opening the trap.
- Ensure that when a cat is inside a trap, the trap is fully and completely **COVERED AT ALL TIMES** to minimize stress on the animal and help them stay quiet and calm.
- **NEVER** leave a trap out unattended, for any reason, for any length of time.
- **NEVER** stack traps.
- **NEVER** trap past midnight, and **ONLY** trap the night before your appointment, from 4:00pm - 11:30pm.
- **ALWAYS** hold cats in traps in a safe, quiet, temperature-controlled and well-ventilated location until time for transport (i.e. laundry room, bathroom, or locked garage).
- Make sure all adult cats **DO NOT** have food after midnight the night before their surgery. Eating after midnight poses a serious surgery risk and the cat could die.
- **MONITOR, MONITOR, MONITOR!** Don't place trapped cat/s in your holding area and forget about them! Check in throughout the night and again in the morning. Peek under the trap cover. Feral cats may growl, spit, hiss or lunge at you when you look at them. Don't take it personally!
- **ENSURE** kittens 2-4 months old **WILL BE FED** a TEASPOON ONLY of wet food at 6am on the morning of their surgery.
- **DO NOT** transport cats in the back of an open bed truck, a sealed trunk, or sealed trailer.
- **WAIT** in your vehicle and leave cats in your vehicle until admission paperwork is completed and you are instructed by TAILS OF HOPE staff to remove the cats/traps.

**In addition:**

- **ARRIVE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT ON-TIME.**
- **If you were unable to catch the cat/s for your appointment, CALL TAILS OF HOPE (724-346-4673) AND NOTIFY US AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND PRIOR TO YOUR DROP-OFF TIME.**

**And, always remember: SAFETY FIRST!** Following the Best Practices, Policies & Procedures, guidelines and tips will help to keep the cats and you safe. **NEVER** attempt to handle a feral cat. Don't stick fingers in the trap or allow children or other pets near the trap.

## POST-SURGERY CARE

Post-Surgery care begins at the clinic and continues with you at discharge/pick-up from the clinic.

- **WAIT** in your vehicle until discharge paperwork is completed and TAILS OF HOPE staff brings the cats/traps to you.
- **DO NOT** transport cats in the back of an open bed truck, a sealed trunk, or sealed trailer.
- Ensure that when a cat is inside a trap, the trap is fully and completely **COVERED AT ALL TIMES** to minimize stress on the animal and help them stay quiet and calm. Use a sheet or light blanket inside so the cat doesn't get too hot.
- **ALWAYS** hold cats in traps in a safe, quiet, temperature-controlled and well-ventilated location until time for transport (i.e. laundry room, bathroom, or locked garage).
- **MONITOR, MONITOR, MONITOR!** Don't place trapped cat/s in your holding area and forget about them! Check in throughout the night and again in the morning for bleeding, difficulty breathing, lethargy or dullness, and/or vomiting or loss of appetite, although not all community cats will eat overnight due to stress. Peek under the trap cover. Feral cats may growl, spit, hiss or lunge at you when you look at them. Don't take it personally! If a cat is bleeding, vomiting, having difficulty breathing, or not waking up, please call TAILS OF HOPE immediately. If after hours, contact an emergency vet clinic. (Remember TAILS OF HOPE is not responsible for costs associated with follow-up services.) Cats do not need to routinely return to TAILS OF HOPE; dissolvable sutures are used and do not need removed.
- **FEED** the cat/s. Place canned/wet food on a plastic lid with a little water around it and set it *under* the trap. The cat will be able to eat/drink through the trap. Keep hands out of the trap, and always ensure the trap door is locked. Be aware the cat may not eat due to stress.
- **RETURN for release: Return the cat/s to the colony where they were trapped during a time when they are typically out/active and traffic is light. Male cats can be released back into the colony 24 hours after surgery. However, we recommend-if possible, safely keeping a female cat for one additional day for a total of 48 hours.** Certain circumstances may dictate that a female needs to be retained for a longer period, as directed by the veterinarian. To release, place the trap with one end uncovered and facing toward the direction they should travel, and let them orient for a few minutes. Unlock the back trap door and remove the door. Some cats will come out quickly, and others will take a bit longer. Once the cat is out of the trap, put the door back on. Provide fresh food, water, and shelter (especially important in the winter months). The cats may disappear for a few hours or days, but they will return after they have calmed down.
- If trap/s were borrowed from TAILS OF HOPE, clean and return them to retrieve your deposit.
- **FOLLOW-UP.** If possible, follow-up with the colony caretaker to check on the colony's health and population growth. Schedule additional TNR days as needed and continue your service!

### VERY IMPORTANT:

- TNR is Trap-Neuter-Return, not release to any outdoor area. Refer to **Best Practices for Relocating Feral Cats** in this guide only if there is a clear and present risk to the cats' lives.

**And, always remember: SAFETY FIRST!** Following the Best Practices, Policies & Procedures, guidelines and tips will help to keep the cats and you safe. **NEVER** attempt to handle a feral cat. Don't stick fingers in the trap or allow children or other pets near the trap.

## RELOCATING FERAL CATS

The consensus of opinion is to leave feral cats where they are unless there is a clear and present risk to their lives. These risks can include the threat of physical harm, or perhaps the cats have lost their caretaker and there is no one else who can provide the daily care the cats deserve. When there is no alternative to relocation, we can only take every precaution available, plan the relocation carefully, and pay logistical attention to the cats' instinct for survival.

### Relocating feral cats is a last resort.

Relocating feral cats comes with a unique set of challenges. This approach from *FixNation* will help ensure a successful relocation and assure us that we did our best to improve an impossible situation for the cats.

- 1. Assess the colony.** The colony might include kittens and socialized cats. If you have time and resources, there's a possibility that they can be fostered and adopted into homes.
- 2. Find a new outdoor home for the cats.** Cats adjust to new locations better and are less stressed if they remain with their colony members. Find a new location where all cats can go together. If that's not possible, cats with strong bonds should be moved together.
- 3. Ensure long-term success.** When you find a promising location, inspect the area carefully and talk to the prospective caregiver to ensure that he or she will provide daily food, water, and monitoring. Develop an adoption contract with the new caregiver stating he or she will provide basic needs, including veterinary care.
- 4. Moving the cats.** Trap the cats and safely transport them immediately, in covered traps, to their new location. Upon arrival, the cats must be confined in pre-installed large cages for six to eight weeks.
- 5. Follow-up.** Plan to call or visit the new caregiver regularly to ensure that the cats are well cared for and to check in. He or she may also serve as a contact for future relocations.

## WHAT IS TNR?

**Trap-Neuter-Return (“TNR”) is the humane approach to controlling feral cat overpopulation. It’s a community-based program that involves concerned citizens like you trapping free-roaming cats in your neighborhood, bringing them to a clinic like TAILS OF HOPE to get them spayed or neutered, and then returning the cats to the exact location where you trapped them so they can live out the rest of their natural lives, ideally with a caregiver also providing food, water and shelter for them.**

A large population of homeless feral and stray cats exists in our community. Given their strong survival capabilities and prolific breeding, if nothing is done, this population will simply continue to grow. If the population is left unchecked, it will only lead to more and more cats living in unmanaged colonies, a decrease in public tolerance of homeless cats, and increased pressure on the environment, animal control agencies and our society as a whole.

### **Trap and Remove does NOT work.**

The old approach to controlling free-roaming cats was repeated extermination attempts. Capturing feral cats and turning them in to animal shelters – if they’ll even take them, and where they were often killed - may temporarily reduce their numbers, but this doesn’t solve the problem for long.

Cats are living in the environment because of two main reasons: 1) there is a food source (intended or not); and 2) there is some sort of shelter. When cats are removed from a location, it creates a **“vacuum” effect** – meaning the surrounding cats can sense it and they breed rapidly to fill in the gap, plus new cats move in to take advantage of the natural food and shelter sources. This vacuum effect is well documented. Trapping and removing cats often results in having even more unsterilized cats in the location than when you started. Catch and kill is very costly, doesn’t work, and ultimately is inhumane.

### **Trap-Neuter-Return is a proven and humane solution.**

Trap-Neuter-Return programs are a very successful method of decreasing feral cat populations. TNR programs succeed at the least cost to the public and provide the best possible life for the cats themselves. Therefore, TAILS OF HOPE dedicates resources – financial, personnel and material – toward decreasing the number of homeless cats in our community by offering low-cost or no-cost services for homeless strays and feral cats at our clinic.

Providing food, water and shelter for outdoor cats is important, but it’s also equally important to make sure all of the cats in the group or colony are spayed and neutered. If not, your small colony today will soon be a large colony tomorrow. Cat colonies can quickly quadruple in size in a very short period of time, as cats can have two to three litters per year of five and six kittens each and those kittens can become pregnant at about six months of age...and so the cycle continues.

Spaying and neutering the cats will not only stop the breeding cycle, but it will also eliminate problematic behaviors such as howling, fighting and spraying.

Let’s TNR!

## WHAT IS A COMMUNITY CAT?

**“Community Cat” is a term used to describe feral, stray, and owned pet cats who roam outdoors. These are the cats that live outside in our streets, alleys, yards, farms, abandoned homes or warehouses, and parking lots.**

**Feral and Stray cats differ in their experience and interaction with humans.**

| Feral Cat  | Stray Cat  |
|--|--|
| Cat born outdoors, free-roaming cat who never had a guardian or “owner”  | Former pets who are abandoned or lost  |
| Has never been “socialized” or had any positive interaction with humans  | Formerly cared for a person or family, now trying to survive on their own  |
| Lives in a “wild” state (Note: Even though feral cats are called “wild” they should not be confused with true wildcats, such as mountain lions or bobcats.); very fearful and distrustful of humans; tend to avoid people and come out at dusk or at night | Generally tame and friendly although may be skittish because they are scared/frightened because of having to fend for themselves or the experiences they have had with other animals or people since being outside |
| May show aggression, such as hissing and arching their backs while others avoid eye contact and run; will crouch and crawl   | May allow you to pick them up or pet them; will move and walk like a housecat, such as with the tail up as a sign of friendliness  |
| Likely to live in a group, known as a colony   | Most likely will roam alone  |
| Often dirty, matted, and may have visible injuries   | Often still has a clean, well-kept coat  |
| May or may not have a tipped left ear, a sign that the cat has been through the TNR process  | Most often does not have an tipped ear unless the cat was trapped in TNR process and re-released rather than placed in a home or foster  |
| Feral kittens born to a feral or stray mother can generally be tamed and adopted into home, but only if they are socialized within the first couple months of their lives; the older they are, the harder it becomes if not impossible                     | With patience and care, can learn to trust humans again and be adopted as pets   |

## WHAT IS A CAT COLONY?

**“Community Cat Colonies” are groups of homeless cats all living together. These colonies usually spring up when there is a shelter and a food source. Sometimes stray homeless cats will live alone, but most feral cats form colonies.**

## WHEN TO SPAY/NEUTER A CAT?

**To avoid behavioral problems and to eliminate the chance for pregnancy, we advise scheduling surgery before a cat is five months of age. It is possible to spay a female cat while she’s in heat.**

Kittens may be spayed/neutered at TAILS OF HOPE when they are at least two pounds (about 2 months old). However, the kitten must be at least 3 months old to receive the Rabies vaccine.



# ABOUT TRAP-NEUTER-RETURN (TNR)

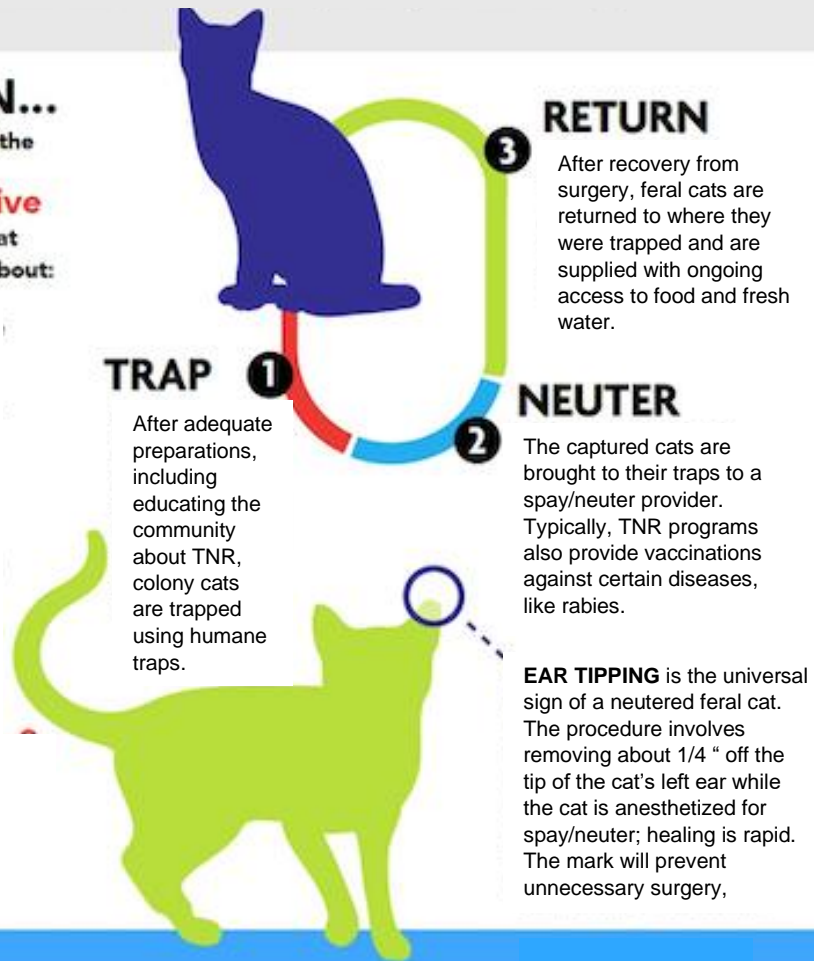
the **PROBLEM**...it's estimated that **tens of millions** of feral and stray cats freely roam the streets of the United States and breed rapidly! Doing nothing and using ineffective approaches are what have resulted in the current overpopulation problem. Trying to rescue all of the feral cats and find them homes is impossible given their numbers and their limited socialization. Removing or relocating all of the feral cats invites new unneutered cats to move in and the cycle of reproduction starts again.

## the SOLUTION...

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is the only method proven to be **humane and effective** in controlling free-roaming cat population growth. TNR is about:

- + Population control and **permanently reducing** the number of cats in an area
- + Lowering cat intake into shelters, thereby **lowering shelter euthanasia rates**
- + **Reducing the spread of disease**
- + The returned, spayed/neutered colony **guards its territory**, discouraging unneutered cats from moving in and beginning the cycle of overpopulation anew

Source: Petsmart Charities



## CAT POPULATION GROWTH PYRAMID

Each day over 70,000 puppies and kittens are born in the US, and because of overpopulation, more than 3.7 millions animals are still being euthanized each year in shelters across the country. You can help.

### Unspayed/Unneutered Cats & Kittens:

This chart represents one unspayed female, her mate and all of her offspring, producing 2 litters per year, with 2.8 surviving kittens per litter:



© 2011 North Shore Animal League America

By spaying and neutering just one male and one female cat, more than 2,000 unwanted births can be prevented in just four years – and more than 2 million in 8 years!



SPAYING/NEUTERING YOUR PET MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN THE ROOT CAUSE OF PET OVERPOPULATION WHICH CREATES OVERCROWDING IN SHELTERS, RESCUES & ON THE STREETS IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

## MORE REASONS TO Spay & Neuter YOUR PET



### YOUR PET WILL LIVE A LONGER, HEALTHIER LIFE

Spay/neuter significantly reduces the risks of your pet developing cancer or other illnesses.

Spay females before first heat and neuter males before six months of age.



### YOUR PET WILL BE LESS LIKELY TO GET LOST

Pets are less likely to roam the neighborhood, run away, or get lost when spayed/neutered.

Keep pets safe and away from wildlife, cars, and other dangers.



### YOUR PET WILL BE LESS INCLINED TO BE AGGRESSIVE

Pets are less likely to bite when spayed/neutered.

Reduce fights with competing animals or people.



### YOUR PET IS LIKELY TO BE MORE CALM, AFFECTIONATE

In general, spayed/neutered animals make better pets.

Help your pet be happy, healthy, and well-behaved.



### REDUCE OR ELIMINATE UNWANTED BEHAVIORS

Spraying, wailing, and heat cycles are examples of unwanted behaviors that can be reduced or eliminated with spaying/neutering.

Maintain a quiet and clean home for you and your pets.



### IT'S HIGHLY COST EFFECTIVE

The cost of spay/neuter is a lot less than the cost of having and caring for a litter.

The cost of this routine surgery is also less than treating cancer or other disease and can reduce the chances of expensive health problems in the future.



(724) 346-4673 (HOPE)

[tailsofhopewpa.org](http://tailsofhopewpa.org)

## WAIVER & RELEASE TERMS

I am over the age of 18 and I agree to be bound by the following terms and conditions:

### Authorization for Procedure.

I hereby authorize TAILS OF HOPE (TOH) to receive, treat, prescribe, transport, care for and house the cat/s under my appointment and to perform such anesthetic, medical, surgical and therapeutic procedures as indicated in this document and my Application. If any other condition is discovered that is deemed medically necessary, the attending veterinarian may in his/her absolute sole discretion, perform such procedures without seeking additional authorization or consent from the authorized representative. I consent to any such additional procedure(s) and agree to take full responsibility, financial and otherwise, if the animal becomes ill. To the best of my knowledge, the cat/s are in good health and able to undergo the medical procedure.

### Acknowledgement of Risks.

I understand that, as with all community cats, the cat/s may be exposed to other cats that may not have been properly vaccinated or that have been exposed to contagions and illnesses. I understand that a brief visual pre-surgical exam for feral/fractious cats will be performed. I understand that the attending veterinarian performing the medical procedure has the right to decline to perform any procedure on any animal for any reason. I understand that local and/or general anesthesia will be administered to the cat/s and a medical procedure will be performed on the cat/s; this involves uncertainty and risks to the cat/s. I understand and acknowledge this information and I assume all risks associated with the anesthesia and medical procedure, including any adverse effects, illness or death of my animal. If the cats receive a spay/neuter procedure, I understand that the cats will receive a feral ear-tip and a small tattoo on their underside to show that he/she has been sterilized. I understand that some factors increase surgical risks, including but not limited to pregnancy, being overweight or in heat, FELV/FIV, heartworm disease, and underlying pre-existing conditions that may not be detectable on a visual pre-surgical physical exam. I understand the cat will not receive pre-op bloodwork. If I choose for the animal to have such bloodwork done, I understand it must be performed at a full-service veterinary clinic. If, in the course of treatment or during the procedure, a cat is found to be pregnant, the pregnancy will be automatically terminated. If a FELV/FIV test is administered and yields a positive result, I understand the cat will be automatically euthanized. If any other condition is discovered that requires medical attention or an additional procedure(s), we will call the authorized representative at the phone number listed on this form. If we are unable to reach the authorized representative in a timely manner, the attending veterinarian may in his/her absolute and sole discretion, perform such procedure(s) without seeking additional authorization or consent from the authorized representative. I consent to any such additional procedure(s) and agree to take full responsibility, financial and otherwise, if the cat becomes ill.

### Post-Procedure.

I agree to contact my own veterinarian with any questions about the cat's health unrelated to the medical procedure. If I suspect that the cat has a postoperative complication caused directly by the procedure, I agree contact TOH. I also agree to follow the Post-Surgical instructions, or any other instructions received by me from the TOH.

### Animal Drop-Off and Pick-Up.

I understand that all of my cats shall be picked-up from the clinic by me, or someone authorized on my behalf and in compliance with the terms of this Appointment and Agreement, at the time designated by clinic staff, on the same day of my appointment. If my cat/s are not picked up at the designated time on that day, I understand that TOH shall have no obligation to wait for or further contact me, and that my animal will be considered to be abandoned by me. I understand TOH is not an animal boarding facility and is not equipped or staffed to keep animals at the facility beyond the day of service. I understand that if I fail to retrieve my animal from TOH by the end of the service appointment business day, and I cannot be reached by phone prior to close, TOH has the right to report your animal abandonment to the proper authorities, place your cat/s with an animal organization or an alternative boarding situation at my cost and I release TOH of all obligation and responsibility for my cat/s.

### General Release & Waiver.

I hereby release TOH, its directors, officers, employees, and agents, from any and all claims arising from or connected with the performance of this surgery or procedures. I agree that I have not or will not claim any right of compensation from any of them, or file action by reason of such sterilization or attempted sterilization of such animal or any consequences related thereto. TOH, its directors, officers, employees, and agents shall not be liable for any injury or damage to any animal for any disease, accident, injury, or death from any cause whatsoever, including but not limited to fire, theft, lightning or Act of God. I agree to indemnify TOH and its owners against any claim for damages to any person, animal, or property. I understand that TOH is not responsible for any expenses incurred as a result of complications following surgery or any other fees incurred outside of TOH. I hereby release TOH, its directors, officers, employees, and agents, from any and all claims arising from or connected with giving vaccines. I understand the inherent risks of failing to maintain current vaccinations and waive all claims arising out of or connected with the performance of this surgery or procedure due to such failure. If the cat/s have not already been fully vaccinated, the risk for contracting a disease or virus increases due to the potential exposure at TOH. If my cat/s are being vaccinated by TOH, I understand that there is a risk associated with all the vaccination procedures and that my animal could still contract the disease/virus being vaccinated against or have another potentially harmful side effect, including death. I understand that vaccines may need a booster in order to be fully effective. By signing my Application, I am consenting to the medical procedures being performed on my cat/s and all related activities of any kind and acknowledge that I understand that all risk, whether known or unknown, is expressly assumed by me and all claims, whether known or unknown, are expressly waived in advance. I also understand and agree to permit TOH to use my name and pictures of me and/or my animal for publicity or promotional purposes without liability or obligation to me.

## SUMMARY & THANKS

TAILS OF HOPE thanks you in advance for your action to help mitigate the feral cat overpopulation problem in our community.

There is no one-fits-all solution to the community cat overpopulation problem. Any type of effective and positive solution to this issue requires a lot of time and resources. This effort will take grass-roots efforts and cooperation from diverse resources including TNR trappers like you; financial sponsors; TAILS OF HOPE Board Members, employees, volunteers and clinic staff; the veterinary community; local rescues and shelters; area residents, city staff, and other community leaders. But we know nothing worth doing is easy and TAILS OF HOPE is up for the challenge; it is why we exist.

This TNR program exactly aligns with our Vision, Purpose, Mission, and Core Values.

- **OUR VISION / WHAT WE DREAM:** TAILS OF HOPE believes the world will be a better place when it values and ensures the well-being of companion animals, treating them with kindness and compassion.
- **OUR PURPOSE / WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH:** TAILS OF HOPE exists to eliminate neglect, abuse and suffering of animals resulting in improved overall quality of animal life.
- **OUR MISSION / WHAT WE DO EVERYDAY:** TAILS OF HOPE strives to impact pet over-population through spay/neuter programs, and support of rescue, rehabilitation, adoption and education.
- **OUR CORE VALUES / HOW WE WORK:** TAILS OF HOPE is guided by the following values in action and in decision making: Commitment to Community; Compassion; Diversity & Inclusion; Growth-oriented; Professionalism; and Quality of Service.

This program also includes measurable goals to hold us accountable, the opportunity to identify and assess adjustments which may necessitate plan review and updating development of new strategies and tactics to accomplish the goal, and will provide reporting of the meaningful results of our collaborative efforts to our sponsors.

We look forward to seeing you at your appointment. Please reach out to us at any time with questions.

*On behalf of our furry friends, thank you for all that you have done and will do to care for them!*

*Best of luck!*



**PLEASE REMEMBER: AN APPROVED APPOINTMENT IS REQUIRED FOR ALL FERAL CATS.**