



Brunswick Region Feral Fix

Project #
17-220

County: Frederick

Number of Cats Spayed:	327	Number of Dogs Spayed:	0
Number of Cats Neutered:	235	Number of Dogs Neutered:	0

Amount Received: \$24,662.90	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): \$0
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Project Synopsis:

This grant enabled Tip Me Frederick to sterilize, vaccinate (rabies and distemper combo), and ear tip 562 community cats in the Brunswick-Jefferson regions of Frederick County, MD. This included the completion of nine large colonies with 100% sterilization.



Project Description:

Brunswick Region Feral Fix was a 13-month effort to trap, sterilize, and vaccinate 500 feral and free-roaming cats in the Brunswick/Jefferson area of Frederick County, MD. The project was managed by Tip Me Frederick (TMF), in partnership with Spay Spa & Neuter Nook of Davidsonville, MD. This area was selected because of known concentrations of managed and unmanaged cat colonies spread throughout the region; high incidence of complaint calls received by Frederick County Animal Control (FCAC) and high incidence of intake; and, high incidence of requests for financial assistance for spay/neuter and assistance with feeding feral and free-roaming cat communities received from these areas by TMF, FCAC, and Frederick County Humane Society.

Summary of Approach:

Tip Me Frederick (TMF) promoted the program through web, print, social media, and radio channels, as well as reaching out to all known colony caregivers in the region. We developed an on-line application process and reporting system which enabled us to accurately track participation including: names, addresses, and contact information of participants; colony location; number of cats serviced by participant, including sex, age, and identifiable markings; scheduled surgery date; wait time from receipt of application to surgery; total cost/cat including medical needs other than sterilization, vaccination, and ear-tipping; and, unmet needs (names and numbers of participants who could not participate because project was full to capacity). Once an application was received, we contacted applicants to explain program logistics and set up a clinic appointment. All participants received materials on how to trap and transport cats; scheduling information for surgery (date, time, how to prepare cat, what to expect); recovery information; and contact information for TMF project coordinators. We worked with Spay Spa & Neuter Nook to schedule monthly clinics of ~55 feline sterilization/vaccination/ear-tips per clinic. TMF called participants with a reminder 2 days before the scheduled



appointment and made a follow up call 1 day post-surgery to ensure the cat had recovered and been released. As needed, we provided training in trapping or performed trapping for people who were unable to trap themselves. We also provided transportation from the trap site to the transport pick up site and back if the caregiver was unable to provide for transportation. Cats were transported by van to SSNN where our volunteers waited throughout the day for all cats to recover before loading the cats for transport back to the Frederick pick-up location where caregivers collected their cats.

Accomplishments:

TMF successfully sterilized and vaccinated (for rabies and the distemper combo) 562 cats (62 more than originally proposed) from the Brunswick-Jefferson region of Frederick County. We completed sterilization of nine large colonies. We also successfully re-homed over 42 cats and kittens who were trapped during clinic trapping events and deemed suitable for adoption into barn or indoor homes. Although we worked with traditional cat foster and adoption groups, because these groups were often full to capacity, we expanded our foster care provider network and developed an adoption program, utilizing petfinder.com and in conjunction with PetValu where we hold weekly adoption events. More generally, this grant helped further solidify TMF's reputation as a professional, reputable TNR resource. As awareness of the grant and TMF's approach spread through word of mouth, through TMF's advertising on social media, and through regular communications with Frederick County Animal Control (FCAC) and Frederick County Humane Society, more and more colony caregivers realized there was finally a resource for them to sterilize their colonies. While we are still working with FCAC to determine the statistical impact of this program in terms of lower intake and euthanasia of cats from this region, we have anecdotal evidence which suggests that fewer cats from known colonies in these areas, for whom we performed TNR, are being picked up by FCAC. We are continuing to work with FCAC to revise their intake assessment categories to more precisely characterize cats as "feral" or "semi-feral" vs "stray" and to revise their euthanasia criteria to be more specific since "euthanized for temperament" does not necessarily indicate the cat was feral or semi-feral, i.e. it could merely have been frightened/stressed. This will help FCAC and groups like TMF more accurately measure the impact of TNR programs.

Lessons Learned:

After three grants from MDA, our processes and relationship with Spay Spa and Neuter Nook are robust and clearly understood. We've also managed to stabilize the number of cats per clinic month to month by over-booking such that we typically end up with clinics of about 50-55 cats. Our two biggest challenges are additional funds to cover extraordinary medical expenses as well as the cost of the FVRCP vaccine, and finding and retaining volunteers. Thankfully, the MDA has been willing to work with us on medical expenses and for our current grant (Frederick City), we were awarded a \$700 grant to partially subsidize the cost of the FVRCP vaccines. We continue to struggle with volunteer support.

Attachments:

Listing of all cats sterilized and vaccinated over the 13-month grant cycle, with associated costs

For More Information Contact:

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MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM

