



SAVECats

Project #
20-506

County: Anne Arundel County

Number of Cats Spayed:	701	Number of Dogs Spayed:	0
Number of Cats Neutered:	499	Number of Dogs Neutered:	0

Amount Received: 60,540	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): 0
-------------------------	---

Project Synopsis:

Rude Ranch Animal Rescue (RRAR) created a project to reduce the number of homeless, unwanted, stray/feral/community cats turned into the Anne Arundel County Animal Control facility and other shelters in Anne Arundel County MD. This goal was accomplished through an aggressive, targeted campaign to spay/neuter feral, stray and community cats living on farms, shopping centers and business parks, apartment complexes, alleys and on individual and family properties of Anne Arundel County. This project use documented TNR best practices to "target" colonies of cats, provide spay/neuter/vaccine(s), document the cats, location(s) and caregivers. SAVECats has been effective at the numbers of free roaming, feral and community cats in Anne Arundel County.

This grant funded the actual cost of 1200 spay/neuter surgeries (and rabies vaccine) for the cats and a transportation component to bring the animals from the targeted colonies to RRAR's spay/neuter clinic (The Spay Spa & Neuter Nook) then return to the colony after surgery.



Project Description:

The SAVECats program is comprised of a coalition between Rude Ranch, and it's spay/neuter clinic (The Spay Spa & Neuter Nook), and several other animal welfare agencies. The goal of the program is to provide spay/neuter and vaccination services for feral, community and stray cats in Anne Arundel County, MD. This program is considered ground breaking for several reasons: it will save many cats lives (previously, feral and community cats were caught, impounded and immediately euthanized); it will reduce the volume of unwanted and homeless cats at large; it is the first working agreement between a County Government agency and non profits; and it is changing the culture of our local animal control from a dark, sad place to a more open adoption option.

The mission of the SAVECATS program is to significantly, humanely and permanently reduce the community and feral cat population in Anne Arundel County, MD while saving their lives and improving their quality of life.



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM



This will be accomplished through community partnerships to identify problem areas, providing support, training and veterinary care (TNR) where needed. SAVECats officially launched in July, 2018. In the first 18 months, the program facilitated the spay/neuter of 1900 feral/free roaming and community cats in Anne Arundel County. As the program is becoming more well known, we are receiving many requests for help. With proper funding, this program has the capacity to spay/neuter up to 7,500 community cats per year in the next few years.

During the prior funding period, we were able to reach our goal of performing spay/neuter surgeries for 1200 feral cats.

Summary of Approach:

SAVECats is notified/learns of feral cat colonies in several ways:

- Call or email for help from a citizen
- Request from our website or other social media
- Referral/word of mouth
- Complaint/request from AACACC

Once we've received a plea for help, the process is the same:

- Establish relationship/communications with Communities/areas with large the population(s) of feral and free roaming cats.

Ensure colony is within Anne Arundel County:

- Determine the exact location of the colonies, if there is a caregiver, if the colony is in a "safe" location, or is at risk of abuse, vehicle impacts etc.
- Once information on potential colonies is gathered, we would attempt to determine if the colony has a feeder/caregiver. If so, work with the caregiver to estimate number of cats, and if there are other nearby colonies.
- If there is no caregiver, work with/negotiate with local people, businesses or associations to find a caregiver.
- Explain responsibilities, etc
- Determine/Estimate number of cats in colonies
- Determine if there are other colonies nearby
- Develop TNR Plan/Responsibilities

We want to determine/assign responsibility for who will do the trapping, who will release the animals, who will transport, etc.

- Develop list of volunteers, caretakers etc and their roles
- Fill out/get signatures on appropriate paperwork: caregiver agreements, colony registration forms, property permission slips, etc
- Train/explain basics of trapping ferals, etc.
- Assign tasks/responsibility for tasks
- Set up time table/schedule for trapping/spay/neuter etc
- Set up holding area for recovery before release back to area.
- Confirm Everything!!!!!!

Implement Plan:

- Make sure traps are available and picked up
- Volunteers/Caregivers deploy traps

Cats should be semi fasted a few days before the trapping: caregivers are instructed to feed 1/2 the usual amount of food for two days before trapping

- Food should be removed from the feeding area. Traps should be baited and placed in the feeding area. (Cover traps with an old blanket or towel.
- As cats enter and trigger traps, cover fully and remove trap to transport vehicle.
- Do Not Leave traps unattended.
- transport to Spay Spa & Neuter Nook for spay/neuter



Methodology at SSNN:

- Each cat is checked in using SSNN volume check in process. Cats or kittens that are not healthy enough for surgery are moved to a quarantine area for further evaluation.
- Each cat will be induced using Telezol or TKX and prepped for surgery according to the Maryland Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners procedures by clinic veterinary technicians. Once induced, each animal will be maintained on isoflurine and monitored while receiving anesthesia.
- Surgical Vet will perform either orchiectomy or ovariectomy, depending on the animal's gender. If a cat is cryptorchid both testicles will be removed. If it has pyometra it will be treated; however, additional medicines and surgical procedures will be needed. If the cat has other wounds or abscesses it will be treated as well. Each cat will be tattooed to indicate it has been altered and will get a post-op injection of buvicaine for pain management. The left ear will be "tipped" to also indicate the cat has been altered.
- After surgery is complete, the animal will be moved to the clinic's primary recovery area where its vital signs will be continuously monitored by a clinic veterinary technician. The pet will remain there until it is sternal.
- Rabies vaccine will be given and the cat will also be microchipped.
- About three hours after surgery the animals will be ready to make the return trip to the recovery/holding area. Spay/neuter and rabies certificates prepared by Spay Spa administrative staff will be sent with each cat.
- Costs for the day's surgeries will be charged to the grant.
- If possible, cats are held for 36 hours after surgery
- After recovery period, if alert/ambulatory, release back to colony.

Monitor colony:

- Ensure all members of colony were spayed/neutered
- Monitor for any unaltered new animals.

Notes:

- Trapped cats may be transported to/from SSNN and the recovery area in any vehicle. If a large vehicle is not available, the RRAR transport van can be used.
- Kittens that are not old enough for spay/neuter and friendly cats will be transferred to an adoption partner for adoption. Kittens that are not old enough for rabies vaccines can be held until old enough or if they can be handled /show potential for becoming socialized, they will be transferred to an adoption partner.
- If a cat or kitten is processed through the SAVECats project, it MUST be eartipped. No exceptions

Accomplishments:

We spayed 701 and neutered 499 feral cats; we exceeded our expected number of 700 spays by one cat and came in one cat under our expected number of 500 neuters. We expect that we would have accomplished more had the pandemic not have hit. Many of the female cats were in heat or had already had at least one litter of kittens before coming to us. Without intervention these pets would have produced many more unwanted animals.

In addition to a healthier life for the animals altered through this program, we feel that there are additional benefits: one of the most immediate outcomes was a decrease in calls for help with kittens born in neighborhoods and nuisance complaints in general. Although it is too early for to see immediate results this year, we expect to see a decrease in the numbers of unwanted litters of kittens (and accompanying mothers) turned into Anne Arundel Care And Control and surrounding shelters and rescues. As a result we expect the overall euthanasia rate to go down. Financially we also expect the costs to run Anne Arundel Care And Control and other shelters to go down: if less animals are turned in, less resources will be required to care for them. This will benefit the entire county in the long run

Lessons Learned:

While we didn't have any completely unexpected issues in terms of implementing the grant itself. However, we did learn several things relating to COVID related fears and quarantines.

We found that many people with previous issues and fears regarding the unknown were even more fearful and mistrusting during the pandemic. It took a lot of extra time and patience to handle these clients, including gaining



entry to property and setting traps. Other requirements for social distancing, etc added a few steps to our procedures.

We encountered a few difficulties in terms of the actual surgeries we provided. Many of the cats we spayed/neutered were older, and had multiple health issues, resulting in more complicated surgeries and higher costs. Fortunately, Rude Ranch's general veterinary fund was able to cover the additional costs for these animals. Likewise, most of the cats, being feral, were not socialized and difficult to handle. Because several of the staff came on during the grant period, we found additional training for our staff was necessary.

Attachments:

SAVECats Jan 2021 List (PDF) - This attachment is added to show the cat spay/neuter surgeries that were performed in January during the extension period.

For More Information Contact:

Name:

Erik Andrusis, Executive Director

Organization Name and Address:

Rude Ranch Animal Rescue

3200 Ivy Way

Harwood, MD 20776

ruderanch@comcast.net

Email: erik@ruderanch.org



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SPAY AND NEUTER GRANTS PROGRAM

