



Washington County Feral Fix

Project #
20-526

County: Washington County

Number of Cats Spayed:	338	Number of Dogs Spayed:	0
Number of Cats Neutered:	268	Number of Dogs Neutered:	0

Amount Received: \$31,600	Amount Remaining (to be returned to MDA): 0
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Project Synopsis:

This project was a Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage effort to trap, sterilize, and vaccinate 600 community cats in Washington County, MD.



Project Description:

Washington County Feral Fix was a 11-month (Dec '19 - Oct '20) Trap-Neuter-Return-Manage project through which Tip Me Frederick (TMF) sterilized and vaccinated 606 community cats whose colony caregivers reside in eastern Washington County. The project involved working with colony caregivers to trap unaltered cats; transporting the cats to and from Hagerstown to Davidsonville to our low-cost veterinary clinic partner, Spay Spa and Neuter Nook (SSNN); sterilization and vaccination for rabies and feline viral rhinotracheitis, calicivirus and panleukopenia (FVRCP); housing cats during recovery; and, returning the cats to their colony caregivers post-recovery. TMF also used our partner, the Humane Society of Washington County (HSWC), for four of the clinics. The costs of sterilization and the rabies vaccination were covered 100% by the MDA, while TMF covered the cost of the FVRCP vaccine and other extraordinary medical costs for sick or injured cats. These expenses totaled \$6,898 and were funded through individual donations and social media fundraising efforts. In most cases, colony caregivers were unable to afford sterilization/vaccination services through local veterinarians, making this program the only humane option to manage feline over-population.

Summary of Approach:

TMF worked with over 45 colony caregivers located in Thurmont, Leitersburg, Smithsburg, and Hagerstown to identify and trap unaltered cats. In some cases, when a caregiver was unable to trap, TMF volunteers performed the trapping in the 24 hours prior to a scheduled clinic. On the morning of the clinic, TMF rented a van and transported an average of 30 cats to SSNN (or HSWC) for sterilization and vaccination. TMF volunteers then returned cats to their colony caregivers once they were fully recovered.



In the course of this grant, TMF identified 130 kittens (under 5 months of age); 76 of those kittens were young enough to be socialized and were then fostered and made available for adoption. While TMF worked closely with local cat rescue groups such as Friends for Life and Animal Welfare League of Frederick County (whose main mission is to foster and adopt cats and kittens), TMF also fostered and adopted out kittens from this effort.

Accomplishments:

TMF sterilized and vaccinated 606 cats, 6 more than the target of 600. Of this, 56% were females. TMF helped 13 large colonies, as well as dozens of smaller (3-7 cats) colonies.

As public awareness of TMF's program continues to grow throughout Frederick and Washington Counties, and by relying on social media, TMF no longer has to invest any funds or effort in publicity to ensure clinics are full. This allows the group to use funds solely for veterinary care.

Also, TMF continued to see 33% of clinic cats having medical issues such as infections that required TMF to cover extra medical expenses for antibiotics, as well as several enucleations, umbilical hernias, and amputations. Social media fund-raising enabled the group to cover these expenses.

Through this grant, TMF also developed a strong relationship with HSWC; this will serve both groups well since TMF's FY21 grant covers the City of Hagerstown and will involve use of HSWC for a minimum of 20 cats/month (the balance will go to SSNN).

Lessons Learned:

Since TMF has been using this same approach (described above) for 7 years (trapping, transporting) in partnership with SSNN, the process is well-documented and understood by both the veterinary staff at SSNN and by our volunteers.

The greatest challenge with execution of this grant was related to impacts of COVID-19. TMF was unable to hold a clinic in April, and by the time SSNN was able to re-open, they were only able to accommodate 30-40 cats per clinic. As a result, TMF ended up holding 20 clinics versus the planned 12 clinics. Although the additional trips between Frederick and Davidsonville meant higher than budgeted van rental and fuel expenses, the use of HSWC (located very close to trap sites) for four clinics helped mitigate the extra transportation expenses.

Attachments:

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