

Colorado Group Seeks Cat Licensing

A proposal aims to reduce the stray and feral cat population in Colorado Springs.

By Soraya Gutierrez

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The Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region on Monday presented a plan to the city council that addresses the stray and feral cat population and cat euthanasia rates in Colorado Springs, Colo.

Citing feline overpopulation and euthanasia as the organization's biggest challenge, the humane society proposed cat licensing to handle the problem. Colorado Springs does not require licenses for cats. This plan would change that and use the licensing fees to pay for a trap-neuter-return program as well as to operate a low-cost spay and neuter program.

The plan calls for feral cats to be caught, sterilized and inoculated against diseases and then returned to their colonies. The licensing fees would be the same as for dogs — \$12 a year for spayed and neutered pets and \$25 for unaltered animals.

Wes Metzler, executive director of the humane society, said in a letter to the city council that the number of cats handled by the organization increased by a "startling" 3,000 cats to 8,000 in 2007. Cities that have been successful in dealing with this issue, he said, implemented programs that include TNR and mandatory identification.

City officials directed staff to create draft ordinances to move the plans forward.