

Salt Lake City Uses TNR

Success seen controlling feral cats through trap-neuter-return policy.

Posted: Oct. 18, 2008, 3 a.m. EDT

The City Council of Salt Lake City recently set aside \$60,000 in funds to continue its trap-neuter-return (TNR) policy of controlling feral cat populations. Having seen success with TNR after granting \$10,000 to support the program, the council voted to continue the efforts through 2011, The Salt Lake Tribune reports. Residents of the city can request grants from the council to participate in the TNR program.

"This is a plan to reduce feral cats long-term," said Gina Chamness, Salt Lake City administrative analyst. "And short-term, it will reduce euthanasia at animal shelters."

Local animal welfare organizations agree with the city's TNR policy, with some citing the program's effectiveness in slowly but steadily reducing feral cat populations. "When you simply remove the cats, it creates a vacuum," said Holly Sizemore, executive director of No More Homeless Pets in Utah. "There is an increase in breeding that can lead to a population increase."

TNR programs work best when local residents get involved. Jonny Woodward traps cats in Salt Lake City for No More Homeless Pets. He feeds the cats so the animals become accustomed to eating at the same spot, then puts the food in the cage. Once the cat is trapped, he takes the cage to a facility where the animal is spayed or neutered, and marked with a clipped ear (to distinguish it if trapped again). The cat is returned to its neighborhood the next day.

While feral cat colonies mostly consist of cats born wild, sometimes abandoned animals will join colonies. Sizemore said some people will abandon their cats when they move because they think the animals can survive on their own – but cats don't live well without care from humans.

"People should not abandon animals," she said. "It's cruel and against the law."