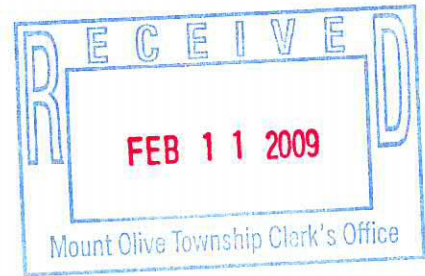




**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

February 11, 2009



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Mount Olive Township  
204 Flanders-Drakestown Road  
Budd Lake, N.J. 07828

Dear Mayor Scapicchio and Mt. Olive Council Members:

The Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest animal protection organization, with an office in Flanders, NJ has been following and supported the proposed Trap-Neuter-Return project by Michelle Lerner in Flanders. We were disappointed to learn that the town council would not allow such a well-thought out proposal to proceed despite the evidence that in the long run a well-managed TNR program will more effectively reduce the number of feral cats and improve the quality of life of the community and cats.

I have encountered many misconceptions and misrepresentations about TNR. I will address the most common, but would be happy to address any others you may have. I have worked with housing complexes dealing with homeless cat issues. Just this fall, I have worked with a condominium complex in Franklin, MA that thanks to a managed TNR program, the number of cats dropped from 200 to about a dozen cats in the past 10 years. You may contact Brockton, MA Animal Control Officer Tom DeChellis at 508-580-7835 and animalct@ci.brockton.ma.us. Although Brockton has few resources or funds, Tom can discuss the effectiveness of TNR in his community.

There are many advantages and benefits of a well-managed TNR program. TNR helps the community and the cats because it:

- is feasible
- saves municipal funds
- reduces or eliminates reproduction
- includes vaccinating cats against rabies and other diseases
- attracts volunteers and gains caretaker cooperation
- creates an immediate reduction in population because tame adults and kittens are removed from the colony for adoption
- decreases cat injuries due to roaming in search of mates
- decreases aggression and fighting
- reduces nuisance complaints about fighting, noise, urine odor
- maintains healthier cats
- leads to less visibility of feral cats and decreased dumping of additional cats
- provides ongoing monitoring of the cats and conflict resolution by private non-profit organizations and volunteer caretakers

On the other hand, decades of trap and remove have failed to decrease the numbers of feral and stray cats due to:

- inadequate animal control resources
- caretaker resistance
- public aversion to killing cats
- difficulty and failure of relocation attempts
- continued availability of food
- increased reproduction of un-trapped cats and increased survival rate of kittens
- lack of a monitoring system
- migration of additional cats into territory

All these disadvantages lead to increased:

- euthanasia rates
- municipal/animal care and control costs
- possible injury to shelter staff who interface with feral and stray cats
- stress and illness of adoptable cats housed near feral cats

The National Animal Control Association no longer opposes TNR because, in the words of its president, Mark Kumpf, "You need to be able to be flexible with your community animal management strategies for both cats and dogs. And if you continue to follow the old philosophy, eventually everybody else is going to pass you by. Progressive communities are seeing that being flexible in their strategy allows for economic savings. The cost for picking up and simply euthanizing and disposing animals is horrendous, in both the philosophical and the economic sense."

In addition, trapping cats on a wide scale is beyond the current resource capabilities of most municipalities. And, although it is highly unlikely that feral cat caretakers would trap cats knowing they were to be euthanized, these dedicated volunteers do exist for TNR efforts. An added benefit of TNR is that kittens young enough to be socialized and tame pet cats are removed from feral cat colonies – which in itself leads to an immediate reduction in the number of homeless cats – and evaluated for adoption.

As you may know, the Animal Welfare Task Force Report submitted in 2004 to Governor McGreevy, Attorney General Harvey and Commissioner Lacy recommended TNR to effectively control homeless cat populations. In 2006, the Environment Transition Policy Group's report for Governor-elect Corzine recommended TNR as well.

I hope you invest 16 minutes to watch our video about effective feral cat management at [www.humanesociety.org/feralcats](http://www.humanesociety.org/feralcats). You will also find testimonials about TNR from animal care and control agencies (in the Advocacy section of the Resource page), lists of organizations and agencies that support TNR across the country, pro-TNR ordinances and animal control ordinances that exempt managed feral cats, for example, from feeding bans, at-large regulations and licensing requirements.

On behalf of our more than 420,000 supporters in New Jersey, I am ready to assist you.

Respectfully,



Nancy Peterson  
Feral Cat Program Manager