

## Free Feral Spay/Neuter Program

With grant funding through the Snyder Foundation, the Humane Society of Charles County offers free spay/neuter for community cats through the HSCC Spay/Neuter Clinic. To qualify, you must agree to become the caretaker for cats in your TNR colony. Coordinate appointments through our outreach coordinator, Mary Cerniglia, at 301-643-6946.

## Trap, Transport, and Recovery Assistance

Program volunteers can help you trap cats, set up appointments, transport cats to and from surgery, and hold them overnight while they recover.

## Caretaking Support

When available, bowls, bedding, food, and shelter may be provided for colony use. Our outreach coordinator is also happy to provide advice, information, and helpful tips to keep

## Humane Society of Charles County

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## Outreach Coordinator

Mary Cerniglia 301-643-6946



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OF CHARLES COUNTY



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## The Truth About Community Cats

### **Community cats live healthy lives in their outdoor homes.**

Most community cats (also called free roaming or feral cats) are just as healthy as pet cats - with equally low rates of disease. They have the same lifespans, too.

### **Most community cats are not socialized to people.**

And therefore, they are not adoptable. They don't belong indoors and are typically wary of us. However, as members of the domestic cat species (just like pet cats) they are protected under state anti-cruelty laws.

### **Community cats should not be taken to pounds and shelters.**

Community cats' needs are not met by animal control agencies or shelters. They live full, healthy lives outdoors - but are usually killed in shelters. Even no-kill shelters can't place unsocialized cats in homes.

### **Their kittens can be adopted.**

Kittens can often be adopted into homes, but they must be socialized at an early age. There is a crucial window, and if they aren't handled in time, they will remain feral and therefore unadoptable.

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## The Truth About Catch and Kill

### **Catch and kill doesn't work.**

Catch and kill has been practiced for decades even though the number of outdoor cats does not decrease. When cats are removed from a location, new cats move in or survivors breed to capacity. This vacuum effect is well-documented and just one reason catch and kill is so ineffective.

### **Trap-Neuter-Return works.**

Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) benefits the cats and the community. Cats are trapped, spayed or neutered, vaccinated, ear-tipped, and then returned to their outdoor home. The colony's population stabilizes - no more kittens! TNR improves their lives and their relations with the community. The behaviors associated with mating, such as yowling and fighting, stop.

### **You can make a difference.**

Together, we can prevent the senseless killing of cats in our community.

The Humane Society of Charles County has resources available to help you trap, spay/ neuter, and return cats to their colonies instead of taking them to pounds or shelters. Contact our outreach coordinator, Mary Cerniglia, for help and more information.

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## TNR Guidelines

There are some steps you can take that may help you avoid complaints and potential problems with your community cats. Animal control will not interfere with community cats if you obey these basic rules.

### **Trap-Neuter-Return**

Neighbors are often bothered by behaviors associated with breeding, such as roaming, fighting, yowling, spraying, and the birth of litters of kittens. TNR will virtually eliminate these behaviors.

### **Clean feeding areas and follow feeding protocols.**

Keep the cats' feeding stations or areas clean and trash free. Do not put out more food than the cats will finish in one meal. Remove what they do not eat after 30 minutes and clean up the area. Never leave food out overnight as this can attract unwanted wildlife and result in complaints.

### **Keep cats away from public areas.**

Cats can be discouraged from climbing on cars or other private property by gradually moving their shelters and feeding stations away from these areas. The cats will follow the food and shelter. Create litter box areas and scoop regularly.

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