

How to Build a Grassroots TNR Movement with Limited Volunteers and Funds

1. It can be done! New York City

- a. Neighborhood Cats started in Fall of 1999 with three neighbors, limited funds, no regular veterinarian, no organized TNR efforts
- b. Six years later:
 - **NYC Feral Cat Council** (www.nycferalcat.org) includes all organizations (approx. 12) involved in TNR work
 - **Feral Cat Initiative** (a program of the Mayor=s Alliance for NYC=s Animals), featuring twice-monthly workshops, trap banks throughout city, TNR Coach system
 - Free spay/neuter by ASPCA and Humane Society of NY
 - Alert system for eartipped cats in city shelters
 - Hundreds of trained caretakers, thousands of ferals s/n annually

2. The Model Approach

- a. **First, create a model colony** - 100 percent neutered, adoptables removed, community cooperation & support, strong caretaker, well documented (esp. # of cats over time compared to original #). Focus your limited resources (funds, vet, volunteers) on this **one** site.
- b. **Second, create a model neighborhood** - the key again is to focus your resources. Create a kitten-free zone. **Don't** run all over town.
- c. **Third, create a model community** (e.g., Upper West Side)
- d. **As you expand your territory:**
 - Insist on **caretaker participation** in terms of trapping, transport, holding the cats and/or veterinary bills. Wait for people who will participate and are willing to be trained by you. Actively involved caretakers are the key to a growing grassroots TNR movement. **Don't try to do everything yourself!! Learn to say No!**
 - Observe the **70 percent (really 90 percent) rule**.
 - **Document everything** - cat data, photos, video, testimonials

e. **Basic fundraising**

- Raffles (check state laws)
- Garage sale / Bake sale
- Donation jars (at stores, flea markets)
- Discount spay/neuter

3. **Creating a TNR Identity (vs. rescue) - Why?**

- a. Clarity of message and mission: population control and feral cat management, not adoption
- b. Professionalism: working in a more planned, controlled manner rather than the crisis-driven work of rescue
- c. Allocation of resources: fostering, finding good homes, rescuing cats from non-feral situations (e.g., cats left in apt., collectors, owner surrenders, strays in shelters, etc.) are time and resource demanding and will distract from TNR.
- d. Instead: try to partner with established adoption groups or shelters, or require caretakers to foster.

4. **Exporting the Successful Model**

- a. **Workshops** (see free sample workshop outline at www.aspca.org/tnrkit. Linked to The Neighborhood Cats TNR Handbook)
 - Excellent way to get another, larger organization involved by having the be the host
- b. **Coffee shop meetings** (once a month at the same time and place)
- c. **Public seminars** (what is TNR? Why should the town embrace it? How can people get involved?)
- d. **Meet with officials from other organizations** who could help, inc. animal control, public health dept., town council members
 - present data on your models
 - packet of educational materials
 - suggest **pilot projects** (e.g., one mass spay day, one site to be TNR-ed, etc.)

e. Publicity

- **Choose high profile projects** - ones that will either generate media interest within the relevant community or gain you the approval of policymakers (e.g., colony next to town hall).
- **Brochures, flyers** - pass out at events, post in strategic places
- Public access TV, videos

5. Facilitate the Growing Movement

- a. **Website** - for how to info and available services (see, e.g., Services page of www.nycferalcat.org, www.lbcats.org, www.atlanticbeachcats.com)
- b. **Hotline** - phone number/voice mail for public (but be sure to say in the message what you do and what you don't)
- c. **Caretaker e-network** - always gather names, addresses. Create caretaker email list and send out updates. Grant access to resolve TNR problems
- d. **Online discussion group** for TNR activists & open to all, hopefully not moderated but yes, if necessary. TNR only!, not placing cats)
- e. **Trap banks** (contact Neighborhood Cats for forms, procedures)
- f. **Form an official non-profit** - for fundraising:
 - direct mail
 - grants
 - small (low financial outlay) events
- g. **Council** of interested groups with regular meetings (even 3x, 4x a year)