

55.475 Managed care of feral cats.

1. Feral Cat Colonies.

(a) Feral cat colonies are allowed in Washoe County. Feral cat colony caretakers shall be entitled to maintain and care for feral cats.

(b) *TNRM Programs: Sponsorship.* Any animal humane organization that agrees to comply with the requirements of this section shall contact regional animal services to obtain designation as a sponsor. The humane organization shall advise regional animal services in writing and provide its address, telephone number and electronic mail address, if applicable.

(c) *Sponsor Requirements.* It shall be the duty of the sponsor to:

(1) Approve feral cat colony caretakers;

(2) Work actively to resolve any complaints over the conduct of a feral cat colony caretaker or of cats within a colony;

(3) Maintain records provided by feral cat colony caretakers on the size and location of the colonies and the vaccination, micro-chipping, and spay and neuter records of cats in the sponsor's colonies. Titer tests are acceptable to determine a particular colony's resistance to rabies by random examination;

(4) Provide educational training and written materials for all feral cat colony caretakers covering uniform standards and procedures for colony maintenance. An approved online training program may be accepted upon approval by regional animal services;

(5) Report annually to regional animal services on the following:

(i) number and location of colonies by address and zip code that the sponsor maintains through the TNRM program;

(ii) estimated total number of cats in each of the colonies;

(6) Prevent sponsored feral cat colonies from being maintained on lands managed for wildlife or other natural resources, such as, but not limited to, nature preserves, in order to avoid the taking of rare, listed, threatened or endangered species as determined by Nevada Department of Wildlife;

(7) Provide forms and other documentation necessary to allow feral cat colony caretakers to receive public or private subsidies, medical care or other assistance which may be available for their feral cat colonies.

(d) *Feral Cat Colony Caretaker Responsibilities.* It shall be the duty of each feral cat colony caretaker to:

(1) Register each colony with the sponsor;

(2) Take all appropriate and available steps to vaccinate the colony population for rabies, preferably with a three-year vaccine, and to update rabies vaccinations as mandated by law;

(3) Take all appropriate and available steps to have the colony population spayed or neutered by a licensed veterinarian;

(4) Ear tip the left ear of each colony cat that has been vaccinated, spayed or neutered so that each colony cat can be readily identified;

(5) Microchip each colony cat in accordance with professional medical standards. The sponsor and the feral cat colony caretaker shall be the named contacts for purposes of the microchip animal identification;

(6) Provide the sponsor with descriptions of each cat in the colony and copies of documents demonstrating that the cats have been vaccinated, micro-chipped and spayed or neutered;

(7) Provide the necessary sustenance for colony cats;

(8) Obtain written approval from all property owners or their authorized representatives to enter land upon which the feral cat colony caretaker requires access to establish and provide colony care;

(9) Abide by the sponsor's policies and procedures. (e) *Withdrawal of feral cat colony caretaker or sponsor.* In the event a feral cat colony caretaker is unable or unwilling to continue in that role, he or she shall notify his or her sponsor. In the event a sponsor is unable or unwilling to continue to perform its role, it shall advise regional animal services. The sponsor shall work with regional animal services to obtain a replacement sponsor. If no new sponsor is found within 30 days, the sponsor shall notify regional animal services.

(f) *Disposition of feral cat colony cats.*

(1) An animal control officer or authorized representative who has impounded or received a cat from a member of the public, where the cat has been ear tipped or microchipped indicating that it belongs to a feral cat colony, shall attempt to contact the sponsor or feral cat colony caretaker. If a microchip is not found, the animal control officer or authorized representative shall impound the cat and notify the approved sponsors of the description and zip code where the cat was found. The sponsor shall then take all available steps to identify the cat's feral cat colony caretaker or a feral cat colony caretaker who will take responsibility for managing this cat.

(2) If an identified feral cat colony caretaker is not able to immediately take custody of the cat, the sponsor shall immediately pick up the cat.

2. Enforcement.

(a) In order to encourage the stabilization of the feral cat population in Washoe County, regional animal services shall have the following rights:

(1) To trap in a humane manner and remove any cats:

(i) which demonstrate signs of disease; or

(ii) which must be removed for public health or safety concerns.

(2) To euthanize in a humane manner any feral cat which demonstrates signs of rabies, or which has an illness or injury that presents an imminent danger to public health or safety.

(3) To request that a sponsor remove a feral cat that is creating a nuisance if the sponsor has failed to adequately resolve the nuisance within 30 days of written notice thereof. In the event regional animal services directs the sponsor to remove the cat, the sponsor shall have 30 days to do so.

(b) Animal control officers may investigate any nuisance complaint allegedly caused by a feral cat. In the event an animal control officer finds that a feral cat or feral cat colony has created a nuisance, the animal control officer shall advise the sponsor in writing.

(c) If a sponsor fails to perform its responsibilities, regional animal services may notify the sponsor that it must comply with the requirements of this section within 30 days. If the sponsor fails to do so, regional animal services may remove the sponsor from the list of approved sponsors, and may reassign the feral cat colonies to another sponsor.

(d) A feral cat who is not microchipped, but who was spayed or neutered, vaccinated for rabies, ear tipped, and released prior to the effective date of this section shall be deemed to be in compliance with this section.

(Adopted April 28, 2015)