

Feral Issues

Location: Hood Park

Hood Park is a considerable issue in the city for feral cats. Last year we concentrated on Hood Park and trapped and worked with Public Works with maintenance on the barns. Before the fair season 2021 over 40 cats and kittens were removed and the barn was clear before fair time.

This year, more cats have moved in due to dumping at this location. Several people are feeding them despite being told by Animal Control, Public Works and PD not to feed them. As of April 2022, there are at least 16 that we could count with a couple of them that appear to be pregnant. They are seeking shelter in the hog barn and causing damage to the building and defecating inside the building.

The food is also attracting raccoons and other wildlife into the buildings that is also adding to the building damage. It also puts people at risk of confrontation by the animals especially during mating and birthing seasons.

Resolution:

The once repaired vents need secured back on the building where the food is being placed. Feeding from the public needs to come to a stop as this is a common dumping ground for cats. They will not go into our traps when there is another food source nearby. It is a waste of time to try to trap there.

Location: Highland Terrace/ Rutz Subdivision

This too, is a heavy feral cat area, also a heavy feeding area. There is a house on Locust Street that has feeding bowls, water bowls and outside cat houses on the front porch. We pick up several deceased cats a week on the road that are killed coming and going from Locust to PP to get to this feeding spot.

We have received numerous calls from a house about cats on Magnolia they feed and allow to continue to have babies. On the other side of Magnolia, a cat was picked up recently and they too had two outdoor food and water dishes on their porch for their "outdoor" cats.

On Shenandoah, there are several others who also feed outdoor cats which in turn attract other cats to join their feeding station.

Location: St Joseph trailer park/ McLeod/ School Street/McLeod Street/Zac Drive

This problem area is loaded with people feeding their cats outdoors which attracts other cats. They call us when other cats show up and want us to trap them and leave their cats alone. They allow their cats to run free and it causes a nuisance and property damage to neighbors.

Many dwellings in St Joseph Trailer Park have had multiple litters that just get tossed outside or left to birth kittens all over with no plans of spaying any of them. Those feeding have food and water out 24/7. This feeding has also caused increase in wild life presence in the area. We are constantly receiving calls in this area.

The people feeding the cats are often getting in trouble by landlords. They then call and expect the shelter to just take them when we have our hands full in other areas that we are trying to clean up for the homeowner that is being bothered and NOT feeding anything outside. We clear these areas first.

When someone is continues to feed outside and we remove them from the area, this only allows new cats or wildlife to move in unless they STOP feeding **their** outside cats. Last year for example, Fleenor apartments were completely cleaned up. This week, we received 2 phone calls in one day both feeding their outside cats and one just gave birth to 4 kittens. They call us and expect us to take them because their landlord is threatening eviction when they themselves caused the problem.

We are spinning our wheels cleaning up these locations and then have to start all over in the next spring because people are not being responsible.

Feeding needs to be stopped or an understanding that under RSMO an animal fed or harbored for three consecutive days becomes the responsibility of that person. Therefore, they are responsible for the animal going onto others property as well as any damage the cat causes or medical care needed.

Cat enforcement should be the same as dog enforcement. Dogs cannot run at large and cats should not be allowed to run at large either. Both cause a nuisance to neighbors and to people that are responsible pet owners. If we allow feeding of outdoor animals, they must stay on their property per our city ordinance and can face citations if they are allowed to roam or run at large off of their property.

We do not have a cat problem; we have a people problem. Citizens should be responsible for whatever eats out of the food dishes they put outside and not make expect the shelter to fix the problem.

We have been screamed and cussed at both in person, and on social media, for asking people not to feed the feral cats because they will not go into our traps. "They WILL NOT let them starve. "No one will tell me I can't feed an animal, etc."

On the other side of the spectrum, we have also been screamed and cussed at for not doing enough to take care of the ferals that are a nuisance to the complaining neighbors.

We need a new look at this problem because it is not going away. It is exhausting and we are spinning our wheels.