



Building a Vision for a Responsible Cat Ownership Program in HRM.

Halifax and West Community Council Presentation

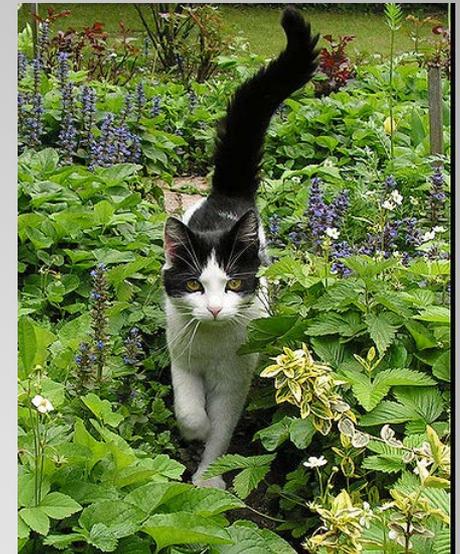
June 12, 2018

Patti Green, Registered Veterinary Technician

Veronica Sherwood, Volunteer, EAC

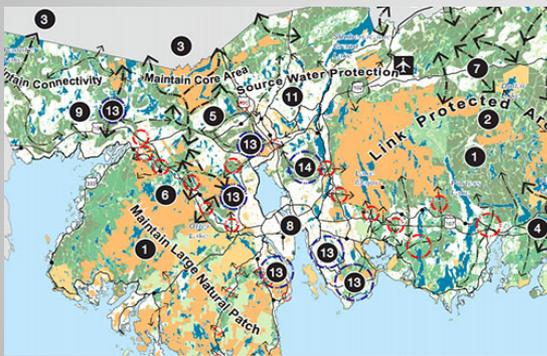


- Who We are and Why We are Here
 - *Building a Strategy for a Responsible Cat Ownership Program in HRM.*
- EAC
- Current Status
- Challenges
- Solutions
- An Approach for HRM
- Key Considerations
- Our Request



Together We are Stronger

- EAC is the Province's Oldest and Largest Environmental Organization (1971), 5500 members
- **EAC & HRM: a strong track of innovative successes**
 - HRM Recycling 1971
 - Community Gardens
 - Green Spaces
 - Bike Lane & Safe transportation



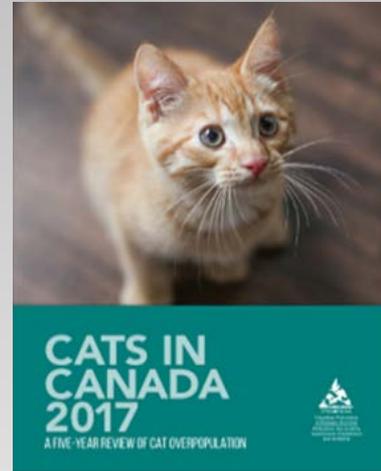
Situation

- HRM: estimated 60,000 feral and 98,000 owned cats (2010 HRM staff report)
- 2,000 cats in 4 years, and 2,000,000 in 8 years



CFHS Cats in Canada 2017:

- Municipal programs
 - Dog Bylaws and education
- Perceptions/attitudes
 - Adoptable cats and kittens; 50% Friendly (previously owned?)
- Full shelters
 - NS shelters 2016 89% capacity
 - 7 times cats than dogs
- < 10% national reclaim rates for cats vs. 68% for dogs



Outdoor Cat Concerns



- Susceptible to injury, disease, death – ethics of release
- Disease transmission to wildlife and humans (toxoplasmosis, rabies)
- Ongoing nuisance complaints: gardeners, neighbours
- Loss of wildlife, Bird predation: 1-2 birds/cat/month
Species at Risk: Eastern Ribbon Snake, Monarch Butterfly, Chimney Swifts

HRM is Committed

- Council has taken a critical step in addressing the issue, with organizations like Spay Day, SPCA, etc.
 - Within the 3 years, \$150,000 has been allocated to remediate the feral cat population
 - Spay/neuter is an important part of the solution

***Only Education and Awareness
Changes Human Behaviour!!***



Challenges Facing HRM

- TNR affects 1-2% of feral population. Unknowns: # of feral and roaming cats, # colonies and location
- Conflicts between conservation groups, humane organizations and HRM residents, i.e. HRM DFCC,
- Unexplored solutions remain
- Nationally, HRM remains behind on this issue and must examine other models



There is a solution!

- A comprehensive strategy to develop a Responsible Pet Ownership Program will create a higher standard of care and address civic responsibility;
- HRM requires a partnership based program relying on wide-spread public education and incentives;
- 17 of the 20 biggest municipalities in Canada have significantly raised their standard of care.

**We Can Do This!
We Can Learn
From Others**



Looking at Calgary's Model

- 3 years of education prior to program launch
- Actively promoted municipal policy, programs, and successes
- Extensive input from citizens and stakeholder groups
- Launched a wide spread education campaign
- Incentives, no cost spay/neuter, business rewards
- 60% participation rate highest in North America
- **No use of tax dollars**



HRM *Is* Moving Forward

- Building awareness so cat owners make responsible choices
- Promoting voluntary buy-in
- Informing citizens of the need and reasons to update standards of care
- Providing spay and neuter programs

An indoor cat:

- Is significantly less likely to contract diseases such as Feline Leukemia, Feline Immunodeficiency Virus, Rabies or pick up fleas/ticks.
- Is safe from vehicles, insecticides, pesticides, parasites and harm from other animals — reducing emergency vet visits and expenses.
- Avoids becoming lost, homeless or placed in a shelter.
- Doesn't risk frostbite in winter or dehydration in summer.

To register a complaint or report a lost cat, call 311 or visit halifax.ca



HALIFAX

What More is Needed

- Step 1: A **Committed Vision and a Strategy** for improved cat care programming
- Step 2: **Continued Spay/Neuter**
- Step 3: Wide spread **Public Education**
- Step 4: **Identification Program** for safe return
- Step 5: **Low cost registration** is provided
- Step 6: **Cost Benefit Analysis of HRM's Financial Investment**
- Step 7: Program **Evaluation**



Our Concerns & Request

- HRM needs to **strengthen** its commitment to this issue.
- Education is key. Our goal is **behaviour change**.
- Decisions makers need **verifiable data**, to compliment anecdotal evidence.
- **HRM's investment impacts 1-2% of ferals**, is this acceptable?
- This remains a broad **humane, social, health, and conservation concern**.
- HRM requires a comprehensive & informed **solution** to address this complex issue.
- ***Please consider recommending that HRM hires an external consultant to analyze the issue and recommend the best policy and programing framework required.***

Thank You! Questions?

RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP How to solve the cat crisis

Susan Kelly, Manager of Animal Services, City of Vaughan
Dr. Helene Van Doninck, Cobequid Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre
Hope Swinimer, Hope for Wildlife

Tuesday, November 21, 2017, 7:00 p.m.
Scoliabank Conference Theatre
Saint Mary's University, 903 Robie St.

Join us for an informative evening that explores solutions to Canada's cat overpopulation crisis. A growing number of municipalities across Canada are implementing Responsible Pet Ownership Programs to deal with the environmental, health and welfare issues that result from large populations of free roaming cats.

This event will take an in-depth look at the City of Vaughan's successful animal services program, discuss vaccine and microchip clinics, cat ID and licensing programming, and bylaw education. Speakers will also examine the importance of integrating responsible pet ownership programming that promotes healthy and safe communities for our pets, native birds and wildlife, and the environment.

Refreshments provided.

For more info contact:
Patti Green, Bird Conservation Outreach Coordinator
pattigreen@ecologyaction.ca / 902 - 403 - 9340



Please Don't Let Our Cat Out



This network of cats lead safe, happy lives by remaining indoors while reducing their impact on birds and other wildlife.



Allied Cats

Ecology Action Centre

Canada

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