

CommunityCatsPodcast_Ep441_Kortis_220201.mp3

Kristen Petrie [00:00:03]

You've tuned in to the Community Cats podcast. Ready? Let's go.

Stacy LeBaron [00:00:13]

Welcome to the Community Cats Podcast. I am your host, Stacey LeBaron. I've been involved helping homeless cats for over 20 years with the Merrimack River Feline Rescue Society. The goal of this podcast is to expose you to amazing people who are improving the lives of cats. I hope these interviews will help you learn how you can turn your passion or tasks into action. Today we're doing a very special episode. This is going to be a replay of our free webinar that we did last fall with the folks at Neighborhood Cats, with Brian Kortis and Susie Richmond. It's "Return-To-Field & Targeting: The Community Cat Program." This is going to be a two-parter, so this is part one and we'll have the next part on next week, so I encourage you to tune in next week, and if you aren't already a subscriber to the show, please do so. But I think you're going to find this absolutely fascinating on the topic of Return-To-Field & Targeting and how to run a successful community cat program, so I hope you enjoy listening in. If you'd like to watch the video, get the downloads, please tune into our virtual education page that we have on the Community Cats Podcast website, as well as the video of this is available up on YouTube or on our page on our website. So thanks again for tuning in for the Community Cats podcast and enjoy the show.

Stacy LeBaron [00:01:42]

I want to thank you all for joining us today for "Return-To-Field & Targeting: The Community Cat Program," presented by Neighborhood Cats' Bryan Kortis and Suzi Richmond. Suzy Richmond is the executive director of Neighborhood Cats. She joined the organization after over 20 years running a major New York City shelter and nonprofit veterinary clinic. At Neighborhood Cats, she has led multiple large targeted TNR projects in New York City and Northern New Jersey, managed a program for providing scholarships to veterinarians for training in high volume spay neuter of community cats, and co-authored the Humane Society of the United States' online course on TNR. In her spare time, she can often be found trapping feral cats on Maui. And our presenter today, Brian Kortis, is co-founder and National Programs Director for Neighborhood Cats, a leading community cat advocacy group with

hands-on programs in New York City, New Jersey, and Maui. Currently, he and his wife, Susan Richmond, live in Hawaii and can usually be found trapping cats or releasing them after they've been neutered. Inbetween stints with Neighborhood Cats, he served as a grants manager for PetSmart Charities, overseeing over \$21 million in TNR and special spay neuter projects. He has produced many of the leading educational materials on trap-neuter-return, including award-winning books and videos. Brian has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell University and a JD from the University of California at Berkeley, has assisted numerous communities in setting up large scale TNR programs, and is a frequent presenter on community cat issues.

Bryan Kortis [00:03:08]

Okay. Hello, everybody, and thank you for taking time out today to talk about, you know, often in our presentations with the Community Cats Podcast, we're talking about ground level work: trapping, colony caretaking, the whole hands-on TNR process. And today's a little bit different, we're going to talk more about strategy and what a TNR program can look like on a community-wide scale. But before we get going, I just want to make sure that we're all using the same terms. So when we talk about a "community cat" today, we're talking about basically cats who are free-roaming, and they're unowned in any traditional sense. People also refer to them as "ferals," sometimes as "strays," but the basic thing is they're free roaming and they're not traditional pets.

Bryan [00:03:57]

Now, it's important to realize that the term "community cat" came around because "feral," for example, is a behavioral description, and not all community cats are feral. They exist on a whole range of socialization, from cats who may be quite friendly, to cats who may be quite feral. But they all share the characteristic of "free-roaming" and "unowned." Now, when we talk about colonies, what we're talking about is a group of community cats who share a common food source and a common territory. Now, a group can be one or more as long as they have those characteristics of the same food source and the same territory. And they could even include roaming pet cats. So, you know, at least to some extent, they may come and the pet cats may come and have a bite to eat or hang out with the community cats. But sometimes we

do find pets in colonies. So what is "Return-To-Field?" And this is a basic schematic that describes it.

Bryan [00:04:56]

So we've got a cat who's a community cat, he's free roaming, he's unowned. Somebody captures him. Typically, we're talking about a private citizen who just doesn't want the cat around for whatever reason. Sometimes we have animal control coming and responding to a complaint. Most of the time it's a private citizen. So the cat is trapped and brought to the local shelter. So in the old days, if the cat was unadoptable for whatever reason, either because of lack of space or lack of suitable temperament, the good chance the cat would be euthanized, and that would be the end of the line. If the cat was friendly and there was capacity for care, then the cat would be put up for adoption. Now with Return-To-Field, instead what happens is the cat is spayed or neutered, given a chance to recuperate overnight, ear-tipped, and then transported right back where he was found and originated, and released. So he ends up basically right back where he came from, but now he's fixed and vaccinated and ear-tipped. That's what we mean by "Return-To-Field."

Bryan [00:06:02]

I think it's interesting for people to understand where this came from because it's not, you know, it's only been around since 2008, and it originated in Jacksonville, that you see circled on the map here, with a group called First Coast No More Homeless Pets, which was--and is--a high volume spay/neuter clinic, but also is involved in other animal welfare issues in their community. So they met with the local county animal control agency and animal shelter agency, Jacksonville Animal Care and Protective Services, and they asked the shelter if they would return ear-tipped--let them return ear-tipped cats to their colonies. That was meant as a way of starting to build support for TNR in the community. So the thinking was that if people engaged in the TNR process, they would know that their cats were protected. And if they ever ended up in the county shelter, they would be notified and the cats would be returned to their location. So the director of the animal shelter thought about it and he came back and said, well, not only can you have the ear-tipped cats, you can have all of them. And if you agree to fix them and return them, then all impounded kittycats would be handed over to you. And that was quite the daunting challenge, but they,

First Coast took it on, and they had a lot of support from Best Friends Animal Society. And they launched this program where basically all cats who otherwise would have been euthanized for whatever reason were instead fixed and brought back.

Bryan [00:07:43]

And this is a graph of the results. And the one that you want to pay most attention to at this time is the red bars. That's, that's euth—the number of cats who were being euthanized. So you could see in the year 2007, before the program began--and the program began in August of 2008--the shelter was euthanizing over 11,000 out of about 13,000 cats. So a really high number and a really high percentage. You can see that, starting in 2008, the euthanasia rate numbers started going down, and they went down by the green bar, which is the number of cats who are returned-to-field. So there was a one-to-one relationship in this program between “cats returned” and “euthanizations avoided.”

Bryan [00:08:31]

So 2009, you start to see the first full year, and you see the euthanasia numbers drop quite dramatically, and you see them falling every year after that. And by the time you get to 2014, you're about 5-or-600 cats being euthanized compared to 2007, when there were 11,000. So obviously, this was a huge change and it caught the attention of the animal welfare field as a whole, and then these programs started to proliferate around the country.

Bryan [00:09:05]

So: why stop euthanizing? You know, why is Return-To a better policy in the view of, you know, many in the field now? Well, the problem with euthanizing, which was kind of the traditional approach to community cats for decades prior to 2008. And the reason is because no matter what communities were finding, like in Jacksonville, was no matter how many cats they euthanized, their intake never went down, the number of cats being euthanized never went down. At best, they might stay steady, which basically indicates that the free-roaming population was at its carrying capacity, meaning there was the number of cats matched the human population in terms of food and shelter that was available. You know, it was just a go round that never went anywhere. Same thing with complaint calls, they never--did not see improvement. And that all reflected, as I say, that the number of community cats is not going

down--again at best, steady. And if you were in an area with a rising human population, good chance you would see all these different metrics going up and not staying steady.

Bryan [00:10:13]

At the same time, euthanasia as a policy has been recognized as having quite a few—even though there's very few benefits to it, there's quite a bit of cost to it. Number one is high stress. So there have been a number of published studies that have been done on the mental health of shelter workers who are regularly exposed to the euthanasia of healthy animals, who are actually directly involved--not necessarily the person at the front desk, but certainly the euthanasia tech, or the people who have to deal with the bodies or whatever direct involvement there is. That class of shelter workers has an extremely high rate of mental illness. We're talking substance abuse problem, psychological conditions, suicide rates, substance abuse. So that's quite a, quite a—quite a high cost. And of course, that then ends up resulting in quite a high turnover as people cycle through these agencies. Now, fairly or not, and usually not fairly, usually these shelters have been kind of designated by our society as a whole to be the place that, you know, has to deal with this stuff with very few options, and they end up—well, you know, if you've got 20 cages and there's 40 cats waiting to come in and the cages are all full, you don't have a whole lot of choice about what you're going to do. But nonetheless, the public blames the shelter for its practice. And even if they don't blame them, people tend to associate a high euthanasia environment as an unpleasant one that they don't want to be in. So high euthanasia rates tend to lead to very poor public relations, which is then translated to difficult, low fundraising, also lower adoptions. It doesn't make sense--you would think, in a logical world that people would want to adopt from agencies where the animals are in the most need, but in fact, they tend to stay away.

Bryan [00:12:16]

So it's a really important thing to understand the underpinning of Return-To-Field, to know why doesn't lethal control work? You know, why did the numbers not go down? Why doesn't intake drop if you're euthanizing thousands, you know, 11,000 cats in a year, how come that doesn't make a dent in any of this, of the data? And that's not true for--just true for Jacksonville, you could really look at any shelter that has had a history of high euthanasia, and you're most likely going to find the same thing. So,

well, here's the reasons why.

Bryan [00:12:50]

I mean, there's too many cats. And there's too few animal control resources, so, you know, there's just not enough manpower to run around and catch—you know, the cats are constantly reproducing. So you would have to capture and euthanize them at a rate that outpaces their reproduction, and that would just take an army of animal control officers who are in any one community who are willing to spend their time doing this. And that is just not a realistic scenario in almost every community. You also have the fact that people who feed the cats, the caretakers, are very bonded to them. They love them just as much as anyone loves their pet cats. And they don't just go along with having the cats hauled away and euthanized. They may just withhold information. So if you're out trapping and you don't know how many cats are at that location, it's rather difficult to do an effective job. They may feed the cats before a trapping takes place, some of them may even go as far as tripping the traps. So very difficult to have an effective program when the people on the ground are resisting you. If you don't capture all the colony members, which is usually the case with these kind of lethal control efforts--the people doing the trapping don't know how many cats are there. They don't have time to hang out for hours observing the location, they tend to put some traps out and whoever goes in gets hauled away. But that usually means a number of cats are left behind, and now these cats will reproduce with less competition for resources.

Bryan [00:14:24]

And then there's the phenomenon that's referred to as “the vacuum effect.” It's so important to understanding why lethal control doesn't work, and why Return-To-Field is, in my opinion, a better policy that--I'm going to make all of you vacuum effect experts right now. Okay, so let's start off at a grocery store that we call Ralph's, and we're talking about a scenario here where there are ten cats—well, let, let me start. This is a grocery store, and the garbage can is meant to be a dumpster. That's the best I could do with clipart, but that's a dumpster. Every day the wasted food and stuff gets thrown out there. And on a regular basis, there's enough food to support ten cats. So that's what's referred to as the “carrying capacity” of any particular

location, is how much food is available, how many cats can that food source support? Now, of course, if you have a feeder, you know, a human being who comes by and puts food out for the cats every day, well, that carrying capacity might increase as the number of cats increases, but you know, going to reach a limit at some point, whether before the neighborhood rises and revolts and the cats are hauled away, or the person can't afford to feed anymore. But it's just an easier concept to understand with something like a grocery store where the amount of food that's put out is constant. So at this particular grocery store, we have enough food in the dumpster to support ten cats, and that's what we have--we have a ten cat colony. When they get beyond ten cats, because you know, they continue to give birth, so let's say there's ten now and then there's two litters born. Well, now you'll have 18 cats, and only enough food for ten. That's when you start to see things like FeLV and FIV spreading rapidly throughout a colony. That's when you'll see cats migrating., they'll go off out of the territory in search of new food sources. Or pregnant cats will, in order to protect their kittens from male cats who, who if there's not enough food and stuff, may kill the kittens, they'll go off to try to find some isolated area. So nature kicks in at the point when carrying capacity is exceeded, until the balance is achieved.

Stacy [00:16:42]

We interrupt this podcast for a quick trivia question. Where is the single place with answers to all of your animal welfare questions? Yes, even the one that kept you awake until two in the morning. Anyone? Anyone? Bueller? It's Maddie's Pet Forum! Maddie's Pet Forum is the only dedicated forum for our industry where you can find answers from colleagues fast and free. Stop doom scrolling and join today. Visit forum.Maddiesfund.org/cats.

Stacy [00:17:10]

Could your animal welfare organization use a tune up? Humane Network can help. You can get a free 30-minute consultation to talk through your challenges and get ideas on how your organization can be more successful with less stress. From board development and fundraising to strategic planning and operations, Humane Network has got you covered. Whether you are a large or small, nonprofit or government, it's a live and thriving program led by a certified animal behavior consultant. Features specially designed training for shelter and clinic staff on enrichment, stress reduction,

safe animal handling, and behavior modification. With Humane Network, you receive individualized advice and support customized to meet your organization's unique needs. And Humane Network can lighten your load by taking on fundraising, communications and other tasks you struggle with. Contact Humane Network today for a free 30 minute consultation. Visit Humanenetwork.org. That's Humanenetwork.org.

Stacy [00:18:04]

A simple picture of an animal in foster or needing adoption just doesn't cut it. Adopters want to see video of the animal in action, showing off their personality, but shelter software doesn't let you get video back from fosters or staff easily. They can't text it because video is just too big, and posting to YouTube means you have to give them access. If only there was a way for you to get video back from anyone that you can use in your organization. Luckily, the team at Doobert has solved this problem with their RescueTube module. Now you simply create a Bucket and give that code to any of your staff, volunteers or fosters to type into the Doobert mobile app. They can easily upload videos up to ten minutes that you can easily download and use in your adoption efforts. Organizations across the country are using Doobert's RescueTube to capture video of foster animals, adoption events, play time, and behavior testing. ACOs are even using it to document cases in the field so they have video evidence. Check out RescueTube today at www.doobert.com, where they make animal rescue simple.

Bryan [00:19:07]

So, um, but somebody complains and doesn't want the cats around anymore, calls animal control, they're very good at their job, and boom--no more cats. But what's the problem? If the food is still available, right? There's still a food source; the environment is unchanged. Whatever it was that attracted the cats to be there in the first place is still there. And it's really important to understand that Ralph's Grocery Store is not an island, it's part of a neighborhood. And that neighborhood has cat colonies, community cats all over the place, right? And they're not altered, they're intact, so they're breeding. They have their own carrying capacity, they're going to run out of food, and what's going to happen is before too long--usually it can happen within days, sometimes weeks, sometimes a little longer--Adam and Eve are going to

come along and discover this untapped food source, and they're going to say, hey, nice territory, no competition, plenty of food, you and I are attracted to each other, why don't we settle down and we'll start a family and boom--within a couple of breeding cycles, you're right back up to ten cats. So the vacuum that you created by removing all the cats is now filled. This typically happens within six to twelve months--you end up with the exact same number of cats or, not exact but pretty close to the same number of cats that you started with. And all you've accomplished is turnover. But you haven't accomplished, you know, reduction. You have new furry faces, but you don't have fewer of them. And this scenario plays out over and over and over again in communities that rely on lethal control.

Bryan [00:20:55]

Now, on the other hand, what are the benefits of return? Well, let me also point out that the futility of lethal control is also, you know, it creates the question: like, so what's the point? What's the point of euthanizing all these original cats? You consider all the costs that are involved with euthanasia, the cost of high stress, high turnover, poor relations, lower adoptions. So why bother, you know, if you're not changing the outdoor situation? So here's the benefits. As we saw in the Jacksonville graph, it's a one to one relationship in terms of euthanasia. For every cat you return to field, that's one less cat that's dying in the shelters. The program frees up resources. So when you're euthanizing 500 cats a year instead of 11,000, that's an awful lot of money and staff time and other resources that can go to other, more productive programs where you might accomplish something besides turnover. Maybe you put it into a spay/neuter program, into dog behavioral programs, or whatever it might be. It's not being wasted on a merry-go-round that doesn't change any community or change anything in the shelter.

Bryan [00:22:10]

You also end up with a healthier--and there are published studies about this--you end up with a healthier shelter environment. And the main reason is because in a return to field program, the cats are moving--they should be housed separately from the general shelter population, and they should be moving in and out of the shelter as quickly as possible. As a result, you end up with less crowding and less disease, less stress, and just a healthier environment for the cats. Public support goes up.

Now all of a sudden, you've got a high live release rate instead of a high euthanasia rate. Again, we're not talking fairness here, we're talking about the reality that we see, and fundraising and adoptions start to go up because people are drawn to a situation where they feel like lives are being saved.

Bryan [00:22:57]

Culture change, both inside and outside the shelter. Let me explain that a little bit. So inside the shelter—you know, the vast majority of people who enter the animal welfare field enter it because they want to help animals, and they don't enjoy seeing healthy animals dying, and they don't enjoy being part of the process that makes that happen. But they often—and correctly—feel they have little to no choice other than leave the job. So when—I've been there at a couple of major city-wide shelters where Return-To-Field programs were introduced, and the change inside, the culture is just astonishing. When you unleash people's life-saving capacity and you say, “yeah, no, we want you to do things that are going to get these cats out of here alive,” it just completely changes everything. I'll give you one example: in San Antonio, Texas, where Best Friends worked with the municipal shelter to start a Return-To-Field program, and I was working with PetSmart Charities at the time, and we were funding a lot of this—well, San Antonio is a city of about 1.1 million people, at least it was at the time, maybe more now. The city was too big for us to try to cover the entire city. So what we did was we basically split the city in half. And the Return-To-Field, it was a combination of Return-To-Field and Targeted TNR, which I'll talk about the Targeted TNR part in the second half of the presentation today. But the Return-To-Field part only involved half of the city because otherw—if you take your resources and you spread them too thinly, you can end up accomplishing nothing, so you have to match the area you're working in with the resources you had. And we felt that we could only really cover half of the city. So cats that came in from the Return-To-Field half came in the shelter, got fixed, went out alive. Not the same trajectory for cats who came from the zip codes that were not in the program. So the animal control officers, the people who worked in the shelter, felt like, wow, this is really arbitrary, you know, the cat is living or dying depending on the zip code of origin. You know, that just didn't feel right to them. And I understand that. So what they did was they went out and they got their own separate grant funding to pay for the surgeries for

the cats from the non-target areas, and then they returned them themselves, on their own time. So that's how much change there was inside the shelter.

Bryan [00:25:35]

I'll give you one other example. In Albuquerque, there was a veterinary technician who really bucked the trend and stuck with, even though euthanasia had been the dominant form of control for 20 years, she stuck with it, though she hated it, but she stuck with the job, and she did her job and did her work. And when the Return-To-Field program launched, she asked if she could come when the first cats were being released. And of course, the staff said yes. And she went with them. They opened the door of the trap, the cat went running out, and she just burst into tear, you know, she was just so overcome, joy to see this transformation. So it's a profound change inside the shelter itself.

Bryan [00:26:20]

Outside the shelter, it's a slower process, but it's still equally profound. And what it is, is the community looks to the shelter, especially when there's one dominant animal welfare agency in a community, which is usually the case. The community, you know, people have their own jobs, they have different professions, they're not thinking animal welfare 24/7 like we all are. So they're not experts, and they don't try to be experts. And they look to the shelter for leadership. Like, what do I do when I have a problem with an animal? Well, I call you up, give me advice, or I see what your policies are, and I just, thinkingly or unthinkingly, go along with that. So when the leader in the community, the leader in animal welfare, starts to say, "hey, we have an overpopulation of cats here, but we're not going to solve this problem by trying to remove them lethal control, we're going to spay and neuter them and let them live and that's how we're going to solve the problem." Well, that's how people start to think. So when we introduced trap-neuter-return, Neighborhood Cats did on a large scale, to New York City, people who cared about the cats would call up and they'd be like, the first thing they want to do is relocate them, right? That was always the first question is, "what do I do? How can I get them out of here?" But after ten years of TNR, when people called, they would say, "how do I get them fixed?" So the culture shifted. And the same thing happens with Return-To-Field, where people who for

years and years and years have been taught, like, “you got a problem with a community cat, come get a trap, catch them, bring them in. We'll take care of the rest.” Now they're learning that oh, actually, I should be getting them fixed. Well, over the years, that will take holds more and more and more.

Bryan [00:28:08]

Finally, another benefit of return to field is—you know, there are roaming—a lot of people let their cats, their pet cats roam. I think that's unfortunate, you know, I wish we had a culture that's more of “let your cats outside, but in a safe way,” you know, in a catio or in a cat fenced in yard or something like that, or train them to be happy indoors, which is perfectly possible. Still, like, here where I am on the island of Maui in Hawaii, everybody lets their cats outside. So at any one time when a cat is brought in, if the cat's not microchipped or wearing identification, there's a very good chance that cat is going to act frightened, which could easily be interpreted as feral. And if decisions are made rapidly, which they often are in situations that are crowded, that cat ends up being put down. And what was really an owned pet who would have just, put him back where he was found he'd have just found his way home, instead, he dies. And we have no idea how often that is happening.

Bryan [00:29:13]

So even if, you know, if you're persuaded that this is a policy worth exploring, usually what happens, the first question is, isn't everybody gonna freak out? Aren't they going to storm the shelter with pitchforks and torches once they find out that putting feral and stray and community cats back out on the street, right? That's a fear that everybody who thinks about having this program, in the beginning, everybody has that, right? So let's put fear aside for a moment and try to look at some objective data. So I'm going to go over a couple of surveys. Before you decide, oh, they're biased—they were commissioned, meaning they were paid for by animal welfare agencies, but they were conducted by independent polling agencies like Harris and Gallop. I don't remember the specific ones, but they were not conducted by the animal welfare agency. So in this one in 2007, the question was, “If you saw a stray cat”—you could only choose having the cat caught and put down, or just leaving the cat where the cat is—“what would you choose?” Right? And the results were kind of

surprising at the time. 81%--and this is a national, national representative, nationally representative survey--81%, four out of five people, said "leave the cat where the cat is." Only 14% thought that euthanizing the cat was the best alternative. So unless--least we think that was some type of aberration, another survey, national survey was done in 2014. This time, the question was a little bit different. Now people were given three choices. One, A, was basically "TNR"--if you have stray cats, should you TNR them? B was "have the cat trapped and euthanized," and C was just "leave the cats alone and don't do anything for them." And the results were, here, and we see 68% supported TNR. Another 8% said, just leave alone. So you end up with 76% of people who wanted to just let the cats live. Fortunately, most of those 76% also wanted them fixed, and only a quarter of the respondents thought the best thing to do was to euthanize the cats.

Bryan [00:31:27]

So what this tells us is that most people out there are fine with the cats, and they would prefer that they were fixed, but they don't want them killed. And it's a distortion--this is a surprise, these results are often a surprise to people who are in the animal welfare field, especially if you work for an open admission shelter or are involved with animal control. And I've thought about that, and my theory is that there's a real distortion of what kind of information you're getting when you're in those situations, when you're in an open admission shelter, when you're in animal control. And the distortion is that when people contact you about community cats, it's almost universally negative. They're calling because they don't want them there. They're calling because they think they're a problem. They're calling to blame. They're calling because they want you to get rid of them. So if that's all you're hearing, it's easy to interpret that as "the vast majority of people don't want the cats around and they're going to go nuts and we're going to lose our jobs and our funding if we start a Return-To-Field program." But when you think about it, you know, the people, which these surveys suggest is the vast majority of people who like the cats, do they call you? Do they call you up to say, "hey, thanks for leaving the cats alone in my backyard," you know, or "hey, I just wanted to let you know you're doing a great job by letting Fluffy come and visit me twice a day?" No, I mean, you don't hear anything from the silent majority, and you wouldn't know they were there unless you

did these kinds of surveys. So you know, consider that, thinking like, hm, you know.

Bryan [00:33:19]

And the reality, we also have now, what is it, 13 years of experience with Return-To-Field programs, and the pitchforks and torches have not come out. Not that it's always a smooth ride, there are definitely bumps in the road. But funny enough, the main resistance to Return-To-Field programs has not been from the general public, not at all. It's actually been from the rescue community, over the issue of friendly cats--that's where the controversy and the disruption have come from, and we'll talk about that.

Bryan [00:33:50]

Here's, you know, statistical support for the fact that there's a huge percentage of our population that likes the cats. And this was a survey done in 2008 of Ohio adults and there's a lot of great information in this study, but the points I want to bring up now were that almost half of the participants have, had seen free roaming cats in their neighborhoods on a regular basis, and almost more than a quarter of them had actually been feeding community cats at some point during the prior year. Again, this points to the general acceptance of Return-To-Field, or of the cats being there. So my conclusion from all this data is that Return-To-Field is actually a program that's more aligned with the majority, who favors live outcomes and are willing to leave the cats in the environment, and euthanasia, lethal control, is aligned with the very loud minority who is complaining about them and wants them removed, and what a shelter needs to decide--or anybody who, health agency, whoever is responsible in the community for animal control policy--is which part of this community are you going to serve? Are you going to serve the majority who likes the cats there, or at least the majority that's suggested by the data that we have? Or are you going to throw in your lot? Return-To-Field serves one, but certainly not the other.

Stacy [00:35:15]

That's it for this week! Please head over to Apple Podcasts and leave a review. We love to hear what you think, and a five star review really helps others find the show. You can also join the conversation with listeners, cat caretakers, and me on

Facebook and Instagram. And don't forget to hit Follow or Subscribe on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts, YouTube, Stitcher, or wherever you listen to podcasts so you don't miss a single show. Thanks for listening, and thank you for everything that you do to help create a safe and healthy world for cats.