

To Euthanize Or Not? Question Needs To Be Asked When It Comes To Feral Cats

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EDWARDSVILLE – To euthanize or not to euthanize? That is the question that needs to be asked when it comes to feral cats in Madison County.

“My opponent is criticizing a program that is approved by the humane society,” Chairman Kurt Prenzler said. “It’s a program that is in operation all across the country and saves the lives of cats deemed unsuitable as pets.”

Prenzler said the comments came following a Wood River Drainage and Levee District approval of a resolution on Sept. 18 that would allow the district to enter into an agreement with the Metro East Humane Society’s Working Cat Program.

The district planned to adopt feral cats through the program to help control the infestation of moles, voles and other burrowing animals along its levee system. The program saves the district the cost of hunting, and is more environmentally friendly than using poison.

The Working Cat Program started more than a year ago when MEHS collaborated with Madison County Animal Care and Control to help reduce the number of feral cats euthanized in the county. Prior to adoption, the cats are spayed/neutered, vaccinated, micro-chipped and ear-tipped.

“The program has helped us achieve our goal of making the county ‘no-kill,’” Prenzler said.

The program started by adopting cats out to barns and rural settings with the new owners benefitting from the felines hunting mice and other nuisance critters. In June 2019, the program expanded to the levee at Metro East Sanitary District.

Prenzler said the claims that these “semi-feral” cats at MESD were not cared for is incorrect.

“First of all, the cats were deemed feral by the humane society,” he said. “Second, the cats were provided food, shelter and water on a daily basis by a caretaker.”

The program was up and running for six months before it ended at the end of 2019. MESD set up trailer cameras to monitor the daily activity of the animals, which all were accounted for until a leadership change in January.

“Last year, Gov. Pritzker signed a law passed by the Democrat-dominated General Assembly that took away one MESD board appointment from Madison County, and gave it to the City of Granite City,” Prenzler said. When the Democrats took over control of MESD at the beginning of this year, they just abandoned the Working Cat Program that was already a success.”

Prenzler said that prior to his election in 2016, two-thirds of the cats and one-third of the dogs were euthanized.

“My opponent was on the county board when thousands of dogs and cats were needlessly euthanized,” he said. “He offers no other solution for feral cats other than euthanasia. This program is an innovative plan to give feral cats, unsuitable for adoption, a second chance.”