



# The Greenbelt

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## Dog Gets Loose and Attacks Small Dog

This is a sad article. In September, a boxer escaped from its back yard fence that was in disrepair and attacked and killed a small dog that was being walked on a leash. As homeowners, we are responsible to maintain our property in good repair, including fences as stated in Section 2.04 of the By-Laws. If you are a homeowner with pets (dogs) and you keep them in your back yard, PLEASE make sure that the pet is unable to escape from the yard. Dogs get creative; they may try and dig their way out or just climb the fence and hop out. (Give the office a call for tips on how to better secure your yard) Either way, the dog owner is responsible for their dog's actions. As responsible dog owners, we must maintain control of our dogs at all times, whether they are kept in the back yard or being walked on a leash. (Remember, all dogs must be on a leash while being walked in the neighborhood). Please let's make Oak Hills a safe place to walk our pets without fear of any future attacks.

## Homeowners seek solutions to the growing feral cat population

Out in the wilds of Oak Hills it's not uncommon to see raccoons, opossums, skunks, turkeys, and the occasional deer. Most recently there have been complaints about a growing population of feral cats. Unneutered and unvaccinated, feral cats can cause serious health and property damage.

Animal health experts say that a mere four feral cats can grow exponentially into a massive population of 5000 cats in just seven years. With this kind of reproduction potential, feral cats can literally take over a property. At the same time, they can pose significant health risk to your family pets because they are known to carry diseases like ring worm, cat parvo, feline aches and leukemia, in addition to rabies.

After consulting both our local SPCA and Monterey County Animal Control, there appears to be a couple different measures that homeowners may want to consider in dealing with the problem.

Both the SPCA and Animal Control say that you should not attempt to handle a cat that you suspect to be feral, that you should set a trap. Traps can be purchased at Harbor Freight in Salinas. Prices vary from \$19-\$49, relative to size. Those in the know, say putting some tuna in the trap will usually work.

However, before setting the trap, you'll have to decide ahead of time where you will be taking the trapped the cat, since the SPCA and the Monterey County Animal Control have different policies regarding stray and feral cats.

Monterey County Animal Control will accept the trapped cat at no charge. They will then attempt to determine if the feline is feral or stray. A stray cat is a cat that is lost or abandoned, but used to people and can be handled and is "adoptable." A feral cat is the offspring of a stray or a feral cat and is not used to people, is fearful, not able to be handled, and "not adoptable." Unadoptable cats are euthanized. If it is determined that the cat is a stray, Animal Control will try to find the cat a home.

The Monterey County SPCA accepts trapped cats, however you must make an appointment before bringing in the trapped animal, and there is a charge: \$10 for a male and \$20 for a female. Fees are charged to vaccinate and neuter any cat that is taken in, stray or feral. The SPCA will also determine if the cat is a stray or feral. Stray cats will be put up for adoption.

Regarding feral cats, the SPCA follows what is called a TNR policy: trap, neuter/vaccinate, and release. Under these guidelines, you would make an appointment to bring in your trapped feral cat, pay the required fees outlined above, and the SPCA will neuter, vaccinate and tag the ear of the cat. You would then have the option of bringing the cat back to your home and releasing the feral cat back into the wild to live within the feral cat colony. The SPCA encourages this policy, hoping that enough cats are trapped, neutered and vaccinated, tagged and released back into wild. It is their view, that this is a more humane way of cutting the feral cat population.

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### ***Wanted: Newsletter Editor***

The OHHA is looking for a volunteer Newsletter Editor to compose and assemble the Greenbelt Newsletter on a bi-monthly basis. If interested, please contact the office at 633-0103

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