

Caboodle Ranch Inc. Cat Sanctuary

On Friday, April 24, 2009, I went to Caboodle Ranch Cat Sanctuary with Madison County Animal Control Officer Jamie Willoughby, who had been requested to advise Craig Grant, founder of Caboodle Ranch, about problems with local dogs. When we arrived at the location, Jamie called out to Mr. Grant, but got no answer. We then proceeded to walk around the front part of the property looking for Mr. Grant. The property is not fenced in so we were able to walk into the sanctuary.

While checking to see if Mr. Grant was on the property, I observed a large number of cats scattered throughout the sanctuary's center area. I would estimate that I visually saw 60+ cats. All were loose and either lying in the woods, or in and around the small houses that dot the property. We were approached by a number of the cats and the majority appeared to be in poor health. Many appeared to be extremely thin; others had little hair on their body, others appeared weak and unable to move.

As I looked further at the cats, many appeared to have respiratory issues and were having difficulty breathing. One cat was leaning its head over the rim of a plastic kiddie pool to drink water, but appeared to be too weak to lift its head when it was done.

I did observe dry food in containers and clean water for the cats, though did not observe any cats eating the dry food. Cans of wet cat food were seen, but none was available to the cats at that time.

Jamie completed his search of the primary area of the sanctuary, but could not find Mr. Grant. He posted a note asking him to call him back. As we walked back to the car, many of the cats followed us onto the driveway. One gray, long haired cat appeared to be particularly thin, weak and lethargic.

A number of cats swarmed the animal control truck as we were leaving, and Jamie and I tried to shoo them away before moving the truck. However, as we backed out, a black cat ran from under the vehicle and appeared to be wobbling on its back legs. I told Jamie that I believed we had hit the cat and needed to make sure it was not seriously injured. Jamie caught the cat and while placing it in a cage, I noted that the cat appeared thin and weak, he was breathing heavily and his gums appeared very pale. Jamie wrote an addition to the note that he had left for Mr. Grant telling him what had happened, and then we proceeded to take the cat to the vet.

Upon arriving at Madison Veterinary Clinic, the cat was examined by Dr. Lewis, who manually checked the cats back and legs for signs of injury. Dr. Lewis said he could not find any broken bones, but that the cat was in overall poor health. However, he then stated that the cat looked better than other cats brought to the clinic by Mr. Grant, and that there were problems with upper respiratory infection (URI) at the sanctuary. Dr. Lewis said he has tried to convince Mr. Grant to euthanize some of the very ill cats that he has brought to the clinic, but Mr. Grant had refused. Dr. Lewis then gave the cat an injection and we took the cat to Madison County Animal Control.

Laura Bevan, Director
The Humane Society of the United States
Eastern Regional Office
1624 Metropolitan Circle, Suite B
Tallahassee, FL 32308
(850) 386-3435
lbevan@hsus.org
May 4, 2009