

DATAW ISLAND FELINE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2017

DIFF began our 2017 year with our annual board meeting on Thursday, January 14th in the DIC3 conference room. All present board members attended and were reelected for another one-year term: Dale Martin, Executive Director; Pat Ashton , Co-Executive Director; Tom Hurley, Treasurer; Roberta Gunderson, Secretary and Fred Houle, Chief Trapper. Two new board members were voted to join the present five sitting. Rich Kocher will be our member at large and Beverly Porter will be Cat Community Network Liaison. They both agreed to join the board.

DIFF reminded Dataw of its presence and mission during a "Carnival of Clubs" held at the Carolina Room on March 3rd. Several new volunteers signed up during that event.

Shortly afterward, on February 18th, the DIFF annual tea was held at the home of Dory Ingram. This is the third consecutive year Dory has invited our motley crew of DIFF volunteers to her lovely home. Members brought yummy appetizers, and wine was served as well as traditional tea. Our first order of business was remembering our dear volunteer Carol Morgan and our well loved treasurer, Lee Schlorff, who both passed this year. Roberta Gunderson arranged for Tallulah Trice and Stephanie Brumley from Beaufort County to address us re the grant Beaufort County received to operate an accelerated TNR program on St. Helena Island. Roberta also invited Diane Voge and Kate Zalusky, who operate Broken Tails, and are animal advocates. They both spoke about their organizations.

Deciding that it was time to replenish the DIFF coffers, a fund raiser was planned. Charlotte and Tom Hurley agreed to be in charge of a Sunday Guest Bartender Night at Sweetgrass on April 11th. David Elmore, Bob Martin, George Fiorella and Tom Hurley took on the bartending duties. The evening, which included a 50 -50 raffle netted a total of \$580 and a lot of fun for all those attending.

Looking back at cat activity on Dataw during 2016 matters were, well, matter of fact with our usual Pool, Marsh, Odingsell, Gleason's Landing, Security House and random sightings of possible feral cats. Never say those words, for out of the blue in early summer came an alert about a couple of newborn feral kittens and a mom hanging out under a deck on Longfield. Investigation began. We started leaving food nearby but mom was smarter than the DIFFers and, lo and behold, all disappeared after a few days. Notes were placed in message boxes of two dozen houses in the area. We waited. Two weeks later a call was received from a Dataw Drive home where mom had taken up residence with both kittens under the front deck. A plan was hatched with the residents, and we began feeding the cats in their garage. Bottom line: it took a couple of weeks of feeding, introducing have a heart traps before mom and the "larger" of the two very small kittens were snagged, but the elusive smaller one was too tiny to trip a trap and indulged in feedings for another week or so, gaining weight (to her disadvantage), until we were successful. Pat Ashton offered her screened back porch for a socialization area for all three. Many volunteers spent many hours on that porch feeding, scooping, playing until it was decided the mom was again smarter than we were and was a much more powerful force in making the kits antisocial versus our attempts at socialization. A book could be written about our antics with those cats. The final resolution was Roberta and Trudy made arrangements for K1, Donny, and K2, Daisy, to make their way to Tabby House for a successful adoption. Zena became a resident in a handmade tent system Tom Hurley, George Fiorella and Chuck Schweitzer created (check pics on website) on Reeve Court. It was our fervent hope that after a six-week campout, where volunteers fed, watered, scooped, and visited, Zena would love the area and make it her home after being freed. Again, Zena outsmarted her human do-gooders, and away she went to be spotted once but never seen again.

DIFF gained insights through community contact including Stephanie Brumley and her team's hard work locating colonies, trapping, neutering and returning on an ongoing basis. Roberta, Trudy, Pat, Fred Houle, and Tom and Charlotte Hurley joined the county effort. At one point a special board meeting was called to determine what our by-laws allowed about bringing more feral cats onto our Island. Rich reminded us we should adhere to those bylaws. We decided to take an inquiry to the DIOA board about bringing a half dozen ferals from Brody's

and Food Lion to replenish those we had lost during the past three years. Both management and DIOA congratulated our efforts in being highly successful in our Dataw TNR mission and denied bringing any cats to the island.

Many DIFF volunteers have outreached, feeding ferals at our local post office, trapping and working shifts at Tabby House. Beverley maintains close relations with our Beaufort County cat coconspirators.

The most recent DIFF event was the acceptance from Stephanie Brumley of a feral cat permit for the Dataw cats. The information shared through this permit will allow a county team to use GPS to identify our feral colonies with the purpose of caring for them after an evacuation situation such as a hurricane. A team, including Stephanie, will go into action 48 hours after the evacuation (the first two days will involve only humans in need) to attempt to re-establish the colonies, providing them with food, water, and emergency care.