

Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC)
BCC Assembly Room
315 Court Street, 5th Floor
Clearwater, Florida 33756

September 10, 2013

WORK SESSION AGENDA

1:00 – 5:00 p.m.
Time Certain

1. [Animal Services Overview/Policy Issues](#)

Citizens' Comments Will Follow Presentation

Any Person Wishing to Speak During the "Citizens' Comments" Portion of the Work Session Agenda Must Have a Yellow Card Completed and Given to the Agenda Staff at the Staff Table. The Chairman Will Call the Speakers, One by One, to the Podium to be Heard. Each Speaker May Speak up to Three (3) Minutes. Persons authorized to represent a group of five (5) or more individuals should complete Yellow Cards, submit to staff, and limit their presentation to ten (10) minutes.



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: The Honorable Chair and
Members of the Board of County Commissioners

THROUGH: Robert S. LaSala, County Administrator
Bruce Moeller, Executive Director *[Signature]*

FROM: Maureen Freaney, Director, Animal Services *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: Animal Services' Workshop – September 10, 2013

Attached is a copy of the PowerPoint Presentation for the September 10, 2013 Work Session. The PowerPoint includes:

- 1) An Overview of Animal Services
- 2) Proposed Changes to the County Animal Ordinance
- 3) Trap/Neuter/Vaccinate/Return Policy Information
- 4) Mandatory Spay/Neuter Policy Information

County Commission Workshop: Animal Services September 10, 2013

Maureen “Moe” Freaney
Bureau Director
Pinellas County Animal Services



Mission

To ensure animal related health, welfare and safety for citizens and animals of Pinellas County



Partners

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- SPCA Tampa Bay
- Humane Society of Pinellas
- Pinellas Animal Foundation
- Pet Pal
- Other Animal Welfare Organizations/ Rescues
- SPC Veterinary Technology Center
- Local veterinarians
- Pet Stores
- Volunteers
- Citizens, Visitors, Pet Owners

AGENCY PARTNERS

- Department of Health
- PCSO
- Municipal law enforcement agencies
- State Attorney's Office
- County/municipal code enforcement agencies
- Juvenile Welfare Board
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission
- USDA
- Florida Animal Control Association
- National Animal Control Association

COUNTY PARTNERS

- County Attorney's Office
- Communications Department
- Parks and Conservation
- DEI
- Extension Services
- Public Safety and Emergency Management
- Healthy Communities

Animal Services Overview

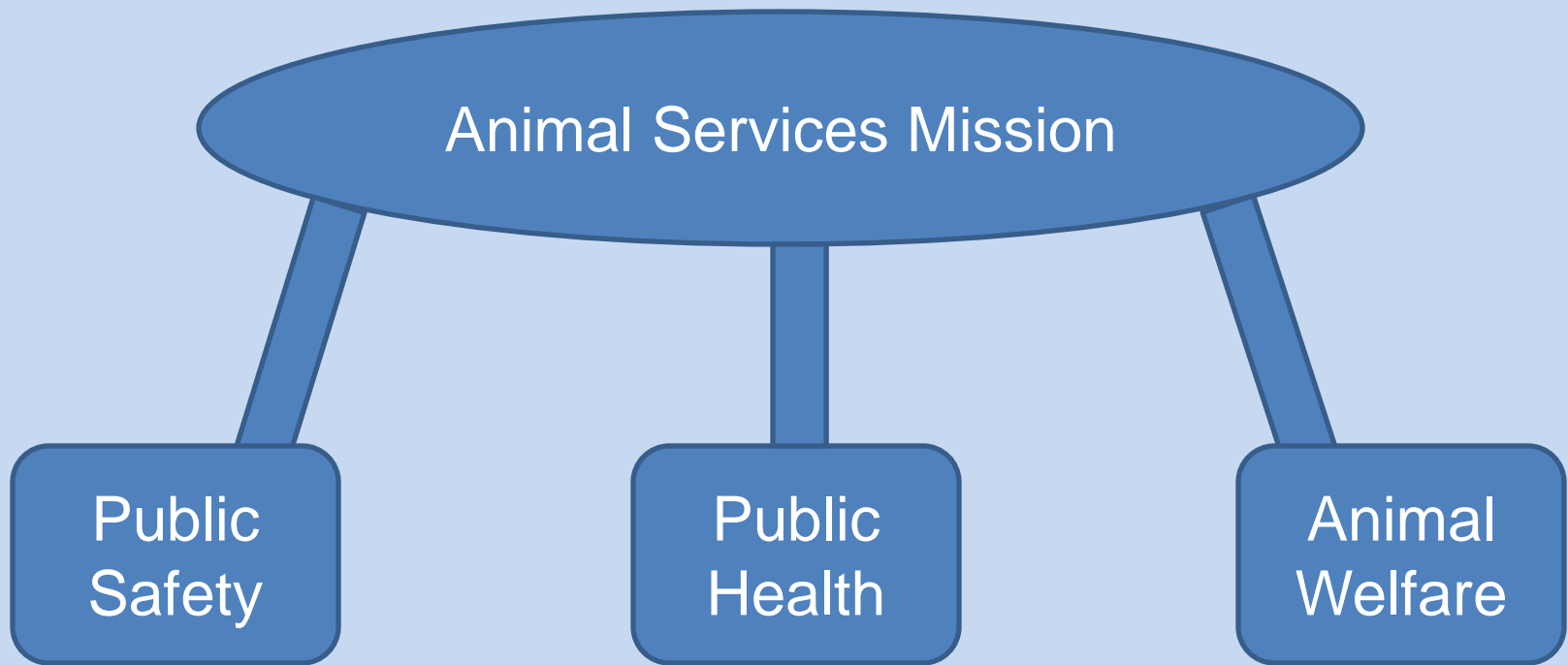
- Authorized by County Charter
- Operates countywide
- Handles dogs and cats
- 49 employees
- \$4 million budget



Hours of Operation

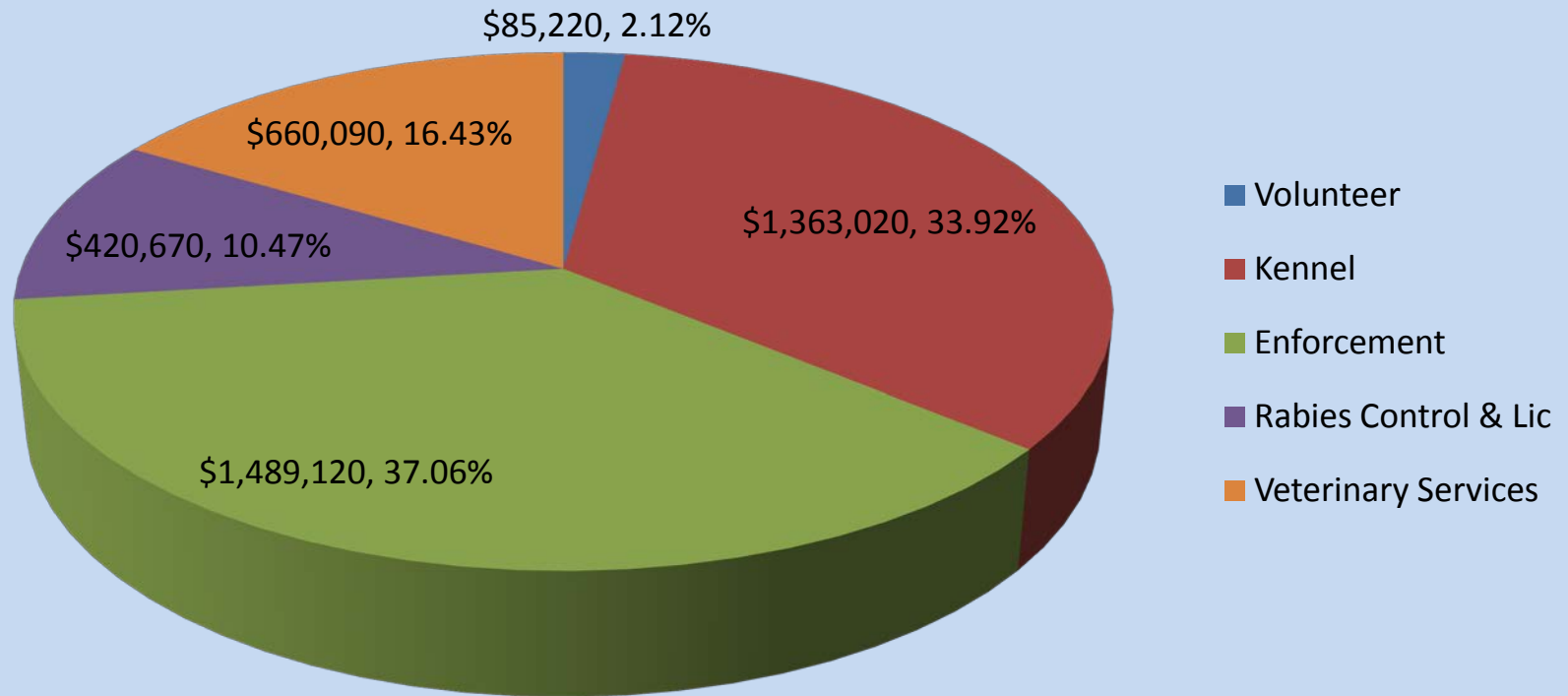
- Customer Service Lobby/Adoption Center (49 Hours)
 - Mon - Fri: 9 AM – 6 PM
 - Sat: 9 AM – 1 PM
- Kennel Operations/Animal Care (77 Hours)
 - Mon - Fri: 6:30 AM – 6:30 PM
 - Sat - Sun: 6:30 AM – 3PM
- Code Enforcement (63 Hours)
 - Mon - Sat: 7 AM – 5:30 PM
 - 24/7 standby service for priority callouts

Three Legs of the Stool



Budget

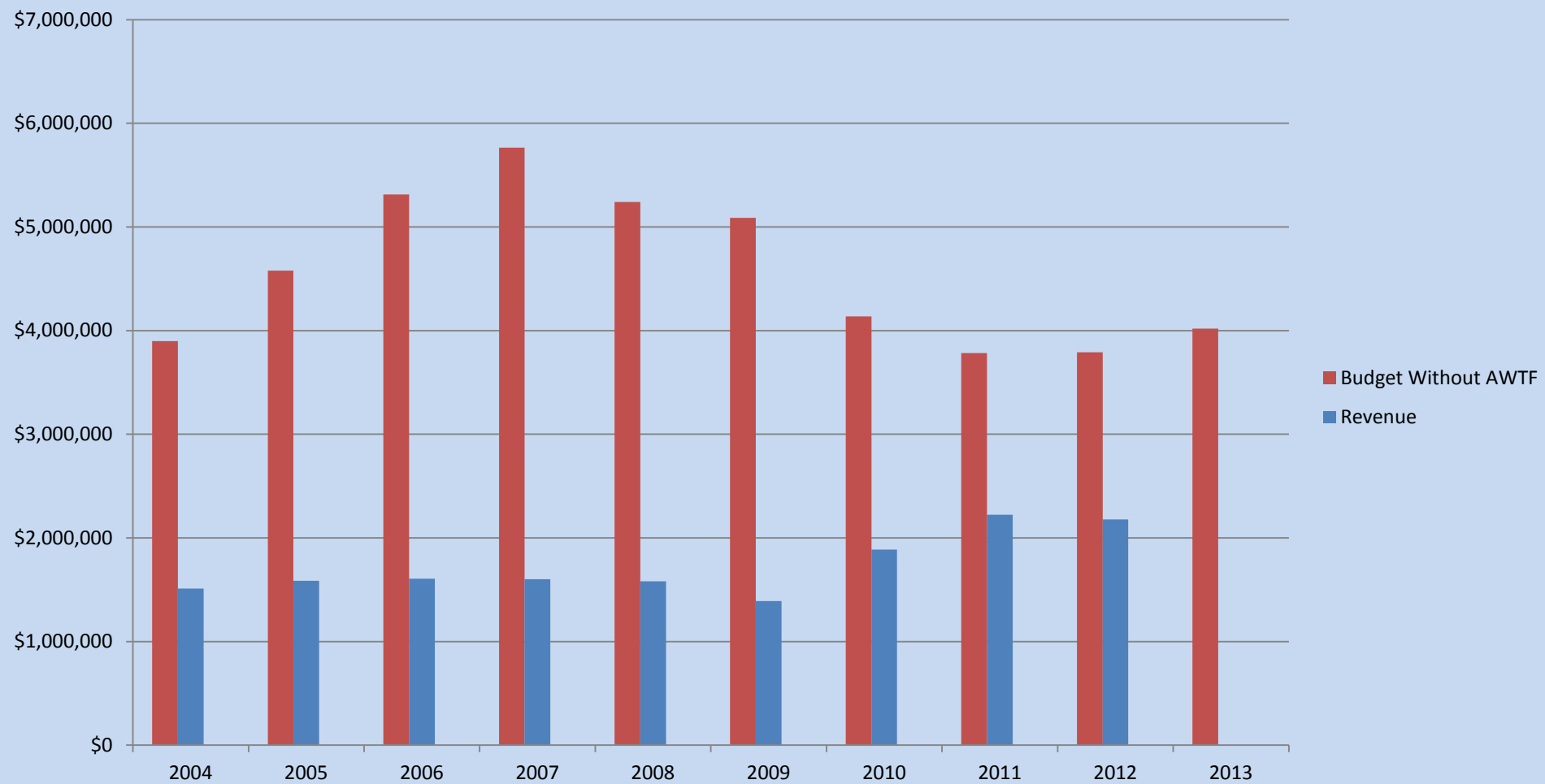
FY13 Budget by Program Without AWTF



Total FY 13 Budget= \$4,018,120

Budget

Budget History without AWTF



Animal Welfare Trust Fund

- Revenue Sources
 - Pet Store Adoptions
 - Donations
 - Bequests
- Sample Expenditures
 - Supplies for Special Needs Animals
 - Anti-Tethering Pamphlets
 - Animal Yard Shade Structure

KENNEL / VETERINARY SERVICES

Kennel / Veterinary Services

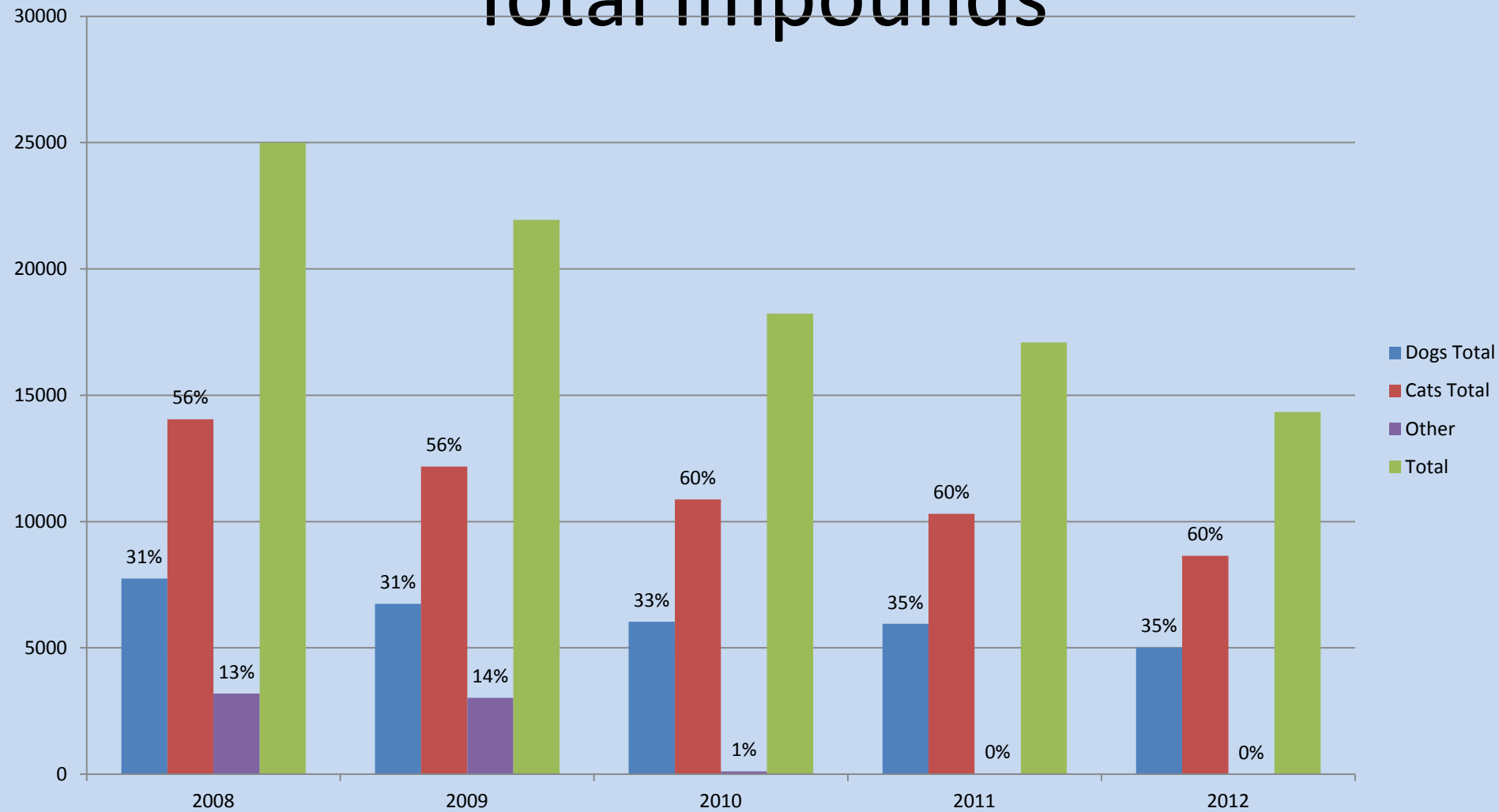
- PCAS is an Open Admission Shelter
- Accepts all dogs and cats regardless of health, temperament, breed, size, age, etc.
- PCAS does not euthanize for lack of space
- PCAS does not euthanize healthy, adoptable animals

Kennel / Veterinary Services

- Average daily census:
300-400
- Average daily
impounds:45
- Shelter capacity:
 - 294 dog runs
 - 160 cat cages and 17
cat runs (up to 15
cats/run)
- Hospital
 - 3,676 spays and neuters
 - 62 other surgeries

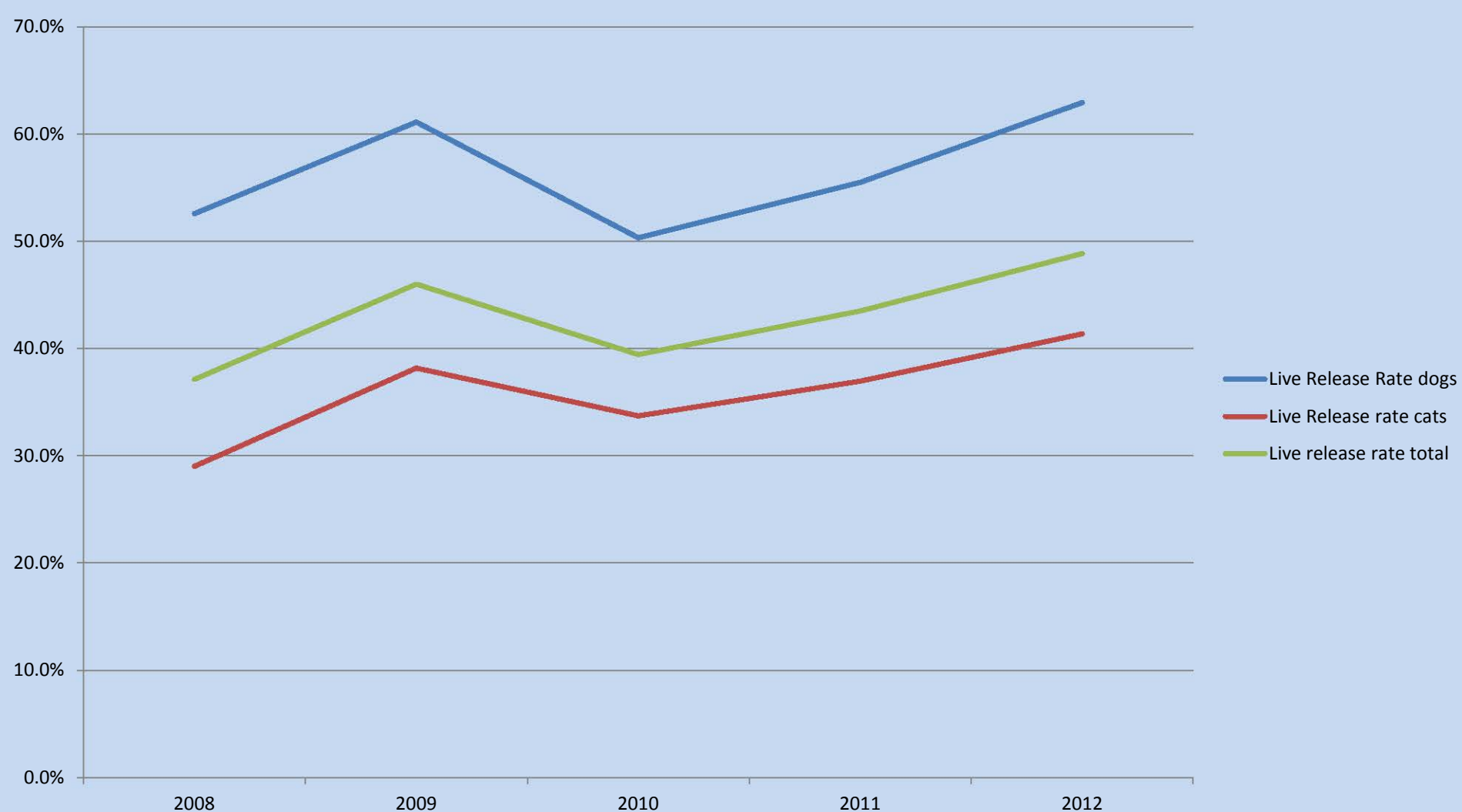


Total Impounds



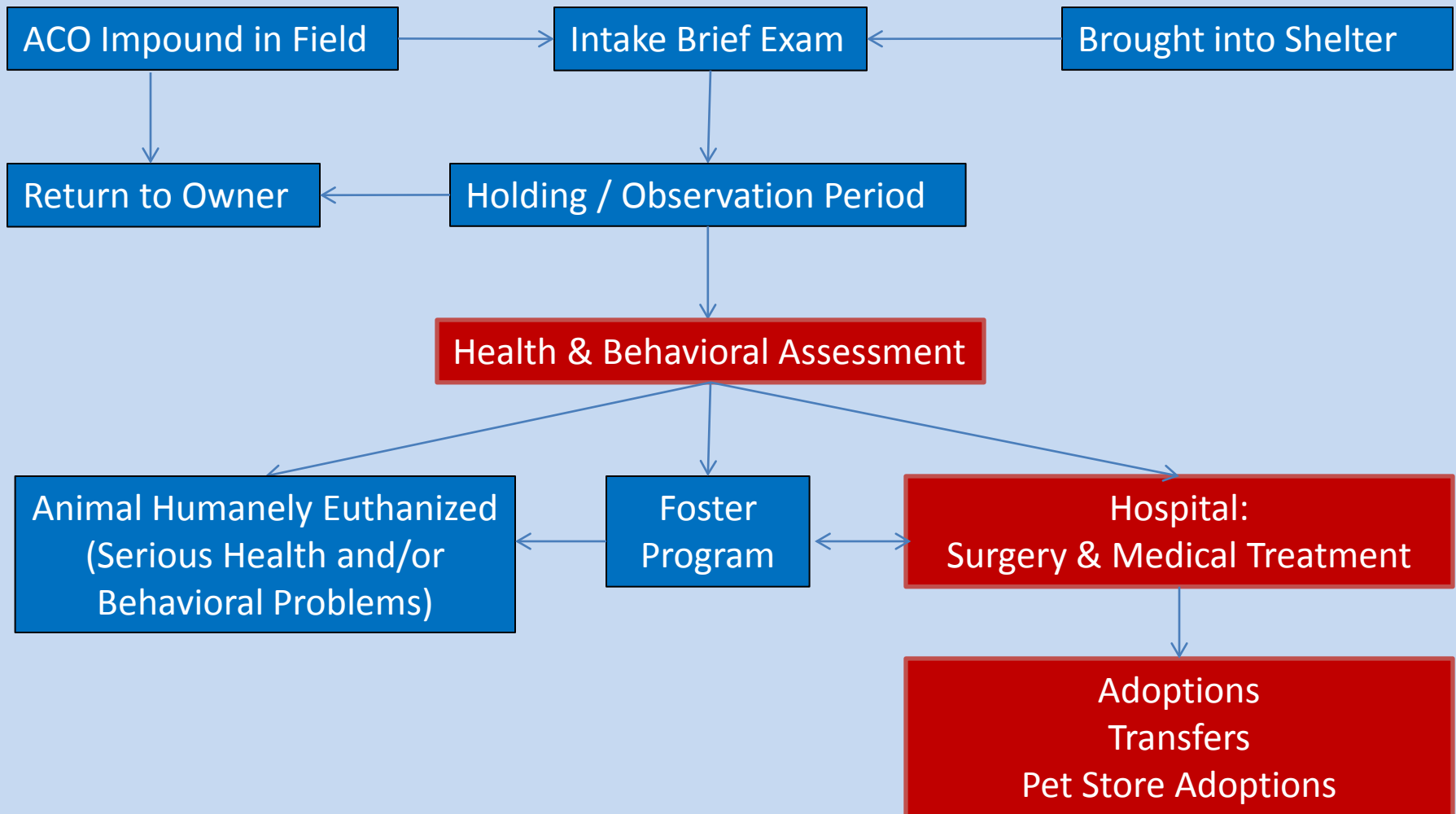
- “Other” impounds decreased significantly in 2010 due to cessation of all wildlife intake save raccoons
- “Other” impounds became negligible in 2011 due to cessation of raccoon intake

Live Release Rate



Live Release Rate = Live Outcomes ÷ Total Intake (minus owner requested euthanasia)

Shelter Flow



ENFORCEMENT

High Priority Calls

- Animal bites
- Animal cruelty
 - Abandonment
 - Neglect
 - Hoarding
 - Tethering
 - Abuse
- Police requests for assistance
- Stray dog and cat pickup
- Dangerous dog investigations
- Animal endangering public safety

Number of Calls

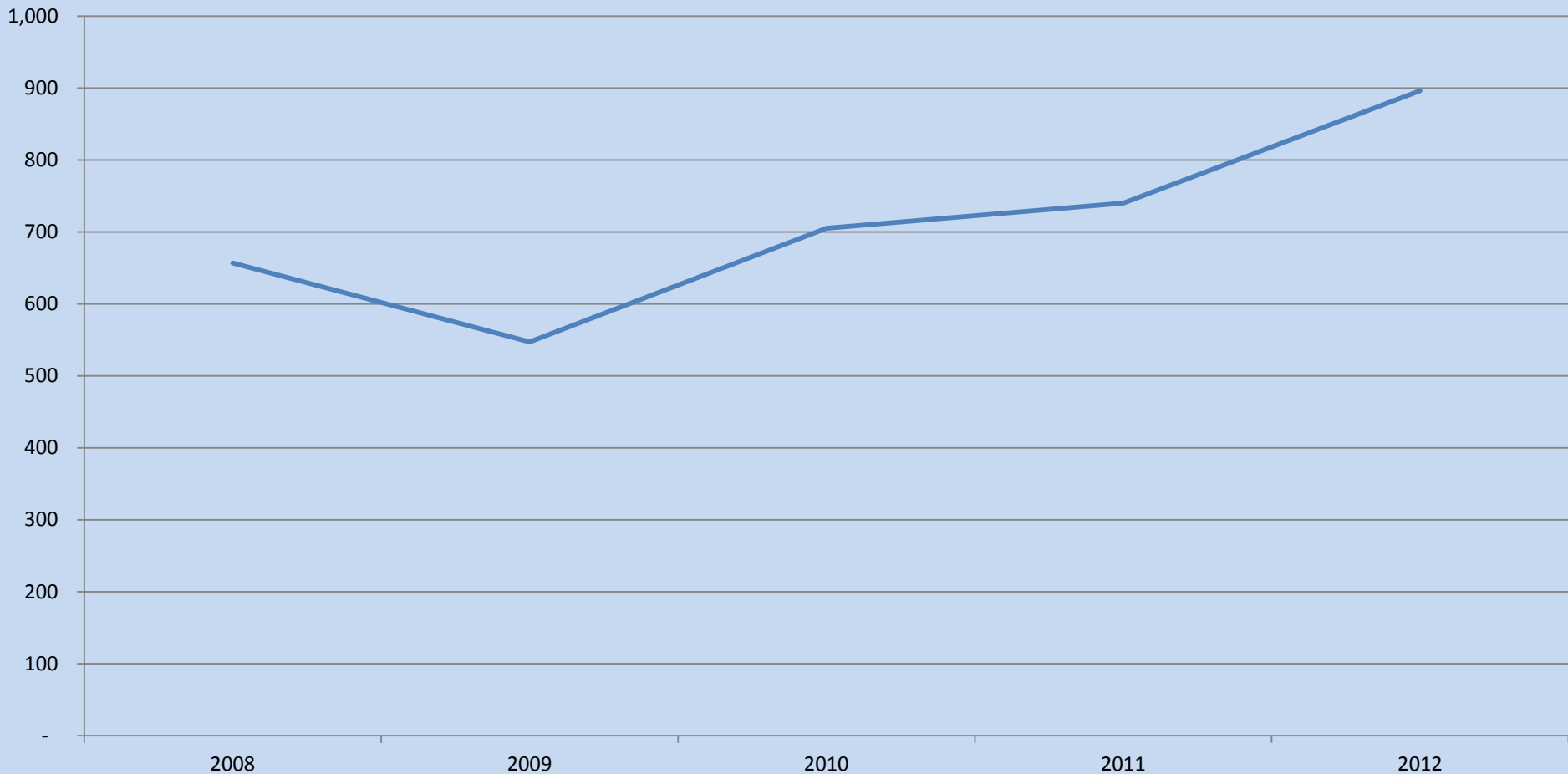
Total # of Enforcement Calls Dispatched



•Includes cancelled calls and warning letter mailings

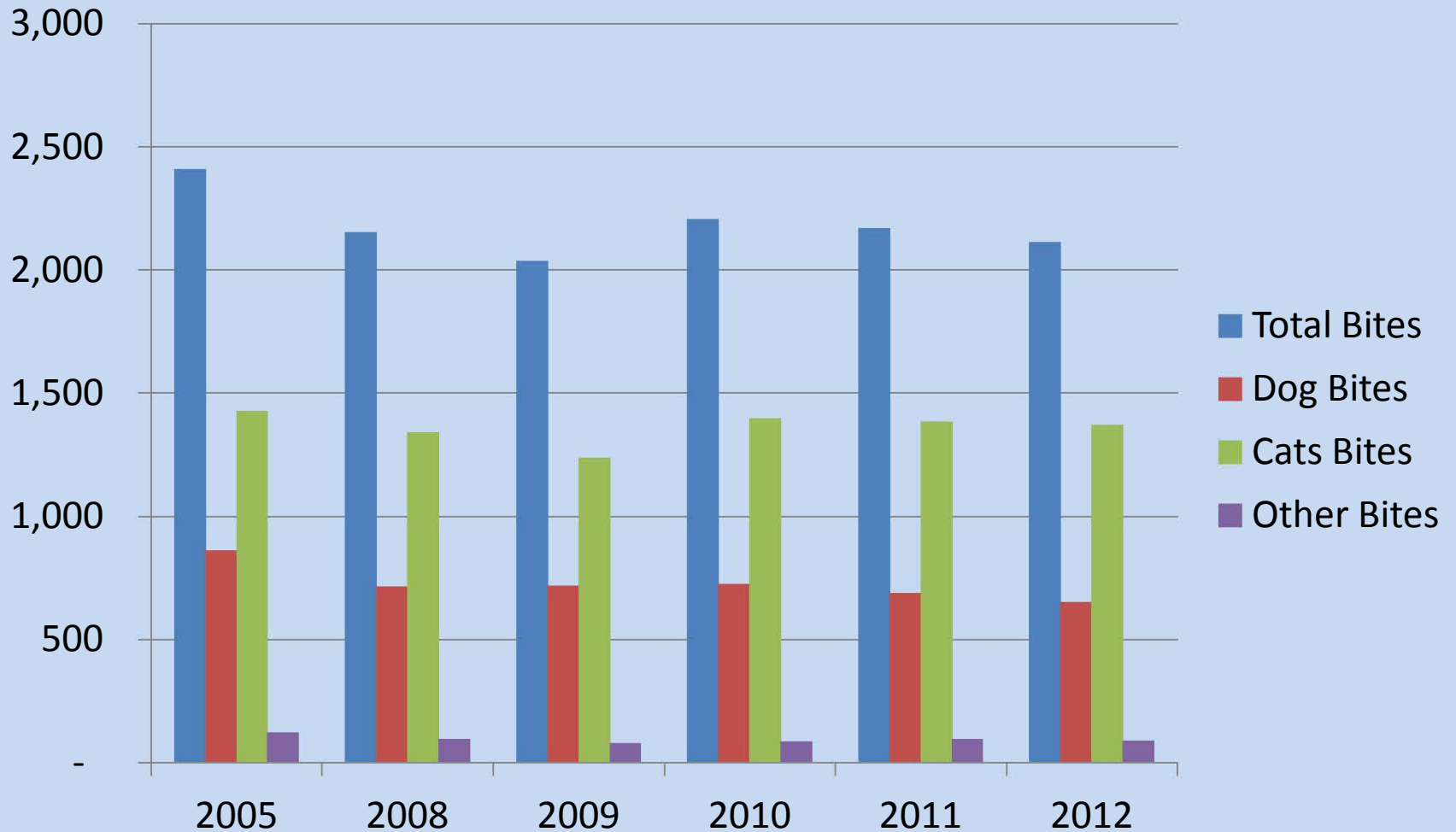
Citations

Number of Citations Issued



Compliance citations began in 2012

Reported Animal Bites



Dangerous Dog Investigations

- On average, there are approximately 15 open dangerous dog investigations.
- There are currently 8 dogs declared dangerous in Pinellas County at this time.
- Most cases do not meet the requirements outlined in Florida State Statute 767.

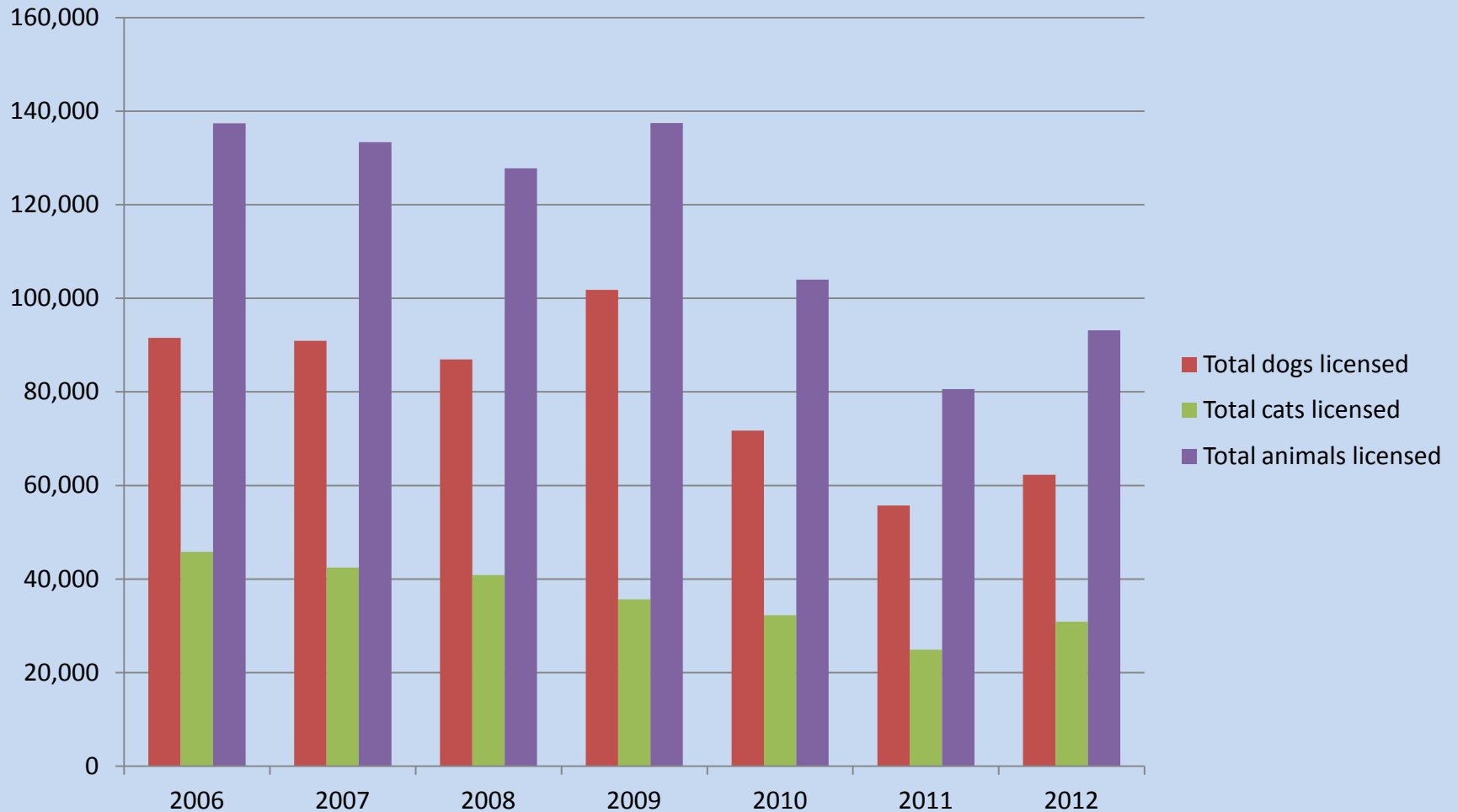


Licensing and Rabies Control

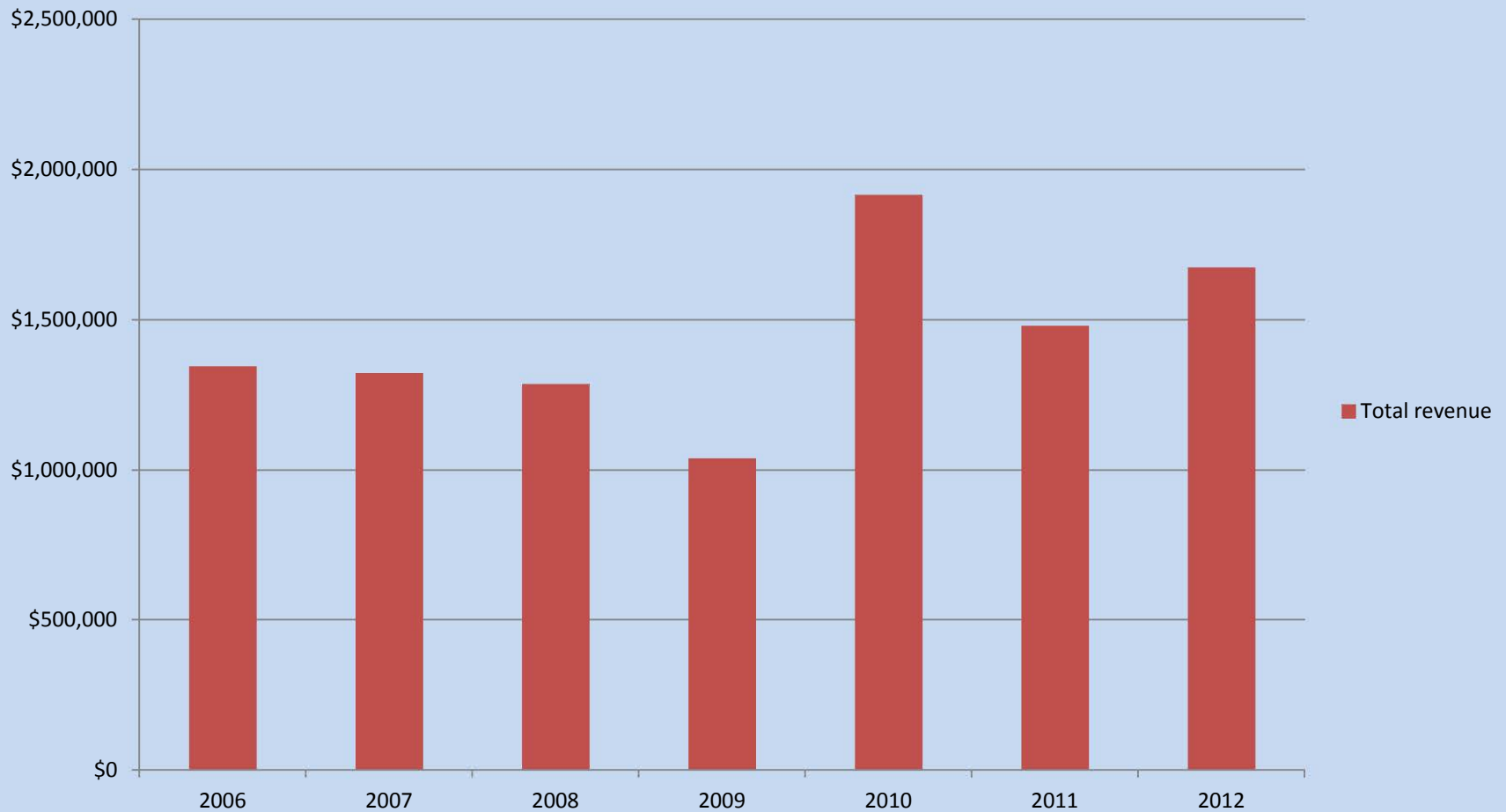
Licensing and Rabies Control

- Required for all dogs and cats
- Rabies control
 - Requires current rabies vaccination
- Facilitates lost pet reunification
 - ~30 animals reunited with owners on a daily basis by citizens with license tag numbers on found dogs and cats
- Licenses available at 121 veterinary clinic partners and PCAS

Licenses Issued

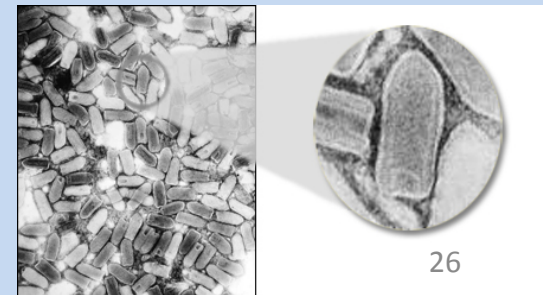


Licensing Revenue



Rabies

- A preventable viral disease of mammals that is usually transmitted through the bite of an infected animal
- Affects the central nervous system causing disease in the brain and death within days of the onset of symptoms
- Considered endemic in Florida

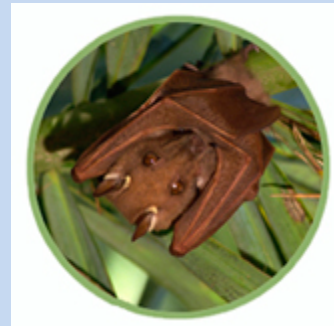


Rabies

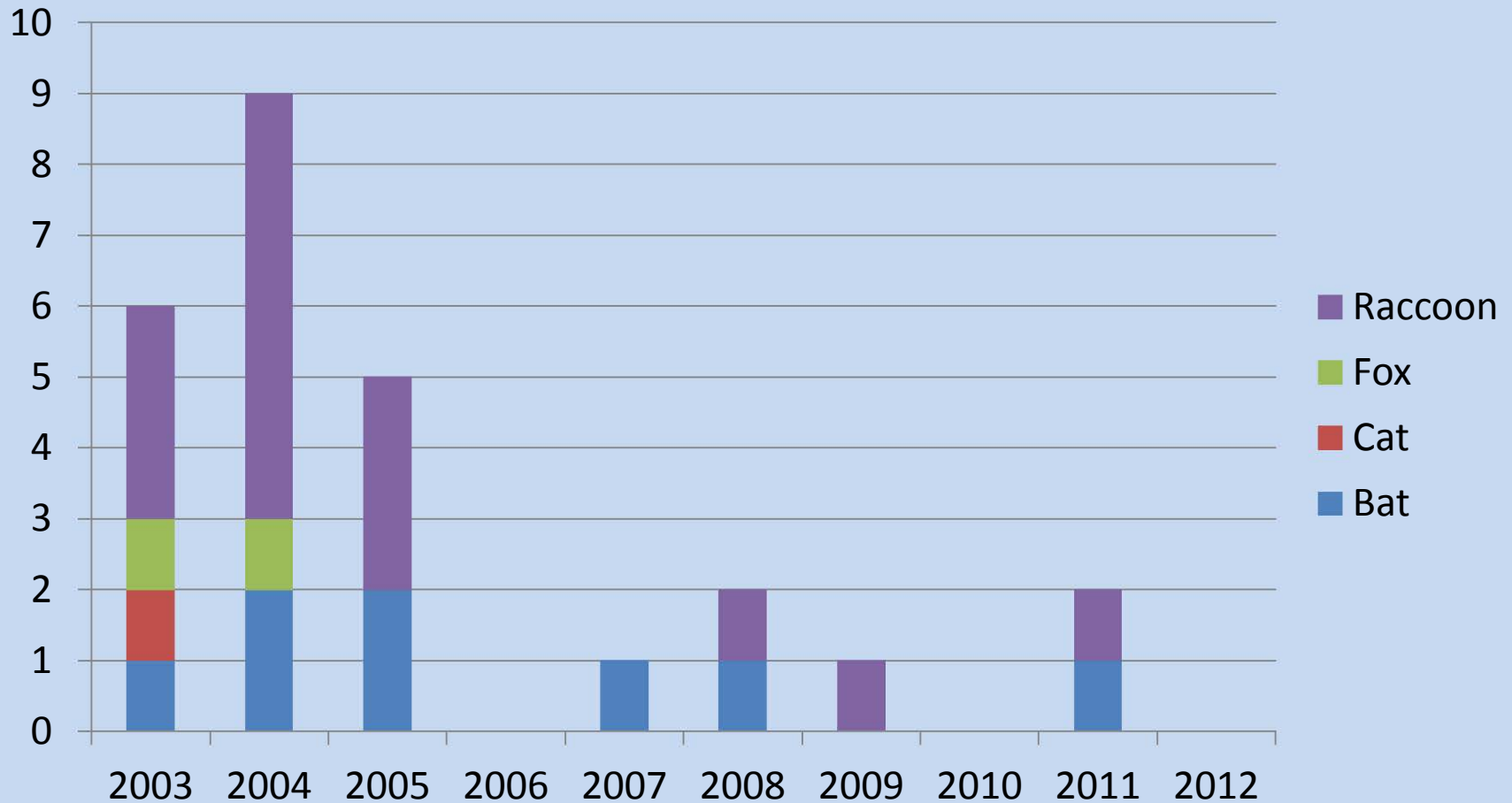
- Wildlife reservoir in FL
 - Raccoons

- Vectors

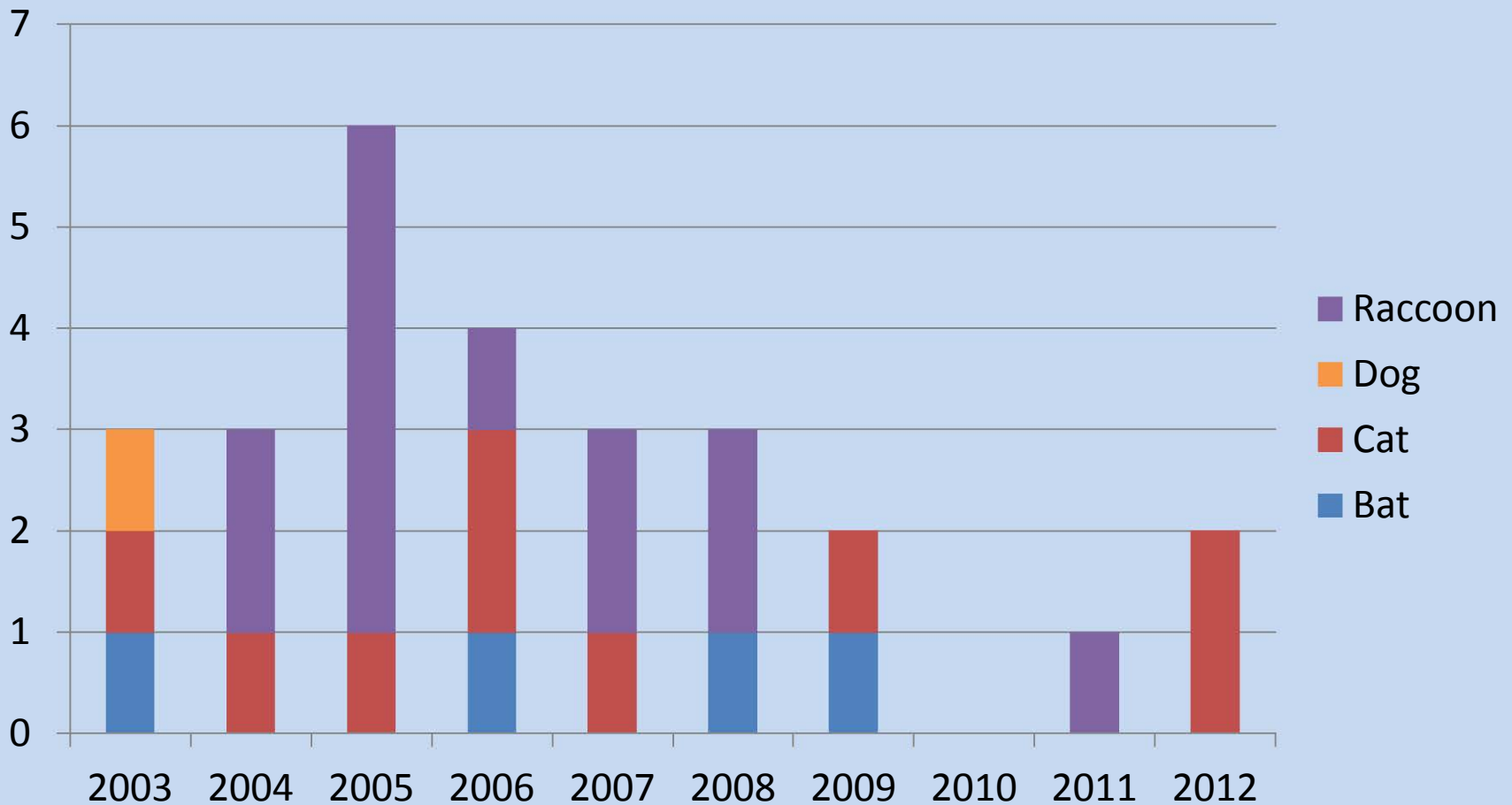
- Bats
- Cats
- Dogs
- Foxes
- Horses



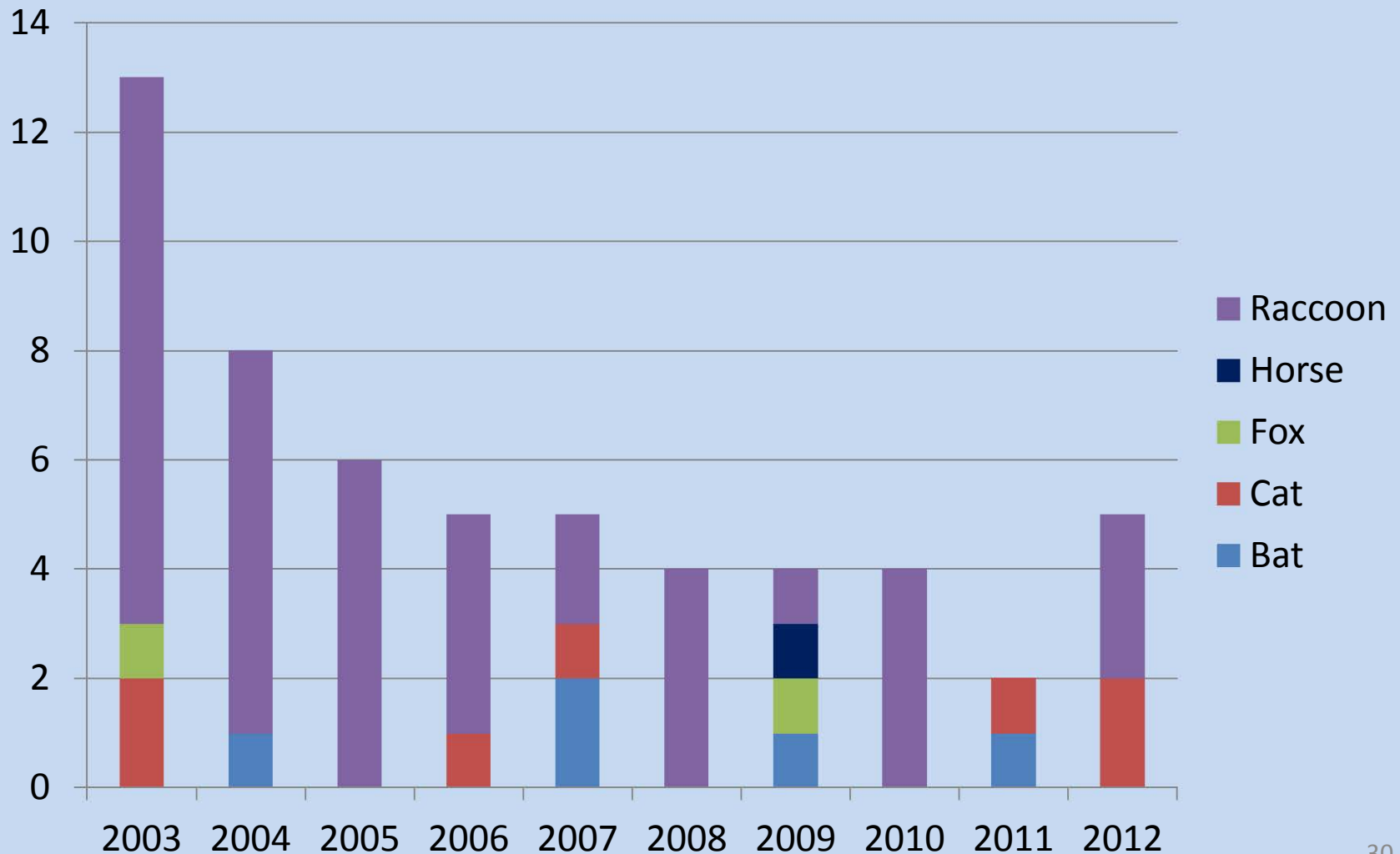
Rabies Cases in Pinellas County



Rabies Cases in Pasco County



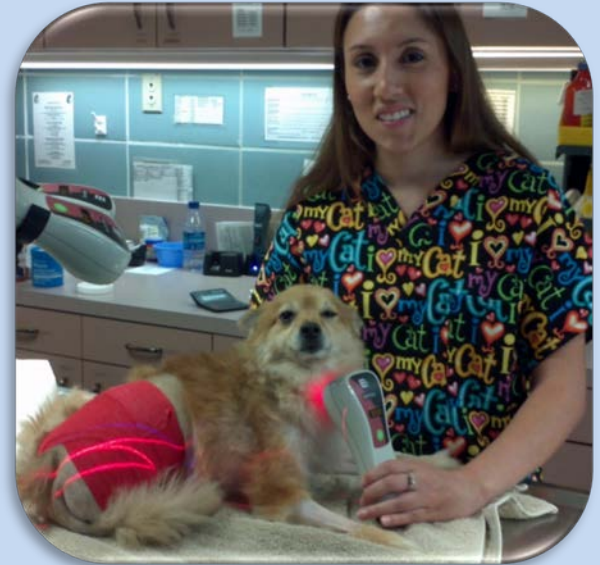
Rabies Cases in Hillsborough County



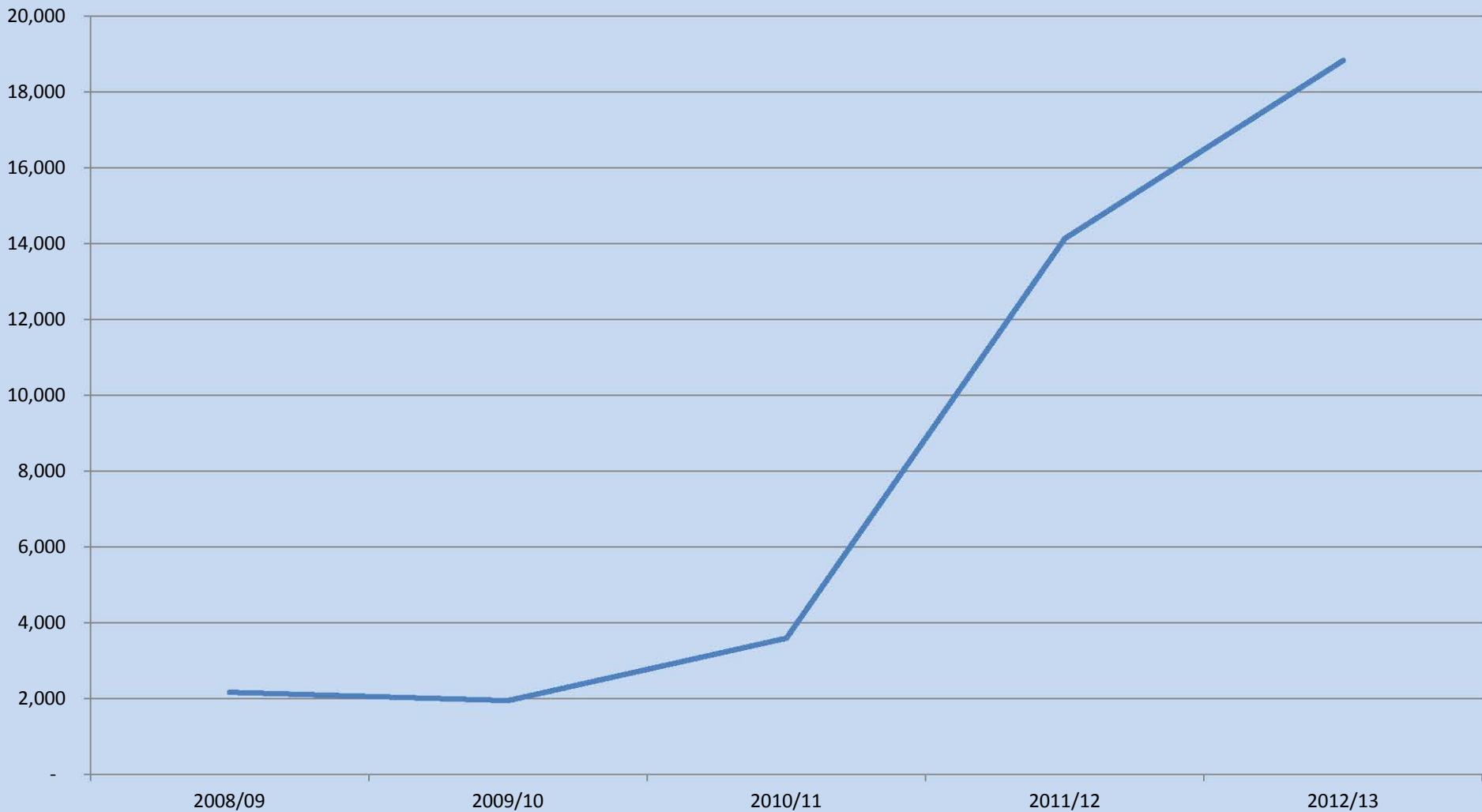
VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteerism

- Volunteers are essential for daily operation
 - Walking
 - Grooming
 - Socialization
 - Social media
 - Special events
 - Foster



Number of Volunteer Hours



2012/13 represents YTD amounts

Disaster Response

- 3 Pet friendly shelters
 - North County – Dunedin Middle School
 - Mid County – Oak Grove Middle School
 - South County – Thurgood Marshall Middle School
- Special needs citizens animal transport and housing
- Post disaster animal control



Service Priority Levels

HIGH

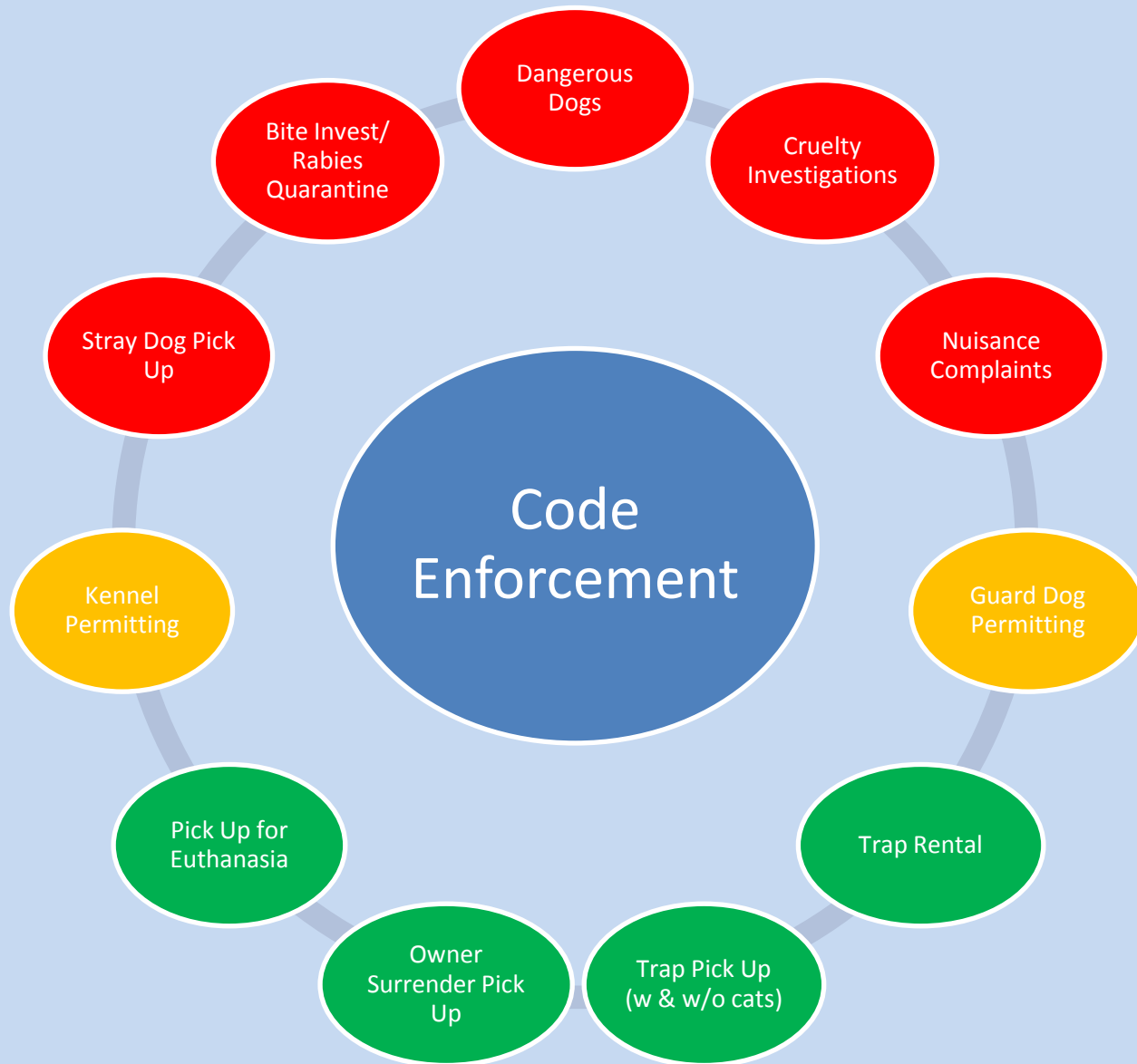
- Bite and Dangerous Dog Investigations
- Stray Dog Pickup
- Rabies Quarantine
- Code Enforcement and Citations
- Licensing
- Cruelty Investigations
- Live Outcomes (Adoptions, Returns to Owners, Transfers)
- Spay / Neuter / Microchipping of Adoption Animals
- Pet Friendly Shelters
- Special Needs Animals During Disasters

MEDIUM

- Kennel Permitting
- Guard Dog Permitting
- Owner Requested Euthanasia

LOW

- Owner Surrendered Animals
- Rabies Vaccinations and Microchipping at PCAS
- Cremation of Owned Animals
- Pick-up of Owner Surrendered Animals
- Pick-up of Owner Requested Euthanasia
- Cat Trap Rentals
- Pick-up of Trapped Cats



Challenges

- Increasing live release rate as an open admissions shelter
- Maintaining a healthy, clean and safe kennel facility
- Varying levels of “Responsible Pet Ownership”
- Pet Overpopulation (particularly of cats and certain dog breeds)
- Housing/insurance restrictions regarding certain dog breeds
- Labor intensiveness of cruelty cases
- Need for multi-species response (i.e. birds)
- Compassion fatigue
- Reduction in staff

Opportunities

- Organizational restructuring to maximize efficiency and effectiveness
- Streamlining services with primary partners
 - SPCA Tampa Bay
 - Humane Society of Pinellas
 - Other Partners
- Increasing community collaboration and education
- Improved technology (shelter and field vehicles)
- Further development of the Animal Welfare Trust Fund
- License automation and increased compliance
- Further increases in volunteerism and animal fostering
- Facility and vehicle upgrades

Base Ordinance Proposed Changes

- Remove rabies tags – License tag only
- Dangerous dog change (court case)
- Clarification of cruelty vs. neglect
 - Definition of shelter and water
 - Penalty for failure to provide shelter and water
- Mandatory sterilization at owner's expense for any animal impounded at large a second time
- Housekeeping

Base Ordinance Proposed Changes

Hold Time Adjustments

- Possible owner info animal: No change, remains 7 days
- Dogs over 16 weeks: No change, remains 4 days
- Single puppies under 16 weeks: Decrease from 4 days to 2 days
- Litters of puppies under 16 weeks: Decrease from 4 days to 0 days
- Cats over 16 weeks: Decrease from 4 days to 3 days
- Kittens under 16 weeks: Decrease from 4 days to 0 days

Trap Neuter Vaccinate Return (TNVR)



Free Roaming Cats

(Estimated 92,367 – 172,687)

Strays

- Owned
- Domesticated
- Free roaming

Feral Cats

- Unowned
- Unsocialized
- Free roaming



Citizens' Work Group on Feral and Free Roaming Cats 2008-2009

- Recommended Initiatives:
 - Humanely reduce current cat population
 - Prevent free roaming cats from becoming feral
 - Elevate status of feral/free roaming cat back to that of a companion/pet with a home and responsible owner
 - Education campaign
 - Improve access to spay/neuter
 - Support current animal code
 - Private humane organizations to organize TNR programs

Board Action: Acknowledgment and Acceptance of the report on December 8, 2009.

BCC Work Session 2012

- Presentation on trap/neuter/release and mandatory spay and neuter
- Work session directives
 - Work with various stakeholders
 - Work on a voluntary spay and neuter program (a solution everyone agrees with)
 - Analyze increased license fees as a possible funding source

Trap Neuter Vaccinate Return (TNVR)

- Feral and free roaming cats humanely trapped
- Spayed or neutered, vaccinated for rabies +/- other medical treatment
- Left ear tipped
- Returned to community of origin



Current PCAS Shelter Practices

- Citizens are loaned traps
 - Trapped cats accepted at no charge
- Held a minimum of 4 days
 - Available for reclaim by owner
 - Hold time for kittens of 2 days due to disease risks
- Examined after holding period
 - Friendly cats placed up for adoption
 - Feral cats humanely euthanized
 - Extensive foster network utilized to socialize feral kittens in preparation for adoption

TNVR: Legal Aspects per Pinellas County Animal Control Code Ch. 14

- Feeding Strays (Sec. 14-30)
 - Prohibits feeding that attracts cats and wildlife causing nuisance
- Abandonment (Sec. 14-33)
 - Prohibits the release of animals non indigenous to FL without a permit from FWC
- Rabies Vaccination and Licensure (Sec. 14-61)
 - Requires all dogs and cats to have a current rabies vaccination and County license
- At Large (Sec. 14-63)
 - Prohibits dogs and cats from running at large

TNVR: Concerns

- Animal welfare and quality of life
- Wildlife impacts
 - Predatory behavior of cats
 - Human feeding of feral cats attracts more cats and wildlife



TNVR: Concerns

- Public health and safety
 - Rabies
 - Toxoplasmosis
 - Hookworms
 - Roundworms
- Negative effect on efforts to improve responsible pet ownership
- Private property owners' rights



TNVR: Considerations/Next Steps

- Promote Pinellas as a community where all cats live indoors. This should always be our goal.
 - Healthier and safer for humans, cats, and wildlife
- Recognize euthanasia of feral cats at PCAS is having no significant impact on the total population of feral cats in Pinellas County
- Recognize TNVR of feral cats at PCAS would have no significant impact on the total population of feral cats in Pinellas County

TNVR: Considerations/Next Steps

- Prefer no feral/free roaming cats, but:
 - Choice: Sterilized feral cat vs. unsterilized feral cat
 - Prefer: Cat sterilized and vaccinated for rabies
- Aware many citizens currently participating in TNR “under the radar”
- **THE QUESTION: Should/can Pinellas County become more TNVR friendly while still protecting public safety, public health, wildlife, and private property owners’ rights?**

Conditions to Consider a TNVR Pilot Program

- Credible/responsible non-profit group (501c3) must provide a viable business plan to include:
 - Budget and sustainable funding sources
 - Insurance and liability provisions
 - Cat colony management parameters insuring reduction of number of colonies and number of cats within colonies and method for independent validation
 - Other critical metrics that will define program success and method for independent validation
 - Geographic area of pilot project (entire county vs. targeted area)
 - Policies/procedures to ensure protection of public lands, parks, beaches, schools and wildlife areas
 - Efforts to ensure respect for private property rights
 - Methodology to ensure friendly stray cats and all kittens are immediately separated from colonies or the outdoors for adoption or return to owner
 - Efforts to promote importance of keeping cats indoors

Conditions to Consider a TNVR Pilot Program

- Business plan must be approved prior to the initiation of any change in County Ordinance provisions or pilot program.
 - If approved, operation of Pilot Program would be contingent upon adherence to all aspects of the business plan.
- Under any approved pilot program, individual citizens will have the option to trap any cat on their property and transport to PCAS. Said cats will undergo the standard examination process.

MSN: Mandatory Spay/Neuter

- Common provisions:
 - Requires spay or neuter at age 4-6 months
 - Prohibits the sale of unsterilized animals over 4-6 months
 - Exemptions granted for working, service, breeding, show, and hunting dogs or for health reasons
 - Increased licensing fees or citations issued for animals in violation

MSN: Current PCAS Shelter Practices

- All adoption dogs and cats are spayed or neutered prior to adoption
- Incentives offered for voluntary spay or neuter of pets that are reclaimed by owners including bite cases and dangerous dogs
- Low cost spay & neuter of cats for owners on public assistance
- Education on importance of spay & neuter
 - Citizens, volunteers, & students
- Reduced impound fees for sterilized animals

MSN: Legal Aspects per Pinellas County Animal Control Code Ch. 14

- Not addressed

Claims Made in Opposition to MSN

- MSN has led to decreased rabies vaccination and licensing compliance in other communities
- License revenue decreased
- Does not address accessibility of services, which is a major barrier to voluntary spay & neuter
- Increased shelter costs
 - Cost of facilitating spay and neuter for the public
 - Families who cannot afford to comply would be forced to surrender their pets
- Enforceability and public compliance
 - Increased enforcement costs

Claims Made in Opposition to MSN

- Veterinary support
 - Decision to spay/neuter not made through consultation between pet owner and veterinarian
 - Advantages of spay/neuter on population level clearly outweigh disadvantages, but not necessarily for an individual pet
 - Owners less likely to seek veterinary care for their pets if in violation of MSN ordinances



MSN: Considerations/Next Steps

- Continue to work with partners, advocates and the Low Cost S/N Committee on voluntary low cost spay and neuter initiatives
 - Fall 2013: Targeted S/N “Mash Clinic” (PCAS, SPCA Tampa Bay, Humane Society of Pinellas)
 - Seek out grants
 - Seek out corporate sponsors
 - Possible use of increased licensing revenue from increased compliance for additional “targeted” sterilization programs
 - Support SPCA Tampa Bay’s efforts to build a low cost spay and neuter clinic
 - Support the Humane Society of Pinellas’ “Neuter Scooter”
- Mandatory sterilization at owner’s expense for any animal impounded at large for the second time
- Consider an increased license fee for intact animals

Questions????

