

Workers' strike saves Bluffers Park cats - for now

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STAFF REPORTER

The feral cats of Bluffers Park have made lots of new friends lately, including many who want to help feed and look after them.

We've written twice about the colony of 20 to 30 felines after learning of a threat by Toronto Animal Services to remove them, based on a questionable complaint that four wild cats launched an unprovoked attack on a leashed bull terrier and scratched its snout.

Robert Brydges, one of the area residents who have cared for the cats for 10 years, told us animal services had first demanded the cats be licensed, then decided they were a menace to the public and had to go.

Animal services denied making the threat, then hastily arranged a meeting with Brydges and another caregiver after our first story, for which they were asked to write a "proposal" on how they intend to continue caring for the cats.

The stories provoked dozens of outraged comments from readers online at [thestar.com](http://www.thestar.com).

Brydges, who has started a petition asking that the cats be left alone, says the response from the public has been "overwhelming," with people showing up just to see them, including two who told him they drove all the way from Newmarket.

"I've had strangers call me up just to offer their support or say they'd like to help out with looking after them, or contribute to the cost of feeding them," Brydges says.

Among them is an 82-year-old woman who Brydges says called and arranged to meet him so she could hand off a stockpile of food, adding that the woman drove all the way from the west end to get to the park, at the foot of Brimley Rd., in Scarborough.

We spotted three of the cats lounging on waterfront boulders yesterday while people tiptoed up to them for a look. Feral cats normally scatter when approached, but these are so well cared for they're practically domesticated.

It's quite a stretch to believe that four of them ganged up on a bull terrier minding its business.

The cats have become unexpected beneficiaries of the civic workers' strike, with workers not expected back any time soon. After all, there's nobody to run them out of the park – for now.

What's broken in your neighbourhood? Wherever you are in Greater Toronto, we want to know. To email us, go to



JACK LAKEY/TORONTO STAR

Dozens of feral cats live in Scarborough's Bluffers Park. People drive from as far as Newmarket just to see them.

thestar.com/the fixer and click on the "submit a problem" link. Or call us at 416-869-4823.