

# Does the UI even know what really happened to the cats?

**Devin Rokyta/Moscow-Pullman Daily News**

The University of Idaho this past spring trapped seven sickly feral cats on its campus and found all of the animals happy and loving homes.

What a great story - if only it weren't fiction.

What we know of the real story is that the university's campus veterinarian, Peter Autenried, trapped and euthanized the animals to eliminate an "infestation" around Morrill Hall. Autenried said some of the animals were kittens, but they "had snotty noses and some of them were pretty skinny, so we decided to euthanize them." None was checked for a microchip.

Autenried said the university had to euthanize the cats due to a lack of an appropriate facility to care for them, but Humane Society of the Palouse Executive Director Autumn St. Armand said her organization had not been approached for help and that she had heard from people who would have been willing to take the animals.

Stefany Bales, executive director of university communications and marketing, told the Daily News last week the university asked for and received permission from Idaho Fish and Game to conduct the trapping, and that it had sought assistance from HSOP prior to catching and euthanizing the animals. A Fish and Game official, however, told the Daily News on Monday the agency had not granted the UI permission to place the traps, and a spokesperson with the Humane Society said the organization first had conversations with the university about the cats late last week.

Defending such senseless acts - and apparently without all the facts at hand - is a very difficult job, but one the university evidently feels necessary.

An online petition at Change.org demanding that the university stop the practice was started Thursday and was approaching its goal of 10,000 signatures Monday. For those keeping count, that's nearly as many people as currently attend the UI.

Fortunately, all the publicity seems to have gotten the attention of the folks at the UI, as a university spokesperson said Monday the institution had removed all the traps, a claim that has not been verified.

The next time the university has an animal problem it should not use lethal means as its first option. There are almost always better alternatives, ones that have much happier endings and that don't give the university a big black eye.