

Bethel Friends of Canines
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Dear Tribal and City Leadership

On behalf of Bethel Friends of Canines (BFK9), we would like to introduce our organization and express our interest in partnering with your community to address the growing issue of animal overpopulation and loose dogs in the YK Delta region.

Bethel Friends of Canines is a nonprofit animal rescue based in Bethel, serving communities throughout the YK Delta. Our mission is to reduce animal overpopulation and improve public and animal health through rescue, spay/neuter services, and community collaboration. We take in dogs and cats that do not have homes or whose owners are no longer able to care for them, and we work hard to provide humane, practical solutions that benefit both people and animals.

A major part of our work is providing no-cost spay and neuter services. We host free clinics in Bethel and travel to villages to provide on-site clinics when possible. In addition, we routinely transport animals from villages to Bethel for surgery and then return them home — all at no cost to the owners. These efforts are aimed at reducing unwanted litters, aggressive animal behavior, and the number of loose animals in our communities.

As you know loose dogs create real problems in villages. They get into subsistence foods that families have worked hard to harvest and prepare. They scatter trash around our communities harming the ecosystems. They form packs that can be intimidating or dangerous, especially for elders and children. There is also public health risks associated with dog bites and potential rabies exposure. When dogs are allowed to roam and breed freely, the cycle of overpopulation continues, worsening each year.

An often-overlooked impact of this issue is the effect it has on children. Children in villages witness injured and neglected dogs because of the uncontrolled population. In some communities, they are also exposed to culling practices that are deeply traumatic, creating fear, emotional distress and can normalize suffering in ways that no child should have to experience. Addressing loose dogs proactively and humanely is not only an animal welfare issue it is a child welfare and community health issue as well.

We recognize that the loose dog and overpopulation problem in our region has become overwhelming, and that lasting solutions require local leadership and community-driven policies. In other rural communities, we have seen positive results when animal control strategies include:

- Establishing and consistently enforcing animal ordinances
- Implementing monetary fines for loose dogs, with funds returned to the community
- Actively supporting and promoting spay/neuter options

BFK9 understands that every community is different, and we deeply respect local decision-making. Our goal is not to dictate solutions, but to offer support and partnership. We are ready to assist in whatever way is most helpful — whether that means education, spay/neuter services, logistical support, or collaborative planning. Several communities VPSO and TPO programs already have partnered with us and are sending dogs in regularly. They have seen the impact it makes in the community.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you, listen to your concerns, and explore how we might work together to improve public safety, animal welfare, and overall community well-being.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration. We look forward to the possibility of working together.

Respectfully,

Bethel Friends of Canines