

Every year animal control organizations, police departments, veterinarians, wildlife rehabilitators and NCWRC officials face the dilemma of dealing with orphaned raccoons. All receive calls from citizens concerning baby raccoons that they find. There is no channel to deal with baby raccoons and other rabies vector species that is acceptable to many of these citizens. There should be.

Wildlife Rehabilitators of North Carolina (WRNC) proposes that the North Carolina Resources Commission establish a permit that would allow specially trained rehabilitators to take in and care for rabies vector species. Our organization is prepared to arrange the training for rehabilitators who wish to obtain the permit, and we have set aside the necessary funds to finance this training. We propose that these rehabilitators receive a full rabies pre-exposure series, monitor their titers every two years, boosting the vaccine as appropriate, complete RVS specific training, and have proper caging in place prior to applying for the permit. We wish to provide a way for the public to turn over the animals with confidence that the animals will receive appropriate care. Without such an alternative citizens often try to raise the animals themselves, risking exposing themselves and others to parasites and zoonotic diseases that may be life threatening.

Every other state on the east coast has established a rabies vector species program such as the one we propose. It is time for North Carolina to do so. Establishing an RVS program is sound public health planning and makes sense for the many people who are faced with dealing with RVS problems every year.