



**REPORT TO THE PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION & PROTECTIVE SERVICES
COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, 22 JUNE 2011**

SUBJECT **DEER CONTROL**

ISSUE

Update on response from province on regional deer control measures and options for future actions.

BACKGROUND

A report was presented to the January Planning, Transportation and Protective Services committee (PT&PSC) on January 26, 2011. Staff presented a report outlining the regional concern regarding the increase in the deer population and the rise in the number of public complaints regarding ungulate damage to gardens, landscaping and urban forests. There appears to be an increase in ungulate vehicle collisions. With the increasing animal population there is a concern regarding the potential human and animal health impacts related to animal associated diseases, and human/ungulate conflicts.

At that time the committee discussion indicated that the issue was under the jurisdiction of the province and that the province should be strongly encouraged to develop a comprehensive deer management plan. The committee also noted that they did not support funding a regional study or management plan, that additional scientific information was required and the economic impacts on the rural farming community were a concern.

The PT&PSC passed a motion which recommended to the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board:

“That the CRD Planning, Transportation and Protective Services committee concerns regarding the effect of urban deer population be expressed to the province with the recommendation to have them develop a deer management plan including a public consultation framework and funding.”

On March 9, 2011 a letter was submitted to the Ministry of Environment Compliance division outlining the regional concern and need for a management plan and requesting the Ministry to develop a comprehensive provincial deer management plan (Appendix 1). This has resulted in a response from the Ministry dated April 20, 2011 (Appendix 2). In this letter the Ministry acknowledges increasing human-deer conflicts in urban areas. They express regret that the CRD will not be establishing an Urban Deer Management Advisory committee. They indicate that if such a committee were established the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations staff could have an active role in developing strategies and management options. They indicate that while Ministry staff cannot lead such processes, they will encourage and facilitate community involvement and leadership.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Direct staff to prepare the terms of reference for an Ungulate Management Plan including a public consultation framework and seek out partnership interests to prepare and fund the plan.
2. Direct staff to examine the CRD Animal Control Bylaw to determine if any amendments can be made that would help control deer populations and consult with municipalities on a potential 'regional model bylaw'.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

As outlined in the January 26 staff report solving ungulate conflicts will likely include: changing stakeholder attitudes or behaviours; developing community capacity to increase participation in management decisions; establishing measureable management objectives for each community; modifying deer behaviour; modifying human behaviour; reducing herd size; and amending provincial and municipal regulations to facilitate management interventions. No single technique will be universally appropriate and that complexities of deer management and limitations on available interventions make quick-fix solutions unlikely. Further, because both the positive and negative values associated with ungulates are so high, setting management goals and determining treatment options can be very difficult. This issue affects all municipalities and electoral areas as the wildlife populations and range are not exclusive to any one jurisdiction. An integrated management program will require action by the province, municipalities, and the general public.

Should the CRD want to pursue animal control measures consideration should be given to the preparation of a management plan to determine the extent of the animal problem, identify trends in animal populations and issues, identify the range of the control measures supported by the region's residents, and the financial implications of implementing the plan. Such a plan would require an extensive public consultation plan as the need for full public consideration of the issue and potential options will be required.

Should the Region wish to actively address the conflicts and issues relating to the increasing deer population, staff recommend that an inter-municipal cross departmental committee be established to prepare the terms of reference for a management plan including baseline data collection to determine the extent and severity of the problem, public consultation plan, management option evaluation criteria as well as project monitoring criteria.

Provincial funding may be available to support the committee to develop the management plan. From the response from the province, it appears that staff from the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations will be available to assist the committee.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Maintaining the "status quo" or do nothing option will result in increased local and provincial government costs related to responding to increased complaints, public and private costs related to increased property and vehicle damage and perhaps human injury or fatalities. There will be administrative costs to implement any control measures and depending upon their success the complaints and damage may continue to increase. The primary costs associated with establishing an inter-municipal cross departmental committee and developing terms of

reference for a Deer Control Management Plan will be staff time. Provincial funding may be available to undertake needed scientific work and for public consultation processes.

The CRD is undertaking a Regional Canada Goose Strategy at an estimated cash and in-kind contribution cost of \$225,000. The out of pocket cost is estimated to be approximately \$125,000. The costs are funded from the municipalities and agencies involved and through a Ministry grant of \$70,000. Due to the need to create an ungulate inventory, to determine the type and extent of the ungulate problems, and as many of the potential management options are very controversial a broad public consultation process is required. Therefore it is likely that a regional ungulate management plan would have a cash and in-kind cost of at least the same amount. While in kind contributions are likely, the CRD would have to take the lead on seeking partnerships with the province, municipalities and agencies. Grants may be able to provide some out of pocket funding, however if this issue is a priority and work on the management plan is to proceed in a relatively short time frame, the CRD would have to consider funding of up to \$125,000 and evaluate staff resources and the work plan for the Regional Planning division budget as part of the 2012 budget process.

CONCLUSION

If the CRD wants to reduce the damage and conflict issues and complaints associated with the increasing ungulate population then management options need to be considered and implemented. At a minimum staff can review the existing bylaws to identify potential opportunities for animal management options to be considered. If more substantive action is support by the Board, staff can prepare terms of reference for an integrated animal control management plan including a public consultation framework.

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Transportation and Protective Services Committee recommends to the Board:

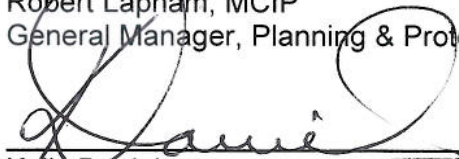
1. That staff be directed to establish an inter-municipal cross departmental committee to work with the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operations to prepare the terms of reference for an Ungulate Management Plan including a public consultation framework and seek out partnership interests to prepare and fund the plan to be considered as part of the 2012 Regional Planning budget.



June Klassen, MCIP
Manager, Local Area Planning



Robert Lapham, MCIP
General Manager, Planning & Protective Services



Kelly Daniels
Chief Administrative Officer
Concurrence



Making a difference...together

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March 9, 2011

Mr. Tom Clark, Executive Director
Ministry of Environment
Compliance Division
Box 9337, Stn Prov Govt
Victoria, BC V8W 9M1

Dear Mr. Clark:

RE: Report to the Capital Regional District Board on Deer Control, February 16, 2011

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of the Capital Regional District's (CRD) position on responsibility for deer control. Increases in the population of ungulates, deer in particular, are apparent throughout the Region as evidenced by a rise in public complaints regarding damage to gardens, landscaping and urban forests as well as a rise in deer-vehicle collisions. This trend prompted a staff report prepared for consideration by the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee (the committee) and subsequently by the Board.

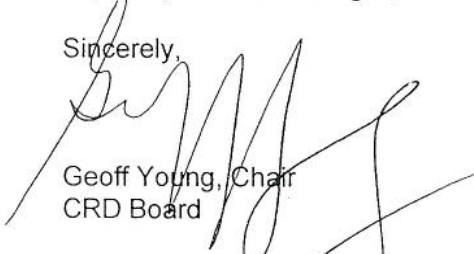
At its meeting of February 16, 2011 the CRD Board passed the following resolution:

That CRD Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee concerns regarding the effect of urban and rural deer population be expressed to the Province with a strong and urgent recommendation to have them develop a comprehensive provincial deer management plan including a public consultation framework and funding.

It is the clearly expressed position of the committee and Board that deer control is within the jurisdiction of the Province. Further, there is a sense of immediacy to the need for a plan to address the deer population, in accordance with guidance given by the Hesse report, recently issued by the Ministry of Environment. While the committee and Board do not believe that this responsibility falls to municipal or regional governments, they agree that a management plan is necessary to address the issues associated with the deer population. The CRD is not in favour of committing resources to the development of an ungulate management plan; however, CRD staff is available to discuss the matter further with ministry staff.

Should you wish clarification or further discussion on this matter, please contact Mr. Robert (Bob) Lapham, General Manager, Planning and Protective Services at 250.360.3285.

Sincerely,


Geoff Young, Chair
CRD Board

cc Mr. Edward Illi, Chief Conservation Officer, Ministry of Environment
Ms Lana Popham, MLA Saanich South
Mr. Kelly Daniels, Chief Administrative Officer, CRD
Mr. Robert (Bob) Lapham, General Manager, Planning and Protective Services, CRD

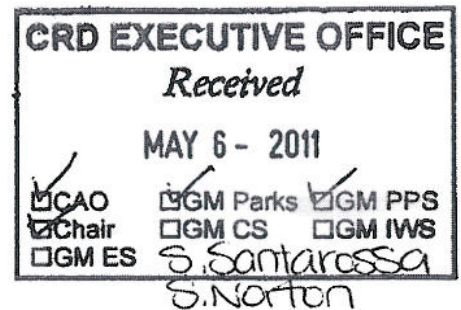
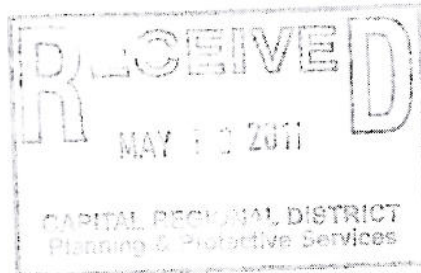




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APR 20 2011

Geoff Young, Chair
CRD Board
Capital Regional District
625 Fisgard Street
Victoria BC V8W 2S6



Dear Mr. Young:

Thank you for letter of March 9, 2010, regarding urban deer issues in the Capital Regional District.

We certainly recognize that in some British Columbia (BC) communities, there are increasing numbers of human-deer conflicts in urban areas. This is not unique to BC; it is a North American phenomenon. Deer inhabit residential areas because they feel protected from predators and have access to an abundance of food. Urban sprawl is also contributing to this trend. Deer are not considered dangerous wildlife but can act aggressively to protect themselves or their fawns. As with any wildlife, they must be given respect and space.

The Conservation Officer Service will respond to deer conflicts if public safety is at risk. Conservation Officers have responded to reports of aggressive deer incidents on several occasions, however, in many cases the offending deer had moved on, could not be identified or could not be safely captured or shot.

This is not an easy situation to resolve and our primary focus is on conflict reduction. Deer readily adapt to human activity and are sometimes seen in unlikely places. It is important that homeowners understand the consequences of attracting deer into town. Feeding can increase the dependence of deer on people, lead to aggressive behaviour and facilitate disease transmission. Humans will have to adapt and co-exist with wildlife using the same piece of land.

I understand that you are familiar with the *British Columbia Urban Ungulate Conflict Analysis* and it is unfortunate that you will not be establishing an Urban Deer Management Advisory Committee. Ministry of Environment (MoE) and Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) staff have an active role in the process of developing

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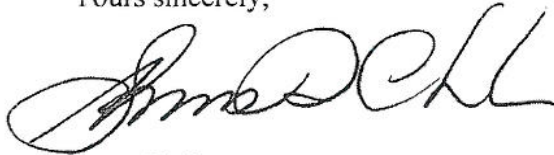
strategies through participation on committees and, as capacity allows, involvement in delivery of management options. MoE/MFLNRO staff will not lead these processes, but will encourage and facilitate community involvement and leadership. Communities are expected to develop their own deer management objectives with government oversight. Lessons learned through these initial efforts will be used to further develop this process and will be shared with other communities to assist with their initiatives.

We believe this direction will result in a consistent approach to community-led deer conflict management strategies. It gives communities the responsibility of leading the process which ensures broad community support for proposed management actions, and allows management strategies to reflect the unique biological and social conditions of individual communities. Successful resolution will involve cooperation and partnerships between all parties involved.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Mike Badry by phone at 250 356-9134, or by email at Mike.Badry@gov.bc.ca.

Thank you again for writing and we look forward to continuing toward effective management of this difficult issue.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Clark', written in a cursive style.

Tom Clark
Executive Director

cc: Chief Conservation Officer Edward Illi, Conservation Officer Service,
Ministry of Environment
Mike Badry, Wildlife Conflicts Prevention Coordinator, Conservation Officer Service,
Ministry of Environment