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CRD Regional Deer Management Strategy Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 12, 2012 – 4:00pm

Activity Room, Burnside-Gorge Community Centre, Victoria

Meeting Notes

Present:

Jocelyn Skrlac (Chair)
Robin Bassett
Richard Christiansen (left at 5:40pm)
Wendy Fox
Lisa Kadonaga
Sol Kinnis (arrived at 4:40pm)
Robert Moody (left at 6:10pm)
Patrick O'Rourke
Kerri Ward

Regrets:

Terry Michell
Phil Tom

Staff:

Jeff Weightman (Deer Management Project Manager, CRD Regional Planning)
Marg Misek-Evans (Senior Manager, CRD Regional Planning)
Corey Burger (Recording Secretary, CRD Regional Planning)
Jan Pezzaro (Facilitator)

1. Approval of Agenda

P.O'Rourke moved approval of the agenda. R. Moody seconded.

CARRIED

2. Review and Approval of Minutes of June 5, 2012

R. Moody noted that the current Minister of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations was the executive director of the British Columbia Agricultural Council, not the president of the Investment Agricultural Foundation, and that the notes on contraception should use the word contraception, not sterilization.

P. O'Rourke moved approval of the minutes. R. Moody seconded.

CARRIED

3. Correspondence



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J. Weightman noted that three submissions have been addressed to the CAG and been circulated by email.

R. Christiansen moved the correspondence accepted

CARRIED

4. Facilitated Discussion

J. Skrlac reintroduced J. Pezzaro who spoke about the upcoming goals, building on the Principles, Goals and Objectives that the CAG worked on during the June 5, 2012 meeting. J. Pezzaro talked about the need to categorize the 13 initial management criteria identified by the CAG into broader categories and prioritize the criteria. J. Pezzaro also spoke about developing a rating scale for the management options to evaluate the criteria for each of the three identified geographies urban, rural and agricultural.

The gallery requested that members of CAG speak up so they may listen to the conversation and inquired as to the absence of video cameras. M. Misek-Evans replied that filming was done was done by an independent volunteer, not CRD staff. The public were invited to move their chairs closer to the CAG and members and staff were asked to speak up.

J. Pezzaro introduced a group exercise to group criteria followed by a group discussion.

The CAG requested clarification on the purpose of evaluation and J. Pezzaro replied that it was to evaluate management options as identified in the Ministry of Environment BC Urban Ungulate Conflict Report and in the Regional Deer Management Strategy Table of Contents. J. Pezzaro said that further management options could be identified, added and evaluated in the future.

J. Pezzaro then gave an overview of the 13 evaluation criteria the CAG had generated and the 7 broader categories and added definitions of the larger categories.

The initial 13 evaluation criteria the CAG identified were:

- Efficacy of reducing conflict in identified geographic areas
- Public acceptability
- Humaneness of management options
- Sustainability of management options
- Options that are most effectively monitored
- Legal and regulatory changes to bylaws, provincial statutes or regulations, licensing, education
- Timely implementation of options
- Alignment of options with CRD corporate strategic vision (e.g., food security)
- Authoritative limitations (implementation in different geographies)



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- Public health considerations
- Cost
- Capacity to be grouped or paired with other options
- Jurisdictional barriers to implementation in specific geographic areas

The 7 larger categories:

- Effectiveness
- Feasibility
- Capability/Capacity
- Cost/Economic Impact
- Time
- Support/Enthusiasm
- Community Factors (Health, Safety and Environment)

The CAG then discussed the categorization of the evaluation criteria in the group exercise.

S. Kinnis arrived 4:40pm

The CAG then broke into two groups and both groups organized the 13 criteria into the 7 criteria categories.

The CAG discussed combining community factors with support and enthusiasm but chose to keep them separate. The two groups had different capability and feasibility groupings and decided to define feasibility to include both ease of implementation and potential problems during implementation while capability was defined as having the means to implement.

The CAG also noted that the 'time' category should include long and short term considerations and that measurement was an important issue. The CAG noted that support or enthusiasm could be separated by general public vs. policy makers and that they did not know details of the CRD corporate strategic plan or vision specifically for food security. The CAG also broadened the community factors to include First Nations and public education.

The CAG discussed joining of the community support and enthusiasm categories, noting that the 'community' meant all residents, while 'community factors' were more technical and 'enthusiasm' is more values-based. The CAG noted that health, safety and environment were very separate and that they may need to be kept separate. J. Pezzaro noted the ability of the CAG to footnote parts of evaluation and management options in the strategy.



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The CAG then discussed the 'community support' and 'enthusiasm' categories and considered the term 'awareness'.

J. Pezzaro then asked the CAG to rank the seven broader criteria, the CAG requested clarification of ranking the criteria and weighting. Further discussion examined 'effectiveness' as the most important criteria in addition to time. The CAG further discussed the impact of the numerical ranking of the criteria on the process.

J. Pezzaro spoke to the next steps of creating the evaluation matrix for the management options by using the criteria the CAG is developing currently. The CAG mentioned that the order for the criteria might be different based on the urban, rural or agricultural geographies and the CAG discussed why the separation was necessary, discussing how specific management options may not be available in specific geographies.

J. Pezzaro then asked the CAG to rank the evaluation criteria based on the three separate geographies.

5. The CAG broke for dinner from 5:40 to 6:15.

6. Facilitated Discussion Continued

J. Pezzaro discussed the ranking system with the CAG and several CAG members expressed preference for a high, medium, low approach rather than a strict numeric ranking.

J. Pezzaro then asked the CAG look at the 1st management option in the Regional Deer Management Strategy Terms of Reference: Hazing and Frightening, asking the group to apply the evaluation criteria. The CAG discussed the challenge of ranking with some of the information gaps including economic loss and the business of farming. J. Pezzaro reiterated that the CAG can rank the criteria and include footnotes. J Pezzaro also emphasized that the options were still in draft form.

The CAG requested the Expert Resources Working Group (ERWG) to provide a statistic or dollar amount on farm damage and J. Weightman mentioned that there wasn't one that pertained to specifically to deer. The CAG requested clarification regarding a 2011 Globe and Mail article that cited a figure of \$300,000 of damage. M. Misk-Evans mentioned that this topic has been one of continuous discussion with the ERWG and that the CAG can footnote the issue and make their recommendation subject to certain conditions such a further information gathering. An email response to the CAG indicated the value reported in the Globe and Mail was an error and misquotation.

ACTION: CRD Staff to ask the ERWG for more information re: farm damage'

ACTION: CRD Staff to look at 2011 Globe and Mail article and provide feedback



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J. Pezzaro asked the CAG about a preferred scale to use, they agreed on a 1 to 3 scale, with a 3 indicating the CAG felt it was more favourable.

J. Pezzaro then asked the CAG to rank Hazing and Frightening option using the developed 1 to 3 point scale for agricultural areas. After discussion, the CAG agreed on 1 as the effectiveness of all types of Hazing and Frightening.

The CAG then discussed the feasibility of Hazing and Frightening options in agricultural areas. The CAG discussed farm size and location of neighbours as well as proximity to roads as contributing factors. The CAG discussed sound-based hazing techniques including the use of cannons to scare birds by farms outside the CRD. The CAG discussed how the ranking would apply to the entire Saanich Peninsula, rather than a specific farm. The CAG also mentioned the issue of deer becoming habituated to sound-based hazing and frightening techniques. The CAG then agreed to score the feasibility of hazing and frightening as a 1.

The CAG then discussed capability of hazing and frightening in agricultural areas, noting that the Ministry of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations had banned dog-based hazing of deer and J. Weightman noted that they had tried it in the Interior. The CAG discussed noise bylaws for sound based hazing and the challenges of nearby neighbours being annoyed with the technique. The CAG agreed on score of 1 for Capability.

The CAG also discussed the cost of hazing and frightening in agricultural areas, and agreed that costs are low according to both the Ministry of Environment BC Urban Ungulate Conflict Report and the CAG's agricultural members. The CAG agreed to score Cost as 3.

The CAG discussed Support and Enthusiasm in agricultural areas, noting that it was low for neighbours. The CAG agreed on a score for Support and Enthusiasm as 1.

The CAG then discussed Community Factors for agricultural areas, including proximity to highways, effects of noise on other species such as owls, and time of year restrictions. The CAG agreed on a score for Community Factors of 1.

The CAG asked about footnotes, noting that while the reason for deciding on a specific management option may be qualitative, the initial matrix was quantitative. J. Pezzaro noted that final report will include a qualitative paragraph for each quantitative section that CRD Staff will write and the CAG will agree on.

The CAG discussed ranking the options separately or together, given the time required for the high number of management options and geographies. J. Pezzaro mentioned that she is going to ask the CAG to take a single option away to evaluate for the next meeting.



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The CAG then requested information on a potential device similar to a 'Mosquito' that could be used to repel deer or a visual frightening tool for deer similar to the cutouts that police use for speed control. J. Pezzaro mentioned that the deer management issue is on the rise and all these questions will become part of the body of literature for the subject, even if the CAG aren't able to recommend them for their report.

ACTION: CRD Staff to ask the ERWG if an auditory device such as the Mosquito existed for deer and if visual frightening was a possibility

The CAG asked about definitions of land types and asked if the CRD had a definition they could use. J. Weightman replied that the Regional Growth Strategy includes a Rural/Rural Residential Policy Area. J. Weightman also mentioned the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) but that in the West Shore, the UCB included large amounts of area that was not yet developed and that North Saanich lacked an UCB. J. Weightman then mentioned the sewer and water servicing boundaries but that this too didn't truly capture what the CAG needed. J. Weightman then suggested that the CAG agree on a common definition of rural such as a single-detached house on a large lot outside an agricultural area.

The CAG then evaluated Hazing and Frightening against the 7 criteria for both rural and urban areas.

The CAG discussed the effectiveness of Hazing and Frightening in an urban area noting that sound-based options were not available and dogs weren't easily available either, although small dogs can work. The CAG discussed how habituated deer in urban areas are to people and if sprinklers could work as a hazing technique. The CAG agreed to score Effectiveness and Feasibility both as 1. The CAG noted that in order to use dogs to haze they had to be loose in the yard to be effective. The CAG agreed to score Capability as a 1+, with the Cost as 3 and Time as 3.

The CAG then discussed the Support and Enthusiasm criteria for urban areas, noting that a different, higher, impact than in agricultural areas. The CAG also noted that Hazing and Frightening was a privatized solution and the issue of differing levels of support might lead to moving the deer problem between neighbours. The CAG discussed if there could be more support in urban areas due to wildlife impacts of deer overabundance, and greater human population. M. Misek-Evans requested clarification of the Community Factors and J. Pezzaro noted that Cost and Community Factors are both inverted, where 3 meant a low cost or a low impact, and 1 a high cost or impact. The CAG then agreed to score Community Factors as a 1.

The CAG then discussed Hazing and Frightening in rural areas, noting that rural places are more likely to have a dog. The CAG noted that Effectiveness is likely to be higher compared to agricultural areas as the actual areas that deer need to be moved from are



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smaller, encompassing often a house and a garden rather than a large field, and many rural areas have wild areas the deer could be frightened back into. The CAG discussed how valid the scoring system was, given the challenges with information. The CAG then agreed on 2 for Effectiveness.

The CAG then discussed Capability in rural areas and the various bylaws that impact dog ownership and noise, noting that even the relatively-rural Juan de Fuca Electoral Area has both dog and noise bylaws. The CAG then agreed on a score of 1.5 for Capacity and 3 for both Time and Support & Enthusiasm.

The CAG then discussed Support and Enthusiasm in rural areas, and considered the differences in support between the immediate residents and the larger region. The CAG agreed on 1.

The CAG considered Community Factors in rural areas and noted that there were fewer highways and observed that people may have concerns with environmental impact including grazing impacts from deer overabundance, and therefore might rate Hazing and Frightening higher. The CAG agreed with a score of 1.

The CAG agreed try to evaluate the fencing option over the week and return with their ranking with notes and that questions should go to J. Weightman before the next meeting so that they could be answered sooner. The CAG asked about electric vs. barrier fencing and J. Weightman replied that Sara Dubois of the ERWG suggested keeping the two different kinds of fencing separate as electric fencing was becoming more feasible. The CAG also noted that O. Schmidt presented similar ideas regarding electric fencing last week. The CAG also noted that the longer version of the Ministry of Environment BC Urban Ungulate Conflict Report had a good section on fencing.

7. Next Steps

J. Weightman spoke to the CAG about the need for public consultation and receiving feedback on the Objectives, Principles and Goals. He asked if the CAG could provide him feedback on the Objectives, Principles and Goals and then approve for posting to the website for public input at the next meeting.

The CAG asked how the consultation would be written and J. Weightman replied that the feedback form would be web-based. J. Weightman further said that a request would be sent to those who had submitted to the deermanagement@crd.bc.ca email address in addition to anticipated earned media coverage. The CAG asked about what parts of the management plan the online feedback form will cover and J. Weightman replied that there will be online feedback forms covering each section as it is completed including the evaluation criteria and the management options.



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The CAG asked about timetable for the drafting of the management plan and J. Weightman replied that the CAG was approximately on schedule and that a first draft of the plan would be written based on the Table of Contents, and completed sections would be released for public feedback as approved by the CAG. The CAG asked about how specific recommendations could be incorporated and M. Misek-Evans replied that recommendations can be quite specific and that any management options can have conditional statements.

The CAG then asked if the online feedback form was considered the public opinion survey and J. Weightman replied that these online feedback forms were designed to get feedback during the process and didn't preclude the CRD Board from doing a statistically-valid public opinion survey after the CAG has given them their report. The CAG asked about survey fatigue in addition to broadening the audience for the polls and J. Weightman replied that the CRD hoped to get earned media for the online feedback form building on the existing media interest with deer management. J. Weightman then went over the schedule of releasing the information publicly starting with the Objectives, Principles and Goals next week after the CAG approved them. Feedback on the evaluation criteria would follow, then the management options. The CAG asked if each online feedback form was going to be a separate and if each online feedback form was going to have a closing date and J. Weightman replied that the online feedback form would be separate and would have a closing date on each of them.

R. Bassett mentioned that he would not be available next week due to travel and requested options for listening into the meeting. J. Weightman replied that CRD staff would look into it. The CAG asked if they wanted feedback on the principles/goals and objectives now and M. Misek-Evans replied that it would be the first agenda item next week.

ACTION: CRD Staff to investigate allowing R. Bassett to listen into the meeting next week

8. Next Meeting Date

J. Skrlac then asked the CAG about the next meeting date and the CAG agreed on the following Tuesday, from 4 to 8pm, at the Burnside Gorge Community Centre provided it is available.

The CAG asked about a target date for the completion of the plan and J. Weightman replied that ideally the plan was to present to the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee on July 25, 2012 and the plan would go to the CRD Board after that. The CAG also discussed the challenges of getting feedback and generating excitement in summer months. The CAG also asked about recommending an empirical poll and J. Weightman replied that they can make such a recommendation in their report if they wished.



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The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm