

# CRD Regional Deer Management Strategy Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, August 8, 2012 – 4:00pm

Activity Room, Burnside-Gorge Community Centre, Victoria

## Meeting Notes

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### **Present:**

Jocelyn Skrlac (Chair)  
Robert Moody (Vice Chair)  
Wendy Fox  
Lisa Kadonaga  
Sol Kinnis  
Patrick O'Rourke  
Terry Michell

### **Regrets:**

Richard Christiansen  
Phil Tom  
Glenn Jim

### **Staff:**

Jeff Weightman (Deer Management Project Manager, CRD Regional Planning)  
Marg Misek-Evans (Senior Manager, CRD Regional Planning)  
Graeme Jones (Recording Secretary, CRD Regional Planning)

#### **1. Approval of Agenda**

L. Kadonaga moved approval of the agenda. R. Moody seconded.

**CARRIED**

#### **2. Review and Discussion of Minutes of August 8, 2012**

P. O'Rourke moved approval of the minutes. T. Michell seconded.

**CARRIED**

#### **3. Chair's Remarks**

The Chair noted that she and the Vice Chair attended a closed session of the CRD Board, at the invitation of the CRD, regarding the resignation of two members from the CAG. She further indicated that the CRD Board considered the matter of CAG quorum in closed session on August 8<sup>th</sup> and adopted a resolution to revise quorum to 6 members. The Chair also noted the Board expressed appreciation and thanks to the CAG for their efforts.

#### 4. Correspondence and Project Manager's Remarks

The CAG had no comments on the week's correspondence.

J. Weightman spoke to the CAG's previous request for Statistics Canada data that detailed crop loss, he described the different methodologies that were employed to collect planted area versus harvested area data and noted the data were collected for different purposes, under different methodologies and therefore were not comparable. Information relating to damages and losses was aggregated in such a way that it would not be possible to determine the extent of deer damage. J. Weightman noted that CRD staff will report back to CAG any changes or updates regarding this information.

**ACTION:** CRD staff to provide Statistics Canada's data updates for applicability to deer management if any are received.

J. Weightman discussed the next steps, noting that this meeting would be the last working meeting, the next meeting would be devoted to review of the draft strategy. J. Weightman discussed the short timeframe remaining and asked the CAG to provide feedback as soon as possible on the front end sections of the draft report. J. Weightman added that the ERWG have been asked for comments on the draft report and that any feedback will be distributed before the next meeting. J. Weightman further noted the need to complete draft recommendations by the end of today's meeting. J. Weightman also requested that the CAG validate the Status Quo and Crop Protection options at today's meeting for public feedback.

The CAG noted two letters in the paper regarding sonic fencing and requested further information from the ERWG. The CAG briefly discussed this type of fencing. J. Weightman commented that the article in the paper mentions use for other animals but noted that no product had been identified for deer, just the idea of applying this measure to deer.

**ACTION:** CRD staff to ask the ERWG about sonic fencing and its applicability to deer

#### 5. Facilitated Discussion

##### Evaluation of Crop Protection option

J. Weightman asked the CAG to evaluate Crop Protection as a management option and confirmed with the CAG that they wanted to evaluate Crop Protection applied only at the Agricultural geography. The CAG noted the local government restrictions of firearm discharges and discussed the differences between Crop Protection and Controlled Public Hunt. J. Weightman noted that hunters are not allowed to keep the animal with Crop Protection. The CAG noted that the option required permits, has a bag limit of 5, and the associated waste of deer as a food resource. The CAG noted it may be difficult for hunters to donate or re distribute deer. The CAG commented that there are existing

agreements in place between large property owners and the First Nations to hunt and process deer. The CAG noted the Province's existing experience with Crop Protection, but viewed the processing capacity issue borne by the property owner and the regulations that restricted processing of wild animals negatively. The CAG noted that First Nations have Douglas Treaty rights that supersede any restrictions on the Crop Protection option that apply to others.

The CAG reviewed the notes, comments and opinions taken from previous minutes on the evaluation criteria sheets and requested the removal of the comments regarding Crop Insurance from the evaluation. The CAG discussed the Negative Community Impact criteria and noted that despite compensation the farmers experienced a great deal of frustration from crop loss. The Agricultural Representatives noted that compensation for crop damage was not desirable, when compared to reducing overall crop losses. The CAG noted that the inability to use deer meat as resource negatively affects the score. The CAG agreed to a score of 3 for Negative Community Impacts. The CAG noted that they have received mixed feedback from farmers about Crop Protection and that the effectiveness was not that high. The CAG agreed to score the Support and Enthusiasm criteria at 2.5.

The CAG discussed the Time criteria and noted that Crop Protection is an existing management option offered by the province but that it still takes time to get permits and that any improvements to the management option would impact the Time score. The CAG agreed to a score of 2 for the Time criteria.

The CAG discussed the Cost criteria score and the degree to which it is impacted by the perceived ineffectiveness of the current program and the resulting economic impact. The CAG noted that the option needed to be repeated which would impact the Cost score. The CAG continued discussion, adding the overall cost would be favourable in the short term and increasingly favourable in the long term. The CAG noted some properties excluded from the Crop Protection option due to local government firearm restrictions. J. Weightman suggested separating Cost and Economic Impact scoring Cost low and Economic Impact high, the CAG declined. The CAG scored the Cost and Economic Impact criteria as 2.5.

The CAG noted the Capability criteria is impacted by local government discharge of firearms bylaws and property size. CAG discussed the Capability criteria and Feasibility/Capacity criteria scoring both at 2. The CAG further noted that bylaws vary by local government, specifically discussing the District of Saanich's strict regulations. The CAG concluded that the option is very feasible for some.

The CAG noted the potential for increased effectiveness adding this would depend on implementing other options in conjunction with this option.

### **Validation of Status Quo**

The CAG validated the Status Quo option. The CAG revised a comment to indicate delaying decisions to take action on the deer measures would delay implementation. The CAG noted that there is polarized public response to this option.

### **Discussion of management option recommendations for each geography**

CAG reviewed a list of their draft recommendations. J. Weightman explained the recommendation process includes drafting an outcome statement for each geography before outlining recommendations.

The CAG reviewed the Agriculture Outcome Statement drafted at the last CAG meeting, revising the grammar noting a need to define the term “acceptable levels”. The CAG noted the distinction between when the decision is made and when the option has an effect and the need to clarify this point in the report. The CAG noted that different options have different timeframes and discussed having the recommendations written based on when the effect of the option would take place, rather than when the decision to begin an option was made. The CAG noted some options are easier to implement, citing fencing as an example. The CAG commented that keeping the timeframes for short, medium, and long would be beneficial. M. Misek-Evans noted that different options have different phases such as research required before implementation. The CAG agreed to keep the three timeframes.

The CAG discussed recommendations for the short term in the Agriculture geography. The CAG recommended extending the hunting season and other hunting improvements. The CAG discussed a general recommendation to reduce the deer population to address urgent agricultural needs. M. Misek-Evans noted that population reduction is captured in the Outcome Statement from the previous week. The CAG questioned how specific recommendations should be. The CAG discussed broader population reduction measures with recommendations to discuss Professional Sharpshooting and Capture & Euthanize with local governments. M. Misek-Evans suggested Public Education could be included specifically and as an overarching recommendation. The CAG responded that Public Education is not completely specific to any geography. M. Misek-Evans replied that Public Education helps support for other options. The CAG suggested correspondence with municipalities about fencing restrictions.

The CAG discussed fencing subsidies and considerations with regard to recommending the CRD request reviving a defunct program or create a new program at the regional level. The CAG discussed the differences between subsidies and compensation. M. Misek-Evans noted that compensation was different from a fencing subsidy. The CAG discussed importance of involving both farmers and governments to make any fencing program feasible. The CAG noted that crop insurance compensation regulations require that other options such as fencing and other stipulations are completed prior to compensation. The CAG noted that crop loss can occur with or without population reduction. The CAG discussed data collection and its role in assessing losses. The CAG discussed investigating partnership opportunities between governments and NGOs to

secure funding to implement some of the options. The CAG discussed recommending the creation of a permanent oversight committee for the Regional Deer Management Strategy, specifically, a permanent Expert Resources Working Group with citizen representation included.

## **6. Break for dinner from 6:00pm to 6:40pm**

## **7. Facilitated Discussion Continued**

The CAG discussed the medium-term timeframe for the agricultural geography noting many short-term recommendations also apply in the medium-term. The CAG added that evaluation of progress and outcomes needs to be added. The CAG discussed First Nations and if it whether there should be standalone recommendations, noting the comments from First Nations CAG members. M. Misek-Evans suggested a notation identifying the experience and capacity of First Nations is a resource. The CAG suggested the wording should reflect the existing First Nation experience and capacity. The CAG questioned the feasibility of asking the First Nations to expand their capacity to also review the recommendations. The CAG suggested building and recognizing relationships between farmers and First Nations adding that First Nation hunters are already going outside the region for hunting. The CAG concluded that the recommendation should be framed as a memorandum of understanding between farmers and First Nations to explore opportunities.

The CAG asked if Deer Vehicle Collision Mitigation is being separately discussed. M. Misek-Evans replied in the affirmative.

The CAG discussed the actual time-frame for long-term. M. Misek-Evans replied that long-term referred to a decade from now or longer. The CAG noted the Immunocontraceptive option would need to be reviewed regularly in the future due to the varying availability of drugs over time for widespread authorization and implementation. M. Misek-Evans clarified that this recommendation was for monitoring. M. Misek-Evans asked the CAG for recommendations to be implemented after the population had been reduced to maintain it at that level. The CAG discussed maintenance and how it depended on the level of deer-human conflict and noted that this would require ongoing monitoring.

The CAG proposed the Outcome Statement for the Rural geography be used as a template for the Outcome Statement for the Urban geography. M. Misek-Evans suggested adding a vector such as increase, decrease, or sustain. The CAG adjusted the wording to reduce deer-human conflict. The CAG noted the need for increased public understanding of deer as prey animals; currently they are perceived differently by the public compared to rats and geese. The CAG noted that due to lack of predators in urban areas, deer are at or near the top of the food chain. The CAG suggested an acceptable deer population could be based on the deer populations in undeveloped

areas that have a healthy predator population. The CAG added that sustaining a healthy population could be added as part of the outcome statement. The CAG noted that, in other jurisdictions, people's perception of deer changed with an increase in incidence of Lyme disease. The CAG added that a healthy deer population also reflects a healthy human population. The CAG noted that these suggestions were part of Public Education and not the Outcome Statement. The CAG recommended providing a range of options for homeowners. The CAG noted this could include the provision of information services. The CAG acknowledged Public Education as a common theme adding that the recommendation for improving Public Education should be explicitly stated. The CAG noted that Public Education could also include identifying deer problems and potential solutions.

**Action:** CRD staff to draft an outcome statement for CAG approval for the urban geography.

The CAG discussed recommendations for the urban geography in the short-term. The CAG discussed whether successful implementation of options in the other geographies would lead to reduced deer human conflicts in the urban geography. M. Misek-Evans reminded the CAG of the ERWG's comment that the deer have local ranges but over time would expand or change their ranges. The CAG discussed Landscaping Alternatives and the matter of gardeners' expectations. The CAG recommended the use of fencing and the creation of a guide to fencing as to avoid ineffective products and construction, noting the potential inclusion under Public Education. The CAG noted that bylaw enforcement for deer feeding would be difficult. The CAG added that the cost of fencing may be a barrier to the implementation of the option. The CAG discussed incentives for fencing including tax-breaks or subsidies. The CAG noted that the CRD may facilitate a program similar to the recycling bins where fencing material was sold at cost. The CAG also noted that a program could help prevent the use of poorly built fences being dismantled and sent to the dump. The CAG also suggested fencing specific plants and replacing others with deer resistant plants. The CAG also discussed bulk purchase of repellants for distribution. The CAG discussed the variation of the deer's diet concluding that deer will eat almost any plant if it is fertilized and watered. The CAG recommended reducing deer population in urban areas by exploring the acceptability of options with municipalities to conduct Capture and Euthanize and limited Professional Sharpshooting in specific areas around the region. The CAG noted that alternative plantings need to be considered especially where deer trails are located, adding there should be public education for deer resistant plants.

The CAG then discussed the medium term and noted that all the short-term recommendations should be carried over with monitoring. The CAG suggested development and planning documents related to new development include provisions for reducing deer-human conflict.

The CAG discussed the long term and noted that new approaches or technologies such as Immunocontraceptives may become available. M. Misek-Evans noted that changes to the Capability criteria of Immunocontraceptives relies on the federal approval.

The CAG discussed the rural geography and used the recommendations from the Agricultural geography as a basis for discussion. M. Misek-Evans noted that some of the regulations in urban would also apply for rural geography. M. Misek-Evans suggested adding Public Education. The CAG commented that it may be difficult to implement Public Education in some areas. The CAG also revisited the issue of human health and Lyme disease noting that deer are carriers ticks which transmit Lyme disease but deer do not get the disease. The CAG suggested the creation of a Lyme disease helpline by the Vancouver Island Health Authority. M. Misek-Evans recommended adding this service to an existing service. The CAG noted that this could be done through the existing Nurseline service. The CAG noted that Lyme disease is a growing concern and without a cold winter with killing frosts to eradicate the ticks, the issue may continue to worsen. The CAG suggested the Lyme disease information should be part of Public Education including clinics and doctors.

**ACTION:** Staff to draft Urban Outcome Statement for approval.

The CAG discussed the Deer/Vehicle Collision Mitigation Outcome Statement suggesting a reduction of deer-vehicle collisions and the risks. The CAG noted collisions are traumatic. The CAG recommended more effective road signage due to declining obedience to the existing signage. The CAG suggested school children design deer signs that could be moved around to different locations over time at the neighbourhood level, as well as more frequent highway brushing on major roads. M. Misek-Evans suggested that transportation and infrastructure plans take deer trails and wildlife corridors into consideration. The CAG noted that recommendations should be more general to reducing risk of deer-vehicle collisions, rather than site-specific.

The Chair requested consensus for extending the meeting beyond 8:00 PM. All members were in favour of continuing.

The CAG recommended revising speed limits in high collision areas. The CAG suggested this option should be integrated into the Regional Transportation Plan. M. Misek-Evans explained the process of input into the Regional Transportation Plan.

The CAG moved to discuss overarching recommendations. M. Misek-Evans suggested recommending long term monitoring of potential immunocontraceptives drugs since it may have the potential to be used in each geography. The CAG discussed the suggestion of a permanent CAG. The CAG agreed there needed to be some oversight to monitor the strategy. The CAG concurred that an ERWG standing committee would be a good idea. The CAG noted the limitations of having the service in a department given the interagency requirements. The CAG requested citizen involvement or representation

on any oversight committee. The CAG also suggested the CRD monitoring of the Goose Management should be expanded to include deer.

The CAG asked if Public Education could be a broad recommendation. M. Misek-Evans suggested waiting for the draft to see if there was enough variation to keep public education recommendations at the geography level. The CAG recommended a principle that venison should not be wasted. The CAG recommended exploring mechanisms for allocating and distributing meat. The CAG noted there could be issues with meat being accepted at food banks and more generally distributing game meat is difficult. The CAG noted the CRD should engage with First Nations before sending recommendations for their consideration. The CAG restated the no harm principle for their recommendations. The CAG asked about wildlife considerations in new development plans. M. Misek-Evans responded that this recommendation should be captured in the urban and rural geographies. The CAG suggested the deer conflict should be addressed by the province and region. M. Misek-Evans clarified this as partnerships with all levels of government. The CAG questioned the need for a deer hotline.

CAG validated Status Quo and Crop Protection options to allow for posting on the website for public comment.

## **8. Next Steps and Outstanding Items**

J. Weightman reviewed the timeline noting a revised draft of the first part of the report would be sent to CAG by the end of the week. J. Weightman reminded the CAG there is no meeting the following week. J. Weightman continued by noting the meeting on August 23, 2012 would be for the final review of the report. J. Weightman suggested ERWG members could be invited to the final meeting. The CAG requested this to be done. The CAG requested that comments from the ERWG are forwarded to them as they are received by staff.

**Action:** Staff to forward ERWG comments on draft report to CAG and invite the ERWG members to the August 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the CAG.

## **9. Next Meeting**

The CAG agreed to meet Thursday, August 23, 2012 at Burnside Gorge Community Centre, pending availability.