

**REPORT TO CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT BOARD  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2015**

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**SUBJECT**      **Regional Deer Management Strategy Update**

**ISSUE**

To update the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board on the Regional Deer Management Strategy (RDMS) pilot project.

**BACKGROUND**

The CRD Board endorsed the RDMS (Appendix A) in December 2012. At the same time, the CRD Board supported implementation and funding of a one-year deer management pilot project. The pilot project was initiated in September 2013. In August 2014, the CRD Board extended the pilot project to the end of March 2015.

The pilot project was guided by Terms of Reference (ToR) developed by a registered biologist. The ToR included recommendations related to conflict reduction, deer vehicle collision mitigation, public education/administration and population reduction. Partner municipalities taking action on deer management considered the recommendations in the context of community values, resources and priorities.

At the June 26, 2014 PTPSC meeting, the Committee received report PPS/RSP 2014-11 for information. That report provided background on Regional Deer Management pilot project implementation initiatives and summarized activities up until May 2014.

This report provides an overview of the activities completed to support deer management between June 2014 and March 2015.

**DISCUSSION**

Over the past 10 months, CRD staff has advanced deer management activities for the region as a whole and more specifically for two pilot project areas: Central Saanich (rural pilot) and Oak Bay (urban pilot). The CRD's efforts were complemented by local action in both Central Saanich and Oak Bay. Specifically, the CRD has:

**Deer Management Support (all areas)**

- Provided conflict reduction and public education tools to all municipalities. All CRD municipalities have the option of hosting the electronic versions of the brochures on their websites. The brochures provide information on deer and promote safe ways to behave around deer. The brochures also provide tips for reducing deer-human conflicts.
- Attended a Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) urban deer management workshop to share CRD perspectives on deer management issues and lobby for increased provincial support.

**Central Saanich (Rural Pilot)**

- Advocated for changes to the Hunting and Trapping Regulations to allow for extension of the hunting season for antlerless (female) deer.
- Advocated for greater fencing subsidies.

The majority of the rural pilot project work was completed in Spring/Fall 2013. During that time, CRD staff reached out to 35 farmers whose names were gleaned from complaints and word of mouth. Sixteen farms requested site visits. Site visits involved crop damage inspection and a site assessment. Staff provided information packages/tools for estimating fencing requirements and costs; obtaining municipal permits, general permits for nuisance wildlife and firearms licenses; and using scaring and hazing tactics. CRD staff offered additional assistance during the past 10 months. No additional farm visits were requested during that time.

In Central Saanich, both the municipality and community members undertook public education (brochure distribution), conflict reduction (brochure and online brochure distribution), and deer vehicle collision mitigation (improved signage and road way brushing).

#### Oak Bay (Urban Pilot)

- Drafted strategic communications plan to coordinate provincial, regional and local roles.
- Assisted Oak Bay with key messages for communications.
- Prepared the general permit for nuisance wildlife for municipal submission to the Province.
- Assisted Oak Bay with contingency protocols.
- Assisted Oak Bay with preparing operations plan.
- Prepared project budgets in response to evolving project needs.
- Prepared a Request for Proposals (RFP) for contractor services for Oak Bay to post.
- Evaluated RFP submissions to facilitate Oak Bay decisions.
- Lobbied Province for provision of traps.
- Developed criteria for trap property selection.
- Identified and evaluated potential trap sites.
- Transported, stored and delivered traps.
- Scheduled and attended contractor training.
- Researched, ordered and purchased required materials.
- Requested that the Province provide for Conservation Officer Service attendance.
- Fostered relationships with First Nations.
- Researched options for butchering/meat donation.
- Provided staff support both in the field and at District of Oak Bay offices during population reduction.

The urban pilot project required more municipal government involvement than the rural pilot project. The District of Oak Bay undertook significant communications work, undertook public education and conflict reduction (brochure distribution), and helped anticipate and respond to emerging issues. Oak Bay's actions and 'lessons learned' are documented in Appendix B.

In BC, five local governments have tackled deer management. There are many similarities in the challenges experienced by those local governments. It is worth noting, however, that to this point, Oak Bay is the only municipality to have reduced the deer population within a highly urbanized environment. It is also worth noting that Oak Bay is the only Island municipality to have directly contracted to reduce the deer population. The mild, coastal climate (with typically no snow on the ground) makes urban deer population reduction initiatives in this region particularly challenging.

#### **Partner Feedback**

CRD staff has not solicited municipal feedback on the desirability of an ongoing CRD role in deer management nor received any municipal requests to provide these services on an ongoing basis.

First Nations partners have expressed an interest in continuing partnerships and working with the CRD to develop a program, building on the lessons learned in the pilot project so as to support long-term access to a healthy traditional food source.

The Peninsula and Area Agriculture Commission has requested that the CRD continue to provide deer management services (Appendix C).

The Islands Trust has asked the CRD to consider either preparing a fallow deer management plan or managing and funding the preparation of a fallow deer management plan (see Appendix D).

#### **Input to the Province**

The Province has recently invited input into their urban deer management framework. UBCM canvassed municipalities for input and conveyed those received by April 24, 2015. In order to meet the UBCM timeline, staff forwarded the recommendations noted in Appendix E as input from staff, noting that the comments had not yet been vetted by the Board but that any input from the Board would be forwarded if/once such is received.

## Budget

The CRD Board in 2013 approved \$150,000 to cover RDMS pilot project costs. In August 2014, the Board approved an additional \$70,000 to allow the pilot project to be extended to March 31, 2015. Project costs were as follows:

Staff	\$184,211.79
Printing/Publications	\$1463.05
Vehicles/Fuel/Travel	\$2851.08
Consultants	\$500.00
Meetings	\$100.65
Office Space	\$1823.80
Supplies	\$3999.91
Total	\$194,950.28

If this program were to be offered on an ongoing basis, it is anticipated that costs would be less given that the program would benefit from a similar project having been previously offered in this region. More solid commitments from the Province would help reduce some costs. Familiarity with the process and the roles played by participating parties will allow for tighter processes and more efficient deployment of resources should the service be continued. That would, in turn, reduce future costs. Fixed costs of this service are high and it would be inefficient to continue to deliver the service for only a small area or a short time. More routine programming, conducted over a longer time frame or over a larger geographic area would be significantly more cost effective.

As of March 31, 2015, approximately \$25,000 remained in the budget. Some of this funding will be needed to cover costs of follow-up deer counts. Such counts will be required if the CRD or member municipalities wish to retain the option of pursuing future deer population reduction. Provincial staff has recommended that a count be undertaken in the fall of 2015. Staff is exploring the potential for undertaking a region-wide, scientific deer count in partnership with the University of Victoria. The University of Victoria partnership is dependent on grant funding and is therefore, at this time, not confirmed. Should the University of Victoria partnership not materialize, then the CRD would need to conduct the deer count on its own.

## Project Evaluation

Deer management has been a collaborative effort of municipal, regional and provincial staff.

The two pilot projects were initiated in 2013. Some activities (e.g., conflict reduction) began in 2014, whereas other activities (such as urban deer population reduction) did not occur until 2015. Given the recency of some activity, it is difficult at this point to get a full sense of the impact of various measures. At this point, the following metrics/data are available:

- Tripling of regional calls for problem deer reported to the Ministry of Environment's Conservation Officer Service RAPP line between 2006 and 2012/2013 (from approximately 100 to approximately 300 annually)
- 14 email and mail complaints received in 2014 (compared to over thirty in 2013)
- 320 deer vehicle collisions in 2013, compared to 297 in 2011
- 26 deer were counted with the Oak Bay index count
- 11 deer were harvested in Oak Bay
- 27 deer were counted with the Central Saanich index count
- Over \$300,000 was the estimated combined Saanich Peninsula crop loss due to deer and geese damage in 2014 (Peninsula Agriculture Commission)

A full understanding of the impact of the deer management project will likely not be possible until data is available for all of 2015. Potential sources for further data include the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, Oak Bay, Central Saanich and ICBC.

The urban pilot project resulted in an opportunity for urban First Nations to receive traditional foods from their traditional territory, with the meat distributed amongst community members and the skins and hooves utilized for cultural purposes.

If deer management were to become an ongoing service, then it is suggested that the CRD:

1. Place primary emphasis on public education and deer-human conflict reduction.
2. Work with the Province and other stakeholders to credibly document regional deer populations.
3. Ensure, in advance of any project work, that there is clear, documented agreement as to the roles and responsibilities of municipal, regional and provincial staff – with project sign-off responsibilities identified.
4. Advocate for a stronger role for the Province (see Appendix E) and for more timely, consistent and comprehensive Provincial assistance for the provision of equipment/expertise and establishment of permitting requirements.
5. Work with other jurisdictions and come up with a longer term strategy to address the challenges of finding a contractor with appropriate expertise.
6. Acknowledge and provide for the staff resources necessary to respond to resistance to population reduction (communications, FOI requests, etc.).
7. Undertake any population reduction over a broader geographic area and over a longer time-frame.

Deer management needs to be sustained to be effective. Pilot projects will have only short term impacts on deer-human conflicts.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

That the Board:

1. Receive report PPS/RSP 2015-11 titled *Regional Deer Management Strategy Update* on the Regional Deer Management pilot project and endorse CRD recommendations to UBCM as noted in Appendix E and refer the report to the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee for consideration as to whether an ongoing Deer Management or wildlife management service should be provided.
2. Receive report PPS/RSP 2015-11 titled *Regional Deer Management Strategy Update* on the Regional Deer Management pilot project and endorse CRD recommendations to UBCM as noted in Appendix E.
3. Receive report PPS/RSP 2015-11 titled *Regional Deer Management Strategy Update* on the Regional Deer Management pilot project and endorse CRD recommendations to UBCM as noted in Appendix E and direct that staff in future focus efforts on sharing the material developed and the experience obtained with member municipalities and that an ongoing deer management service not be pursued.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Jurisdictional Implications**

Wildlife management remains a provincial responsibility. The Province's tool box has, to date, focussed primarily on traditional wildlife management techniques such as hunting. Hunting is not relevant or useful in dense urban environments. To be effective at controlling deer population any CRD involvement would require a more supportive provincial role than has been the case to date. Without CRD and/or municipal deer management services, effective urban deer management would be entirely dependent on the Province playing a larger role than it has to date.

### **Service Implications**

Activities carried on over the past few years were undertaken within the framework of a pilot project. The pilot phase has now ended. Continuation of the service would require establishment of a service mandate.

Although there are currently only four animal species managed by the CRD, staff anticipates that demand will grow as additional species become hyper abundant or invasive. There could be an ongoing coordination, public education and advocacy role for the region to play if more municipalities wish to pursue wildlife management.

Ongoing regional involvement is likely not practical or economical unless a significant number of municipalities collectively choose to address deer-human conflicts.

### **Financial Implications**

There is no funding in place for deer management services to continue on an ongoing basis. Activities to date were funded through supplemental budget approvals.

### **Partnership (First Nations) Implications**

Local First Nations, through their Douglas Treaty rights, actively seek out opportunities to hunt or acquire wild game in their traditional territory, and as such have expressed an interest in partnering with municipalities in the deer management program. In rural areas, the partnership has evolved as a direct relationship and agreement between private landowners and First Nations hunters. The CRD's role has been as facilitator between the parties and coordinator of education materials and outreach regarding the program, safety protocols, and liaison with the Province as issues relating to regulations or permitting arise.

Partnerships with First Nations in the urban context are more involved as the population reduction process is undertaken by a third party contractor and as the complexity of the activity calls for a more formalized and orchestrated partnership with each respective Nation than is the case with individual hunters.

### **Partnership (Municipalities) Implications**

A piecemeal approach to regional deer management will be neither successful nor economical. A majority of municipalities will need to be involved (whether or not the CRD plays a coordinating role) to realize sustainable improvements. Significant municipal commitment will be necessary to ensure effective service delivery as there are some tasks that can only be carried out at a local level. Some tasks can, if such is agreeable to a municipality, be delegated to the CRD (e.g., provision of public education material, liaison with Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, preparation of budget estimates, development of contractor RFP content, assistance with First Nations liaison, preparation of permit applications etc.). However, even under a scenario that sees significant delegation to the CRD, there will be tasks (e.g., determining deer management options to be implemented, determining amount and type of public education and input, selecting trap sites, managing contracts, etc.) that can only be completed by municipalities. Municipalities considering deer management options should be prepared for additional demands on staff, particularly for communications and policing. Prior to embarking on an ongoing service, it is suggested that municipalities be canvassed for their willingness to commit the necessary resources.

The material developed as part of the pilot project and the 'lessons learned' can be made available to interested municipalities upon request. In the absence of an ongoing service, that material will not be kept current. Medium and long-term recommendations of the RDMS ToR (such as: ongoing monitoring of new and emerging tools such as changes to immune-contraceptive availability; allowances for relocation; public education; partnership development; and complaint monitoring) would not proceed.

### **Operational Implications**

Regional Parks manages non-migratory Canadian geese (as a pilot project due to conclude at the end of 2015) and Integrated Water Services also manages Canada geese as well as bullfrogs and beavers. Regional and Strategic Planning was involved with deer management only because the department oversaw preparation of the RDMS. The division does not typically provide operational services and it is suggested that it would not be the division best suited to provide ongoing services, should such be desired. Should the CRD venture into deer management on a longer term basis, then it is suggested that the service be offered in conjunction with established (possibly consolidated) wildlife management services so as to maximize efficiencies. Efficiencies may be realized in creating public education

materials, hosting workshops and sharing municipal contacts. It is noted, however, that each wildlife species requires different management approaches and faces different challenges.

### **Staffing Implications**

Maintaining the recent level of service for deer management, even in the context of consolidating wildlife services, would likely require at least one additional full-time equivalent staff position.

### **Strategic Plan Implications**

The Board's initial strategic planning discussions identified as a 2015 priority the determination of the CRD's future role in regional wildlife management (including deer, bullfrogs, geese etc.). The Board is scheduled to confirm Strategic Planning priorities at its May 13, 2015 meeting.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Regional Deer Management pilot project is now complete, save for the post population reduction count to occur in the fall. An ongoing role for the CRD will be dependent on a deer management (or expanded wildlife management) service being established.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Capital Regional District Board:

Receive report PPS/RSP 2015-11 titled *Regional Deer Management Strategy Update* on the Regional Deer Management pilot project and endorse CRD recommendations to UBCM as noted in Appendix E and refer the report to the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services Committee for consideration as to whether an ongoing Deer Management or wildlife management service should be provided.

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SB:lc

Attachments: Appendix A – Regional Deer Management Strategy  
Appendix B – Oak Bay's "Lesson's Learned"  
Appendix C – Letter from Peninsula Agricultural Commission  
Appendix D – Letter from Islands Trust re: Fallow Deer Plan for Mayne Island  
Appendix E – RDMS Requests to Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations

Regional Deer Management Strategy

<https://www.crd.bc.ca/docs/default-source/regional-planning-pdf/Regional-Deer-Management/regional-deer-management-strategy.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

DISTRICT OF  
OAK  BAY

Lessons Learned:  
Resulting from the District of Oak Bay's  
Participation in the Capital Regional District  
Deer Management Strategy Urban Pilot Project

April 30, 2015

## Lessons learned resulting from the District of Oak Bay's participation in the CRD Deer Management Strategy Urban Pilot Project.

**Purpose:** The District of Oak Bay wishes to share with other interested communities some insights and lessons learned resulting from the District of Oak Bay's participation in the CRD's Deer Management Strategy Urban Pilot Project.

**Background:** Wildlife management is the responsibility of the Provincial Government but is now being managed by local governments. In 2011 the Ministry of Environment directed the CRD to develop a Deer Management Strategy for the Capital Region. The Regional Deer Management Strategy was developed by the CRD and a Citizen's Advisory Group with input from wildlife and animal health experts from the provincial government and the private sector. The strategy explains the population of black-tailed deer, addresses the issues of deer-human conflicts and makes recommendations to effectively and humanely address public safety, health and wildlife issues.

There is an overpopulation of deer living in urban areas throughout the Capital Region. Our coastal climate offers urban deer an abundance of year round food and green space while enabling them to live in the absence of any natural predators. As a consequence, deer populations are increasing. Does give birth to twins, and we are now seeing more triplets born every spring – an indication of a strong and reliable food source and a safe environment in which to raise and habituate fawns. Deer-human conflicts are on the rise with real public safety implications.

**District of Oak Bay:** Complaints and concerns from residents are on the rise in Oak Bay. Conflicts and concerns include: vehicular collisions; aggressive deer interactions with pets and people; native plant and property damage; and deer feces in parks, yards and school fields. In response to the growing numbers of residents' concerns, the District of Oak Bay Council (the District) agreed to participate in the Capital Regional District's urban pilot project in November 2013 at an estimated cost of \$25,000.00. The pilot project guided the District through a number of deer-human conflict reduction measures. During the 2014 calendar year, the District:

- Reviewed fencing bylaws to ensure that rear and side fencing heights were appropriate to discourage deer from entering back yards.
- Re-printed copies of the CRD's public information brochures (2 brochures) and distributed them through the Oak Bay News to every household in the District.
- Reviewed the District's practices to ensure that Parks and Recreation departments were applying deer repellants to the District's parks and gardens and planting deer resistant plants.
- Increased fines for feeding the deer to \$300.00 and supported this initiative with education posters in high traffic areas throughout the community.
- Website updates and newspaper editorials.
- Increased signage in areas known for high concentrations of deer and high incidents of deer-vehicle collisions.
- Supported the CRD with a deer count in June 2014 to better understand the population densities in Oak Bay neighbourhoods.

As a condition of the District's participation in the CRD Deer Management Strategy pilot project, the District asked the CRD to ensure that every possible population management option be examined and implemented prior to the decision to reduce the population through a cull.

The decision to proceed with population reduction in the District of Oak Bay in 2014 was interrupted by the destruction of the Modified Clover Traps during the cull in Kimberly. The provincial government was not able to support the District with the necessary traps and for many months, it was unclear as to whether or not the traps would be rebuilt for the District's use. Late in 2014, the province confirmed their commitment to provide 5 Modified Clover Traps to support the District's decision to apply to the Province for a permit to harvest up to 25 black-tailed deer in Oak Bay.

Twenty three deer fatalities were addressed by Oak Bay police and Oak Bay public works in 2012. The number grew to forty in 2013 and thirty nine in 2014.

The 2014 municipal election provided all Councillors with an opportunity to publicly declare their position on deer management, and specifically, population reduction. The issue of whether or not to conduct a cull in Oak Bay was a high profile and very public election issue. Oak Bay residents elected Mayor and Council with a mandate to proceed with a cull.

The District applied to the Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations for a permit to reduce the population of deer in the District of Oak Bay by 25 deer in October 2014. The District engaged a contractor to lead the initiative and 11 deer were harvested over 16 days in February 2015. Homeowners offered their properties and the deer were given to local First Nations for Traditional food and ceremonial purposes.

### **Urban Pilot Study Area: Oak Bay – Lessons learned**

#### **Executive Summary:**

There is a financial cost to doing nothing as well as a social cost. There are also real risks to public safety. The costs to taxpayers for managing deer fatalities and to homeowners through property damage, and fencing investments has not been calculated, however it should be noted as it is likely more significant than anyone realizes. We have reports of residents in Oak Bay who have been chased up their walkways to the door, whose children have been challenged by bucks in rut in their own play area, and whose pets have been trampled in their yards. The deer in Oak Bay are 6 and 7 generation habituated deer and they have lost much of their fear of humans. Escalating human deer conflicts are to be expected and learning more about these wild animals and how to live safely and responsibly with them in our neighbourhoods is an important part of any deer management strategy.

Greater, collaborative involvement from the province, who have overall responsibility for wildlife management in BC and who have the knowledge and expertise is an overarching theme in the lessons learned.

The District has no wildlife specialist on staff and therefore was reliant on information provided through the CRD's Deer Management Strategy team. The CRD in turn were relying on the expertise of the professional staff in the Provincial Government who have over-all responsibility for wildlife management in B.C. Wildlife management is a specialized area of expertise and more needs to be done to improve upon the access and exchange of clear, factual information that is written specifically for public consumption. The public demanded more factual information than was available. Given the sensitive nature of the issue, access to subject matter experts and knowledge to promote greater understanding is of paramount importance.

The District attended a Deer Management workshop in January 2015 led by the Union of BC Municipalities and the Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations. This workshop was attended by ministry staff, and representatives from 12 local governments all struggling with the same challenges around how to live safely and responsibly with growing populations of deer living in their communities. This was a very helpful and informative session.

The District observed that a very different model of operational and planning engagement was employed in the Kootenays, a model that saw a more active role for the MFLNRO regional wildlife biologist at the planning table shaping and implementing the deer management strategy in partnership with the municipal government and with citizen representatives from the local deer committee. Having subject matter experts actively taking part in informing and implementing a deer management strategy with local citizen involvement appears to be a model that promotes collaboration and shared understanding of all the intricate dynamics involved in addressing the challenges of urban deer in a responsible and humane manner. Improved collaboration between the provincial government staff and the planning team in the community would address many of the District's lessons learned in this document.

While there were residents living in the District of Oak Bay that were entirely opposed to population reduction – or were opposed to the only permitted methodology of capture and euthanize – the 2014 municipal election gave the District of Oak Bay a mandate to proceed. Ways to strengthen that mandate could have included a survey or a referendum question.

Population reduction options are limited and what few are available to urban municipalities are further reduced to only one permitted methodology: capture and euthanize. The nature of this undertaking in an urban setting is very challenging. While we believe that the majority of people in Oak Bay supported the cull, a well-organized and articulate public opposition from citizens, and from animal welfare organizations from across the country and throughout the world played a significant role in how the project was viewed outside of the District. This is to be anticipated going forward.

The District of Oak Bay was the first urban coastal community to undertake a cull. With the support of private property owners, eleven deer were harvested over sixteen days without detection or disturbing neighbourhoods. We learned that while difficult, it is possible providing there is leadership and sufficient social licence in the community. Regardless of having the support of the silent majority in our community, there is currently no permitted and socially acceptable way to responsibly and ethically manage a growing population of urban deer in a manner that does not financially and emotionally severely challenge the municipal leadership who are taking action.

Public safety continues to be an important lens in the evaluation as the real implications of deer-human conflicts continue. The issues of vehicle collisions, the biological carrying capacity of our environment and the socio-economic carrying capacity of our residents (property damage, fencing costs, vehicle damage, veterinary bills, stress) all continue.

**District of Oak Bay Pilot Project Overview:**

**1. Data Monitoring**

**Deer fatalities in the District of Oak Bay**

Though not scientific, this is a meaningful raw statistic and speaks to public safety concerns. These numbers were generated by the District’s public works department as they along with the municipal police were most involved in responding to injured and dead deer. While responding to problem or injured wildlife would normally be dealt with by the provincial conservation office, the responsibility fell to our local police. To ensure that this was done properly, our police were trained by conservation staff.

Year	Number of deer deaths
2012	23
2013	40
2014	39

**Complaints**

The CRD Deer Management Strategy Pilot Project attempted to lessen the District’s burden by directing complaints to their website. This call to action to the CRD was posted also on the District’s website. In reality, the District received a steady volume of verbal complaints, emails and letters. These most often went directly to the District’s Mayor and Council. Over time, the amount of information became overwhelming at the District, and there was no one person responsible for records management for this aspect of the project.

- **Lessons learned:**  
 While the intention was to have the CRD manage and track complaints and inquiries, the reality is that the District was a natural point of contact. The heavy volume of inquiries over the duration of the project would have benefited from a dedicated resource to implement a proper records management process at the District.

**Urban Deer Count**

Wildlife experts in the provincial government informed us that Black-tailed does do not migrate very far from where they were born. They generally don’t cover more than a few square blocks. Home range in urban areas is estimated to be about 2.5 square kms. Bucks, however, will cover slightly more ground looking for females during the rut and for prime food.

Deer generally will not move to a new area unless they are pushed because of predation (animal or people), dense populations and/or a lack of desirable habitat.

The CRD with support from the District undertook a deer count over a period of 5 days in June 2014. The methodology that they used was informed by the Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations (MFLNRO) biologist responsible for rural wildlife management. The scientific merit and validity of the District's count methodology was continually challenged.

- **Lessons learned: Urban Deer Count**

Although there were many other influencing factors, the Pilot Project focussed on a deer count to inform population density and link these extrapolated estimates to determine the need for population reduction measures. Counting deer in an urban setting is challenging at best. Identifying a threshold for other aspects of deer human conflict in addition to population density would be a helpful guide to determine when there is a need for population reduction.

The count methodology used in the District, while recognized as a standard count practise in the wild, had never before been applied to an urban setting.

The District would recommend adopting the methodology used in the Kootenays. It includes citizen participation and involves driving/walking in a grid through all neighbourhoods over a number of days. The contractor that the District hired upon reviewing our local process indicated that the District's process would benefit from adopting what was done in the Kootenays as it is more suitable for an urban setting.

In the Kootenays, conservation officers, whose authorities include enforcement, were part of the planning and implementation team. The District and the CRD requested the support of the conservation office from the Province. They did not have the staff resources to lend to the initiative.

## **2. Education and Communications**

There was an assumption built into the CRD Deer Management Strategy Pilot Project that community engagement and outreach had already taken place during the development of the CRD Deer Management Strategy as this process was very heavily focused on consultation and engagement.

The District's educational component was therefore limited to acting upon the recommendations within the pilot project as referenced at the beginning of this report. The District did however invest in the reproduction of the CRD educational brochures to ensure they were distributed through the local paper to every household and accessible on the District's website.

The District also worked directly with the CRD and the MFLNRO to strengthen the public information regarding permitted population reduction options. The District adopted a pro-active media engagement approach to encourage stronger awareness and understanding of the issues, to demonstrate that the District would be accessible to media and was prepared to

address public concerns. The spokesperson however was not a subject matter expert and as such the factual information presented was often challenged.

The District was learning in real time throughout this Pilot Project. The role of the BCSPCA leading up to and during the cull was not clear. Their very public opposition to the Oak Bay cull (but not the cull in Cranbrook) was confusing. The permit to undertake a cull is held by the Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resources. The permit provides municipalities with legal authority to proceed abiding by strict protocols. We were advised at the time of the cull, however, that once the deer is in the trap, the animal becomes the responsibility of the BCSPCA who have provincial oversight for the animal's humane handling.

The District, the District's contractor, along with staff from MFLNRO and the CRD met with the BCSPCA representatives. The BCSPCA acknowledged the appropriate expertise of the contractor and affirmed that the methodology of capture and euthanize is not an offence nor did it contravene either the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act or the Criminal Code of Canada.

- **Lessons learned: Education and Communication**

While citizens in Oak Bay were largely supportive of population reduction, more substantive educational outreach in the community would have helped the entire process as it would have identified earlier and remedied earlier the challenges associated with getting factual information from the provincial government out into the community.

Provincial government information sheets posted on line, while informative, are not sufficiently clear nor are they written for the purposes of addressing public concerns regarding population reduction. Citizens challenged the District's claims when it came to population reduction methodologies – what was allowed and what was not allowed by the Province, why and why not. Given that the authority for the permitting lies with the Provincial Government, the education with regard to options should be informed by the Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations and information should be clearly laid out and easily accessible for all.

There remains significant public confusion and debate over what population reduction options exist for municipalities in B.C., and then what population options the authorities in the provincial government will permit.

Greater collaborative involvement from the province, who have overall responsibility for wildlife management in BC and who have the knowledge and expertise would be a tremendous benefit reducing dramatically the risks associated with misinformation.

- **Lessons learned: BCSPCA**

Given that the Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resources is responsible for issuing a permit for population reduction, and that BCSPCA falls under the Ministry of Agriculture, assistance from the province to appropriately define the role and responsibilities of the BCSPCA in deer management strategies is needed.

The BCSPCA's dual role as advocates and enforcement adds a complicated and confusing element to this already emotionally charged initiative. It may be there is a larger role for this organization to play in helping address this emerging challenge of overpopulations of urban deer. The District was fortunate to be able to provide a letter of approval written by the BCSPCA regarding the professional conduct of the Oak Bay contractor. The letter acknowledged his professional services in another community.

### **3. Population Reduction Options:**

What considerations and options were explored with the Province of BC and the CRD to address population reduction in Oak Bay?

**Capture and Relocate:** This method is not currently supported by the Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations for black-tailed deer in this region. The Ministry Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations stated that it will not authorize the capture and relocation of black-tailed deer due to the transportation stress and resulting high mortality rate. Deer habituated to urban and suburban environments do not fare well when introduced into wild environments.

**Tranquilize and Relocate:** The Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations has stated that it will not authorize the use of tranquilizers to aid in relocation due to the high risk of the deer reacting poorly to the tranquilizer. Risks range from no reaction to the deer succumbing to the tranquilizer causing death. Deer habituated to urban and suburban environments do not fare well when introduced into wild environments. Residual tranquilizers can impact other animals that consume deer that have been tranquilized.

**Immunocontraceptives:** This method involves trapping a deer in a clover trap, releasing the males, marking the females and injecting them with a contraceptive. This is currently only possible and legal as part of a research project and the contraceptive application must be supervised by Provincial staff. It is necessary to trap the deer in a Clover Trap in order to give the inoculation and manage any appropriate tagging or radio collaring for tracking. The inoculation not only sterilizes the doe, it also makes the meat unfit for human consumption. If the animal dies, scavengers that feed on the inoculated carcass could become contaminated. Approximately 70-90% of the doe population must be treated in order to start slowing population growth. Best results occur in geographically isolated populations. The contraceptives are not currently licenced or approved by Health Canada for use except when being used for experimental scientific research and by permit only. Immunocontraceptive treatment needs to be ongoing in order to be effective over the long term. Treated deer will live out the remainder of their natural life.

**Farming:** The farming of black-tailed deer has not been supported as a deer management option by the government of BC. This is to reduce the risk of transferring diseases between wild populations and domesticated, farmed big game animals. According to the Provincial Big Game Farm Act, the only big game animals that can be legally farmed in the province are Fallow Deer, Reindeer and Bison.

Capture and Euthanize: Under the direction of professional wildlife experts, deer are baited into modified Clover traps. The wildlife experts use the trap to constrain the deer and employ a bolt gun to euthanize the deer. The deer dies quickly, and the meat, uncontaminated by tranquilizers or contraceptives, can be consumed rather than wasted.

- **Lessons Learned: Population Reduction Options**

Achieving social license to undertake a deer management plan that involves capture and euthanize population reduction measures is going to remain challenging for the provincial government, municipal governments and communities. Factual public education that includes subject matter experts is a critical success factor – so is providing a forum for innovation.

Those that are opposed to capture and euthanize are not necessary opposed to the need to implement a responsible deer management strategy. There is no one in Oak Bay who would not welcome an alternative option to achieving the necessary objective of reducing the population of urban deer providing it is: humane, ethical, legal and affordable.

It is important to note however that the District received many inquiries from residents who wanted to buy the deer meat, and editorial coverage included strong sentiments that the deer meat would be welcomed by those families in our region who are living in poverty. In speaking with the communities in the Kootenays, the food banks are extremely grateful to take the meat. Our First Nations communities were pleased to receive the deer honouring the animal as a food source and for cultural purposes.

The question remains, would harvesting deer on an annual basis find greater acceptability over time? Education and leadership are the two key success factors.

Earlier engagement with a neutral third party to help with the public education throughout the community – such as Wild Safe BC, an organization that specialize in educating the public on how to live safely with wildlife and avoid conflict – would have helped create a foundation of important, trusted knowledge.

#### **4. Modified Clover Traps**

The provincial government confirmed in the fall of 2014 that it would provide 5 modified Clover traps to the CRD in support of the Oak Bay pilot.

Online footage of a trapped deer being handled by people inside the trap made its way prominently into the social media and mainstream media networks. The MFLNRO confirmed that the footage posted and aired was not indicative of the capture and euthanize practices. While a person would enter the trap to tag a deer or to administer a shot, no one enters the trap during capture and euthanize. The images of a frightened, trapped animal were disturbing for many viewers. Our local media were very responsive to the correction and took down the footage.

- **Lessons learned: Modified Clover Traps**

A media strategy that engages much earlier as a component of the public outreach education may have helped address the misperceptions around the utilization of the trap and the trapping. Educating the public on the fact that deer and other wildlife are trapped as part of responsible practise in the wild to tag them and monitor them may have eased some concerns. The animal is only startled during the period that it is being approached which is a matter of a few minutes.

## 5. Permitting

The District applied to the MFLNO for a permit to reduce the population of deer in Oak Bay by 25 in October 2014 and received the permit in January 2015. The permit was valid for the time period up until March 15.

- **Lessons learned: Permitting**

Municipalities that are attempting a population reduction would benefit from consistent guidelines across the province to standardize the permit application content and process.

## 6. Contracting and Training

The CRD wrote a request for proposal to attract a contractor to implement the population reduction within the strict conditions of the permit. Given that the permit methodology is restricted to capture and euthanize, those individuals locally with any relevant experience was very limited. Some of those who were identified as strong candidates were not interested in such a controversial assignment, and others who may have been interested determined that the remuneration was not sufficient given the controversy involved.

The District reached out to the most experienced person in this highly sensitive and specialized area. He came to us from the Kootenays. The District's contractor fast became an invaluable resource bringing his many years of experience and wisdom to the District's plan. Of great significance was the professional recognition by the BCSPCA for his professionalism. The contractor was only available, however for 21 days.

The contractor training on the use of the Modified Clover Trap and the Captive Bolt Gun is undertaken by the provincial government. A team of two contractors is necessary to undertake the cull, one lead and one assistant. The training took place out of town over 1.5 days.

- **Lessons learned: Contracting and training**

Finding a contractor with the appropriate experience and appropriate demeanor is challenging. Someone who is a hunter does not necessarily have the appropriate skills and temperament to manage all of the complex requirements that accompany something as sensitive in nature as this initiative.

The District would have benefited greatly from engaging with our contractor at the beginning of the Pilot Project to hear first-hand his experience and recommended approach to community engagement, the count, the qualifications of the contractor etc.

In addition, the contractor's long standing relationship with the subject matter experts working in the MFLNR would have allowed for improved direct communication and may have strengthened the quality of the information crafted and shared with the public.

**Some of the contractor's observations included:**

- Recommendation of a different count methodology
- Recommendation that the Deer Management Strategy team be established before there is a need for a population reduction and that this team include local citizens, municipal staff, provincial biologist and conservation officer.
- Observed that the District started the cull too late in the allowable season. He noted that our mild coastal climate and the unseasonal mild February weather created a lush food source for the deer. The deer were not as tempted by the bait in the traps as the deer in the Kootenays that are being trapped when there is snow cover over their food.
- Observed that the District has a healthy population of racoons and rats that were interfering with the process by triggering the traps shut as they entered to dine on the bait. They also caused damage to the netting.
- Observed that a cull would take longer than other jurisdictions because of the abundance of natural food habitat and that therefore, more time and more traps would be required.
- Recommended that minor modifications to clover traps would be beneficial.

## **7. Trapping Locations**

Home owners volunteered their properties to host the traps. The District had many more properties volunteered than available traps. Locations were selected based on areas where there were known populations of deer and consideration was given to privacy and topography of the yard. Through discussions with homeowners, the District learned that private home insurance would likely not cover any incidents that might take place on the homeowner's property during the cull. Given the high profile challenges to the cull, and given the precedent in other communities for trespass and vandalism, the District entered into agreements with property owners to ensure that the District would be responsible for any property damage associated with the cull. The District also received releases from the property owners to allow for the District and the CRD staff to manage any issues of trespass and potential media attention that might result. As there were no incidents that took place during the cull, these arrangement were not tested.

## **8. Donations of Meat**

As deer meat is a Traditional food source for First Nations, the District through the CRD worked directly with local First Nations to arrange for the deer to be given to them. The harvested deer were used for food and for ceremonial purposes.

- **Lessons learned: donations of meat**  
While the province has developed health protocols that inform how harvested deer meat must treated and inspected before it is given to shelters and food banks, we could not find any protocols that govern in the same way the donation of culled game meat to

First Nations communities who preferred to receive the animal whole and hang and butcher the animal in Traditional ways.

The document, Donated Game Meat: Standards for the Donation of Culled Game Meat should be updated in cooperation with First Nations to include the donation of culled game meat to Aboriginal communities.

The District also suggests exploring opportunities with First Nations to take a greater role in the harvesting of deer in communities.

## 9. Costs:

The District signed onto a Pilot Project with the understanding that the scope of investment would be \$25,000.00. The nature of a Pilot Project assumes learning and responding in real time which inevitably has cost implications. While the hopeful intention was the CRD would be operationalizing the Pilot Project in Oak Bay, the District and the CRD soon realized the limitations of this approach as much of the implementation required local knowledge of the community and the District. Given that the District did not have an internal staff resource who had the time or the expertise to assume this responsibility – and given the highly sensitive political nature of the initiative itself, the CAO assumed the leadership role on the implementation of the Pilot Project and contracted part time a local citizen with communications, risk management and project management experience to assist.

In addition, other expenses were incurred in the following areas:

- The deer count required the unexpected involvement of the District's animal control contractor;
- The additional insurance policy required to protect home owners resulted in corresponding legal costs;
- The CRD provided to each municipality in the region a few copies of two educational brochures. The District printed a second run and distributed them through the Oak Bay News to ensure that every resident in Oak Bay received these two information brochures at their home;
- The District increased signage in key areas;
- The District chose to create and distribute posters and hand bills to educate the community on the fine increases for feeding wildlife;
- The higher than anticipated contracting costs due to the need to hire a contractor from the Kootenays;
- Attendance at the UBCM Deer Management Forum;
- The cost of staff time involved in implementing something as high profile and sensitive as this initiative;
- The District would have benefited from an earlier Deer Management Forum where the subject matter experts from the province, and those with authority including the BCSPCA and municipalities are sharing and hearing the same information. The efficiencies that would result from greater collaboration between the province and municipalities along with the standardization of accessible information would have positive financial implications to the overall initiative. The learning curve is costly.

At the Deer Management Forum, the District found the model used by Invermere's Urban Deer Management Committee (Deer Committee) to be an interesting one. The goal of the committee was not to find consensus where all concerns could be met, nor was it to eradicate the deer population from the community. The Deer Committee was tasked with identifying resident issues and concerns, researching and evaluating solutions, determining which potential solutions may work in Invermere and making recommendations to implement proposed actions. It is important to note that despite this grass roots approach, the District of Invermere still concludes that there is no simple solution to address the concerns of all residents and at the end of the day, leadership is what is required.

Seeking alternative sources of funding to help lessen the burden on municipalities/taxpayers is needed. The responsibility for wildlife management in BC is with the provincial government. As this issue of urban deer begins to escalate throughout the province, perhaps the role of ICBC could also be considered given the high number of vehicle collisions that take place across the province.

**10. Next steps:**

- District of Oak Bay to continue to monitor deer human conflicts going forward.
- District to receive CRD Project evaluation following a second deer count undertaken by the CRD in the fall of 2015.
- District awaits recommendations from CRD regarding Deer Management Strategy to determine next steps for the Capital Region including Oak Bay.



**Peninsula & Area Agricultural Commission  
c/o Saanich Municipal Hall  
770 Vernon Avenue, Victoria, B.C. V8X 2W7  
Telephone: (250) 475-1775 Fax: (250) 475-5440  
Secretary: *Isobel Hoffmann, [isobel.hoffmann@saanich.ca](mailto:isobel.hoffmann@saanich.ca)*  
Co-Chairs: *Bob Maxwell & Jack Mar***

March 22, 2015

CRD Board & Directors  
Capital Regional District  
PO Box 1000 – 625 Fisgard Street  
Victoria, BC V8W 1R7

Dear Board members and Directors:

**GOOSE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

At its meeting on March 12, 2015, the Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission (PAAC) once again discussed the never-ending problems surrounding the increasing population of resident geese on the Peninsula and throughout the Regional District. We thank the CRD for its efforts to date in trying to find solutions.

It is our understanding that funding for this project could be terminated at the end of this month. We further understand that funding from the Growing Forward 2 Strategic Outreach Initiative was used to assist with the February workshop on egg addling and wildlife nuisance permits, and that funding for the egg addling and proposed pilot goose cull received from the Agriculture Wildlife Initiative – ARDCorp of BC Agricultural Council will terminate in the 2015/16 fiscal year.

As we are all aware, our farmers continue to see devastating crop losses year after year, (over \$300,000 annually – and rising), which in turn affects the food security of our region. Of course, it is not only agriculture that is suffering, but public health and safety issues are paramount in our regional parks, school fields, playgrounds and at the airport.

PAAC would respectfully request that you consider continued funding of the Deer and Canada Goose Management Strategies for the forthcoming budget year, and encourage you to consider establishing a service going forward. We also ask that you take the lead on implementing the recommendations of both the Deer and Geese Strategies to develop wildlife management as a service to the CRD municipalities.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing a positive outcome in the near future.

Sincerely,

Bob Maxwell and Jack Mar  
Co-Chairs  
Peninsula and Area Agricultural Commission

cc: *See attachment*

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**Member Municipalities:  
Saanich, Central Saanich, North Saanich, Metchosin and Sidney**

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COPIES SENT TO:

All CRD Municipalities:

- Victoria, Saanich, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, Central Saanich, North Saanich, Sidney, Langford, Colwood, Metchosin, Sooke, View Royal, Highlands, Juan de Fuca Electoral Area, Salt Spring Island and the Southern Gulf Islands Trust

- Victoria Airport Authority
  - Elizabeth May, MP, Saanich Gulf Islands
  - Randall Garrison, MP, Esquimalt Juan de Fuca
  - Murray Rankin, MP, Victoria
  - John Horgan, MLA, Juan de Fuca
  - Gary Holman, MLA, Saanich North and the Islands
  - Carole James, MLA, Victoria-Beacon Hill
  - Lana Popham, MLA, Saanich South
  - Rob Fleming, MLA, Victoria-Swan Lake
  - Dr. Andrew Weaver, MLA, Oak Bay Gordon Head
  - Maurine Karagianis, MLA, Esquimalt Juan de Fuca
  - Department of National Defense
  - School Districts 61 & 62
  - Agricultural Land Commission – Elizabeth Sutton
  - Ministry of Agriculture
  - Ministry of Environment
  - Environment Canada
  - Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
  - Victoria Natural History Society
  - Victoria Native Plan Society
-



**CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT  
REGIONAL DEER MANAGEMENT  
REQUESTS TO MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND  
MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS AND NATURAL RESOURCE OPERATIONS**

1. **Request:** Provision of a clear template for the Urban Deer Management process including criteria for each of the four management areas (conflict reduction, population reduction, deer vehicle collision mitigation, and public education) laid out in the urban ungulate conflict analysis. Provide a clear indication of how to achieve sufficient public participation.

**Background:** The CRD researched other communities across North America to establish a template for a regional deer management strategy, using local municipal examples from BC. We were provided with the urban ungulate conflict analysis and limited provincial staff time.

**Justification:** A more structured approach provided by the Province, who owns, oversees and ultimately approves or disapproves permits for wildlife in the province would provide communities with more guidance. Given the Province's experience and expertise, it seems appropriate for them to provide an effective toolkit with policy tools (example bylaws) and process templates.

2. **Request:** Committed representation of Wildlife Biologist and Wildlife Veterinarian at meetings that discuss the roles and responsibilities of the Province vs municipalities related to deer management.

**Background:** The provincial Wildlife Biologist and provincial Wildlife Veterinarian were represented on the Expert Resource Working Group. They presented at and attended a limited number of meetings. The request would be for these experts to lead the technical aspects for input in the process and provide definitive advice to local governments exploring deer management options.

**Justification:** Most local governments do not have wildlife expertise on staff. Communities can be given conflicting information by advocacy groups. The Wildlife Veterinarian and Wildlife Biologist can provide scientific, empirical information backed by their credentials.

3. **Request:** Committed representation of a conservation officer at the implementation of any deer management option that involves capture or handling of deer.

**Background:** Conservation officers and managers have provided input throughout the deer management process. Currently the Province does not permit conservation officers to carry out capture and euthanize activities or controlled public hunting.

**Justification:** Conservation officers are the most qualified individuals to attend and oversee population reduction management option activities. Even if they themselves do not carry out the activities, their attendance and authority provides visible and non-visible support to the process. Conservation officer's expertise will be helpful if contractor actions don't go according to plan.

4. **Request:** Clear provincial position on capture and relocate management option that is consistent for all communities in the province.

**Background:** From 2011-2013, this management option was deemed to be too risky to blacktail deer with a high mortality rate. Then in 2014 Cranbrook and Grand Forks began discussions to attempt another pilot. Funding was allocated to write a grant application to explore the feasibility of this option through a pilot potentially in 2016. We understand that currently it will not be viable until 2016.

**Justification:** This issue has gone from a firm 'no' to a 'maybe' and then it will be tested/piloted. A firm answer as to whether it is an option in 2015 would be ideal.

5. **Request:** Clear provincial position on the immunocontraception management option that is consistent for all communities in the province, and a commitment to track research, and announce when/if an immunocontraceptive appropriate for deer becomes commercially available.

**Background:** This option was presented by the provincial Wildlife Veterinarian only as a one off scientific experimental management option that would require over 90% of females to be treated, in an isolated population, with very little chance for immigration or emigration from and to the population. The animals still live out their natural lives, but undergo the same stress during the capture process. It would take multiple generations of treatment for success and the experimental immunocontraceptives are expensive. Currently there are none that are commercially available in Canada.

**Justification:** This is constantly the topic of misinformation in the media. The messaging for this needs to be firm and consistent and delivered by an expert backed by credentials.

6. **Request:** Initiate and enforce report back/tracking for nuisance wildlife permits for the purpose of crop protection.

**Background:** CRD staff through the rural pilot project attended a number of farms to try and help farmers get nuisance wildlife permits and local firearms permits to discharge and help control crop loss. Staff heard that in some cases the number of animals permitted to be removed was being exceeded dramatically and there was not a report back mechanism to the Province. Therefore the Province assumed the permits were sufficient.

**Justification:** In order for the Province to better track and adjust permitting, a report back mechanism needs to be instituted and enforced. Currently the provincial position is that no additional resources are required because the given tools are not being used to their full capacity. In fact the tools are being used beyond their capacity, but the process and cost to get additional permits is prohibitive so some farmers get enough permits to cover themselves should they be caught.

7. **Request:** Work with the Ministry of Agriculture to re-institute fencing subsidies and crop loss insurance for farmers.

**Background:** Fencing is extremely expensive and prohibitive for farmers, the Ministry of Agriculture used to provide some relief through subsidies but those minimal subsidies have disappeared in recent years.

**Justification:** This is a RDMS recommendation that was discussed at length and was heard at length in farm site visits.

8. **Request:** Request that Province determines whether hazing techniques with dogs are appropriate and legal under certain circumstances.

**Background:** This management option was piloted and deemed successful in a number of towns, however, it was too hard to manage and enforce province wide.

**Justification:** This is a RDMS recommendation that was discussed at length and was heard at length in farm site visits. For rural and agricultural properties this is a reasonable way to remove animals, although it does not work well for non-herd animals such as black tail deer.

9. **Request:** That the Province increase effectiveness of deer warning signage.

**Background:** This is a recommendation given in presentations to seven municipal councils on deer management. It was discussed at length and recommended by the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG).

**Justification:** This is a RDMS recommendation. ICBC collisions continue to increase.

10. **Request:** That the Province partner with ICBC to increase driver education on deer vehicle collision mitigation.

**Background:** This is a recommendation given in presentations to seven municipal councils on deer management. It was discussed at length and recommended by the CAG.

**Justification:** This is a RDMS recommendation. ICBC collisions continue to increase.

11. **Request:** That the Province explore partnerships with schools to produce unique mobile signage to increase awareness.

**Background:** This is a recommendation given in presentations to seven municipal councils on deer management. It was discussed at length and recommended by the CAG.

**Justification:** This is a RDMS recommendation. ICBC collisions continue to increase.

12. **Request:** That the Province work to increase and extend right of way brushing and highway fencing in high collision areas identified on ICBC collision maps.

**Background:** This is a recommendation given in presentations to seven municipal councils on deer management. It was discussed at length and recommended by the CAG.

**Justification:** This is a RDMS recommendation. ICBC collisions continue to increase.

13. **Request:** That the provincial government consider capital infrastructure planning design pertaining to minimizing deer vehicle collisions in master planning projects.

**Background:** This is a recommendation given in presentations to seven municipal councils on deer management. It was discussed at length and recommended by the CAG.

**Justification:** This is a RDMS recommendation, ICBC collisions continue to increase.

14. **Request:** That the provincial government revise speed limits in high collision areas identified on ICBC collision maps.

**Background:** This is a recommendation given in presentations to seven municipal councils on deer management. It was discussed at length and recommended by the CAG.

**Justification:** This is a RDMS recommendation, ICBC collisions continue to increase.

15. **Request:** That the provincial government provide strategic and implementation funding for communities that can demonstrate problems attributed to high deer populations.

**Background:** The CRD to date has spent over \$260,000 in single supplementaries on regional deer management since 2011.

**Justification:** Wildlife management remains under provincial jurisdiction and the responsibility was downloaded to local government without any additional financial assistance. If this is going to be an ongoing role for local government it needs to be funded sustainably.

16. **Request:** That the Province provides a very clear policy and allowances for the distribution of game meat to food banks.

**Background:** Currently animals taken under nuisance wildlife permit may not be kept by the hunter and either need to be taken to the dump, buried or butchered and donated to persons in need or given to First Nations. The regulations around donation to food banks is hazy and has many grey areas.

**Justification:** The Province needs to provide a clear process as to what needs to be done to maintain clean healthy butchering, the types of facilities required, packaging, time for hanging, etc. in a tool kit in order to properly assist local governments that are looking into this potential option.

17. **Request:** That the Province provides a mechanism to allow for a certification to allow specific hunters to discharge single projectiles within rural and agricultural areas.

**Background:** Currently the Saanich Peninsula permits hunting with shotgun (multiple projectile and bow only) (based on the 2015-2017 BC Hunting and Trapping Regulations). Multiple projectile rounds, although more safe due to reduced traveling distance and velocity of projectiles is a less humane way to kill a deer. A single projectile is considered more humane.

**Justification:** Previously, the Saanich Peninsula provincial hunting regulations permitted shotgun with a slug (single projectile) which hunters, biologists and the Wildlife Veterinarian consider more humane to kill deer.

18. **Request:** That the Province provides a mechanism to land owners that allows for crop protection from nocturnal deer depredation similar to Section 26 (2) of the *Wildlife Act* that allows for a land owner to protect any domestic animal or bird from predator depredation regardless of the season or time of day.

**Background:** CRD staff through the rural pilot project attended a number of farms to try and help farmers get nuisance wildlife permits and local firearms permits to discharge and help control crop loss. Staff heard that in some cases the number of animals permitted to be removed was being exceeded dramatically and there was not a report back mechanism to the Province. Therefore the Province assumed the permits were sufficient. However, often predation pressure during the day time creates a situation where deer turn nocturnal and browse on crops at night, when farmers cannot discharge a firearm.

**Justification:** Farmers that are engaging in crop protection have found that once enough pressure has been applied to deer from crop protection the deer become nocturnal and this prevents the landowner from effectively protecting those crops.

**Themes:**

Provincial Staff Support; Financial Funding; Provincial Partnerships between Ministry of FLNRO, Ministry of Environment, and Ministry of Agriculture; Highest and Best use of meat; Consistent, firm messaging/media support; Provision of tools and toolkits; Reporting and tracking of permits; Research and analysis for new and evolving products/management options