

Media Release



URBAN WILDLIFE
STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY

Province of B.C. approves funding for Oak Bay, Urban Deer Management Project.

Date: Thursday, March 16, 2017

For Immediate Release

OAK BAY, BC – Approval has been granted by the Province of B.C., Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations, to provide the District of Oak Bay, in partnership with the Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society (UWSS), with a cost-share grant of \$20,000 that will be matched with an additional \$20,000 from the District of Oak Bay. This funding will allow for the implementation of the first phase of a progressive, science based, deer management project.

The provincial government's 2010 *BC Urban Ungulate Conflict Analysis* suggests that communities that undertake "collaborative, community based, co-management processes" result in "greater stakeholder participation and satisfaction with urban wildlife management". This is exactly the model that Oak Bay and the UWSS, have undertaken.

Oak Bay is a community that places a high value on good public policy based on research and evidence. This collaboration between the municipality, the UWSS, science advisors from the University of Victoria and Camosun College, as well as other partners, is a rigorously developed and implemented deer management plan that includes a scientific, evidence-based, and humane method of deer reduction.

Oak Bay offers an abundance of year-round vegetation where urban deer have no natural predators. The population of black-tailed deer has been on the rise, and as a result, so are incidents of deer/human conflicts. That said; it is generally considered that the carrying capacity for deer in Oak Bay may have reached its limit. Since 2012, deer mortalities within Oak Bay have averaged at 35 – 45 per year. However, much of the evidence on deer population levels and movement within the District of Oak Bay, are anecdotal.

Phase 1, is the research portion of the project whereby up to 20 deer will be captured and fitted with radio-telemetry, GPS reporting collars. As well, a rigorous photo-identification assessment will be made. The expected results of this research project will be to:

- Develop an understanding of population size, density and movement patterns of Black-tailed deer in Oak Bay.
- Develop an evidence-based, systematic, long-term urban deer management program that provides the ability to measure success, definitively.

- Provide a science-based standard for effective urban deer population control.

A key component for the success of this project will be communicating with, and engaging the continued support of Oak Bay residents as the UWSS moves forward with the implementation of this initiative.

The District of Oak Bay and the Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society would like to acknowledge and express our appreciation for the financial support from the Province of B.C., Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations; with a special mention of our thanks to the Provincial Urban Deer Advisory Committee for their counsel and guidance.

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