



Deer Plan Oak Bay

A campaign of the
URBAN WILDLIFE
STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY

April 14, 2015

Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society BACKGROUND

The Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society (UWSS) is a new citizen-led organization that was formed following the recent lethal deer cull in Oak Bay. The UWSS consists of deer biologists, educators, professional communicators, retired senior public servants and working professionals, mostly from Oak Bay, who believe that there are effective and sustainable, non-lethal solutions to human-deer conflicts in Oak Bay, the CRD and other urban areas.

The immediate objective of the UWSS is to implement an immunocontraceptive program to properly steward the deer population in Oak Bay. The organization will also conduct a scientific deer count and work with local governments and other organizations to build public awareness on how to co-exist with urban deer.

To achieve its objectives, the UWSS is seeking financial support from citizens in Oak Bay, the CRD and beyond. The initial fundraising target is \$50,000 in a three-month “Deer Plan Oak Bay Campaign,” which runs until July. The funds will cover the costs of the immunocontraceptive program, including the vaccine, permits, equipment and salaries.

More than \$8,500 has been raised to date, plus in-kind donations. This initial funding is allowing UWSS scientists to proceed immediately with acquiring the vaccine and permits, and start the vaccination program. The remaining funds are needed to obtain other materials and equipment and continue with the field work. People wishing to make donations are asked to visit the website at deerplanoakbay.ca.

The UWSS is citizen-led and has the range of skills and experience to implement this science-based approach to the stewardship of urban deer. In contrast to a cull, the activities of the UWSS will be community-building by engaging citizens and implementing ethical and humane solutions in a transparent and accountable way. This is an opportunity for Oak Bay and the CRD to be innovative leaders on an issue faced by other urban centres across North America.

The UWSS is a registered non-profit society. It is guided by a citizen-based steering committee and led by the following board members:

- **Bryan Gates, Msc, RPBio (ret) (President)**—A former manager of wildlife resources for BC’s Ministry of Environment in the southwestern mainland, Gates is a retired registered professional biologist with four decades of experience who has lived in Oak Bay for 40 years. He worked in environmental management and impact assessment with the BC government for 23 years. His MSc thesis from UBC involved a four-year study of deer on Vancouver Island and during that time he captured and handled over 300 deer.

- **Kristy Kilpatrick (Vice-President)**—A two-time recipient of the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence, Kilpatrick is a teacher-leader in the Greater Victoria School District, recognized for innovative teaching practices and for giving her students the tools to excel. Her initiatives include a native plant garden at her school to support “urban wild culture” and encouraging her students to engage with community leaders on issues of importance to their communities.
- **Dr. Danalee Goldthwaite, PhD (Secretary-Treasurer)**—A research psychologist with interests in human language, memory and perception, Goldthwaite retired from post-secondary teaching, research, and administration in 2001. She obtained her doctorate from Simon Fraser University and was on the faculty of Langara College, the University of British Columbia and Thompson Rivers University, where she chaired the Department of Psychology. She is the author of several scholarly publications.
- **Ralph Archibald (Director)**—A former Assistant Deputy Minister of Environmental Stewardship for BC’s Ministry of Environment, Archibald has 40 years’ experience in the natural resource sector. Starting as a wildlife research assistant in Ontario, he has also worked in the NWT and the Yukon, before coming to BC in the early 1980s, where he held progressively more senior positions. He retired as ADM in 2010 and is currently a member of the Forest Practices Board.

The scientific activities of the UWSS will be guided by a Scientific Advisory Group comprised of two ecologists and an economist from the University of Victoria, a veterinarian, an experienced deer biologist and SpayVac for Wildlife president Mark Fraker, RPBio (ret), who conducted the other three SpayVac pilot projects in BC.

The chief scientist for the immunocontraceptive program is **Dr. Rick Page, PhD, RPBio**. A biologist with four decades’ experience, Page conducted a decade-long study on Vancouver Island black-tailed deer for the BC government in the 1980s. He’s a self-employed biologist in Victoria and a non-government science member on COSEWIC, the federal commission on endangered species. He also researched wolves and moose on Isle Royale National Park—the world’s longest continuous predator-prey study—for his PhD and has studied everything from honeybees to killer whales. He has taught conservation biology at the University of Victoria, lectured around the world and published many scientific papers. A registered professional biologist with the College of Applied Biology of BC, Page is also the longest-serving member of the college’s disciplinary committee, which is responsible for maintaining high standards of professional conduct and ethics.

The UWSS has received statements of support from five prominent animal welfare organizations including the **BC SPCA**:

“The UWSS is using a scientific, evidence-based approach to deer management. Their commitment to finding a humane and socially acceptable solution to urban wildlife conflicts includes a scientific count, involving and engaging the community, and a goal of working cooperatively with local governments to implement conflict reduction programs such as public education and speed reduction and enforcement, has our full support.”