



Deer Plan Oak Bay

A campaign of the
URBAN WILDLIFE
STEWARDSHIP SOCIETY

April 14, 2015

NEW SCIENCE-BASED PROJECT TO SHOW NON-LETHAL METHODS BEST IN MANAGING URBAN DEER

This year's Oak Bay deer cull will be the last conducted in the CRD if a new science-based citizens' group accomplishes its goal. The newly incorporated Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society (UWSS) has initiated the process for federal and provincial permits to conduct a pilot project in Oak Bay using an immunocontraceptive to capture, vaccinate, tag and release 25 black-tailed does.

The project aims to demonstrate that non-lethal methods to reduce the population of deer in Greater Victoria are more effective and less costly than killing animals. In contrast to the secrecy surrounding the recent Oak Bay cull, the group is looking to keep CRD residents informed and involved.

The Oak Bay-based group, which will fund the project through community donors, includes a retired provincial ADM and a senior manager, both with expertise and long-term experience in wildlife management, particularly with deer; educators; professional communicators; and two of Canada's leading deer scientists.

The pilot project, "Deer Plan Oak Bay," is targeting late August or early September to start the vaccination program using experienced biologists. So far, the UWSS has raised more than \$8,500 to fund the pilot project and will be seeking financial support from the community to complete the project and expand the approach into other areas of the CRD.

For more information about the Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society, Deer Plan Oak Bay, and how to support the campaign see deerplanoakbay.ca

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Quotes, FAQs and backgrounders on the UWSS and on the science of deer stewardship are attached.

Quotes:

“Our group coalesced around the idea that there’s a better way to address human-deer conflicts in the CRD. The Oak Bay lethal cull approach ignored science, lacked effective public education and citizen involvement, and left other measures of mitigation undone.

There’s an opportunity here for Greater Victoria to show leadership in stewarding our urban wildlife in an innovative, transparent, collaborative and humane way that can serve as a model for other communities.”

- Kristy Kilpatrick, Vice-President, Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society and educator

“Recent events have indicated to us that our local governments may not have sufficient staff with experience and vision to address the management of urban deer populations. We believe they can benefit from outside advice. As citizens with scientific and public policy expertise, we are offering comprehensive and science-based alternatives.

A humane, effective and non-lethal approach to wildlife management — one that addresses concerns across the spectrum from gardeners to those who consider wildlife an attractive part of urban life — can create a win for Greater Victoria. It can engender a community that we can present to the world with pride.

We are reaching out to both the district of Oak Bay and the Capital Regional District. Each has an important responsibility for impact mitigation and community education, and to address wildlife conflicts, whether real or perceived.”

-Bryan Gates, President, Urban Wildlife Stewardship Society, and retired deer biologist

“For more than a century, lethal removal of urban deer has been the traditional approach applied by governments, despite the availability of effective non-lethal alternatives that are preferred by the public. Fertility control through immunocontraception—using vaccines to produce antibodies that safely block the reproductive capacity of females— is now readily available.

We’re seeking approval from senior levels of government to use SpayVac, a patented Canadian vaccine that has been tested and proven on deer populations at CFB Esquimalt and James Island locally and in Maple Ridge. We now have both the scientific knowledge and the local expertise to demonstrate that there’s a successful science-based solution for urban environments.”

-Dr. Rick Page, Chief Scientist, Deer Plan Oak Bay