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British Columbia

DISTRICT OF LAKE COUNTRY	
To:	Hazel
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June 13, 2007

Hazel Christy
 Director of Corporate Services
 District of Lake Country
 Municipal Office
 Lakewood Park Mall, 11852 Highway 97, Unit #17
 Lake Country BC V4V 1E3

Dear Hazel Christy:

Thank you for your letter of April 30, 2007, regarding urban deer conflicts in the Okanagan Valley.

Deer remain in residential settings because they feel protected from predators and there is an abundance of food. At some point, the level of deer damage to domestic plants becomes unacceptable to home owners. There are limited steps that the Ministry of Environment (MOE) can take, but the long term solution must include residents making their community less attractive to deer.

Deer are not considered dangerous wildlife, but they must be given respect and space. Deer normally react defensively and most often flee from perceived threats. However, they are intelligent animals and can learn that humans or even dogs are not necessarily threats. Deer are wild animals and does can aggressively protect their fawns. Any human physical contact from an aggressive deer should be reported to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) through the Report All Poachers and Polluters line (dial toll free 1-877-952-7277 (RAPP)) for appropriate action.

However, it is incumbent upon the landowner to make reasonable efforts to protect their property from deer damage prior to action by ministry staff. Information regarding deer conflict reduction can be found at:

http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cos/info/wildlife_human_interaction/docs/ungulates.html. These actions may include:

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Ministry of Environment

Conservation Officer Service

Telephone: (250) 387-6041
Facsimile: (250) 356-5240

Mailing Address:
PO Box 9376
Stn Prov Gov't
Victoria BC
V8W 9M5

Fencing

For fencing details and designs, see also: <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/living/deer.htm>.

1. Woven wire fencing is the most effective protection from browsing deer. To be effective, though, the fence must be a minimum 2.5m high.
2. Electric fencing can be a barrier to deer, but must be maintained. To be effective, 8 strands of electrified wire should be spaced over 1.5m height. Another suggestion is to have a single strand of electric fencing, but coated with a deer attractant (peanut butter has been suggested) to ensure that a deer would get a shock and be repelled from the area.
3. Cages or mini fences can be installed around specific shrubs, that the landowner wants protected.
4. Netting that is normally sold to protect berries and fruit from birds, can be an effective temporary barrier to browsing deer.

Repellents

Chemical mixtures sprayed onto plants give a taste or odour, which is disagreeable to deer.

A recipe for a homemade deer repellent can be found at

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/living/deer.htm>.

Commercial repellents such as *Plantskydd* are available at major garden supply centres (Art Knapp, Rona, Canadian Tire) which claim to provide protection for months. CanRepel (<http://www.canrepel.com/home.html>) sells a monthly deer repellent service to homeowners in the Okanagan. Deer can become accustomed to a specific repellent, so it may be necessary to vary the product used occasionally to maintain effectiveness. There are motion sensor devices attached to a water sprinkler (one brand is called "Scarecrow" <http://www.contech-inc.com/products/scarecrow/>) which the company claims is effective at scaring deer from a yard.

Deer resistant plants

Lists of plants that act as attractants, as well as those that are unpalatable to deer can also be found at <http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/living/deer.htm>.

It is the mandate of MOE to provide hunting recreation and a sustainable harvest of game. This is achieved primarily by manipulating the hunting seasons, however, deer management options in the Okanagan Region have been hampered by private land, hunting restrictions, and local government firearm bylaws.

In an attempt to reduce the local deer population, the City of Kelowna amended their bylaws to allow the discharge of shotguns on private property land over five acres within the city limits. This has allowed hunters to harvest nuisance deer and bear during hunting seasons. A similar bylaw for the District of Lake Country may help to reduce the numbers of residential deer, as it has in Kelowna.

It is possible to have a Limited Entry Hunt for deer, directed at specific private properties and adjacent Crown land (usually within 400 metres). In this way, the number of hunters can be controlled and the hunting effort directed at problem areas. The ministry can administer the hunt, but the local government Council must:

- identify the areas or properties where this hunt could be carried out,
- waive or modify firearm or hunting restrictions to allow a hunt; and
- ensure that there is general community support for such a hunt.

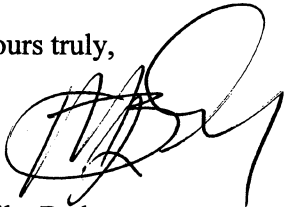
In response to deer conflict concerns, several communities in Canada and the USA (including Princeton) have instituted deer-feeding bans. The ministry has proposed an amendment to the BC Community Charter—Spheres of Concurrent Jurisdiction that would authorize communities to enact bylaws, that would prohibit the intentional feeding of deer. I understand that the Town of Kimberly has already passed such a bylaw.

This is not an easy situation to resolve. Deer are long term residents of both remote and semi rural areas, and like the deer, humans will have to adapt to co-exist with wildlife using the same piece of land. From the human's perspective, successful co-existence could involve:

- selecting landscaping plants that are unpalatable to deer.
- educating adults and children on how to respond when encountering wildlife.
- building suitable fences for worry-free play areas and enclosing gardens.
- acquiring an assertive dog (but keeping it under control).
- using scare devices or repellents.
- never feeding deer and educating neighbours who do.
- passing a bylaw prohibiting the feeding of deer in town; and
- making hunters feel welcome to legally hunt deer close to town.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Yours truly,



Mike Badry
Wildlife Conflicts Prevention Coordinator

pc: Rick Hildebrand, Regional Manager, South Interior