

Message from the Mayor and Council

In June 2013, Mayor and Council agreed to participate in the Capital Regional District's (CRD) Regional Deer Management Strategy – a decision signifying Oak Bay's desire to better understand and address the growing population of black tailed deer in our community. In the absence of any natural predators, the population of deer is increasing and, as a result, the incidents of deer-human conflicts are increasing exponentially. Public safety is our primary concern and responsibility.

Forty deer died as a result of car collisions and other injury-related events in Oak Bay in 2013. These numbers are up from twenty three in 2012. These animals died painful difficult deaths. Many of the deaths were a result of vehicle collisions, and these collisions also put human lives at risk.

The Regional Deer Management Strategy was developed by the CRD and a Citizen's Advisory Group with input from an Expert Resources Working Group made up of wildlife biologists and animal health experts from the provincial government and the private sector. The strategy explains the population of deer, defines the inherent issues of deer-human conflicts and makes recommendations to effectively and humanely address public safety, health and wildlife issues.

Public education is a key component of The Regional Deer Management Strategy and you will find more information on this site including information brochures, links to information prepared by the CRD, and Frequently Asked Questions.

In addition to public education, several deer-human conflict mitigation measures have been or are in the process of being implemented in Oak Bay:

- We have a bylaw that bans the feeding of deer. In February, Council voted to increase fines for feeding the deer to \$300.00.
- We have increased allowance for side and back property fencing heights.
- We support deer resistant plantings and the use of deer repellents in municipal gardens and parks, and our brochure promotes tools for homeowners.
- We are looking at strengthening our street signage in order to raise greater awareness of the possibility of deer vehicle collisions in our neighbourhoods.
- Should population reduction be necessary, we will follow the direction of the CRD, their wildlife experts, the Provincial Wildlife Veterinarian, Provincial Wildlife Biologists and the provincial government agency (Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources Operation) that has overall authority in this matter. We continue to be open to all legal options available should a population reduction measure be necessary.

As the year unfolds, we will continue to hear from our residents and we will continually re-evaluate our deer mitigation measures.

While education and awareness are key priorities going forward, public safety is of paramount importance. We ask all drivers to pay extra attention while on the roads to avoid deer human conflict where ever possible.