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REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREAS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 09, 2019

SUBJECT Provincial Urban Deer Cost Share Program

ISSUE

Capital Regional District (CRD) Board authorization is required to enable submission of grant applications to the Provincial Urban Deer Cost Share Program.

BACKGROUND

The Provincial Urban Deer Cost-Share (PUDOCS) program is a Provincial program to help local governments and Indian Bands/First Nations manage conflicts between humans and deer in urban areas. The PUDOCS program is directed by the Provincial Urban Deer Advisory Committee (PUDAC) with representatives from the Province, local governments, Union of B.C. Municipalities and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. PUDAC was created to support local governments in dealing with urban deer issues. The objectives of the PUDOCS program are to:

- *Encourage effective community-based urban deer planning and communications;*
- *Support high-value projects that will effectively manage urban deer;*
- *Provide learning opportunities through scientifically rigorous research trial;*
- *Partner effectively with local governments and Indian Bands/First Nations in the delivery of urban deer management actions;*
- *Foster a standardized and structured approach to management actions, reporting and monitoring in order to continuously improve 'best practices';*
- *Encourage effective communications and information transfer between the provincial and local governments and Indian Bands/First Nations;*
- *Develop effective information and education materials; and*
- *Acquire and loan specialized deer management equipment to local governments and Indian Bands/First Nations.*

In 2018-19, the CRD participated in the PUDOCS program and was funded to run a successful pilot project on Mayne Island. The fallow deer population on Mayne Island is significantly impacting the health of the island's ecosystems. The high incidence of fallow deer, which are an invasive species in the Southern Gulf Islands, is impacting the islands by outcompeting native species for space and nutrients. Mayne Island has very little public land available to manage deer populations. The population of fallow deer on Mayne Island is estimated between 500 to 1000, however, Provincial biologists within the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources and Rural Development think this estimate is low based on the number of animals removed each year.

The 2018-19 pilot project, "An Eco-Cultural Restoration Partnership," worked with the community to identify private properties appropriate for hunting, used bait to attract deer to ideal hunting locations, and partnered with local First Nations to increase hunting capacity and distribute meat to the community. As a result of this project, 70 deer were harvested and distributed amongst the community. The project demonstrated that hunting can be completed in a safe and responsible manner on Mayne Island, which does not have a long history of hunting on the island. While the short time period of the pilot project limited the number of deer harvested, the project was very successful in building relationships and overcoming administrative barriers that will prove highly valuable for future projects. It also gave the First Nations hunters experience working on private properties with private property owners. The Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area of the CRD

would like to enter into the PUDOCs program again to run a similar hunting program for the 2019-20 season. The deadline for the PUDOCs grant is October 30, 2019.

Hunting is but one in a range of strategies for managing populations of invasive species. As part of the 2019 fallow deer work program priority in the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area, the CRD has issued a Request for Proposals for a broad based Fallow Deer Management Strategy for Mayne Island. The closing date for bids is October 11, 2019 and the final management strategy is due on January 31, 2019. The results of this strategy will inform the approach to future management actions on Mayne Islands.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

That the Electoral Areas Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the Capital Regional District Board authorize the submission of an application to the Provincial Urban Deer Cost-Share Program for \$20,000 for the Mayne Island Fallow Deer Management Project, and that the Board authorize staff to support this project through its duration.

Alternative 2

That the Electoral Areas Committee does not recommend the Capital Regional District Board support a funding application to the Provincial Urban Deer Cost-Share Program.

IMPLICATIONS

In keeping with the CRD's grant process, the project proposal has been analyzed to verify alignment between PUDOCs program goals and the CRD's planning framework (*as articulated in the Corporate Plan 2019-2022*). Matching funding, including in-kind support has been identified in the CRD provisional budget for 2020, and organizational capacity to deliver the proposal outcomes has been confirmed.

CONCLUSION

The project proposal for a 2019-20 Fallow Deer Management project will be submitted to Provincial Urban Deer Cost-Share program in time for the deadline of October 30, 2019. The funding aligns with both the grant program and CRD objectives. CRD has the organizational capacity to achieve the proposed project outcomes within the grant program and within the context of a broader fallow deer management strategy for Mayne Island.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Electoral Areas Committee recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the Capital Regional District Board authorize the submission of an application to the Provincial Urban Deer Cost-Share Program for \$20,000 for the Mayne Island Fallow Deer Management Project, and that the Board authorize staff to support this project through its duration.

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