

From [www.kelownadailycourier.ca](http://www.kelownadailycourier.ca)

## **Council makes nice with TRACS**

By Ron Seymour

Friday, October 16, 2009

A rabbit roundup organized by an animal-rights group that once battled city hall produced “excellent” results, Kelowna council will hear on Monday.

The Responsible Animal Care Society has caught, sterilized and cared for 173 rabbits since the group was awarded a city contract in April, and only a “small number” of bunnies remain in areas that were once nearly overrun.

“I’m happy to hear they’re happy with what we’ve been doing,” Sinikka Crosland, TRACS president, said Thursday. “We’ve been working hard to get all the rabbits off the streets.”

Instead, council awarded a \$54,000, controversial contract to EBB Environmental Consulting, which killed about 600 rabbits.

“We feel that not one rabbit had to die,” Crosland said.

After the expiration of that agreement with EBB, council decided to let TRACS try to deal with the remaining volunteers in a humane way.

The city gave TRACS \$11,500, on condition that all of that money be used only for the neutering or spaying of the animals. It costs about \$60 to sterilize each animal.

Virtually all of the city-supplied money has been used up, but TRACS has raised about \$15,000 from the community to cover the cost of building secure enclosures for the rabbits and buying their food.

The TRACS plan is to sterilize all the rabbits they have trapped, plus the 133 other rabbits that they have since given birth to, with a combination of city-supplied and donated funds. The group intends to adopt some out to good homes, but care for the other bunnies for the rest of their natural lives. Rabbits live up to 10 years.

Despite the dramatic drop-off in rabbit numbers, city staff nevertheless recommend a roundup program be extended for at least one year beyond the current contract’s scheduled expiration in April.

Council will decide whether to do that during budget deliberations set for December.

TRACS’ efforts have been so successful the organization hosted a University of Victoria representative, Crosland said. The campus is home to thousands of feral rabbits.

While the group is pleased with the city’s praise for its roundup, sterilization and care, Crosland said she wishes TRACS had got the rabbit contract earlier.