



British Columbia **Deer Protection Society**

January 12, 2016

Mayor and Members of Cranbrook City Council
Cranbrook City Hall
40 – 10th Avenue South
Cranbrook, BC
V1C 2M8
P: 250-426-4211
F: 250-426-4026

Dear Mayor Pratt and Members of Council,

We are writing to urge you to end the deer cull. We have video footage and photos of three separate incidents taken during the current cull. Two of those in particular reveal violations of the terms of the cull permit issued by the Minister.

Ministry Permit: Three sections of the Ministry permit set out humane requirements as follows:

***Standards point 2:** Animals must be killed humanely and exsanguinated (bled) as soon as possible after death.*

***Capture Guidelines-Methods of Capture:** Two (2) contractors will quickly collapse each Clover trap with the deer inside and dispatch the animal immediately and humanely with a bolt gun; Contractors promptly re-establish the trap from its collapsed state, open the gate and move the deer into a plastic sled for transfer to a waiting vehicle; deer must not be visible while in the vehicle.*

(http://docs.cranbrook.ca/downloads/urban_deer/2015-Urban-Deer-Management-Annual-Report.pdf - pg 6 of the permit section)

***General Conditions (9):** The permit holder must ensure that each person authorized to undertake activities under this permit ensures that the wildlife are treated as humanely as possible during all phases of the project.*

(http://docs.cranbrook.ca/downloads/urban_deer/2015-Urban-Deer-Management-Annual-Report.pdf - pg 3 of the permit section)

City of Cranbrook's Urban Deer Management Report for 2015: The report states that the permit outlines "requirements to improve humane treatment".

***Permitting:** The permit is very detailed and outlines requirements to improve humane treatment and safety. Two contractors are required to conduct trapping activities. To reduce stress of captured deer, capture of deer occurs when dark prior to daylight; traps are set at or near dusk. Care is taken to place traps in quiet locations. When a deer is captured within the trap, it is quickly dispatched using a Blitz bolt gun. (The BLITZ Captive Bolt gun is the most powerful captive bolt gun available to the wildlife control industry.) Traps were checked twice each night to reduce the amount of time deer were inside trap.*

(http://docs.cranbrook.ca/downloads/urban_deer/2015-Urban-Deer-Management-Annual-Report.pdf - pg 7 of the report)

Incidents: Two incidents in particular reveal violations of the terms of the cull permit issued by the Minister.

Incident #1: Footage (bcdeer.org) for one incident shows a fawn captured in a trap (unedited video documents the fawn pacing for over two hours). The cull contractors arrive, collapsing the trap on the animal and applying the bolt gun. The cull contractors stand and the fawn moves. They apply the bolt gun a second time. The fawn moves again as the contractors try to erect the trap. They drop it and observe the fawn. One contractor starts to reach for the bolt gun but stops. They proceed again to erect the trap and drag the fawn away by the hind leg. In both cases the fawn is seen moving. The cull contractor returns immediately leaving the fawn still alive and unattended. A total of six minutes passed between the arrival of the contractors and the removal of the deer.

Incident #2: Photographs from a second incident show two fawns entangled in a trap that has collapsed on them. They remain entangled and compressed for at least two hours prior to the arrival of the cull contractors. It is not known at this time whether the fawns' struggle was so violent as to dislodge the mechanism holding the trap upright or whether the mechanism was faulty. Regardless, no-one checked the trap during that two hour period to end the suffering of these two animals.

No public discussion at Council, no resident notification and little Ministry or municipal oversight:

A review of the Council minutes for 2015 shows no publicly recorded decision to proceed with a deer cull in the fall of 2015. A review of the Committee agendas shows no discussion about the deer cull. Council obviously voted behind closed doors and failed to provide any public notification that a cull was to take place.

In keeping with the secrecy of the cull is the secrecy about any municipal oversight of the permit requirements. The municipality as the permit holder is responsible to ensure that the cull contractors comply. Lack of transparency by Council calls into question the commitment to proper enforcement of the permit given that the video footage and photos expose permit violations. How many more violations have there been that have not been documented because of lack of oversight and transparency?

Data collection:

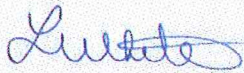
Part of determining the humaneness of the cull is proper data collection of the deer killed. We have repeatedly asked for data, including photographs, from deer carcasses prior to processing to determine the condition of the deer killed. Such information would include the number of bolt gun applications to the skulls, documentation of body injury due to the trap and any indication of capture myopathy. The permit already requires the cull contractor to keep a "Record of Wildlife Hunted, Trapped or Killed" but still does not require the collection of any information regarding the condition of the animals upon death. To our knowledge this information has not been collected either by the Ministry or the municipality. If it has, it has not been made public or been part of the reports of the municipalities conducting culls.

Evidence should be regularly collected about the impact of the trap bolt gun cull on the deer and that evidence should be made available for public review.

Conclusion:

Given the documentation we have concerning violations of the permit, we urge you in the strongest possible terms to stop this cull immediately, investigate the violations of the permit and encourage the Ministry to lay charges where appropriate.

Sincerely,



Liz White,
Spokesperson, BC Deer Protection Society
Director, Animal Alliance of Canada
liz@animalalliance.ca



Barry MacKay
Spokesperson, BC Deer Protection Society
Canadian Representative, Born Free
mimus@sympatico.ca

Two live fawns entangled in the collapsed trap
Photo taken January 8, 2016



Two live fawns entangled in the collapsed trap
Photo taken January 8, 2016

