

**1ST REPORT OF THE**  
**ANIMAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Meeting held on January 10, 2012 commencing at 4:20 p.m.

PRESENT: E. Gerrow (Chair), M. Blosh, D. Harris, J. Lalonde, W. L. MacKay, S. C. Rans, V. Van Linden, B. Warder, M. Warder and J. Martin, Committee Secretary.

ALSO PRESENT: B. Bergsma and R. Oke.

REGRETS: D. Clarke, D. Fortney, L. Jackson, A. Papmehl and M. Shepherd.

**I YOUR COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

11th Report of  
the AWAC

1. (1) That the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee received and noted the 11th Report of the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee from its meeting held on November 22, 2011.

Beaver  
Management  
Strategy

2. (2) That the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee received and reviewed the attached presentation and heard a verbal presentation from B. Bergsma, Ecologist Planner, City of London, with respect to a beaver management strategy; it being noted that the AWAC will work with Civic Administration to develop recommendations for policies and best practices to handle wildlife specific to the City's beaver management practices.

No More  
Homeless Pets  
Conference

3. (3) That the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) deferred the No More Homeless Pets presentation from D. Fortney, AWAC, to its February meeting.

2011 No-Kill  
Conference

4. (4) That the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) received and reviewed the attached presentation and heard a verbal presentation from M. Blosh, with respect to the 2011 No-Kill Conference.

AWAC Meeting  
Schedule

5. (5) That the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) held a general discussion with respect to the AWAC future meeting schedule related to the AWAC's new reporting relationship to the Public Safety Committee.

Goals &  
Objectives for  
2012

6. (6) That the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee (AWAC) held a general discussion with respect to the goals and objectives for 2012; it being noted that the AWAC deferred further discussion to the April meeting, following the new AWAC member appointments.

Other Business

7. (Added) B. Saylor acknowledged M. Shepherd and D. Fortney for their efforts related to a dog bite incident over the holidays.

Next Meeting

8. That the Animal Welfare Advisory Committee will hold its next meeting on February 2nd, 2012.

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

## BEAVER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Prepared by Bonnie Bergsma, M.Sc. Ecologist Planner  
December 13, 2011

AWAC was very helpful in the drafting of a City-wide Wildlife Management Strategy for White-tailed Deer.

I would like to invite AWAC to participate in the development of a Wildlife Strategy relating to the City's beaver management practices, including development of a risk management evaluation process for responding to conflicts between beavers and infrastructure, such as municipal drains, culverts and storm water facilities.

Also, when undertaking stream restoration projects where there are existing beaver lodges and dams, that the recommended solution should not be to trap kill and remove the beavers and their habitat, but to undertake restoration with protection of the beavers habitat in mind.

I understand that AWAC has previously discussed the issue of the trapping of beaver; and that any information obtained through this previous initiative will be helpful for drafting a beaver management strategy.

Subject: beaver

Date: Wed, 26 May 2010 20:38:14

### Information request to the SWM Unit:

I understand that AWAC is preparing a report on the killing of beaver by the city. There is one piece of information that I think is critical to understanding and dealing with this issue:

at what exact locations has the city deemed it necessary to contract a trapper to kill beaver? I would appreciate it if you would share this information for the past 5 years. Look forwarding to hearing back from you.

### Reply:

Thank you for sharing documents regarding beaver habitats, traps, non-lethal alternatives, etc. At this point, I have had a chance to glance through them but my area will undertake a more thorough review. We do appreciate the concerns being raised and were also surprised with some of the details that appeared in the London Free Press. The trapping and permanent removal of beavers is not something done on a regular basis under the direction of City staff. Information that you have shared will be read and we will look at our current practices. The remainder of this email addresses the questions you have raised.

When beaver damming issues are brought to our attention, we do consider a number of items such as location of the stream, impacts, liability issues, etc. If we are able to leave a beaver in nature, we will do so. However, many times this is not the case. When this occurs we ensure that all Provincial legislation is followed for removal. The removal of beavers is required to be undertaken by licensed trappers in accordance with requirements identified and governed by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) using permissible traps and, as noted above, is done on an as-needed basis only, driven by surface flooding, property owner complaints and/or liability issues.

In addition, we must abide by a number of pieces of legislation regarding the operation of water courses. Specifically, the City of London needs to remove beavers through Provincial legislation such as the Drainage Act, the Ontario Water Resources Act, the Municipal Act and all applicable acts that require us to maintain and operate water resources and municipal infrastructures within municipal boundaries. The most adverse impacts related to beavers are water damming which often results in:

- water stagnations that may affect human health and life,
- flow obstructions,
- properties flooding,
- flooding of timber and agricultural crops, and
- flooding lawns and roads.

Beaver dams may cause the obstruction of, or damage to, bridges, culverts, drains, dikes and road beds. The City cannot ignore the significant liability that would be associated with inaction in these cases. We

Stittsville resident, Anita Utas, stepped up to the plate big time when she saw that the City of Ottawa was planning to trap and kill beavers in a local storm water pond. It looked very bleak at the time as the City was determined to go head, in spite of logical arguments that preventing conflicts with beavers was the sensible solution. Thanks, however, to a tireless campaign, the Mayor and City Councillor involved have had a change of heart and the beavers won't be killed. Instead, the City will look at progressive alternatives and also accelerate the development of a long overdue Wildlife Strategy.

do recognize the ongoing dilemma of urbanization and wildlife habitats and do our best to minimize habitat and wildlife disruption.

As noted, under provincial legislation and regulatory requirements, within our boundaries, the City must inspect and maintain municipal drains, open channels, tributaries, storm water management systems and all municipal infrastructures to ensure:

- adequate functions of these systems
- the protection and safety of people and properties

Our goal is not to have to remove beavers but it has become an unfortunate part of our requirements. Beavers are not isolated to specific areas in London and we do hear about them across the area. Usually, there is no cost for the City for the removal of a beaver. There have been some occasions where we have been charged about \$150 per location.

To date, there have been no records kept on the number of beavers trapped or the number of complaints received from concerned property owners. The numbers brought to our attention have not been significant.

Based on the details provided to us, we will discuss alternatives with MNR and the trapper's that the City has contacted in the past. Can I have your permission to share the documents you have provided to us directly with local MNR staff and a few others?

Thank you again for sharing the details, your concerns and the concerns of others.

Regards,

*Berta B. Krichker M.Eng., F.C.E., P.Eng*

**Manager of Stormwater  
Stormwater Management Unit**

## **OTHER DOCUMENTED CONCERNS WITH BEAVERS IN THE CITY OF LONDON**

### 1. Beavers eating large trees and creating stagnant water

- a) Since moving into my house 3 years ago by Stoneycreek near Adelaide and Fanshawe more and more trees are downed by beavers. I am not one to complain and that's why it has taken me 3 years to get mad enough to write about it. The Stoneycreek and natural area that surrounds it, is the only thing that separates my backyard from the noisy traffic of Adelaide. As more trees are downed the natural noise barrier is taken away.

#1. Has this problem come to the attention of your office before?

#2. Can you be of assistance to stop these problem beavers? If so, what measures will be taken and what time frame?

- b) Thank you so much for coming Friday (June 26 2011) to get a first hand look at our beaver situation. As you saw, I have a few photos of the damage the beavers are causing. They are eating and felling very large trees in the floodplain. The loss of these large trees is creating a large gap in the forest and removing a visual screen from homes across the ravine. We are also concerned that the flooding and stagnant water conditions created by the beavers may interfere with the nesting success and health of resident wildlife. We are not opposed to beavers, but their damage has increased beyond an acceptable limit.

## **BEAVER IN THE MEANDER CREEK PORTION OF THE KILLALY ENVIRONMENTALLY SIGNIFICANT AREA**

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**ISSUE 1:** Very large diameter trees are being eaten and felled by the beaver.  
**SOLUTION:** Wrap intact large trees to protect from beaver damage



**ISSUE 2:** Beaver dams are creating stagnant water conditions – neighbours are concerned about potential impact on other local species.

Red Tail hawk, Carolinian Wren, Great Blue Heron, Wild Turkey, Downy Woodpecker, Red Pole, Junco, Morning Dove, Rose Breasted Grosbeak, Pine Grosbeak, Gold Finch, Nuthatch, Red Bellied Woodpecker, Indigo Bunting, and Northern Oriole, chipmunks, mink, deer.

**ISSUE 3:** UTRCA installed one beaver control device at the first dam. Beavers have responded by building additional dams – there are now three or more dams in a series.

The UTRCA must keep the culvert at Highbury Avenue open to a level of 58” through control of beaver. Our objective in an ESA is to co-exist with Beavers

2. Do Beavers have Rights?

We live on a small lake in Komoka. A couple years ago some beavers moved in and my neighbours were all up in arms about it. The first thing they did was hire a trapper to kill and remove them. I was really troubled by this, tried to stop them, but was out voted.

My question to you is...what other solution to this issue is there? Do the beavers have any rights to stay alive if they are not causing any issues? Using conibear traps seems very dangerous to other animals (I have 4 dogs that swim) so what safety measures do the trappers take to make sure no one gets hurt by these?

I know Guelph has banned these devices and I am hoping to find out how they did that. I enjoy the fact that beavers live in our beautiful little lake, and I believe they do their part in creating a viable ecosystem. Please let me know if there is anyone else that can help in this situation.

3. When are beaver lodges and dams not considered wildlife habitat for protection in relation to the maintenance and rehabilitation of municipal drains to a more natural stream corridor, and to provide storm water management facilities for expansion of urban growth?

Stanton Drain Remediation and SWM Facility Construction – City project – Environmental Impact Study was required and is currently under review.

An area has been identified through an Environmental Assessment (approved in 2002) for construction of a SWM facility and realignment of the stream (Stanton Drain – a permanent warmwater watercourse with resident baitfish). One of the channelized stream reaches downstream of the location of the SWM facility has been identified as supporting two beaver dams. The presence of beavers have been associated with poor (stagnant) water quality, barriers to fish migration, lack of vegetation and slow

moving water. Recommendation is to remove the beaver dams resulting in displacement of mated pairs of beaver, improved water quality and removal of fish barriers. Methods of removal are not given; however, it has been verbally clarified that the beaver will be trapped by licensed trapper and dams removed.

## WHAT ARE OTHER MUNICIPALITIES DOING?

### Development of a Beaver Management Policy – City of Kitchener

Questions to ask other Municipalities and Agencies:

- 1) Do you currently have a beaver management policy?
  - a. Yes/no
  - b. Is this a council approved policy?
    - i. A city wide vs departmental policy

If answer yes to Q1, then will you send/provide a copy of the policy?

If NO, do you currently deal with beaver issues or concerns?  
- How are beaver issues/problems currently dealt with?

Additional details about the policy or procedure:

- 2) When dealing with a nuisance beaver or beaver issue
  - a. Do you trap and remove?
    - i. Have you defined when to remove (what level) versus an alternative option?
  - b. Do you trap and relocate?
  - c. Do you manage the situation by implementing alternative measures?
    - i. Bafflers
    - ii. Fencing/tree protection measures
    - iii. Dam removals
      1. criteria for dam removal
  - d. Do you currently have a monitoring framework in place to deal with beavers?
- 3) Have you defined or do you define the level of unacceptable beaver activity? Definition of unacceptable beaver activity for the following:
  - a. Flooding
  - b. Felling of specific diameter trees
  - c. Tunneling
  - d. Interference with infrastructure and storm water management control devices
- 4) Does your policy differentiate between parks, natural areas and other areas (i.e. storm water infrastructure – streams, creeks, ditches etc)?
- 5) In developing the policy and/or dealing with nuisance beavers, has there been public input, consultation and significant amount of outcry/concern?
- 6) Have you provided info to residents about the issue and or about dealing with beavers on private property?

### Recent Success Stories with Alternative Methods to Deal with Nuisance Beavers

*Locals fence out Bowen Island beavers to protect the community's water supply*  
By Mike Raptis, The Province (Newspaper, BC)

October 18, 2011

Bowen Island residents, animal protection advocates and municipal officials teamed up Tuesday in an effort to save the island's "nuisance" beavers from their own damming ways.

Volunteers helped construct beaver exclusion fencing at Grafton Lake on Bowen Island on Tuesday, October 18, 2011. Beaver dam debris has been clogging a spillway connected to the municipal water supply. "We have to dig it out every day. It's costing us money," said Bob Robinson, public works

supervisor for the municipality. Robinson said it's his job to ensure that water is supplied downstream, but like other island residents he doesn't want it to come at the expense of trapping or killing the furry animals.

Normally the beavers are trapped and killed but the Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals proposed an alternative — constructing beaver-exclusion fencing, made from timber and wire, which prevents the beavers from building dams and blocking the waterway. The wiring is also wide enough to allow for fish and other debris to pass through. Materials cost \$1,700.

Advocate Adrian Nelson said this fencing is a better alternative than water-set traps, which are set on shores and endanger both people and animals. Nelson also said other municipalities with beaver issues — most notably Surrey, Maple Ridge and Coquitlam — have installed similar fencing with success.

Hiring a trapper to kill the beavers does no good, as the beavers eventually just make their way back to what they see is a prime habitat location. Last year a trapper was brought in to Bowen Island and killed three beavers, making only a short-term solution to an ever-growing problem.

More and more municipalities are realizing the benefits of keeping wildlife . . . for tourism, creating wetlands, and natural habitats. 60 per cent of species on earth are dependent on water sheds that beavers create. "Killing beavers doesn't make sense from an ecological perspective or from an animal protection perspective."

A spokesman with the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations said Tuesday that beaver populations are on the rise in B.C. and estimates that 115 beaver-removing permits and 70 dam-removing permits had been authorized in 2011 throughout B.C.

### *If you can't beat 'em ...*

By JAKE EDMISTON, FOR THE WHIG-STANDARD  
Tue, 31 May 2011

It's taken Jack Colden 30 years to learn how to live with beavers. Since the 1980s, a beaver dam has been flooding the only road on his 70-hectare hobby farm, preventing access to almost half the property. Colden's tried removing the dam from the creek that divides his Glenburnie recreation property. It's always rebuilt the next day. He's hired trappers to kill the animals, but new ones show up within a year.

"You can't defeat the beaver," Colden said.

He gave up trying until five years ago when dam-related flooding killed a large section of Maple trees and almost ruined his syrup operation. Neighbours rallied to help Colden construct and install a pipe system that prevented flooding by allowing water to flow through the dam. Colden's first design was a long pipe with a barrel attached at the end to stop the beavers from clogging the water flow. After two days, the beavers had chewed a whole in the barrel and the road was flooded.

"I had to get something they couldn't chew," he said.

Colden opted for a stronger, steel pipe with a cage at the end to keep the beavers away from the spout. He said he spent about \$200 on supplies at a local hardware store. "I've done everything for years to try and tame those beavers," he said. "I never had any success until I devised this."

When Colden and his family spend Sunday nights barbecuing at the hobby farm, he drives his all-terrain Ranger to the creek and spies on the beavers. He said he's seen up to six beavers trying to extend the dam to block the flow of water into the pipe. "When they get to the cage, they're euchred," he said. "It's been three years and they still haven't figured it out."

Colden said he believed his was an original invention until he heard that an animal rights group petitioned officials in the Frontenac Townships to adopt patented versions of the system. The B. C group got involved last week after learning that North and Central Frontenac commissioned the killing of around 300 beavers this spring in an attempt to quell dam-related roads wash-out.

"I don't like to kill anything," Colden said, adding that he resorted to hiring trappers in the past because flooding was affecting neighbours. "Now I've learned to live with (beavers)."

Colden said he wanted to see how long his invention would last before reporting his successes to organizations like the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. "I've laid low because I wanted to prove that it works," he said. "If it lasts 10 to 15 years, I wouldn't mind putting another one in."

He also noted that licensed trappers do not need permits.

### **No-Kill Conference**

**Washington, D.C.  
July 30-31, 2011**

**Marie Blosh  
Member, London AWAC**

### **No-Kill Equation = 11 steps**

1. TNR: Trap, Neuter & Return
2. High Volume, Low Cost Spay/Neuter
3. Rescue Groups
4. Foster Care
5. Adoption Program
6. Pet Retention Program

continued...

### **No-Kill Equation (cont.)**

- 7. Medical & Behaviour Programs
- 8. Public Relations/ Community Involvement
- 9. Volunteers
- 10. Proactive Redemption ("Virtual Shelter")
- 11. A Compassionate Director

### **Reduce number of animals entering the shelter**

- Return lost animals before they go to the shelter. Use volunteers, computers, vans to create a "virtual shelter".
- Don't take in feral cats. Refer to TNR.
- High volume/low cost spay and neuter.

### **Reduce number of animals entering the shelter (cont.)**

- Pet retention program to keep animals in the home instead of surrendered.
- Talk to people surrendering a pet. Try to solve the problem instead.
- Advice, monetary help, food bank.

### **Reduce amount of time animals are in the shelter.**

- Foster care.
- Keep animals in the shelter healthy and well behaved.
  - Medical programs.
  - Behaviour programs.
- Market animals up for adoption.



### **Adoption ideas**

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- No background check except abuse
- Offsite is essential, but keep in same place
- Marketing: discount fee, tuxedo week, keep it new, be creative
- Volunteer to match animal with adopter
- Make people feel good ... ring a bell when animal is adopted

### **Harness community compassion**

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- Partner with rescue groups.
- Foster care program.
- Volunteers.
- Donation jars everywhere.
- Use social media.
- Public relations.

### **Don't wait for perfect conditions.**

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- Old buildings and trailers used as shelters ... just add temporary fencing for dog run.
- Be creative.
- Need strong shelter director to lead.

### **<http://www.nokilladvocacycenter.org/whatsnew.html>**

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- Workshop materials can be downloaded for free.
- Shelter Track
- Legal Track