



Date: May 13, 2002

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**  
**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: MANAGEMENT OF COYOTES**

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

*THAT the Board receive this report for information.*

## **BACKGROUND**

On October 2, 2001 Vancouver City Council and Park Board endorsed a collaborative strategy to deal with coyotes in the urban environment. The Stanley Park Ecology Society initiated the program called Coexisting with Coyotes. Elements included the expansion of public awareness and education programs, coupled with the monitoring of coyote activity and an improved response to incidents involving aggressive animals.

Council initially approved \$16,000 in interim funds to expand a public information hotline and to support the work of a Park Board Wildlife Ranger whose role is to provide immediate community response where aggressive coyotes have been reported.

In early summer 2001 there were several incidents of aggression by coyotes. The strategy was put into effect at this time in order to meet the public demand for action.

## **DISCUSSION**

The following is a progress report on the Coexisting With Coyotes Program focusing on the time period from August 2001 to January, 2002:

Education : 8000 elementary school children participated in coyote awareness programs. Entitled Coyote 101 this is a 45 minute auditorium presentation, which emphasizes how to identify and react in the presence of coyotes. The session also emphasizes coyote natural history and how to discourage them in neighbourhoods.

Phone Line: Coexisting With Coyotes program received over 600 requests for individual information in the first year. It is estimated that the number of calls will increase to 1500 calls in 2002. A hot line with recorded information is available 24 hours per day. Messages are checked and responded to a minimum of twice daily.

**Brochures:** Over 16,000 brochures have been distributed. They are currently available in English, French and Chinese, with translations in Punjabi, Spanish and Korean to follow.

**Internet:** The web site is volunteer operated and is a constantly growing source of information. New materials include a poster for downloading, elementary school Parent Advisory Committee information packages, updated sighting records, natural history information and multilingual brochures.

**Park Signs:** 50 full colour 24 x 30 inch aluminum signs have been made and will soon be installed in several Vancouver Parks and other areas of high coyote activity.

**Information Packages:** These will be sent to 25 community centres, 600 childcare facilities and 50 veterinary clinics in Vancouver this spring. Information packages are also being sent to each Elementary School Parent Advisory Committee for all schools in Vancouver, Burnaby and the North Shore.

**Program Blueprint:** A draft of the Coexisting With Coyotes Program is being developed for other communities to use, which will be available later this year.

### **Immediate Community Response**

A Park Board Ranger was employed part-time to provide quick response when calls of concern are received via the hot line. In many cases the appearance of an aggressive coyote can create significant public concern. They can also be a significant hazard for neighborhood pets and, in some cases, coyotes have bitten children. Upon receiving a call about aggressive coyote activity, the Park Wildlife Ranger will visit the neighbourhood, meet with residents to give first hand information on coyote control and aversion techniques such as repellants and noisemakers. The Park Wildlife Ranger will do a problem coyote assessment, checking for evidence of coyotes and reviewing the site. The neighbourhood is also canvassed to advise people of the incident. Brochures are distributed to homeowners.

This immediate response allows the Park Wildlife Ranger to deal directly and quickly with the public and to determine the significance of the incident. If the situation is judged to be serious the Park Wildlife Ranger will call for the conservation officers with the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to remove the problem animal.

The Park Wildlife Ranger has attended over 50 locations where there has been concern about aggressive coyotes. Many of these calls involve repeat visits and neighbourhood canvasses. The Park Wildlife Ranger also helps with the distribution of information to businesses, community centers and other public venues.

### **SUMMARY**

The Coexisting With Coyotes program will be in effect for a full year in 2002. The program has made significant advances in its first half year. It is becoming well recognized throughout the Lower Mainland and is considered to be a very effective model of a partnership between levels of government and a non-profit organization, the Stanley Park Ecology Society. The Ministry of Water Land and Air Protection has also endorsed the program and will continue to provide support to the Stanley Park Ecology Society. At this time we are not aware of service reductions that may affect responses to coyote emergencies. However, experienced Park Board staff now provide quick response and assistance to ensure a measure of reassurance and protection in local neighbourhoods.

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