

SER-001-009

Strathcona County
Municipal Policy Handbook

Vertebrate Nuisance Control

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Lead Role: Chief Commissioner

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Administrative Responsibility: Transportation and Agriculture Services.

Policy Statement

The control of Vertebrate Nuisance pests is a shared responsibility between Landowners, the Province of Alberta and Strathcona County. Strathcona County's Vertebrate Nuisance Control Policy ensures that the prevention, control, or destruction of Vertebrate Nuisance, as specified in this policy, is undertaken as effectively as possible with due consideration of human safety, and municipal liabilities. Nuisance Pests identified under provincial legislation that is not included in this policy may be controlled by the Landowner or Occupant.

Definitions

"Act" means the Agricultural Pests Act, R.S.A. 2000, c A-8), as amended from time to time by the Province of Alberta.

"County" means Strathcona County.

"Inspector" means a person appointed by the County pursuant to the Act.

"Landowner" means the registered owner under the Land Titles Act (R.S.A. 2000, c L-4), as the owner of the land.

"Nuisance" means a Vertebrate Animal defined as a nuisance according to the Act.

"Occupant" means a person occupying or exercising control over or having the right to occupy or exercise control over land.

"Pest" means a Vertebrate Animal defined as a pest according to the Act.

"Services Department" means the Transportation and Agriculture Services Department of the County.

"Vertebrate Nuisance" specifically refers to either a: Beaver, Coyote, Rat, Skunk, Squirrel, Ground Squirrel (also referred to as a Gopher), Pocket Gopher, or Muskrat.

Guidelines

This policy will provide administration with a policy outlining general procedures, an awareness program, an emergent issues program, and specific Vertebrate Nuisance control protocols and procedures to meet the County's legislated responsibilities associated with Vertebrate Nuisance control issues.

All procedures will comply with the provincial legislation; more specifically, the Agricultural Pests Act (R.S.A. 2000, c A-8), the Wildlife Act (R.S.A. 2000, c. W-10) and the Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act (R.S.A. 2000, c E-12), all as amended, repealed or replaced from time to time.

Procedures

General

- 1) Any request for a Firearm Discharge License is subject to the conditions as set out in the County's Firearm Control Bylaw.
- 2) Any Firearm Discharge License approved by an Inspector shall be issued in accordance with the Vertebrate Nuisance Control Protocols and Procedures set out within this Policy.
- 3) Any shooting of a Vertebrate Animal will only be undertaken after the County issues its Firearm Discharge License to the Owner or Occupant or a person authorized by the Owner or Occupant;

Awareness Program

- 1) The County will provide a Vertebrate Nuisance awareness program for its residents.
- 2) The Services Department will distribute communications to the residents through the use of local newspapers, newsletters, displays, and posters. The awareness communications will include identification and recommended control techniques for Vertebrate Nuisance management.

Emergent Issues Program

- 1) The County will provide a communication program throughout the calendar year whereby emergent issues related to Vertebrate Nuisances are identified to our residents.
- 2) The Services Department will identify those areas of the County affected by the emergent issues.
- 3) The Services Department will provide to the Landowner or Occupant, who lives within an identified area, with training or communication which will aid the Landowner or Occupant with identification, control and/or proper destruction of the Vertebrate Nuisance animal.
- 4) The Services Department will also provide any other services required by the Act.
- 5) The Services Department shall assist the Federal District Veterinarian with issues affecting human health and public safety.
- 6) The Services Department shall capture and submit for testing any animal suspected of being rabid.

Specific Vertebrate Animal Control Protocols and Procedures

- 1) In addition to the programs aforementioned, the County will maintain animal specific protocols and procedures for the control of Vertebrate Nuisance animals.
- 2) In all cases, control of the Vertebrate Nuisances will be undertaken humanely by utilizing generally accepted techniques approved by provincial and federal departments.

Beaver Protocols and Control Procedures

Beaver Control may be undertaken in the County.

- 1) On municipally owned lands, and subject to the Priority of Service outlined in 3 below, the County shall ensure a:
 - a) Beaver will be eradicated, and/or
 - b) Beaver dam will be breached.
- 2) On private or non-municipal public lands, and subject to the Priority of Service outlined in 3 below, the County may, if requested by the Landowner or Occupant, and where a right-of-entry agreement has been obtained, ensure a:
 - a) Beaver will be eradicated, and/or
 - b) Beaver dam will be breached as soon as possible.
- 3) Priority of Services for Beaver removal and Beaver dam breaching will be ranked as follows:
 - a) Any public infrastructure system will be ranked as having the Highest and First Priority for control;
 - b) Any private buildings or private roads will be ranked as a Second Priority for control;
 - c) Any agricultural crop lands will be ranked as the third Priority for control;
 - d) Any Pasture or other lands within the County will be ranked as the fourth Priority for control.
- 4) Beaver dam breaching shall only:
 - a) Be completed when the Canadian Department of Fisheries & Oceans notification and requirements have been met;
 - b) Be conducted on property where a right-of-entry agreement has been obtained;
 - c) Be breached with dynamite when deemed safe to do so;
 - d) Be undertaken when there will be no interference with planting and harvesting of agricultural crops;
 - e) Be undertaken to have minimal effect on upstream and downstream wetland habitat and riparian areas.
- 5) Removal of blast debris will be the responsibility of the Owner or Occupant.
- 6) Beaver dam breaching conducted on a culvert, or bridge on private property will be undertaken at the discretion of the Coordinator, Agriculture Services.

Coyote Control Procedures

- 1) Coyote destruction will only:
 - a) Be undertaken once the Inspection has sufficient evidence of predation;
 - b) Be undertaken by generally accepted and approved techniques;

- c) Be conducted on property where a right-of-entry agreement has been obtained;
- d) Be completed by the Owner or a person authorized by the Owner;
- e) Be completed subject to any other federal or provincial requirements;
- f) Be completed where there are no personal or property safety issues.

Skunk and Squirrel Control Procedures

- 1) Skunk and Squirrel Control may only:
 - a) Be undertaken by the owner or occupant by trapping the skunk or squirrel in a live-capture trap, at a cost available from the County;
 - b) Be relocated by the County;

Ground Squirrel, Pocket Gopher and Muskrat Control Procedures

- 2) Ground Squirrel, Pocket Gopher and Muskrat Control may only:
 - a) Be completed by the County where municipal infrastructure is being impacted.
 - b) Be undertaken by utilizing generally accepted and approved techniques.

Other Nuisance Pest Control Procedures

The County will provide information and recommendations on control techniques for all other nuisance animals but will not carry out control measures.