



CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL DISTRICT

DATE: 5 February 2015

TO: Board Chair Reginald Moody and Board Members

FROM: Darla Blake, Chief Administrative Officer

SUBJECT: **Grizzly Bear Concerns in Bella Coola Valley**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board of Directors for the Central Coast Regional District receive the report and attachments on item C(f) in the 12 February 2015 CCRD Board agenda, regarding Grizzly Bear concerns in the Bella Coola Valley; and

THAT based on the information provided to the Board, the CAO be requested to write to the Province advising them of the current concerns and issues raised by members of the community in the Bella Coola Valley regarding Grizzly Bear management and human/bear conflicts, and

THAT, the Province is requested to fulfill its mandate for all wildlife management, ensuring the safety and wellbeing for humans and Grizzly Bear/wildlife alike in the Bella Coola Valley, and

THAT, the Province is also requested to actively keep the wider Bella Coola Valley community and the Central Coast Regional District well informed on all actions taken by the Province, with respect to Grizzly Bear/wildlife management.

STRATEGIC PLAN

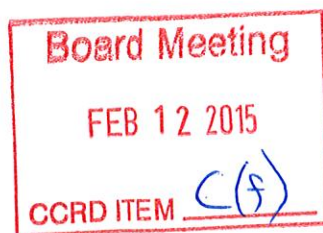
Our Vision:

An inclusive, resilient and sustainable group of communities thriving within a locally influenced, safe, healthy and natural environment.

Mandated Services: *Category 3: the Board will attempt to influence, through advocacy, federal and/or provincial government for benefits of central coast residents.*

Goal 3 – An Enhanced & Strengthened Region

Objective – Continually strengthen intergovernmental relationship



BACKGROUND

Over the past few years, more residents in the Bella Coola Valley have reported bear sightings and incidents relating to bears. During 2014, many residents have expressed their personal concerns regarding the number of bear sightings.

The issue of bears has raised dividing views within the community itself.

CONSULTATION

Nil

LEGISLATION /POLICY

Community Charter, sec 191
Local Government Act, sec. 814

BUDGET/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Within current approved budget: No

Requires further budget consideration:

Further budget considerations will depend on the decision of the Board – noting: bear management and involvement on committee(s) as proposed in the attachment report, has the potential to incur costs that will require a budget should the Board decide to go that way.

If no budget is allocated and any costs are incurred this would be an unlawful expenditure. Other than lobbying and advocacy, the CCRD has no mandate for bear management – this is a provincial responsibility.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Administration has evaluated potential risks with the two proposals and assessed, bear management is a provincial mandated activity and outside the physical mandate of services provided and budgeted for by CCRD.

However, under Category 3 of our mandated services, the Board is allowed to attempt to influence through advocacy to the federal or provincial governments for the benefit of the central coast residents.

The risk lies in the fact that the community itself is divided on the management of bears, so until there is clarity and agreement on this issue, it would be difficult for the Board to advocate one position or another.

The Board needs to be very clear, that any involvement on any committee as proposed has the potential to incur costs. And, unless there is an estimate of increased costs to the 2015

advocacy budget, Board members could face the risk of unlawful expenditure and personal liability – which carries a very high personal risk for the board member.

Section 191 of the *Community Charter* sets out the legal consequences where a Board member has voted for a resolution or use of money contrary to the *Community Charter* or *Local Government Act* section 814, which applies to votes on expenditures that are contrary to a financial plan.

Section 191(3) provides that in addition to any other penalty to which the person may be liable, the Board member who is liable to the regional district under subsection (1) is disqualified from holding office until four years from the date of the vote.

DISCUSSION

There are two attachments (with three papers on Grizzly Bear management solutions) to this report for the Board's consideration, both with differing views and suggestions on how to manage concerns.

The paper by Ryan Parr and Christina Hoppe outlines incidents of bear events during 2014, and concerns for the safety of residents in the Bella Coola Valley. Finally comments by Gary Shelton would suggest frustration that little is being done.

Paper two, *Human/Bear Conflict in The Bella Coola Valley, British Columbia, Canada*, written by James Gary Shelton outlines his views on bear behaviour, bear encounter survival courses, human/bear conflict particularly in the Bella Coola Valley. Mr. Shelton has put forward a number of suggestions to manage conflict situations and potential long term results. Mr. Shelton's paper concludes with his recommendations which include the suggestion to have a bear management committee which includes three Nuxalk Band Council members, CCRD Board members, and three provincial government members. The proposed committee is to have a clear mandate to reduce "large carnivores in the Lower Valley on a long-term basis"...

The third paper received, are comments from Jefferson Bray in response to the two above papers, which are currently circulating throughout the community. In Mr. Bray's paper, he has a preservationist view point and requested CCRD endorse and support the science based knowledge, rules and actions of the Conservation Officer's Service of BC, WildSafe BC, Bear Smart, Bella Coola Valley Working Group and accredited bear/wildlife scientists.

Mr. Bray has also requested that CCRD make a formal written request to RCMP for education and enforcement in the legal use of firearms by the public with our community and to have a CCRD Board member presence on the Bella Coola Valley Bear Working Group.

CONCLUSION

The views on Grizzly Bear/wildlife management are divided. CCRD have been asked by opposing proponents to support or endorse their positions. Administration wish to point out that the Board of Directors role is to make decisions for the benefits of all central coast residents.

Bear and wildlife management is the role of the provincial government not CCRD. The CCRD mandate does however allow for the Board to attempt influencing, through advocacy, federal and/or provincial governments for the benefit of all central coast residents.

Any role CCRD Board members may take on a committee (which could only be in an advocacy role, not a management role) must either have all costs associated with involvement in the committee included in a budget or have all costs covered by an outside agency and at no cost to the regional district.

The Board must also be mindful that to avoid any unlawful expenditure and personal liability, funds must be included in the 2015 budget, should the Board decide to be involved.

Based on the information provided to the Board, Administration would recommended the Board write to the Province advising them of the current concerns and issues raised by members of the community in the Bella Coola Valley regarding Grizzly Bear management and human/bear conflicts. Further to this that the Province is requested to fulfill its mandate for wildlife management, ensuring the safety and wellbeing for humans and Grizzly Bear/wildlife alike in the Bella Coola Valley. Further to this the Province is requested to actively keep the wider Bella Coola Valley community and the Central Coast Regional District well informed on actions taken by the Province.

Respectfully submitted



Darla Blake
Chief Administrative Officer