

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

For immediate release – January 10, 2012

[View the presentation to Council: *Feral Rabbit Management Plan*](#)

The Delta Community Animal Shelter will soon begin a capture, sterilization, identification and release program for the feral rabbit population located around Ladner's civic precinct.

At last night's Regular Meeting, Mayor Lois E. Jackson and Delta Council endorsed a feral rabbit management plan. The plan includes the goal of humanely capturing between 20 to 25 rabbits per week for approximately five months. The cost of the management plan is estimated at \$60,000, which includes staffing, capturing, supplies, transportation, delivery and veterinary services. Local veterinary clinics have generously committed to providing sterilization services at a reduced cost in support of the program.

Once sterilized, the rabbits will be released at Ladner Harbour Park, a historical feral rabbit habitat. Delta Community Animal Shelter staff and volunteers will provide ongoing care and monitoring of the rabbits at Ladner Harbour Park. Sterilized rabbits will also be available for adoption through the Delta Community Animal Shelter.

It is estimated that over 500 feral rabbits are currently living around the civic precinct and this number continues to grow with the rabbits breeding at uncontrollable rates. These rabbits are the result of generations of abandoned pets; a practice considered as cruelty in both the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* and the Criminal Code.

The rabbits are responsible for extensive damage to landscaping and building foundations at the Ladner Leisure Centre, Delta Sport Development Centre and Delta Hospice. There are also safety concerns with children chasing and feeding rabbits in and around the parking lots and roadways.

"If nothing is done to control the feral rabbit population, we could see the colony grow by 20% every year and double within five years," said Sarah Lowe, Delta Community Animal Shelter Manager.

Following the five-month management plan, staff will report back to Council with a review of the program and an update on measures taken to discourage future incidences of feral rabbit populations. Planned measures include the creation of a public education program to discourage future abandonment of rabbits and the introduction of a bylaw to restrict the sale of



unsterilized rabbits in pet stores. A bylaw will be presented to Council for consideration in the coming months.

For more information on this media release, contact the Mayor's Office at (604) 946-3210 or e-mail mayor@corp.delta.bc.ca

Visit the Delta Community Animal Shelter's Website at www.deltacommunityanimalshelter.ca

- 30 -

