

Subject: [Fwd: Re: FW:]

Date: Fri, 01 Apr 2005 14:30:38 -0800

From: Brian Platts <bplatts@shaw.ca>

To: Corrie Kost <kost@triumf.ca>

Subject: Re: FW:

Date: Fri, 01 Apr 2005 10:22:32 -0800

From: M E Craver <mecraver@shaw.ca>

To: Ernie Crist <ernie_crist@dnv.org>

CC: claremclaren@shaw.ca, katherineam@shaw.ca, wallhouse@shaw.ca, kimdoc@telus.net, KGoodwin@intrawest.com, jmcgann@shaw.ca, chhrisnorton@shaw.ca, hollydor@hotmail.com, Mayor and Council - DNV <Council@dnv.org>, Senior Management Committee <managecomm@dnv.org>, James Ridge <James_Ridge@dnv.org>, fonvca@fonvca.org, Cagebc@yahoo.com

Dear Councillor Crist: I am glad that you have brought up the problem with dogs off-leash and dog owners. It seems the minute many dog owners enters a park, like Mountain View Park, they release the hounds. Two, three, four dogs running all over the place. We have a can for garbage at the entrance to the park, but people still leave their neatly tied doggy bags on the trail. Such laziness. All one has to do is tuck the baggy into the collar of the dog -- we do not have to carry it, the dog does. Second, those dogs off-leash never get their business picked up. There has been some relief in the form of Residents' Parking Only in Upper Lynn Valley and Mountain View Park. It has kept the Commercial dog walking companies away. That means on average, 40 less dogs running rampant in the park and forest. We used to have about five or six dog walking company "regulars" who would unleash anywhere from six to ten dogs at a time into the park and forest.

The other problem is the many mountain bikers who ride in the park and forest -- they may keep on the trail, but what of their many "tag along" dogs? Those dogs run in packs, off leash, covering much area in the forest, trying to keep up with their mountain biking owners. Can you scoop poop from the back of a bike? We have a real problem. The mountain bikers and their dogs can be seen in our forests in all kinds of weather, day and night.

If DNV does not show care about their natural parks and forests, why should the public who use the resources? The constant excuses from those who abuse our forests ie. "It is only second growth, and the area was logged, so it isn't worth anything". This is just a feeble-minded excuse for people who feel they have the ordained right to do whatever they wish, because of that "fact". Tell that to a few "species at risk" who make their homes in our forests on the North Shore.

People seem to have forgotten that their pet dogs are just animals, and naively believe, Disney-like, that their dogs are like people. That is another problem. People do not understand that dogs do not need "so much freedom", and that they do much damage to the forest areas. Dogs like control and authority. They also like attention (talking petting, and "play") from their "alpha" owners. An extenda-leash gives a lot of freedom with complete control for dogs. How many times have I had to "fend" off a "friendly" dog off of mine, or myself, with my walking stick?? A person's dog may be friendly to them and those they know, but act very differently to someone else. If a dog growls at me, it is not friendly. If a dog is let loose into the pond to cool off or fetch tennis balls in there (Mountain View Park), it is damaging the pond, and those that inhabit it, especially during amphibian breeding season. Dogs do a lot of damage when they are left to roam the forest off-leash. They are predators. They need to remain leashed for safety reasons toward others and themselves. An enclosed fenced area in some parks might be considered for off-leash "play-time", instead?

Until there is a viable solution with enforcement, both off-leash dogs and extreme off-road recreational vehicles (mountain bikes, etc.) will be the demise of our natural forest, parks and mountain areas. They both have created a great disturbance to the flora and fauna in our forests, etc. and unless these problems are taken seriously, we will lose the biodiversity of these natural places on the North Shore. Mountain biking, other off-road recreational vehicles, and packs of loose dogs in our forests can be considered a problem as grave as "logging" the area in the past. One was drastic destruction. Today it is gradual destruction. Mankind never seems to learn from it's past mistakes, and repeats them, under a different name, each time. Can we hope to change that?

Monica Craver

Ernie Crist wrote:

Dear Pet (Dog) Owner:

We all love animals or at least most of us do. However, the dog population is increasing so rapidly that it has become a real problem. The District of North Vancouver has become the dog latrine of the Lower Mainland. And this is no exaggeration. As the population increases, so does the problem. I am also aware that many people have dogs for protection in a society of increasing violence and barbarism.

However, while it may be true that some dog owners or maybe even most are responsible, many are not. Dog feces left on trails and in parks are a health hazard and can linger for a long time. Some dog owners or dog walkers clean up after their dogs, many do not. Off leash dogs create problems with wildlife, with other hikers, with bicycle riders etc, - even "friendly" dogs can become intimidating for hikers trying to walk and enjoy the forest. The contempt which many dog owners show for society is evident by the fact that only an estimated 20% of all dog owners register their dogs and actually buy and pay for a licence.

As for the North Shore forests, they are a shrinking commodity and require protection. I am sending you a copy of a motion coming before Council shortly which I invite you to support. At first blush, you may think that it has little or nothing to do with your particular concerns. However, I invite you to think about the big picture. I am also sending you some background material which will make you aware of the potential magnitude of the problem we face world wide and why we have a special responsibility to protect locally that which we all enjoy while at the same time helping to stop the march to disaster.

You may say, what is the connection between my dog and this motion. The connection is that accessible land resources around cities and municipalities such as parks and forested areas must be protected for people to relax since they are becoming rarer by the day. They must also remain places of refuge for wildlife. The motion is an opportunity for the public to help protect that which we all cherish namely our environment. The point to be made is that if those treed areas are gone or misused, nobody will be able to enjoy them.

The motion which I will send to you by separate email will come before Council shortly. I will be curious as to how many of the people who have sent emails asking us to allow their dogs on our forested mountains will also come forward and support this motion.

Yours truly,

Ernie Crist.

A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

The latest edition of Discover (Science) Magazine deals extensively with a phenomena which is overtaking the planet with staggering consequences.

The story headed "Killer Dust" confirms that every year gigantic particle storms sweep across the oceans, dumping viruses, acids, pesticides, heavy metals, and even grasshoppers on the United States and not only on the United States.

Worldwide deforestation, mining, overgrazing, and the diversion of water have combined to create huge dust clouds that carry bacteria, viruses, soot, acids, radio active isotopes, and pesticides around the world. A massive dust cloud from the Asian continent passed over Japan in 2002, travelling a man made dust byway that runs east. Uneven heating of the ground and air generate turbulent airflows that keep sediments aloft.

A moderately wimpy, sustained wind with turbulent gusts will be enough to lift particles into the Atmosphere says meteorologist Tom Warner of the National Center of Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. Although Dust storms start out gritty, coarse sediments like sand soon fall out, leaving finer silts and clays to rise up to 15,000 feet and travel thousands of miles. An Asian Dust storm that swept over the West Coast of the United States in April 2001 spread to Cape Cod and eventually reached Europe. In Japan the seasonal dust cloud from China is called yellow because of its color, carrying pollutants, including heavy metals, that attach to airborne sediments. Roughly half the mercury contamination in the United States comes from this source; much of it may arrive aboard particles in atmospheric dust clouds.

Dust from the Mojave Desert contains an array of mineral grains, as well as diatom, a single-celled aquatic organisms commonly carried by dust. African dust collected in Barbados carries an unidentified fungus. More than one hundred species of bacteria, viruses, and fungi have been cultured from airborne dust. Roughly one third of the bacteria are pathogens that can cause diseases in plants, animals and people. These include pseudomonades, which give rise to ear and skin infections in humans, and the microbes responsible for sugarcane rust, potato dry rot, and banana leaf spot.

Results from studies such as the international Aerosol Characterization Experiments, which examined the trajectory and mineral content of dust clouds crossing the Pacific in 2001, reveal that dust also carries pollution. African Dust that fell on the Azores in 2000 was enriched with Mercury, probably from open pit mines in Algeria.

Scientists are concerned that the hazards are intensifying. Some 3 billion metric tons of dust are lofted into Earth's atmosphere each year and that amount has climbed steadily for a decade, possibly owing to the increase in surface area now covered by deserts and dry lake beds. Unless this trend is reversed the dust storms will only worsen. In some parts of the world dust storms have become five times more intensive than previously. Beginning in 1950, China planted 300 million trees in a belt south of the Gobi Desert to protect its provinces from the storms much as the Great Wall once stood against Mongolian Invaders. This seems to have helped lessen the siege of Beijing but has done little for Japan, Korea and the United States and the rest of the world that lies downwind.

Trees definitely lessen the impact of atmospheric pollution. Regions, such as the Lower Mainland could protect themselves by insuring that the total number of trees in the Region is maintained. This would mean implementing a Regional Air Pollution and Tree Inventory Protection Strategy. The cornerstone of such a strategy would be that, notwithstanding any other planning issue, the absolute number of trees in every municipality is not only maintained but, if possible, increased. In the District of North Vancouver it would mean no development unless it guarantees that the total number of trees is maintained.

A whole new community planning strategy is in order and it must begin at home. The District of North Vancouver was the first municipality in the Lower Mainland to pioneer community driven planning as opposed to developer driven planning. Eventually Community planning was embraced by the provincial government making Community Planning mandatory.

However community driven and sustainable planning has been constantly assailed by pro developer interests and their political representatives and Lynn Valley in the District of North Vancouver is probably the best example of this outdated and bankrupt approach to planning. In the name of creating a "Pedestrian Oriented Town Center" consisting of a 12,000 square foot cobble stone plaza the whole Lynn Valley Core was turned over to developers who came, densified, created more pollution, cut more trees, increased traffic and noise and left while the people were left with paying for the infrastructure needed for the development but nothing else.

On the other hand, in most other areas of the District it has been successful notably in Seymour and in Edgemont where the public stood up against outside driven development. However, the City of North Vancouver is hurrying along the road of creating a concrete jungle. It does so without providing additional green space. It is not the creation of a green belt that counts which is meaningless unless the actual number of trees is either maintained and/or increased.

The urgency of changing direction is considerable since large parts of the world continue to be denuded including the Amazon Basin where 50 % of the Amazon Rain Forest will be removed. Liveability of cities will have to take on a new meaning. >From now on it will mean no development if it results in the loss of the municipal tree inventory.

With this in mind I will draft a resolution for Council's consideration within the next few days.

Ernie Crist