



18 March 2010

Thetis Island Residents & Ratepayers Association:

Thetis/Kuper Friends of Furrries, the small band of volunteers started in 2005, has spent hundreds of hours to cut the number of stray, unwanted, sick, injured, feral or marauding cats and dogs on both Thetis and Kuper Islands.

In five years the group has led in the rescue, sterilization, vaccination and placement of upwards of 75 animals in distress or causing distress. It has done so with help from the SPCA in Duncan, Nanaimo and Victoria; Big Heart Animal Rescue, and sundry veterinarians -- mainly Chemainus Animal Hospital.

Enabling FOF operations is a core group of generous grass-roots supporters on both islands who have made donations either directly or to in support of Friends of Furrries fundraising projects.

Now, on Kuper, the deer are back for the first time in decades. The unsettling incidence of canine packs that regularly crossed the cut to slaughter wildlife and domestic animals and make citizens on both islands jittery has dropped dramatacally.

Zero-tolerance of strays is becoming the standard of Penelakut Tribe animal control volunteers. On Kuper the trend is toward ownership of smaller canines, house pets more likely to be part of a family.

A down side is the growth of feral cat colonies enabled by a lack of canine "predators"

On Thetis there is still work to be done in promoting public awareness both of the need to curb unwanted and feral felines that both suffer and have great potential for suffering, and for responsible management of dogs to prevent "pack" action ensuing when any two dogs get to run free, to threaten wildlife, the community and often themselves.

Animal care and control regulations are on the books most everywhere -- but not on Thetis. In place or not, collective awareness and community practice of common sense is the essential factor in success with animal welfare and control.

Thus, on behalf of Friends of Furrries, I am asking that the Thetis Island Residents & Ratepayers board lend its moral support to the cause with a motion endorsing the core values of animal care and control in relation specifically to Thetis Island.

On Thetis we plod along without an infrastructure that elsewhere puts teeth in animal control bylaws through the services of the SPCA, municipal pounds or a police presence. In urban areas the sheer volume of human population includes individuals who turn up on-the-spot to help resolve situations where animals are either in distress or causing it.

The Cowichan Valley Regional District, through our Area "G" Director Mel Dorey, last year gave Friends of Furrries \$500.00 towards expenses currently at about \$3,000.00 annually. This was a big help in mitigating Thetis Island residents' "taxation without representation" in animal control matters and acknowledged what Friends of Furrries has done with grass-roots support such as found on Thetis.

This is not a request that Thetis Island Residents & Ratepayers Association endorse Friends of Furrries, *per se*, but rather, formalize its support of the principles of responsible animal care and ownership -- including that dogs in particular should be under control at all times; spay/neutering of both canines and felines should be encouraged to curb the rise of unwanted pets leading to suffering and spread of disease.

TIRRA backing would not be a "cost" item but if adopted it reflect the widespread community support FOF has already engendered and liberate FOF volunteers from appearing to be self-appointed arbiters on what's good for the community.

On record over the past five years are scores of prominent and some not so well known incidents involving harm to people, pets, livestock and wildlife on Thetis resulting from the old saw that dogs need freedom and "room to roam in the country." They have involved injury, expense and equally important, damaged peace of mind.

Yours truly,



Lon Wood.