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The Highlander

Thursday **November 2 2023** | Issue 614

INSIDE: BOSHKUNG BREWING MERGES WITH TRUSS FOODWORKS PAGE 11

FREE




Oh deer Haliburton! We've got a problem...

Dysart et al's revised deer feeding bylaw:

- What's happened to date... page 2
- Stop Deer Feeding Property Owners Coalition... page 3
- Deer feeder speaks out... page 4

Photo by Lisa Gervais



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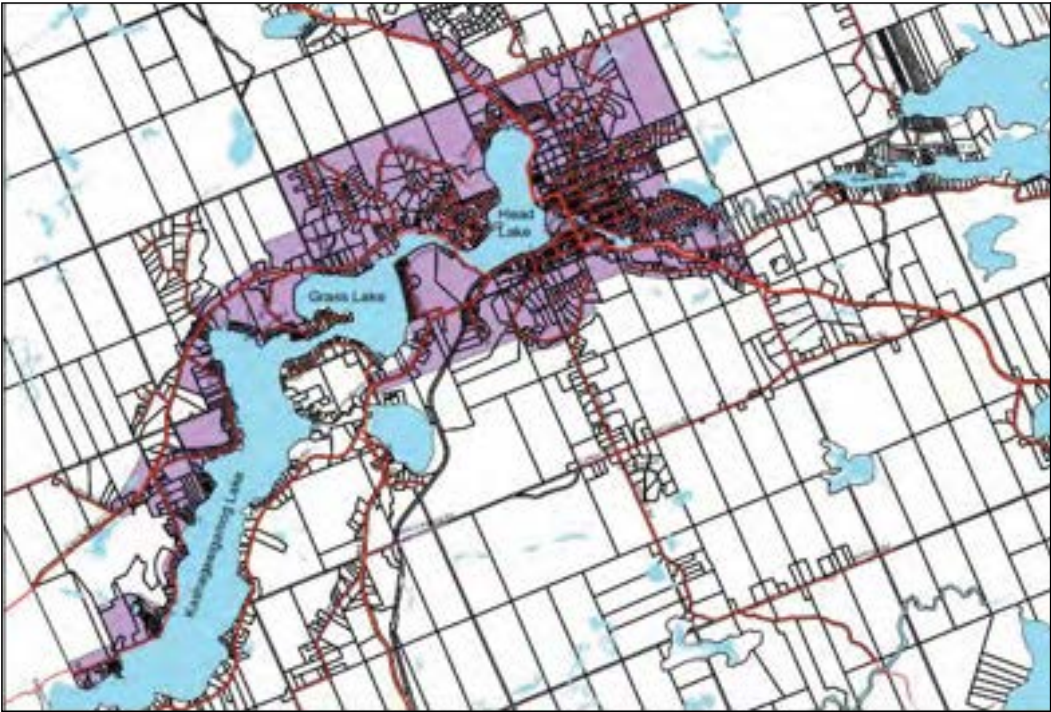
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HALIBURTON DEER FEEDING BYLAW



The proposed ban area. *Dysart et al* council.

Dysart to revisit bylaw

Timeline

- Haliburton residents Mike and Debra Landry made a delegation to council in December 2022. They believed deer were becoming a nuisance in the downtown, and contributing to deer-vehicle collisions.
- Dysart debates a bylaw, coming up with a May 1-Sept. 30 ban.
- The Stop Deer Feeding Property Owners Coalition, Haliburton-by-The-Lake Owners Association and Shelley Stiles of County Rose write to council Sept. 26 saying the bylaw, approved in July, needed a revisit. They wanted a complete ban.
- Greg Gillespie and Chris Bishop spoke to council Oct. 24. So did resident Lori King, who offered a counter-argument to the anti-deer feeders.
- Council is expected to pass a revised bylaw at its November meeting.

Reasons not to feed

The Stop Deer Feeding Property Owners Coalition say the village deer population has experienced rapid and exponential growth over the last five to eight years because of feeding. "This has had serious consequences on private properties, public spaces, the natural environment, the local economy, and the deer themselves." They say:

- Natural and planted vegetation on private properties and public space is being damaged. Many residents have lost thousands of dollars in destroyed landscaping and

gardens, they claim.

- Over-browsing jeopardizes the natural food supply of deer, and their shelter. Can lead to decline in other species. Forest regeneration is reduced.
- Easier for deer-to-deer transmission of disease and parasites, as well as to humans. More ticks.
- Deer-vehicle collisions
- Impact on deer: shelter (takes them from dense cover in winter); food (deer are supposed to lose weight in winter). Artificial feeding disrupts this. Commercial deer feed is nutritionally inferior to natural food, can cause gastrointestinal problems; behaviour (robbing deer of their wildness); and competition at feeders can lead to issues.

Household do's and don'ts

The MNRF has put out a fact sheet on the do's and don'ts of feeding wildlife, saying feeding wild animals may do more harm than good.

Do: appreciate wildlife from a distance; keep household waste, compost and pet food out of reach of wild animals; attract wildlife to your property by improving natural habitat; work together with your neighbours to help keep wild animals wild.

Do not: put out food to attract wildlife; try to approach or touch wild animals; feed pets outdoors or allow pets to roam free or put garbage out until the morning of collection.

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Coalition wants immediate ban on feeding

By Lisa Gervais

When Greg Gillespie and his wife, Gail, moved to their current Haliburton home 10 years ago, Greg says they had a lot of regeneration under their mature trees. They had Hermit Thrush nesting on the property as well.

However, Greg says the deer have eaten the undergrowth and the birds have moved on.

“So, it’s not just traffic accidents,” Greg says of the deer problem in Haliburton. “It’s a whole litany of things they’re impacting.”

As if on cue, a deer walks into the forest behind Gillespie’s house, visible through the living-room window where he and Chris Bishop are sitting on a couch.

The two are behind the Stop Deer Feeding Property Owners Coalition. They made a delegation to Dysart et al’s Oct. 24 council meeting, calling for an immediate, year-round, ban on deer feeding in the Haliburton settlement area. They came armed with a 720-name petition.

Council is expected to formalize a bylaw at its November meeting.

Gillespie said he was concerned with talk of the ban only being for Ward 1, since they want the settlement area included, and the section north of Harburn Road, up to the area around Country Rose.

“If it wasn’t for Pat Casey stepping in with a very timely refocus on what we’re trying to do here I’m not sure what would have happened and then there was confusion about the map...” Gillespie says.

In the end, Gillespie and Bishop said council appeared to get to where they wanted them to go.

“If they do the coverage area that we presented in the map, we’re happy with that,” Bishop said. “It’s a starting point, that’s for sure.”

The coalition had also asked that notice of the bylaw be posted at feed stores, as well as attaching their research paper ‘consequences of deer feeding in urban areas’ to the bylaw. However, they conceded council could not do the two minor asks.

“But the key is education,” Gillespie says. “Notification of the bylaw, and education of why the bylaw is there in the first place.” He added it sounded as if council was



Greg Gillespie and Chris Bishop have been working on their Stop Deer Feeding Property Owners Coalition initiative for the past two months. Photo by Lisa Gervais.

conducive to doing that.

Bishop said he would like education on the township website, and an insert with tax bills.

“If they don’t educate the people, and people don’t know that they’re not supposed to be feeding them, people will feed them,” Bishop said.

He added when someone complains, he is okay with a first-time warning.

Gillespie said they want a ban first, then enforcement, then possibly a County-wide ban.

‘They’re not afraid’

“You read all of the consequences of feeding deer. It is absolutely amazing to me that the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ontario government, hasn’t stepped in to legislate against it. They’ve got reams of

information on their website and yet they leave it to the municipalities to deal with, if there’s a problem. I just can’t understand it,” Gillespie said.

Bishop said they went door-to-door to collect the signatures and encountered a lot of domesticated deer. At one property, he said he was told the feeder gets up to 30 deer at a time. He added he does not buy the argument that people are hitting deer with vehicles because they are speeding. “They’re (deer) not afraid. That’s why they walk out on the road in front of you.”

He added because they are being fed in winter, fewer deer are dying, which does not allow for natural control of the population.

Gillespie said the pro-feeders are bringing the emotional side of the debate, “which is powerful.” He added they are arguing for private property rights. “But we have

property rights too.”

For example, he said he and Gail can’t use their property in the spring when doing maple syrup because their paths are paved with droppings and buckets have deer hair in them. They added people’s gardens are being decimated.

Nor do they want the bylaw phased in. “We have to deal with this issue now or next year it’s going to be even worse. The sooner we start, the sooner we get it resolved,” Gillespie said.

Bishop added, “the deer are going to die. They always do die in the winter. Yes, the first couple of years, there will be more carcasses. That is nature’s way and the reason that’s going to happen is you fed them. People who are feeding them need to take responsibility because they are the ones causing all the problems.”

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HALIBURTON DEER FEEDING BYLAW

Deer feeder says ban is short-sighted

By Lisa Gervais

When Lori King moved to Haliburton in 2019, she said she was told not to feed the deer.

"I was here two days and they said 'you won't be very popular if you feed the deer.' I thought, wow, these people are brutal," she says with a laugh. She said she was sent literature on how bad feeding is for deer and thought, "alright, I don't want to make any enemies right away".

She didn't feed - until a young deer showed up at her back door with an injured leg, followed by what she presumed was its mother, also hurt.

She calls up a photo on her laptop, cooing, "oh my God, he is too cute."

She said she called the Ministry of Natural Resources for advice. She claims she was told, by possibly a volunteer, 50 per cent of infant deer die in winter without feeding and she could do so responsibly. She said she was also advised once she started, she could not stop. Even on vacation, she had to ensure the deer were fed when she was away.

Today, she said no one at the MNR would admit to giving such advice.

However, King said she stopped feeding this past summer, and as soon as Dysart et al council started talking about a ban. However, she said the young deer showed up last week with another injury and, "he's not going to survive unless he gets a bit of help..."

Referencing the do not feed petition, King said some people didn't sign it because they plan to continue.

She said she won't be able to feed as she is known after making a delegation to council, but says people around still will.

She thinks council is short-sighted and does not know anything about deer. She said she's been studying them since COVID.

"This is not going to work. People will feed them at night so they can get away with it and it's going to increase the collisions because they'll run from house to house like little trick or treaters. I see when my neighbour shuts up shop, they all come here, and I just think there's a better approach to this."

Asked for suggestions, King says, "stick with their plan to not ban it this winter - and rely on the media to really educate people."

She said if the total ban goes ahead, deer will starve to death in town. "It's the abruptness of it. I cannot believe that people are OK with them starving to death. I can't wrap my head around it."

Asked for other ideas, she said people could make their gardens less appealing or put up small, electrical fences.

She adds, "I want to think outside the box. Get the town... both sides together."

"There has been some success leading deer out of towns. If we all get on board with this. It will require discipline from a lot of deer lovers who are in areas where they should not feed. They just have to reject them and let the people on the outskirts take care of it. I could sign up for that plan if someone told me they're not all going to starve to death." She said the feeders could be exempted from the bylaw and given a permit.

She agrees with the anti-deer feeders it isn't the deer's doing. She said cottagers came up during COVID and bought deer feed locally. She said people worked on



Lori King shows a photo of an injured deer. She began feeding deer when one showed up in her yard in 2019. Photo by Lisa Gervais.

elaborate gardens. "You don't think the deer are going to miss that tragically... this is catastrophic... we don't know what will happen."

King said she is planning to move somewhere where she does not have

neighbours, and can feed the deer.

"I know I'm going to fail. Another lame one will show up and I'll be on my third glass of wine and I will be emptying my fridge for them. I know it as surely as I know my own name."

INFORMATION PAGE

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CULTURAL CENTRE

Shifting Lens, a group exhibit featuring 15 artists from the Eastern Hub of the Ontario Society of Artists, will be on display until November 25, 2023, in the Agnes Jamieson Gallery. Admission is by donation. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am - 4 pm. For more information, please call 705-286-3763 or email culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca.

Join the Minden Hills Cultural Centre and Haliburton County Public Library for a special screening of the documentary *Unwanted Soldiers*, taking place at the Cultural Centre on Thursday, November 9 starting at 5 pm. Admission is free, but donations are welcome. Proceeds will go to the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 636 - Minden. The film is provided courtesy of the NFB. For more information, please call 705-286-3763 or email culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca.

PA Day movies at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre! The Minden Hills Cultural Centre and Haliburton County Public Library welcome you to join us in a series of PA Day movies during the school calendar year of 2023 and 2024. On every PA Day starting at 1:00 PM, there will be a free, family-friendly movie screening that takes place in the Welch Room of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre. Our next movie is scheduled for Friday, November 17. No registration is required. Snacks will be provided, however, please feel free to bring your own as well. The movie of choice will be decided by voters who cast their votes at the Haliburton County Public Library, Minden Branch, or online at the following link: <https://www.haliburtonlibrary.ca/Programs-Events/PA-Day-Movies?id=1696611600-186416>. For more information, please call 705-286-3763 or email culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca.

Christmas in the Village takes place on Saturday, November 18 from 11 am - 4 pm. Visit Santa from 12-2 pm and sip hot chocolate as you tour the heritage village. Don't miss the Old-Fashioned candy shop, fresh baked goods for sale in the Bowron House, hands-on activities and games for children and our outdoors Artisan's Market. We are also accepting vendors for our Artisan Market. The registration fee is \$10 for a 10'x10' area. Please contact culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763 x 542 to reserve your spot.

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE FOUNDATION

The Minden Hills Cultural Centre Foundation Annual General Meeting is scheduled to take place at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre on Wednesday, December 13 at 4 pm. All members of the MHCCF are welcome to attend. Please email mindenhillscffoundation@gmail.com for more information.



VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON COUNCIL MEETINGS

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted with a hybrid model of in-person and electronic participation in accordance with the Municipality Act. Meetings begin at 9:00 AM unless otherwise noted. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

November 9 - Regular Council Meeting
November 30 - Regular Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or a live-stream link available on the Township CivicWeb Portal at mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx or by using the direct link provided in the notice. Meeting agendas are not displayed during the meeting; please download by visiting our CivicWeb Portal at mindenhills.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx. Please note the live stream file/video will be available to the public for the duration of one week after the Council Meeting.

WASTE DISPOSAL Hunting Season is Here

Please dispose of your hunting shell casings properly:

- Used metal shell casings can be recycled with scrap metal
- Used plastic shell casings can be placed in with your household garbage
- Unused ammunition is not accepted at any Waste Disposal Site and should be returned to the OPP for safe handling.

A reminder that animal carcasses or remains are not accepted at our Waste Disposal Sites.

TIME TO CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS AND THE BATTERIES IN ALL SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

Clocks will fall back one hour at 2 am on Sunday November 5 and the Minden Hills Fire Department is recommending residents install new batteries in their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms when they change their clocks. Don't forget to check the date on your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms they need to be replaced every 10 years.

WINTER PARKING

From Nov 1st to Apr 30th, overnight parking is prohibited between the hours of midnight and 8:00 AM on township roadways and parking lots. Furthermore, parking in the turning circle of a cul-de-sac is prohibited during all hours. Vehicles parked in these areas that prohibit the removal of snow will be towed away and/or ticketed at the owner's expense.

TheHighlander

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OUR MISSION

- To tell the story of Haliburton County each week.
- To be a source of information and inspiration through stories and ideas.
- To report on issues, people and events important to the community.
- To reflect and promote pride in the culture, people and landscape of The Highlands.
- To encourage Highlanders to believe in themselves, in our community, and in their power to make our place in the world better every day.

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Fact versus emotion

There is plenty of research about why humans should not feed deer, especially in urban areas.

People have complained about having their flowers and vegetables eaten. Some of us have hit deer with our vehicles. We're walking on deer droppings.

We're also hurting – not helping – the deer. They are converging at feeding sites and sharing diseases and parasites. Humans can pick up some of these and there may be more ticks around. They are leaving optimal winter shelter to come to the village. Artificial feeding is actually disrupting their winter cycle of getting leaner. Their metabolism gets sped up and they burn their fat reserves quicker.

Here's the tough one: yes, some deer starve during extreme winters. It's upsetting to many people, but winter mortality is a natural process that helps keep the deer population at long-term sustainable levels. Also, a lot of the man-made food isn't good for deer, anyway. It messes with their digestive system. Deer can actually starve to death with a stomach full of food they can't digest.

And, of course, by feeding them, we take away their wildness. They become dependent on easy food sources and don't eat as much of their natural food. Young deer don't know how to forage. They're not afraid of us.

While I was out taking photos for stories in today's paper, I turned to find a young deer about six feet away from me, looking for a handout.

At feeding sites, deer can fight, some get stressed out, others injured.

The folks behind the Stop Deer Feeding Property Owners Coalition have come up with three pages of research with references.

They've been working on the file the last two months, as well as collecting 720 signatures for a petition they presented to Dysart et al council last week, calling for an immediate, year-round, ban on deer feeding in Haliburton village.

They don't think phasing in a ban will work. They believe that just reducing the amount of deer feeding, or allowing feeding for part of the year, will still result in significant numbers of deer in the village. They argue it's not far for town deer to migrate to areas with natural sources of food, and where deer feeding will still be allowed, so mass starvation resulting from a complete feed ban is unlikely.

On the other side of the coin are people who feed deer. They make some pretty powerful emotional arguments.

A delegate to last week's council meeting



By Lisa Gervais

has sent a follow-up letter to the mayor.

She concedes there are too many deer in town but thinks an immediate ban is cruel.

She is proposing a committee of the Stop Deer Feeding group, with feeders, and council, to come up with a phased-in solution.

For example, she wonders if some feeders can be exempted from the bylaw to do responsible feeding outside of town.

She said people such as her need some peace of mind in order to willingly comply.

She told the mayor it will be very difficult for her and others to ignore the deer's hungry faces this winter but they would if there was a better plan. She said they will continue to feed unless there is some sort of compromise.

One thing both sides agree on is there has to be more education. We encourage people to do their homework.

From what we can see, all information points to a total ban not just in Dysart et al, but across the County.

NATURE'S CALLING

The busy October

Well, the month of October was undoubtedly busy and extremely beautiful. With the fall colours changing on the trees, it was breathtaking. The temperatures were higher than usual, so getting outdoors was a must. With Thanksgiving and Halloween, it was a month of getting together with family.

Family times are unique and one of the best memories people can make. October is also the month that we at our homestead make sure there is wood in the house for winter. We ensure that patio tables and furniture are away and all summer items get tucked away until next year.

Those are only a few things happening. October also marks the start of the fall hunting season, deer season with bow starts, moose season, and fall turkey, and remember goose and duck season.

Many were at hunting camps, preparing them for the upcoming hunting season. I have so many fond memories of being at the hunting camp with many family members around the dinner table, hearing stories, and making memories that last a lifetime.

While others were prepping for the upcoming hunting season, I was taking advantage of getting outdoors and enjoying the nice weather and breathtaking views. I headed to Muskoka to A.I.M Archery range in Dwight. They have an excellent archery range and a 3D archery course. There are so many benefits of archery; not only is it fun, but it also improves your focus. It also aids in hand-eye coordination, social skills, and confidence. These are just a few benefits. Archery is one of my favorite activities.

In previous years, I held a ladies archery day that got women and girls out and taught them a new skill. Not only did I host archery days, but I also hosted different lady hunting trips. I enjoy teaching and seeing women learning new skills and enjoying getting outdoors.

I understand that only some people are okay with hunting; however, this is part of our



By Toni Cooper

heritage. Hunting has been around for two million years. People have been hunting for years to provide for their families, and I am no different. We only hunt to feed our family. We don't waste any part of any animal we harvest. Not only do we hunt, we grow our vegetables, and we fish. In the fall, I can or blanch our garden vegetables to have for the winter months. Our parents brought us up this way, and I have passed this heritage on to my daughter and three beautiful granddaughters.

I do hope everyone had a fantastic October and enjoyed what the warm fall weather brought us. I hope you all made lots of memories with your families and got outdoors lots. I know I did. Now, to get prepared for November. I will be heading to Aspley for a week of ladies deer camp.

The Highlander welcomes all contributions, however we wish to remind readers of the following: Letters to the editor policy

- Letters should be exclusive to *The Highlander*. We do not publish letters also addressed to other media outlets, open letters, letters to third parties, or cc'd letters.
- Letters must be signed with first and last name and home town. We also need an address and phone number for verification. The address and phone number won't be published. We do not run anonymous letters.
- Letters must be a maximum of 300 words. If submitted at greater length, they will be returned for editing.
- *The Highlander* may still edit for length and clarity. • *The Highlander* has the right not to publish letters.

Social media policy

The Highlander expects respectful debate in Facebook and Twitter comments. We reserve the right to hide or delete posts, and to block commenters, if necessary.