

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF OTTAWA-CARLETON  
MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE D'OTTAWA-CARLETON

REPORT  
RAPPORT

Our File/N/Réf.  
Your File/V/Réf.

DATE 13 March 1998

TO/DEST. Coordinator, Corporate Services and Economic Development  
Committee

FROM/EXP. Councillor Wendy Stewart

SUBJECT/OBJET **OTTAWA-CARLETON WILDLIFE CENTRE**

### **REPORT RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee recommend that Council approve, at its next meeting, funding for the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre's public Hotline Service in the amount of \$51,100.**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre was established in 1987 as a non-profit, volunteer organization to provide wildlife response services to local taxpayers. It provides two services to the community: 1) a wildlife rehabilitation program for orphaned and injured wildlife which is entirely paid for by volunteers and private donations and sponsorships; and, 2) a Preventive Education Program, including a public Hotline Service which provides the first-line response to homeowners needing immediate and experienced advice on how best to deal with a wildlife problem. The Centre responds to about 4,000 Hotline callers annually. Until last year, the cost to operate the Hotline Service was largely subsidized by the Centre's private donations and sponsorships. Currently, the cost to RMOC taxpayers for that service is about 7 cents per capita versus 35-37 cents in other Ontario municipalities.

As part of its 1997 budget deliberations, Regional Council, on February 26<sup>th</sup> 1997, approved funding for the Centre's public Hotline Service in the upset amount of \$51,100, pending resolution of the local governance issue in Ottawa-Carleton. At that time, several municipalities had agreed to provide a portion of that amount for 1997 and several had not yet deliberated the matter. On that basis, Regional Council budgeted \$42,000 as the purchase of service agreement with the Wildlife Centre for the provision of the public Hotline Service. It is that amount then which appears in the 1998 Draft Operating Estimates.

To date in 1998, six local municipal Councils have forwarded requests to the Region that it provide full funding for the Hotline Service while the remainder have not yet responded to the

funding request. It is likely that most of these latter municipalities will not provide their portion of the Hotline Service cost in that they did not do so in 1997. Last year at this time, the funding situation with respect to the Hotline Service had already been determined at the Region. In addition, public demand for the Hotline Service has increased this year as a result of January's ice storm. On that basis and given that the Centre must hire staff within the next few weeks if it is to operate and continue to provide wildlife response services to Ottawa-Carleton residents this year, the Hotline funding issue must be resolved prior to Regional Council's 1998 budget deliberations scheduled for May of this year.

The responsibility for urban wildlife issues in Ottawa-Carleton seems to be one which has 'fallen between the cracks'. Wildlife does not recognize municipal boundaries - a fact which is supported by local municipalities in asking the Region to provide full funding for the Centre's Hotline Service. That request also recognizes that the cost-effectiveness of this volunteer service is entirely dependent upon it being *centrally* funded, as opposed to the Centre having to deal with eleven individual municipalities annually.

The Centre's Hotline Service has been acknowledged by prestigious international organizations as a model North American program. In entering into the recommended purchase of service agreement with the Ottawa-Carleton Wildlife Centre, the Region is recognizing the importance of this public/private partnership and has an opportunity to demonstrate leadership in providing to our ratepayers an essential community service which they demand and which we cannot afford to lose.

*Approved by*  
*W. Stewart*