

## Nuisance beaver agreement between city, trapper's council criticized

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A recently-expired agreement between the city and the Kenora Trapper's Council to remove nuisance beavers is now recognized as having been illegal.

The Kenora Trapper Council's Nuisance Beaver Agreement, which spanned the off-season beaver hunt from May to September, allowed for the killing of 48 beavers in May and June of this year alone.

"There were situations where the City of Kenora was having them trap on property not owned by the city," said David Critchlow, the provincial enforcement specialist for wildlife under the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Critchlow pointed out the agreement is between the City and the Kenora Trapper's Council, the latter of which is not a person or a corporation and therefore, not a legal entity that can take legal responsibility. Under new province-wide legislation, the trappers will be individually licensed.

Adrian Nelson is the director of communications for the Fur-Bearer Defenders. He saw the agreement taking powers that belong to the Ministry of the Environment and giving it to the municipality and trappers to make decisions regarding nuisance beavers on Crown land. The trappers, he said, had licence to destroy dams without environmental studies to ensure wetland and fish habitat wouldn't be disturbed. Trappers were paid \$15 per hour to "lower the water" at specified sites.

"The main point of contention was that the city is paying \$65 on a beaver pelt rather than the service itself," he said. "The real problem is it took the power away from the (Ministry of the Environment) and gave it to the trappers to decide what was happening on Crown land. It basically gave the city authorization to say 'there's a nuisance beaver here' without any input from the ministry as to whether it's a nuisance beaver."

Under the new rules, the city remains the authority to declare the locations of nuisance beavers.

The total cost to the city was \$2,310 in 2008 and \$2,815 in 2007. According to the Fur Harvester's Auction Inc. in North Bay, pelts are selling at an average of \$16.59.

Crown land trapping aside, documents obtained through a Freedom Of Information request revealed beavers were trapped in Keewatin Ball Field, behind Valley Drive, Golf Course Road, Tetroe Drive near C&C Husky, and on Norman Drive.

Lee-Ann Carver is a local nature photographer who hasn't had a beaver in her sights all summer. She has, however, noticed the lethal conibear traps within reach of roadways.

"It was only two human footsteps to that trap," she said of two traps she came across near Round Lake. "People walk their dogs here all the time... It's open season on beavers all year round and it's absolutely wrong. The death of these animals is only benefitting the trappers."

City operations manager Rick Perchuk was surprised when he learned of the locations of certain traps and said he was "unaware of the magnitude" of trapping.

"I didn't realize there were no safety precautions being done. That was a surprise," he said. "There will be a discussion we'll have in the future with the trappers. Safety is important to the city in regard to not having animals getting into the traps accidentally. We expected the trappers to take whatever due diligence on their part, recognizing the areas they're working in."

The Kenora Trapper Council did not return calls.