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Over the last two years, an understanding of veterinary infrastructure services, and how the lack of these services affect First Nations, has been introduced to Treaty #3 by veterinarian, Dr. Richard Herbert, and Mr. Percy Bird. The root causes of out-of-control dog populations, public health issues related to dogs (rabies, biting, family violence, etc.), nuisance wildlife control problems, the lack of meat inspection structures to ensure disease-free traditional foods (wild meat and fish), and the root causes of the lack of negotiated protocols to enable Ontario First Nations to manage, harvest, and retail wildlife as a part of a sustainable community economic infrastructure were introduced. **At the centre of each of these problems was the lack of one or more veterinary services.** These missing services form the infrastructure (framework) from which solutions for these problems can be built; they form a veterinary infrastructure.

First Nation communities have lived in relation with animals since the beginning. Before, deer and other animals gave food, tools, and clothing. These gifts were also used for trading. Today, treaty rights guarantee access to these same animals to feed families and to use in trade. However, things have changed dramatically over the last few hundred years. The rest of the world has set safety standards for the trade of meat and developed an entire infrastructure of services to harvest, process, and retail safe meat; including, a veterinary infrastructure. Unfortunately, these infrastructure services were not developed for the harvest, processing, and sale of meat traditionally eaten and used for trade by Canada's First Nations. As a result, **First Nations have the right to hunt but have no access to retail trade of the meat to support their families.** All around, the land is alive with the wealth of a Nation but communities are unaware of the missing services that prevent prosperity. A well-developed sustainable wild meat and fish industry would result in 100's to 1,000's of jobs within Treaty #3.

Many agree that there were dogs living with First Nations 400 years ago. However, today those dogs are gone and replaced with dogs that are foreign

to the land. **Today's dogs were changed, through breeding, in other areas of the world for specific purposes.** Dachshunds were bred in Germany to go into holes and kill badgers, foxes, and other pests; Karelian Bear Dogs were developed in Finland to hunt bears; Rottweilers, German Shepherds, and Dobermans are guard dogs used by Nazi Germany; Siberian Huskies and Norwegian Elkhounds were bred in Northern Europe to pull sleds in the snow; and the list goes on. **When dogs were changed through selective breeding, they also lost their ability to live in the wild and to control their own population. Today's dogs are a man-made problem imported into First Nation communities.** Uncontrolled dog populations, and problems they cause in communities, are also an issue in the rest of the world. In response, the world developed humane societies (public education), veterinary services, bylaw regulations, and animal bylaw enforcement services as the infrastructure to control problems created by these changed dogs. Unfortunately, these infrastructure services and their teachings were never developed for First Nation communities.

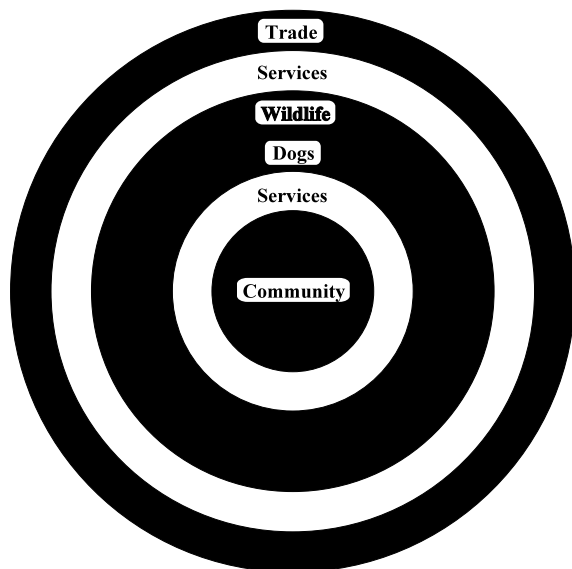
Clearly, for prosperity to flow into First Nations from wildlife, there needs to be a framework of services to sit between wildlife harvest and trade. These services are part of a veterinary infrastructure. Not as clear, is the need for services to First Nation dogs. Dogs provide a zone of protection around a community. They protect us from wild animals but who protects us from the dogs? Dogs will prevent a fox with rabies from biting a community member by fighting the fox. Unfortunately, the dog will get rabies from the fox and then spread rabies to community members; unless, the dog was vaccinated for rabies. Fifty years ago, rabies was not in the Treaty #3 area, now it is. **Vaccinating a community's dog population against rabies protects that community from rabies.** Unfortunately, in-community rabies vaccination services are another of those services that have not been developed for First Nations.

Rabies, and other dog diseases, are not the only concerns if we do not provide adequate care for the

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overpopulation of dogs within communities. Studies show there is a link between animal cruelty and family violence. **Dog abuse has been shown to be part of the same circle of violence as child, spousal, and elder abuse.** Animal cruelty legislation, dog owner liability legislation, the prevention of animal cruelty legislation, public education, and dog control infrastructure services are all part of a community's arsenal to break the circle of violence at the dog level. Unfortunately, these teachings and their infrastructure services have not been developed in First Nation communities.

First Nation communities are missing services necessary to manage, harvest and retail wild meat; plus services necessary to solve dog problems and make communities safer. **First Nations are missing a veterinary infrastructure.** The lack of a veterinary infrastructure to enable traditional wild meat retail is a major contributing factor to First Nation poverty. The lack of a veterinary infrastructure to facilitate dog control services is a contributing factor in the cycle of



family violence through the link to animal cruelty.

Through discussions, a pilot First Nation veterinary infrastructure initiative was developed. **This pilot program included a wild deer harvest, a**

nuisance bear program, and a dog control program. The pilot program and funding proposals were sponsored by the Lac Des Mille Lacs First Nation. Lac Des Mille Lacs quickly realized that the veterinary infrastructure initiative was a Treaty #3 issue and presented the proposal to Grand Council Treaty #3. **In October, 2005 Grand Council Treaty #3 resolved to support the development of a veterinary infrastructure within Treaty #3** because it is, "...integral for developed nations to establish regulatory frameworks through which protocols allow for national and international meat strategies; provide for animal care and animal disease management strategies; be involved with all animal species in respect to care, inspection, regulation, use, transport, slaughter and consumption; and create the foundation for humane societies and dog pounds for use in the control of companion animal populations." Further, the Grand Council Treaty #3 recognized the, "...absence of a veterinary infrastructure exposes the citizens of Treaty #3 to risks of eating uninspected meat and fish; exposure to preventable diseases from domestic and wild animals; increased dog attacks; and leaves the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3 without the management tools to sustain and excel in traditional lifestyles; including the development of an international trade and commerce in wildlife harvest." Lac Des Mille Lacs First Nation now spearheads the planning and funding development of the First Nation veterinary infrastructure for the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3.

The wildlife (deer and bear) infrastructure is at an early planning stage. Funding proposals were submitted to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada by Lac Des Mille Lacs some time ago. These proposals gained the support of both Ogichidaa Arnold Gardner and the Grand Assembly of the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3. Lac Des Mille Lacs' funding proposals had tracked their way through to the level of the Prime Minister just before the election call. Unfortunately, these funding proposals are on hold until the Federal government returns from the election. In the interim, **funding proposals and plans are being made for the**

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consultation of the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3 at three levels: Community, Elder, and Treaty #3 governance. These consultation workshops will provide the moral, cultural, and spiritual basis upon which trade and commerce from an elder-guided, tribal-based sustainable wildlife-based economy can be built. The wild deer harvest aspect of the veterinary infrastructure will be used to pioneer this sustainable economic development. Other focussed workshops are also in early planning stages.

The veterinary infrastructure's dog control program is less dependent on government funding and so has progressed at a quicker pace. There are four groups of infrastructure services needed for a complete Treaty #3 dog control infrastructure. They are; public education, bylaw regulation, bylaw enforcement, and veterinary infrastructure services. **The dog control infrastructure has a number of new services available for Treaty #3 communities.** In the public education infrastructure, **three in-community training workshops** on the importance of dog control are available: A half day rabies workshop, a full day dog public health workshop (includes the rabies workshop), and a two day dog control infrastructure workshop (includes the public health workshop).

The dog control veterinary service infrastructure has a **new centrally located veterinary hospital already providing emergency and surgical (spay/neuter) services.** The hospital is located at the western edge of Fort Frances. Attached to the hospital is a mobile veterinary unit. **This mobile unit has already commenced bringing dog and cat wellness services into First Nation communities. These wellness services are currently focussed on dog-related public health issues, including; rabies prevention, parasite control, humane euthanasia, and more.** For more information regarding First Nation veterinary services or to obtain veterinary services for your community or a community member, please call 807-274-2356.

Current development work in the dog control infrastructure program focuses on both the public health and the bylaw enforcement infrastructure

services. Regional workshops are being planned to define working models for a treaty-wide dog public health education system to replace the humane society and for an animal control-pound network to meet rabies quarantine, community bylaw enforcement, and Treaty #3 police law enforcement needs.

For more information on the Treaty #3 veterinary infrastructure initiative, contact Mr. Quentin Snider, Mr. Percy Bird, or Dr. Richard Herbert.

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