



## Strategic Plan 2014 - 2018

The British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

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## Introduction

Established in 1895 out of a concern for the mistreatment of horses and other farm animals, The British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (BC SPCA or the Society) is a not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia.

The Society was formally created under the provincial *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act* (PCAA) and is the only animal welfare organization in British Columbia with the authority to enforce laws relating to animal cruelty and to prepare cases for the prosecution of individuals who inflict suffering on animals. The BC SPCA relies heavily on public donations to support its work.

Over the course of its existence, the BC SPCA has worked to effect positive change to the welfare of all animals in the province, whether through advancements in the standards of care for animals in its shelters, the enactment and strengthening of anti-cruelty legislation or the creation of progressive animal bylaws in communities. This work was made possible because British Columbians are by nature animal lovers who will do all they can to improve the plight of our province's most vulnerable animals.

Our relationships with animals are interwoven into the fabric of our communities. We rely on animals for food, they are part of our families, we are moved when we encounter animals in the wild. They are expressed in our personal and cultural stories. Our responsibility is to protect, nurture and extend our compassion to those who cannot speak for themselves. Our connection with animals is evidenced by the fact that more than 60 per cent of households have companion animals and more would if rental housing didn't restrict even more people from sharing their lives with animals.

In 2001, the Society adopted the Charter of the BC SPCA, in which we pledged our energies to inspire and mobilize society to create a world in which all animals, and in particular those animals whose lives we can influence, enjoy as a minimum five essential freedoms:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst;
2. Freedom from pain, injury and disease;
3. Freedom from distress;
4. Freedom from discomfort; and
5. Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being.

The period between 2002 and 2007 was focused on restructuring the BC SPCA into a single legal entity and consolidating the foundation of the organization so as to ensure the Five Freedoms within its shelters and to permit it to flourish across the province, leaving little time to consider the notion of extending the 5 Freedoms into society as a whole.

On October 25, 2008 the Board of Directors of BC SPCA approved a five year Strategic Plan for the period 2009 to 2013. 16 goals were identified in the Plan, built around five key strategic priorities:

- To intervene, protect and advocate for animals;
- To create humane communities and responsible animal guardianship;
- To improve the level of services and care to all animals;
- To strengthen staff and volunteer services; and
- To build financial and organizational capacity.



On all levels, implementation of the Plan has been a resounding success as concrete progress was made in each of the 16 areas identified for action. Some of the many accomplishments achieved over the past five years include:

- Acknowledgement by independent charity watchdog groups MoneySense and Charity Intelligence of the BC SPCA's sound management and oversight.
- Accreditation in the Imagine Canada Standards Program, the first SPCA in Canada to receive the seal of approval in the area of governance, financial management, fundraising, staff and volunteer involvement.
- The recruitment of additional special constables positions across the province to investigate complaints of animal cruelty.
- Introduction of a provincial call centre to receive complaints of animals in distress and wildlife relates enquiries.
- Investing further in the prevention of pet overpopulation, through an increased focus on spay/neuter.
- Development of new progressive Codes of Practices for a number of species of farm animals, including beef cattle, horses, sheep and pigs.
- Construction of new community animal centres in areas such as Maple Ridge, Powell River and Kelowna and the upgrading of others, including Wild ARC; Williams Lake and Penticton.
- The development of a sled dog code of practice and other meaningful improvements to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.
- The further development of our humane education programming, including expansion of summer camp programs across the province and significant growth in the BC SPCA Kids Club.
- Sound financial management of the Society leading to consistent operating surpluses and the growth of invested assets to be reinvested in future years.
- Development of staff resources leading to significantly reduced turnover and high engagement rates.

The accomplishments of the past few years allowed the Society to be in the strongest position in its history and permitted it to begin considering the long term future of animal welfare in our province and in Canada. The BC SPCA has long held the belief that the only sure way to truly implement the Five Freedoms is through transitioning the organization and the community from being largely reactive in nature on animal issues to one that was proactive or preventative in nature – to address the root causes of animal cruelty which stem from exploitive attitudes and behaviours toward animals and all too often ignorance to the care needs to which animals depend.

In 2013, in the final year of its then Strategic Plan, the BC SPCA set out to test this belief by embarking upon an extensive stakeholder consultation process to solicit input into its future direction. More than 7,000 supporters participated in this consultation process by way of public surveys, interviews, or through feedback sessions. Animal lovers across the province were unanimous in their view that while the BC SPCA must remain the safety net for the province's most vulnerable animals, now is the time for the BC SPCA to significantly increase its investment in proactive, preventative animal welfare such as pet overpopulation programs, youth and adult education and advocacy initiatives

Our new Strategic Plan, approved by the Board of Directors on December 14, 2013, seeks to do exactly that. During the course of the next five years, the BC SPCA will focus its energies and resources in the development and expansion of programs that seek to eliminate the root causes of animal cruelty and neglect, which in turn will move us towards the creation of humane communities throughout British Columbia.



A humane community is one where all animals are accorded the Five Freedoms by those that provide guardianship over them. Considerations such as mandatory pet identification, youth and adult humane education programming, progressive animal control bylaws and enforcement, companion animal sterilization programs are all part of a humane community, as are activities such as off-leash areas, pet friendly rental accommodation, humane farming practices and wildlife preservation.

Central to this notion is the idea that it is the community itself and not the local animal shelter or SPCA that creates the humane community. While the BC SPCA can and will play a key role in this endeavour, so do veterinarians, local government representatives and other animal organizations. Ultimately though, it is the citizens of the community who aspire to extend compassion and respect for animals who will bear ultimate responsibility for creating such a community.

As a leader in progressive animal welfare, we are committed to help inspire society to create humane communities by dramatically enhancing and expanding our own preventative initiatives in areas such as education, sterilization and advocacy. But, we are just as committed to empowering our staff, volunteers and supporters to also look outside their local shelter and into the community to find the long term solutions to animal welfare that will lead to the creation of humane communities.

This is a key time in our history. We call on all British Columbians to help us create a world in which all animals enjoy, as a minimum, the Five Freedoms.



## Founding Principles

### Mission:

To protect and enhance the quality of life for domestic, farm and wild animals in British Columbia.



### Vision:

To inspire and mobilize society to create a world in which all animals enjoy as a minimum, five essential freedoms:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst;
2. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease;
3. Freedom from distress;
4. Freedom from discomfort; and
5. Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being.

### The Charter of the BC SPCA:

Whereas, the world is inhabited by many species sharing a common ecosystem of air, earth and water. We recognize and value our interconnectedness with all animals.

Therefore, the BC Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the quality of life for the animals of the world we share.



We pledge our energies to inspire and mobilize society to create a world in which all animals and in particular those animals whose lives we can influence, enjoy as a minimum five essential freedoms:

1. Freedom from hunger and thirst;
2. Freedom from pain, injury, and disease;
3. Freedom from distress;
4. Freedom from discomfort; and
5. Freedom to express behaviours that promote well-being.

## Guiding Principles:

The following beliefs and principles guide our attitudes and actions.

### Principled Behaviour

We are open, honest and transparent in our relationships with our staff, volunteers, members, donors and the public. We treat each other and those we serve, including the animals, with integrity, respect and compassionate caring.

### Partnerships

By forming partnerships and strategic alliances with those who share our vision, guiding principles and respect for animals, we can do more than any of us can do on our own.



## Leadership

We exercise leadership in the protection and promotion of animal welfare by demonstrating courage, compassion, wisdom and advocacy.

## Learning

We honour the need to grow and learn, using an evidence-based approach to guide improvements and constantly evaluate the impact of our work.

## Responsibility

Animal welfare is not solely the responsibility of the BC SPCA. It is also a matter of individual and community responsibility. We are committed to working with individuals and communities, through educational and other initiatives, to promote great responsibility for animal welfare.

## Accountability

We are accountable in order to deserve the trust of those we serve. We measure, track and report regularly on what we have achieved as well as on what we have not.



## BC SPCA Strategic Priorities 2014 - 2018

### 1. Creating Humane Communities through a Cultural Shift to Proactive, Preventative Animal Welfare

#### Key Priorities

In order to achieve a cultural shift both within and outside the organization, the BC SPCA will:

1. Strategically apply a specific percentage of new revenue and resources to preventative programs such as advocacy, education and pet overpopulation initiatives. Time frame: from year two and onwards, increasing over time as capacity permits.

In order to develop humane communities across British Columbia, we will:

2. Finalize and implement a comprehensive provincial pet overpopulation plan, which will include:
  - Investigating opportunities for additional spay/neuter clinics and mobile spay/neuter services. Time frame: submission of recommendations to the Board of Directors by the end of year two;
  - Establishing community spay/neuter programs at six branches with the highest pet overpopulation problems. Time frame: incremental establishment each year;
  - Investigating opportunities to expand existing services at our clinics and hospital. Time frame: by year three;
  - Increasing partnerships with other organizations working in remote communities by offering BC SPCA spay/neuter grants. Time frame: each year; and
  - Increasing public awareness and education. Time frame: by year three and onwards.
3. Build strategic partnerships with stakeholders including provincial and local governments; veterinarians; other animal welfare, rescue and wildlife rehabilitation organizations; farm industry groups; donors and philanthropists and other organizations and individuals as appropriate. Time frame: by year three and onwards.

4. Enhance and expand humane education programs for youth, teens and adults through schools, in-shelter programs and public events and workshops.
5. Expand the reach of social media to empower and encourage supporters to become involved in our advocacy and education initiatives. Time frame: by year three.

To advocate for improved animal welfare we will:

6. Investigate opportunities to improve compliance with pet identification through implementing mandatory pet identification and/or outreach programs to dramatically increase the number of stray/lost animals returned to their guardians. Time frame: by year three, staff will have investigated the possibility and made recommendations to the Board of Directors.
7. Explore opportunities for a province-wide dog breeder assurance program, whether through a provincial licensing system or a BC SPCA certification program. Time frame: by year five.
8. Investigate opportunities for the development of standards for the humane removal of wildlife by industry. Time frame: by year four.

### Other Strategic Issues

9. Communicate and educate staff, volunteers and the public regarding the importance of adopting a community-based approach to animal welfare. Time frame: each year.
10. Continue to seek greater transparency and accountability from all institutions using animals in research and encourage opportunities to reduce or eliminate the use of such animals through continued participation in the Canadian Council on Animal Care. Time frame: each year.
11. Continue to work towards prohibition of additional exotic species in British Columbia. Time frame: each year.
12. Continue to take a leadership role in advancing improved standards of animal welfare for farm animals through participation in the national Codes of Practice process and advancement of SPCA Certified as a national farm certification program. Time frame: each year.

## 2. Delivering Excellence in Animal Welfare Programs

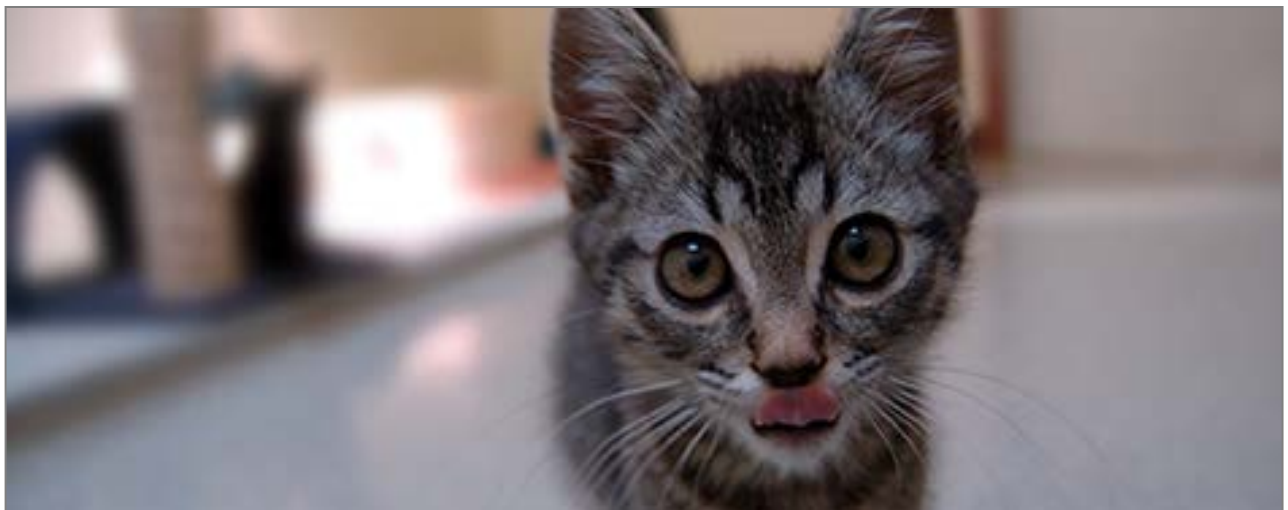
### Key Priorities

In the area of animal cruelty investigations, we will:

1. Enhance the training of shelter-based staff, enabling them to undertake initial animal cruelty investigations. Time frame: by year two and onwards.
2. Recruit new constables to targeted and underserved areas of British Columbia. Time frame: each year as resources permit.
3. Continue to educate and update the legal and law enforcement communities on animal cruelty law through teaching opportunities and partnerships with the police forces, Crown Counsel, faculties of law and other educational facilities/opportunities. Time frame: by year two.

With respect to the services provided by our community animal centres and facilities we will:

4. Implement the initial phases of the Facilities Development and Services Plan (FDSP), ensuring that all facilities are constructed in a manner consistent with the Society's goal of preventative animal welfare and a focus on youth and adult education, support for animal guardians, community support mechanisms and environmental responsibility. Time frame: completion of a priority facility by the end of year two of the plan and completion of a minimum of two facilities by the end of year four.
5. Seek federal, provincial and local government funding as base funding for the FDSP and other aspects of our mission. Time frame: submission of formal funding request in the first year of the strategic plan with funding obtained by the end of year three.



To ensure improved animal welfare standards in our facilities, we will:

6. Introduce new and expand existing behaviour and welfare programs to increase adoptions, save more lives and support the most vulnerable animals in the province. Time frame: from year three and onwards.
7. Recruit staff with specific animal behaviour and welfare expertise into the organization and enhance the skills of existing staff. Time frame: from year three and onwards.
8. Strengthen management and oversight mechanisms in Northern British Columbia and in the Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley regions. Time frame: years three and five, respectively.

### Other Strategic Issues

9. Enhance the role of the BC SPCA Provincial Call Centre to further support branches and the Cruelty Investigations Department. Time frame: by year four.
10. Participate in national efforts to improve consistency and quality of animal cruelty investigations in Canada. Time frame: by year five.
11. Modify and enhance the Drive for Lives transfer program to support and optimize the FDSP. Time frame: by year two.
12. Identify all areas of BC SPCA involvement in animal control and develop corresponding policies to ensure operational consistency and optimal implementation of the FDSP. Time frame: by year two.
13. Further develop and increase customer service training for all staff and implement measures to objectively track and reward progress. Time frame: by year four.



### 3. Building a Mission-Focused Team of Staff and Volunteers

#### Key Priorities

1. Continue to invest in the recruitment, training, compensation and career development of staff across the province. Time frame: incremental investment in each year.
2. Develop a multi-level volunteer development plan to significantly increase the number and training of volunteers across the Society. This will include the creation of volunteer positions in new areas. Time frame: development of the plan by the end of year, with implementation thereafter.

### 4. Enhancing Financial and Organizational Strength

#### Key Priorities

1. Recognizing the importance of donor support to our organization, grow new and enhance existing donor relationships to support programs that benefit animals, focusing on the long term and working in partnership. Time frame: incremental investment in each year.
2. Explore the potential for new and existing social enterprise opportunities. Time frame: recommendations submitted to the Board of Directors by the end of year two, with action thereafter dependent on the Board's decision.
3. Continue to invest in technology, including expanding our use of social media; our website and enhancing our support, volunteer and adoption platforms. Time frame: incremental investment in each year.



## Other Strategic Issues

4. Investigate the possibility of partnering with local government to support spay/neuter programs, the adoption of pound animals, education initiatives and cruelty investigations within their jurisdiction. Time frame: year two and onwards.
5. Explore the potential for BC SPCA to access support from industry community social responsibility programs in resource-based, northern communities. Time Frame: by year three.
6. Ensure the Society maintains an effective disaster recovery plan, so that we can continue to provide services in the event of a natural disaster. Time frame: an initial audit completed and recommendations submitted to the Board of Directors by year three.

## 5. Strengthening Governance

### Key Priorities

1. Create a process and policy for the recruitment, election and succession of Board Directors that ensures optimal candidates are identified to eligible voters in a timely manner. Time frame: by year two.
2. Explore opportunities to reassess the role of Community Councils to ensure optimal and effective governance of the Society, taking into account the 2012 report of the Community Council Task Force. Time frame: by year three.
3. Determine the role and value of membership to the Society and based on that determination, develop related policies and procedures to improve the governance of the Society. Time frame: by year two.



## Other Strategic Issues

4. Revise and consolidate the Terms of Reference for Directors (at large and regional) to ensure accountability, transparency and participation. Time frame: by year two.
5. Create new and/or revise existing bylaws and other governance documents to enhance the Board's ability to provide effective oversight of the business and affairs of the Society. Time frame: by year five.

*Photo credit: Vicktoria Haak*

