

From: Andrew Fall [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, January 28, 2021 12:35 PM
To: Lasqueti Island Local Trust Committee
Subject: OCP and sheep: suggestions

Dear LTC,

Given the recent community discussion about the proposed changes to the OCP regarding sheep, I would like to offer some suggestions for your consideration.

The LCA OCP Review Steering Committee identified sheep as a *major unresolved issue* that it had neither time nor resources to properly address. The LCA report included some details on what the committee heard from the community, and suggested some steps that could be considered.

Based on the inability to find consensus, the committee made two recommendations:

1. Remove the current objective (objective 2 in section 3.4):
"To preserve and support balanced control of the local feral/heritage sheep which are a valued part of the community and its history."

and replace it with:
"While recognizing that some exotic species may have value to the community as a source of local food, to minimize the impacts of invasive exotic species on native fauna and flora."
2. Consider adding a policy or advocacy policy similar to:
"Scientifically rigorous surveys of invasive species, in particular feral sheep, are encouraged to estimate population size and to assess local ecological impacts (e.g. by the Lasqueti Island Nature Conservancy)."

It is important to note that the LCA report acknowledged that there are diverse views held in the community, and stated

"The Steering Committee process did not resolve how to deal with this important issue, and the recommendation to remove the above objective should be viewed as recognition that there is no recommendation of if, or how, feral sheep should be addressed in the OCP."

This was based on feedback from the two forums and sub-committees (Environmental Stewardship and Resource Stewardship):

"It is the recommendation of this sub-committee that the new OCP simply not say anything about the sheep issue until more research is completed and some kind of community consensus can be articulated. Further research and community consultation on this matter is required."

"At the forum there was general support for changing how we represent the issue of sheep in the OCP and a sense that the existing text is inappropriate and outdated and should be replaced – and that we need to work towards a balance between supporting local biodiversity and ecosystems and maintaining local food supply. However, there was little consensus on exactly what should be said."

Given this context, I offer two suggestions for your consideration:

1. Revise the recommended advocacy policy to something like:

"Scientifically rigorous surveys of important exotic species, in particular feral sheep, are encouraged to estimate population size and to assess local ecological effects."

The essence of this recommendation is to advocate for scientific information that can be accepted as objective and credible by most people. It seems difficult to consider discussion over values regarding sheep without a common foundation of accepted facts. Changing "invasive species" and "impacts" to "important exotic species" and "effects" could make it more neutral, while retaining the goal of gathering information.

I also suggest removing the reference to LINC. LINC was included as an example local organization, but did not advocate to be involved with the sheep issue. As such, it is unfair to LINC to be pulled into a community debate regarding sheep in the context of the OCP.

2. Make a stated commitment to help address the topic of sheep in the OCP. This could be done by helping to advance action on the above policy. This could be followed by a community process (led by the community or Islands Trust) that tries to work through values and interests regarding sheep, and attempts to identify any areas of consensus that might be included in the OCP.

Sincerely,
Andrew Fall