

PROJECT COYOTE

F O S T E R I N G C O E X I S T E N C E



February 13, 2017

Arcadia City Council, City Manager Dominic Lazzaretto & Mayor Tom Beck
City Hall City Council Chamber
240 West Huntington Drive
Arcadia, CA 91007

SENT VIA EMAIL:

Mayor Tom Beck: tbeck@ArcadiaCA.gov

Mayor Pro Tem Peter Amundson: peter@keeparcadiagreat.com

City Council Members

Roger Chandler: CityCouncil@ArcadiaCA.gov

Sho Tay: ShoTayforArcadia@gmail.com

April Verlato: averlato@ArcadiaCA.gov

Re: Coyote Management in Arcadia

Dear City Council Members, City Manager Lazzaretto & Mayor Beck,

It was brought to our attention by some of our Arcadia supporters that the city council voted to hire a trapper to trap and kill coyotes in Arcadia at a cost to taxpayers of \$20,000.

As an organization that assists communities across the country in implementing long-term strategies for coexisting with urban wildlife, we are writing to urge you to choose another path. Trapping and killing coyotes is an ill-conceived approach that is ecologically, ethically and economically indefensible.

For the reasons outlined below, we highly recommend that you rethink this trapping strategy as it will ultimately prove ineffective, and can exacerbate the problem, as coyote populations will rebound- often within weeks. Such an approach is misguided and a misuse of limited city funds. Instead, we encourage you to choose a more humane, effective, and ecologically sound approach that more and more cities are adopting across California, and the country—one that emphasizes public safety, education and reduction of coyote/wildlife attractants. The city of Calabasas adopted such a program after it passed a resolution prohibiting city funds from being used to kill coyotes. Project Coyote helped customize an innovative Coyote Management Plan for Calabasas (see attached), and we continue to work closely with the city as it implements this plan. Through our Coyote Friendly Community™ program, we offer our services (many free of charge) to help you develop a long-term coyote coexistence plan and educational program that fits the specific needs, constituency, and resources of Arcadia.

INEFFECTIVENESS OF LETHAL COYOTE CONTROL

Unexploited coyote populations naturally limit their population density by establishing and defending non-overlapping territories and behaviorally suppressing breeding among subordinate members of their extended family group. This prevents over-population in any given area and

PH: 415-945-3232 • FAX: 415-373-3826 • P.O. BOX 5007 • LARKSPUR, CA 94977

INFO@PROJECTCOYOTE.ORG • WWW.PROJECTCOYOTE.ORG

PROJECT COYOTE

F O S T E R I N G C O E X I S T E N C E



ensures sustainable prey resources for the group. Efforts to reduce their numbers have largely been unsuccessful because coyotes exhibit strong compensatory population responses to lethal control. While lethal control may result in short-term reductions in the number of coyotes in a specific area, the vacuum is soon filled by coyotes emigrating from surrounding areas. Disruption of family groups allows more subordinate females to breed. And the temporary increase in prey availability results in increased pup survival. The result can be an increase in regional coyote populations following control actions. (Crabtree & Sheldon, 1999).

Findings from the longest-term study of urban coyote ecology to date (Cook County, IL) show that the void created by the removal of non-problem coyotes may actually be filled by loner coyotes who are less wary of humans and may end up being more problematic. (Fox, 2006; Gehrt, 2004).

Project Coyote Scientific Advisory Board member and internationally renowned canid behaviorist Dr. Marc Bekoff (2010), who studied coyotes for more than 40 years, stresses that: “Killing does not and never has worked. When a space opens where a coyote had lived another individual simply moves in. Usually the offending coyote is not identified. And it is ethically indefensible to wantonly go out and kill coyotes because they try to live among us...and we conveniently decided that they have become ‘pests’ when we don’t want them around any longer...Confrontations with coyotes can almost always be traced to irresponsible human actions including allowing dogs to run free off leash and feeding the coyotes, either intentionally or unintentionally. And, it’s pretty easy to clean up all of these problems and coexist peacefully with coyotes.”

Please see attached letter about the effects of lethal control on coyote populations written by Project Coyote Scientific Advisory Board member Dr. Robert Crabtree, who also studied coyotes in the wild for more than 25 years.

COYOTES ~ BENEFICIAL PREDATORS

Coyotes play a vital role in maintaining healthy and viable ecosystems in urbanized environments. As top predators in some ecosystems - particularly urban- coyotes directly regulate the abundance of small rodents including rats and gophers and indirectly increase the diversity of songbird species by keeping mesocarnivores (e.g. foxes, feral cats, raccoons, skunks) in check (Crooks & Soulé, 1999). Likewise, as opportunistic carnivores and scavengers, coyotes help reduce rabbit and insect populations (Fedriani et al., 2001). Hence, through their highly adaptable nature, coyotes impact a community’s food web and play an important role in their ecological systems, both wild and urban. In areas where coyotes are the apex predator, their removal can precipitate an ecological chain reaction that leads to profound degradation of the health, integrity, and diversity of the ecosystem (Crooks & Soulé, 1999; Henke and Bryant, 1999). By arbitrarily removing coyotes from the environment, the City of Arcadia may be setting off a cascade of negative environmental consequences.

PH: 415-945-3232 • FAX: 415-373-3826 • P.O. BOX 5007 • LARKSPUR, CA 94977

INFO@PROJECTCOYOTE.ORG • WWW.PROJECTCOYOTE.ORG

PROJECT COYOTE

F O S T E R I N G C O E X I S T E N C E



Although coyotes are the most maligned and misunderstood native carnivore in the U.S., they were once revered by many Native American tribes. Known as the “trickster” and “creator” figure in many tribal lore stories, coyotes were highly respected for their keen intelligence, resilience and adaptability.

HUMANE & EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS TO COEXISTENCE

Through our Coyote Friendly Communities Program, Project Coyote has assisted dozens of communities throughout North America with the development and implementation of humane, proactive, and long-term coyote coexistence plans that emphasize public safety, effective public education, communitywide reduction of food sources and intentional/ unintentional feeding of wildlife, consistent messaging and response, and, when necessary, hazing of habituated coyotes. All of these efforts also help to reduce negative encounters with other wildlife.

Components of our Coyote Friendly Communities Program include:

- *Coyote Coexistence Plan (tailored for each community)
- *Be Coyote Aware Trail sign (also available in Spanish)
- *Don't Feed Wildlife sign (also available in Spanish)
- *Coexisting with Coyotes Brochure (also available in Spanish)
- *Coyote Hazing Field Guide (also available in Spanish)
- *Coexisting with Our Wild Neighbors door hanger
- *Coyotes & Dogs fact sheet
- *Coexisting with Coyotes fact sheet insert for utility bill (tailored for each community)

We have attached copies of these documents and offer them to any municipality that would like to use them (we will insert any city/agency logos). All of the resources can be viewed on our website here: <http://www.projectcoyote.org/resources/>.

We urge you to follow the lead of Calabasas by working with us to craft a tailored Coyote Coexistence Outreach and Education Plan for the City of Arcadia that can help guide the city in developing win-win solutions for living with coyotes and other wildlife. Such a plan should focus on public education and awareness and consistent agency response protocols. To be successful we believe this program must be long-term, proactive and consistent. We offer our services to help Arcadia toward this end.

COYOTES ARE HERE TO STAY

Appreciate them or not, coyotes are here to stay and they play an important role in maintaining ecological health and integrity and species diversity. You have an opportunity to join Calabasas and other communities in adopting progressive and innovative approaches to living with coyotes including Marin County and San Francisco, California, Denver and Superior, Colorado, Belmont, Massachusetts, and Vancouver, British Columbia.

PROJECT COYOTE

F O S T E R I N G C O E X I S T E N C E



For all of the reasons outlined above, we hope you will reconsider your plan to trap and kill coyotes.

We offer our services to help the City reach this goal and create a community where wildlife and residents can coexist safely. If you would like to discuss further you can reach us directly at the numbers listed below.

Thank you for your consideration,

Camilla H. Fox
Founder & Executive Director
415-945-3232

Randi Feilich
Southern California Representative
310-498-2975

cc: Elizabeth Campo Sr. Vice President, Pasadena Humane Society

LITERATURE CITED:

- Crabtree, RL, and JW Sheldon. 1999. The Ecological Role of Coyotes on Yellowstone's Northern Range. *Yellowstone Science* 7(2):15-23.
- Crooks, K.R., and M.E. Soulé. 1999. Mesopredator release and avifaunal extinctions in a fragmented system. *Nature*. 400: 563-566.
- Fedriani, J.M., T.K. Fuller, and R.M. Sauvajot. 2001. Does availability of anthropogenic food enhances densities of omnivorous mammals? An example with coyotes in southern California. *Ecography*. 24: 325-331.
- Fox, C.H. 2006. Coyotes and humans: Can we coexist? *Proc. 22 Vertebr. Pest Conf.* (Timm, R.M., and J.M. O'Brien, eds.). University of California, Davis. pp. 287-293.
- Fox, C.H., and C.M. Papouchis. 2005. Coyotes in our Midst: Coexisting with an Adaptable and Resilient Carnivore. Animal Protection Institute, Sacramento, CA. 64 pp.
- Gehrt, S.D. 2004. Chicago coyotes part II. *Wildlife Control Technology*. 11(4): 20-21, 38-39, 42.
- Henke, S. E., and F. C. Bryant. 1999. Effect of coyote removal on the faunal community in western Texas. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 63:1066-1081.
- Worcester, R.E., and R. Boelens. 2007. The co-existing with coyotes program in the Vancouver, B.C. *Proc. 12 Wildlife Dam. Mgt. Conf.* (Nolte, D.L., W.M. Arjo, and D.H. Stalman, eds.). 393-397.)