



George Clulow

23 March 2021

Mayor and Council  
c/o Office of the City Clerk  
4949 Canada Way  
Burnaby, BC, V5G 1M2

Protection of Deer Lake Park Heronry

Mayor Hurley and Council,

The Deer Lake heronry is well known to members of City Hall and to many Burnaby residents. Breeding has just recommenced at the colony, but the birds remain very vulnerable to disturbance.

I am writing to urge council to authorize some very simple, low-cost measures to provide much needed additional protection for this significant colony for which the City is the de-facto protector.

Great Blue Herons are Blue-listed in BC, and identified as a species of Special Concern by COSEWIC.

We are very fortunate to have such a prominent and spectacular part of the City's wildlife, breeding and raising their young right in our midst. Great Blue Heron colonies are, however, extremely sensitive to disturbance, and colonies may be abandoned at any time during the March to July breeding season.

Unfortunately, over the past three years our Deer Lake Heronry has seen significant disturbances during the critical time of year and the numbers have declined.

Construction adjacent to the colony has repeatedly coincided with the herons' nesting season. Outside the March to end of July period heron colonies are unoccupied, which leaves the rest of the year for construction. The construction projects involved were the storm water/sewer upgrades, forest removal to create additional RCMP parking, and the 2020 upgrade of Deer Lake Avenue roadway itself.

If it wasn't for the vigilance of Burnaby citizens who have, on a couple of occasions, alerted City staff and Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy personnel to active construction work on Deer Lake Avenue, we might have already lost the heronry at this location. Let's work to keep it there.

I urge City Council to undertake the following simple measures:

- Designate Deer Lake Avenue, from the Art Gallery access road to its intersection with Deer Lake Parkway, a no construction zone for March to end-July period. This restriction would include large construction projects, but also such small jobs as road sign placement, and vegetation removal and control. This information should be distributed and given emphasis to all City Hall departments.
- Send reminders annually to the home owners and tenants along Rowan Ave. and Price St. of the sensitivity of the heronry and ask for their cooperation in restricting very noisy activities during the critical period.
- Build a split rail fence, of the type now used in the park, to surround the colony on its north and west sides. This work should, of course, be completed outside the colony's critical period.

Yours sincerely

George Clulow