

The Editor

In England under William the Conqueror savage game laws were introduced and dogs caught chasing deer had their claws pulled out. Commoners risked having their eyes put out just for disturbing the wildlife. Mankind has progressed somewhat in the past 900 years but every spring vestiges of barbarism reappear in the form of wardens hunting dogs in the Gatineau Park.

There is a case for protecting deer and the NCC is adept at using the media to present itself as guardians of these defenseless and beautiful creatures. In fact no reasonable person would object to the destruction of a dog found chasing deer in the woods or to a fine against owners whose dogs cause a nuisance. In recent years, however, the NCC has overstepped its authority with the unjustified shooting of dogs in parking lots and along roadways. It has also become commonplace to run into NCC officials on snowmobiles patrolling ski trails with rifles over their shoulders. Citizens have been even harassed and threatened while walking their dogs on public roads.

Of course, there is more involved in this matter than the blatant irresponsibility of some trigger-happy individuals hired by the Commission. For example, it is not ridiculous for one branch of the NCC to be developing the park into a mass recreation area with more marked trails, parking lots, huts and other amenities while another branch is charged with protecting deer who are more threatened by the recreational development than by dogs? It is even more ridiculous to see conservation officers, again on snowmobiles, cutting down bushes or distributing hay to sustain deer herds which have become overpopulated and exhausted their natural food supply. Finally it is intolerable to hear about the kind of veiled and not so veiled threats, including expropriation, which the NCC routinely uses against local residents who object to their policies.

The National Capital Commission is a force unto itself, unaccountable to the electorate and unsusceptible to public opinion and other normal pressures in a democratic society. However if it continues to condone high-handed, indiscriminate, and perhaps illegal actions by some of its employees, citizens might eventually be forced to conclude that they have no choice but to respond in kind.

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