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Dogs continue to die in traps while government does nothing

10-month-old puppy dies in owners' arms after finding a baited trap on a popular walking route

VICTORIA, B.C. – A wildlife non-profit is demanding the provincial government take action following another tragic and traumatic death of a family pet due to a legally set trap this month.

Last Friday, 10-month-old Shasta, an Australian Shepherd mix, was on a walk with her family along a popular forest service road in the West Kootenay Region. A baited Conibear-type trap set only feet from the service road caught Shasta around the head. For the following ten minutes, her owners attempted to forcefully remove the trap, but without the specialized tool required, they were unable to assist. Shasta died in their arms.

“Shasta’s story is tragic and traumatizing to her family, but it is becoming a regularly occurrence in British Columbia,” says Lesley Fox, Executive Director of The Fur-Bearers. “For years we have asked the government and trappers to require signage in areas where traps are set so families can make informed decisions about using publicly accessible and multi-use trails, roads, and paths. But no regulation or legislation has been introduced, and pets continue to die.”

A Freedom of Information Act requested revealed that the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development is aware that an average of eight family pets are killed or maimed by traps every year – and that’s just the ones who are reported or found.

“There are no excuses or explanations of trapping as a hobby or part-time job that will bring back Shasta, nothing that will ease the pain her family is experiencing,” says Fox. “This traumatizing experience lands solely at the feet of a government that has refused to make common sense legislative changes to protect the majority of British Columbians from the actions of a few. We will not accept excuses or explanations – we will only accept change.”

The Fur-Bearers have started a letter writing campaign on their website at www.TheFurBearers.com/BCTrapSigns for those who believe the government should immediately enact legislation requiring signs to warn hikers, dog walkers, photographers, families, and other outdoor enthusiasts of nearby traps. This incident comes on the heels of the news of a lawsuit against the trapper whose trap killed a Kamloops man’s dog one year ago – the first of its kind of which The Fur-Bearers are aware.

More information on the legality of traps, how to help pets escape, and how to take action can be found at www.TheFurBearers.com.

The Fur-Bearers is a non-profit formed in BC in 1953. Their mandate is to advocate on behalf of fur-bearing animals in the wild and in confinement, and they work with municipalities, landowners, and other stakeholders to find science-based solutions to wildlife conflict that protect all parties.

Attached are photos of Shasta in the trap that killed her, as well as photos from happier days.
<http://files.furbearerdefenders.com/media/shasta.zip>

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