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Subject: Formal Proposal for a Coyote-Tracking App for UBC Point Grey Campus and Other Neighbourhoods Bordering Pacific Spirit Park

**Introduction:**

Located adjacent to Pacific Spirit Regional Park, the UBC Point Grey Campus is used to coyote activity. However, since the pandemic shuttered the campus and pre-empted in-person classes from 2020-2021, the area has seen an uptick in coyote activity beyond the park itself, spreading into the surrounding residential neighbourhoods.

Coyotes are an unpredictable animal, and when they are habituated to humans, such as what happened over the summer in Stanley Park, they can become aggressive and a potentially life-threatening hazard to people.

Thus, introducing an app for those who live or frequent the campus would allow people to be informed of highly accurate, up-to-date coyote sightings to allow them to be more vigilant, particularly if they are walking in the area alone or at night, when coyotes tend to be more active.

**Intended Audience:**

Students, professors, residents, hospitality staff, and others who frequent the Point Grey campus – or any neighbourhood surrounding Pacific Spirit Park.

**Statement of Problem:**

As campus emptied out from 2020-2021, local residents of UBC's Point Grey campus noticed a significant uptick in coyote activity. The animals, which typically stayed within the boundaries of Pacific Spirit Park, were regularly being sighted moving down UBC sidewalks, in front of people's gardens, and roaming right outside major University Buildings on campus.

Although people have returned to campus since pandemic restrictions relaxed, the behavior of the Pacific Spirit Park coyotes remains far more confident and unafraid of human activity than it was prior to COVID-19.

This has resulted in continued, frequent sightings around campus by students and other members of the public alike. While usually harmless, coyotes can become confrontational when they have become so well-adjusted and unperturbed by humans.

#### Statement of Solution:

A possible solution to this problem is the development of an up-to-date coyote-spotting app for the UBC Point Grey Campus and the other neighbourhoods which form a triangular border around Pacific Spirit Park, which include the areas of West Point Grey and Dunbar-Southlands.

This app would provide up-to-date information on the latest coyote sightings in the area, and notify anyone who uses it when a new sighting has occurred. If it were used by a sizeable proportion of those who regularly visit or reside on campus or in the surrounding neighbourhoods, people would be more aware of the places these coyotes frequent, and be able to respect the coyotes' natural habitat, while modifying their own behavior accordingly in order to keep safe.

#### **Scope:**

In order to determine whether this is a viable solution for UBC's coyote problem, I intend to research the following areas of inquiry:

- How many people have sighted coyotes recently on UBC Point Grey campus or in the surrounding areas?
- How much demand is there for a coyote-tracking app amongst residents, students, and other regular travellers to campus?
- Have any documented incidents occurred on campus where coyotes have become aggressive toward humans?
- How probable is it that people would use the app to document their sightings, if it became available?
- Roughly how many coyotes are known to inhabit the area, and is it known whether they are having offspring?
- What is the Pacific Spirit Park Rangers' opinion on the matter?

### **Methods:**

This app would allow any user who has spotted a coyote to drop a location marker on where they saw the coyote, automatically provide a date and time for the sighting.

Additionally, each new sighting would allow the user to write any additional relevant context about the sighting – for instance, if the coyote was travelling with newborn pups, and therefore might be more aggressive.

Any new sighting would provide an instant notification, complete with the date, time, location and any context added by the witness, to all of those using the app, helping to inform them so they can be vigilant when travelling in that area, particularly if they are travelling by themselves or at night.

### **Qualifications:**

I have lived on UBC Point Grey campus for over 7 years, and in that time I have had many encounters with coyotes just steps from doorstep – particularly since the world was hit with COVID-19.

There have been many instances from early 2020 until present, when I have witnessed coyotes walking on the sidewalks right in front of my ground-level apartment, or chasing a squirrel right across the street from me. This behavior has shocked me, as it was highly-uncommon before COVID-19. Coyotes have also come up to me, seemingly unafraid, while I have been sitting in parks on campus. They have usually been looking for food, and are interested in my backpack. This kind of marked increase in confidence and habituation with humans on the part of coyotes that used to primarily stay within Pacific Spirit Park, has made me concerned for my

community's safety – particularly the safety of young children, who coyotes are known to be aggressive toward.

### **Conclusion:**

In light of the recent, unsettlingly confident behavior of coyotes on UBC's Point Grey Campus and in the other neighbourhoods bordering Pacific Spirit Regional Park, a coyote-tracking app seems like a logical solution to this problem to keep campus residents and visitors informed of recent activity. With such an app, people would be able to share their own sightings with others, and stay up-to-date on the animals' activity, such as where coyotes frequent the most, and the times of day they typically go there. This would allow people either to alter their routes, or to be extra vigilant when walking through these areas.

### **References:**

"Kip the Coyote Calls UBC's Vancouver Campus Home." UBC News, February 24, 2021.  
<https://news.ubc.ca/2021/02/24/kip-ubc-coyote/>. Accessed February 24, 2023.