

Dead dogs left unburied at town dump

Who is leaving dead dogs to rot at the La Ronge landfill?

That's the question that band and municipal lead-

ers are trying to answer, after learning of a stack of canine corpses left tied to trees at the town dump.

The Town of La Ronge

has a three-month-old contract with Kirby Woodhouse to have strays euthanized by lethal injection, then disposed of in bags buried at the landfill. Both the Village of Air Ronge and the Lac La Ronge Indian Band still deal with loose animals by shooting them at the landfill, but both insist that leaving the corpses unburied is not their practice.

"This is not our approach," said Doug McLeod, the band's executive director, after seeing a set of photos taken of the remains and consulting with the band's public works staff. "This is not humane treatment. We don't do this."

When photographed in mid-January, some of the corpses were lying in snow still splattered with bright red bloodstains, while others were visible only as a mound with a paw jutting up from the snow. Most were still attached to lengths of thick yellow rope tied to tree trunks, and are easily visible to anyone walking down the first access road into the landfill.

"They just tie 'em up to trees and shoot 'em. It's pretty gruesome," said Randy MacAuley, who saw the corpses while on a rabbit-snaring expedition.

"You'll pretty much find a dead dog wherever you go back there.... They should have a sign up there, saying what you're going to stumble on. It's gross."

While tying dogs to

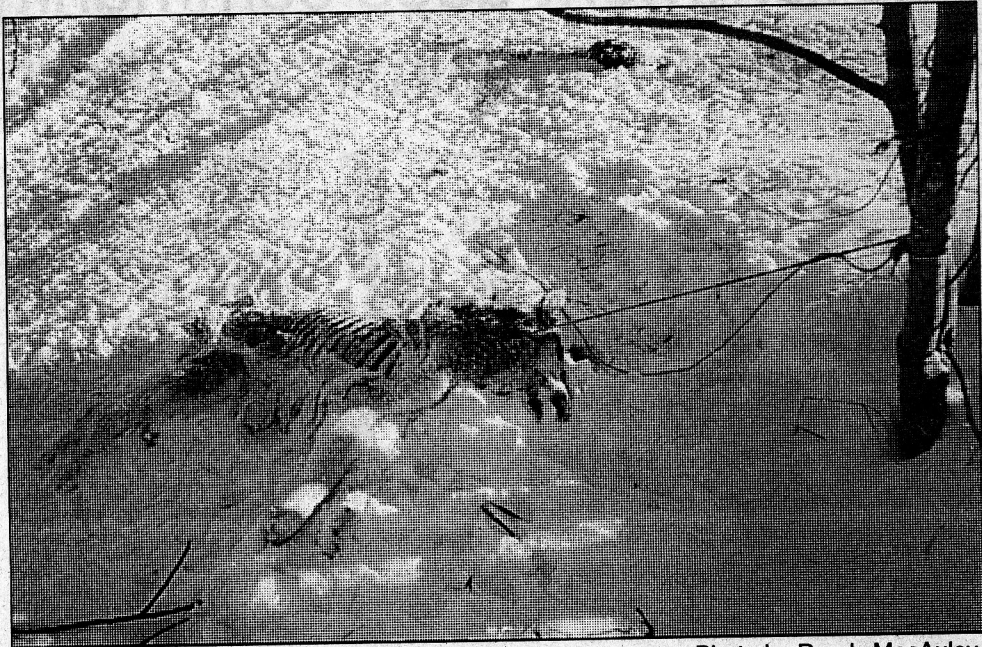


Photo by Randy MacAuley

Dogs are being tied up, shot and left to rot at the local landfill, but so far, no one has claimed responsibility.

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trees and shooting them is a common method of dog control, leaving the corpses lying in the snow is not. Even so, "it's in poor taste, but it's not criminal," said S/Sgt. Ron Savidan, commanding officer of the La Ronge RCMP.

If this is being used as a method of dog control, someone should be monitoring their workers more closely, Savidan added. "If they're paying someone to get rid of dogs, they should know that they're not following through with the clean-up. ... That's just laziness."

While it may not be a crime, per se, leaving the dogs to be eaten by ravens or other animals is still a violation of environmental laws. Saskatchewan's *Municipal Refuse Management Regulations* state that "slaughterhouse waste"

(that is, any animal remains) can not be left in a landfill without the municipality's permission. The preferred approach is to have remains taken to a rendering plant, but if that isn't feasible, "we like to see them buried as quickly as possible," said Gregg Hallsworth, a provincial environmental planner who works with municipalities on landfill planning.

Even if the culprits were caught, though, prosecution is unlikely. "It's up to the municipality to know what's going on at their landfill," Hallsworth said.

The news that dogs are being tied to trees, shot and left to rot at the town landfill came as a surprise to Mayor Joe Hordyski.

"It certainly should be done in a more humane manner. I certainly wouldn't like to see any animal being treated as garbage," Hordyski said.

The problem in La Ronge is that the landfill is neither fenced, nor

monitored, so restricting what goes in and out is next to impossible. "Until we have a manned landfill, it's difficult to control that," he said.

The local SPCA is willing to help, at least with what's being done through official channels. "We're working to get all three municipalities working together to do it properly, but three people (the SPCA board) can't do it," said Daina Lapworth, president of the La Ronge SPCA.

"There's no reason for the dogs to be left tied to the tree. We have a lot of equipment in our community that can be used to bury the animals and prevent disease from spreading."

"It's kind of an environmental disaster waiting to happen," MacAuley agreed. "If they have to shoot them, so be it. But they should at least cover them up.... Every animal deserves a certain degree of respect."

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