



**Kiawah Conservancy's Position Statement
on the Use of Anticoagulant Rodenticides on Kiawah Island
September 15, 2020**

The Issue and Current Understanding

The Kiawah Conservancy (Conservancy) has been working in concert with the Town of Kiawah Island (TOKI) concerning the use of anticoagulant rodenticides and their deleterious effects on our bobcat population here on Kiawah Island. Not only do these anticoagulants poison our bobcats, but they also poison additional rodent predators such as eagles, owls, hawks, snakes, raccoons, alligators, and other animals.

In 2017 TOKI's wildlife biologists saw a noticeable increase in bobcat deaths and decrease in bobcat numbers. Recently a number of bobcats found dead were determined to have been killed by anticoagulant rodenticides. We have been able to document that the extensive use of these chemicals was directly responsible for at least seven bobcat deaths between May 2019 and July 2020. Evidence is showing that we now have less than 10 bobcats left on the Island as of September 2020 out of an historic population of 30-35.*

The loss of Kiawah's bobcats has caused a dynamic change in our ecosystem with one critical effect being the dramatic increase in the deer population. We are seeing an increase in deer-car collisions and an increased risk of the spread of diseases carried by these animals. Also the deer are foraging on vegetation that they do not normally consume. For the first time TOKI has been forced to implement a deer management plan to be carried out in the fall of 2020.

Community Discussion and Recommendations

TOKI's Environmental Committee and Town Council heard presentations at a number of meetings regarding the significant loss of bobcats and the dramatic effects on Kiawah Island's ecosystem. After contacting the state of South Carolina's Pesticide Regulatory Board, it was determined that Kiawah could not ban the use of these harmful chemicals on the Island and the board refused to allow a one-year temporary ban.

Also upon learning about the problem of anticoagulant rodenticides the Conservancy's Environmental Science Committee formed an Ad Hoc Committee to study their use. After much research and discussion this committee produced two documents: "The Kiawah Conservancy's Recommended Steps to Control Rodents in Homes on Kiawah Island" and "The Conservancy's Recommendation of Rodenticides to Use as a Last Resort in IPM (Integrated Pest Management)".

The elimination of anticoagulant rodenticides on Kiawah is widely supported by Island entities (TOKI, Kiawah Island Community Association, Kiawah Partners, Kiawah Island Architectural Review Board, and Kiawah Island Golf Resort), businesses, homeowners, and rental companies. The Coastal Conservation League and others off island support the elimination of these poisons on Kiawah.



Kiawah Conservancy Position

The Conservancy fully supports the elimination of anticoagulant rodenticides on Kiawah Island. It is imperative that we ban the use of these harmful chemicals as soon as possible. The Conservancy will promote the best practices to help alleviate the problems we are seeing. The Kiawah Conservancy will use all possible outlets including our social media platforms to educate the public, stakeholders, Island entities, homeowners, real estate and rental companies, and pesticide providers on this issue.

*Reference: TOKI Email (August 13, 2020) “Bobcat News – Temporary SGA Ban Denied”