

# Workshop to reduce cougar conflicts

By Tammy Rollie  
Staff Reporter

Priddis residents concerned about cougars attacking livestock and pets will gain words of advice this week.

Rising concerns about recent cougar activity in the community has prompted Alberta Environment and Parks and Fish and Wildlife to host a safety workshop at the Priddis Community Hall Dec. 1 at 7 p.m. to educate area residents.

"(Residents) really wanted to have an opportunity to discuss the issue and hear from some experts to learn about cougar behaviour and protective measures that are reliable," said MD of Foothills Coun. Suzanne Oel.

Oel helped organize the workshop after being contacted by several Priddis residents who expressed concerns about recent cougar attacks in their area.

Fish and Wildlife officers received seven reports of

suspected cougar incidents involving pets and livestock in the Priddis area since the beginning of September.

"It's about removing attractants and why that's important and having animals penned properly that are easy pickings for cougars and other wildlife," Oel said. "I think this is something that needs to be prepared on an ongoing basis for new residents and people who have not had wildlife encounters."

"In areas where we have

the acreage population we need to have an awareness. Ranch owners are more equipped for dealing with this. They may have shotguns because of having to deal with bigger, tougher situations."

Fish and Wildlife public affairs officer Brendan Cox said it's important that the lines of communication remain open.

"(Fish and Wildlife officers) can hold events like this to talk to the public and to help pass on information

about cougars and things they can do to avoid conflicts," he said. "It's something that they can do when there is a need to engage the public and to hear concerns from the public and also to get information out and help alleviate those concerns."

The most recent cougar-related report received by Fish and Wildlife officers in the area was that of a dead cougar and domestic cat found beneath a power pole north of Priddis on Nov. 18

Officers were also informed of a cougar and cat found dead near a power pole Sept. 28 east of Priddis.

Officers received a report on Oct. 9 about a missing dog near the Priddis Greens Golf and Country Club. A cougar was seen at the back step of the home, yet officers haven't confirmed the cougar is responsible for the missing dog. On Sept. 4 officers were told a miniature horse was killed by a cougar west of the golf club.

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Mandy Janicki, pictured with husband Andy and children Brooklyn and Dylan, had a seizure that resulted in severe brain damage. Her friends are hosting Christmas for the Janickis at the Black Diamond Hotel on Dec. 3 to support Andy and the children.

## Friends offer family worry-free Christmas

By Tammy Rollie  
Staff Reporter

Friends are putting their Christmas preparations on hold as they help the family of a Black Diamond woman lying unresponsive in a hospital bed.

Tammy McGonigle rounded up half a dozen friends to organize a fundraising event for Andy Janicki after his wife Mandy had a seizure, went into a coma and is suffering brain damage. The couple has two children Dylan, 7, and Brooklyn, 2.

"Mandy is incredibly kind, compassionate, generous and caring," said McGonigle of her friend. "She'd be the first one to help anybody who needed a hand."

Now it's Mandy and her family who need help.

McGonigle said Mandy, who was born and raised in Black Diamond, was admitted to the hospital

and diagnosed with pneumonia on Sept. 19, and days later suffered a seizure that caused her brain to swell and her heart to stop.

Mandy, who was discovered to have meningitis, went into a coma and has since been taken off of life support, but McGonigle said she remains unresponsive.

"She is breathing on her own and her heart is beating on its own but she will never come out of her bed," said McGonigle. "I had to figure out something to help them out so (Andy) could have a worry-free Christmas."

McGonigle created The Friends of Mandy to organize the fundraiser Christmas for the Janickis, Dec. 3 from 6 p.m. to midnight at the Black Diamond Hotel to raise money through a silent auction, raffle tickets and 50/50 draw. Entertainment will be provided by cover

bands Coyote Creek and Friends and The Roamin' Cadillacs.

McGonigle said the Janicki family has since moved to Calgary where Andy's mom is looking after the children. She said Andy hasn't been working for two months as he's been going back and forth to the hospital to be with Mandy.

As The Friends of Mandy organize Christmas for the Janickis, they've found the support from Black Diamond and surrounding communities to be overwhelming with more than 120 items donated toward the silent auction and raffles, said McGonigle.

"The communities have been amazing," she said. "When my little helpers went out and delivered letters I would get a phone call right away that they had something. I'm overwhelmed at how phenomenal people have been to support this family."

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The report came from rancher Steve Caldera, who suspects he lost two barn cats to cougars days before their three-year-old miniature stallion Peanut was killed just 10 yards from their house.

Two nights later, a cougar attacked one of his

quarter horses, leaving a scratch on its chest and taking a chunk out of its right shoulder.

Cox said Fish and Wildlife officers trapped and destroyed a cougar that reportedly killed a goat east of the golf course on Sept. 2 to prevent the

animal from continuing to rely on livestock and domestic pets as a food source.

Anyone who sees a cougar or an incident involving a cougar is encouraged to call 1-800-642-3800.

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