
CITY OF KELOWNA

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 31, 2006
File No.: 6130-00

To: City Manager (Ron Mattiussi)

From: Parks Manager (Joe Creron)

Subject: Goose Management Strategy and Action Plan

Recommendations:

THAT City Council receive the Okanagan Regional Goose Management Strategy and Action Plan dated July 20, 2006 as information;

AND THAT the City continue to participate on the Okanagan Regional Goose Management Committee to minimize the impact of geese on our beach parks and sportsfields throughout the Okanagan Valley;

AND THAT a zero tolerance waterfowl policy be adopted on beach parks;

AND THAT no feeding of waterfowl be strictly enforced;

AND FURTHER THAT additional funds required to implement the strategy be proposed within the 2007 Budget.

Background

Historically nesting geese were found south of Okanagan Falls in the Vaseux Lake area and along the river between Oliver and Osoyoos Lake. Prior to 1967, only a few nesting geese were found north of Penticton. Numerous transplants of flightless young breeding stock in the 1960's and 1970's have established a large goose resident population in the valley.

In 1995 a group of Okanagan Park administrators formed the Okanagan Regional Goose Management Committee (ORGMC). The purpose of the group was to discuss various issues relating to geese including techniques used to minimize the impact of geese within an urban environment. Over the past 10 years there has been some success but the committee is of the opinion that the goose problem is increasing and contributing to poor beach water quality. This may result in health concerns and have a significant impact on tourism.

In 2005 the ORGMC had a consultant prepare the Okanagan Regional Goose Management Strategy and Action Plan. The consultants; Robertson Environmental Services Ltd. and Ophiuchus Consulting, reviewed local historical data of goose populations, conducted stakeholder meetings in Osoyoos, Penticton, Kelowna and Vernon to solicit community input and confirmed current control techniques within the Okanagan Valley. The plan outlines management tools required to deal with short and long term goose management in the Okanagan Valley. The plan focuses on Public Education, Reduction of Geese in Conflict Areas,

Population Control by egg addling, Scare Tactics, Relocation of Geese, Lethal Damage Control, on-going monitoring of goose population and program administration.

It is estimated that the program will cost \$150,000 annually of which Kelowna's prorated share is about half. In the short term, the Parks Division will continue to use scare techniques (pyrotechniques, noisemakers, and laser lights), habitat modification where it makes sense, canine control, birds of prey, decoys, visual deterrents, turf sprays plus lethal damage control. Egg addling is the long term solution assuming we can find all the nests.

However given the life expectancy of a goose can be well over 15 years, that goose populations within beach parks are excessive and that egg addling won't reap significant benefits within the short term, a significant increase in lethal damage control will be necessary in order that geese don't pose a health hazard in our recreational beach water. Our damage control permit is currently at 60 and the Parks Division will seek a significant increase in the damage control permit so that waterfowl don't pose a health risk to our beaches. Although the Interior Health Authority doesn't advise of how they would like us to control geese within our beaches they do support a reduction in waterfowl at our beaches. In a recent letter (Enclosure I) from Dr. Paul Hasselback, Senior Medical Health Officer for Interior Health, he advises that beach operators have a duty to protect the quality of recreational water to which beach users may be exposed. He further explains that waterfowl can contribute to fecal coliform and E. coli in water, that there is also evidence that some waterfowl can harbour pathogens potentially contributing to disease risk in water contaminated by waterfowl feces and therefore supports and encourages efforts to reduce the waterfowl population at beaches.

In conclusion we will continue to participate on the ORGMC, we will continue to use a variety of techniques to manage geese within the valley and subject to City Council 2007 budget approval place emphasis on egg addling in the future in order to keep the waterfowl population within manageable levels.

Joe Creron
Parks Manager

Cc David Graham, Director of Recreation, Parks and Culture
Ted Sophonow, Supervisor, Parks Operations and Maintenance