

Type of Decision									
Meeting Date	Friday, April 20, 2012				Report Date	Wednesday, March 28, 2012			
Decision Required	X	Yes		No	Priority	X	High		Low
Direction	x	Information Only			Type of Meeting	X	Open		Closed
REPORT TITLE									
Canada Goose Problem Reports #20/04/12/1103									

Subject: Methods to consider for deterrence of geese at Old Mackey Park.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council pass the following resolution authorizing a combined short and long term plan to provide deterrents for the local goose population in Mackey.

**WHEREAS** members of the public have complained that the mess created by the Canada Geese at Old Mackey Park significantly detracts from their enjoyment of the facility;

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT** the Council of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria does hereby agree to authorize staff to erect a temporary fence along the water's edge as a short term deterrent and allow a barrier of long dense grass to grow at the park edge;

**AND FURTHER THAT** Council approve the commencement of a long term plan of planting thick shrubs or grasses along the water's edge to provide a permanent barrier.

Background/Executive Summary: The attached document from the Canada Wildlife Service explains some methods of deterring geese. Council needs to decide which method is most appropriate for Old Mackey Park.

It is suggested that temporary deterrents using triple lengths of monofilament with Mylar reflective flags be used for the short term with a long range plan to plant local dense shrubs along the water's edge as a permanent solution.

The monofilament could be installed with short wooden stakes to be removed prior to mid-June when the beach might be accessed by the public. Signage will be installed to ensure that users are aware of the installation and purpose and that it will be removed prior to beach time.

From

[http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/Natural\\_Resources\\_Stewardship/Living\\_with\\_wildlife/geese/Geese\\_index.shtm](http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/Natural_Resources_Stewardship/Living_with_wildlife/geese/Geese_index.shtm)

“ Another way to deter Canada geese from staying in an area is by allowing tall grasses, which geese don't like to walk through, to grow up around ponds and in vacant fields. Fencing off an area will also normally work in situations during the summer when the birds molt and can not fly. A 3-foot poultry-wire fence can be effective around gardens and yards. Some people have found that using 20-pound monofilament line to make a 2- or 3-

strand fence with strands about 6 inches apart works well also. For the time of year when geese can fly, putting elevated grids of stainless steel wire or monofilament line above an area can keep geese from entering, and there are other exclusion practices that can be effective.

A third technique that has been found to discourage geese is to acquire a pet. Dogs, especially Border Collies, are extremely good deterrents for geese because they represent a natural predator, and the birds instinctually leave a site where predators are spotted and generally don't return. Other ways of scaring geese away are noisemakers and scarecrows, but these are not nearly as effective."

From <http://knol.google.com/k/canada-geese-control-best-humane-solution>

### ***"Disturbance" Methods Minimally Effective***

Many methods have been used in attempts to control or reduce the geese population in areas where they have become an intolerable nuisance. "Disturbance" methods include: trained dogs, noisemakers, chemical repellants, propane canons, scarecrows, strobe lights, recorded distress calls, balloons, sirens, etc. Some of these may be effective when used for farm crop protection from migrating geese that do not stay permanently. Unfortunately, geese that have permanently settled in an area become accustomed to the disturbance and quickly adapt. Other methods such as egg sterilization, wax coating or addling (shaking) are ethically controversial, may require U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service permits and are difficult to apply in large and dispersed geese populations.

### ***"Water"--The Key to the Solution***

As mentioned at the start, **water** is the key to survival of Canada Geese, as it is to all life. Accordingly, effective Canada Geese control simply involves preventing the geese easy **access to fresh water sources** located near problem areas. Products are available such as Mylar tape or ribbon, installed eight to ten inches from the water and about ten inches high that are intended to scare the geese from entering the water. While partially effective, drawbacks to the use of tape are high maintenance (vandalism) and normal use in conjunction with additional disturbance tactics such as scare pistols.

#### ***On Alert! Adult Canada Geese***

The most practical low cost and non-harmful permanent deterrent that requires little maintenance is **lightweight fencing** installed around local bodies of fresh water within the nuisance areas. The fencing **must** be installed no farther than **3 feet** from the water's edge and should be **3 to 5 feet high**. Heavy chain link type fencing is not necessary. Often called "lawn fencing" and made of lightweight green vinyl coated wire, this unobtrusive fencing is inexpensive, durable, and readily available at building supply stores. Gates in the fencing should be periodically provided for access to the water.

Within nuisance problem areas, fences should surround as many bodies of water as possible, including runoff or overflow ponds, rivers, and creeks. Low areas having prolonged standing rainwater should also be addressed and either filled in or fenced. At golf courses, water hazards including islands should be fenced. Public parks having ponds with water access for recreation and toy boating can use both permanent fencing and temporary movable fence sections that may be set in place when the park closes.

### ***Deter Landing, Takeoff and Water Access***

During a six week summer molting season, Canada Geese are unable to fly. After molting, because of their size, they require a large expanse of open water to take off directly from the water surface. In smaller bodies of water the three to five feet high fence most always deters them from a water landing, knowing that they

must clear the fence to take off. The fence, close to the water's edge, also prevents geese from either landing or taking off from the narrow strip of ground between the fence and the water. Overhead lines or tape, crisscrossed three to six feet above the water have been used to prevent landing or taking off from the water. This method is unsightly and very impractical due to high initial and maintenance costs. Further, fencing would still be required to prevent geese from accessing the water's edge from the ground.

### ***Low Fencing at Water's Edge--the Best Solution***

Geese will always nest near water and must feed either beside a water source or within a very short flight from it. This is particularly true when they are tending their flightless goslings that must remain within a short walk to a fresh water source. During feeding, geese will typically return to the water to drink every thirty to sixty minutes. Therefore, the most important feature of a fence is to prevent easy access to water sources located in the problem areas. The two photos above show an excessive Canada Geese population at the land-fill pond, Stoney Run Athletic Complex, Newport News, VA Over 100 Geese were noted. For the most effective nuisance control within a larger geographic or metropolitan area, the fence installation could be accomplished as a planned and phased project on a subdivision, community, or regional basis. However, if comprehensive fence coverage is not possible, even spot installation of fencing around selected water sources can greatly reduce the nuisance in those specific areas.

The following photos show examples of fencing that is located more than 20 feet from the water's edge, thus providing no barrier to Canada Geese that feed freely on both sides of the fence. With undeterred access to these storm water surge ponds in Chesapeake, Virginia, the resident Canada Geese population in this area has increased dramatically each year.



***Fencing located too far from the water's edge***

The next three photos show a fence, also in Chesapeake, Virginia, that was correctly installed as a deterrent to Canada Geese. Because of this properly located fence (about 3 feet from the water's edge), no Canada Geese have taken up residence in the area. The chain link type fence shown is heavier and higher than needed but serves the purpose very well.



***Properly located fencing--close to the water's edge***

The photo below was taken at the Norfolk County Agricultural High School, Walpole, MA. Note the low, lightweight green vinyl coated fencing located several feet from the water edge. The day before this photo was taken, wild ducks were swimming in the pond, unhindered by the fencing. The fence was installed several years ago to control pond access to what had become a large population of resident Canada Geese that were fouling the pond and surrounding grounds. The fence has been entirely successful and, as you can see, is quite unobtrusive.

the two could be utilized, by using temporary deterrents for the initial years along with a planting of dense shrubs over the next few years to form a longer term barrier. This of course would require additional work with maintenance of the plants and the temporary barriers.

Policy Impact: None.

Others Consulted/Resources/References: Canada Wildlife Service document at <http://www.ec.gc.ca/Publications/4A43AD92-09F6-4FEC-A44A-8EAA7E609DCF%5CCWSCanadaGeeseandShorelines.pdf> ; [http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/Natural\\_Resources\\_Stewardship/Living\\_with\\_wildlife/geese/Geese\\_index.shtm](http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/Natural_Resources_Stewardship/Living_with_wildlife/geese/Geese_index.shtm); <http://knol.google.com/k/canada-geese-control-best-humane-solution>;

Approved and Recommended by the Clerk

Melinda Reith,

Municipal Clerk

*Melinda Reith*