



**REPORT TO THE REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY COMMISSION
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2012**

SUBJECT: REGIONAL CANADA GOOSE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

ISSUE

To present the Regional Canada Goose Management Strategy to the Regional Water Supply Commission for information.

BACKGROUND

Non migratory Canada geese have been an ongoing concern in the capital region since approximately 1985. The attached Regional Canada Goose Management Strategy (RCGMS) will provide regional coordination and strategic guidance for the long term management of non-migratory resident Canada geese.

Prior to the 1960's Canada geese were considered migratory in British Columbia. As a result of an introduction program throughout the 1960's and 70's, today's resident population did not learn to migrate.

Integrated Water Services has been monitoring and managing Canada geese on Greater Victoria Water Supply Area (GVWSA) lands since the late 1990's, in order to protect drinking water quality. The management program includes scaring, egg addling, fecal sampling and tracking of yearly population numbers and locations. Scaring and egg addling are done under Environment Canada permit.

Regional Parks has been reporting to the Parks Committee on geese related issues since 1997. Non migratory Canada geese continue to be an existing management problem in Elk/Beaver Lake, Thetis Lake and Matheson Lake regional parks. Over the past decade, the Parks Committee has received a variety of staff reports and correspondence on problems and issues associated with geese management.

Since May 2010, a number of municipalities, Victoria Airport Authority, Saanich Peninsula and Metchosin farmers, First Nations and the CRD have been working cooperatively to develop a regional goose management strategy. It was agreed that this initiative should remain a collaborative regional process in order to ensure: (1) support from federal and provincial regulatory agencies (2) regional coordination to reduce local frustration (3) maximum use of resources.

In late November 2010, the BC Province - Agriculture, Environment & Wildlife (AEWF) funded a \$40,000 grant proposal and, combined with participating municipalities and stakeholders' financial contributions totaled a project budget of \$118,000. The CRD provided the project coordination and administration including a website to post information.

Since then the working committee has met regularly to oversee the project management with the guidance/assistance from other partners and agencies when required. During 2011-12 extensive data was collected by community volunteers and stakeholders on the goose population abundance and distribution, seasonal habitat use by geese and agriculture impacts. The syntheses of the data has led to the development of the attached RCGMS which describes a long term multi-faceted approach for the management of non-migratory resident Canada geese.

Canada geese and other waterfowl are protected under the federal Migratory Birds Convention Act and pursuant Migratory Birds Regulation which provides senior jurisdictional authority. There are also provincial regulations which apply to certain management techniques. Throughout the development of the strategy, the working committee held meetings and field visits with the Canada Wildlife Service and the Ministry of Environment staff to: (1) gain a better understanding of the respective regulations (2) demonstrate the extent of the issue. Both regulatory agencies have reviewed the attached draft management strategy and any comments were incorporated.

In an effort to gather meaningful input and comments into the draft RCGMS, during September and October the working committee made 14 presentations to key stakeholders. These presentations were made to participating municipal councils, agriculture groups, environmental interest groups and the Victoria Airport Authority. In addition, an open Information Session was also held in October. Throughout the consultation, the working committee remained open to any suggestions, questions or feedback which should be incorporated and/or responded to in the draft strategy.

The overall long term goal of the RCGMS is to humanely reduce the impacts from the non-migratory resident Canada goose population in the capital region to a level which prevents conflict between geese and human activities. By doing so health and safety concerns related to geese will diminish and the ability of farmers and other land managers to conduct their works will improve. Additionally goose related degradation of natural habitats will be alleviated.

Upon Board approval, the working committee intends to develop an aggressive implementation plan which will include: prioritizing management techniques, funding, public communication/education strategy, regional coordination and ongoing federal and provincial support.

CONCLUSIONS

Non migratory resident Canada geese have been an ongoing concern in the capital region for many years.

During 2011 – 12 extensive data was collected by community volunteers and participating stakeholders which includes GVWSA and Regional Parks, on the goose population abundance and distribution, seasonal habitat use by geese and agriculture impacts.

The RCGMS will provide for regional coordination and strategic guidance for the long term management of non-migratory resident Canada geese in the capital region. The long term impact should be a decreased pressure on the GVWSA and Regional Parks.

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RECOMMENDATION

That the Regional Water Supply Commission receive the staff report for information.

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Regional Parks

Ted Robbins, Acting General Manager
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Concurrence

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Attachments (2)
 Regional Canada Goose Management Strategy
 Technical Report