

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 30, 2021

TO: Ted Corrigan, P.E., CEO and General Manager

FROM: Jessica Barnett, Supervisor of Property Management

SUBJECT: Goose Management Plan in Water Works Park

Water Works Park is home to hundreds of Canadian Geese. Geese are a highly adaptable species utilizing the urban landscape. The Park's water basins nestled amongst thick stands of open manicured turf create a habitat perfect for a goose to call home. Due to our proximity to the Des Moines Airport requests were made to decrease the number of geese.

In the mid 2000's DMWW's Grounds staff partnered with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to reduce the population numbers by conducting nest manipulations and lethal management. Don Miller, Grounds Operator, volunteered to be an apprentice to the DNR assisting with their efforts. After several years of training, Don received his Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator license and currently serves as our main licensed operator.

Each April nests are scouted near the banks of the Raccoon River and water basins around the park. When the program first initiated, eggs in nests were oiled and removed. In recent years staff has focused efforts on removing eggs during the goose's incubation period. Eggs are collected when the female begins sitting on her nest. This effort has been successful in reducing the number of goslings hatched each spring, but the population numbers are still high.

An alternative approach, using buffer or prairie strips, has been suggested by Andy Kellner, DNR Wildlife Biologist. This method focuses on eliminating the line of sight of the bird. Geese prefer long sight distances and ease of travel between their food and the water bodies they live in. Buffer strips along shorelines can reduce sight distances and impede goose movement therefore deterring them from inhabiting the area. The strips have several other positive aspects including improving soil health, water quality, nutrient reduction, serving as a pollinator habitat, and maintenance cost savings.

Staff, with the support of the Board, would like to move forward with preparation and implementation of a buffer strip along the shoreline of the basin ponds in the east node of the park. The buffer strip will be an aesthetically pleasing addition to the landscape while providing functionality for the recreational use of the park.