

Type of Decision									
Meeting Date	Friday, March 22, 2013				Report Date	Thursday, March-07-13			
Decision Required	X	Yes		No	Priority	X	High		Low
Direction	X	Information Only			Type of Meeting	X	Open		Closed
REPORT TITLE									
Goose Deterrents Report #22/03/13/1101									

Subject: Options for deterring geese at Old Mackey Park.

RECOMMENDATION: That Council approve a schedule of staff and volunteer work to help deter the geese at Old Mackey Park as well as funding for supplies to create "scarecrows".

WHEREAS the geese problem at Old Mackey Park requires attention;

AND WHEREAS Council deems it important to attempt to deter the geese from frequenting the park;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Council of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria does hereby agree to spend upwards of \$200 on supplies to help deter the geese at Old Mackey Park.

Background/Executive Summary: After additional research it has been determined that a number of different tactics are required to effectively modify goose behaviour and act as permanent deterrents.

Deterrent activities need to begin early in the year – as early as April (whenever water opens) when geese are selecting nesting sites.

A combination of staff and volunteer efforts will be most effective. A schedule of activity should be created to ensure effectiveness.

Different areas have used these scare tactics and techniques to effectively run geese off parklands and golf courses.

Suggestions to utilize in combination in the immediate term include:

1. The purchase and installation of large Mylar balloons affixed to poles and suspended on heavy weight nylon line. These balloons will wave in the wind and cause the geese to become nervous. Minimal cost.
2. Wide pieces of plastic/mylar/coloured tarps can be installed and moved from place to place every second day or so to act like scarecrows. (the material needs to flap in the wind and make noise, it does not need to be any particular colour or shape) Minimal cost.
3. Reinstall the ropes and ribbons from last year but at 3" and 8" in height. (One company sells fencing and uses material similar to white clothesline to string which has proven effective.) Rope and posts already purchased in 2012.

4. Use noise – purchase “blanks” for shotguns or firecrackers and have volunteers (licensed) make noise for the time right after dawn and right before dusk. Other sites suggest simply banging pots and pans. Volunteers would be needed to provide assistance during non-work hours. Obvious cost for blanks or firecrackers.
5. The visual deterrents should be moved around to different locations so that the geese do not simply become used to them. Staff can do this during the day.
6. At dusk and dawn flashing lights or strobe lights could also be used. Obvious costs involved.

As expressed above, some of these techniques could be installed and moved by staff from time to time. Other options would require volunteers to take dawn/dusk shifts for a number of weeks.

If a number of volunteers were recruited staff could create a schedule to ensure that someone was working each day to be most effective.

We have a wonderful park; it's too bad that many people refuse to use it because of this problem.

Suggestions for the long-term projects which have had positive results include:

1. Planting or transplanting natural shrubs/coarse grasses along the shores edge to eliminate easy pathways. No costs using volunteers and local materials. Obvious costs if planting materials are purchased.
2. Allowing a dense area of grass/shrubs to grow as a border around the cut lawn. Geese prefer the short cut lawn of public spaces. Using this and the rope border might be effective. Fencing near the water's edge is effective but an eyesore and costly.
3. Can gradually replace the type of grass with something coarser which geese do not like – such as fescues. Obvious costs.
4. Install low (3 foot) fencing, rock walls, shrub borders so that geese do not have the 6 degree slope required for take-off to water and cannot see the water from the grass; removing their escape routes. Geese prefer to walk to and from water and not fly to eat. Again, using found materials, rocks etc, driftwood and volunteers this may be achieved with little cost. Fencing would need to be budgeted for.

Financial Considerations/Budget Impact: Mylar balloons may be purchased on line for as little as .38 cents each for 18” balloons. Of course there would be the cost of inflating them – I think \$1.50 each in town. There are other options we can look at if we decide to go this route.

Policy Impact: None.

Others Consulted/Resources/References: <http://www.canadageese.org/nlcontrol.html>;
<http://www.canadageese.org/goosereport.pdf>;
<http://www.bargainballoons.ca/10browse.asp?Page=1&Display=Catalog&Catalog=Mylar>;

Approved and Recommended by the Clerk

Melinda Reith,

Municipal Clerk

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