

---

**Policy:** Geese Management Plan

**Adopted by Board of Park Commissioners:** March 2025

### **Overview**

The City of Bristol Parks, Recreation, Youth & Community Services (BPRYCS) Department has experienced damage and human health and safety threats related to Canadian geese at the Veterans Memorial Boulevard Park, Pine Lake and Page Park Pond (*Appendix A*) for a number of years. The resident Canadian Geese population has grown significantly, sometimes exceeding 150 Resident Canada Goose.

### **Damages and Impact**

The resident Canadian Geese population has presented a nuisance to the BPRYCS parks, especially at the Veterans Memorial Boulevard, where park visitors gather to pay respect to Bristol veterans. The birds have caused the following issues:

- Fecal contamination of lawns, walks, and driveways
- Damage to turf due to overgrazing, excess droppings, and human health and safety issues related to droppings and aggression
- Occasional traffic hazards from birds in roadways and parking lots
- Dozens of hours of staff time and resources power washing and removing goose feces and/or feathers from park grounds

### **Historic Management Efforts and Results**

Over the years BPRYCS has employed a number of strategies to address the resident Canadian Geese population at the Veterans Memorial Boulevard. BPRYCS contracted with Nutmeg Farms from 2017-2019 for a management program that combined a mix of dogs to scare the geese and addling of eggs through a CT DEEP approved process. Nutmeg Farms services yielded temporary results (*Appendix B*) but the annual costs were approximately \$15,000. The services would need to be rendered on an annual basis which became too costly. In 2021, 4 industrial unit fake swans and 2 water units were installed in the pond and around the pond borders which yielded temporary success. The cost of these products from Away with Geese were \$2,194.00.

### **Current Management Approaches (2024-2025)**

Following a successful fundraiser at the *Dinner on the Diamond* in May 2024, the Board of Park Commissioners allocated \$5,000 for the design, purchase and installation of educational signs regarding feeding the geese at park ponds. Experts have indicated if geese are being fed at any location, that regardless of what you do, they will continue to come back to that site. As such, public education was the first priority.

Second, BPRYCS partnered with the Farmington River Watershed Association (FRWA) and was awarded a River Smart Grant to aid in the planning, design and installation of a riparian buffer along the Veterans Memorial Boulevard Ponds. Experts indicate that you must change the physical environment to make the ponds less desirable for geese. Riparian buffers make it harder for geese to fly in and out of the ponds. Planning work is commencing in 2025 and the installation of the buffers are expected spring 2026.

### **Monitoring and Future Management**

The geese management plan will be reviewed on an as needed basis by the Board of Park Commissioners to determine success and continued management practices in consultation with experts at the USDA Wildlife Services.

**Appendix A: Park Ponds & Lakes (Source: Bristol GIS Maps)**

**Veterans Memorial Boulevard Ponds**



Pine Lake & Malones Pond



Page Pond



Appendix B: Geese Population Levels in 2019 (Source: Nutmeg Farms)

