



**DRAFT GOOSE MANAGEMENT PLAN  
FOR THE CITY OF GOLDEN VALLEY**

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## **Plan Summary**

The Golden Valley Goose Management Plan is a specific area/location approach to respond to public safety issues, reduce over population and deal with resident and patron issues. Geese are messy and aggressive in high human use areas. The removal plan will only be implemented as needed in the specific areas identified (See Appendix A). The plan allows for a population reduction process, round-up/removal and disturbance strategies. Lethal disposition techniques may be utilized if recommended by contractor and approved by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Wildlife Division. The plan also provides for city staff to support administratively both public and private property owners other than the City of Golden Valley to guide and administer Canada goose removal if requested.

# **1.0 The City of Golden Valley (specifically the Brookview Recreation Area) Goose Management Plan Recommendation**

## **1.1 Canada Goose Habitat Use and Population Estimate**

The Brookview Golf Course and Brookview Park, referred to in this plan as the Brookview Recreation Area, encompass approximately 176 acres of varied green space and habitats. Habitat areas include floodplain, emergent marshes, ponds, creek, open green space, landscaped amenities and developed recreation areas. These are the dominant land features and cover types within the boundaries – see appendix A.

Canada geese use various areas of the Brookview Recreation Area and begin nesting in the spring. They prefer areas near bodies of water and nesting occurs in the creek banks, pond banks and island areas within some of the ponds. Newly hatched broods tend to loaf and feed on the golf course fairways, tee boxes and greens as well as the open green space at Brookview Park. Geese will generally stay on the property until it is time to migrate for the fall. After their flightless period, Canada geese are more mobile, and frequently move from the ponds and creeks to adjacent feeding areas on the golf course and in Brookview Park. Other properties in Golden Valley that have goose population residency issues include the privately owned General Mills locations and the Perpich Center for the Arts property.

The Canada goose population in the vicinity of Brookview expands to over 200 geese during fall migration. During the spring and early summer months, when adult geese pair and build nests, we estimate approximately 75 - 100 breeding pairs are typically present. In mid-summer, as many as 100 - 150 young and adult geese are found in these same areas, depending on reproductive success. Later in the summer, late July through October, additional flocks exceeding 40 - 60 birds are observed in the Brookview Recreation Area as birds are flying into the vicinity from surrounding areas.

## **1.2 Visitation and Recreation Areas**

Areas and amenities impacted include picnic areas, playgrounds, shorelines, interior ponds, parking lots, trails, golf fairways & putting greens, tee boxes, volleyball courts and gathering areas around Brookview.

## **1.3 Concentrated Habitat Use and Human Use Conflicts**

Conflict areas include picnic areas, shorelines, ponds, Bassett Creek, parking lots, trails/sidewalks, fairways, greens, pull & powered golf carts, streets/highways and maintenance equipment. There are also concerns regarding food and health safety with the heavily utilized onsite food service during high patron use periods at Brookview.

### **1.3.1 Proximity Sensitive areas**

The Brookview Recreation area is surrounded by heavily travelled roads including Interstate 394 and Highway 55. Highway 169 is located just to the west of Brookview Golf Course. In addition to busy roads bordering the facility on three sides of the property, a residential area is located just to the east of the primary parking lot. General Mills corporate headquarters and other private property owners are located just to the west of Brookview. The General Mills property in close proximity to Brookview also has ponding areas with large landscaped green spaces.

The city of Golden Valley has ordinance restrictions on the use of firearms. Due to the proximity of heavily traveled roads and highways, neighboring residential and neighboring corporate properties, staff is not recommending the use of firearms or other lethal means for onsite goose removal.

### **1.3.2 Water Quality Impacts**

Golden Valley does not have any data on water quality impacts.

### **1.3.3 Water Quality Sampling**

At this point in time the City of Golden Valley does not implement a water sampling process in the ponds or creek within the Brookview property.

## **2.0 Canada Goose Management Recommendations**

### **2.1 Goals and Measures**

The city of Golden Valley is a site specific goose management plan and not a citywide removal process plan. The two primary areas of concern are public safety and property damage attributed to higher goose populations. Our goal is to systematically work on these aspects to help reduce the number of complaints from residents and patrons.

Staff has identified three goals for implementing a Canada goose management program.

The primary goal is to focus annually on the green space and water areas in the Brookview Recreation Area to reduce the Canada goose population.

The second goal is to develop annual strategies throughout the Brookview property creating natural, random and physical barriers that deter geese from loafing on the property and reduce patron and community concerns.

The final goal will be to support other community public and private property owners, if requested, to develop plans to implement processes to reduce the number of Canada Geese on property not owned by the City of Golden Valley. This would also extend to all current and future property owned by the City of Golden Valley that has not yet been identified as a goose management problem area. All future properties that are identified for potential removal will be updated in this plan and submitted to the DNR for approval as well as be added to the removal permit application.

The city of Golden Valley plans to implement an onsite goose management plan for the Brookview Recreation Area during the spring, summer and fall seasons.

During the spring, staff would secure an independent contractor approved by Minnesota DNR to implement a process of egg addling for population reduction. This strategy will assist with the reduction of future populations by dipping the eggs from nests in corn oil and replacing them back into the nests. This process prevents the eggs from hatching and keeps the eggs in the nest so the geese do not lay more eggs. Annually the contractor will impact no more than 50 nests in the Brookview Recreation Area. A pre-oiling survey will provide a count of the number of nests present and determine the number of nests being treated. A minimum of two nests per-wetland will be left unoiled every year. In addition to the addling process, staff contractor would implement a round-up process during the molting flightless period if population goals are not being reached.

During the summer and fall seasons staff will implement strategies to reduce localized residency by creating obstacles throughout the property to deter time spent at Brookview. Options may include but are not limited to Denier Lights, Dori Poles, loud noises, treating pond and creek banks, adding natural barrier elements to creek and pond shorelines, etc.

Our goal annually would be to reduce goslings and adults through addling and capture/round-up techniques, total number of removals will vary and be based on Brookview Recreation Area goose population estimates. Our goal is not to eradicate geese on the Brookview property, simply support a process that allows reasonable reduction. Without knowing population estimates for future removals, an initial on-going goal for nesting and brood reduction will not exceed 50 successful nests selected for addling within the nest search area outlined in Appendix B. Staff is also proposing an estimated annual capture/round-up of 40 to 60 geese. In addition, to reduce loafing on and near developed green area(s) and prevent significant use of Brookview Recreation Area by Canada geese during the summer and fall months, a number of varied redistribution techniques will be utilized May through September.

Though the city of Golden Valley will specifically target the Brookview Recreation Area, staff will also work with residents and other public and private property owners if significant goose management issues arise within the city in the future. The City's role would be to assist entities with the process of obtaining approval and permits from the Minnesota DNR for removal as well as recommending/approving a contractor to implement a reduction program.

## **2.2 Geographic Scope**

The population and concentrated use reduction primary goals are focused on two distinct areas. Approximately 176 acre nest search area of green space and the pond & creek water bodies throughout the property which is outlined in Appendix A. These are expected to produce broods that would subsequently move to Brookview Golf Course and Brookview Park after hatching. Due to significant nesting area options and abundant food sources, population reduction activities will be focused in this area. The management techniques that focus on redistributing geese will be implemented on the smaller geographic area near the ponds - creek and surrounding landscaped areas on Brookview Golf Course.

Goose management activities are not planned at this time for any publically or privately held property outside of the Brookview Recreation Area. Beginning in 2019, goose population control strategies are only planned for the Brookview Recreation Area, however could be implemented at other locations in the city of Golden Valley if deemed necessary.

## **2.3 Management Techniques**

The proposed techniques for Canada goose management at Brookview are varied in type and geographic area. Meeting the goals as outlined will require the implementation of a broad set of techniques. Any one management technique used alone will likely be ineffective for any significant length of time, since tolerance and habituation will likely occur. As a result, we propose the use of an integrated management approach, where a number of techniques are applied in varying ways at unique times and locations.

### **Recording/Tracking Management Activities for Future Adjustments/Improvements**

All management activities will be documented on an annual Management Activity Tracking Form attached in the Appendix C and submitted to the Minnesota DNR annually on September 10<sup>th</sup>. All activity will be kept on file at the city of Golden Valley in the Golf Maintenance Building at 101 Brookview Parkway N. Staff understands that future reduction plans may require new management strategies that require adjustments or improvements.

### **Habitat Modification**

Site Modifications at Brookview Recreation Area may include but are not limited to: no mowing areas, increase height of vegetation around ponds and creek banks, planting or promoting shrubs by natural willow colonization, landscape plantings or added permanent barriers. Staff will continue to expand use of Denier Lights in and around water areas as well as stay up to date on all new technologies for goose reduction strategies.

### **Temporary Physical Barriers**

Though not in place at this time, the use of temporary snow fence, woven wire, fishing line, etc. that limits Canada goose access to the water areas during the spring, summer, and fall season will be considered. Any fencing that is installed would need to be removed prior to the winter season, and should be established in a manner that prevents geese from entering the fenced off area from the water or from the adjacent property areas.

### **Permanent Physical Barriers**

There are no permanent physical barriers in use at the Brookview Recreation Area at this time. Any use of permanent physical barriers that limit Canada goose access to the water areas at Brookview Golf Course and Brookview Park during the spring, summer and fall seasons could be considered in the future. Any permanent physical barrier that is installed would need to be approved by the Minnesota DNR Area Wildlife Manager and would be established in a manner that prevents geese from entering the blocked off area from the water or from the adjacent property area. Routine inspection of the permanent physical barrier would be done on a monthly basis.

### **Redistribution Techniques**

Preventing Canada geese from loafing on Brookview Golf Course and Brookview Park will be an ongoing activity during the summer months. We anticipate using a number of techniques to redistribute the geese to other areas. Additionally, we plan to use multiple techniques at varied times and with subtle shifts in methods so that the geese do not become habituated to any one technique or get accustomed to a particular schedule of activity. Most of the methods will have minimal impact on the park/golf visitor experience. Some redistribution techniques may require specific training, personal protective equipment and adherence to policies and procedures for their safe use. While some of these redistribution techniques have minor impacts and safety considerations, each technique will have a thorough examination prior to employment in a particular area.

- **Human and mechanical disruption**
  - Disturbing loafing and feeding Canada geese by individuals or dogs on foot so geese can be moved from the mowed and maintained green spaces and into the ponds and creek may be implemented throughout the season.
  - Sprinklers or water devices
  - Drones over trails or open areas
  - Remote control cars/trucks
  - Staff also plans to use and expand the night time Denier Lighting system to create a disturbance for both green areas and water bodies.
  
- **Predator decoys**
  - The use of 2D or 3D coyote/dog decoys around pond/creek areas to discourage use by geese could be a management option. Decoys that are placed intermittently and exhibit periodic motion due to wind gusts can be effective at deterring geese however must be moved on a very regular schedule to be affective.
  
- **Pyrotechnic rounds**
- Limited use of pyrotechnic options such as flares, bangers, crackers, popper shells, etc. can be temporarily effective with moving geese and dissuading them from returning to a given area. Special training, handling and storage considerations would need to be considered. Use restrictions and notification requirements would be required prior to the use of pyrotechnics. Safety will always be the number one priority when considering pyrotechnics for the relocation of wild turkeys.
- Flash bangs from Orion Safety Products have been used on a sporadic basis with success to dissuade geese from using a particular area.

## **Excrement Removal**

Sporadic removal of goose excrement from patios, decks, trails, courts and building areas area may be necessary during the late spring, summer and fall months. The primary goal is to effectively redistribute geese away from these areas and hopefully dramatically reduce or eliminate goose excrement.

## **2.2.1 Population Reduction**

### **Nesting Management**

Annual nest search and treatment will be conducted in a localized area (Appendix B). The areas to be searched and treated include suitable nesting habitat immediately adjacent to the ponds, islands and creek bank areas. Nest searches and treatment protocol will follow methods prescribed by the required U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Minnesota-DNR permits. Permit conditions will be followed and reporting will be conducted on an annual basis. To facilitate future nest searches in the Brookview

Recreation Area, GPS coordinates of most of the Canada goose nests should be obtained since nest site fidelity is strong and the same nest sites are likely to be used in subsequent years.

### **Trapping and removal (during flightless period)**

Capture and removal of flightless, mixed age groups of geese during the spring/summer flightless period is an effective way to reduce localized population of geese during the peak golf course and park use time (May-September). The use of contractors to capture and remove for the disposition of geese from Brookview Recreation Area is a management option which Golden Valley has implemented in the past and plans to implement in the future. This type of removal would need to be detailed as part of a removal permit application through the DNR Fish & Wildlife Division. Goose removal and disposition would need to be conducted according to the permit conditions.

### **Goose Removal**

Selective and occasional lethal removal of individual geese has been determined to be an effective complement to loud noises and other redistribution or hazing methods. Lethal removal of geese by means of shooting geese on an occasional basis is a management option. Such removal would need to be detailed as part of a removal permit application through the Minnesota DNR Fish & Wildlife Division, and goose removal and disposition would need to be conducted according to the specific permit conditions. Conditions would include the number of individuals and the specific information about the methods to be used in their harvest and disposition. **At this point in time, Golden Valley has no plans for the utilization of firearms for lethal removal unless deemed necessary by public safety officials in specific circumstances.**

### **2.4 Public Information**

Informing the public and golf/park patrons about Canada goose management activities is an integral part of a successful goose management plan. Information will be shared through community publications, electronic tools and public meetings. Information will include review of the management plan, resident input, commission and city council review. Signage or posted notices may be developed for certain areas and activities if needed. Additionally, patrons and neighboring residents may be notified of pending activities that might be considered alarming had they not received prior notice and explanation. All persons performing management activities will provide city staff with accurate and thorough information about goose management objectives, strategies and schedules. Additionally, no removal will be allowed without an approved removal permit from Minnesota DNR. This permit will be available for view for all residents and patrons upon request.

### **2.5 Partner Relationships and Permit Requirements**

Coordination of all wildlife management activities will be communicated with the Minnesota DNR, Parks & Recreation Department, Public Safety Department and the City Manager's office. Population monitoring, permitting, annual reporting for egg destruction permit, dates/conditions for permits, permit in possession while conducting activities, notification and involvement of Conservation Officers, Area Wildlife Managers, etc. will be the responsibility of city staff and all contractors employed to implement wildlife management services.



## **2.6 Communication Plan**

Review of initial draft of plans sent to MN DNR staff for comment – Mid-September 2018

The initial draft of both the Goose Management Plan (GMP) and the Turkey Management Plan (TMP) will be available for hard copy review at the Open Space and Recreation Commission (OSRC) meeting Oct 22, 2018, 6:30 pm, at Brookview (316 Brookview Parkway – 763-512-2345).

Once the Commission's recommended changes have been included in the draft documents, electronic versions of both plans will be available for public review on the City website with the option to give feedback.

When the public comment period ends, the updated plan will be reviewed at the November 13, 2018, City Council/Manger work session meeting (Golden Valley City Hall, 6:30 p.m. – 763-593-8000).

The Open Space and Recreation Commission will host a final draft document review and public input meeting on November 26, 2018, 6:30 pm, at Brookview.

Final Goose Management Plan and Turkey Management Plan are scheduled to be presented to the City Council for approval at the January 2, 2018, City Council meeting.

If approved, both plans will be implemented beginning in 2019.

**2.7 Staff Contact Information:** Any questions regarding the proposed wildlife management plan or the communication plan can be directed to: Rick Birno, Parks & Recreation Director at 763-512-2342 or [rbirno@goldenvalleymn.gov](mailto:rbirno@goldenvalleymn.gov).

APPENDIX (Maps of Goose management zone and identified problem areas)

