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Rope at Marsh helps control geese

For six years, community volunteers from the Dufferin Marsh Committee have worked with the King Township Parks, Recreation and Culture Department to install a rope across the storm water management pond on the south end of the Dufferin Marsh to help control geese. The rope will be installed again this spring.

We do this to discourage the Canada geese from using Neuwland Park as both their cafeteria and washroom during the breeding season and to reduce water quality issues and habitat destruction in the Dufferin Marsh.

The combination of Neuwland Park and the man-made stormwater pond are an almost irresistible attraction to the geese. The pond provides safety, and the park provides food. Unfortunately, this irresistible combination has attracted more geese than would naturally be found in the area, and the results can easily be seen (and trod upon) in the park throughout the spring and summer. Each adult goose can create up to two pounds of fecal material per day ? and no one wants that in the park and playground.

The rope discourages the geese from using the stormwater pond for refuge, and encourages them to find suitable habitat elsewhere. We have also done two plantings of trees and shrubs in the pond area. Besides providing habitat diversity, this makes the man-made pond less attractive to the geese by putting a barrier between their food and rest area.

The goal is not to ban all geese from the pond, but to moderate their numbers and lessen the chances for negative interaction with the public and negative impacts on the environment. The use of the plantings and goose rope is passive and does not threaten the health of the geese.

Last spring, the rope, which was installed by community volunteers under the direction of staff from the Township of King, was cut down twice. The rope was not installed a third time as the geese became habituated to the pond during the period when the rope was vandalized.

The volunteers who gave their time and effort on two separate weekends are dismayed and discouraged by the vandalism that has occurred. The installation of the rope was a well considered effort to enhance use of the park for people while at the same time causing the least amount of stress and anxiety to the geese. The wanton and repeated destruction of this effort shows a lack of respect to the greater community ? both to the Marsh and the people who use Neuwland Park.

This repeated vandalism was reported to the York Region Police, who have taken an active interest in the issue. They have made a number of suggestions regarding security and we are looking into them for this year.

For more information about the Dufferin Marsh, please visit www.dufferinmarsh.ca.

Charles Cooper
Dufferin Marsh
Chairperson