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REPORT TO REGIONAL PARKS COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 22, 2020

SUBJECT **Non-Migratory Canada Goose Management**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To provide information on the efficacy of advocacy or enhanced service levels for non-migratory Canada Goose Management in the Capital Regional District (CRD).

BACKGROUND

Non-migratory Canada geese were introduced from Eastern Canada in the 1960s and 1970s for wildlife viewing and hunting. They have been an ongoing concern in the capital region since approximately 1985. Large populations of non-migratory geese contribute to health, economic, and environmental issues affecting municipalities, parks, farmers, businesses, health agencies and airport authorities, to name a few.

In 2010, the CRD, provincial agencies, participating municipalities and stakeholders partnered to fund a project to collect extensive data on the goose population abundance and distribution, seasonal habitat use by geese and agriculture impacts in the capital region. The resulting Regional Canada Goose Management Strategy outlined a long-term, multi-faceted approach for the management of non-migratory Canada geese in the capital region and included a technical report completed by EBB Environmental Consulting that examined population data and historical impacts in the CRD. The strategy's goals were to: (1) reduce impacts on agricultural crops from Canada goose populations in the capital region to a level that prevents conflict between geese and human activities; (2) develop a knowledge base for the CRD, First Nations, farmers and local governments; and (3) reduce goose impacts on parks and recreational areas.

The CRD Board endorsed the strategy in December 2012, which was supported by local governments, provincial wildlife authorities, Canadian Wildlife Service farmers, and other stakeholders. The Board directed staff to continue to partner with interested municipalities and stakeholders to ensure effective implementation and coordination.

The CRD coordinated the Regional Goose Management Working Group through 2015, culminating in a pilot population reduction program in June of the same year. Since 2015, the working group has continued to meet without the CRD providing a coordinating role. The group participates on the Vancouver Island Regional Canada Goose Working Group, a group of Vancouver Island local governments affected by Canada goose conflicts. CRD staff continue to attend the Regional Canada Goose Working Group in support of the Regional Food and Agriculture Strategy initiatives.

In July 2019, staff provided an update on the Regional Canada Goose Management Strategy to the CRD Board. In response to the update the Board approved:

That the Board advocate to senior levels of government for resources (e.g., policy, programs, research and grant funding) to maintain and enhance the scope and scale of non-migratory Canada goose management in the region and report back in one year on the efficacy of the advocacy or enhanced service levels.

In August of 2019, Chair Plant, on behalf of the CRD, sent a letter to Minister McKenna requesting the federal government increase the resources to maintain and enhance the scope and scale of non-migratory Canada goose management in the region. A response has not been received; however, federal and provincial representatives are participating on the Vancouver Island Regional Canada Goose Working Group and staff continue to represent the CRD interests and direction from the Board at this table.

Correspondence from the Town of View Royal (Appendix A) and the District of Central Saanich (Appendix B) earlier this year requests that the CRD play a more active role in coordinating a goose management strategy and goose egg addling across the Region.

CONCLUSION

The CRD coordinated the Regional Goose Management Working Group through 2015, culminating in a pilot population reduction program in June of the same year. Since 2015, the working group has continued to meet and participate on the Vancouver Island Regional Canada Goose Working Group. CRD staff continue to participate on the Regional Canada Goose Working Group and the Vancouver Island Regional Canada Goose Working Group.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Regional Parks Committee receive this report for information.

Submitted by:	Jeff Leahy, RPF, Senior Manager, Regional Parks
Concurrence:	Larisa Hutcheson, P. Eng., General Manager, Parks & Environmental Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix A: Town of View Royal Correspondence (February 10, 2020)
- Appendix B: District of Central Saanich Correspondence (April 23, 2020)