**Spring Creek Association**

**Canadian Geese Management Plan**

**Background**Complaints from the public about the goose feces making the parks unusable have increased significantly over the last several years. The continued growth of the goose population has outgrown the park staff’s ability to keep up with cleaning and turf repair. The population of geese is increasing far beyond levels that the Association is able to maintain. A core population is setting up permanent residency and not migrating. Since the majority of areas where the geese congregate have very few natural predators controlling the population, it is easy for them to not migrate.

**Next Steps**The SCA has learned through surveys and feedback that the public is supportive of actions the Association is willing to take to alleviate the damage caused by geese at the Marina, Golf Course, Sports Complex, and other parks. The management plan takes into account the input from the public along with recommendations on geese management best practices. The majority of people that have weighed in on the issue are asking for stronger action.

This spring, and working into the upcoming years, the Association will be working with Wildlife Services, to begin a program to encourage Canada geese to migrate. The goal will be to cause the geese to migrate out of the area to molt like wild geese are supposed to do. Molting occurs in June.  Some aspects of the plan are noted below:

• Herding geese with trained dogs
• Physical harassment by staff and with remote control boats, noise makers and lasers
• Oiling eggs, removal of nests
• Using repellents where feasible

Finding a healthy balance with wildlife in our environment can be difficult. You can help. Please do not feed wildlife in parks, at the marina, or the golf course. Feeding encourages geese that should be migrating to set up permanent residency.

Canada Geese *(Branta canadensis),* like all wildlife are a valued aspect of our area but we have to remember that these birds are wild animals and they need to be treated as such.  For example, when people feed geese in parks they are actually doing harm to the geese and the parks.  Feeding geese habituates the wild birds to associate people with food.  Habituated geese tend to quit migrating and become year-round residents to an area. Canada geese are migratory birds. They typically migrate north in the spring to their breeding grounds and south in the fall to their wintering grounds. As you know, these geese are abandoning their natural migration cycle and becoming full time residents. This can be attributed to several factors but two significant ones are the abundance in food and the reduced number of natural predators.

History has shown that when geese populations are too high in parks there are numerous issues that arise for both the geese and recreationist park visitors.

Listed below are two activities in the plan that have proven successful in managing the goose population.

* **Egg Addling or Oiling:** Geese nests are located and the eggs are covered in vegetable oil.  Geese are now starting to pair up preparing to mate and reproduce.  Nest locating and egg oiling will start the beginning of April and continue through the end of May.
* **Hazing:** Hazing is done with dogs, people, noise makers, and light lasers.  Staff and Wildlife services, along with dedicated volunteers, use their trained dogs to haze geese both at parks and other areas.  Using dogs to haze is very effective since the geese identify dogs as predators.   So if you see a dog off a leash on one of the Association owned properties with a yellow bandana around its neck it is helping us haze geese.

**Please refer to the habitat modification timeline for more details.**

For more information on the Canada Goose Management Plan, please contact Jessie Bahr, SCA President at 775-753-6295 or email JessieBahr@springcreeknv.org.