



NEWS FROM SPOKANE PARKS AND RECREATION

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BREAD IS BAD FOR DUCKS

Please Help Us Improve the Water Quality in Spokane City Parks

It's a long standing tradition in Spokane to grab a bag of bread and head to Manito Park, Cannon Hill Park or Riverfront Park to watch and feed the ducks.

But, have you noticed the condition of those ponds and the quality of the water? The feeding of ducks by humans has created an artificial food supply that is attracting well more ducks that the ponds' fragile ecosystems can support. Feeding ducks not only encourages the ducks to stay longer than they should, but creates an unhealthy environment with the potential for spread of disease.

Parks and Recreation staff members are currently working on a proposal to determine the best alternatives to renovate and improve the water quality at the Manito duck pond.

"We are working on a landscape design plan and cost estimates," said Horticultural Supervisor, Steve Nittolo. "We will definitely be moving forward with a restoration of the pond and a general clean up to improve water quality, but as a first step we need the public's help to manage the duck overpopulation."

Here's why feeding wild ducks, and especially feeding wild ducks bread, is a big problem:

- Wild ducks need a naturally diverse diet.
- Feeding bread creates overweight yet malnourished ducks.
- The availability of bread creates an artificial food supply that attracts more wild ducks than small ponds' ecosystems can sustain.
- Poor water quality is a direct result of this overpopulation of wild and

domestic ducks.

- Inferior water makes the pond inhospitable to other native wildlife such as turtles, frogs, and other species that are lost in the balance.
- The more ducks, the more potential for disease transfer between birds and even to humans.
- Feeding wild ducks too late in the season disrupts their migratory pattern. They might even be too fat to fly!

The Parks and Recreation Department staff is working diligently to improve the water quality at the Manito Park and Cannon Hill Park ponds, and in Riverfront Park near the Carrousel. To do that we the public's help to manage the number of ducks and sustain a fun and safe environment for all who use the parks.

About the Duck Pond at Manito Park

The present Duck Pond was originally a natural lake called Mirror Lake that would dry up during the summer months, until a concrete retaining structure was built to keep it full throughout the year. It was large enough to accommodate canoes that could be rented on site. A dance hall was located on the bank of the lake and open air motion pictures were shown nearby from 1905-1907. Today, the pond is a favorite gathering site for ducks, geese and families alike.

About Manito Park

The Parks and Recreation Department maintains Manito Park's 78 acres of native and cultivated landscape and 20 acres of world class botanical gardens. Comprised of five major garden areas, the Nishinomiya Japanese Garden, Duncan Garden, Rose Hill, Lilac Garden and Ferris Perennial Garden, Manito Park is nationally recognized for its diverse horticultural displays. Established in April 1904, the Park has evolved from an undeveloped recreational area with a few flower beds, picnic spots and a zoo to one of Spokane's primary showplaces. Other Manito Park features include the duck pond, a favorite of children who enjoy watching the ducks; the Park Bench Café, originally built in 1923 and open in the summer months for light meals; Loop Drive and Bridge offering majestic views of the Rose Garden; Upper and Lower Playgrounds – a favorite gathering spot of children; and the large basalt rock office building built in 1912. Central to the Park is the Gaiser Conservatory where beautiful flowing displays change seasonally.

About Spokane Parks and Recreation

City of Spokane Parks and Recreation is responsible for the professional management and prudent caretaking of more than 4,100 acres of developed parks and conservation land. The Golf Division maintains and operates four championship municipal golf courses, including Indian Canyon, Downriver, Esmeralda and the Creek at Qualchan. Park Operations has responsibility for

the maintenance of all park land and park facilities in the City of Spokane including Riverfront Park, Manito Park, Gaiser Conservatory and the many city-wide gardens, Finch Arboretum and the Urban Forestry Program. The Recreation/Entertainment Division offers classes, special events, athletic leagues and activities for youth, teens, adults, seniors and persons with physical and mental disabilities. It also operates Riverfront Park attractions, activities and events including the Spokane Falls SkyRide, the Loeff Carrousel and IMAX Theatre, and provides support for community centers, senior centers, the Northeast Youth Center, Corbin Art Center and outdoor swimming pools. For more information please visit www.spokaneparks.org.

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