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SPOKANE YOU HELPED US BEFORE NOW WE NEED YOUR HELP AGAIN

Here's why bread is bad for ducks

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 than the ponds' fragile ecosystems can support and

it's creating an unhealthy environment with the potential for the spread of disease.

In the last two years Parks and Recreation staff has worked diligently to inform the public about why they need to refrain from feeding the ducks. And the public responded and helped us get the word out.

But now, despite signage and staff work to educate the public we are again seeing a huge increase in the amount of bread literally being dumped into the pond in Manito.

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 stop feeding the ducks.”

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 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 Mirror Pond

The pond in Manito Park 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. We invite you to come and watch the ducks, but please don't feed them.

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 Mirror 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.

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