



October 18, 2010

Contact: Steve Nittolo, 509.624.6692

DOMESTIC GEESE IN RIVERFRONT PARK TO BE TRANSPLANTED

New Home Offered for Flock of Injured Domestic Geese

Spokane Parks and Recreation has been contacted by local waterfowl advocates who are concerned about the health of a small flock of domestic geese at Riverfront Park. The flock is comprised of about nine or ten individuals that are Embden, Toulouse, and other hybrids. These geese are a close-knit flock and have not bonded with the Canada geese in the park.

Most of these domestic geese have injuries including one Embden with an eye infection, and a serious foot infection for one of the heavier Toulouse. Several of the others walk with limps and have bumblefoot (a common infection for domesticated waterfowl due to constant walking on hard, rough, or sharp surfaces. Birds develop small wounds on the bottom of their feet which are highly susceptible to infection).

In addition to current injuries, these domestic geese are subject to a not-so-kind public that on occasion allows children to throw rocks at the injured geese and chase them into the park. And as has been the case in other park ponds, it seems the public cannot refrain from perpetually feeding the geese bread which in itself is not at all nutritious for them.

Parks and Recreation has agreed to work with the local waterfowl advocates and a private farm veterinarian regarding rescuing this domestic flock and relocating it to the vet's farm. There the flock will have access to a garden to wander in and a fenced orchard area where they will be safe from predators. The vet has also agreed to provide ongoing medical care for the geese.

Experienced volunteers will work to catch the members of this flock and then transport them to their new home. The volunteers will work under the

supervision of Riverfront Park staff who will have identification and can provide information to the public as to why these geese are being relocated.

Please note: Under no circumstances should the public make any attempt to capture ducks, geese or other waterfowl on any city pond or body of water including Riverfront Park, Manito Park or Cannon Hill Park.

If you care about waterfowl and especially the geese at Riverfront Park and the ducks at Manito Park, here is what you should know and what you can do to help them retain their “wildness” and maintain their well-being.

- Waterfowl need a naturally diverse diet.
- Feeding bread creates overweight yet malnourished birds.
- The availability of bread creates an artificial food supply that attracts more birds than small ponds’ ecosystems can sustain.
- Poor water quality is a direct result of this overpopulation of birds.
- Inferior water makes ponds inhospitable to other native wildlife such as turtles, frogs, and other species that are lost in the balance.
- The more waterfowl, the more potential for diseases to transfer between birds and even to humans.
- Feeding waterfowl too late in the season disrupts their migratory pattern.

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, the many city-wide gardens, and Finch Arboretum. Urban Forestry staff manages 50,000 street trees and another 28,000 trees on developed park land within the City of Spokane. 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, 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

###