

Busy Times at Swan Lake Park

by Madeleine Nevins and Fred Peters

With a little help from its Friends, the city of Markham was busy this fall addressing some of the core issues facing Swan Lake and Swan Lake Park.

Refresh Plan for Swan Lake Park

In November, Markham Council approved plans for a Park Refresh Program for Swan Lake Park. Over the next three years city staff will work to reduce invasive plants within the park, address safety and accessibility issues along the pathways, add pollinator plants throughout the park and start a program to introduce favourable tree and shrub species to improve the canopy before removing some of the existing invasive species. Markham plans to engage the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to assist in a shoreline redesign that, while limiting shore access for Canada Geese, will reopen overgrown viewing areas for the public.

Friends of Swan Lake Park thanked Markham Council for initiating these critical first steps, but requested further discussion in 2021 on defining the broader community role and specific objectives for the lake and park. Clarity around the long term objectives is needed to provide a framework for setting goals for the restoration of the lake and park. The following chart illustrates items not addressed under the current programs.

New Shoreline Path and Traffic Circle Improvements Planned

Plans call for a dedicated pathway way along the Amica shoreline which will provide for a safe passageway around the lake. Markham is investigating ways to improve the safety and accessibility at the roundabout by adding new sidewalks around the traffic circle with the goal of getting pedestrian traffic off the roadway, plus possibly adding a few public parking spaces along Swan Lake Boulevard for park visitors.



A representative from Border Control Bird Dog, hired by the City of Markham, monitors the hazing operation.

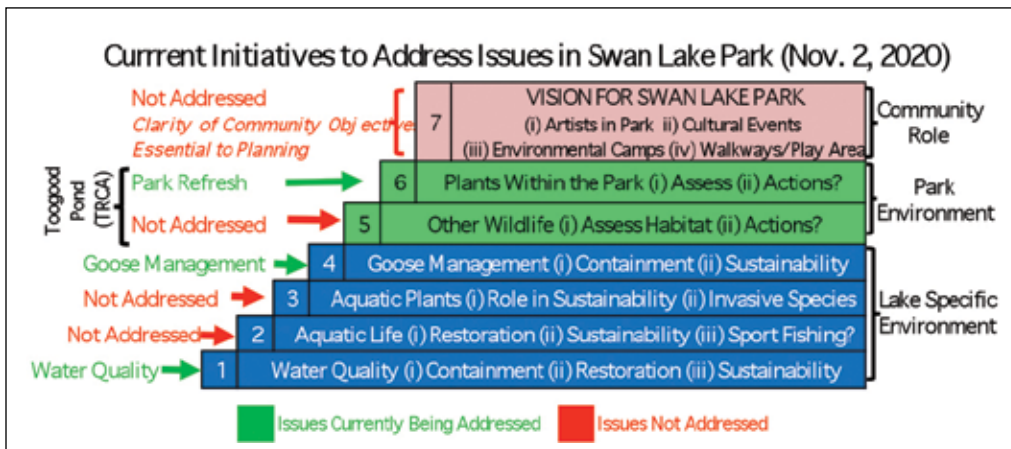
Busy Counting Geese

Twenty-five area residents volunteered to record the geese leaving the lake at sunrise and again on their return at sunset through October and November.

It is the migratory geese who come from the north heading to sunny climes for the winter that

cause the greatest problems. They feed in farmers' fields during the day and spend the night on Swan Lake, thus contributing to the fouling of the lake.

Swan Lake has been known to host over 2,000 geese per night in November. The fall migration accounts for over 70% of the annual phosphorus contribution by geese.



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Holiday Festivities

by Lynda Cohen

We are a fortunate family, observing both Hanukkah and Christmas celebrations. Here are some of our individual family happenings.



Chanukah (pronounced Ha-Nu-Ka) usually precedes Christmas. This year it starts on December 10, continuing for eight days. Traditional

foods definitely include potato latkes with applesauce and sour cream, served along with beef tenderloin and all the trimmings. There are eight nights of lighting candles on the Menorah. Starting with one, and moving right to left, a candle is added each night.

We also enjoy playing games with the children, searching for hidden dreidels, winning candy prizes, etc. This very happy and cheerful holiday season is enjoyed by all family members.

Christmas is another wonderful family holiday for us, celebrated every year on December 25. The fun begins days earlier as we decorate both inside and outside the home. Choosing and cutting our own tree from a tree farm, tying it to the top of our car and heading home has been a family favourite. Baking cookies and Christmas cake early in December is a big event. Ahh, the aroma!

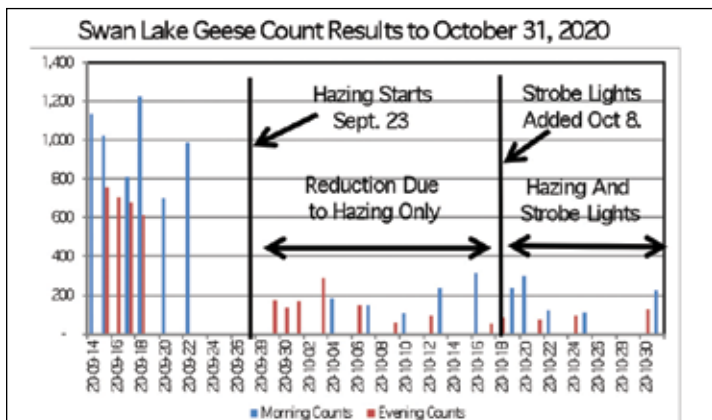


Music provides the special touch to both celebrations. I had the privilege of singing in both Jewish and Christian choirs for many years.

Wishing everyone a wonderful holiday season with your families and old traditions. □

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When the counting started in mid-September totals were already over 1,000. In late September, the city of Markham launched an intensified hazing program. A small remote controlled boat is sent out on the lake and the sound of the motor quickly scares them away. Since the hazing started, the geese coming in at night seem more hesitant to land and many have moved on after a quick circling of the lake.



Another deterrent that is being tried is placing seven strobe lights on the lake. They look like black jugs with an orange cap floating in the lake. The strobe lights run from dusk to dawn and annoy the geese and disrupt their sleeping pattern, encouraging them to find a more comfortable location for their next night's sleep.

Apparently geese migrate at night, so during October when new arrivals are expected, we observed higher counts in the morning than at sunset. The anticipation was that in November when the southern migration started, we would see fewer in the morning than at sunset.

Results so far show that the hazing and strobe lights are doing their job. Daily counts are now below 300 which should significantly reduce the phosphorus contributions to the lake.

Our thanks to the volunteers for their contribution towards restoring Swan Lake. □