

Busy Summer in Swan Lake Park

by Fred Peters

A busy summer is planned for Swan Lake Park. Pathway repairs are scheduled and during their molting period, likely in late June, some Canada geese will be relocated to bird sanctuaries in Ontario.



TRCA Staff Electrofishing April 2021

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority will visit the lake a few times this summer to inventory fish and remove bottom feeders, such as goldfish and carp that stir up the bottom.

This is the first step towards a long term fish management program that we expect will see restocking, possibly with small algae eating minnows once water quality has improved.

The city could not get the Phoslock chemical for the planned April water treatment so another product will be used mid-summer to help reduce the algae content.

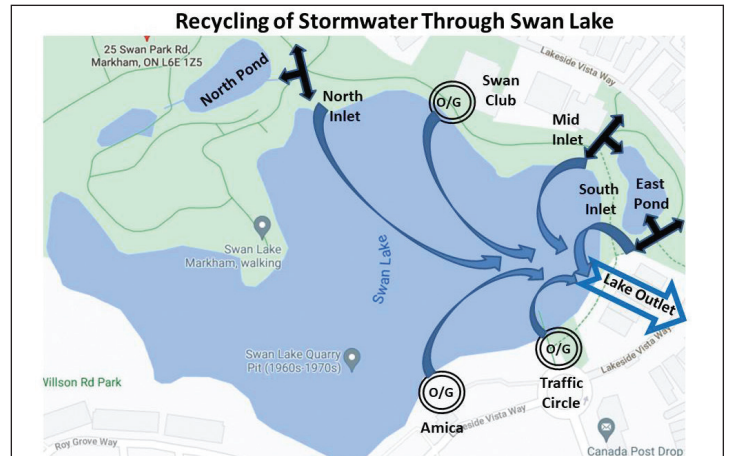
In preparation for fall discussions, city staff is actively reviewing options for a long term water quality strategy for Swan Lake, which will likely include treatments with Phoslock every 3-5 years. Friends of Swan Lake Park have encouraged the city to find ways to also improve oxygen levels.

Ending Swan Lake's Stormwater Management Role

In June, as part of the ongoing water quality discussions, the Friends of Swan Lake Park submitted a report to the City of Markham that demonstrates that Swan Lake's role in local stormwater management is not necessary and should be minimized.

Annual stormwater flows and road salt are unnecessarily being recycled through Swan Lake. In essence, Swan Lake is the "third" stormwater pond in Swan Lake Park.

The challenge of reducing the amount of road salt entering Swan Lake each year lies primarily in



minimizing Swan Lake's role in the local stormwater management regime and the adoption of prudent salt management practices by the city and the adjacent private owners, including Swan Lake Village.

Given that the use of road salt can only be minimized, not discontinued, the report outlines four actions that the city can take to reduce the continuing inflow of road salt into Swan Lake:

- i) Reroute two of the three oil/grit separator flows into the main stormwater sewer system on 16th Avenue. The one in the parking lot at the Swan Club would remain active.
- ii) Minimize the stormwater flows bypassing the ponds and entering Swan Lake;
- iii) Restore the lake level to its natural depth;
- iv) Implement an effective pond monitoring and maintenance program to ensure future stormwater flows are not unnecessarily contaminating Swan Lake.

These proposed changes should improve water quality in two fundamental ways:

1) Swan Lake would become a self-contained entity retaining more of the clean local runoff and precipitation. Contaminated stormwater would substantially remain in the stormwater system. Simply increasing the blend of fresh water within the lake should help enhance water quality and the aquatic environment.

2) An 82% reduction in annual chloride contributions is projected. Minimizing the increase in chloride levels will provide an improved aquatic environment for zooplankton and small fish that are a natural means for controlling algae growth. Risk of chloride contamination of the downstream aquifer will be minimized and future costs for expensive chemical treatments should be reduced. □