

PRAB Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2020
DRAFT (until approved by the board)

Board Members In attendance: Fran Coleman, David Richter, Lee Rains Thomas, Marla Rodriguez, Trena Marsal, Florence Navarro, Jack Paterson, Leslie Twarogowski, Meredith Levy, Molly McKinley, Lynne Mason, Lisa Calderon, Frank Rowe, Noel Copeland, Tashmesia Mitchell

Absent: Samantha Villatoro

From DPR staff- Vicki Vargas-Madrid, Scott Gilmore, Veronika Hall, Gordon Robertson, Happy Haynes, Jesus Orrantia, John Martinez, Yolanda Quesada, Fred Weiss

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by President David Richter. A quorum was established. David reviews protocol for online meeting.

Explains meeting change- due to number of public comments, we are not going to go into committee reports due to time. Would like committee chairs to send written notes to Lee to include in minutes.

Marla explains- we need to keep public comments to 2 minutes due to the high number of public speakers.

Jesus explains the virtual remote ground rules- explains how to be unmuted and re-muted. Please bear with us, so we can get through this. Raise your hand feature is how you will ask a question or comment.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Motion to accept notes from March meeting- Fran made a motion, Lee seconded.

Unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

General Public Comment

*Several people submitted written statements and questions. Those statements are attached on separate pages at the end of this document.

1. David Mintzer – Car Free Streets
Support of maintaining car free roads in parks- Cheeseman park neighborhood. Begun a petition with over 300 signatures to support keeping them open.
2. Jonathan Pitocco – Car Free Streets
District 3- advocate for maintaining car free parks- Sloan’s Byron st and lakeshore closed. Wash park has ring loop and we can do this with Sloan’s. With growing populations- more safe for peds, bikes, etc.
3. Courtney DeWinter – Geese
Canada geese protection Colorado- concerned about 2020 plan:
 - Goose damage management guide, not called a goose management guide
 - all info about egg oiling is not available any longer- why?
 - 2020 guide removes promise of public outreach and engagement- why? Lack of transparency?
 - scouting parks- geese are disappearing in parks
4. Carole Woodall – Geese

Canada geese protection Colorado- concerned (Silent Spring reference)

-June 2017- we had asked where did the geese go?

- 2019 removed geese with no meaningful engagement with public

-2020 version removed community engagement- why?

-lack of transparency and accountability in 2020 plan

5. Elizabeth Holland – Geese

District 5- CGPC- protection of animals

Asked a question in March- how do we know which geese are migrating or resident, has not been answered as of yet.

Time for a new study- last one was in 2000.

Other areas have had success with other measures- like relocation.

6. Pfeifer Brown – Geese CGPC member.

Sees the emotion on both sides of this issue- people would choose non lethal methods if given a choice. Ask for members to listen and work to come together. Referenced Good Night Denver- book

7. Suellen Scott – Geese (CGPC)

Cory/Merril resident, upset about geese cull in 2019 and wonders why community groups were not consulted.

8. Justin Aragon – Geese

Asking for an Immediate end to all lethal methods- references Canada geese control guide.

9. Karin Olsson – Geese

West wash park resident, heartbroken that the culling happened last year. Would like to have used other methods.

10. Robert Chase – Geese

Policy of culling is a sensible policy- put them to good use, use the meat as food.

Did not eliminate the geese, in fact would like to see more culling.

Would like to make room for other birds by removing some more of the geese. Geese are overcrowding parks and eco-systems.

11. Eric Rooney –

Here Planet Earth- presents another alternative to lethal measures of geese management.

1982- story of using a goose call to encourage them to move on. Why don't we use methods like this? Meat is ridden with pesticides- lack of transparency all around.

12. Ean Tafoya – Park Hill Golf Course

Advocates to use 2A funds- buy the Park hill golf course

Urban farm on several acres- resiliency goal of Denver Parks and Rec.

13. Ryan Fitzgerald – Red Rocks Public Transit

Denver's response to climate change has been weak, despite a progressive view.

We need to use more public transit to get to Red Rocks-

Equity- underserved areas by RTD-

Public safety- offer public transportation from Red Rocks for venues

14. Becky English – Red Rocks Public Transit

Sierra Club- Importance of transportation in mitigating climate change

Activate membership and make this happen

15. Adrian Garcia- Red Rocks

Business owner on Santa Fe. Advocating for transit to red rocks from Denver and metro area.

16. Amy Kenner- District 7, support of car free parks, kids doing loops, safer

60% of citizens surveyed are interested, but concerned about using park streets.

6:15- end of comments

Signed up to speak, but were not present to speak:

Kenyon Moon – Geese

Spencer McCullough – Car Free Streets

Robbie Hoebin – Car Free Parks

Claire Cpo– Geese

Jack Murphy – Geese (said in the form he was a “maybe”)

Ramsey Harris – Park Programs

Janet Thornton – Geese

Patty Brisbois – Geese/

Nicole Norris – Geese

OTHER ITEMS

Capital Improvement Plan presentation- Gordon Robertson (Mike Buchard, Kathy LeVeque)

***Presentation is attached separately.**

Capital planning is a 3-5 year process- used to develop high priority projects

Reduce capital maintenance, more equitable parks system

DeBoer water way- nature play areas- matched funding

Working on grants, partnerships , like The Park People group.

Q & A

Fran - do these figures reflect the current shut down?

Gordon- did have to make reductions in 2020, but we think we have covered it in 2021.

Estimating reduction in every account, waiting to see actual numbers.

Frank- Its going to be tough and we understand that there will be cuts all around. Equity map is fabulous and really shows where PR needs are.

Florence- Comment- appreciates the explanation of how the equity map and score are used in the CIP process. This has been one of our questions that our committee had, and this really addresses it well. Moving higher impact project to higher need areas.

Meredith- Wants to know more about process and how timelines might change with community input due to all that is going on.

Gordon- We are not sure how this will play out, but we are looking at webex and are looking at alternative ways to gather input.

Meredith- Curious what we can share about longer term timeline.

Gordon- Our goal is to start all the projects in the year they are funded.

6:40

Finance Committee Report/PRAB White Paper

Leslie met with all subcommittees- came up with a list of recommendations. Leslie reads them out loud.

Happy- Short time to review, will keep response brief

Budget outlook for the rest of this year and into 2021- it is going to be a very difficult year- with reduced tax revenue and general revenue. Will impact all budgets for into next year. Road to recovery likely (budget recovery) will be slow to say the least. Will be working with PRAB as things change and information becomes available.

Rangers, etc- already increased expenditures for rangers, will be adding to maintenance and safety.

Access to city park golf course- this cannot happen- as it is a construction site- it will not be released until the growing season can occur...

Park hill golf course is on the radar. We are not inclined to spend the entire sum of our dollars on one acquisition.

DPS- long standing relationship about using space within schools. No pilot needed- already have several agreements. Working to strengthen relationship.

Street closures- have been part of an emergency response to Covid- 19. We have heard a lot from residents saying they love it. Very complex issue that has implications across the board with accessibility, etc. Not intending to make long term commitments in the face of a crisis. After crisis, we will want to address this. Different use of

Goose management- suggestion that methods are not consistent may not be accurate. Have a team that manages wildlife, including geese. Driven by the science. At times managing wildlife is more challenging because we are dealing with wildlife. Disappointed that the community partners could not go forward due to covid.

Community engagement- want to find other ways for people to connect. For PRAB to be able to broadcast, it would be unlikely. More creative ways for public to connect.

Q & A

Lisa- Wants the group to consider how we could have more time to evaluate these recommendations. Would like to have white paper response, response should include the methodology & metrics used to evaluate these recommendations provided in writing.

Wonders why there was a change in white paper wording from non-lethal to consistent goose management methods?

Leslie- Explains that she met with all committees.

Fran- explains that even egg oiling is considered lethal.

Lisa objects to terms that changed.

Lisa- Point of order- Clarifies that the intent is for the board to vote on this tonight.

David- We do hope to vote on this tonight.

Lisa- not a white paper, should have more substance including references. This is an outline.

Leslie- Agrees that this format is more of a list of recommendations, not a white paper. Has already changed wording to recommendations to the executive director.

Lynne- like that it is short and outlines priorities of the board. Especially the park hill golf course- an opportunity not to miss.

Leslie- Purchase at current market value- probably not be more than 5-6 million dollars. Could be our last opportunity to get this done. Pocket parks don't fill the same void as the regional parks.

Florence- Had talked about continued support of equity goals- we were struggling with wording, so where did it end up? Equity goals should be included.

Leslie- equity is a big issue and we need to work it into all that we do- not necessarily informing the paper. Larger issue.

Marla- would like to include something with equity in these recommendations.

Leslie- Q to Happy where are we with acquiring this project (park hill golf course)- would need to connect with comm planning and development, working on acquisition strategy for trying to complete this deal. Will be part of 2021 budget.

Lisa- is the term *white paper* part of the charter? Answer- no

Meredith- one rec was not included on this version, opening rec centers 7 days a week. Not able to make this rec at this time due to covid and changing.

Happy- 1- have worked to increase rec center hours for several years.
2- unlikely to ever be able to open all centers for 7 days a week. Have already extended hours at some rec centers with a lens on equity. Facing significant reductions.

Meredith- concerns about social distancing and limited hours, etc. Hope it's considered in decision making.

Molly- recommendation to think about how we can use more open space. With dedicated open spaces- maybe golf courses can be used. Reaching out to people in San Fran who have had some success with this.

Leslie- Would want to limit it to paved areas to have more space to walk. Regional parks are overrun and this could help alleviate it.

Fran- as a golfer, would need to know a lot more about this.

....

Lee- explains that the committee was thinking about this thoroughly and would be willing to change to non-lethal and consistent

Lisa- Possible state lethal, but not culling

Fran- reads the statement and shares that there was not enough notice and communication about the culling last year. So, whatever comes out of this tonight- we have consistent communication about the measures being taken.

Lisa- maybe too succinct and could call out exactly what we have seen as consistent and inconsistent.

Marla- If communication and working with the community is really important, then we need to make sure we keep all methods on the table.

Lynne- Asked for clarity about equity statement

Leslie- would hope to begin this conversation in June. Not immediately tied to budget recc.

David- would like to spend time on this at a summer meeting.

Florence- opportunity to inform the budget process.

Lisa- Point of Order- sounds like there are additional comments/ wording that needs to be adjusted. Sounds like this discussion is adding value to the document.

Noel- rec center availability is critical. Need to restore the rec center hours.

Leslie- asks for edits to be sent into chat box.

Happy- recommends- we delay the vote until the end of the meeting, pending language changes. Adopt principles

Leslie will work to incorporate changes to vote at end of meeting if possible.

Happy- maybe just include general principles.

8:00-

PRAB COMMITTEE REPORTS

David explains that we will skip committee reports and chair people need to submit notes from last meetings to Lee. David expresses gratitude for the DPR staff during this extraordinary time.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

During these times, we can see how important parks are to people in this city. Challenging to keep social distancing when everyone wants to be in the parks. Likely, everyone has been accommodating and people are generally trying their best to comply. And not using playgrounds and picnics has been hard. Working with state and local health departments to figure out next steps. Concerned that parks could be the venue for a surge in infections. Being very thoughtful and careful about releasing restrictions. Dept does not yet know how this will end and parks and rec centers could re-open. Safety is first and foremost. Lots of staff has been working on this and really stepped up in this time. Will continue working with PRAB as things change.

Goose Management Plan

Scott- posted goose management program on website for the past month. Looking across the country, no big cities have posted plans on how they manage geese in their parks. We are working on being transparent and consistent with our methods. Per recommendations from PRAB- we have created a team in P and R based on sustainability and resiliency. Not managing for just geese, but the eco system and other wild life and people.

Includes:

Resiliency plan

Landscape conversions

Lake and gulch restoration.

Vicki Vargas Madrid-

***Presentation attached separately.**

Various methods used to control population of geese. Many years ago, used goose relocation. Now have a multi-strategy approach. Human health, water quality, conflicts,

Reviews the tactics used to try to discourage geese in our parks. Have been using these strategies for 15 years with great success.

Resident goose population- born in our parks system- they become in printed into Denver parks. They are geese that are not migrating. We have created a perfect habitat- they no longer need to migrate. Resident geese don't scare easily, migratory geese respond to hazing.

Targeting geese in parks where they are a problem. 14 parks- 9 main ones.
Working with other states and organizations

Egg oiling season is not over yet, have already oiled 1000 eggs.

Have not decided if there will be culling, need more data.

Continue to monitor on goals.

Can see that resident populations have gone down and that is due to all the methods being used.

Q & A

Fran- Explain what the molting is and how that is part of the process.

Vicki- Time in summer when geese are flightless, loose flight feathers for 3-4 weeks in the summer. This is when we cull.

Lisa- egg oiling in 2002- was inconsistently employed.

When did PR last do a population study?

Lisa- Asks many questions from constituents related to geese management plan (Questions were captured in document provided by Lisa Calderon after the meeting adjourned):

- Vicki Vargas-Madrid stated that Sloan's Lake and Garfield Lake Park do not have "sustainable" numbers yet without any explanation. What does "sustainable numbers" mean and according to what scientific study that weighs environmental impact?

- Can DPR Executive Director Haynes, Deputy Manager Gilmore, and Wildlife Manager Vargas-Madrid explain why it was necessary to remove the possibility for meaningful engagement with the public on a topic that is deemed as “complicated and controversial issue”?
- Can DPR Executive Director Haynes, Deputy Manager Gilmore, and Wildlife Manager Vargas-Madrid explain why they are demonstrating a lack of commitment to exercising transparency and accountability? Can they explain how they would account for a transparent and accountable process?
- Can DPR Executive Director Haynes, Deputy Manager Gilmore, and Wildlife Manager Vargas-Madrid provide supporting evidence for those claims? Evidence cannot be at the level of anecdote or minimal instances. There must be enough evidence to suggest that Canada geese create conflicts.
- Can DPR provide substantiated local evidence to supports its claims of conflict?
- Should there not be an acknowledgement of how DPR’s management program is impacting a sentient species and thereby the park ecosystem?
- Can DPR provide the methodology used to support the above stated claims about human behavior and preference?
- Can DPR explain what scientific measures are being applied to determine what is “manageable” for a park habitat? And, why has habitat replaced that of ecosystem? Can she provide current scientific evidence that can support her claim?
- Why does the current program not account for environmental variables or climate change on the impact of Canada geese?
- Not enough time to interact or connect with public.

WildEarth Guardians have been leading a campaign against USDA Wildlife Services to update the science behind its operations in the Western states: https://montanafreepress.org/2020/05/14/wildlife-services-to-cut-back-killings-pending-environmental-review/?fbclid=IwAR0O3f5s_3tsu5nchzr7YoA9sLrJqqV0u69TmTHDFef75UENuoWJA8Wccs4

Vote on recommendations to the executive director

David made a motion to vote on recommendations. Marla seconded it.

Those in favor of adopting recommendations to executive director with changes discussed tonight: 13

Fran Coleman
 David Richter
 Lee Rains Thomas
 Marla Rodriguez
 Trena Marsal
 Florence Navarro
 Jack Paterson
 Leslie Twarogowski
 Meredith Levy
 Molly McKinley
 Lynne Mason
 Frank Rowe
 Noel Copeland

Those opposed: 1
 Lisa Calderon

Not present to vote: 2

Tash Mitchell
Samantha Villatoro

ADJOURNMENT

Beginning of public written statements

More Shared Streets and Car Free Parks in District 3- email Anna Burrell

I am emailing you to express my strong support for the expansion of Open and Shared Streets in Denver. This includes a permanent change to Denver Parks to continue to make them car-free.

This could be a huge advantage for Denver, especially if you coordinate with DEDO and make it a cross governmental effort because Denver is amazing and can absolutely coordinate a large project that will not only help beautify the city but it can also make dramatic strides in the right direction for our goals on clean air, clean cities, and healthy people.

The next part of this message has been copy and pasted however is still worth considering. We your people are speaking.

- - -

"A quick trip to our parks will illustrate why this is necessary. Watching families walk and ride safely is evidence enough. Parks should be accessible to all but this does not necessitate car travel within them.

Denver also saw a dramatic reduction in road violence while we implemented Shared Streets. It is imperative that we continue and expand the use of these streets so people in Denver can continue to walk and bike safely.

Please, let us build the city we want and not just keep the one we have. If this pandemic has shown us anything it is that we can act quickly and no longer can accept the status quo."

All the best,

Anna

More Shared Streets and Car Free Parks in District 3- email John Riecke

I am writing today to urge your support for the shared streets program currently being run by Denver DOTI at the direction of the mayor. This program, these few free streets, have shown Denverites what streets can be: places for people. Places of relaxation, places of socialization, places of safe and slow transportation.

It is often thought that we must make our streets available only to drivers. That the best use of our transportation network is to move many cars at high speed from one end of the city to the

other with no delay. These newly shared streets have shown that we can use them for so much more, with so much more joy, than we have done in the past.

Those blocks that we have designated for the use of all Denverites, not just those in cars, are quieter, happier places as a result. They have not unduly restricted traffic; any driver can use them, they must simply share them, safely and slowly, from one end to the other.

The mayor was recently asked if the newly opened streets would remain so after the current emergency is declared ended. He hesitated to commit one way or the other but I suspect that he fears a driver backlash to being denied domination of these few feet of pavement. It would be more than a shame to lose these linear parks, it would be irresponsible to revert them back to their previous use as neighborhood traffic sewers.

Denver has many stated goals, goals for mode-share, for the environment, for open space, for improving the livability of our neighborhoods. These streets help us meet those goals. They are the backbone from which to expand our efforts, the spark of an idea to spread across the city, giving space to our citizens and making their lives a little less stressful.

I'm asking you to express your support for our shared streets to the mayor and to ask him not to kill the program but rather to expand it. To enshrine safe, quiet streets for everyone in our lives and in our plans for the future.

I hope you'll join me as I urge the same to him directly.

From: Dr. Carole Woodall

To: Mr. David Richter and Dr. Lisa Calderon

Date: 15 May 2020

Time: 12:51 a.m.

Questions

1. It is disturbing that a 2019 cornerstone of the plan's success being "public support of DPR strategies" has been removed from the 2020 version. The removal of public engagement demonstrates lack of transparency and accountability to the public. On pg. 19, there is a one-sentence section on "Public Support through Education and Outreach." It states that DPR staff participates in events "to engage and inform the public about wildlife issues." The statement does not imply discussion.

Can DPR Executive Director Haynes, Deputy Manager Gilmore, and Wildlife Manager Vargas-Madrid explain why it was necessary to remove the possibility for meaningful engagement with the public on a topic that is deemed as "complicated and controversial issue"? (pg. 3)

The first sentence of the introduction is a declarative statement, and is used in both the 2019 and 2020 versions. So, the 2020 version frames "goose management" exactly the same way as the 2019 version. The difference is that the 2020 version negates the possibility for citizens to have a voice in the process. By the conclusion of the document, the intention is for the public to be told.

2. Transparency should not be a mere buzzword, and should extend to Denver Parks and Recreations, especially on issues deemed as "complicated and controversial." The mayor's Transparent Denver initiative

commits to being open, accessible, and visible to the city's residents.¹ The idea of public input is not necessary for minor day-to-day events, according to Denver Parks and Recreation Public Engagement, Communication and Notification Policy (PECAN). The public does not expect to be consulted on decisions regarding minor administrative actions. PECAN does not list the extermination of the park's wildlife as the conclusive means of controlling population as an exception. Lethal removal of Canada geese warrants public notification and engagement.

Can DPR Executive Director Haynes, Deputy Manager Gilmore, and Wildlife Manager Vargas-Madrid explain why they are demonstrating a lack of commitment to exercising transparency and accountability? Can they explain how they would account for a transparent and accountable process?

3. The logic of the 2020 RCGDMP should provide a supported argument that justifies the conclusion of Canada geese removal. The 4-paragraph introduction presents how DPR principally understands the role of Canada geese in the parks. There is a reference to the "aesthetic appreciation of the species" (pg. 3), and a statement of DPR's intention to not eliminate Canada geese (pg. 7). There is a logical misstep. The document emphasizes Canada geese and human conflict. The word *conflict* implies two parties being in opposition, having opposing needs or demands. There are eleven (11) unique usages of "conflict" in the document with three references in the introduction:
 1. Growing populations of resident Canada geese have resulted in "increased conflicts with human activities." (pg. 3)
 2. "Increases in the human population along the Front Range have contributed to human-geese conflict." (pg. 3)
 3. Increased geese population "creates conflict with people and causes property damage." (pg. 3)

The other references to conflict include: "steady increase in conflicts" (pg. 5) "resolving conflict" (pg. 6), "park user conflicts" (pg. 6), "minimize human/geese conflict" (pg. 7), "minimal wildlife conflict" (pg. 7), "Canada geese issues and conflicts" (pg. 8), and "create conflicts elsewhere" (pg. 14).

Other words that suggest conflict include references to the geese as "aggressive" and as a "nuisance".² A September 5th 2019 email from Wildlife Manager Vicki Vargas-Madrid states the same claim for the lethal take of the Canada geese as "human-wildlife conflicts." In the fall of 2019, CGPC researched goose attacks through the Colorado Open Records Act. Our research indicated there was only ONE aggressive goose incident in the last 5 years, which occurred on private property, not in a park. It was a mother protecting her eggs.

Can DPR Executive Director Haynes, Deputy Manager Gilmore, and Wildlife Manager Vargas-Madrid provide supporting evidence for those claims? Evidence cannot be at the level of anecdote or minimal instances. There must be enough evidence to suggest that Canada geese create conflicts.

4. On pg. 5, the reference to support the idea of human-geese conflict is a 1998 scientific article, which does not account for current and local environmental variables impacting park ecosystems. The citation is outdated and irrelevant.

Can DPR provide substantiated local evidence to supports its claims of conflict?

¹ The official website for Transparent Denver provides definitions: **transparency** means "access to information about what is really happening," and **accountability** means "ways to hold decision-makers accountable for the decisions we make." Refer to: <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/transparent-denver.html>

² The 2019 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Depredation Permit, Permit Number: MB715492-1, section G, reads: "You may not use this authority for situations in which migratory birds are merely causing a nuisance." DPR's response might be that migratory birds are not being killed for being a nuisance. Resident Canada geese are being killed. However, in a March 2020 meeting between DPR representatives and CGPC representatives, I asked a question to Gilmore and Uhing if they could determine the difference between the two groups given changes to bird behavior and migratory patterns due to environmental factors and climate change. Gilmore and Uhing responded that they did not know the difference. Their response was that resident Canada geese are those which are here during the summer. How is it that *The Game Plan* recognizes these factors, but the GMP does not.

5. The 2020 RCGDMP does not demonstrate any knowledge of Canada geese sentience. The program only posits how humans perceive the geese, for example as “aesthetic appreciation” (pg. 3) The program provides information on biology and reproduction (pg. 4) and flyways (pg. 4). However, the program does not reflect how the lethal removal of Canada geese by putting them in orange crates, by not being able to protect their young, by losing their young impacts them. Nobel laureate ethologist Konrad Lorenz wrote, “A Greylag goose that has lost its partner shows all the symptoms that [developmental psychologist] John Bowlby has described in young human children in his famous book *Infant Grief* ...the eyes sink deep into their sockets, and the individual has an overall drooping experience, literally letting the head hang...”³

Should there not be an acknowledgement of how DPR’s management program is impacting a sentient species and thereby the park ecosystem?

6. On pg. 3, the 2020 version states: “Some people are tolerant of any inconveniences resulting from a coexistence with wildlife while others accept it at differing level. Some people consider Canada geese to be a valuable resource and have an aesthetic appreciation [...], while other consider them to be nuisance because of their prolific nature, site tenacity, longevity, size and tolerance of human activities.”

I am struck by the usage of “tolerant” “tolerance” “tolerate”, which the program defines “tolerate” as “subjective and means something different to each person.” (pg. 7) It is an odd word choice and incorrect. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*,

- The first recorded reference in English was 1531, and meant means to endure or sustain (pain or hardship).
- In forestry, tolerate came to mean “the capacity of a tree to endure shade.”

OED provides a rich history for the usage of “tolerate” in a variety of fields. The idea of tolerate suggests specificity not subjectivity. Then, there is the problem of referring to people by an unknown “some”.

Can DPR provide the methodology used to support the above stated claims about human behavior and preference?

7. “DPR’s management program strives to maintain a population or a reduction in goose numbers and related problems to a level that the park habitat can tolerate.”

In Vargas-Madrid’s presentation, she referenced that Sloan’s and Garfield were “over objective.” Likewise, she mentioned that 30 geese was a manageable number.

Can DPR explain what scientific measures are being applied to determine what is “manageable” for a park habitat? And, why has habitat replaced that of ecosystem? Can she provide current scientific evidence that can support her claim?

8. A claim is just a claim without supporting documentation and evidence that reflects the current environmental variables impacting park ecosystems. Recognition of the environmental impact of human behavior is stated in *Game Plan for a Healthy City*: “The science is clear, our planet is facing a global crisis attributed largely to human behavior that is changing climate patterns around the world. The environmental emergency threatens to alter our normal landscape, limiting where we can live, where we can grow our food and how we are able to access natural resources.”⁴ Yet, the 2020 Goose Management Plan does not account for the impact that climate patterns are possibly having on migratory and resident populations of Canada geese. The plan does not account for environmental variables or climate change.

Why does the current program not account for environmental variables or climate change on the impact of Canada geese?

³ Mark Bekoff, “Killing Denver’s Sentient Geese is Flawed in Many Way” in *Psychology Today* (5 July 2019), <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/animal-emotions/201907/killing-denvers-sentient-geese-is-flawed-in-many-ways>

⁴ Denverright and DPR, *Game Plan for a Healthy City*, May 2019, 10.

9. I have a comment about the “recommendation bullet points”. Listening to the bullet point discussion was concerning. In particular, I could not understand why members of the advisory board and the Sustainability committee were insistent on the use of consistent. The word does not provide any clarity or suggest transparency. As Scott Gilmore spoke, I then understood what he meant. He made note that he and Vargas-Madrid went to speak to groups when asked, answered emails and phone messages. To him, “they” are consistent in their correspondence. In this instance, consistent does not imply transparency not does the word demonstrate open and effective communication with the public on issues deemed as “controversial”. Although the bullet point recommendation was passed, I would encourage that the board make necessary modifications. The current wording is vague and opaque, which does not follow the initiative for a Transparent Denver. I will send in a further suggestion. I need to obtain the current phrasing
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13 May 2020

First Statement delivered at Denver Parks Citizen Advisory Board virtual meeting

Second Statement prepared for Denver Parks Citizen Advisory Board

Prepared by: Dr. Carole Woodall, CGPC Core Team Leader

First Statement

In 1962 Rachel Carson galvanized the nation with the publication of *Silent Spring*. In this work of scientific journalism, she opened with a story entitled “A Fable for Tomorrow” in which a small town in the heart of America undergoes a terrifying transformation. She writes, “There was a strange stillness. The birds, for example – where had they gone? Many people spoke of them, puzzled and disturbed. The feeding station in the backyards were deserted. The few birds seen anywhere were moribund; they trembled violently and could not fly. It was a spring without voices.”⁵

The image of a silent spring could very easily have been set in Washington Park, City Park, Sloan’s Lake, and Garfield Lake Park in 2019. On June 27th, Denver citizens who frequent the parks for sport, relaxation, and watching the Canada geese parents raise their young questioned “where are they”? Where had the Canada geese gone? Rachel Carson writes that the birds had not been silenced of their own accord. “No witchcraft, no enemy action had silenced the rebirth of new life. [...] The people had done it themselves.”⁶ In 2019, Denver Parks and Recs in contract with USDA-APHIS/Wildlife Services decided on the lethal forced removal of 1,662 Canada geese – adults, juveniles, and goslings – without any meaningful engagement with the public.

The 2019 Goose Management Program states on pg. 13 that “besides hazing and egg treatment, the next most important part of a Resident Canada Goose Management Plan is public outreach and support. The public’s understanding of the specific measures being performed, and their support of those strategies are necessary. [...] Public acceptance of lethal control [of Canada geese] will also be sought.”

It is disturbing that a 2019 cornerstone of the plan’s success being “public support of DPR strategies” has been removed from the 2020 version. The removal of public engagement demonstrates lack of transparency and accountability to the public. On pg. 19, there is a one-sentence section on “Public Support through Education and Outreach.” It states that DPR staff participates in events “to engage and inform the public about wildlife issues.” The statement does not imply discussion.

Transparency should not be a mere buzzword, and should extend to Denver Parks and Recreations, especially on issues deemed as “complicated and controversial.” The mayor’s Transparent Denver initiative commits to being open, accessible, and visible to the city’s residents.⁷ The idea of public input is not necessary for minor day-to-day events, according to Denver Parks and Recreation Public Engagement, Communication and Notification Policy (PECAN). The public does not expect to be consulted on decisions regarding minor administrative actions. PECAN does

⁵ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston and New York: A Mariner Book/Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 2.

⁶ Ibid., 3.

⁷ The official website for Transparent Denver provides the following definitions: **transparency** means “access to information about what is really happening,” and **accountability** means “ways to hold decision-makers accountable for the decisions we make.” Refer to, <https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/transparent-denver.html>

not list the extermination of the park's wildlife as the conclusive means of controlling population as an exception. Lethal removal of Canada geese warrants public notification and engagement. ⁸

Fifty years ago it was Rachel Carson's campaign against the use of DDT pesticide sprays. Eventually, public outcry led to the ban of DDT. Last year, there was public outcry against the lethal take of the Canada

geese. DPR's continuing lack of transparency and accountability is demonstrated again in the 2020 version. Not only are the Canada geese being silenced, but also the public's voice is being silenced.

Email from Liz Holland

Comments and Questions

Hi this is Liz Holland, member of CGPC and Friends of Animals. Thank you for taking time to repair communication with the public and including individuals, you are making a very positive impact on the PRAB board and I greatly appreciate the waves you are making by standing up for public interest. I spoke about the difference between resident and migratory geese, and the importance of banding. Banding will also help determine age of geese, and who will be able to relearn how to migrate. Once I have my statement finalized, I will send it to you. Please see the comments and questions shared from the 5/13/20 meeting below: Questions and comments to be addressed:

- Egg oiling started in 2002 and was inconsistently deployed – in the 2019 report, showed only oiled eggs at 6 parks, stabilizing eggs at 30000 per year. should be doing 10,000 per year.
- 3100 in 2019, graph shows 3900.
- 5600 in Denver, and 1600 killed last year, with an addition of killing 4000 means they are planning to eliminate the entire population.
- Concerns from co-opting volunteers and bird conservancy who did their own surveys, and oiling events—not quite an equal partnership yet
- Water quality from goose poop is inaccurate/ Ecoli levels in co rivers have not changed in 15 years. No evidence in the program, have to think about it as an entire ecosystem.
- Report does not address climate change.
- Legal definition of migratory bird is that it is a migratory species, would like to know what definition y'all are using.

⁸ Carole Woodall, "Considering Transparency," presented at "Geese and People: Protection and Policy" forum, sponsored by The Institute for Human-Animal Connection and The Center for Social Science Informed Animal Law, 29 January 2020.

- Definition of sustainability, how do you know what is sustainable?
- Egg oiling Graph inconsistent from reports
- Need to Send questions also in to sustainability committee
- Lack of transparency and communication remains a concern.
- Volunteers who bring up controversial issues, do not get engagement or a cool airing, even though they still are willing to help.
- Scott stressed that “when the goose group contacted DPR about volunteering, there was no hesitation and that they went through one training. After that covid really hit, so we did shut down the volunteer effort. We cannot take the chance of people out and about possibly getting infected.” “I also understand that there are things that we state and actions that we take, that they are not supportive of and will never be supportive of.” “We will do the best we can to continue with engaging with them, and working with them, and being responsive.”
- How is the reduction from 400-500 geese from 4 parks to under 250 sustainable?
- Concern: There isn’t a time to interact with these issues and get information to the public. (Outreach committee)**
- Lisa shared the public feel this presentation is not an engagement opportunity*****needs further discussion
- Fran suggests questions also be sent to sustainability committee. Offers to be contacted ahead of time). Sustainability subcommittee meetings are Last Friday monthly/1pm online (link to be obtained)
- Language edit to white paper made:
 - Significant increase in management methods, and consistent communication in community engagement regarding wildlife management.

Next meeting: unannounced, likely 2nd wed next month

Courtney DeWinter- Canada Geese Protection Colorado

PUBLIC COMMENT-

May 13, 2020 – Denver Parks & Rec Advisory Board Meeting

The following public comment was presented to the Denver Parks & Rec Advisory Board at the May 13, 2020 virtual meeting of PRAB, from Courtney DeWinter, Core Team Leader – Canada Geese Protection Colorado

Canada Geese Protection Colorado asks the Denver Parks & Rec Citizen Advisory Board to help us get timely & accurate answers from Denver Parks management.

Denver Parks is presenting the 2020 Goose Management Plan tonight. There are significant & disturbing changes between the 2019 & 2020 versions of this plan, listed as follows:

First Disturbing Change to the DPR Goose Management Document:

This document is no longer called a “Goose Management Guide.” It’s now a Goose Damage Management Guide.

Question for Denver Parks & Rec:

- Why has the language changed from “goose “management” to “goose damage management?”

Second Disturbing Change to the DPR Goose Management Document:

In February 2020, Canada Geese Protection Colorado publicly announced that Denver Parks created the goose overpopulation problem because they didn’t oil goose eggs for 9 out of the last 17 years. Instead of acknowledging this, Denver Parks management has removed the information showing their lack of execution of the Denver Parks egg oiling program from the document altogether.

Question for Denver Parks & Rec:

- Why was the egg oiling information omitted from the 2020 DPR Goose Management document?

Third Disturbing Change to the DPR Goose Management Document:

Denver Parks has removed ALL 2019 content promising opportunities for public comment & engagement.

Question for Denver Parks & Rec:

How does removing all promises of public outreach & engagement from the 2020 guide fulfill Mayor Hancock’s written policies of a “Transparent Denver” and state Sunshine laws regarding public discussion?

We respectfully request that the Denver Parks & Rec Citizen Advisory obtain answers for us.
Thank you.

Email comments to Arthur

From Kenyon Moon

My name is Kenyon Moon, and I have a brief comment to add to tonight's discussion on goose management. As I am unable to be at the meeting in person this evening, I am submitting a written comment.

While I am drawing in part on my experience both as a naturalist and working for Wild Bird Rehab to develop this information, the statement should be considered my own and not that of the organization.

While I will likely make regular contributions to the discussion in coming months and years, tonight I would like to touch on only two questions of the tens we receive on a regular basis.

Question 1: How many goslings do you get, and what can we learn about nesting habits from them?

Answer: we do receive goslings orphaned for a variety of reasons; as far as possible, we attempt to join them to new families in the area. This year, the public has asked on more than one occasion if we can re-home them outside of Denver. We do not know whether their concerns of future culls are valid, but we do honor those requests as best as we can.

As to how many goslings, and what we can learn from them, yes-- there is information we can learn from these surrenders, but as May is the peak of gosling season and the situation is developing daily, I would be beyond my professional responsibilities to discuss specifics at tonight's meeting.

Question 2: Aren't geese everywhere? If geese are everywhere, is there anything we can do that is NOT active intervention? Can we reach populations like are at the Arsenal without active maintenance?

Answer: Geese are common in the area, and several plausible passive actions are regularly batted about in discussion, but I want to be more specific.

In answering the question: "Where are the geese?" a modest break-down of data from eBird (a citizen science website dedicated to bird-watching) confirms that – yes – the Arsenal does experience a smaller breeding and molt population of geese compared to Denver parks, but the same data also reveals a much more surprising hint that may allow us progress toward lower numbers with less "maintenance heavy" actions such as egg oiling and lethal take. Breaking down observations by hundreds of people across dozens of sites around the metro-area suggests that most parks in surrounding metro-area counties with both water features and turf-grass as their primary attraction ALSO have substantially lower spring and summer goose populations than Denver's big parks, sometimes nearly as low as the population present at the Arsenal.

Which brings us to questions not yet asked--

- Has any survey been conducted of landscape, human activity, dog activity, and other variables been done to compare, and possibly decipher, what geese are selecting for in Denver parks over parks in the suburbs? Parks that you or I would call similar to Denver Parks?

- Are these populations acceptable to residents who frequent those parks, and if so, which parks?

These are questions I will be seeking to answer in coming years. I will forward what I find to the City, and it is my hope that the city will both pursue information on their own and make use of this information as management efforts continue to evolve.

Thank you

Email to Dr. Calderon
From Kenyon Moon

Greetings, Boardmember Calderon.

Dr. Woodall has been asking me for numbers related to Canada Geese that have come through Wild Bird Rehab this spring.

I have no answers, but I may be able to at least offer some information.

In 2014 we received about 43 goslings, of which 4 came from somewhere in the suburbs, and at least 16 were from reported from Denver parks. Sloan's Lake (7), Washington Park (8), City Park (1). Some of the remaining 20 or so from Denver neighborhood addresses, and several have addresses that look like parks, but I've not looked in the old files to see if there are any further notes not listed in the database. In other words:

- Of about 43 goslings
 - All but about 4 came from Denver,
 - Of those roughly 39+,
 - At least 16 were from Denver parks, possibly more (some only list cross streets, some use a park address, some use a park name), and
 - The remainder were a combination of business and residential addresses, and a few of these may have used the address of the park to report the origin

The last year for which we have complete data is 2019:

- In 2019 we received (to my memory) 14 goslings, 4 from Denver, only one from the parks.
- 2018 we received a total of 15 goslings, 5 from Denver, none from parks.

In 2017 we were open, but not until late enough in the year that we missed gosling season.

We were closed in 2015 and 2016.

For 2020: To my knowledge, we have received calls for 17 goslings as of 5/16, and most of these have come through us and either been rehomed or transferred to Greenwood Wildlife. Note that this number may have changed since I left Saturday. (This is updated since the PRAB meeting, at which point we had 14). To my knowledge, 5 of the 17 are from Denver, none of these from parks so far.

I understand there may be some concern that the city and/or Wildlife Services are working in the parks in some way during the pandemic. I have no information or evidence either way with this. I can, however, note that:

- I would expect that interference close to or after hatching would result in an increase in orphaned geese, especially from the parks. This has not happened.
- If there are efforts against geese on nests prior to hatching activity, I would have no information on my end-- this information would come from people monitoring the parks, ostensibly for changes to established nests. If these geese are being removed, the eggs won't come to us unless they are found and/or they are close enough to hatching (in which case, see previous).
- If nesting geese are being removed, it is likely that eggs are being taken as well as nest material scattered. If they are simply being chased away from nests, I would (assume) that eggs are being removed to discourage the parents from returning. I would have no information on this, unfortunately, this would also have to come from people monitoring the parks.
- This may be happening, and we may yet be able to uncover hints in the data we collect from goslings, but this is not something I can do with a partial dataset.

Unfortunately, I can't offer any answers on this and can hardly even form questions as we are still receiving goslings a few times a week, and the numbers (and related statistics) will continue to change in ways that will change the nature of the concerns or questions that may need to be raised. I simply do not know, yet, how to offer you questions (much less answers) until we get to the end of nesting season in another week or two.

In the meanwhile, I hope this information helps you with whatever inquiry you are pursuing.

May 13, 2020

Personal Statement by Liz Holland

A Need For Banding and Updated Studies on Migration of Canada Geese

In a March CGPC and DPR meeting it was asked, "how can you tell the difference between resident and migratory Canada geese," and there was no definitive answer other than "we

know the resident geese are the ones who stay here in the summer.”

However, billions of birds are shifting their migration patterns. Canada geese are migrating later and may be remaining in Denver’s parks for longer durations; blurring the lines of who should truly be defined as migratory or resident.¹

Visually, there are no obvious physical differences in appearance between migratory and resident Canada geese. There is no difference in their brown bodies, black necks, and white chinstraps.

As shared in the April 3, 2020 Denver Parks Resident Goose Management Program, banded populations have not been implemented or studied since the year 2000. Surveyed counts without bands are not enough. This ultimately presents the issue that non-target goose populations potentially could be affected by any management action or program aimed at resident Canada goose populations at any given time. As climate change lengthens warmer seasons, standard months to avoid such a conflict may be changing, and an updated study is overdue.

The ability to confidently distinguish between the two is imperative to understand how migratory populations may respond well to relocation, which has been previously expressed as an unsuccessful method in Denver; yet successful in other communities such as Salt Lake City, UT. ²

The lifespan of Canada geese is between 10-24 years. According to the Canadian government, it is the younger geese who have learned to stay and congregate in the warmer temperatures of the US.³ However, these populations still have adaptability to relearn how to migrate from other geese, if relocated strategically as proven by Salt Lake City who have successfully relocated 6,000 adult geese and 6,000 young geese since 2006.⁴ Only 1% of the young geese reportedly returned to their original sites.⁵ This solution even involved volunteer work from young adults and children. Every effort is important. We owe it to the geese to better understand the changes in their patterns, so as to help them regain their familiarity and access to other resources than urban parks, not kill them.

¹ Baumann, Joella, 2019. *You Know Who Else Has Moved to Denver in Doves? Geese. They love it here.* CPR, <https://www.cpr.org/2018/12/31/you-know-who-else-has-moved-to-denver-in-doves-geese-they-love-it-here/>

² Associated Press, 2018, *Urban Geese Roundup Under Way to Move Birds to the Wild*, US News, <https://www.usnews.com/news/beststates/utah/articles/2018-06-06/urban-geese-roundup-under-way-to-move-birds-to-the-wild>

³ Ray, C., 2015, *Some Canada Geese Are Losing Migratory Instincts*, The New York Times, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/06/science/some-canada-geese-are-losing-migratory-instincts.html>