

# C O N N E C T I C U T R I V E R

## S t o r m w a t e r C o m m i t t e e

October 21, 2019

Hello,

Many communities here in the Pioneer Valley, are subject to more stringent federal stormwater permit requirements that came into effect last July. This permit requires communities to reduce contaminated storm flows to local rivers, streams, and lakes.

Why should you care?

**If Canada Geese have made your property their year-round home**, it is likely that you are familiar with how problematic goose waste can be. The United States Department of Agriculture findings show that goose waste is a major source of contaminants such as *E. coli*. When it rains, goose waste dissolves into storm flows and moves to the nearest local waters, causing contamination and excessive algal growth, making our rivers, streams, and lakes unsafe for recreational use.

Perhaps the most important action you can take is to get people to stop feeding the geese on your property. Feeding encourages birds to stay in one place and can increase flock size.

We also recommend two strategies to manage what are known as "residential" geese. These geese are here year-round, including notably May through September. This population essentially began in the 1960s from captive migratory birds used to attract migrant birds for hunters. The offspring of these captive birds never learned to migrate and populations have boomed ever since.

One strategy entails reducing the population of residential geese, while the other strategy is directed at decreasing stormwater contamination impacts on local waters. It is important to combine these strategies for best effect. Coordinating with other property owners in the region to follow similar practices could make for powerful reductions of residential geese populations overall.

### **Reducing the residential goose population**

Birth control - Addle eggs, including shaking or covering them in corn oil, to render them unviable. This requires a special permit from MassFish&Wildlife. See link below.: With repetition each year and coordination across an area, a favorable outcome could be realized in some 6 years.

<https://www.mass.gov/files/documents/2>

### **Decreasing stormwater impacts on local waters**

Landscape modifications - Vegetated barriers can reduce direct storm flows into local waters, while also making areas less attractive to geese. These barriers reduce sightlines, impede access between water and lawn areas, and reduce the size of the lawn (foraging) area. *See diagrams below.*

Town of Agawam

Town of Belchertown

City of Chicopee

Town of East Longmeadow

City of Easthampton

Town of Granby

Town of Hadley

City of Holyoke

Town of Longmeadow

Town of Ludlow

City of Northampton

Town of Palmer

Town of South Hadley

Town of Southampton

Town of Southwick

City of Springfield

Town of West Springfield

City of Westfield

Town of Wilbraham

University of  
Massachusetts, Amherst

Pioneer Valley  
Planning Commission

We understand that managing residential Canada Geese can be difficult as it requires persistence. One source of help is the USDA Wildlife Services in Amherst, which offers technical assistance and operational management. You can reach them at: 413-253-2403.

Please also contact Patty Gambarini at the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. She facilitates our coalition of municipalities regulated under this federal stormwater permit and is interested in how our group might support landowners on the issue of geese in the Pioneer Valley region. Her e-mail is: [pgambarini@pvpc.org](mailto:pgambarini@pvpc.org).

We will continue to reach out to you as part of our stormwater permit compliance work.

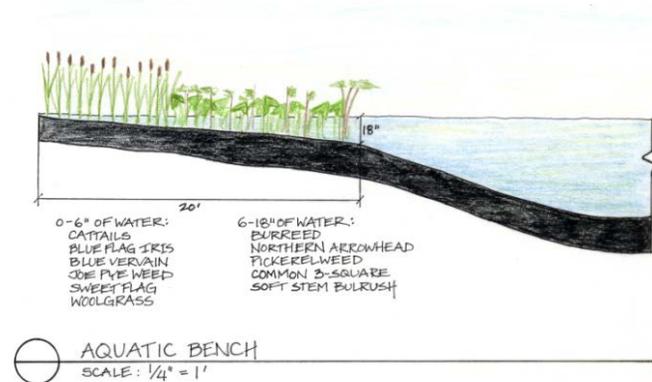
Sincerely,



Kevin Chaffee, Committee Chairman  
Natural Resources Manager, City of Springfield



Randal Brown, Committee Vice Chairman  
Public Works Director, Town of Southwick



*Examples of landscaping along water's edge that both helps to reduce direct stormwater flows and also creates barriers for goose movement from water to foraging area. Note that to do landscape along water's edge it is important to consult with your local Conservation Commission.*