

Source:

Mike Hood



TO: City Council
FROM: City Manager and Staff
DATE: April 2, 2008
RE: Stephens Lake Swim Buoys and Lane Lines



SUMMARY: At the March 17th City Council meeting, the Council requested a staff report as to why the swim buoys and lanes lines used to define the swimming area at Stephens Lake were not removed from the lake at the end of the swimming season. The primary reason the buoys and swim lines are not removed is that both the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Missouri Department of Conservation Department have recommended leaving the buoys and lines in the water year round to help discourage the park's geese population from using the sand beach area.

Fiscal Impact

YES

NO

DISCUSSION: The first two years Stephens Lake was open for swimming, park staff removed the buoys and lane lines at the close of the swim season. Then, as the geese population continued to grow at the park, staff noticed that the geese preferred the beach area. Staff met with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and MO Dept of Conservation to discuss goose control measures and their agents recommended that the Department leave the lane lines and buoys up to discourage the geese from staying in the beach area. Apparently, geese prefer open water and the lane lines are supposed to act as a hindrance to the geese.

Other Info.

Each year prior to the opening of the swimming beach, park maintenance staff uses a boat to re-set the buoys and at that time, cleans the buoys. At the Twin Lakes Recreation Area, the Department's other lake swimming facility, staff does remove the buoys and lane lines each year as the swimming lake is drained to assist with geese and fish population control. The problem with goose control measures is that one action, by itself, normally will not prove successful as geese quickly adapt. However, such an action combined with other multiple control measures will help. This year, staff has also enlisted the assistance of a border collie to help keep the geese from nesting at Stephens. This is a proven method that many departments are utilizing and is highly recommended by humane organizations such as geese peace. Staff is not certain how effective the buoys and lane lines are in controlling the goose population, but it is one action out of many that are currently being taken at Stephens to help control the goose population.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the buoys and lane lines continue to be left in the water during the winter months to assist in the control of the park's goose population as suggested by the Department of Conservation and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Buoys

and lane lines will be cleaned each spring by park staff prior to the opening of the beach area for the swimming season.

SUGGESTED COUNCIL ACTION: If Council concurs with the staff recommendation, direct staff to proceed in that manner. If Council prefers other action be taken, provide staff with direction.