



Legislation Text

File #: 22-0770R, **Version:** 1

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING APPROVAL AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOOSE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE CITY OF DULUTH

CITY PROPOSAL:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the proper city officials hereby approve the Goose Management Plan for the City of Duluth, and authorize implementation of the plan.

FURTHER RESOLVED, the Natural Resource Commission unanimously voted to approve the Goose Management Plan for the City of Duluth, attached hereto as Exhibit A.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: This resolution authorizes approval and implementation of the City of Duluth Goose Management Plan as required by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources prior to any removal or relocation of Canadian Geese outside of regular hunting season.

The only specific goose management action within the City of Duluth that is anticipated at present is lethal removal of adult geese from the St. Louis River Estuary population in the period late June to early July in order to achieve the inter-agency goal of restoring 275 acres of wild rice to the estuary by 2025. All currently planned goose management activities within the City of Duluth will be managed and funded by partner natural resource management agencies and carried out by Minnesota DNR, Wisconsin DNR, and/or their contractor. The City has no specific expectations at this time to plan, manage, fund, or undertake goose management activities of its own.

The City and its federal, state, and tribal partners wish to restore wild rice for ecological and cultural purposes. Natural resource scientists have deemed lethal goose management a necessary means to that end. To date, extensive efforts and investments at wild rice restoration in the estuary have been stymied by Canadian Geese whose heavy feeding has effectively prevented wild rice from reaching the level of maturity necessary to enable self-sustaining natural propagation. Years-long efforts by partner agencies to use non-lethal goose management techniques in the City of Superior proved to be unsuccessful due to the vastness of the estuary and the age composition of the local goose population. Lethal removal of adult geese on the Wisconsin side of the estuary carried out during the 2021 and 2022 molting periods has been more effective. Because the estuary goose population spans both states, a parallel program of goose management on the Minnesota side of the estuary has been deemed necessary to achieve wild rice restoration goals.

It is anticipated that the agencies would use lethal techniques to remove up to 300 adult geese from the Minnesota side of the estuary at the beginning of summer 2023. Geese would be herded into pens during their flightless molting phase in late June and early July then humanely euthanized. Euthanized geese would then be donated to agencies including the Lake Superior Zoo and the Wildlife Science Center as feed for captive non-avian predators.

As written, the City of Duluth Goose Management also permits the City to manage, or authorize the management of, geese that are causing property damage and public health hazards on City-owned land. At this time, the City has no intent to authorize or pursue goose management for purposes other than wild rice restoration.