

R-8: Residential Animal Waste

Animal feces that enters lakes, streams or Puget Sound begins to decay, using up oxygen and releasing ammonia (nutrients). Low oxygen levels and ammonia combined with warm water can kill fish. Nutrients encourage weed and algae growth, and contribute to low oxygen and high pH in waters we use for swimming, boating, and fishing. Most importantly, feces and fecal contaminated wash water can carry viruses and bacteria that could cause disease and lead to beach or shellfish harvesting closures.

Potential pollutants can include but are not limited to fecal coliform bacteria, nutrients, oxygen demanding substances, PCBs, and sediment.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) are required by King County Water Quality Code (KCC 9.12). If the BMPs included here are not enough to prevent contamination of surface water and stormwater, you will be required to take additional measures.

Supplemental BMPs – Pet Waste

- Promptly pick up and dispose of your pet waste when away from home.
- Regularly pick up pet waste deposited on your property.
- Put pet waste in a securely closed bag and deposit it in the trash. Do not place pet waste in yard waste containers because pet waste may carry diseases, and composting may not kill disease-causing organisms.
- Do not compost or use pet waste as fertilizer. Harmful bacteria, worms, and parasites that can transmit disease can live in the soil for years even after the solid portion of the pet waste has dissolved.
- When cleaning out cages and kennels, dispose of wash water down the toilet or a mop sink. Otherwise, wash directly over lawn areas or make sure the wash water drains to a vegetated area.
- Bathe pets indoors or in a manner that wash water won't be discharged to storm drain systems, ditches, or surface waters.

Required BMPs – Goose Waste

- If possible, pick up goose waste using shovels, brooms, rakes, power sweepers, and trash cans. Properly dispose of goose waste in the garbage.
- Do not blow, sweep, or wash goose waste into surface waters or stormwater drainage systems.
- Regularly clean goose waste from areas of chronic deposition.

Supplemental BMPs – Pet Pharmaceuticals and Pesticides

- Do not dispose of unused pet pharmaceuticals in a toilet or down a sink.
- Pet pharmaceuticals can be disposed of at several medicine return drop-boxes located throughout the county. Refer to www.kingcountysecuremedicinereturn.org for guidelines and to locate a drop-box near you.

- Pet pesticides, such as flea prevention, cannot be disposed of at a medicine return drop-box. Pesticides should be taken to at a local hazardous waste drop-off location. Refer to www.hazwastehelp.org for guidelines and to find a drop-off location near you.

Supplemental BMPs – Goose Waste

- Do not feed wild geese or other waterfowl.
- Change areas of chronic accumulation of goose waste from goose friendly to goose resistant. Reduce lawn areas and increase the height of shoreline vegetation (tall grass, shrubs) as geese are reluctant to walk through tall vegetation.
- Geese's favorite food is new shoots of grass. Let grass grow to six inches or taller. Stop fertilizing and watering lawn in areas of geese accumulation to reduce the palatability of the lawn.
- Create a natural geese barrier of 20 to 100 feet of herbaceous vegetation at least 3 feet in height to discourage geese. A narrow, winding path through the plantings will allow for beach access, while preventing geese from having a direct line of sight through the planted area. Minimize open sight lines for geese to less than 30 feet.
- Where space is limited, use one or two rows of shrub plantings combined with a fence to construct a geese barrier. Fences can be made from woven wire, poultry netting, plastic netting, plastic snow fencing, mono-filament line, or electrified wire. Fences should be at least 24 inches tall (3 feet may be better), firmly constructed, and installed to prevent the geese from walking around the ends. Lower openings should be no larger than 4 inches from the ground to prevent goslings from walking under or through the fence.
- Construct bank slopes steeper than 4:1 to discourage geese by preventing a clear view of the bank top and potential predators. Or, separate the beach from the grass with a few steep steps, which makes the ascent too difficult for most geese.
- Plant shrubs or trees along ponds to limit takeoff and landing opportunities.
- Scare geese away when they are around. Geese often learn quickly to ignore scare devices that are not a real physical danger. Vary the use, timing, and location of tactics. Take advantage of geese being fearful of new objects. Examples of harassment and scare tactics include:
 - Dog patrols: Dogs are the method of choice for large open areas. Results are often immediate. After an aggressive initial use (several times a day for one or two weeks), geese get tired of being harassed and will use adjacent areas instead. A dog can be tethered to a long lead (which may require relocating the dog and tether frequently to cover more area), be allowed to chase and retrieve a decoy thrown over a large flock of geese, or be periodically released to chase the birds (if this is not against leash laws).
 - Eyespot Balloons: Large, helium-filled balloons with large eye-like images. Tether balloons on a 20 to 40-foot monofilament line attached to a stake or heavy object. Locate balloons where they will not tangle with trees or utility lines.

- Flags and Streamers: Simple flags from plastic mounted on tall poles or mylar tape to make 6-foot streamers attached to the top of 8-foot-long poles. Flags and streamers work best in areas where there is steady wind.
- Scarecrows: Effective in areas where geese view humans as dangerous predators. For maximum effect, the arms and legs should move in the wind, use bright colors, and large eyes. Large, blow-up toy snakes are reported to work as a type of scarecrow.
- Canada geese are protected under federal and state law and a hunting license and open season are required to hunt them. Where lethal control of Canada geese is necessary outside of hunting seasons, it should be carried out only after the above nonlethal control techniques have proven unsuccessful and only under permits issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Currently, the only agency permitted for lethal removal is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services. Lethal control techniques include legal hunting, shooting out of season by permit, egg destruction by permit, and euthanasia of adults by government officials.
- The Humane Society of the United States' *Solving Problems with Canada Geese: A Management Plan and Information Guide*
http://www.humanesociety.org/assets/pdfs/wild_neighbors/canada_goose_guide.pdf

For more information or assistance contact the King County Stormwater Services at 206-477-4811 and visit kingcounty.gov/stormwater.