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Make Humane Pest Control Part of City Planning

What about the animals you don't want around, such as the rats, crows, raccoons and wasps? A city can play an important preventative role in pest control, by educating citizens that the vast majority of the little creatures they encounter pose no threat to them or their homes and are beneficial guests.

Casting Light on the Problem

The township of Montclair, New Jersey, has a brand new light show in two of its parks. Very early in the morning, just before dawn, a laser light show begins dancing through the grass of Edgemont Memorial and Yantacaw Brook parks. But it isn't intended for the local residents — it's intended for the geese.

Montclair has a huge goose problem. The geese don't think it's a problem, but the residents do. A thick layer of goose droppings

carpets both parks on a regular basis, causing quite a mess for park users and a potential health risk.

Other communities have been less inventive in dealing with the geese, euthanizing them to lower their populations. But Montclair sought a more humane approach, choosing the services of a local laser company. The low lights dancing over the grass deter the geese from landing, causing no more harm than the annoyance of rescheduling their morning flight.

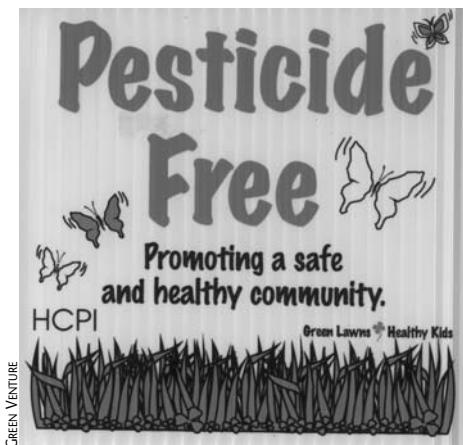
Geese have excellent memory, similar to that of a nine-year-old child,¹ and will pattern their morning visits around the lights. In order to be effective, the lasers have to be moved around and lit at different times to persuade the geese to move their morning visits farther from the community.

Feral Felines

Hampton, Virginia, has a cat problem. The region has an over-population crisis, and feral cats have created large colonies to survive. The city responded by creating legislation to curb the problem by setting strict rules for cat guardians; including not letting cats venture outside at all unless they have been licensed, vaccinated and sterilized. The city issued firm guidelines for the courageous people who have taken on the responsibility of caring for the wild cat colonies.

Going Pesticide-free in Canada

Over 60 communities across Canada have pesticide restrictions, including the major centers of Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Halifax, with



Pesticide free sign in Hamilton, Ontario.

30% of Canadians living in communities with such bylaws.

The Ontario College of Family Physicians says a growing body of studies show pesticides cannot be considered safe at any level of exposure, and a 2002 Environment Canada study found that water in the Don and Humber rivers was contaminated with pesticides coming from Toronto lawns, with amounts exceeding Ontario's water-quality guidelines for aquatic life.² With many studies confirming the danger of pesticides to humans, animals and the environment,

Pesticides are:

- Harmful to human health. Of the 30 most commonly used pesticides, 19 are known carcinogens (cancer causing), and 13 are linked with birth defects.⁵
- Particularly harmful to children, pregnant women, the elderly and those with chronic illnesses.⁶
- Hazardous to companion animals. Dogs and cats that spend time in public parks and backyards are vulnerable to pesticide poisoning and long-term illness.
- Hazardous to wildlife. Deer, raccoons, squirrels, birds, butterflies, snakes, insects and fish are all vulnerable.
- Contaminating soil, water and air. A 2005 study by the Environmental Working Group, analyzing 22 million tap-water samples from across the US, found 260 contaminants; 141 of which have no safety regulations.⁷

cities coast-to-coast are creating bylaws to stop an out-of-control situation. A 1993 Ontario government survey found that professional applicators alone were applying 2.8 million pounds of pesticides for cosmetic reasons, accounting for just 21% of the provincial total of outdoor pesticide use.³

City residents in areas with pesticide bylaws are adapting quickly. Within three years of Halifax's 2002 bylaw, 93% of its residents had stopped using pesticides altogether. In Toronto, where pesticide use was reduced by 97% between 1998 and 2002, public opinion polls suggest that 80% of residents support the bylaw.⁴ Businesses are behind the bylaws, too. One of Toronto's premier golf courses, The Granite Club, reduced its costs by \$40,000 by cutting its pesticide use in half, and it still has pristine greens. In 2003 the Canadian Center for Pollution released a report finding that pesticide bylaws in Quebec have resulted in an economic boom for the organic lawn-care industry.

- Abundant Earth: www.abundantearth.com/store/naturalpestcontrol.html
- Humane pest control information: www.absoluteponds.com/links/pestcontrol.html
- Pigeon control: www.animalaid.org.uk/h/n/CAMPAIGNS/wildlife/ALL1348
- Trapping alternatives: www.idausa.org/facts/gluefacts.html
- PiCAS UK Limited: www.picasuk.com/alternatives.htm