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Border collies hired to control geese

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

In order to preserve the beauty and cleanliness of the main campus, Oakland University is contracting with the company **Gooseworks** to provide environmentally friendly, humane control of the goose population on campus.

The increasing number of Canada geese on the main campus has created tremendous amounts of goose droppings on the sidewalks and grounds and has elevated the bacteria levels in the lake via fecal coliform. Territorial behavior toward campus pedestrians is another common complaint. To find a humane solution to the problem, OU performed research through the **Michigan Department of Natural Resources** and **Michigan Humane Society**, which lead the university to Gooseworks.

Gooseworks plans to urge the geese to vacate the campus and move to other areas through the use of highly trained border collie dogs and handlers, along with control tactics such as flags and mylar balloons. Border collies are ideal for the task because they are a herding breed and do not attack geese. The methods used by Gooseworks do not harm the geese.

By using the border collie program, the university hopes to achieve improved cleanliness and sanitation of the main campus for the enjoyment of everyone walking the grounds. The Gooseworks control program will begin in mid-August and end in mid-December.

Oakland University also plans to take additional measures to control the goose population by landscaping the perimeter of the lake with deep-rooted tall native grasses, tall wildflowers and low shrubs.

"Canada geese prefer open areas with low vegetation and a readily available water source. The manicured grass we presently have at the lake's edge makes it an ideal place for the geese," said Rusty Postlewait, associate vice president for facilities management. "In our landscape modifications, we will permanently lower the lake level by 2.8 feet. At the exposed areas we'll plant tall native grasses and water-tolerant shrubs. The native plants will have deep roots, which will hold the soil and stabilize the banks. And from the goose control aspect, they feel vulnerable to predators if they cannot see clearly within 30 feet in all directions. If they land in the water, they more than likely will fly away."

SUMMARY

In order to preserve the beauty and cleanliness of the main campus, Oakland University is contracting with the company Gooseworks to provide environmentally friendly, humane control of the goose population on campus.

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