

Discouraging geese from neighborhood ponds and other waterways

Geese are an issue for many neighborhood ponds. When geese graze, they leave droppings that present a water quality problem, increases bacteria in the pond and nearby streams every time it rains.

Geese tend to graze where they have open sight lines, access to water, and where they can see and escape predators. These reasons that make our urban ponds attractive to geese are the same reasons that they are unattractive to their natural predators: there is no cover.

To reduce the problem, the goals are to reduce food, reduce preferred nesting and brood-rearing areas, and increase the sense of insecurity from danger. A natural plant buffer around ponds and other waterways can be an effective and aesthetic choice for reducing geese.

Many neighbors are concerned that plant buffers will cut them off from the water's edge, but this is not true. Winding pathways and cutting off lines of sight will keep the area accessible to neighbors but unattractive to geese. The goal is not to eliminate your ability to enjoy the look of the pond, or to prevent common recreational activities. The goal is to do enough to deter geese and improve water quality.

Before you fill out the grant application, read through the application packet for Class A Neighborhood Projects to make sure this grant is the right fit for your neighborhood group.

As you fill out the grant application, please follow the guidance below. If you have further questions, please contact Frank Mabson at fmabson@lexingtonky.gov for assistance.

1. Group stream focused efforts can provide:

- public education through signage, creek walks, speakers, educational materials, social media and neighborhood level outreach
- public involvement through a neighborhood planting day
- water quality improvement through native plantings
- stormwater runoff reduction through native plantings
- E. coli pollution reduction through discouraging geese populations from waterways

2/3. If the natural plant buffer will be located in any homeowners' yards, those homeowners need to give written permission to the applicant and should be willing to complete a riparian buffer application with the city. Once the grant is approved, the applicant should assist homeowners in filling out the application and ensuring it is returned to the city.

Riparian buffer application available at: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/riparian-buffer>

4/7. If the project is located on city, neighborhood or private property, permission is required from the property owner or neighborhood association through an email or letter included with the application. For permission in a city park, please contact Frank Mabson [fmabson@lexingtonky.gov] for the appropriate Parks contact person.

5. Include the location and a description of the pond or waterway. An aerial map is helpful for documenting the location as well as the property owner(s).

8. Describe where you will be planting. If you are using only plants to modify habitat, there is no need for a professional, although you are welcome to use the budget to hire a professional if you want help choosing the appropriate plants for an area. The plantings can be completed by paying landscapers or through volunteers. If you plan to use volunteers, please include your plan if you have an active neighborhood association, interested scout troop or other group that has expressed interest in volunteer plantings.

If you don't intend to use a partner experienced in choosing native plants that can tolerate wet conditions, you should be sure that your grant application proves that your choices can be successful with the plant list that you provide. The City's Plant by Numbers program offers a streamside planting guide for both sunny and shaded areas: <https://www.lexingtonky.gov/PlantByNumbers>

9. Include accurate roles and contact information for your project team. If there are questions about the grant application, they can help with answering them.

10. Your project schedule should take planting seasons into account and have wiggle room if work days must be delayed due to weather. In general, spring and fall are good times to plant.

11. Your budget determines your grant amount, so please be as precise as you can and make sure you include all possible costs using the budget template available on the website. If you plan to use volunteers to plant, you can include approximate hours in your budget as a match. If you are using landscapers, the match will likely be through funds from the homeowner or neighborhood association.

12. Include documentation of your pond or waterway's geese problem. Letters from neighbors and photos are great options. Geese droppings do contribute to E. Coli in ponds, so make sure you include that.

13. Think about how you'd like your project area to look in five years. What will be different? How will your project help accomplish this future?

14. Your target audience includes direct volunteers as well as anyone who may receive educational materials, attend a presentation or view signage at your project location. Signage is a great way to educate nearby neighbors about the plant buffer and how it will reduce geese population and improve water quality.

16. Include support letters from the community that may be affected by the project, news articles about the project area or any other documentation that supports why this project is needed and that the community/neighborhood supports it.

17. The executive summary should be short and to the point: what is your project, how will it improve water quality, reduce runoff and/or provide education and the estimated cost. Include what makes your project unique, how it relates to the project area's history or community needs, or something else that would make your project stand out from other projects.