

Subject: Duck Feeding

Dear Council Members;

Even though I am not a resident of Rapid City, I would like to encourage your support of the proposed wildlife feeding ban and commend you for the progress you've made so far. As an elected official myself, I know how contentious and emotional issues like this can be for the public. The situation at Canyon Lake was ridiculously out-of-hand. Canyon Lake naturally attracts nearly a dozen species of wild waterfowl which should delight all nature lovers. Feeding wildlife should not be a recreational activity, and it can be a tough habit to break.

This proposed ban is the best thing for your park system AND for the wildlife. I truly hope you will use this opportunity to educate your citizenry about the values of true wildlife management and how sanctioning the petting-zoo-like environment of exotic, introduced waterfowl at Canyon Lake is inappropriate on many levels.

As I am sure you are aware, you will get a TON of feedback from people who support the "family tradition" of feeding the "ducks." There is NOT ONE wildlife advocate, biologist, naturalist, or scientist who would disagree with this policy. Please stand strong as leaders, do the right thing, and seize this opportunity to encourage the public that doing harm to the wildlife and the lake is never okay, even if you've enjoyed it or because it's a family tradition. Please don't let this wonderful educational opportunity pass you by and cave to the misguided emotions of the masses.

Thank you for all the work you do; it's a tough job, but somebody has to make the tough decisions.

Sincerely and with great respect;

Eric Davis
Spearfish
Spearfish City Council

Subject: Feeding wild animals

Ladies and gentlemen:

If I may, I would like to offer my advice on the question of feeding wild animals in the city limits.

1st of all, I fully understand the need to take action against feeding deer in the city. They cause accidents...they destroy yards and gardens and they cause mountain lions to come into the city looking for deer...which gives rise to dangers to domestic animals and children... and they overproduce and overrun the country till they can no longer be tolerated by the homeowners. It has been the decision of the City to limit the numbers by taking these animals and feeding them to the hungry. I think that is good.

Wild ducks and geese however, are another story. Feeding them is an occasion! Feeding the ducks and geese is an event! It is good to see families and children feeding the ducks and having family time together. Grandparents have brought youngsters to the creek and to Canyon Lake for years to enjoy the camaraderie as well feeding and watching the animals.

Not feeding these birds will not solve any problems because there will always be ducks and geese there... and there will always be duck and geese poop in the water and on the shore.

The question as I see it then is really, how many ducks and geese...which questions the amount of food available, which questions how much poop there will be, even with the restrictions. The answer of course, is that the fewer the ducks and geese the less poop there will be. Less poop will be good.

Now, the city has only one way to control the size of the number of ducks and geese. If they are on the Flyway South, they will stop and stay as long as they desire...regardless of the city council's desire. So the city should find another way to limit the number of ducks and geese.

I think it would be wise for the city to first decide...how many is enough! Then they should ask the state for a permit to trap the excess number and after they are caught they can either be cleaned and given to the poor...or they can be relocated...which probably isn't such a great idea because they will probably come back in the spring on their return trip North and remember how much fun it was for them to be fed by little kids and old grandparents.

Please re-think the idea of ticketing and fining. Normally, it is the children who are doing the feeding. Are you proposing to ticket the kids? The Grandparents are only holding the bag of corn or the bread wrapper. Would we ticket the grandparents as an accessory? Certainly possession of bread or corn on the shore, is not an offense so how are we going to reconcile that situation?

Remember instead, the events which you attended with your parents and grandparents when you were a kid...or the Occasions you and your parents or grandparents spent a little time just being together. That was good.

Please.

Thanks you for your consideration...

Tom Hennies

Subject: Please do not ban duck feeding

To Council Members,

Please put a stop to this absurd attack upon those who wish to feed ducks. It is a tradition that has lasted for decades. It is a wonderful way to commune with nature. Feeding ducks is a better activity for children than sitting at the computer playing games. Have you ever seen the wide eyes and huge smile on the face of a small child handing food to ducks? If it was once considered a wonderful enough thing to inspire the construction of a bird-feeding plaza, what has since changed? I do not understand.

To everyone on the council, please reconsider this from all sides of the issue. For those concerned about bird poop, they can walk around it. Whatever fine is imposed for feeding ducks, I will not stop feeding them because my love of nature is stronger than my love of money. Please have a heart on this issue.

Sincerely,
Sonya Thomas-Haley