

City of West Des Moines Parks Department's PESP Strategy

Describe your Organization's Five-Year Goals Related to Pesticide Risk Reduction

The City of West Des Moines, Iowa is a rapidly growing progressive community with just over 50,000 residents. The parks department currently manages about 1200 acres within 24 parks, civic buildings and city owned properties. Approximately 500 acres within the city is managed turfgrass. A small portion of our park land would be considered high maintenance turf, which includes a 10 acre (5) field tournament softball complex, a 27 acre soccer complex, little league baseball complex, girls softball complex, Rugby complex, 3 acres of irrigated medians and a small irrigated portion of our City Hall complex.

The mission of our parks department is to provide a safe and functional parks system to the residents and visitors of the city. We wish to fully implement a turf IPM program that will utilize all tools available while using the least amount of pesticides and fertilizers necessary towards that mission only when deemed necessary to preset expectations for each property.

Fully implementing a turf IPM Program will help us attain our Phase II Stormwater Permit goals as well as our PESP Goals.

What do you envision doing (broadly) to try to resolve your major issues?

We have been working the past 5 years on tactics to reduce the overall amount of pesticides and fertilizers being used on city property as a personal department goal to minimize impacts on humans and the environment as well as budget. This included the initial start of our IPM program as well as converting some of our idle park land from managed turf to Native Vegetation.

In 2006, we implemented new Phase II Stormwater permit requirements, further requiring the city to use less pesticides and fertilizer. Since 2007 we have implemented several tactics which are helping us work towards the goal of using the least amount of pesticides and fertilizers. We have revamped and added to our record keeping as it pertains to pesticides and fertilizers. We are classifying each city property with expected maintenance levels and acceptable pest levels to guide our decisions. We implemented strict soil testing schedules and various other IPM techniques.

Goal 1 and Tactics

Continually expand on the current IPM program devised and used by the City.

Specifically areas pertaining to:

- Soil Testing Schedule
- Property classification and acceptable pest levels
- Lower risk and organic solutions
- Increased cultural controls
- Scouting program

This will be accomplished by continued training opportunities offered through the Iowa Turfgrass Institute and Iowa State University Extension as well as other personal contacts within the turfgrass field. Our personal experience over time should also dictate changes to our program based on or personal experiences both good and bad.

Goal 2 and Tactics

Meet or exceed the requirements of the city's phase II stormwater permit (Use less fertilizer and pesticides).

This goal will be met by fully implementing the IPM techniques and being diligent with accurate and timely record keeping, as well as keeping timely measurements on progress compared to previous years.

Measurement will be on a calendar year basis compared to the previous two years.

Note: certain environmental conditions which could cause significant pest changes from previous years should be taken into account.

Goal 3 and Tactics

Continue to expand our Native Planting Program.

We will continue to search for feasible areas in our parks system where we can convert managed turfgrass to native grasses/plants. We will also search for ways to enhance our current new park design with native plantings, bio swales, rain gardens and natural landscaping.

Native plants require less input as they are better adapted to the local environment.
Measurement will be by sq ft. or acres of new projects or plantings utilizing native plants.

Goal 4 and Tactics

Update or look for ways to retrofit equipment so that when applications of fertilizer or pesticides are made they are done so efficiently and effectively.

This will be tracked from the budget and should also devise a quantitative measure of increased efficiency of new vs. old equipment.