

#### MONTGOMERY PARKS

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission 2425 Reedie Drive | Wheaton, MD 20902 MontgomeryParks.org

July 15, 2022

Mr. Gabe Albornoz Council President Montgomery County Council Council Office Building 100 Maryland Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor Rockville, MD 20850

### Re: Montgomery Parks Pesticide Use Report, January 1 – June 30, 2022

Dear Council President Albornoz,

I am submitting to you the Montgomery Parks Pesticide Use Report for January 1 – June 30, 2022, as required by Montgomery County Code Section 33B-14: Pesticide Use in County Parks.

During this reporting period, parks staff have recorded over 13,000 labor hours using alternatives to pesticides to remove pests and are testing products compatible with Montgomery County's Pesticide Law in many areas, including athletic fields.

In June, ten additional parks were added to the list of pesticide free parks bringing the total of pesticide-free parks to 55. The pesticide-free parks are in different regions of the county to ensure all residents have access to them.

Montgomery Parks remains committed to evaluating and using alternative tools, products, and methods to manage pests and protect our natural resources while meeting the needs of the community, and we appreciate the council's ongoing support of these efforts.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Riley Director, Montgomery Parks

# **Pesticide Use Report**

## January 1, 2022 – June 30, 2022

### Overview

In 2015, The Montgomery County Council adopted County Code Sec. 33B - Pesticide Use. Montgomery Parks began implementing sections of the regulation on July 1, 2016. As required under the regulation, the Parks Department must submit semi-annual reports to the County Executive and County Council on or before January 15 and July 15 of each year.

### Montgomery Parks Pesticide Use Report - January 1 - June 30, 2022

This report is available to the public in a manner consistent with the Montgomery County Open Data Act and contains the following information:

1. Registered pesticide usage details, other than listed pesticide usage, in county parks during the preceding period, including:

- common name of each registered pesticide used
- location of each application
- date and time of each application
- reason for each use of a registered pesticide
- 2. Status of the pesticide-free park program implemented under the regulation

Montgomery Parks provides up-to-date information about the Department's Pest Management Program to the public through multiple channels including a dedicated webpage, social media, press releases, and customer service department.

The webpage (montgomeryparks.org/about/parks/pesticides) includes information about the Pesticide Reduction and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program, frequentlyasked-questions and answers, semi-annual pesticide use reports, a map of pesticidefree parks, and weekly-updated schedule of planned pesticide applications including the location, date, time, product and reason for the application.

### **Montgomery Parks Integrated Pest Management**

The Department follows Integrated Pest Management (IPM) principles to steward resources and protect them from pests (weeds, insects, animals, and diseases) that may harm people or plants, impair function and deteriorate infrastructure.

IPM principles combine multiple strategies and techniques to manage pests such as mechanical removal of pests, cultural methods to improve soil and plant health, conserving and introducing beneficial biological controls, and using organic as well as conventional pesticides.

Montgomery Parks manages more than 37,100 acres of parkland including 420 parks, 274 playgrounds, 362 athletic fields, 299 tennis courts, 226 basketball courts, and many other amenities.

Montgomery Parks is committed to balancing the demand for recreation while protecting and conserving our valuable natural and cultural resources to meet the needs of current and future generations. As such,

- The Parks Department does not use pesticides for cosmetic purposes.
- Pesticides are only used when necessary to protect these amenities and park users.
- Staff who apply pesticides and fertilizers are certified and registered with the Maryland
  Department of Agriculture

Department of Agriculture.

#### **Alternative Maintenance Practices**

Parks' Enterprise Asset Management System (EAM) tracks labor hours of staff managing weeds and other pests without the use of pesticides.

These alternative methods include biological control (using beneficial organisms to control a pest), cutting and/or digging weeds with equipment, additional field dragging, hot foam or hot water to kill weeds and other pests, playground surface grooming beyond the maintenance standards, hand tool weeding, propane flaming, string-trimming, and weed suppression with mulch or landscape fabric.

Total labor hours of alternative methods to control pests for the period of January 1 to June 30, 2022 was 13,059 hours at a labor cost of \$493,577

Alternative Method	Alternative Type	Hours	Labor Cost
String Trim	STRING TRIM	8,719	\$314,924
Hand Tool Weeding	HAND TOOL	1,785	\$76,865
Hot Foam/Hot Water	FOAMSTREAM	1,169	\$45,487
Cut/Dig Weeds with Equipment	CUT/DIG WEEDS	560	\$21,345
Drag Athletic Field, Additional	DRAG FIELD	366	\$14,255
Propane Flaming	PROPANE FLAME	40	\$1,787
Playground Surface Grooming	SURFACE GROOMING	368	\$16,458
Weed Suppression (mulch, landscape fabric)	WEED SUPPRESSION	34	\$1,598
Biological Control	BIOCONTROL	18	\$858
	TOTALS:	13,059	\$493,577

Using hand tools to remove unwanted vegetation from wood fiber surfacing in playgrounds, landscape beds, athletic fields, and other amenities was the second most used alternative practice during this reporting period. Staff used hand tools instead of pesticides for a total of 1,785 labor hours at a cost of \$76,865.

#### **Pesticide-Free Parks**

Montgomery Parks manages 55 pesticide-free parks. Pests in pesticide-free parks, are managed

using alternative methods, such as hot foam, string trimming, mechanical weed removal, and products approved for use by Montgomery County Code 33B.

In 2016, Montgomery Parks began managing ten pesticide- free parks as part of a pilot program in compliance with the adoption of Montgomery County Code Chapter 33B. In September 2019, an additional 35 parks were added to the program, bringing the total number of parks managed without pesticides to 45. In June 2022, ten additional parks were added to the list which brings the total of pesticide free parks to 55. The pesticide-free parks are in different regions of the county to ensure all residents have access to them. A list and map of the pesticide-free parks are

included in the appendix and on Montgomery Park's website <u>www.montgomeryparks.org/pesticides</u>.

The parks added to the program in June are: Bauer Drive Local Park, Caroline Freeland Urban Park, Edith Throckmorton Neighborhood Park, English Court Neighborhood Conservation Area, Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park, Flower Avenue Urban Park, Glenmont Greenway Urban Park, Maiden Lane Urban Park, Saddlebrook Local Park and Woods Local Park.

The pesticide-free parks are diverse and include local, urban, and neighborhood parks as well as neighborhood conservation areas. Amenities in these parks are equally diverse and include 20 basketball courts, 26 tennis courts, 13 athletic field diamonds, 13 athletic field rectangles, 12 picnic shelters and 39 playgrounds. Instead of synthetic pesticides to manage weeds, products approved for use by Montgomery County Code 33B are utilized, along with alternative methods such as hand weeding, string trimming, frequent dragging of infields and warning tracks, hand

tool removal, propane flaming, and hot foam treatments. The purpose of the pesticidefree park program is to observe parks managed without synthetic pesticides over time and determine the successes, challenges, and failures under this type of management. Pesticide-free parks are routinely inspected by staff to assess the status of the amenities. A few parks have been removed from the program because pest problems could not be addressed by only using pesticide-free methods.

### **Pesticide-Free Playgrounds**

Montgomery Parks maintains all 274 playgrounds without the use of pesticides.

To maintain our department's 274 playgrounds without the use of pesticides, playground maintenance crews report using hand-tool weeding methods, hot foam equipment and wood fiber mulch replacement most often to manage weeds that infiltrate the wood fiber surfacing.

During this reporting period, hot foam was used to control weeds in the wood fiber playground surfacing the most often with a total of 526 labor hours resulting in \$19,750 labor costs. Hand tools were used for 321 labor hours or 26 percent of the time at a labor cost of \$13,671. Surface grooming was used as a weed control method for 368 hours or 30 percent of the time for a labor cost of \$16,458.

### **Integrated Pest Management on Athletic Fields**

Staff in all management areas continue to invest in versatile athletic field maintenance equipment to remove weeds without pesticides on skinned areas such as warning tracks and infields. The equipment uses attachments such as rakes, weed bar to cut weeds and athletic field groomer/renovator.

During this reporting period, staff used numerous alternative practices to manage weeds on athletic fields. These include using hand tools and equipment to remove weeds instead of synthetic pesticide applications.

Staff are continuing to replace high maintenance blue stone bench areas in ballfields with poured concrete. Maintaining the blue dust areas are labor-intensive, requiring string trimming and mechanical weed removal to keep the area weed free. The poured concrete significantly reduces maintenance and weeds.

Overseeding is used to thicken turf areas of the athletic fields to prevent and hinder weed development. Seed prices have increased 85 percent this year. Both synthetic

and organic pesticides have been applied to target weeds on athletic fields. The material cost of applying organic pesticides is 25 times more than synthetic pesticides.



#### Appendix: Map and List of Pesticide-Free Parks

Aquarius Local Park Bauer Drive Local Park Berryville Road NCA Big Pines Local Park Bonifant NCA Bowie Mill Local Park Browns Corner NCA Calverton NCA Cannon Road Local Park Caroline Freeland Urban Park Cedar Creek Local Park Cindy Lane Neighborhood Park Clarksburg Village North Local Park Clearspring Local Park

- 1 College View Neighborhood Park
- 2 Countryside Neighborhood Park
- 3 Damascus Neighborhood Park
- 4 Dickerson Local Park
- 5 Duvall Road NCA
- 6 East Silver Spring Urban Park
- 7 Edgewood Neighborhood Park
- 8 Edith Throckmorton Neighborhood Park 22 Kemp Mill Estates Local Park
- 9 Emory Grove Hills NCA
- 10 English Court NCA
- 12 Fairdale Road NCA
- 14 Fox Chapel Neighborhood Park

- 15 General Getty Neighborhood Park
- 16 Glenmont Greenway Urban Park
- 16 Gienmont Greenway Science Annual 17 Highland Stone Neighborhood Park
- 20 Hunters Woods NCA
- 21 John Haines Neighborhood Park
- 23 King's Crossing Local Park
- 26 Miles Road NCA
- 13 Flower Avenue Urban Park
- 18 Hopefield Neighborhood Park 19 Hoyles Mill Village Local Park
- 24 Maiden Lane Urban Park
- 11 Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park 25 Manor Park NCA
  - 27 Moyer Road Local Park
- 32 Peach Orchard NCA 46 33 Pennyfield Lock NCA 47 34 Rosemary Hills-Lyttonsville Local Park 48 35 Saddlebrook Local Park 49 36 Spencerville Local Park 50 37 Stonehedge Local Park 51 38 Twinponds NCA 52 39 Valleywood Neighborhood Park 53 40 Wembrough Neighborhood Park 54 41 Wood Local Park 55 28 Norbeck Meadows Neighborhood Park 42

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29 Norwood Local Park

30 Norwood Village NCA

31 Olney Acres Neighborhood Park

#### List of Pesticide-Free Parks:

Aquarius Local Park Bauer Drive Local Park Berryville Road NCA **Big Pines Local Park** Bonifant NCA **Bowie Mill Local Park Browns Corner NCA** Calverton NCA Cannon Road Local Park Caroline Freeland Urban Park Cedar Creek Local Park Cindy Land Neighborhood Park Clarksburg Village North Local Park **Clearspring Local Park** College View Neighborhood Park Countryside Neighborhood Park **Damascus Neighborhood Park Dickerson Local Park Duvall Road NCA** East Silver Spring Urban Park Edgewood Neighborhood Park Edith Throckmorton Neighborhood Park **Emory Grove Hills NCA English Court NCA** Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park Fairdale Road NCA Flower Avenue Urban Park Fox Chapel Neighborhood Park General Getty Neighborhood Park **Glenmont Greenway Urban Park** Highland Stone Neighborhood Park Hopefield Neighborhood Park Hoyles Mill Village Local Park Hunters Woods NCA John Haines Neighborhood Park Kemp Mill Estates Local Park King's Crossing Local Park Maiden Lane Urban Park Manor Park NCA Miles Road NCA Moyer Road Local Park Norbeck Meadows Neighborhood Park Norwood Local Park Norwood Village NCA

Olney Acres Neighborhood Park Peach Orchard NCA Pennyfield Lock NCA Rosemary Hills-Lyttonsville Local Park Saddlebrook Local Park Spencerville Local Park Stonehedge Local Park Twinponds NCA Valleywood Neighborhood Park Wembrough Neighborhood Park Wood Local Park