



Skokie Park District Integrated Pest Management Plan

May 1, 2020

Updated March 2024

The Integrated Pest Management plan for the Skokie Park District was developed to set maintenance standards for the care of turf throughout the district’s open parkland space. The process for managing pests relies on knowledge regarding the plant or insect pest and its interaction with the environment. A variety of control measures are used including structural, physical, cultural, biological, and with minimal use, chemical. Control measures will be done in a way that minimizes environmental, health and economic risks. The plan will be reevaluated annually by the Turf Specialist, Landscape Supervisor and Superintendent of Parks to determine its effectiveness and make alterations as needed.

Park Classifications

Small Parks/Low Use

- Carol Park*
- Chippewa Park*
- George Street*
- Gross Point/Terminal
- Klehm Park*
- Lee Wright Park
- Menominee Park
- Mulford Park
- Navajo Park
- Pawnee Park*
- Park Services
- Playtime Park
- Pohatan Park
- Seneca Park
- Shabonee Park
- Shawnee Park
- Tecumseh Park
- Weissburg Park
- Winnebago Park

Medium Parks/Medium Use

- Dammrich Park
- Emerson Park
- Gleiss Park
- Lauth Park
- Lorel Park
- Lyon Park
- Main/Hamlin Tennis Center
- Peccia Park
- Schack Park
- Skokie Heritage Museum
- Tot Learning Center
- Lockwood Park
- Sequoia Park

Large Parks/High Visibility

- Central Park
- Channelside-Soccer
- Channelside Pooch
- Devonshire Park
- Devonshire Pool
- Gross Point Park
- Hamlin Park
- Laramie Park
- Lawler Park
- McNally Park
- Oakton Park
- Oakton Pool
- Skokie Tennis Center
- Sports Park East
- Terminal Park
- Timber Ridge Park
- Weber Park
- Veterans Park

*Synthetic free sites

Each park site with turf has been split into one of three categories. The category definitions are as follows:

Small/Low Use Parks: Parks that do not have a sports field, have low amounts of foot traffic and fall under 3 acres.

Medium Parks: Parks that have no more than one sports field, have lightly visited facilities and do not exceed 7 acres.

Large/High Use Parks: Parks that are highly visible to the public, are highly trafficked sites and may have one or more sports fields.

The three categories will be cared for at a specified level of care. The levels of care are defined as:

Small/Low Use Parks

Soil Testing - Soil testing shall be completed every four years to determine nutrient deficiencies or surpluses. Results of the tests may affect several of the following activities, fertilization, and soil amendments.

Aeration - Aeration shall take place every other year to assist in providing oxygen, water and nutrients to root zones and to reduce soil compaction.

Overseeding - Overseeding shall take place every other year in conjunction with aeration to allow for new turf to out-compete potential weeds.

Fertilization - An extended-release organic based fertilizer shall be applied as needed. This allows organic material to build in the upper layer of soil and provides a natural source of nutrients for the turf.

Topdressing - Comprehensive topdressing will not take place unless larger areas are re-seeded or if there is a specific need.

Soil Amendments - Soil amendments will be provided as necessary, in part determined as a course of action resulting from soil testing. Soil amendments add organic material and provide additional nutrients as needed.

Systemic Weed Treatments - Weed treatments will be applied only as spot treatments when the Turf Specialist has determined thresholds are being exceeded and only after the weeds have been identified. With the permission of the Horticulture Supervisor or Superintendent of Parks appropriate treatment may be applied at the proper rate prescribed by the product label.

Pest Treatments - The most common pest issue is grubs. Small/Low Use parks will not be treated preventatively. Instead, these parks will be treated curatively should there be extensive damage or if the threshold meets or exceeds six grubs per square foot. Any other pest shall be treated on a case-by-case basis.

Medium Parks

Soil Testing - Soil testing shall be completed every three years to determine nutrient deficiencies or surpluses. Test results may affect several of the following activities, fertilization, and soil amendments.

Aeration - Aeration shall take place every year to assist in providing oxygen, water, and nutrients to root zones and to reduce soil compaction.

Overseeding - Overseeding shall take place every two years in conjunction with aerating to maximize seed to soil contact. Over seeding will help to suppress weed growth by outcompeting potential weeds.

Fertilization - An extended-release organic based fertilizer shall be applied as needed. This allows organic material to build in the upper layer of soil and provides a natural source of nutrients for the turf.

Topdressing will occur with over-seeding on sports fields. Topdressing will not take place in general park areas unless larger areas are re-seeded or if there is a specific need.

Soil Amendments - Soil amendments will be provided as necessary, in part determined as a course of action resulting from soil testing. Soil amendments will add organic material and provide additional nutrients as needed.

Systemic Weed Treatments - Herbicides will be used as a fall broadleaf control on any sports field to a width of 15 feet around the field borders. Any additional controls will be applied in general turf areas only as spot treatments when the Turf Specialist has determined thresholds are being exceeded and the weeds have been identified. Additional treatments will take place with the permission of the Horticulture Supervisor or Superintendent of Parks. The appropriate treatment will be applied at the proper rate prescribed by the product label.

Pest Treatments - The most common pest issue is grubs. Only sports fields in the medium classification will be treated preventatively. The remaining turf areas will be treated curatively should there be extensive damage or if the threshold meets or exceeds six grubs per square foot. Any other pest shall be treated on a case-by-case basis.

Large/High Use Parks

Soil Testing - Soil testing shall be completed every two years to determine nutrient deficiencies or surpluses. Test results may affect several of the following activities, fertilization, and soil amendments.

Aeration - Aeration shall take place every year in general turf areas and no less than twice per year on athletic fields to assist in providing oxygen, water, and nutrients to root zones and to reduce compaction.

Overseeding - Overseeding shall take place each season in conjunction with aerating to maximize seed to soil contact, improving the germination rates.

Fertilization - Spring and fall applications will be made at all Large/High Use Parks sites. Additionally, an in-house late spring/early summer application will be made to all Large/High Use parks.

Topdressing - Topdressing will take place every other year and will be coordinated with aeration and seeding. This combination will ensure strong seed-to-soil contact and provide a higher germination rate for the turf seed, which in turn will help suppress weed growth.

Soil Amendments - Soil amendments will be provided as necessary, in part determined as a course of action resulting from soil testing. Soil amendments will add organic material and provide additional nutrients as needed.

Grub Control – The tolerance threshold is 5-7 grubs per square foot.

Systemic Weed Treatments - A fall broadleaf application will be made to all Large/High Use parks. Spot treatments may be applied when the Turf Specialist has determined thresholds are being exceeded and the weeds have been identified. With the permission of the Horticulture Supervisor or Superintendent of Parks appropriate treatments may be applied at the proper rate prescribed by the product label.

Pest Treatments - The most common pest issue is grubs. Sports fields and areas with a reoccurring grub issue will be treated preventatively. The remaining turf areas will be treated curatively should there be extensive damage or if the threshold meets or exceeds six grubs per square foot. Any other pest shall be treated on a case-by-case basis.

Additional Procedures

The following actions are recommended at all turf sites where the actions are applicable to reduce and discourage weed growth:

- Tree rings and beds shall be mulched and maintained. Mulch reduces the ability of undesirable plants to grow in the tree rings and bed areas, helps retain moisture which benefits the intended plants and offers a buffer of protection from potential mechanical damage from mowing equipment.
- The frequency of mowing on athletic fields should be maintained at twice a week during the active growing seasons to promote turf growth and suppress weed seeds from germinating.
- Baseball fields should be dragged a minimum of once a week. This frequency should be maintained even when the field is not scheduled for practices or games to discourage weed growth along the edge field surfacing.

- Controlled burns will be used in perennial and native areas to control invasive species and minimize the need for synthetic pesticides.
- Mowing deck heights will be maintained at 3 to 3 ½ inches to suppress weed germination.

Pesticides/Herbicides/Fertilizers

Any employee applying a pesticide, herbicide or fertilizer must have, at minimum, an Illinois Operators spray license. On the day of any application at least one employee with an Illinois Applicators spray license, within the same category of the work being completed, must be aware of the application.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

Any employee applying a pesticide, herbicide or fertilizer must wear personal protective equipment (PPE) per the instructions of the product label. Employees not adhering to this will be subject to disciplinary action.

Documentation and Notification

Documentation must be maintained for any treatments applied to parkland. The document for herbicide or pesticide applications can be seen as Exhibit 1. Documentation shall also be kept for any fertilizations that take place. These documents must be submitted to the Horticulture Supervisor daily and will be kept as a paper copy for no less than two years and will be scanned and kept as a digital copy thereafter.

Once an area has been treated, notification flags shall be placed at a minimum at all park entrances. The flags will provide the contact information of the Horticulture Supervisor. Additionally, these flags will be removed 24 hours after the treatment's completion.

Synthetic Systemic Nonselective Herbicides

Use of synthetic systemic nonselective herbicides will be used only as necessary. These herbicides will only be used in low traffic areas such as tree rings, planting/shrub beds, sign and fence posts, sidewalk and asphalt cracks, and any additional like areas. Herbicides will also be used in native beds to remove invasive species and to prepare turf for native seeding operations. Weeds will be treated at the optimal time, before they have gone to seed, to maximize the effectiveness of the treatment and prevent the germination of newly seeded plants and shall be used at no more than the rate listed on the product label.

Staff will continue to test organic systemic nonselective herbicides each season. If a cost-effective solution is found, reduction or elimination of any synthetic systemic nonselective herbicides will take place.

Synthetic-Free Parks

The following sites have had all synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers use eliminated.

- Carol Park
- Chippewa
- George Street
- Klehm Park
- Pawnee Park

Only organic products will be used at each of these sites. These parks were selected because they are not highly trafficked, have lower visibility, and the smaller size will make it easier to manage without the use of synthetic products.

Emily Oaks Nature Center and Kawaga Garden

The Emily Oaks Nature Center manages 13 acres of native trees, shrubs, forbs, and a two-acre pond. The staff at Emily Oaks will be subject to the Illinois Spray Licensing certifications required by the State of Illinois. For invasive and non-native weed and tree types where it is possible, mechanical removal will be the method of control, including hand-pulling, cutting or scything. For invasive and non-native weed and tree types where mechanical control is not feasible, herbicide wiping, painting and other spot-application methods will take place.

Kawaga Garden is currently maintained without the use of synthetic pesticides or fertilizers.

EXHIBIT 1

SKOKIE PARK DISTRICT

20xx Pesticide Application Data Sheet

Application Date: _____

Location: _____

(must be specific i.e.: west ball diamond, west ID sign bed, etc.)

TYPE OF APPLICATION: (circle one) *Spot* *Blanket*

Reason for Application: _____

Target pest(s)/weed(s), or groups I.E.: Annual, perennial, biennial, broadleaf, White Grub, etc.

Product Applied: _____

Active Ingredient: _____

Application Rate: _____

Total Amount of Product Applied: _____

Product Form: (circle one) *Liquid Granular* *Other*

Application Type: (circle one) *Hand Spray Tank* *Push Spreader*
Back Pack Sprayer *Tractor Spreader*
Z-Max Ryder *Golf Cart-25G Tank*
Other _____ *Golf Cart-50 G Tank*

Application Time: _____ A.M. /P.M.

Temperature: _____

Wind Velocity & Direction: _____

Weather Conditions: (circle one) *Sunny* *Pt. Cloudy* *Cloudy*

Operator Name: _____

Operator License Number: _____