

Section I. - Preamble

On March 29, 2005, the City Commission, Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department and local citizens began development of a pesticide reduction plan for the city's parks. One high-profile park, Buford Watson, Jr. Park, was selected for management as pesticide-free. In addition to this park, 33 other lower profile city parks were also classified as pesticide-free. Simultaneously, Category I and II pesticides were eliminated from the Parks and Recreation's product list, allowing the purchase of only category III and IV pesticides. This product list of pesticides was consolidated throughout the department and made available to the public. A number of alternative products were also purchased and tracked for their effectiveness and comparative costs. In June 2007, a citizen group requested that the city commission make all remaining parks pesticide-free.

In the course of the pilot program with Buford Watson, Jr. Park, it has been found that immediately shifting parks to pesticide-free is not a feasible solution when attempting to reduce pesticide use. While this program helped staff gain a better understanding of the increased workload it also highlighted necessary budget adjustments for maintaining park properties without the use of pesticides. Initially, local volunteers were used to assist with the added work load associated with the reduction of pesticides. Reliable volunteers can be a key component in assisting with an increased workload. A successful volunteer program requires volunteers to be available on a consistent basis. In the three years that Buford Watson, Jr. Park has been managed as pesticide-free, volunteer hours have diminished from 73 hours in 2005 to 20 hours in 2008. Continued management of this high-profile property as pesticide free without volunteers and budgetary assistance is challenging.

The City of Lawrence Parks and Recreation Department has developed an Integrated Pest Management Policy that replicates programs from other municipalities to achieve the goals outlined by the Lawrence City Commission. **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** is an ecological approach to pest management designed to prevent and control undesirable weeds, insects, fungi, and rodents. IPM relies on the use of site-specific information about environmental conditions and the dynamics of human characteristics and activities, as well as pest biology and behavior to prevent, resist, and control pests that interfere with the purpose and use of a particular site. When a pest has exceeded a predetermined threshold at a particular site, all appropriate pest control strategies are employed including cultural, biological, mechanical, and chemical controls as a last resort, within the guidelines of this policy. When staff monitoring of a site discovers a pest problem and determines it to be above the threshold level, IPM implements the use of biological and cultural control practices as a first response to a pest problem, and chemical control as a last resort.

Cultural control tactics are physical adjustments made to the landscape to alter pest activity, reproduction or survival. The adjustments can be made by hand or with mechanical devices. Cultural control tactics include, but are not limited to: mulching, pruning and removal of debris from landscape beds. This method has only limited effect on non target organisms and the environment. Biological control is managing pests by using their natural enemies – predators, parasites, and pathogens. Biological control is often natural and maintains pest populations at a tolerable level. If pests are not naturally maintained the habitat of the landscape may need to be altered to attract the natural enemies. Also, the predators, parasites or pathogens could be physically introduced into the landscape. These tactics can be effective in certain situations, but are more time consuming and subject to other environmental factors outside of staff control.

IPM offers park staff a system of managing parks without depending on pesticides. In turn, this provides a safer place for people to enjoy the outdoors, improves the health and vitality of the park's ecosystem, and ultimately reduces maintenance needs and costs.

The pesticide information and policy in this document pertain to areas designated as parks, cemeteries and athletic complexes. It will exclude city right-of-way locations, city-owned public buildings, and other city maintained areas not designated as parks or future parks and Eagle Bend Golf Course.