



Legislation Text

File #: 2020-0135, **Version:** 3

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): Permit Sonoma, Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures, Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Community Development Commission, Department of Transportation and Public Works, Regional Parks, Sonoma Water and General Services

Staff Name and Phone Number: Oriana Hart, 565-6186

Vote Requirement: Majority

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Annual Countywide Vegetation Management Report for FY 18/19

Recommended Action:

Approve the Countywide Vegetation Management Report for FY 18/19

Executive Summary:

On June 4, 2019, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, passed Resolution #19-0246 establishing Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policies and prohibiting the use of synthetic pesticides, including herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides, in sensitive areas. Among the goals of Resolution #19-0246 were to reduce human contact with synthetic herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides through the reduction of application and use in public spaces and to have a publically available list of “no synthetic spray” zones to enhance transparency and accountability.

In Resolution #19-0246, the Board directed Permit Sonoma staff to prepare an annual report on countywide pesticide use in County operations primarily as part of overall vegetation and landscape management. This item is a compilation of work from Regional Parks, Transportation and Public Works, General Services, Sonoma Water, Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Permit Sonoma, Sonoma County Community Development Commission, and Agriculture/Weights & Measures to put forth this initial annual report for approval.

Discussion:

Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

The Agricultural Preservation and Open District (APOSD) is committed to avoiding the use of synthetic pesticides in sensitive areas, and to support this commitment, has compiled all known information regarding sensitive species and habitats that occur on its properties. APOSD implements an integrated approach in which synthetic pesticides are used conservatively, and only as necessary, and will not use a synthetic pesticide unless: 1) there is no other option available to control an extreme infestation; or 2) the environmental benefit is clear, and outweighs the negative impacts of continued weed infestation; and 1) only licensed professionals are involved in the application; and 2) there is minimal risk of harmful exposure to humans or to sensitive resources; and 3) the application is part of an intentional strategy to transition over time to alternative

methods of invasive species control such as mechanical removal, grazing, or prescribed burning.

Total synthetic herbicide use on APOSD owned properties from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019 was 3.3 gallons, on 78.8 acres. This included 1.5 gallons of glyphosate-based product. Note that these numbers describe the total volume of product used, and represent 1.3 gallons and 0.6 gallons of active chemical, respectively.

Community Development Commission

In addition to measures that ensure safe and sanitary housing, the Community Development Commission (CDC) is responsible for weed and other fire abatement measures. When practical, manual controls such as mowing and debris removal are employed. In certain cases, vendors used Round-Up, which was limited to small areas around the Russell Avenue property, Roseland Village, Village Green II, West College, and Broadway Avenue.

The CDC is committed to the responsible good stewardship of agency owned and managed properties while working to ensure it meets the obligations of providing safe and sanitary housing, employing best practices at commercial properties, and effectively mitigating weeds and other pest and fire hazards. CDC is fully engaged with vendors to transition to the most suitable organic alternatives available and to further work on prevention measures to avoid issues from arising.

Department of Transportation and Public Works

The Transportation and Public Works Department (TPW) does not have any landscape management responsibilities involving the use of pesticides by County staff. The Department manages 2,736 miles of roadside, refuse sites, road yards, and airport property utilizing mechanical control of vegetation as much as possible, avoiding the use of synthetic herbicides in sensitive areas and making herbicide applications in a manner that minimizes risk. In fiscal year 2018/2019 TPW used only glyphosate registered for aquatic and terrestrial use, as this is the direction our Department is heading with all post-emergent spraying, even though applicators do not spray into water. TPW also changed its post-emergent herbicide program by switching to a newer formulation of a broadleaf weed and woody plant herbicide. The newer product has a warning label, instead of a danger label, increasing worker safety. Like glyphosate, this newer formulation, may be applied to aquatic or non-aquatic sites. Additionally, department staff worked on updating the IPM plan integrating countywide policies, no synthetic spray zone maps, and prepared for an organic herbicide trial. The IPM plan, mapping, and the organic herbicide trial will be completed at the beginning of the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

Regional Parks

Regional Parks is committed to reducing the risk of toxin exposure for both people and pets that use the parks. Regional Parks uses a range of techniques to manage vegetation including grazing, prescribed fire, mowing, weed whacking, and construction of shaded fuel breaks, as well as pesticides when necessary. Regional Parks is committed to eliminating the use of synthetic pesticides for routine, ongoing maintenance to control invasive weeds. Regional Parks maintains the use of synthetic pesticides to treat and control specific, targeted pest invasions when other means of control are inadequate. All pesticide use is reported to the Sonoma County Agricultural Commissioner. This commitment, affirmed in the June 6, 2019 Resolution of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, is seen in a decreased use of pesticides over the last 10 years. Use of all pesticides including glyphosate are at an all-time low while acres of land Regional Parks owns and operates is at an all-time high.

Sonoma Water

Since the initial flood management programs of the 1950s, routine maintenance needs have continued to be

assessed and prioritized through seasonal and annual inspections with various sediment removal, bank stabilization, and vegetation management activities prioritized as necessary following inspections. The mandate and requirement for routine annual maintenance to provide adequate flood protection has not wavered since the construction of the stream and channel facilities. However, Sonoma Water's perspective towards stream management has evolved and now includes multiple objectives such as resource protection and environmental sustainability in addition to flood management. Sonoma Water uses herbicide to control invasive plant species that are problematic for its water supply, wastewater, and flood control facilities. Sonoma Water seeks to use the minimum amount of herbicide necessary. The Vegetation Management Report includes a summary, for each facility type and the amount of herbicide used (concentrate volumes are in parenthesis), for 2018/19.

Prior Board Actions:

01/14/2020: The Board approved the submitted maps of the designated "No Synthetic Spray" Zones for County owned properties.

06/04/2019: The Board approved by Resolution #19-0246 development of Integrated Pest Management programs for Permit Sonoma, Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures, Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Community Development Commission, Department of Transportation and Public Works, Regional Parks, Sonoma Water and General Services.

FISCAL SUMMARY

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

There are no known fiscal impacts

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

There are no known staffing impacts

Attachments:

Attachment A) Vegetation Management Report

Related Items "On File" with the Clerk of the Board:

None