

Coldstream's Creekside Park field conditions draw concern

Baseball diamonds in Coldstream, specifically Creekside Park, have been overrun by weeds...

JENNIFER SMITH / Feb. 17, 2012 7:00 p.m. / NEWS

Typically in baseball, loaded bases make for a great scoring opportunity.

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But not when they're loaded with weeds, instead of runners.

That's the case at some local diamonds in Coldstream, specifically Creekside Park, where weeds have overrun the infields.

“It presents some real challenges to our young ball players,” said Mark Batchelor, president of the Vernon and District Baseball Association. “There’s significant risk for them and they don’t want to slide, there’s fear of tripping.”

The problem has progressively gotten worse since the Greater Vernon Advisory Committee, at the request of Coldstream, stopped using herbicides and pesticides within Coldstream in 2009.

While coaches and staff have tried to pitch in by raking the infields themselves, they haven’t been able to keep up with the growth. And if the problem persists, Batchelor fears they won’t be able to play ball in Coldstream.

GVAC says it does not have the labour capacity to manually remove weeds nor can it afford to transport machinery around to drag the fields (which is done at the DND diamonds).

Therefore Coldstream is requesting that GVAC do something to fix the diamonds, and keep the bases free of weeds.

“Right now they just need to get it in usable shape again,” said Coun. Pat Cochrane. “Once they do that, we want to make sure they (VDBA) don’t come back a year or two from now with the same pictures.”

In an effort to resolve the problem, the use of chemicals is being debated, just for the infield portion of the diamonds.

“If they can find some organic alternative of herbicide they should use it,” said Coun. Gyula Kiss.

But according to head gardener Isabel Prystawik, even the organic herbicides are caustic, less effective and more expensive. The district is also not permitted to use any home-remedy solution which is not registered.

Meanwhile, Coun. Maria Besso is against any use of pesticides or herbicides.

"I think there are still manual ways to doing this," said Besso, adding that she has fielded local concerns about kids playing in pesticide-laden parks.

Coun. Peter McClean notes that whether its weeds in parks or alyssum spreading into hay fields, Coldstream will forever be plagued by nuisance plants.

"We are an agricultural community and there are a lot of weeds that fly."