

Twelve Reno parks to go pesticide-free under new pilot program



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(Photo: Andy Barron/RGJ file)

Two days after a demonstrator was arrested for pretending to drink Roundup at a public meeting, the Reno City Council approved a pilot program to go pesticide free at 12 city parks.

Before the program was approved, Reno Mayor Hillary Schieve and Councilwoman Neoma Jardon decried the stunt that resulted in the man's arrest and a four-hour shut down of the Washoe County Commission chambers while hazardous materials crews determined the weed killer bottle contained a harmless sugar and water solution.

Jardon also praised other activists who worked professionally with the city to create the PESTICIDE FREE PROGRAM, which has been in the works since earlier this year.

"I just wanted to commend our parks department, (activist) Sandy Rowley and (Councilwoman) Naomi (Duerr) for doing everything the right way, and condemn anybody who believes what that individual did at the county was doing anything that was in any way right," Jardon said.

Ross Tisevich, who had become increasingly agitated while speaking at public meetings on this issue, was arrested Monday on a felony charge of dispersing a hoax substance.

Under the pilot program adopted by the council on Wednesday, pesticide use will be mostly discontinued at 12 parks: Barbara Bennett, Wingfield, Canyon Creek, Plumas, Virginia Lake, Crystal Lake, Pat Baker, Wilkinson, Raleigh Heights, Silver Lake, Whitaker and Lake parks. If pesticides are needed, workers will first hang a public notice advising that chemicals will be used.

The city typically makes limited use of Roundup in planter areas, decomposed granite areas, along fence lines and around trees. It's not used on grass fields.

Under the pilot program, city workers will use OTHER METHODS TO CONTROL WEEDS at the 12 parks, including HAND TRIMMING AND PULLING-- A LABOR INTENSIVE EFFORT.

"While I 100 percent support not using pesticides, if we can get away with it, realize this could CAUSE AN INCREASE IN LABOR," Councilman Paul McKenzie said. "I don't want us to blame these guys when they come back asking for more help."

Since the recession, the city's parks budget has been slashed more than any other department, making it difficult to keep up with maintenance tasks.

Park Maintenance Director Jeff Mann said it TAKES UP TO 40 PERCENT MORE TIME TO CONTROL WEEDS THROUGH HAND TRIMMING. He said other cities have TRIED TO GO PESTICIDE FREE BY RELYING ON VOLUNTEERS to weed the parks, but that HASN'T BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

"TWO OR THREE TIMES PER YEAR IS ABOUT THE MOST TIME AND EFFORT THAT MOST VOLUNTEERS ARE WILLING TO SPEND," Mann said. "For weed control, it's every other week from first spring rain until the last fall."

He noted that Portland REQUIRES A SIGNED AGREEMENT WITH A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION TO DONATE 112 HOURS OF WEEDING TIME A YEAR BEFORE DESIGNATING A PESTICIDE-FREE PARK.

<http://www.rgj.com/story/news/2015/09/23/twelve-reno-parks-go-pesticide-free-under-new-pilot-program/72708690/>

NORAHG RESPONSE

In Reno, it will be impossible for municipal employees to keep parks pest-free, safe, and beautiful by using green alternative pesticides and practices that SIMPLY DO NOT WORK ! Government officials in Reno must start thinking twice about banning conventional products by looking at the experience of those jurisdictions that have suffered the hardship and stunningly exorbitant costs of this #@!!% nonsense !

<http://wp.me/P1jq40-43V> Without conventional pest control products, playing surfaces become thin and yellow, and over-run with weeds and infested with insects, resulting in the dismal destruction of safe turf playing surfaces and turning them into garbage dumps. <http://wp.me/P1jq40-44g>
<http://wp.me/P1jq40-4z3> DOES RENO WANT THIS #@!!% BAN NONSENSE ?!?! WILLIAM H GATHERCOLE AND NORAH G <http://pesticidetruths.com/>