



Conejo Recreation & Park District

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This general informational letter has been prepared in response to concerns raised regarding CRPD's use of the herbicide glyphosate (aka Roundup) in the turf removal process.

This drought is severe and with limited notice, water agencies serving CRPD are required to cut back an average of 33% as of June 1. CRPD has committed to doing its fair share so portions of parks throughout the District will not be watered and eventually be converted to drought tolerant landscaping (this requires time and money). We have defined essential turf as flat, active play space. Portions of nearly every park (and we have over 40) are being transitioned to drought tolerant landscaping. Irrigation modifications will be made and new trees and drought tolerant plants and shrubs will be added to the areas covered in woodchips. (woodchips help with dust suppression and soil moisture retention).

In order to transition turf areas into a drought tolerant landscaped area, the turf must be killed or removed and desirable drought tolerant plants encouraged. Glyphosate (the active ingredient in Roundup) is approved by the U.S. EPA and is the world's most widely used herbicide because of its efficacy and low toxicity. As an herbicide, glyphosate can be considered an "industry-standard" for land managers.

However, online there are some alarming stories about Monsanto the manufacturer of Roundup. I've tried to compile some information that may be helpful to those looking for additional information. . . And, perhaps you have come across some of the links I am providing in this email in your own research.

As a starter, this is a link to a short (and a bit simplistic) video which provides a brief overview on how glyphosate works as a systemic herbicide (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hL4ij2qZhJ4>).

The World Health Organization (WHO) issued a press release in March of 2015 announcing that its International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) had placed glyphosate, the active ingredient in "round-up" into Group 2 "Probably carcinogenic to humans". Here is a link to a short video about what WHO IARC's "probably causes cancer" means.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbBkB81ySxQ> (the punchline from this video is to: "take care / take reasonable precautions when exposed to a probable carcinogen.")

Other activities listed in the WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)'s Group 2 "probable carcinogen" category include working in a barbershop or hair salon, a print shop, dry cleaners, frying food, wood burning fireplace, diesel engine exhaust, solar (UV) radiation, radio frequency (RF) emissions (wireless phones), and coffee.

Agents in Group 1 which are *known* to be carcinogenic to humans includes things like painting, drinking alcoholic beverages, smoking or chewing tobacco, welding, x-rays, soot, outdoor air pollution, solar (UV) radiation and wood dust. (see <http://monographs.iarc.fr/ENG/Classification/index.php>)

These examples are not intended to minimize concerns about glyphosate, but to point out that many things we are exposed to on a routine basis (like too much sun) if taken to an extreme, can become harmful/carcinogenic to humans. (I can hear my 97 year-old grandma saying . . . "the secret to a long life is 'everything in moderation.'") Thus, in the unlikely event a resident ignores signs and walks across weeds/grass immediately after glyphosate is applied and still wet on non-edible weeds and grass, it should be considered in the context of what it is . . . a very brief, limited, external (v. ingesting) exposure. (I mention ingesting because much of the human exposure (and thus concern) about glyphosate relates to the widespread use of Monsanto's Round-up on GMO food-crops (soy, corn etc.) which are sprayed with glyphosate killing the weeds, but not the GMO food-crop.) This leads to a discussion/debate about subjects like world hunger, factory farming, farm subsidies, patent laws and GMOs which are far outside the scope of my expertise and CRPD's limited use of glyphosate in parks.

I am including a link to Monsanto's page (knowing, of course, that they are biased). Still the page does have very helpful information and includes links to non-biased/government sources of information:

<http://www.monsanto.com/iarc-roundup/pages/default.aspx> on this issue.

Although glyphosate is rated for immediate re-entry (no notices or access restrictions are required), for the drought-related turf removal process, CRPD is providing signs notifying people of the use of glyphosate prior to its application and will leave signage up for approximately 24 hours after application so that people may choose to stay away.

Because of the emergency drought watering restrictions, CRPD is removing turf at nearly every park . . . We have maps of the parks and other helpful information on our water page at <http://www.crpd.org/parkfac/water.asp>. We believe that we do have good reasons to utilize glyphosate as part of the drought-related turf conversions and have explained those reasons and provided some other answers to frequently asked questions on CRPD's website at: <http://www.crpd.org/civica/filebank/blobdload.asp?BlobID=10606>.

Roundup/glyphosate has been used as an herbicide in the management of CRPD public lands for nearly 40 years because of its efficacy and low toxicity and ecotoxicity. Scientific studies underpin approval by the US EPA and informs our consideration of its continued judicious use. CRPD works with a state certified and licensed applicator to have it applied in accordance with its labeling instructions with additional (though non-mandated) precautions including signage.

This drought, water restrictions and the rapidly escalating water prices have not been fun for any of us in the park business. CRPD is working hard to do its fair share to minimize water use and still keep our parks attractive, aesthetically pleasing and useful for the 140,000 people who count on them.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this information and the links referenced herein.

Sincerely,

Jim Friedl
General Manager