

Pest Management Plan



Purpose

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is an approach that establishes a sustainable approach to managing pests by combining preventative, biological, cultural, physical, and chemical practices in a way that minimizes economic, health, and environmental risks.

A pest may be defined as any living organism that is invasive or prolific, detrimental, troublesome, noxious, destructive, or a nuisance to either plants or animals, human or human concerns, livestock, human structures, wild ecosystems, etc. Types of pests typically include insects, plant diseases, fungi, weeds, invasive and toxic plants, snails, mites, algae, and rodents (rats, mice, ground squirrels, gophers). It is possible for an organism to be a pest in one setting but beneficial, domesticated, or acceptable in another.

A pesticide encompasses various products that are intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest. Types of pesticides typically include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, miticides, algaecides, and rodenticides.

The Conejo Recreation and Park District (CRPD) has adopted this Integrated Pest Management Plan for the grounds and buildings that CRPD manages. The plan outlines procedures to be followed to protect the health and safety of patrons and staff from pest and pesticide hazards. The plan is designed to voluntarily comply with policies and regulations promulgated by the Ventura County Agricultural Commissioner's Office.

Objectives of this IPM plan include:

- Prevention of loss or damage to structures or property by pests.
- Elimination of significant threats caused by pests to the health and safety of patrons and staff.
- Protection of environmental quality at parks and inside and outside of buildings.

This IPM plan will be stored in the office of the IPM Coordinator.

Community Expectations

At District properties, the Conejo Valley community has the benefit of nearly 240,000 square feet of buildings and facilities, including community centers (with kitchens), restrooms, museums, picnic areas, and pools. Additionally, the community enjoys 1,100 acres of parkland, with over 180 acres of grass turf and 400 acres sporting a variety of trees, shrubs, and plantings.

District programs, as well as community sports groups such as baseball, soccer, softball, football, lacrosse, volleyball, day camps, and youth sport classes, rely on clean, safe, and quality buildings, facilities, and parks, as do the family-friendly community events which occur regularly throughout the District. We live in a very active community with many people engaged in healthy lifestyles, exercise and sports.

The District's patrons, as does staff, expect the District to manage pests in an effective, environmentally sensitive, sustainable, and cost-effective manner.

Oversight

The Park Superintendent or designee shall be CRPD'S IPM Coordinator and will be responsible for implementing the IPM plan and coordinating pest management related communications between CRPD, patrons, and staff.

CRPD's Safety Committee will have the responsibility for annual review of the IPM program and for assisting the IPM Coordinator in resolving pest related issues. The committee will address IPM issues as needed and at least annually. Minutes will be taken of committee meetings and kept on file.

District History of Pest Management

The District takes great pride in our buildings, facilities, and parks, and is committed to be a leader in the community for pest management.

Staff has used a variety of pesticides since the inception of the District in 1963. In order to efficiently maintain the facilities, buildings and acreage of grass that provide play opportunity day and night, 365 days a year, over the years, pest management has required the use of chemicals and mechanical tools to keep pests in control. As better, safer, and more cost-effective techniques and materials have become available, the District has used them. When certain cultural practices were determined to be harmful, they were abandoned.

The equipment, technology, and treatments have been historically and currently utilized in a safe manner. District staff regularly attend conferences, trade shows, and seminars to keep up on the newest trends in the industry. District staff also maintain appropriate licensing, certifications, and continuing education units, helping to provide better turf and parks year after year.

Specific Efforts

In an effort to reduce the potential effects on wildlife who prey on rodents, in 2005, the District ceased using anti-coagulant rodenticides and in 2015, stopped using all rodenticides – poisons used to kill rodents - relying on traps and CO₂ gas injections instead.

Since 2010, the District has made a concentrated effort to decrease the use of non-organic fertilizers by changing turf management practices, aerating more, and using more sand fill and organic composted topsoil. This preventative cultural practice has led to stronger roots and less weeds in our fields.

Strategic Plan Compliance

In 2008, the District developed its initial Strategic Plan, a top-level document to set clear direction over all operational aspects of the District's mission. In the Strategic Plan's early years, the District's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable operations was evident in the following portion of the District's Vision Statement:

To serve our community and be recognized as a top recreation and park district in the nation we must:

- Engage in, and promote, environmentally responsible and sustainable facilities and business practices.

Additionally, included were the broad goals:

- 2.6 Annually evaluate the District's progress toward greater environmental stewardship and "sustainable" operations.
 - 2.6.1 Incorporate environmentally sensitive and energy-efficient design, and recycled, renewable, or otherwise sustainable materials in parks and facilities.
- 6.10 Evaluate CRPD's environmental practices and participate in California Association of Recreation and Park District's environmental report card and strive for continuous improvement, especially in low scoring areas.

Continuing in its efforts to emphasize the District's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable operations, in 2019, the District created a new Strategic Element – Sustainability and Resiliency. The former goals mentioned above (2.6, 2.6.1 and 6.10) were folded into and expanded in the new Sustainability and Resiliency Strategic Element.

The objective of the Sustainability and Resiliency Strategic Element is to operate the District in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner. The strategy is to evaluate new ideas, embrace change, and continuously move the District toward environmentally sustainable and cost-effective operations. More specific pest management related goals include:

- 8.1 Balance environmental and economic factors and continue the District's progress toward greater environmental stewardship and "sustainable" operations.
- 8.7 Regularly evaluate CRPD's environmental practices and strive for continuous improvement toward an environmentally considerate and sustainable operation.
 - 8.7.1 Consider public park industry best management practices and methods and integrated pest management practices for park maintenance and operations including environmentally friendly and economically feasible solutions to unwanted plants (weeds), insects, pests.

Procedures and Practices

General IPM Strategies

Pest management strategies may include education, exclusion, sanitation, maintenance, biological and mechanical controls, and pre-approved, site-appropriate pesticides.

An Integrated Pest Management decision at CRPD shall consist of the following steps:

1. Identify pest species.
2. Estimate pest populations.
3. Select the appropriate management tactics based on current on-site information.
4. Assess effectiveness of pest management control.
5. Keep appropriate records.

Decisions concerning whether or not pesticides should be applied in a given situation will be based on a review of all available options. Efforts will be made to avoid the use of pesticides first by adequate prevention techniques such as: pest proofing of facilities, good sanitation practices, selection of pest-resistant plant materials, and appropriate horticultural practices.

If mechanical or manual means of pest population suppression can reasonably be effectively used, they will be.

When it is determined that a pesticide must be used in order to meet pest management objectives, the least-hazardous material, optimal for the job, will be chosen.

All pesticide storage, transportation, and application will be conducted in accordance with the requirement of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (7 United States Code 136 et seq.), Environmental Protection Agency regulations in 40 CFR, Occupational Safety and Health Administration regulations, CRPD policies and procedures, and local ordinances.

No person will apply, store, or dispose of any pesticide on CRPD-managed property without the appropriate pesticide applicator license and/or prior approval by the IPM Coordinator or his designee. All pesticide applicators will be trained in the principles and practices of IPM and the use of pesticides approved for use by CRPD. All applicators must comply with the IPM Plan and follow appropriate regulations and label precautions when using pesticides in or around CRPD facilities.

Contract service providers shall apply pesticides on CRPD-managed property only with prior approval from CRPD. CRPD's IPM Plan and pest-specific strategies should be made available to, and be included in, the contracts with service providers.

Posting and Notification of Pesticide Applications

The IPM Coordinator or his designee will be responsible to notify patrons and staff of the planned and emergency applications of pesticides in parks and facility buildings as required by law.

When pesticide applications are scheduled in CRPD-managed buildings, facilities, or parks, CRPD service providers and staff shall provide notification in accordance with law, including:

1. Posting a pest control information sign with the date, time, and location of the application and the product applied in an appropriate area and including contact information for additional details.
2. Posting signs and closing areas as required by law.

Where pests pose an immediate threat to the health and safety of patrons or staff, CRPD may authorize an emergency pesticide application. Disinfectants, anti-microbials, and self-contained or gel-type pesticide baits applied in inaccessible areas are exempt from posting, notification, and the 7-hour re-entry requirement.

Record Keeping and Public Access to Information

CRPD will maintain records of all pest control treatments for at least three (3) years. Information regarding pest management activities will be made available to the public at the CRPD's administrative office.

Reporting

Chemical pesticide use will be reported and monitored by the Ventura County Agriculture Department as required by law.

Service Provider Roles

CRPD service providers including cleaning, pest control, and landscape maintenance, is intended to be guided by written and signed contracts including CRPD-developed IPM program specifications for structural pest control providers.

Service providers shall be directed to provide special attention to pest-vulnerable areas including food storage, preparation and serving areas, washrooms, custodial closets, mechanical rooms, and entryways into the building.

Service providers or other IPM experts shall be asked to provide input on any CRPD facility renovation or reconstruction projects including reviewing plans for pest-conducive conditions, suggesting pest-proofing measures, and inspecting construction where applicable to prevent and avoid pest problems.

Staff Roles

CRPD administration shall provide support to assist the IPM Coordinator in maintaining an IPM Plan that relies on minimal pesticide use. Such support shall include efforts to promptly address any structural, horticultural, or sanitation changes recommended by the IPM Coordinator to reduce or prevent pest problems.

Furthermore, CRPD administration shall assist the IPM Coordinator in developing and delivering materials and programs for staff and the public to educate them about the importance of good sanitation and pest control.

Training

CRPD grounds staff will be provided with training on CRPD's IPM Plan at hire and during annual update training. Training will include the rationale for the IPM Plan and specific elements including use of the pest-sighting log and prohibition of pesticide applications by non-certified individuals.

Additionally, designated staff including the IPM Coordinator and those who conduct regular inspections of CRPD building, facilities, and parks, may receive advanced training on identifying pest infestations and pest-conducive conditions. This training is intended to improve the ability of CRPD staff to oversee compliance with CRPD's IPM plan.

Pest Specific Strategies

The following strategies apply to frequently encountered pests and may evolve over time:

Ants/Termites

- Ants/termites should be identified to species to aid in locating nesting sites, preferred food, habits and appropriate baits when necessary.
- Ants inside buildings should be cleaned up with soapy water, including the areas ants are traversing to eliminate any pheromone recruiting trail, which ants deposit to help other ants find the location of food and water sources.
- Maintenance should be informed and the opening providing entry for ants into the building should be located and repaired.
- Building and room occupants should be informed of any action they need to take to prevent future problems, e.g., cleaning up spilled food or drink more promptly or thoroughly, storing food in sealed containers, repairing leaking or dripping pipes or faucets, etc.
- If the above steps fail to correct the problem, CRPD staff and/or service provider shall inform the IPM Coordinator and discuss additional steps, such as more extensive repairs, changes in the food policy, changes in exterior landscaping to remove ant habitat, or selection of least-toxic pesticide baits or gels, preferably in manufactured tamper-resistant bait stations placed in areas inaccessible to children or other building occupants.

Bees

- Best efforts should be made to preserve or relocate a hive that is creating a hazard. Staff has bee suits and equipment for handling a colony.
- Swarms are new colonies looking to establish themselves, they may be barricaded, signed and allowed to move on (typically they go within 48 hours).
- Bee colonies should only be taken as a last resort if they are a threat to park users or are doing physical damage to structures.
- Bee varieties are also considered to determine what action is necessary. Hives of aggressive varieties that create unsafe situations in the parks may require removal.

Ground Wasps/Yellow Jackets

- Yellow Jackets are extremely aggressive and if a colony is found in an urban park or adjacent to a trail, should be injected with an insecticide and capped.

Rodents (Rats, Mice, Ground Squirrels, Gophers, Rabbits)

- Rodents should be identified to species to aid in locating nesting sites, preferred food, habits, and determine appropriate trapping techniques.

- No systemic rodenticides are allowed to be used.
- Burrowing rodents are typically controlled with a CO₂ injections machine.
- Hygiene is also a major factor in rodent population control. Frequent and systematic use of trash can lids will dramatically cut the ground squirrel and rat populations.

Weed Preventative Measures - Soil Management and Turf Culture

- Create good healthy soil with proper mix of nutrients, air and moisture; thus, the plants should suppress the weed population.

Weed Suppression

- Individual weeds should usually be removed manually. Large areas may be treated with mechanical means such as plastic sheeting or weed whips.
- Continue working with organizations such as Non-Toxic Neighborhoods and consulting with other cities and park districts to determine suitable organic herbicides.
- In limited situations, the use of a federally approved chemical herbicide such as glyphosate may become necessary:
 - To kill the stumps of invasive species,
 - Along roads where humans or animals would not be exposed for at least 2 hours,
 - In hardscape (parkways, sidewalks, parking lots),
 - When all other methods fail.
- Glyphosate will not be used:
 - Within 50 feet of playgrounds,
 - In any area where human or domestic animal contact would be likely within 2 hours.

Conclusion

The District is committed to manage pests in a preventative, effective, environmentally friendly, sustainable, and cost-effective manner.

Staff is continuously making efforts to balance the needs, expectations, and concerns of the community with effective pest prevention and control efforts to preserve and maintain clean and safe buildings, facilities, and parks.

The Integrated Pest Management Plan will be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate by the CRPD's Safety Committee. As part of the annual review, staff will consider the latest District procedures and practices as well as information from regulatory agencies in order to keep the plan current and relevant.