

Herbicide-Free Parks Pilot Project • May 2024 update

Parks and Recreation, alongside our valued community partners like [Grow Safe: Non-Toxic Missoula](#) and the [Healthy Babies Bright Futures Bright Cities program](#), is piloting an effort expand herbicide-free vegetation management across City parklands. The City Council's support and recent funding have bolstered our efforts to transition towards natural turf management practices that prioritize community safety, health, and well-being.

As living entities, turf and landscape plants require a thoughtful and measured transition from conventional management practices to a natural approach. This process demands careful analysis, training, and an understanding of sports and recreational turf users' expectations. As we seek additional funding and expand the project, please consider visiting the 18 parks and natural areas on our annual [Herbicide-Free Parks](#) list.

With grant funding from Healthy Babies Bright Futures and the City Council's backing, we have engaged industry leaders [Osborne Organics](#) and [Beyond Pesticides](#) to provide training, consultation, and recommendations for successfully managing healthier turf through natural and organic methods.

Since 2019, our pesticide-free organic turf management pilot program has been in place at McCormick Park, yielding the public health and environmental benefits inherent to natural turf management. The City Council funded equipment and supplies for the project in FY24. The first complete application of natural and organic fertilizers occurred in late 2023.

Encouraged by our supporters, we have requested funding from the City Council for the FY 25 budget to convert three parks containing or adjacent to community gardens to herbicide-free management. These areas include:

- Northside Ballfield (adjacent to Northside Community Garden)
- Montana Rail Link Park (picnic shelter, playground, dog park, and community garden)
- Duncan Field (adjacent to the PEAS Farm).

Our goal is to steadily increase the number of herbicide-free parks in our system each year, reducing the use of pesticides on parklands.

You can support our efforts by expressing your support for herbicide-free parks to your [City Council representative](#), volunteering to pull weeds in your neighborhood park or open space, and sharing this information and the [Herbicide-Free Parks](#) list with your friends and neighbors.

Together, we can create a greener, healthier, and more sustainable environment for all to enjoy.

For more information, please visit <https://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/1739/Vegetation-Management-In-Parks> or [email us](#).