

Toxics Reduction – Strategies

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General Strategies

In order to achieve the community's desired future state, the following strategies will be employed:

1. Minimize and where possible eliminate the use of chemical herbicides
2. Identify a list of other potentially toxic chemicals and substances that should be targeted for reduction or elimination
3. Minimize and where possible eliminate the use of household products that contain chemicals or substances that are harmful to human health or may accumulate in the environment
4. Minimize and where possible eliminate the use of commercial or industrial products that may be harmful to human health or may accumulate in the environment
5. Ensure that products containing potentially harmful chemicals or substances that cannot be eliminated are managed in such a way that the harmful chemicals or substances are not allowed to disperse or accumulate in nature.

Strategies for the Town of Canmore (Corporate) Operations

- Continue the practice of not using herbicides for cosmetic or aesthetic purposes
- Continue efforts to minimize all herbicide use while meeting the requirements of the Alberta Weed Act Control Act
- Utilize integrated pest management practices to minimize the need for herbicides
- Ensure contract service providers (EPCOR, Volker Stevin, etc) are aware of and conform to the requirements of the Alberta Weed Control Act and the Town of Canmore's expectations with respect to herbicide use and integrated pest management practices

- Identify and reduce or eliminate products used by the Town that contain chemicals or substances that may be harmful to human health or may accumulate in the environment
- Where potentially hazardous chemicals or substances cannot be eliminated, ensure that these products are handled in a manner that does not allow these chemicals or substances to be dispersed in the environment
- For public spaces, continue to use landscaping standards that emphasize the use native vegetation species to reduce the potential for invasive species and minimize the need for herbicides
- For private properties, consider implementing landscaping standards and guidelines that emphasize the use of native vegetation species to reduce the potential for invasive species and minimize the need for herbicides

It is important to note that the first strategy listed above does not preclude the occasional use of chemical herbicides to maintain sports fields. Although the use of chemical herbicides on playing fields will be minimized through good turf management practices, the use of chemical herbicides may occasionally be required to maintain the performance (rather than the aesthetics) of the playing surface. If the option of using chemical herbicides were not available, then only option to restore the playability of a sports field where significant weed infestation has occurred might be to re-sod the playing field. This would involve considerable expense and would require shutting down the field until re-growth had occurred.

It is also important to note that inorganic fertilizers are not the same as chemical herbicides and hence the above strategies do not preclude the use of inorganic fertilizers to maintain sport fields or other areas of vegetation maintained by the Town. Although the Town has and will continue to maximize its use of organic fertilizers, for some applications inorganic fertilizers are more suitable.

Priorities for the Town of Canmore (Corporate) Operations

1. Develop and implement a formal Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan for Town owned or operated facilities
2. Complete a review of products and substances used throughout Town operations (including contracted facilities) to identify products that contain potentially hazardous substances that should be reduced or eliminated
3. Identify more environmentally friendly alternatives for products that contain hazardous chemicals or substances and switch to these products where the alternatives are able to satisfy the Town's cost and performance needs

Strategies for the Community

- Develop a better understanding of current herbicide use in community by encouraging retailers to voluntarily provide a summary of the types and volumes of herbicides sold
- Develop a better understanding of current herbicide use in the community by encouraging commercial applicators and/or large industrial, commercial or institutional users to voluntarily provide a summary of the types and volumes of herbicides used
- Develop and implement a community education and engagement to increase awareness and commitment to reducing herbicide use
- Encourage local retailers to stock alternative vegetation control products or chemical herbicides that avoid the most toxic and persistent ingredients
- Encourage individual property owners and local businesses to become herbicide free by establishing a voluntary registry for those who no longer use herbicides
- Increase amount of native vegetation species used for landscaping
- Establish/promote a voluntary Code of Practice for landscaping companies that addresses the use of herbicides and native species
- Work with local nurseries to encourage the stocking and promotion of native vegetation species that are more resistant to invasive species and requires less herbicide use
- Work with local landscaping companies to promote the use of native vegetation in landscaping that is more resistant to invasive species and requires less herbicide use
- Reduce and where possible eliminate the use of toxic or hazardous chemicals and materials from all aspects of the residential and ICI sector
- Where toxic substances or materials cannot be eliminated, ensure that these materials are handled in a manner that minimizes dispersion of these substances into the environment.

Priorities for the Community

1. Develop a community education and engagement strategy to increase the community's commitment to and participation in efforts to minimize the use of herbicides and other potentially toxic substances
2. Work with local retailers and pesticide applicators to develop a better understanding of current herbicide use in the community
3. Identify specific herbicide products or active ingredients that should be targeted for reduction or elimination based on toxicity, mobility, persistence in the environment and other criteria

Priority 1 will be developed as part of the Community Education and Engagement component of the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan.