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**To:** Cass Clay Food Commission  
**From:** Cass Clay Food Partners  
Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments (Metro COG)  
**Date:** March 6, 2020  
**RE:** Cass Clay Food Commission Agenda and Correspondence

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### 29<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Cass Clay Food Commission

March 11, 2020 10:30 am – 12:00 pm  
Location: Fargo City Commission Chambers

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|----------|--|
| 10:30 am | 1. Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Approve Order &amp; Contents of the Overall Agenda</li><li>b. Review &amp; Action on Minutes from January 8, 2020 (<b>Attachment 1</b>)</li><li>c. Welcome to Ken Pawluk, Cass County Commission</li></ul> |
| 10:35 am | 2. Commission Check-In – Chair Mongeau   |
| 10:40 am | 3. Certificate of Appreciation for Mindy Grant – Kim Lipetzky  |
| 10:45 am | 4. Approve Appointment of At-Large Members – Beth McConnon & Jeffrey Miller ( <b>Attachment 2</b> ) – Adam Altenburg   |
| 10:50 am | 5. Five Year Anniversary of the Cass Clay Food Commission – Kim Lipetzky   |
| 11:00 am | 6. Cass County Weed Control – Stan Wolf, Weed Control Officer  |
| 11:15 am | 7. Clay County Soil & Water Conservation District – Gabriel Foltz, District Technician / County Ag Inspector   |
| 11:30 am | 8. Pesticide Use on Public Land Issue Brief & Snapshot – Whitney Oxendahl ( <b>Attachment 3a &amp; 3b</b> )  |
| 11:40 am | 9. Public Comment Opportunity – Chair Mongeau  |
| 11:50 am | 10. Commission & Steering Committee Roundtable – Chair Mongeau   |
| 11:55 am | 11. Commission Action Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Next First Fridays at Theatre B – April 3, 2020</li><li>b. Next Commission Meeting – May 13, 2020</li></ul>   |
| 12:00 pm | 12. Adjournment  |

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Cass Clay Food Commission meetings are taped and rebroadcast on cable channel TV Fargo 56 each Friday at 11:00 am. People with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and need special accommodations should contact Savanna Leach at Metro COG at 701.532.5100. Please contact us at least 48 hours before the meeting to give our staff adequate time to make arrangements. Meeting minutes are available on the Cass Clay Food Partners website at [www.cassclayfoodpartners.org](http://www.cassclayfoodpartners.org) and Metro COG's website at [www.fmmetrocog.org](http://www.fmmetrocog.org).

# Attachment 1

**28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the  
Cass Clay Food Commission  
January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
Fargo Commission Chambers**

**Members Present:**

Jenny Mongeau, Clay County Commission, Chair  
Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council  
Sara Watson Curry, Moorhead City Council  
Chelsey Johnson, Horace City Council  
Mike Thorstad, West Fargo City Commission  
Mindy Grant, At-Large Member  
Kayla Pridmore, At-Large Member  
Janice Tweet, At-Large Member  
Jeremiah Utecht, At-Large Member

**Members Absent:**

John Strand, Fargo City Commission

**Others Present:**

Kim Lipetzky, Fargo Cass Public Health  
Noelle Harden, U of M Extension  
Timothy Hiller, Concordia College – Community Engagement  
Emma Notermann, Clay County Planning  
Deb Haugen, Cass Clay Food Partners  
Whitney Oxendahl, Cass Clay Food Partners  
Greta Gramig, Weed Biology/Ecology Specialist, NDSU  
Mike Schroeder, Parks Maintenance Manager, Moorhead  
Adam Altenburg, Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

Chair Mongeau called the meeting to order at 10:30 AM.

**1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda**

A motion to approve the order and contents of the overall agenda was made by Ms. Watson Curry and seconded by Ms. Grant. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

**1b. Review and Action on Minutes from November 13, 2019**

A motion to approve the minutes for November was made by Mr. Aasness and seconded by Mr. Thorstad. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

Ms. Johnson arrived at 10:33 AM.

**2. Commission Check-In**

Chair Mongeau stated that Commission members and the steering committee had an opportunity to provide updates on news or events happening in the community.

Ms. Pridmore informed the Commission that the Northern Plains Sustainable Agriculture Society would be hosting a feature documentary about regenerative organic farming entitled “Dreaming

of a Vetter World.” She stated that the documentary would be shown on January 12 at the Fargo Theatre.

Chair Mongeau explained that Clay County was beginning the process of updating some of its ordinances and would be looking to potentially integrate language from blueprints developed by the Commission.

Ms. Haugen arrived at 10:40 AM.

### **3. Certificates of Appreciation for Bukola Bakare and Nancy Carriveau**

Ms. Lipetzky thanked Ms. Bakare and Ms. Carriveau for their service as at-large members on the Food Commission. She stated that neither could attend the meeting but that certificates of appreciation would be presented to both of them.

### **4. Approve Appointment of New At-Large Member – Janice Tweet**

Chair Mongeau explained that, with Bukola Bakare and Nancy Carriveau fulfilling their terms, the steering committee had sought two new applicants to serve on the Commission. She explained that the steering committee reviewed and recommended the appointment of Janice Tweet as one of two new at-large members. She noted that the steering committee will still seek applications for an additional at-large member to serve on the Commission.

A motion to approve the appointment of Janice Tweet to the Commission was made by Mr. Aasness and seconded by Ms. Watson Curry. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

### **5. Jurisdiction Spotlight: City of Moorhead – Sara Watson Curry**

Ms. Watson Curry highlighted a variety of food systems accomplishments in the City of Moorhead. She provided the Commission information on the following: city partnerships with the Moorhead Farmers Market and the Dorothy Day Food Pantry, information on city policies regarding compost and yard waste, permitting processes for boulevard plantings and rain gardens, procedures for Moorhead residents to plant yards as natural plantings, programs such as Lawns to Legumes for installing pollinator-friendly native plantings in residential lawns, and other partnerships with the Audubon Dakota Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative, River Keepers, and Longspur Prairie. She concluded her presentation by explaining that Moorhead had reached the third level in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program through its efforts to increase and promote conservation, recycling, and sustainability.

### **6. Weed Biology and Ecology: Non-chemical Weed Control in Weed Management Systems**

Dr. Greta Gramig, Weed Biology/Ecology Specialist with NDSU, presented the Commission information on weed ecology and the urban interface.

Dr. Gramig explained that, prior to the 1940's, weeds were controlled via tillage, hand pulling, mechanical devices, and inorganic herbicides like sodium arsenate. She stated that beginning in 1946, weeds began to be controlled through a range of synthetic herbicides with various modes of action and types of selectivity. She explained that his practice continued up until 1996, when weeds started to be controlled with glyphosate and other herbicides to which crops are resistant through genetic engineering. She touch upon the challenges to herbicide-intensive approaches including: environmental concerns, social and health concerns, economic concerns, and herbicide resistance.

Dr. Gramig described four approaches and tactics to integrated weed management (IWM) including: physical and mechanical tools such as pulling and tillage, cultural tactics such as crop

rotations and cover crops, biological strategies which include grazing and biocontrol, and chemical approaches that use multiple effective herbicide modes of action (MOA). She stated that an IWM program is designed around what is most effective for a particular weed, crop, or farm operation, and that it is imperative to use a variety of tactics as no one strategy is a silver bullet.

Dr. Gramig concluded her presentation with information on the following: benefits of growing food in cities, risks of lawn herbicides moving off-target and affecting gardens, ecologically balanced lawns including 'no-mow' fescue species and adding white clover for weed control, and benefits of natural lawn care.

## **7. Moorhead Parks Maintenance**

Mike Schroeder, Parks Maintenance Manager for the City of Moorhead, briefly addressed the Commission to explain the weed management activities and procedures of the Parks and Recreation Department, as well as information on spraying and mowing in the city's 45 parks.

## **8. Pesticide Use on Public Land Issue Brief and Snapshot**

Ms. Oxendahl presented a draft issue brief and community snapshot regarding pesticide use on public land. She provided information from the issue brief that explained issues with synthetic chemical pesticides including: negative impacts to pollinators, ground and surface water contamination, pesticide drift which can occur during sprayed applications, and neurotoxicity to humans. She concluded the issue brief by providing examples of how cities and states are addressing certain pesticides including: implementing integrated pest management (IPM) plans to reduce pesticide use, creating no-spray buffer zones, banning glyphosate on public lands, and adopting rules to restrict pesticide use to protect local pollinators.

Ms. Oxendahl presented the Commission information included in the draft community snapshot highlighting weed and insect control for the following: Cass County Vector Control, Cass County Weed Control, the City of Fargo, Fargo Parks District, West Fargo Parks Department, Clay County Soil and Water Conservation District, the City of Moorhead, and the City of Dilworth. She described how local non-profits including Audubon Dakota, Longspur Prairie, Pheasants Forever, and River Keepers can help reduce pesticide use by planting prairie grasses, certain trees, and pollinator habitats. She also explained a short list of community actions that jurisdictions and organizations could consider including: communication and education strategies, working with non-profits, IPM plans, recruiting volunteers to hand-weed certain areas, and creating no-spray buffer zones around playgrounds and other sensitive areas. Ms. Oxendahl and Chair Mongeau stated that a final issue brief and snapshot would be brought before the Commission in March.

## **9. Public Comment Opportunity**

Chair Mongeau informed the Commission that time would be allotted for public comments.

Jen Walla, former AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer for the Prairie Roots Community Fund, expressed her gratitude to the Commission for opening up the conversation regarding pesticide spraying in the community. She stated that knowing what is sprayed and how often is beneficial for people who may want to pick certain plants for various uses in area parks and open spaces.

Ms. Grant responded that what some people may consider as weeds, others view as edible plants and that there are sometimes groups of people who forage in parks for dandelions and other plants. She said that she tries to discourage the practice but that there are people that might not always be aware of the risks or may not have the language skills to know that certain open spaces have been sprayed with chemicals.

## **10. Commission and Steering Committee Roundtable**

Chair Mongeau asked for the Commission and the steering committee to share any additional updates.

Chair Mongeau stated that, as the Commission approaches its five year anniversary, it may be beneficial for Commission members to become more involved in steering committee meetings to better understand its processes and to better shape how the Commission moves forward with issues and topics in the future.

## **11. Commission Action Steps**

Chair Mongeau stated that the next Commission meeting would be held on March 11. She also mentioned that the next First Fridays event would be held on February 7, 8:00 AM at Theatre B in Moorhead.

Chair Mongeau adjourned the meeting at 11:40 AM.

## Attachment 2

**To:** Cass Clay Food Commission  
**From:** Adam Altenburg, Metro COG  
**Date:** March 2, 2020  
**Re:** *Approve Appointments of New At-Large Commission Members*

In addition to members from each of the seven jurisdictions in the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan area, there is provision for an additional five at-large members to serve on the Food Commission. It is the intent that at-large members will bring additional and varied expertise to the Commission as it may relate to food systems issues. At-large members are initially vetted by the Steering Committee before being brought to a vote by the Commission. Each at-large member serves a two-year term.

With Mindy Grant stepping down from the Commission and with one prior opening at the beginning of the year, the Steering Committee continued to seek applicants for two new at-large members through February 2020. Having completed this process, the Steering Committee recommends the appointments of Beth McConnon and Jeffrey Miller as new at-large members to the Food Commission.

**Requested Action:**

**Approve the appointments of Beth McConnon and Jeffrey Miller to the Food Commission**

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: Beth McConnon

Phone: 701-388-7841

Email: bethmccannon@outlook.com

Preferred mailing address: 2519 Viking Circle S

City: Fargo

State: ND

ZIP Code: 58103

## EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Current employer: Askegaard Organic Farm

Employer address: 2856 150th Ave S

Phone: 701-261-0448

E-mail: askorganic@msn.com

Fax:

City: Moorhead

State: MN

Zip: 56560

Position: Organic Farmer

**WHAT SKILLS, TRAINING, OR EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION?**

I have been actively involved in my family's organic farming operation my whole life, and have rented/operated a portion of its acreage for the past 7 years. Along with growing wheat and soybeans, our farm grows, mills, and packages certified organic flaxseed for retail and wholesale markets across the Midwest, thus giving me knowledge on many aspects of the "local food movement" from production to

**REASON FOR YOUR INTEREST TO SERVE ON THIS COMMISSION:**

I am interested in serving on the commission because I am passionate about many of the topics that the commission addresses, including access to healthy & local foods, pesticide regulations, community gardens, and pollinator habitats. I am looking to make a difference in my community and believe that my background and experience in organic agriculture will aid me in the discussion of these topics.

**PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF BIO (200 WORDS OR LESS): NOTE: THIS MAY BE USED FOR PUBLICATION TO DESCRIBE THE COMMISSION.**

Beth McConnon is a sixth generation farmer at Askegaard Organic Farm. She graduated from NDSU in 2012 with a degree in Biological Sciences. Beth enjoys all aspects of her job, from driving tractors in the field, to milling, packaging, and distributing the farm's organic flaxseed to grocery stores. In her free time, Beth enjoys gardening, photography, and spending time outdoors with her husband, Tony.

Signature: Beth McConnon

Date: 2-18-2020

Please return this form to Kim Lipetzky – [KLipetzky@FargoND.gov](mailto:KLipetzky@FargoND.gov)

Or mail to:

**Fargo Cass Public Health**

Attn: Kim Lipetzky

1240 25<sup>th</sup> Street South

Fargo, ND 58103-2367

## APPLICANT INFORMATION

Name: Jeffrey Miller

Phone: 701-282-2157 x3

Email: jeffrey.d.miller@nd.nacdn.net

Preferred mailing address: 1665 43rd St S., Suite 103

City: Fargo

State: North Dakota

ZIP Code: 58103

## EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Current employer: Cass County Soil Conservation District

Employer address: 1665 43rd St S., Suite 103

Phone: 701-282-2157 x3

E-mail: jeffrey.d.miller@nd.nacdn.net

Fax:

City: Fargo

State: North Dakota

Zip: 58103

Position: Director

**WHAT SKILLS, TRAINING, OR EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE RELATED TO THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION?**

I work with a variety of citizens and groups on urban conservation projects, including food systems.

**REASON FOR YOUR INTEREST TO SERVE ON THIS COMMISSION:**

I am passionate about local food and access to it. I enjoy working with the citizens of Cass County to develop and implement programs that allow for the development of local food systems.

**PLEASE PROVIDE A BRIEF BIO (200 WORDS OR LESS): NOTE: THIS MAY BE USED FOR PUBLICATION TO DESCRIBE THE COMMISSION.**

I have a Bachelor of Science degree from NDSU in Natural Resources Management. I also own a small hobby farm where I raise chickens and grow a variety of vegetables and fruits. I have worked at the Cass County SCD for over 5 years and have made it my life's work to implement conservation and helping the citizens of Cass County to care for the Earth.

Signature:



Date: 1/8/2020

Please return this form to Kim Lipetzky – [KLipetzky@FargoND.gov](mailto:KLipetzky@FargoND.gov)

Or mail to:

**Fargo Cass Public Health**

Attn: Kim Lipetzky

1240 25<sup>th</sup> Street South

Fargo, ND 58103-2367



## Pesticide Use on Public Land

More than a billion pounds of **pesticides** are applied annually in the United States to places like gardens and farm lands to parks and lawns. Until the 20th century, plant extracts or mineral-based materials were used as pesticides, and preventative techniques were common to reduce pests. With the rise of synthetic pesticides in the 1930s and the boom of making chemicals during World War II, the use of these pesticides skyrocketed.

The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) works hard to approve and regulate these chemicals as they come into the marketplace, but there are more than 16,000 pesticide products to monitor, so it is challenging to measure their impacts on all types of wildlife, and it is difficult to understand the cumulative effects of chemicals and pesticides on the human body. To the credit of pesticides, using them has had vast benefits including increasing crop yields, controlling vector-borne diseases, controlling **noxious weeds**, and making the turf on sports grounds viable. With these benefits and more, many communities across the United States are making decisions on what type of pest control will cause the least amount of harm to their local environments.

### *Some of the issues with pesticides:*

- Pesticides can impact pollinators.
  - **Herbicides** can kill milkweed and nectar plants which are essential for monarch butterflies.
  - Neonicotinoids, an **insecticide** used as a seed treatment, is a neurotoxin for honey bees, impacting their navigation system and foraging abilities. Furthermore, the toxic effects on insects may be correlated to declines in some insect-eating bird populations.
- There are concerns about the world's most widely used herbicide called glyphosate (the main ingredient in the product Roundup), such as:
  - It appears to disrupt microbes in honey bees' digestive tract, which may make them vulnerable to infections and pathogens. This is especially concerning due to the rapid decline of honey bee colonies in the United States.
  - The World Health Organization's (WHO) cancer agency has evaluated glyphosate and found it to be "probably carcinogenic to humans."
  - The use of glyphosate on crops has rapidly increased in the past 25 years. Its use on crops has increased from 13.9 million pounds in 1992 to 287 million pounds in 2016.
- Workers producing synthetic ingredients, such as chemists and manufacturing workers, and those spraying pesticides, such as farm workers and local applicators, are at the highest risk of acute toxic exposure from these chemicals.
- Pesticides can contaminate surface water and groundwater systems when there is water runoff on treated areas.
- Organophosphate pesticides, commonly used in **vector** control, are neurotoxic to humans at certain exposure levels and have been linked to higher rates of childhood ADHD. Long term exposure can cause neurological symptoms like disorientation, depression, and loss of memory.
- The herbicide atrazine, which is banned in the EU, has been linked to cancer, infertility, and birth defects. It has been found in over 90% of the water supply in the U.S.
- During the application of pesticides, they can drift to other areas. Scientists have found that most of the sprayed pesticides (95-98%) do not hit their intended mark. Pesticide drift can be present for days and weeks and even months after application.
- Children are more easily harmed by pesticides than adults, because their bodies and brains are growing and cells are dividing at a more rapid rate than adults.

*Tackling the issue:*

- Cities across the United States, such as Seattle-Tacoma, are implementing **Integrated Pest Management (IPM)** plans to reduce the use of pesticides in their area.
- Cities are creating no-spray buffer zones around playgrounds in parks and at schools
- Some cities, such as Chicago, are banning glyphosate for use on public lands, while other cities like Vancouver are banning the use of glyphosate publicly and privately, except for controlling for certain noxious weeds.
- Forty-three states, including North Dakota and Minnesota, have preemption laws for pesticides, which limit the ability of city and county governments to ban or restrict these products. Canadian cities do not have these laws, and more than 170 have banned cosmetic lawn care pesticides. In 2013, Tacoma, Maryland's city council restricted the use of cosmetic lawn care pesticides, becoming the first to do so in the United States.
- Minnesota cities, like Stillwater and Shorewood, have adopted rules to restrict pesticide use to protect local pollinators.
- In 2019, the City Council of Portland, Maine passed a ban on both public and private use of synthetic pesticides, pairing it with a fine of \$100-\$500, which is the strongest pesticide reduction policy this country has seen yet. A key aspect of the new ordinance is the creation of an advisory committee to educate the community on non-chemical methods to maintain lawns and gardens.
- Minneapolis Parks Department has adopted an IPM strategy to manage its more than 6,800 acres.
- In 2005, Lawrence, KS piloted a program for a pesticide-free area in a local park, and in 2008 an IPM was created for the department.

**Key Definitions**

*Pesticide:* a substance that kills plants, animals, or other organisms to reduce the economic threshold of the pest

*Herbicide:* a plant-killing substance

*Insecticide:* an insect-killing substance

*Integrated Pest Management (IPM):* an ecosystem-based approach to managing pests, whether the pest is a weed, insect, fungus, or other unwanted organisms. This type of management focuses on prevention and monitoring instead of a reactive approach and uses many types of methods to suppress pests. Whenever possible, the least-toxic methods are engaged before the more toxic ones.

*Noxious weeds:* plants that can damage crops, injure livestock or poultry, or negatively affect irrigation, navigation, natural resources, public health, or the environment. Simply put, they are extremely pesky plants.

*Vector:* an organism that transmits a disease, usually it refers to a bloodsucking insect. Regarding pesticides, mosquitoes are the most common vector to control as they can transmit West Nile virus to humans

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# Pesticide Use on Public Land

*Cass-Clay* Community Snapshot

March 2020

## Introduction

In the summer of 2017, a coalition of local food organizations was searching for land for a community garden and incubator farm. The non-profit organizations Growing Together and FARRMS worked with the City of Fargo to select flood buy-out land in South Fargo. When they reached the point of holding a public hearing to use this land for their programs, Cass County Weed Control reached out with the news that the land had been sprayed with an herbicide which remains in the soil a few months to a few years. They were not able to use this land for farming activities and had to find a new location.

This local narrative highlights how synthetic pesticides for weed and insect control can affect the local food system. It can be challenging to track down who is spraying what and where, and how long those chemicals remain in the soil. The information below can be used as a guide for citizens and public officials to understand which department in each jurisdiction makes decisions about these chemicals and the jurisdictions' processes in controlling for pests on public land.

The term *public land* is broad in nature, but for this community snapshot, it will include parks land, flood buy-out land, road ditches, and the city and county right-of-way (ROW) systems, which is primarily boulevard areas next to parks, ponds, or other city- or county-owned properties. The main type of public land absent from this snapshot is the school system, which will be featured in a separate document so it can be fully addressed.

Also included below is how local nonprofits are helping reduce pesticide use by planting prairie grasses, trees, and pollinator habitats, and a section of possible community actions related to pesticides. The resource section provides some helpful websites, while the appendices lists the local jurisdictions' pesticide products and the steps for residents in townships if they find noxious weeds on their property.

## Cass-Clay Pesticide Use

### Cass County Vector Control

As a unit of Cass County Government, Vector Control aims to control the mosquito population to reduce the potential for transmission of diseases like the West Nile Virus as well as decrease the number of nuisance mosquitoes which have the potential to chase residents indoors on hot summer nights. Vector Control uses Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to reduce pests while causing minimal effects to the public and the environment. A three-member board appointed by the County Commission governs Vector Control and the day-to-day operations are carried out by the Vector Director.

Larval control in standing water is the most effective way to reduce mosquito populations, and it also reduces the need for aerial or truck-mounted spraying. Vector Control spends about 80% of its resources on treating breeding sites for mosquito larvae and pupae.

Vector Control uses data from 40 different trap sites in Cass and Clay Counties to determine if there is a need to spray for adult mosquitoes. When the threshold is hit, they utilize truck-mounted spraying and, if weather conditions are appropriate, they can use aerial spraying as well. The spray droplets are

extremely small (micron-size) and must make contact with a mosquito in flight to be effective. The active ingredient in this sprayed chemical (Permethrin) is derived from the chrysanthemum plant.

In recent years, Cass County Vector Control has actively worked toward better practices, such as:

1. Changing to chemicals with lower toxicity.
2. Spraying for adult mosquitoes fewer times per season. Twenty years ago, the department would spray 15-16 times per season and now they usually spray 3-4 times per season.
3. Having a pollinator protection plan, which provides buffer areas for commercial beekeeping zones.
4. Educating the public on how to help reduce mosquito populations, such as getting rid of standing water on their property and keeping the grass mowed.

Residents can receive notifications on spraying schedules by signing up on their website or by checking Vector Control's social media accounts (Facebook and Twitter).

Contact: Ben Prather, Vector Director, [PratherB@casscountynd.gov](mailto:PratherB@casscountynd.gov)  
[www.casscountynd.gov/our-county/vector-control](http://www.casscountynd.gov/our-county/vector-control)

## **Cass County Weed Control**

Cass County Weed Control is overseen by a five-member board which is appointed by the County Commission, and the Weed Control Officer is in charge of day-to-day operations. The main areas they control for noxious weeds are rural road ditches and flood buy-out land. The road ditch land is fixed while the flood buy-out properties may change annually based on a list provided by the County Commission. Other local agencies can also submit work orders to Weed Control for their services.

The Weed Control Officer checks the weed control areas in the spring and once in the summer and sprays as needed. Many of the weeds are perennial, so he only needs to spray them once per year. The Officer contracts out for the road ditch system and these renew every two years in the winter. For the flood-buyout land, the Officer himself monitors the land since only small equipment is needed.

Interesting to note: residents adjacent to a flood buy-out property can release the County for care of the land and take responsibility for mowing and weed control, although the Officer will still monitor to make sure that neighbor is taking care of the property.

They also provide the following services: reimbursement of herbicide application to private landowners for non-crop and non-CRP lands as a means to promote noxious weed control, Weed Seed Free Forage inspection and certification for hay and mulch, weed identification, and assisting in developing weed management plans.

Cass County Weed Control strives to minimize its impact on wildlife and neighboring residents using procedures such as:

1. Always following the chemical label when they spray, such as not spraying on standing water in a ditch,
2. Spraying selectively only when noxious weeds are present, and
3. Starting this year to flag flood buy-out land that has been sprayed to notify the public.

The other ways they notify the public of spraying is by putting it in the paper and communicating with other local media.

Contact: Stan Wolf, Weed Control Officer, [WolfS@casscountynd.gov](mailto:WolfS@casscountynd.gov)  
[www.casscountynd.gov/our-county/weed-control](http://www.casscountynd.gov/our-county/weed-control)

## **City of Fargo**

The Public Works Department contracts out most of its weed control (currently to Valley Green), but the department does a little spraying internally as well. Their flood buy-out land is on a three-year contract, and the contractor only sprays up to the toe of the levee (where the levee meets the natural ground) and leaves the levee to the river as natural grasses. They do not typically notify the public when they spray.

They have worked with Audubon Dakota in the past to convert some land to native grasses, such as near Lions Conservancy Park.

Contact: Ben Dow, Fargo Director of Public Works, [BDow@fargond.gov](mailto:BDow@fargond.gov)  
[fargond.gov/city-government/departments/public-works](http://fargond.gov/city-government/departments/public-works)

## **Fargo Parks District**

With over 2,100 acres of land, the Fargo Parks District has a vast amount of land to manage. How they control weeds can resonate throughout the natural spaces in the area. They are overseen by a five-member committee of elected citizens, and the day-to-day operations are managed by the Executive Director.

Trained and certified Parks staff spray in the spring and fall on a set schedule, once weeds are actively growing and weather permits. They put a notice in the paper when they will be spraying. Applications may occur outside of this schedule based on monitoring each site. After they spray, the areas are marked with signage that tells individuals to stay off the area until the turf is dry along with the application date. To limit the effects on residents, they do not spray when people are in the area and they adhere to the conditions of the product label.

They try their best to keep the turf healthy so it can outcompete the weeds, which reduces the need to spray. If there is an area where weed seeds tend to blow in, they attempt to mow that area to keep weeds at bay or work with nearby neighbors to try to reduce the seeds blowing onto Parks' maintained areas. Their partnership with Audubon Dakota to convert areas of Parks land into prairie grasslands and riparian wooded areas has reduced the need for spraying and mowing and has saved Parks an estimated \$150 to \$200 per acre each year.

Contact: Dave Bietz, Operations Director, [DBietz@fargoparks.com](mailto:DBietz@fargoparks.com)  
[www.fargoparks.com](http://www.fargoparks.com)

## **West Fargo Parks Department**

A five-member elected Parks Board oversees the West Fargo Parks District while the Executive Director manages the day-to-day operations overseeing its 30 parks, bike paths, and facilities.

For weed control, they have a seasonal schedule with local weed control contractors to spray on groomed grass areas, which are locations where grass is kept mowed to around 3 inches. Their contracts are annual and are reevaluated each year. There are some small areas that internal staff sprays for weeds as well.

When spraying has occurred, they post signs around the property to notify residents. They do not make an application if people are in the park area. As far as reducing the need for herbicides, they have not worked with Audubon to convert prairie grasses, but they do make it their practice to keep their grass cut higher to help keep weeds from becoming established.

Contact: Josh Mathern, Parks Operations Manager, [josh@wfparks.org](mailto:josh@wfparks.org)  
[www.wfparks.org](http://www.wfparks.org)

## City of Horace

The City of Horace regularly monitors public areas for weeds and sprays very minimally for weeds in their right-of-ways. The City uses social media to notify the public of spraying. Most spraying is done internally, except some mosquito control done by Cass County Vector Control and Airborne Custom Spraying. The City would consider partnering with Audubon in the future to convert land around retention ponds to prairie grasses.

Contact: Adam Carpenter, Public Works Supervisor, [acarpenter@cityofhorace.com](mailto:acarpenter@cityofhorace.com)  
<https://www.cityofhorace.com/2186/City-Shop>

## Clay County Soil & Water Conservation District

The Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) runs the County Ag Inspector Program, which manages the insect and weed control in Clay County. For weed control, the County Ag Inspector, Highway Department, and the spray contractor (currently L&M Road Services out of Ulen, MN) meet each year to contract and plan for spraying. They have a network of 150 miles of county roads to spot spray annually for noxious weeds. They start in the spring and spray throughout the summer as needed. They spray again in the fall, but wait until crops are harvested to minimize the impacts on nearby land. The Highway Department mows twice per year - once around August 1st and again in late fall.

- Not all of Clay County's flood buy-out land is sprayed every year, only if they have noxious weed issues. Most of the time, the reason they spray is due to a complaint from a neighboring landowner, so they have increased their monitoring in the past few years to stay on top of the noxious weeds and avoid complaints. For this spraying, they hire the same spray contractor who does the highway system.
- In 2019, SWCD worked with Pheasants Forever and Clay County to make a pollinator habitat out of eight acres of flood buy-out land (Crestwood Addition), and they are interested in creating more pollinator habitats on flood buy-out land in the future.
- The department does not have a notification system for residents, as the time they spray varies from year to year.
- There is a leafy spurge biological control program in Minnesota using leafy spurge beetles, but it has to be a couple of acres or larger to be effective; therefore, it does not work for most of the road system.

- There is no mosquito control in rural Clay County.

Contact: Gabe Foltz, District Technician / County Ag Inspector, [gabriel.foltz@clay.mnswcd.org](mailto:gabriel.foltz@clay.mnswcd.org)  
[claycountymn.gov/272/Soil-Water-Conservation-District](http://claycountymn.gov/272/Soil-Water-Conservation-District)

## City of Moorhead

The City of Moorhead Public Works Department maintains over 1,000 acres of parks and right-of-way (ROW) property within the City limits and along the river corridor. For ROW property, the City does the spraying internally twice per year. They have been working with Audubon Dakota since 2015 to restore prairie in the ROW system so it is more low maintenance which equals fewer herbicide treatments and a better habitat for pollinators. They do not post spraying schedules on the website, but mark the area being sprayed with signs to notify nearby residents.

- Moorhead is different from Fargo and West Fargo in that Parks is a Department of the City, so the weed control function is performed by the Public Works Department.
- The Public Works Department has partnered with Audubon Dakota to establish nine sites of about 175 acres of restored natural landscape where they no longer have to mow or apply herbicides. It saves money and is better for the environment.
- The herbicides Public Works uses are the same types used by commercial lawn companies and homeowners.
- Cass County Vector Control performs the aerial spraying for mosquito control in Moorhead.

Contact: Steve Moore, Public Works Director, [steve.moore@ci.moorhead.mn.us](mailto:steve.moore@ci.moorhead.mn.us)  
[www.cityofmoorhead.com/departments/public-works](http://www.cityofmoorhead.com/departments/public-works)

## City of Dilworth

The City of Dilworth does not contract out for pest or weed control - everything is done internally. They do not have a determined schedule for weed control; instead, it is based on regular monitoring. They spray for mosquitoes regularly when they become a nuisance. For weed control, they do not notify residents, but for mosquito spraying, they use social media, their website, and contact the media.

Contact: Peyton Mastera, City Administrator, [peyton.mastera@ci.dilworth.mn.us](mailto:peyton.mastera@ci.dilworth.mn.us)  
[www.cityofdilworth.com](http://www.cityofdilworth.com)

## Non-profit Involvement

### Audubon Dakota

Audubon Dakota is a local non-profit striving to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, especially focused on birds and their habitats. In 2015, they partnered with Fargo Parks Districts, Buffalo - Red River Watershed District, and the cities of Fargo and Moorhead to create the *Urban Woods and Prairies Initiative*. The project began with the goal of restoring grassland and woodland areas in the Fargo-Moorhead area, but now has extended across North Dakota with 2,000 acres to be enrolled in this year. It takes about 3-5 years to establish the prairies with minimal spot spraying for weeds, but after this period, there is virtually no need to spray because the weeds cannot beat out the prairie grasses.

The benefits of this project are numerous. They help residents connect with nature, enhance woodlands, restore wetlands, and create animal habitats, especially for the declining populations of grassland birds and pollinators. These areas reestablish water filtration, help prevent floods, and cut down mowing expenses and herbicide applications for the jurisdictions. In its short lifespan, the project has done incredible work to revitalize the prairies in the Fargo-Moorhead community and now the state of North Dakota.

Contact: Mike Bush, Outreach Coordinator, [mbush@audubon.org](mailto:mbush@audubon.org)  
[dakota.audubon.org/conservation/urban-woods-and-prairies-initiative](http://dakota.audubon.org/conservation/urban-woods-and-prairies-initiative)

## **Longspur Prairie Fund**

Education is crucial for a community to make changes regarding its weed control methods. Enter Longspur Prairie Fund. This local non-profit works to restore local prairies and wetlands, educate residents about the area's ecology and wildlife, and assist local businesses and organizations in creating habitat adoption strategies. Established prairies need fewer herbicide treatments and provide critical habitats for local wildlife and pollinators.

Contact: Peter Schultz, Executive Director, [schultz@longspurprairie.org](mailto:schultz@longspurprairie.org)  
[www.longspurprairie.org](http://www.longspurprairie.org)

## **Pheasants Forever**

Pheasants Forever is dedicated to the conservation of pheasants, quail, and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public awareness, education and land management policies and programs. A local chapter partnered with Clay County, River Keepers, and Clay County Soil & Water Conservation District to create pollinator habitat on flood buy-out land.

Contact: Tony Nelson, Pheasants Forever Biologist, 218-287-2255 ext 3475  
[www.pheasantsforever.org](http://www.pheasantsforever.org)

## **River Keepers**

Established in 1990, River Keepers hosts river- and water-related activities so Fargo-Moorhead area residents understand the value and importance of the Red River, properly maintain it, and safely enjoy it. Their event called *Reforest the Red* works in conjunction with the cities of Fargo and Moorhead and the local Parks Districts to bring volunteers together to plant trees and shrubs near the river. The event builds up the riparian area on public land near the Red River, which is then no longer mowed or maintained.

Contact: Christine Holland, Executive Director, [christine@riverkeepers.org](mailto:christine@riverkeepers.org)  
[www.riverkeepers.org](http://www.riverkeepers.org)



## Community Actions

Local governments can:

- Assure inter-agency communication remains high to reduce the risk of future farmland being sprayed with chemicals with long soil residuals.
- Assure government pesticide applicators and contractors are wearing the appropriate safety gear when applying pesticides to reduce their exposure.
- Educate residents on how to reduce weeds in a safe and environmentally-friendly way and continue to provide education on how to reduce exposure to mosquito-borne diseases.
- Continue working with local non-profits to transition more public land to native prairie grasses, woodlands, and pollinator habitats.
- Map out future flood buy-out land that might be used for farming and gardening to assure it is not sprayed with products with long-lasting soil residuals.
- Move toward Integrated Pest Management in managing public land. For herbicides, options to reduce chemical treatments are practices like burning, steaming, hot foam, and hand-weeding.
- Recruit teams of volunteers to hand-weed areas of dandelions or noxious weeds to reduce herbicide treatments.
- Work with local Parks Departments to create a no-spray buffer zone around playground areas, since children are most vulnerable to toxic effects of pesticides.

### *What can I do?*

- Connect with Longspur Prairie Fund ([longspurprairie.org](http://longspurprairie.org)) to convert some of your land - home, business, or rural - into native prairie grasses.
- Ask to take over neighboring flood-buyout land from the County and maintain it with alternatives to chemical pesticides.
- Work to make your yard, neighborhood, or our community a Honey Bee Haven ([honeybeehaven.org](http://honeybeehaven.org)).
- Connect with your local public officials if you have questions regarding weed or pest control strategies.

## Resources

Beyond Pesticides

<https://www.beyondpesticides.org/>

King County, Washington - Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

<https://www.hazwastehelp.org/ChemToxPesticides/ipm.aspx>

IPM (Integrated Pest Management) Institute of North America

[ipminstitute.org](http://ipminstitute.org)

Map of U.S. Pesticide Reform Policies - Beyond Pesticides

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1VLpVWvifO2JOrgxf1-d1DLyDruE&ll=47.00415731754826%2C-107.75836282084146&z=4>

NDSU Weed Control Guides

[www.ag.ndsu.edu/weeds/weed-control-guides](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/weeds/weed-control-guides)

Pesticide Action Network (PAN)

<http://www.panna.org/>

Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

[xerces.org/pesticides](http://xerces.org/pesticides)

*For more information, please contact Kim Lipetzky with the Fargo Cass Public Health Office at 701-241-8195 or [klipetzky@fargond.gov](mailto:klipetzky@fargond.gov)*

## Appendix A: Pesticides Used in Cass & Clay Counties

Table 1: Products used by Cass County Vector Control in 2019

Pesticide	Residual	Background
Bti granules	Does not exceed 7 days	Bti is a microorganism that produces chemicals toxic to insects only when ingested by insects with an alkaline digestive tract. Per the EPA, when used according to the label, it is essentially nontoxic to humans. Most common pesticide used by Cass County Vector Control.
Vectolex FG	Up to 28 days	The active ingredient is a bacteria, and has a very similar mode of action as Bti. It is used by applicators to control larval populations in sites that hold water for extended periods of time.
Metalarv SPT	Up to 42 days	This product releases S-Methoprene insect growth regulator to control larvae populations.
Altosid Pellets	Up to 30 days	This insect growth regulator is applied to areas of standing water to control larval populations.
Altosid XR 150 day Briquettes	Up to 150 days	An insect growth regulator that is used to control larvae populations. The long residual allows some sites to be treated once per season. These are ideal for sites with heavy water flow and those difficult to access on foot.
Agnique MMF and G	Up to 22 days	These are monomolecular surface films intended to control larvae and pupae populations in standing water. The oil expands to cover the water surface area so the larvae and pupae cannot breathe at the surface. Agnique MMF is made up of a chemical called Poly (oxy-1,2-ethanediyl), alpha-isooctadecyl-hydroxyl, and Agnique G is a granular form.

Table 2: Cass County Weed Control Products Used in 2019

Herbicide	Target Weed	Location
Freelexx	Canada thistle Leafy spurge Absinth wormwood	State, county, township road right-of-way
Makaze (glyphosate)	all weeds	Spot spray for control of grass and broadleaves
Mec-Amine-D	Lawn weeds Dandelion	Flood lots near residential properties Cass County Jail
Method	Canada thistle Leafy spurge Absinth wormwood	State, county, township road right-of-way Water Resource properties

Milestone	Canada thistle Absinth wormwood	State, county, township road right-of-way Water Resource properties Cass County Park, Brewer Lake
Platoon 2,4-D	Canada thistle Dandelion	Flood lots near residential properties
Tordon	Canada thistle Leafy spurge Absinth wormwood	State, county, township road right-of-way Water Resource properties
Vastlan & Element 4	Purple loosestrife	Cattail areas

Table 3: Weed and Pest Control Products Used by Cass-Clay jurisdictions in 2019

Jurisdiction	Product
Cass County	See Tables 1 & 2 (above)
City of Fargo	Escalade II Lesco 3
Fargo Parks	Millennium Ultra 2 Milestone Quali Pro
City of West Fargo	Roundup (Buccaneer) 2, 4-D (Amine)
West Fargo Parks	T33 Tri-Kill Plus
City of Horace	Roundup Durango Rodeo 2, 4-D Barren
Clay County Soil & Water Conservation District	Graslan Vastlan Milestone
City of Moorhead	T-Zone SE
City of Dilworth	MEC Amine-D Cornerstone Rodeo Plus Milestone Pramitol 25E Permanone (insecticide) Tempo SC Ultra (insecticide) Aquabac (insecticide)

## Appendix B: Noxious Weeds in Townships

Below is the process for residents of a township in Cass or Clay counties if they find noxious weeds on their property.

### **Cass County**

If a resident of Cass County finds noxious weeds in a township, they should contact Cass County Weed Control at 701-298-2388 and let them know where the weed is located.

1. If the weed is in the road right-of-way, the County's Weed Control Officer will take care of it.
2. If found on public land, the Weed Control Officer will investigate the complaint and contact the public entity that owns the land and recommend control options. Depending on the situation the Officer may conduct control operations with their permission.
3. If the weed is on private land, the Weed Control Officer will contact the landowner and inform them that they need to control the weed. The Weed Control Officer can provide control options for the particular site.

### **Clay County**

If a Clay County resident has questions about noxious weed identification or controlling a noxious weed on their property, they can contact the County Ag Inspector at Clay County Soil & Water Conservation District at (218) 287-2255.

1. If the weed is located on County property, the County Ag Inspector will go out and verify it before sending their sprayer to the location.
2. If the weed is located on township property, it is the township's responsibility to control it and the County Ag Inspector will notify the local weed inspector.
3. If the weed is located on private property, the local weed inspector will contact the private landowner to take care of it.
4. If the resident has noxious weeds on their own property, they are responsible for controlling the weeds themselves.