



PO Box 7114
Wilton, CT 06897
norwalkriver.org



August 2, 2022

Re: Use of Pesticides at Wilton's Parks and near Norwalk River

Dear Wilton Town Officials,

I am writing on behalf of the Norwalk River Watershed Association and the Wilton Pollinator Pathway regarding recent pesticide (herbicide) applications at Merwin Meadows along sensitive and regulated areas including playgrounds, playing fields, and other areas close to the Comstock Brook and the Norwalk River. In addition, there are many other sensitive sites being treated with herbicides in town along roadside guardrails adjacent to wetland areas.

I urge the Town of Wilton to switch to mechanical methods that are chemical free such as weed whackers and tractors mounted with a cutting head attachment for weed control along fences, guardrails, and grassy edges. Mechanical controls are being used successfully by other towns, and the results are much more esthetically pleasing, as it does not create that unsightly orange, burnt out look of herbicide treatments (see photos attached). In fact, Norwalk and Stamford have passed bans on the use of pesticides on all municipal property, with a few exceptions, such as for poison ivy in public parks in Norwalk.

Switching to using weed whackers would eliminate unnecessary pesticide exposure for our many children enjoying the park during the summer, eliminate exposure for municipal employees, and protect wildlife, pets, and water quality. The association of glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup, with non-Hodgkin lymphoma and other cancers, gut and intestinal issues, neurological conditions, and DNA damage, to name a few issues, is well-documented. Millions of dollars in damages have been awarded in various Roundup verdicts.

Another concern we have is that public notice of pesticide application (the small yellow signs with an X through the child and dog), which is required by law, seems not to be posted when pesticides are used on town property.

Is it a weed or is it a wildflower? Ideally, roadside and parkland edge mowing (please no spraying) would be scheduled only after bloom time to allow pollinators access to the needed nectar and pollen of roadside wildflowers and to allow native plants to go to seed, reproduce,

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and provide winter food for songbirds. We could make better use of our parks edges and roadsides to support monarch butterflies and other pollinators by encouraging and adding native plants and discontinuing herbicide spraying. More information on the effects of pesticides on public health, water quality, and wildlife habitat is available at the Xerces Society website (Xerces.org/pesticides/understanding-pesticides). More information, including Pesticide-Free Municipal ordinances from other towns, is available at Pollinator-Pathway.org/ordinances-and-resolutions.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue,

Elizabeth Craig
Norwalk River Watershed Association
Wilton Pollinator Pathway



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