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Controlling noxious weeds, invasive species at Prairie Park

As part of the parks management plan to control noxious and other undesirable broadleaf weeds in Prairie Park, City of Lawrence, Parks and Recreation Department staff sprayed a broadleaf herbicide at the park on Thursday, April 27. This herbicide only works on existing foliage and does not provide soil residual control of weeds or brush emerging after application.

Noxious weeds and encroaching non-native species are an ongoing challenge for our ecosystem. Kansas has a Noxious Weed Law (K.S.A. 2-1313a) that requires all landowners in the state to control the spread and eradicate a number of noxious weeds. Our plan was developed partially in response to this, as well as to assist in minimizing the impact of noxious weeds and other invasive species.

This was also implemented in part due to the increase of noxious weeds as a result of reduced burning during the COVID pandemic with concerns expressed regarding respiratory impacts. Incidentally, the prairie was burned for the first time in three years this spring, which is earlier than normal as part of the ongoing management plan.

Our current plan is to return to a rotational management plan that includes mowing, burning and spot spraying to control invasive, woody plant materials and noxious weeds.

Some early-growing, native plants have been affected; however, some of the established plants that have not yet emerged will not be affected.

Parks and Recreation will work with local suppliers of native plant seeds to reestablish and replenish the prairie plant species that may have been impacted by this early spring spray.

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