



2010 PESTICIDE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Halifax Regional Municipality

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**Pesticide By-Law
P-800 Respecting
The Regulation of
Pesticides, Herbicides
And Insecticides**

REPORT ON BY-LAW P-800, 2010

This report, intended to provide an overview of the 2010 Pesticide By-Law Program, is divided into sections as follows:

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The intent of Pesticide By-Law is to protect human health and the environment

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

By-Law P-800, Respecting the Regulation of Pesticides, Herbicides, and Insecticides (commonly known as the Pesticide By-Law) was approved by Halifax Regional Council in August 2000. The fundamental intent of the Pesticide By-Law (P-800) is to protect human health and the environment. In 2010 the Sustainable Environment Management Office (SEMO) took over the administration of the Municipal Pesticide Permitting Program. The number of requests had been in steady decline and the service provision agreement with Clean Nova Scotia had run its course. Utilizing a combination of delivery vehicles and stakeholder partnerships, public education on sustainable landscaping and alternatives to pesticides continued in 2010. Invasive species in HRM garnered a great deal of publicity this year. The European Fire Ant, Giant Hogweed, and the black-legged tick all were cause for concern with residents. Information was disseminated to assist citizens in mitigating their risk when dealing with these organisms.

THE PROGRAM – OVERVIEW

In 2010 the Sustainable Environment Management Office (SEMO) Sustainable Landscaping Environmental Performance Officer (EPO) was responsible for delivering the Pesticide Permitting Program. It was the first year that Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) delivered the Pesticide Permitting Program in-house since the full implementation of By-Law P-800 seven years ago. The number of permit requests had steadily declined each year since 2003. As requests came through from the HRM Customer Service Centre, the EPO conducted site inspections using the quadrat method to determine whether or not a permit was in order. Depending on the level of infestation, homeowners were either granted or denied a permit and provided with educational material on sustainable landscaping. The HRM Smart Car was used for transportation to and from the site inspections. Other elements of the program included providing sustainable lawn care solutions to residents, responding to by-law inquiries, and providing customer service and advice to residents on a broad range of issues, including invasive species management.

BY-LAW ENFORCEMENT

By-Law Enforcement received 19 complaints between January 1, 2010 and August 30, 2010, of which 18 were invalid and one was valid. Education was provided for the valid case and no Summary Offence Tickets (SOT's) were issued. Over the years the number of complaints fielded by HRM has been in decline. See chart below:

By-Law Enforcement Statistics	
Year	Number of Complaints
2010	19
2009	42
2007	48
2006	47
2005	47
2004	71
2003	106
2002	111
2001	400

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NUMBER 23: RESPECTING PESTICIDES, HERBICIDES, AND INSECTICIDES

In June 2010, Halifax Regional Council rejected the addition of the chemical FeHEDTA to Administrative Order #23 of the Pesticide By-Law P-800 Respecting the Regulation of Pesticides, Herbicides and Insecticides.

APPLICATION PROCESSING

47 pesticide permit applications were received from July 13 to September 8, 2010. Nearly all applications were regarding the control of chinch bug, and one was regarding the control of white grub. Of the 47 applications, 43 were approved, and 4 were rejected. The majority of applications were submitted by lawn care companies.

Response Time

In past years, inspections were carried out within two business days of the request being received. Due to there being only one staff member in the 2010 season, it was difficult to maintain previous response times. Inspections were carried out in a timely fashion.

Reason for Applying

Applicants consistently identified a chinch bug infestation as the reason for applying. White Grub was identified on one application. Over the last seven years, the most commonly cited reason for a pesticide-permit application has been a perceived chinch bug infestation. Although permit applications were expected in mid to late June, this year no applications were received before mid-July. It is likely this change and the decreased number of permit applications is related to a change in practices by lawn care companies. Some companies are now offering treatments with alternative products that do not require permits, including Safer's Trounce.

RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

Response to homeowner concern was facilitated primarily by telephone through the HRM Call Centre or via the pesticide By-Law email address. Staff offered direct, personal interaction in cases of complaint or concern, oftentimes in cases where a perceived pest intrusion fell outside the By-Law. For example, staff provided safety information and links to informative sites about Giant Hogweed. Due to the frequency of calls concerning invasive species, SEMO staff and the HRM Call Centre established a code in HANSEN for invasive species to ensure that information was tracked and addressed accordingly.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Since its inception in 2000, a companion comprehensive public education and awareness program to the Pesticide By-Law has been in place. This includes a series of Sustainable Landscape Maintenance Fact Sheets, brochures, TV advertisements, web site, *Naturally Green* newsletter, etc.

2010 featured the following:

Telephone

A telephone response system continued to field inquiries on the Pesticide By-Law and sustainable landscaping. Most (82%) of the 122 calls from June 11th to September 8th were related to invasive species (82 regarding Giant Hogweed, 16 regarding Fire Ants, and 2 regarding other invasive plant species). The remaining calls were related to permitted pesticides, the permit application process, and general bylaw inquiries.

Website

The HRM pesticides website was updated and a new invasive species page was created. The invasive species page provides comprehensive information on Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed and European Fire Ants as well as other invasive species and includes links to helpful websites.

Public Education

HRM released an updated Sustainable Landscaping and HRM Pesticide By-Law brochure to be distributed to homeowners applying for pesticide permits and residents seeking information about sustainable landscaping and pesticide use in HRM.



APPLICATOR AND RETAILER EDUCATION EFFORTS

A letter was sent out reminding applicators that the application of cosmetic pesticides, not on the allowable list, in Halifax Regional Municipality requires a permit under the by-law. Another letter was sent to retailers and applicators regarding the use of FeHEDTA, a chemical rejected by Council in June 2010.

PUBLICITY

Invasive species, including Black-legged Ticks, European Fire Ants, and Giant Hogweed received unprecedented media attention during the summer of 2010 and it is clear that there is increasing pressure surrounding this issue.

In addition, an article on sustainable Fall Turf Maintenance Tips was prepared for the MyHRM paper which is inserted in Naturally Green and was circulated in Fall 2010.

INVASIVE SPECIES - EUROPEAN FIRE ANTS

In 2010 HRM partnered with Susan Horton, a Masters student at Saint Mary's University studying and documenting invasive European Fire Ants in HRM. Ms. Horton delivered two seminars on European Fire Ants to HRM residents, hosting one meeting in Halifax and one in Dartmouth. HRM hopes to continue working with Ms. Horton in the future and is interested in supporting her mapping project that is being developed to assist with locating and monitoring infestations in HRM.

The Municipal Operations Division of Transportation and Public Works was responsible for monitoring and managing known infestations on municipally owned property. In the 2010 season, the municipality purchased several dozen boric acid bait stations for trialing the effectiveness on infestations located on HRM properties. In collaboration with Susan Horton, of Saint Mary's University, staff monitored the problem and researched the best methods for avoiding, controlling or eliminating the ants.



While the notwithstanding clause in the HRM Pesticide By-Law places European Fire Ants (*Myrmica rubra* Lin-naeus) outside the Pesticide By-Law, HRM continues to act in a public information role, responding to home-owner inquiries, providing information on sustainable solutions, and referring sample identification to Susan Horton, of Saint Mary's University, and Andrew Hebda, of the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History. HRM received a significant number of inquiries regarding European Fire Ants during the 2010 season. The majority of inquiries were from homeowners seeking advice on how to eradicate ants from their property.

INVASIVE SPECIES - GIANT HOGWEED

As mentioned above, invasive species received significant media attention during the summer of 2010. The majority of inquiries received by staff concerned Giant Hogweed, a highly toxic and invasive species. Considered a human health hazard, Giant Hogweed falls outside of HRM's current Pesticide By-Law. Due to high call numbers a code was created in the HANSEN database to ensure that reports were tracked and acted upon in a timely and organized manner. Staff received 42 reports of Giant Hogweed sightings on HRM property; 38 of which were invalid and 4 of which were valid. HRM contracted Parkland Landscaping to identify and dispose of Giant Hogweed found on HRM property. SEMO staff and HRM Call Centre staff provided safety instructions to concerned residents and directed homeowners to botanist Marian Munro of the Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History for confirmation of cases on private property.




OPERATING BUDGET AND COSTS / ADMINISTRATION

Since the inception of By-Law P-800 in 2000, several internal and external partnerships have been developed that not only help keep costs down, but also help provide for an enhanced pesticide use reduction program and related public education and awareness campaign on sustainable landscape maintenance.

Internally, we have utilized centralized corporate resources such as the Call Centre, HRM Customer Service Centers, By-Law Enforcement, in-house marketing and communication staff and positioned the pesticide use reduction initiatives under the “Naturally Green” corporate umbrella. This has allowed further partnering and cost sharing through joint newsletters, promotion and advertising.

Externally, HRM has partnered with Clean Nova Scotia, the Ecology Action Centre, Land-scape Nova Scotia, various community groups, the Nova Scotia Agricultural College, Halifax Regional Libraries and others, in delivering a comprehensive public education and awareness program on sustainable gardening and landscape maintenance. Original estimate (2000) to annually administer the Pesticide By-Law was \$308,000.



HRM partners with many stakeholder groups to deliver pesticide by-law education.

Effective internal and external partnerships has allowed staff to keep the annual operating costs substantially below the original estimate yet still deliver responsive programs and services. The budget has remained relatively consistent since the inception of the Pesticide By-Law, including the 2007 budget. To date, since the By-Law’s inception in 2000, savings of over \$700,000 have been realized from the original estimates. Effective community and industry partnerships and stewardship have been key to this success.

2009 APPROXIMATE COSTS

Contracted Permit Process and Companion Public Education Program	\$ 91,000
By-Law Enforcement, Administration, etc. * (Carried out by centralized HRM Services)	\$ 75,000
Total <i>* The Full Time Equivalents (FTE’s) were transferred several years ago to the Centralized Services Group.</i>	\$166,000

PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITIES/ OPPORTUNITIES

In the Spring of 2010, Nova Scotia Department of Environment enacted the Non-essential Pesticides Control Act whereby the sale and use of non-essential pesticides is prohibited. The provincial program is expected to unfold in early 2011. HRM staff is currently communicating with the province on this issue as legislation is developed.

GENERAL SUMMARY

The By-Law is meeting its fundamental intent, to protect the environment and those residents medically affected by pesticides.

SEMO's EPO for Sustainable Landscaping was responsible for delivering the Pesticide Permitting Program in 2010. This was the first year that HRM had delivered the Pesticide Permitting Program in-house since its full implementation in 2003. As permit requests came through via the HRM Customer Service Centre, the EPO would conduct site inspections and grant or deny permits, depending on the level of infestation.

Each year since 2003 there has been a steady decline in the number of permit applications, as well as a decline in the number of residential complaints received by By-Law Enforcement. HRM residents have become more engaged in seeking information about sustainable landscaping practices and products. This is creating a shift in the landscaping industry as consumers demand more sustainable products and practices.

As part of the Permitting Program homeowners were provided with educational material on sustainable landscaping during each site visit. Other educational elements of the program included the following: providing sustainable lawn care solutions to residents, responding to by-law inquiries, and providing customer service and advice to residents on a variety of sustainability issues, including invasive species identification and management (Giant Hogweed, European Fire Ants, etc.).

Appendix A – Halifax Regional Municipality By-Law P-800

Appendix B - Administrative Order #23

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