3.11 Implement Green Grounds and Maintenance Program

5 Points | 10 Points | 15 Points | 20 Points | 25 Points

Action Updates

This action has been revised for the **current certification cycle**. A version of this action from the prior program year is available for comparison. Edits are highlighted in yellow. (Last update 2024)

Objective

Engage best management practices at the municipal level related to ground treatments, irrigation, land use practices, or stormwater runoff.

What to Do

The more you do, the more points you earn.

1. Complete the hyperlinked inventory for properties maintained by your municipality. **(10 points)**

   Submit: A copy of the completed inventory (please complete all columns). If your inventory was created more than three years ago, also include a brief description of how it is still relevant and used by your municipality.

2. Best Management Practices (BMPs) **(up to 15 points possible)**

   a. Ground Treatment BMPs **(5 points)**

   - *Utilize an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Standard.* IPM uses a combination of biological, cultural, physical/mechanical, and chemical management tools to solve pest problems while minimizing risks to people and the environment. Although every IPM program is different, successful programs use the same four-tiered approach, according to the U.S Environmental Protection Agency: 1) set action thresholds; 2) monitor and identify pests; 3) prevent or remove conditions that attract pests; and 4) control (Integrated Pest Management Fact Sheet. National Service Center for Environmental Publications. 2010).

   Submit: A copy of the IPM standard utilized with a description of how it is currently implemented.

   OR

   - *Utilize an Organic Lawn Care Standard.* An organic lawn care standard eliminates the use of inorganic fertilizers and chemical pesticides, including fungicides and herbicides, in favor of ecologically preferable materials.

   Submit: A copy of the organic lawn care standard utilized with a description of how it is currently implemented.

   b. Irrigation BMPs **(5 points)**

   - *Assess Annual Irrigation Patterns and Reduce Where Possible.* Assess your annual irrigation schedules. Limit irrigation when possible, by creating a responsive plan that stops irrigation if it's raining or the ground is saturated, and limits irrigation in times of drought. Implement water-efficient practices such as installing an automatic irrigation system that allows for timing adjustments, and has a rain shut-off device and soil moisture sensor. Utilize low-flow irrigation equipment where appropriate. Irrigate in the early mornings,

when possible.

Submit: A copy of your irrigation assessment with a description of the efficient irrigation practices implemented and amount by which this plan reduced irrigation (if available). If your irrigation assessment was created more than three years ago, also include a brief description of how it is still relevant and used by your municipality.

c. Runoff BMPs **(5 points)**

- ***Pervious Pavement.*** Create a policy to utilize pervious pavement (pervious asphalt, pavers, geogrid, etc.) for municipal parking areas (construction and reconstruction).

Submit: A copy of your new pervious pavement policy and a brief description of how it is currently used by your municipality.

OR

- ***Disconnect Impervious Surface.*** Promote the disconnection of impervious areas and rooftops from the stormwater system, by supporting the use of bioretention areas, filter strips, and/or other similar practices. For guidance, see CT Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO): "Developing a Sustainable Community, A Guide to Help Connecticut Communities Craft Plans and Regulations that Protect Water Quality".

Submit: A description of how your municipality currently support the disconnection of impervious areas and rooftops from the stormwater system.

d.Native Planting and Pruning: Create native planting and pruning procedures that prioritize planting of only native species by your municipality. Establish efficient pruning practices to enhance plant success. **(10 points)**

Submit: A description of your native planting and pruning procedures and a list of approved plant species used by your municipality. If there are exceptions to your native planting policy, please include an explanation.

e. Education Program: Sponsor or host an education program for private property owners and commercial landscapers, sharing both the benefits of the best management practices outlined in this action and the impacts of conventional grounds maintenance practices. **(5 points)**

Submit: A brief overview of outreach (suggested 5 sentences maximum), including target populations (if any); date of event; and at least one example of educational materials disseminated in the last three years, which could include flyers, articles, letters, newsletters, presentations, or digital communications. For websites, submit both a hyperlink and a screenshot of the relevant webpage(s).

Engaging Partners

Sustainable CT encourages regional collaboration and other forms of partnership. For every action, please complete the "Partners" box in your submission, indicating the name(s) of any municipalities and/or organizations you partnered with (if any) and a brief description of your municipality's role. If you collaborate with other municipalities, each community will receive points. For additional information, please see the "Partners Guidance Document".

Potential Municipal and Community Collaborators

Staff from the public works, parks and recreation, planning, and engineering departments could be helpful in implementing this action.

In addition, the facilities/maintenance managers could help implement this action.

Funding

If available, below are potential funding sources specific to this Action. For a complete listing of potential funding

opportunities to assist with implementing Sustainable CT Actions, please visit the Sustainable CT Grants Portal, which is searchable by Action. Please also visit the Support for Your Town page for opportunities for technical assistance and other supports.

- Urban Act Grant Program
- Municipal Grant Program (MGP)
- Sustainable CT Community Match Fund

Resources

Toolkits, Calculators, Guidance Documents, General Information

- US Environmental Protection Agency, "Stormwater Discharges from Municipal Sources"
- UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Sources, "Best Management Practices for Pesticide-Free Connecticut School Landscapes"
- UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Sources, "Best Management Practices for Pesticide-Free, Cool-Season Athletic Fields"
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Sustainable Practices and Resources for the Landscaping and Lawn Care Industry"
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Transitioning to Organic Lawn Care in Your Town"
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Pesticide Management Program"
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "Integrated Pest Management"
- Connecticut General Assembly, "An Act Banning Pesticide Use on School Grounds (Public Act No. 07-168)"
- Society for Organic Urban Landcare (SOUL)
- Northeast Organic Farming Association, Standards for Organic Land Care
- Oregon Tilth Organic Land Care Policies and Standards
- Xeriscape
- CT Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials (NEMO) "Developing a Sustainable Community, A Guide to Help Connecticut Communities Craft Plans and Regulations that Protect Water Quality"
- CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, "IPM Guidance"
- NOFA, "Organic Towns"

Organizations and Relevant Programs

- Long Island Sound Study
- Connecticut Conservation Districts
- The Watershed Partnership
- Environment & Human Health, Inc.
- International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM)

Why This Matters

The types of grounds a municipality manages can vary, and each location within a community may require a unique maintenance plan. How your city or town manages its properties, however diverse, can have a large impact on the health and safety of neighborhoods and neighborhood habitats. For instance, fertilizer, insecticide, and herbicide cause negative impacts on human and animal health and on the environment. During rain events, these chemicals runoff from lawns, playing fields, and parks, and make their way to the Sound, where they can lead to hypoxia (low oxygen) – a deadly habitat condition for fish and lobster.

Overwatering can lead to wasted money, and a wasted resource – especially in times of drought.

Benefits

Reducing or limiting the amount of fertilizer, herbicide, and insecticide will lead to:

- Reducing and filtering the stormwater runoff from your municipal properties, which:
    - Protects your local aquatic habitats, and
    - Increases your resilience to possible flooding events.

- Preventing weeds and unwanted pests without as many harmful repercussions,
    - Lower grounds maintenance expenses for your city or town due to using less water and fewer chemical ground treatments, and
    - Reduced harm to the natural environment, including a healthier Long Island Sound,
    - Healthier soils and healthier plants
- Safer places for residents to work and play:
- Improved health conditions for everyone who uses or maintains those grounds,

CT Success Stories

- Glastonbury - Nov 2021 Certification
- Darien - Oct 2022 Certification
- Guilford - Oct 2022 Certification
- Vernon - Oct 2022 Certification