5.9 Parks, Recreation Amenities and Landscaping

Thus far in this chapter we have looked at the inside of facilities in terms of building maintenance, the inside of offices in terms of hard and soft equipment, vehicles and maintenance and major site works involving renovation and demolition. There is another category of purchasing that relates primarily to open spaces; that is parks and recreation amenities and landscaping.

5.9.1 Organic Turf Management

An Overview

Organic turf management is described as being a process that weans turf off of chemical management replacing traditional chemicals and compounds with natural additives. The desired result is a process that has the least impact on the environment, a managed product that is non-toxic and a waste disposal system that is not harmful to the environment.

Organic turf management can represent any number of services, from maintenance to disposal of wastes arising from the maintenance. Currently the Environmental Choice Program is in the midst of a panel review process to determine the final criterion for requirements of products to carry the Ecologo.

Potential Environmental Impacts

- Unnecessary impact on the environment in the form of additional chemicals in the turf, its cuttings, and runoff from the turf.

Things to Consider If You Write Your Own Specifications

At this time it is recommended that:

- Organic turf management systems meet or exceed all applicable governmental and industrial safety and performance standards and that all steps of the process meet all applicable laws
- The process follow the methodology outlined in “1994 Standards for certification of Organic Lawn Care Professionals in the Northeastern United States (Ecological Landscaping Association) or equivalent internal protocol
- Turf management systems include the use of (for example):
  - Synthetically compounded growth promoters
  - Synthetically compounded pesticides
  - Petroleum distillate herbicides
  - Synthetic fumigants
  - Synthetic growth regulators
  - All natural poisons such as arsenic and lead salts.

Specifications from Other Agencies and Seals of Approval

Environmental Choice program Panel Review Committee PRC-003 (guideline pending)

5.9.2 Recycled Rubber

An Overview

Used tires become raw material for the manufacture of an increasing number of products. Applications for shredded, ground, or chipped tires include rubber mats, playground surfaces, and "soaker" hoses. Tire rubber that has been sliced is fabricated into entry mats, loading-dock bumpers, and other products. Shredded tires have been used with limited success as a lightweight fill material in construction applications.

Reduction, reuse and recycling are estimated to potentially divert one third of the scrap tire stream and reduce environmental liability, as there are particular concerns regarding the difficult end-of-use disposal of tires. The recycling option has created a market for consumer products that are made from shredded tires, processed rubber crumb and rubber/plastic mixtures.

The Environmental Choice Program has developed some very specific guidelines regarding recycled rubber content of various sub categories including these that can be applied to Parks and Recreation amenities:

- Agricultural and horticultural supplies (garden hoses, soaker hoses, tubing)
- Containers (composting units, garbage containers)
- Sporting goods (sports mats, running tracks).

Potential Environmental Impacts

- Long term liability of difficult end-of–use disposal including stockpiling, fires, and vector control.

Things to Consider If You Write Your Own Specifications

This is an opportunity to add clauses in particular application specifications to address desirability of:

- Preference for products that carry the EcoLogo
- Preference for products with stipulated levels of pre and post consumer waste recycling For example:
  - 65% recycled rubber by weight as a portion of total rubber compound (agricultural and horticultural supplies)
  - 70% recycled rubber by weight, as a proportion of total content of rubber compound (containers)
  - 100% recycled rubber by weight, as a proportion of total content of rubber compound (sporting goods).

Specifications from Other Agencies and Seals of Approval

Environmental Choice program guideline ECP-06
(details at www.environmentalchoice.com/guidelines/pdfs/ecp-06.pdf)