Toxic Free Philly

Our Land.Our Water. Our Health.

A Call for Organic Land Management without Pesticides

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

Our Story

June 2019

Through informal networks, a group of women, passionate about public parks, got together over our concern about the use of pesticides on public land.

We are physicians who've worked with veterans exposed to agent orange, lawyers experienced in public policy, ecological restorationist and public land managers who have used herbicides for habitat restoration, volunteer park friend's leaders, group facilitators, environmental policy specialist, tree tenders, PA Master Naturalists and elected Committee People.

Accomplishments Summer 2019-Summer 2020

- Assembled a team of law makers, community groups, consultants and resources to launch an Organic Pilot Project in two parks
- Joined the Our Cities Our Schools Coalition
- Testified at School Board Facilities Hearings for implementation of an Integrated Pest Management Program
- Testified at City Budget Hearings in support of full funding for PPR operations and maintenance
- Drafted legislation in partnership with City Council
- Participated in City Council Environment Advisory Group
- Established a growing coalition of organizational supporters
- Secured over 1,000 petition signatures

Toxic **F**ree **P**hilly was formed with the goal of eliminating toxic pesticides from our public lands, parks, playing fields, school grounds and right-of-ways**.**

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

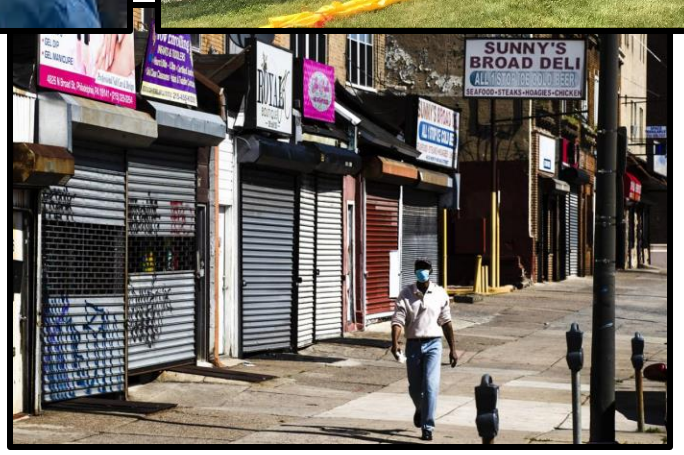
GLOBAL HISTORIC CHALLENGES

CLIMATE CRISIS – SYSTEMIC RACISM - PANDEMIC

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

We have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to RESET the human and planetary trajectory. Converging crisis's of massive inequality, the COVID pandemic and climate change are, in fact, the same agenda and require the same solutions.

Sharron Burrow, General Secretary, the International Trade Union Confederacy



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We Need Urgent Action

- Net-Zero Cities can Drive an Equitable Economic Transition
- Investments in the Green Economy Create 3x the Number of Jobs than in the Fossil Fuel Economy
- Massive Investments can Achieve Massive Impacts by Addressing Racism and Poverty with Livable Wage, Stable, Union jobs without exposure to toxic chemicals
- Prioritize Support for Frontline Communities Most Impacted and with the Most to Gain

Organic Land Management Builds Resilience to the Effects of Climate Change: Justice, Public Health, Economy, Environment, Civic Engagement

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

January 2020:

The Black Institute in Brooklyn, NY released a report:

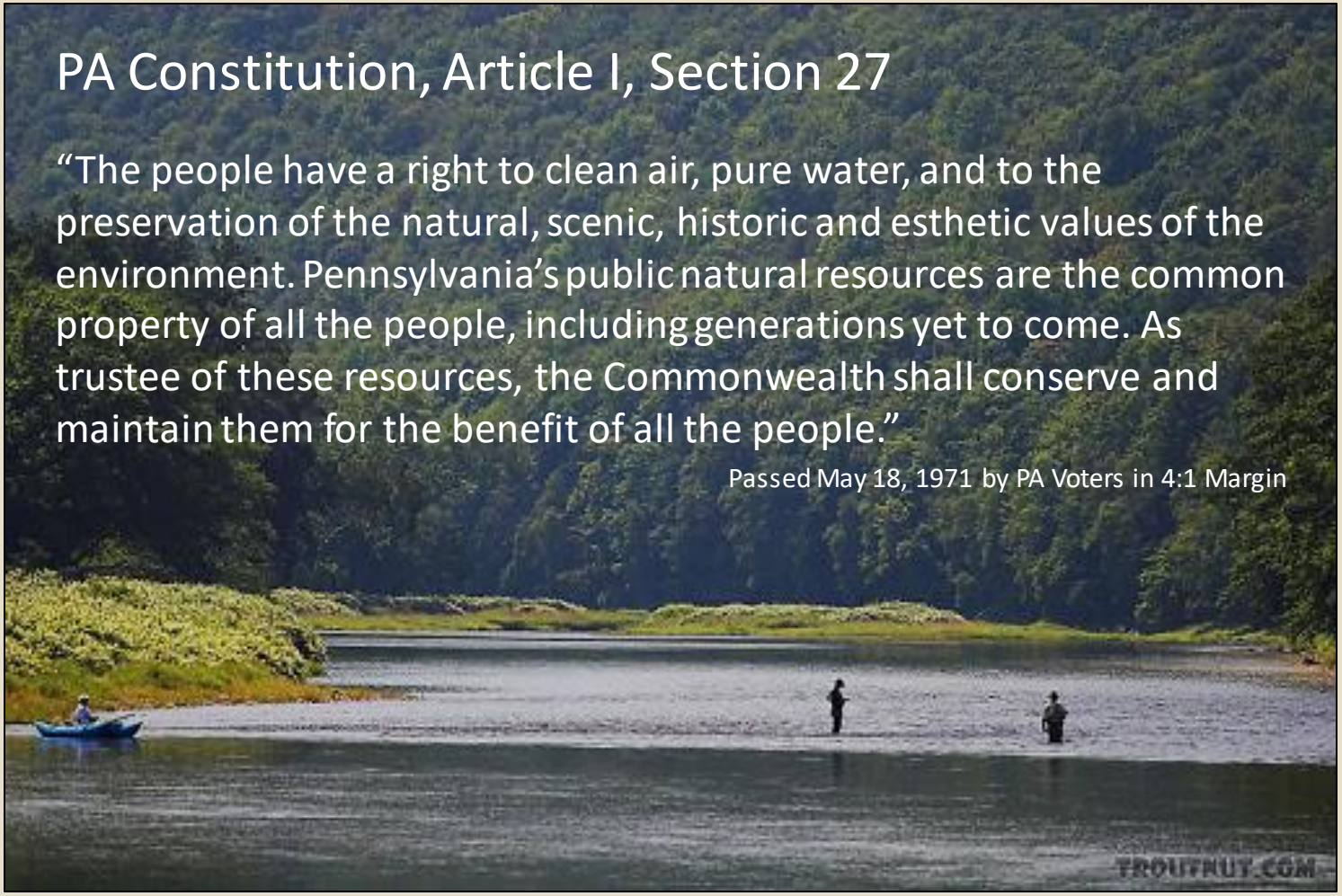
Poison Parks

"It is difficult to keep children happy and healthy on a miniscule budget. Poisoning parks with toxic chemicals is yet another strike against the Black and Brown community. Enjoying a free, public space should not carry unexpected consequences"

"A chemical that disproportionately impacts people of color is an act of environmental racism. When Black and Brown families that are economically disadvantaged must bear the burden of toxic exposure at a higher rate than white families, there is no argument that can change the racist nature of the subject"

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

PA Environmental Rights Amendment



Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

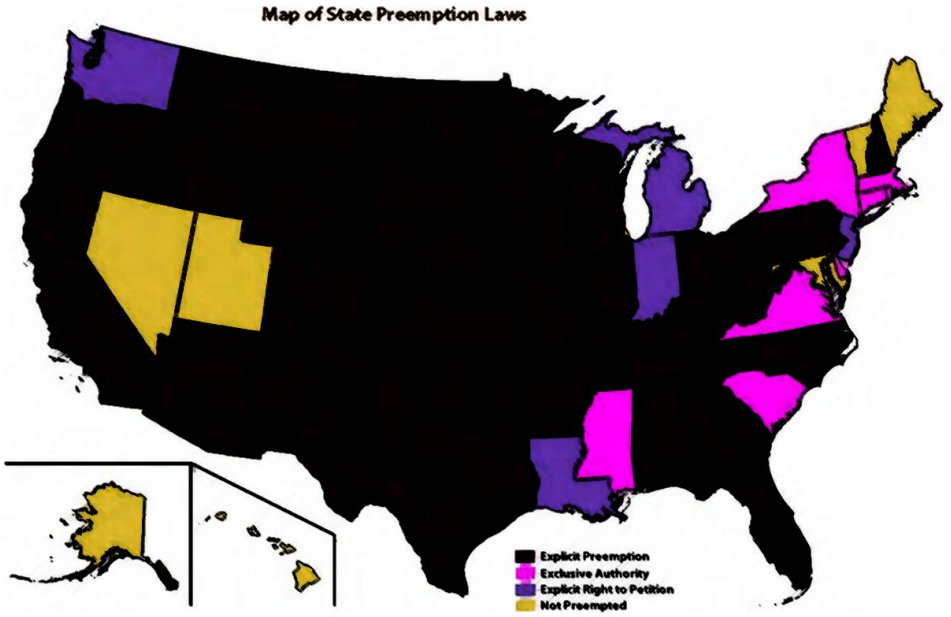
PA State Preemption Law:
A Battle for Local Control and Democracy

Preemption is the ability of one level of government to override laws of a lower level.

State Pesticide Pre-Emption Laws:
- 64% - Explicit preemption
- 24% - Possible exemptions
- Only 12% - No Preemption

Who Benefits?

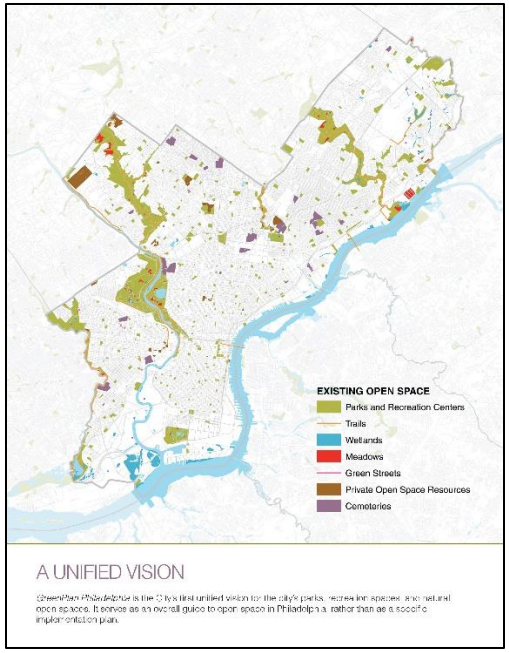
Map Source: Beyond Pesticides



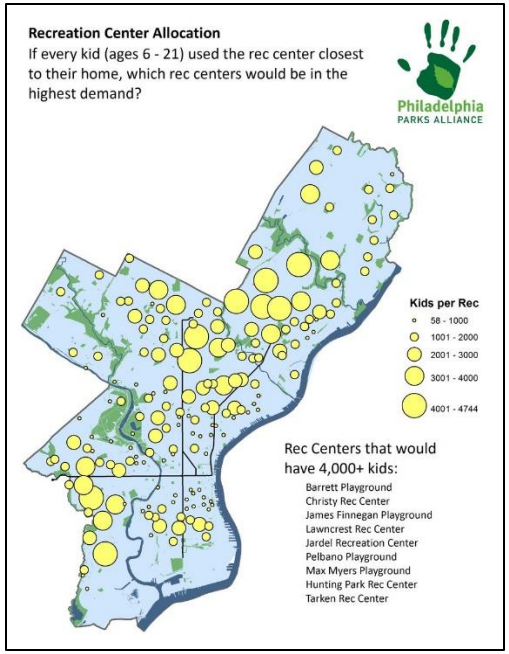
Lobbying from the petro-chemical industry has changed state laws limiting local control to protect residents and the environment from toxic chemicals

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

Preemption Applies to Private - not Public - Land



These two maps highlight the connection between Philly's public land and children, illustrating the environmental justice issue of pesticide use as a land management strategy



City of Philadelphia lawmakers should take this opportunity to adopt legislation that prohibits the use of toxic pesticides on public land to protect the health and quality of life of all people, especially communities of color burdened by environmental pollution.

www.toxicfreephilly.com

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

Risk to Children

Children are more vulnerable to pesticides exposure because their organs, nervous systems and immune systems are still developing; their higher rates of cell division and lower body weight also increase children's susceptibility to pesticide exposure and risks .

Asthma, Cancers, Neurotoxicity, Birth and Developmental Defects

Findings reported by the EPA, World Health Organization and the National Academy of Sciences in Independent, non-industry funded published research

The amount of toxic chemicals in the environment are directly contributing to the rise of physical and mental disorders found in children. (National Research Council)

The Environmental Protection Agency

Does Not Protect Us or the Environment from Pesticides

- No Independent Testing
- “Active” Ingredient Only
- Ignores Chemical Combinations
- Short Term Exposure Only
- **Estimates Toxicity vs Profits**

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

A Chemical Addiction

In U.S. - More Than A

BILLION POUNDS/yr

of pesticides on the land:

Farms,
Parks and Playing Fields,
Right-of-Ways

This Does Not Include
Pesticides Used
In our Homes,
Schools,
Hospitals, Work Places,
Public Buildings

Or on our Pets

Source:, US Environmental Protection Agency, American Academy of Pediatrics

NO ONE KNOWS

Neither PA nor Philadelphia Keep Track of

How Much, What Kind or the Location

of Pesticides Used on Public or Private Lands

PESTICIDE IMPACTS

Of the 30 Most Commonly Used Pesticides:

Our Health

- **1** Proven Carcinogen
- **12** "Probable" Carcinogens
- **14** Associated With Birth Defects
- **18** Reproductive Effects Like Infertility
- **20** Liver Or Kidney Damage
- **11** "Probable" Endocrine Disruptors
- **18** Cause Neurotoxicity

Our Environment

- **17** Detected in Groundwater
- **23** Leach into Groundwater
- **16** Toxic to Birds
- **24** Toxic to Fish and Aquatic Systems
- **11** Toxic to Bees and other Insects

Glyphosate is in Cheerios

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

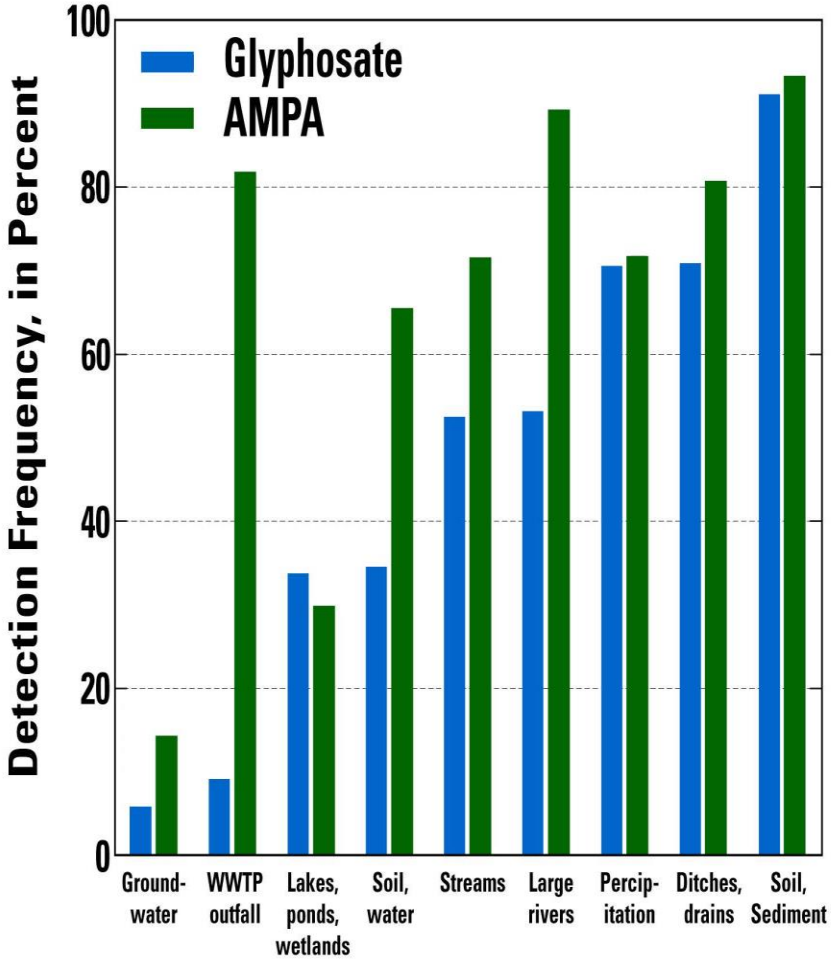
In 2014

US Geological Survey graph from a 2001-2010 study across 38 states.

Key Finding:
Glyphosate and/or AMPA in more than 50 percent of samples:

- soil and sediment
- water from
  - ditches and drains
  - precipitation
  - rivers, and streams

Note: AMPA adds phosphorus to water, decreasing O2 and increasing algae blooms



https://toxics.usgs.gov/highlights/2014-04-23-glyphosate_2014.html

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

GOOD NEWS

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

Toxic Chemicals: We Don't Need Them!

Public parks, playing fields and natural landscapes around the country are being managed using an organic approach. What does this look like?

- Sampling
- Amendments
- Decompaction
- Nutrient Cycling

- Function/Use
- Aesthetics
- Habitat
- Challenges

- Empower
- Educate
- Train
- Mobilize

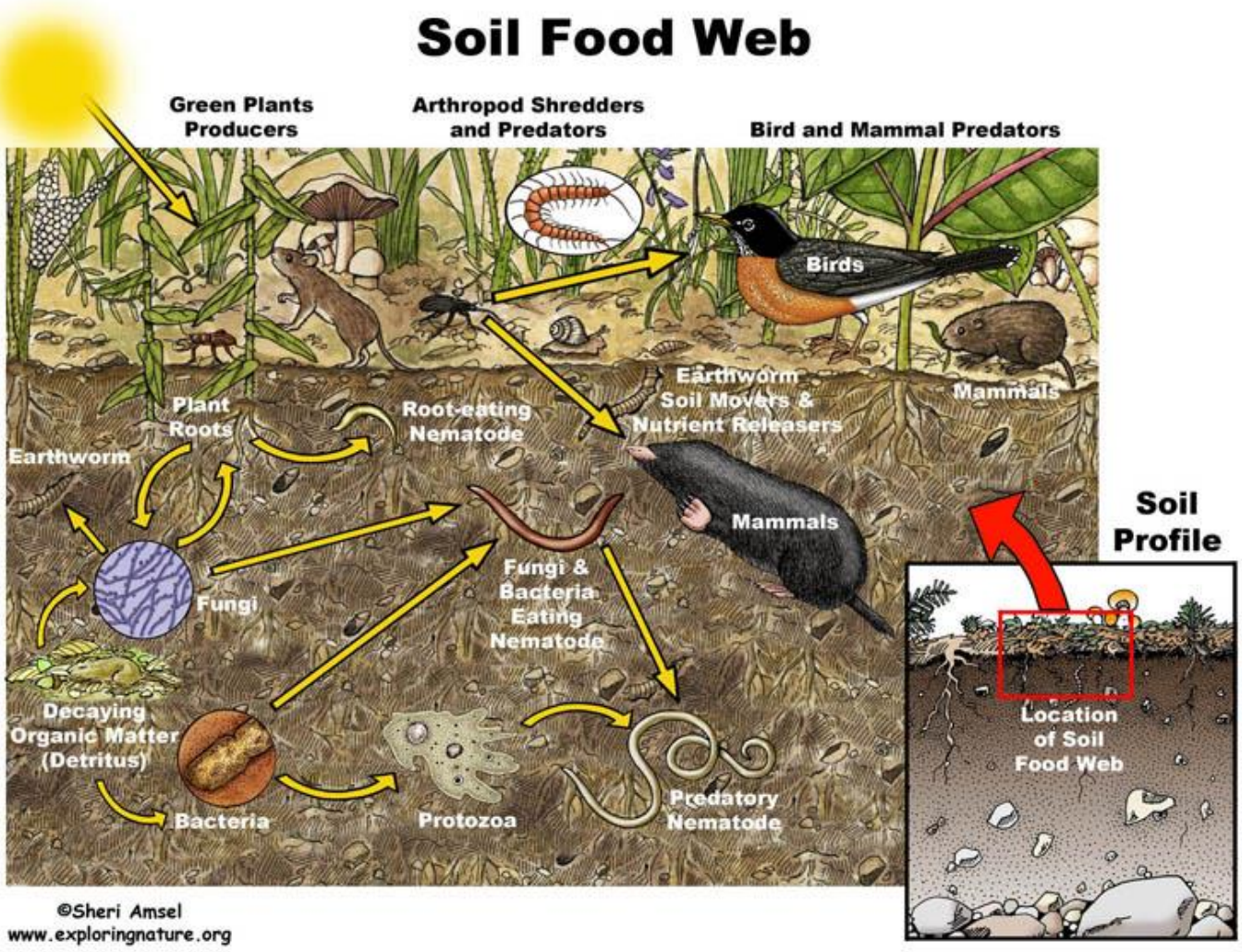
- Soil
- Vegetation
- Pests
- Public Surveys

- Mow Height/Frequency
- Mechanical Removals
- Dense Native Seeding
- Native Plantings
- Wood Chip Mulch
- Appropriate Schedule
- Long-term Approach

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

Organic Land Management: It's All About the Soil

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw



There are more soil microorganisms in a teaspoon of healthy soil than there are people on the earth!

(https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1101660.pdf

Just Can't Say Enough About Soil

Soils provide a foundation for all ecosystem services. Resilient soils across a landscape improve water and air quality, regulate flood waters, and stem climate change by sequestering carbon from the atmosphere

Increased storms and flooding events damage local and regional economies and disproportionately impact communities of color. The daily ability (or lack thereof) of soils to provide vital ecosystem services has long and far reaching economic and health consequences

Soils support landscapes that provide cultural, educational, and recreational activities. The United Nations recognizes aesthetic and spiritual pursuits to be equally vital to individual human health and social cohesion. Healthy soil provides the landscapes for human well being

Soils are a primary component of our life support system. Soils host biogeochemical cycles and store the largest terrestrial stock of organic carbon. In addition, soils contain a vast majority of insect, microbial, and fungal species in a complex matrix and integrate earth system processes necessary for human life.

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

Organic vs Chemical Land Management

Organic

- Safe
- Holistic and Sustainable: Works with Natural Systems
- Builds Soil Ecology
- Captures Carbon
- Infiltrates Stormwater
- Prevents Erosion
- Develops Resilient Plant Communities
- Protects Biodiversity
- Fights Climate Change
- Invites Community Engagement

Chemical

- Hazardous: Use, Storage, Disposal
- Unintended Impacts
- Lack of Regulation, Oversight and Enforcement
- False Sense of 'Quick Fix'
- Treadmill Dependency –Requires Repeated Use
- Ineffective – Often Makes Conditions Worse Over Time
- Destroys Soil Ecology
- Undermines Real Solutions
- Contributes to Climate Change

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

Last-Resort Products

Organic Land Management is
Not Product Dependent, Rather, Ecological-System Driven.

The product list developed by Beyond Pesticides is regularly updated and based on the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Sub-stances of the Organic Food Production Act (OFPA) and the EPA list of exempt pesticides, Section 25(b) of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act.

Worldwide:

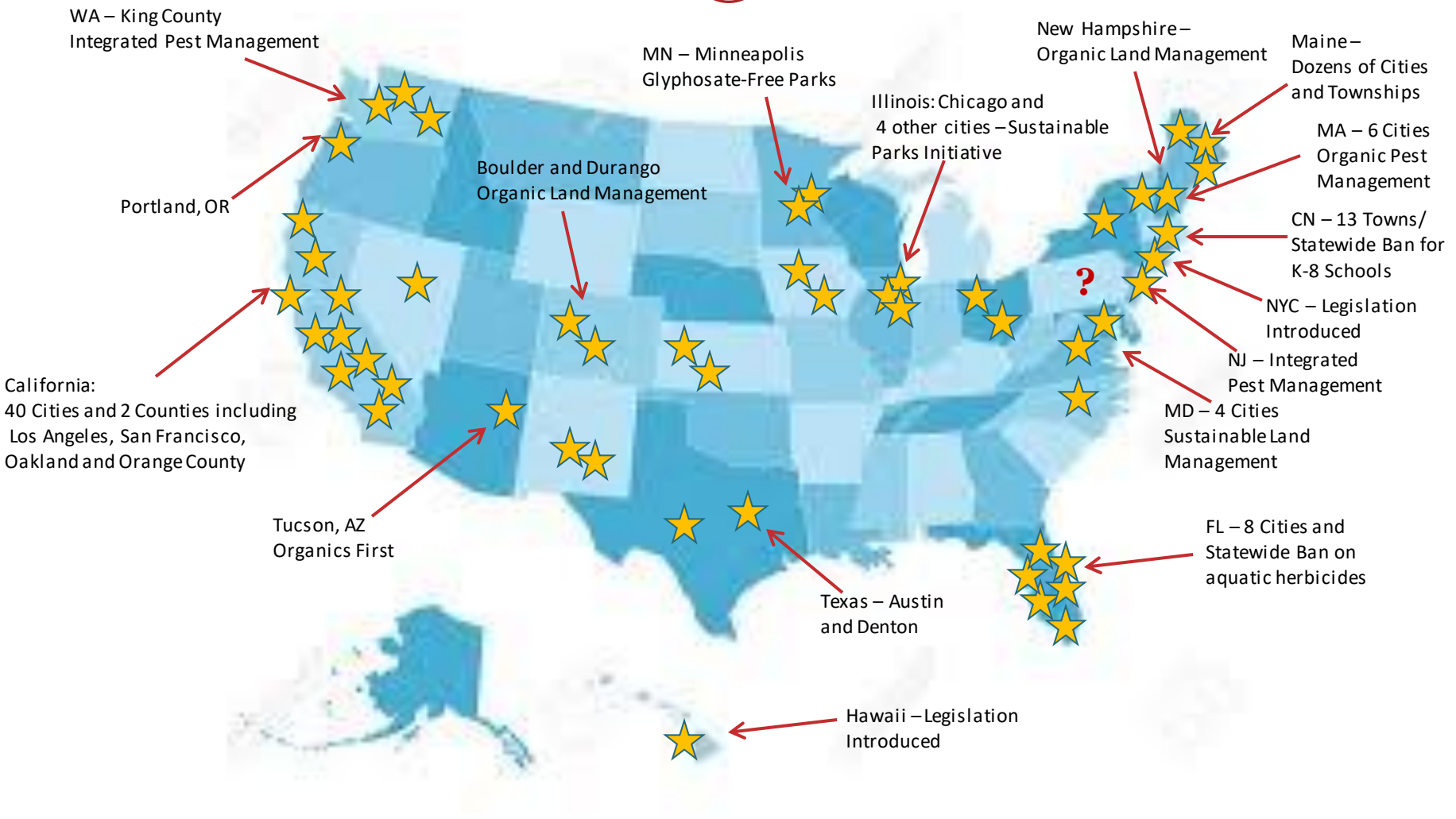
30 Countries have restrictions on the use of Pesticides

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

A Growing Movement

Over 100 Cities, Counties or States have

Prohibited the use of Glyphosate and/or All Pesticides



San Francisco:

Since 2010 –

90% pesticide reduction with Integrated Pest Management

Partner Org: Poison Free Malibu

Source: Conversation with Golden Gate Park IPM Manager
Aug 2019

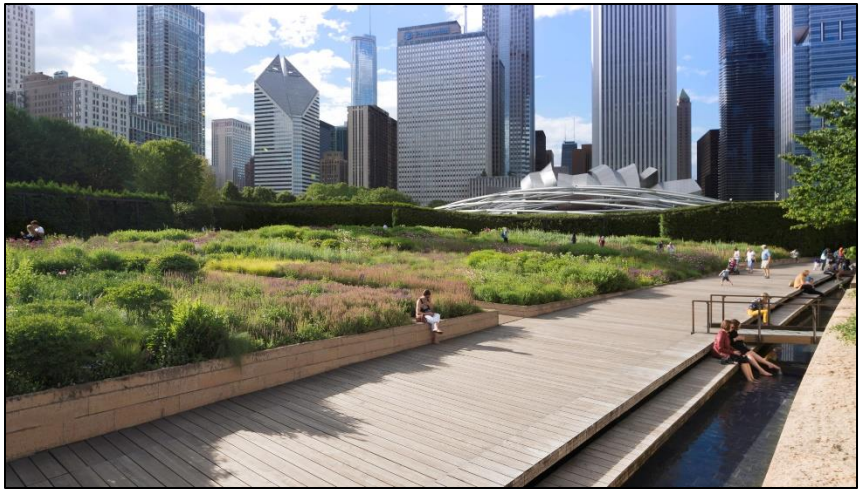
Chicago:

Since 2009 –

No pesticides used on 90% of public lands

Partner Org – Midwest Pesticide Action Center

Source: Conversation with Chicago Park District Operations Dept.
Aug 2019



Philly's Next!

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

Becoming Toxic-Free

1. Legislation
2. Organic Park Pilot Project
3. Organic Land Management Protocols
4. Community Empowerment, Leadership and Civic Engagement
5. Public Transparency, Communication and Accountability

Vision: Knowledge and Use of Organic Practices Become 'The Norm'

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

Toxic Free Philly is Fostering a Transition to Organic Land Management with the Organic Pilot Project –

Connecting Political Support, Resources, Expertise and Training to Philadelphia's Department of Parks and Recreation

Fundamental, Sustained Change in Land Management with an Organic Soil Systems Approach

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

JOIN US

Join Coalition

Sign Petition

Contact Council

Participate in Pilot

Support Legislation

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw

Toxic Free Philly

Toxicfreephilly.com

A Daughter Migrates Towards the Mother Earth by Jess X Snow. Completed 2017. Photo by Steve Weinik.

No Borders by Molly Crabapple. Photo by Steve Weinik.

Protect Our Health,
Our Children, Our Environment

Slide Credit - Peg Shaw