



For Immediate Release: April 19, 2021, 11 am CST/ Noon EST  
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Grand Rapids Grows Green

## Grand Rapids Grows Green

**Grand Rapids and local partners work to restore the Grand River by reducing runoff from nearby parks.**

Grand Rapids residents can enjoy a safer and cleaner Grand River this year thanks to efforts by the City, Sierra Club Grand Rapids and other local organizations to curb nearby pollution.

“Regular monitoring has documented progressively improved water quality of the Grand River thanks to sewer improvements and green infrastructure installations,” said Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Director David Marquardt.

The [City has sampled](#) pH, dissolved oxygen, *E. coli* and other characteristics of the Grand River’s water for more than 40 years. Over the past decade of this sampling, Grand River water quality averaged a score above 70 in the Water Quality Index of 1-100. A score of 70 or higher is considered a good water quality rating.



To build on these successes, the City of Grand Rapids Parks and Recreation Department’s [Strategic Master Plan](#) prioritized Grand River water quality improvement.

“Grand Rapids Parks’ citizen-led and adopted Strategic Master Plan is framed around our distinct environment, ecology and the proper care and stewardship of the city’s valued public open space,” said Marquardt.

Starting this spring, Grand Rapids will eliminate the application of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers on Grand River adjacent parks of Sixth Street and Canal. The City recruited the technical support of the non-profit sustainable landscaping initiative [Midwest Grows Green](#) (MGG) to implement this natural lawn care transition.

“Grand Rapids can eliminate their synthetic chemical use by increasing cultural controls of [core aeration](#), [overseeding](#) and mowing high that builds the soil, turf and plant system at every step,” explained Ryan Anderson, the leader of MGG.

The City plans for these transitions at the 4.6-acre Sixth Street Park and 2.8-acre Canal Park to guide management of other Grand Rapids parks and motivate landowners near the Grand River to limit their own synthetic inputs. The pollution eliminated from this pesticide-free parks program will aide many



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**Parks and  
Recreation**  
CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

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large-scale City initiatives such as the [River For All project](#) that strives to restore the rapids to the Grand River and waterfront, ensuring it remains a healthy, safe and vibrant resource for all to enjoy.

“Restoration work along the Grand River, including this pesticide-free transition at Sixth Street and Canal Parks, showcases the work we’re committed to -- ensuring that we have this beautiful, clean river running through the heart of our city for generations to come,” said Grand Rapids Mayor Rosalynn Bliss.

To learn more about natural lawn care and apply these practices to your own lawn, please visit and take the MGG pledge at [bit.ly/MGGpldg](http://bit.ly/MGGpldg) or visit MGG’s newest resource for pesticide reduction strategies on sports fields at [LawnandLand.org](http://LawnandLand.org).

### **About Midwest Grows Green**

Midwest Grows Green is an initiative of the [IPM Institute of North America, Inc.](#) that accomplishes large scale behavior change by sharing pesticide and fertilizer reduction information at critical places where lawns influence our lives. The IPM Institute is an independent 501(c)3 non-profit started in 1998 that improves sustainability in agriculture and communities through market mechanisms based in Integrated Pest Management.

### **About Sierra Club Greater Grand Rapids Chapter**

The Sierra Club is the largest and oldest grassroots organization in the country, with a mission to explore, enjoy and protect the planet. [Sierra Club Greater Grand Rapids](#) and its natural lawn care grassroots initiative [Growing Green Grand Rapids](#) covers Kent and Ottawa counties. Sierra Club members are active in various grassroots campaigns (local, statewide and national), to protect and preserve the environment.