

BITTERSWEET PARK FAQ

2020-2023

Why did we need this project?

The old irrigation system takes approximately 10 hours, 7 days a week, to run all zones in the park. The new system will run between 5-6 hours a day and only run 5-6 days a week. The current system was failing multiple times a season due to aged piped and valves resulting in the water being off for days to weeks at a time, stressing trees and the turf, making them weak and susceptible to bugs and disease.

How much water will the new turf save?

Water savings of approximately 9,209,674 gallons of water annually with the conversion from all Kentucky bluegrass to a mixture of Bluegrass and Colorado Native grasses. This equates to using approximately 47 acre-feet of water a year. Currently, we use approximately 76 acre-feet per year. This savings of approximately 29 acre-feet of water would supply 77 households with all their water requirements for one year.

When will Bittersweet start to look better?

The park will start to look better next season. Many of the weeds that sprouted are annual weeds, which means they die at the end of the season. The contractor cut many of these weeds before they went to seed which means they will be gone at the end of this season. Also, there will be some grass re-seeding in the spring to fill in bare spots, and staff will be able to cut the more established areas more frequently to eliminate any weeds.

How long does it take native grass to fill in?

Native grass areas will take 3-5 years to fully fill in. Because the site is irrigated to establish the grass, it will be much closer to the three-year mark than the five. It will look much better next year, and even better the following year. It will look different, but the benefits will be worth the wait for the growing season.

How much grass was converted?

The park used to consist of 31.49 acres of Kentucky bluegrass. The conversion left 11.15 acres of Kentucky bluegrass and changed 13.37 acres into Buffalo Grass, and 6.97 acres into taller native grasses.

Why are there so many weeds?

When soil is disturbed, dormant weed seeds can get the moisture and soil warmth needed to sprout. Since there is no way to lay native grass "sod" like Bluegrass, any seed in the soil is able to germinate and grow. Even though we planted a significant amount of native seed, any weed seed disturbed also sprouted.

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Why aren't you spraying the weeds to eliminate them?

Native grasses are very delicate when they are first establishing. They cannot handle a broadleaf weed spray and would die off as fast as the weeds would if sprayed. And due to their delicate nature, the plant can't handle vehicle traffic for several weeks at first, so mowing is also not an option right away. Hand pulling, which contractors did, is the only way to get rid of the weeds in the beginning. A few weeks after sprouting, the weedy areas were mowed and bagged to catch any weed seed that may have been present.

What is the cost of this project?

Total project budget of \$1,659,394 for design and installation. This includes the new crusher fines walking path around the east side of the lake, as well as some replacement and new trashcans, picnic tables and benches.

What are the other benefits of this project?

Mowing time will be reduced from 12 hours a week (336 hours a year average) to 5 hours a week (140 hours a year average). Fuel consumption to mow Bittersweet will be reduced from 30 gallons of diesel per week (840 gallons a year on average) to 14 gallons of diesel fuel per week (392 gallons a year on average). Additionally, staff time on the mower will be reduced leaving time for other park maintenance work.

Bittersweet Park improvement details:
Greeleygov.com/parks - Click "Projects" in top bar.

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