

# Fact Sheet

## **Incidents and Accidents**

Troup County utilizes prison inmate labor to manage vegetation control and debris removal on County roads. We use trained prison inmates to operate tractors to mow and maintain the rights-of-way. With our previous mowing program, we needed a minimum of 14 inmate tractor drivers during the mowing season. Inmates constantly transfer in and out, so we did not have inmates that were familiar with the challenges of the topography of this county.

Number of Incidents:	83 per year (2009)
Number of First Aid Treatments:	81 per year (2009)
Number of Accidents:	10 per year (2009)
Property Damage:	34 per year (2009)
Number of Deaths:	1 (2007)

## **Environmental**

Our previous mowing program ran from April until December of a normal year. The vehicles and equipment were running nine hours a day Monday through Thursday. The mower tractors cause damage to the grass in rough terrain or on moist soil, causing erosion.

Gallons of Diesel Burned:	6,952 per year
Gallons of Unleaded Used:	35,192 per year
Total CO <sub>2</sub> Output	418.5 Tons per year

## **Costs**

We had 8 prison inmate details assigned to the task of Roadside Vegetation and Debris Removal. Seven details were assigned to paved roads and one detail was assigned to dirt roads.

Costs of Correctional Officers-	\$336,000.00
Fuel, Equipment, Maintenance, Supplies, etc. -	\$149,327.00
Total Cost-	\$485,327.00

## **Costs of Spraying**

We have contracted with Natur-Chem to provide roadside vegetation control in order to reduce rounds of cutting utilizing staff and inmate labor. The products applied will retard growth and encourage low-growing grass varieties. Four prison inmate details remain to complete one round of mowing and provide debris removal.

Costs of Correctional Officers-	\$168,000.00
Fuel, Equipment, Maintenance, Supplies, etc.-	\$37,331.00
Spraying Contract-	\$66,720.00
Total Cost-	\$272,051.00
Net Savings-	\$213,276.00

## **Spray Schedule**

Application # 1 - February 2010

Application #2 - Mid May to early June

Application # 3 - Mid July to August

Mowers should stay off of right-of-way until late September.

## **History of Spraying**

The Georgia Department of Transportation began a comprehensive spraying program in 1985. This program, in cooperation with the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension, has been very successful. The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension has given guidelines for the formulation of spraying on County rights-of-way. Troup County's spraying program uses concentrations that are less than or equal to the guidelines recommended by the Georgia DOT and the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

## **Environmental Impact**

The spraying of the rights-of-way in Troup County will reduce the impact of CO<sub>2</sub> discharge by reducing the yearly output of CO<sub>2</sub> by 194 tons. This will be accomplished by the reduced use of fossil fuels and carbon emissions.

The impact on the environment from the use of chemicals for vegetation management will be limited by using chemical ratios set at or below acceptable levels designed by the Georgia Department of Transportation and the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

Listed below are the applications and concentrations used in Troup County:

Application # 1 -	Glyphosate (Generic "Roundup") (41%) - 12 ounces per acre (7.5% of "Label Rate"*)
	SFM 75 (Generic "Oust") - ¾ ounce per acre (10% of "Label Rate"*)
Applications #2 & #3 -	Glyphosate (Generic "Roundup") - 8 ounces per acre (5% of "Label Rate"*)
	Plateau (Panoramic™ 2SL)- 3-4 ounces per acre (25-33% of "Label Rate"*)
	Outrider - 1 ounce per acre (75% of "Label Rate"*)

\*Label Rate is the maximum concentration of herbicide recommended by the manufacturer on the label of the product.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **Have there been tests or studies done on the effects of these herbicides on humans and the environment?**

All the herbicides we use are registered with the EPA and have an EPA number. In order to get this number the manufacturers of the herbicide have to prove to the EPA the safety of the chemical if it is used at label rate. Manufacturers spend millions of dollars on research before the chemicals make it to the market and many do not even make it. The EPA is very tough on these manufacturers.

### **Will the herbicides run off-site and damage my well water or pond?**

We are spraying a swath of about 15 feet from the edge of the pavement out. Once the diluted mix is sprayed on the area it will dry in about 15 minutes depending upon the weather. Most of the active ingredient is absorbed by the plants and broken down. The remaining mix is trapped in the soil and will begin breaking down. All herbicides contain carbon thus are organic and biodegradable. These chemicals are broken down by light and water. It is very improbable that any traceable amount would be absorbed in the water table.

### **With such dilution of the mix, can we expect it to do its job?**

The concentrations that are being applied are not intended to kill all of the vegetation; only to slow the growth and minimize mowing with prison inmate details. NaturChem guarantees Troup County's satisfaction.

### **Is the spraying done by professionals?**

Yes. Troup County has contracted with NaturChem to apply the products. NaturChem uses computer-controlled equipment to regulate proper flow and application rates. Their technicians are licensed and rigorously trained in herbicide application techniques and species identification. Their training ensures that all herbicides will be applied in a manner that is safe for the private landowner, the public, nearby crops and businesses. NaturChem operates in 19 mainly southeastern states with their main offices in Lexington, SC and Conyers, GA.

### **What about drift?**

The spray is directed by computer-operated spray nozzles controlled by the driver to deliver pinpoint accuracy. Each nozzle is independently controlled to ensure the drift amount is kept at a minimum.

### **Can I Opt Out?**

Troup County will allow citizens to opt out of the spraying program by sending notification to the Correctional Institution by mail: Troup County C.I., 2508 Hamilton Road, LaGrange, GA 30241, Attn: Dexter Wells, emailing [dwells@troupcoco.org](mailto:dwells@troupcoco.org), or hand delivery. The notification needs to contain the name of the homeowner, address and a brief statement stating they wish to opt out of the program.

### **Will this new program continue indefinitely?**

The year 2010 is being considered an evaluation period. If the program is as successful as expected, the program will continue. At the end of the first year, we will re-evaluate the program to determine the best future course of action for Troup County citizens.

### **Is there any public oversight of the program?**

Yes. The Troup County Commissioners have formed an informal review committee to provide oversight of the program. Any citizen's input is always encouraged.