



follow the water

Clean Rivers Coalition –
Pesticide Behavior
Change: Two Pilots
Evaluation and Next Steps

**Columbia River Basin Restoration
Working Group Meeting**

April 22-23, 2026

Portland, Oregon

**Keri Morin Handaly, PM,
formerly City of Gresham**

**Roy Iwai, Coalition Chair,
Multnomah County**



Level Up Your Lawn!



Pilot Projects

- Funded by EPA (\$347,412) for Phase II
- **Pilot 1: Latine Landscaper Education**
- **Pilot 2: Reduce weed and feed use in residential lawn care**





Pilot 1: Landscaper Project Goals

1. Understand use of weed and feed (45% have used)
 2. Co-develop training with Latine landscapers
 2. Reduce pesticide exposure and use by Latine owned companies
 3. Enhance use of PPE
 4. Create Video training series in Spanish & Resource Guide
- https://www.pesticide.org/espanol#tab=espanol_videos

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PHOSPHORUS-FREE
Weed & Feed
LAWN FERTILIZER + WEED CONTROL
Fertilizante para césped Weed & Feed sin fósforo + control de maleza

Pilot 2: Residential Project Goals

1. Reduce weed & feed product use
2. Reduce quick-release fertilizer use
3. Deepen technical understanding of how to achieve lawn health
4. Evaluate effectiveness
5. Provide guidance for future implementation

Market Research

Conducted surveys & interviews



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graph TD; A[Conducted surveys & interviews] --> B[Developed audience segmentation]; B --> C[Tested campaign messaging & digital strategies]; C --> D[Used insights for targeted outreach];
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Developed audience segmentation

Tested campaign messaging & digital strategies

Used insights for targeted outreach

For the Maxi's

(lawn fanatics)

Reinforcing the desired behaviors, affirm their pride in expertise and desire to be like a pro. Remind them that weed and feed is not recommended by experts and its for amateur lawn care types.



- 58% of website visitors used weed and feed*
- 52% of these are MAXIS

*Not a random survey, not total population representative, only website visitors responding to ads

For the Anxious Mini's

(time limited &
want help)

Focus on the ease and speed of desired actions, demonstrate that new behaviors don't have to require a lot of new tools. Reinforce that tolerating some weeds is also fine.

LEVEL UP YOUR LAWN

Legendary tips for
a weed-free lawn.



Ditch the weed & feed

You don't need weed killer all over your lawn. Turf experts recommend strengthening your lawn and spot spraying instead.



Raise your mower blades

A 2.5" to 3" cutting height promote deep roots, avoids grub damage and crowds out weeds.



Mulch mow

A mulch mower or mulching blade finely shreds and spreads grass pieces while adding a layer of nutrients to the soil.

Learn how to level up your lawn at [URL](#).



36% of
website
visitors were
Anxious minis



This wastes money and can cause chemicals to enter

LevelUpLawn.org

- - Customer quiz for tailored advice
- - [Videos on best practices](#)
- - Pledge to stop using weed & feed
- - Information on fertilizers & mulch-mowing



Digital Marketing Campaign

Platforms: Google & Meta
(Facebook/Instagram)

Budget: \$10,500

Results:

- 8,000 website visitors

- 600+ quiz completions

- 200+ follow-up survey opt-ins



Behavior Change Evaluation*

- Surveyed website visitors & workshop attendees
- Key Findings: Majority are MAXIS
 - **54% of WF users no longer wanted to use**
 - 29% increase in overseeding (~80% of WF users)
 - Maxis are most likely to fertilize more than 2X/yr, post visit 21% increase of WF users report spring and/or fall only. (**71%** WF users)
 - 13% increase of WF users mulch-mowing (**73%** of WF users)

People like the idea of using compost reporting 32% increase in plans, but none redeemed the coupon. It's a high barrier activity.

*behaviors that p values = or < .05, statistically significant in paired T-tests





Next Steps



Expand the pilot programs to “statewide” with additional funding



Continue implementation and adaptive management over the next 4 years



Recruit watershed partners serving their local communities



Measure effectiveness