



# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

## Parks & Recreation

Michael DiBerardinis  
Commissioner

One Parkway  
1515 Arch Street, 10th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1587  
phone: 215.683.3600  
fax: 215.683.3598

### An Open Letter to Users of Schuylkill River Park About K9 Grass *28 September 2011*

Construction of the Schuylkill River Parks Connector Bridge includes a new Schuylkill River Park Dog Run. The City has chosen to install K9 Grass, a synthetic turf, in the new dog run. Recently, misinformation about K9 Grass and how it was selected has been circulating.

The facts are:

- **K9 Grass is safe.** The product's Material Safety Data Sheet (attached) shows that K9 Grass is non-hazardous as defined by OSHA and that "no health hazards are evident."
- K9 Grass does not contain lead or rubber.
- K9 Grass is made of the same type of plastic that most dog toys and baby bottles are made from.
- K9 Grass contains AlphaSan, an antimicrobial additive. AlphaSan counters the negative effects of dog waste, including foul odors and bacteria. The type of AlphaSan used in K9 Grass has not been shown to be harmful to dogs, people or the environment.
- K9 Grass is easier on dog's joints than many dog run surfaces such as hard-packed dirt, gravel or even natural turf.
- K9 Grass is easy to keep clean. Urine drains through it. Stool can be picked up, as you would from any other surface.
- K9 Grass does not produce any dust, as dirt and gravel dog run surfaces do.
- In hot weather, the temperature of K9 Grass will not be decidedly different than the surface temperature of the concrete or asphalt sidewalks and paths which dogs must use to get to the run.
- K9 Grass is not a 'new' or 'untested' product. Since its introduction in fall 2005, 1.4 million square feet have been installed at over 600 sites throughout the US.
- K9 Grass was supported by the project's Design Concept Team, which includes citizen representatives from the Friends of Schuylkill River Park, Schuylkill River Park Alliance and Center City Residents Association.

PHILADELPHIA  
**PARKS &  
RECREATION**



# CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

## Parks & Recreation

Michael DiBerardinis  
Commissioner

One Parkway  
1515 Arch Street, 10th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1587  
phone: 215.683.3600  
fax: 215.683.3598

- A large sample of K9 Grass was installed in the former Schuylkill River Park Dog Run for over a year prior to its closing in July 2011 for bridge construction. Dogs regularly used it and there were few complaints.
- K9 Grass was selected only after evaluating other surfaces, including natural grass, woodchips and decomposed granite.
- Decomposed granite is similar to the fine-grain gravel surface which was installed in the previous Schuylkill River Park Dog Run. That surface produced numerous complaints about dust and concerns about its negative impact on both humans and dogs.
- Decomposed granite is not an entirely natural product. It includes a polymer stabilizer.
- Thompkins Square Dog Run in New York City installed a decomposed granite surface in July 2008. Within two months, dust from the surface was being noted by users. By February 2009, the Square's Friends group had to rake loose fines from the supposedly solid decomposed granite surface back into place. In June 2010, less than two years after installation of the decomposed granite, the Friends spent \$9,000 to add stabilized sand to the dog run to reestablish a level surface.
- A leader of the Thompkins Square Friends group, who also uses another private dog run surfaced with K9 Grass, has shared that K9 Grass is preferable to decomposed granite.
- The manufacturer of K9 Grass has provided the City with 45 references.
- Design of the new dog run, including the surface, was discussed at two well attended public meetings.
- Attached are letters of support for K9 Grass from the Friends of Schuylkill River Park (FSRP) and the Schuylkill River Park Alliance. FSRP is Philadelphia Parks & Recreation's (PPR) recognized Friends group, who, with nearly 1,000 members, has worked with PPR to maintain the Schuylkill River Park Dog Run for 15 years.

We are pleased to be a part of the City team building the Schuylkill River Parks Connector Bridge and associated improvements to Schuylkill River Park and the dog run. Decisions about the design of improvements, including material choices, have been made in an open and transparent manner after evaluating viable options.

**Michael DiBerardinis**  
*Deputy Mayor for Community and Environmental Resources*  
*Commissioner, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation*

**PHILADELPHIA**  
**PARKS &**  
**RECREATION**

## MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET

### FOREVERLAWN PRODUCTS CONTAINING POLYETHYLENE AND NYLON FIBERS

#### A. IDENTITY

Chemical name:	Polyethylene fibers/Nylon fibers with polyurethane backing
Distributor:	ForeverLawn, Inc., 4500 Bogan Ave. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109
Emergency Telephone Number:	505.217.0177

#### B. HAZARDOUS INGREDIENTS

This product is considered to be a non-hazardous chemical under the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration Hazard Communication Standard 29CFR1910.1200

#### C. PHYSICAL DATA

Melting Point:	Polyethylene yarn 221° – 249°F/105° – 115°, Nylon yarn 428° – 436°F/220° – 230°C
Specific Gravity:	(H2O=1) 0.94 turf
Appearances:	Solid
Odor:	None

#### D. FIRE HAZARD DATA

Unusual fire and explosion hazards:	None
Flashpoint:	> 600°F
Extinguishing Method:	Water, Foam, Carbon Dioxide
Fire Fighting Equipment:	Wear protective pressure, self-contained, breathing apparatus. This product is resistant to damage and spreading of ignition in typical exposures such as lighted cigarette dropped on the surface.

#### E. REACTIVITY DATA

Stability:	(Conditions to avoid) Polymer may decompose under fire conditions to give off hazardous products
Dissolution:	Softening or discoloration may occur with yarn, phenol, formic acid, other acidic exposures below PH5
Hazardous Decomposition Products:	Carbon Dioxide, Carbon Monoxide, Nitrogen Oxides, Traces of Hydrogen Cyanide
Hazardous Polymerization:	Will not occur

#### F. HEALTH HAZARD INFORMATION

No health hazards are evident from MSDS documentation of constituents of this product, in the form presented when installed and used for its intended application as a synthetic turf product.

#### G. ENVIRONMENTAL & DISPOSAL INFORMATION

Environmental Impact:	This product is in compliance with the EPA RCRA backing standard TCLP in US Federal register to CRF261 for all heavy metals on that list.
Disposal Procedures:	Safe for landfills; Can be processed and used as a combustible fuel where proper recycling facilities are available.

#### H. LEGAL DISCLAIMER

While the information set forth herein is believed to be accurate and complete as of the date hereof. ForeverLawn Inc. makes no warranty with respect thereto and disclaims all liability and release thereon.

#### I. DATE OF ISSUE

April 2, 2007

# Friends of Schuylkill River Park

P.O. Box 30246 • Philadelphia, PA 19103

www.fsrp.org

Lynne Hopper  
*President*

Derek Freres  
*Vice President*

Sean O'Rourke  
*Vice President*

Carolyn Levine  
*Treasurer*

Susan Halpern  
*Recording Secretary*

Carolyn Duffy  
*Membership Secretary*

Peg Connor

Suzanne Reichwein

Judith Parker

Steve Slaterbeck

Leslie Young



Michael DiBerardinis  
Deputy Mayor, Environmental & Community Resources  
Commissioner, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation  
One Parkway – 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1515 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

September 26, 2011

Dear Deputy Mayor DiBerardinis,

On behalf of the Friends of Schuylkill River Park (FSRP), we are writing to thank Philadelphia Parks & Recreation (PPR) for the Department's leadership in the civic engagement and design of the Schuylkill River Connector Bridge and the associated improvements to Schuylkill River Park, including the dog run. We write at this time to also express FSRP's support for the installation of K9 Grass in the reconstructed dog run.

Formed in 1988 and with a current membership of nearly 1,000, including many users of the dog park, FSRP is PPR's recognized Friends group for Schuylkill River Park. FSRP's mission is to foster the preservation, beautification, improvement, maintenance, use and enjoyment of Schuylkill River Park. We are volunteer led and have coordinated or are in the final stages of completing nearly two million dollars of improvements to Schuylkill River Park since our inception.

We would like to thank PPR staff for thoughtful consideration of sometimes divergent views on the design of the bridge, park and dog run improvements. The process through which the design was developed is a model of excellence in community engagement and public participation. A Design Concept Team was formed that included representatives from the City as well as several representatives from community groups, including the Friends of Schuylkill River Park, Schuylkill River Park Alliance, Schuylkill River Development Corporation and Center City Residents' Association. At several of the Design Concept Team's meetings, the surface treatment for the permanent dog run was discussed at great length. In addition, two well attended public meetings were held during the design process (as well as an additional public meeting before construction began) for the community at large at which design plans were presented and comments were received.

FSRP, in partnership with PPR and previously the Dog Owner's Association, has maintained the dog run for about 15 years. We believe that K9 Grass is the appropriate, safe surface for the new dog run. Over the years, we have had much experience with different dog run surfaces. All of the previous surfaces have posed many problems, including creating muddy messes, becoming dusty in dry weather, developing an unsavory odor, re-positioning themselves over time, creating divets, and other unsafe surface formations that required substantial effort to re-grade, harboring dangerous fungi or fleas, and posing many other unfortunate problems.

FSRP, along with the Design Concept Team, evaluated numerous surfaces, including several that have been used previously in Schuylkill River Park. The Design Concept Team and the Friends of Schuylkill River Park chose K9 Grass as the surface for the new Schuylkill River Park Dog Run because it solves many of the challenges listed above. K9 Grass is safe for dogs (made of the same type of plastic that composes most dog toys and baby bottles), contains an anti-microbial ion to prevent bacterial growth, drains water to the subsurface at a fast rate, is low maintenance relative to other solutions and keeps dog urine and fecal odors to a minimum.

K9 Grass is approved by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), does not contain lead, and has a long lifespan relative to other surfaces. The manufacturer provided 45 references and the surface has been well received by dogs and humans who use dog runs around the country in which it is installed. For an extremely high use urban dog park such as ours, the Friends of Schuylkill River Park and the Design Concept Team believe K9 Grass is the best and safest surface available. We are very excited to see this surface in the new Schuylkill River Park Dog Run.

Thank you again for PPR's thoughtful stewardship of Schuylkill River Park. Please feel free to contact either of us if you have any questions concerning the project or FSRP's support of K9 Grass.

Sincerely,

Friend of Schuylkill River Park Board of Directors

CC: PA Senator Larry Farnese  
PA Representative Babette Josephs  
Jeff Braff, President, CCRA  
Mark A. Focht, First Deputy Commissioner, Parks & Recreation

113 N. Van Pelt Street  
Philadelphia, PA  
1 9 1 0 3

Sarah Clark Stuart  
215 546.1222  
[scspa@comcast.net](mailto:scspa@comcast.net)

Russell Meddin  
215 567.6767  
[russellmeddin@yahoo.com](mailto:russellmeddin@yahoo.com)



Michael DiBerardinis  
Deputy Mayor, Environmental & Community Resources  
Commissioner, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation  
One Parkway – 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1515 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

September 26, 2011

Dear Deputy Mayor DiBerardinis,

We are writing to express our support for the City's choice of K9 Grass as the surface for the renovated Schuylkill River Park Dog Run that will be constructed as part of the Schuylkill River Parks Connector Bridge.

Friends of Schuylkill River Park have worked diligently with Philadelphia Parks & Recreation staff and the project's Design Concept Team to design the new dog park. With our organization, the Friends has worked tirelessly to provide ample public input and comment into the decision making. The commitment to design the best possible dog park and transparent public process is a testament to the Friends' stewardship of the Park. We support the City's choice of the dog run surface treatment and believe it was done in the best interest of dogs, their owners and the park.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Clark Stuart".

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Russell Meddin".

Sarah C. Stuart & Russell Meddin  
Co-coordinators