



July 9, 2021

**Re: Field Conditions**

Please find following an update and some points of clarification regarding the field conditions for the renters and patrons who utilize the John Blumberg Softball Complex:

- First of all, on behalf of the staff at JBSC, we welcome back all of the leagues, players, coaches, team staff and patrons of softball after a two-month shut down due to previous Provincial Health Orders and Covid related restrictions.
- Second of all, we thank all of you who have visited the park over the past week for your patience and understanding while we work through the current Covid related restrictions. These restrictions have placed limits on outdoor sports facilities regarding players and spectators, as well as food & beverage service.
- Third of all, we would like to address the poor conditions of our playing fields and to identify/clarify a few hurdles that we have experienced that have brought us to the current state of the facility.
  - Please be aware that no one is more disappointed in the condition of the playing fields than myself and our Operations staff. It is disheartening to see a premier facility such as this one move from a viable and vibrant park 4 years ago, to its current condition.
  - While the softball season was shut down, we took the opportunity to do as much maintenance on the facility as possible. Sadly, the extremes in heat and the lack of access to water for our irrigation system were two things that pushed us over the edge and to the condition you see the park in currently.
  - As point of clarification and for those of you who are not aware, JBSC is not on any municipal water service, nor are we on municipal sewer. We have all of our potable water, water for washrooms and the concession/lounge all trucked into the facility. We have all of our sewage held in tanks and pumped out as necessary.
  - Also, as a point of clarification, we do have irrigation systems under all of our outfields (except for diamond 6). This irrigation system is connected to a pump house close to the Assiniboine River and the pump to run the system needs to be connected to a mobile pipe that is placed in the river to draw water for our fields. Unfortunately, due to the severe/extreme drought conditions experienced over the past 3 years, our lessor has been unable to position the main irrigation pipe into the proper location as the water level is too low for the pump to draw any water out of the river.
  - Currently we are doing our best to maintain diamond conditions for the numerous leagues that utilize our facility. This would include light dragging and harrowing of infields, so that the field material does not dry out and blow away; watering the infields

with our portable tank and spray boom prior to the evening's games, again, so that the field material does not dry out and blow away; packing and maintaining the basepaths and pitching mounds; rearranging games to different diamonds that are able to handle older players; other measures to minimize stress on the playing fields.

- Another unfortunate environmental concern we are dealing with are some very serious issues with Richardson Ground squirrels and Thirteen-lined ground squirrels outside/inside of the John Blumberg Softball Complex. We have been doing abatement inside the park to the best of our ability. However, the issue is outside of the park where these rodents are tunnelling into our facility. It is now at the point where we can't keep up inside the park and we are being overrun. There is the same issue outside our complex in the soccer pitches. We have respectfully requested that the lessor provide some abatement measures outside of our complex in order to alleviate the rodent issue. We have asked if that could be undertaken immediately and that the complex, Softball Manitoba and our renters/patrons would be very appreciative of those efforts.
  - Two points of clarification in regard to the above-mentioned issue. The first is that JBSC and its staff are responsible for all maintenance *inside* the fenced area of the complex. We are not responsible for anything *outside* of the complex fence regarding maintenance, which would be things such as grass cutting, weed control, rodent control, etc.; The second point of clarification in regard to rodent control is that we have never and would never use rodent abatement measures such as "*Poisonous straw*" spread around the outfields. Even if there were such a thing, we would never undertake such measures as this would be both an environmental and a safety issue for our users.
  - The last point of clarification is regarding the use of temporary fences. Currently we are not obligated as a facility to use the temporary fences. The temporary fence requirement is for events such as Provincials, Westerns, etc. Due to the fact that our outfields are severely dried out and cracking, we would do severe damage to both the fencing and the outfields if we had to put them up/take them down every night. We do have other users in the park that can't play on diamonds with temporary fences, so they need to be removed after certain league games, which adds extra stress to the staff, the fences, the poles and the underground sleeves in the outfields at JBSC.
- Unfortunately, things are only going to deteriorate further at the complex the longer this drought/extreme heat continues and the more people we have playing on the diamonds. According to the information attached to Appendix A of this letter "***The city of Brandon in southeastern Manitoba, and Dauphin in the east central region as well as Winnipeg in the southeast, were all rated to be in their driest 5 years on record based on precipitation from September 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021***".
  - As mentioned at the outset of this correspondence, we are as disheartened as you are regarding the condition of the playing fields at JBSC and we ask for your continued patience and understanding as we try to move towards a solution to this unfortunate circumstance.

Sincerely,

Monte Miller

Facility Manager

John Blumberg Softball Complex

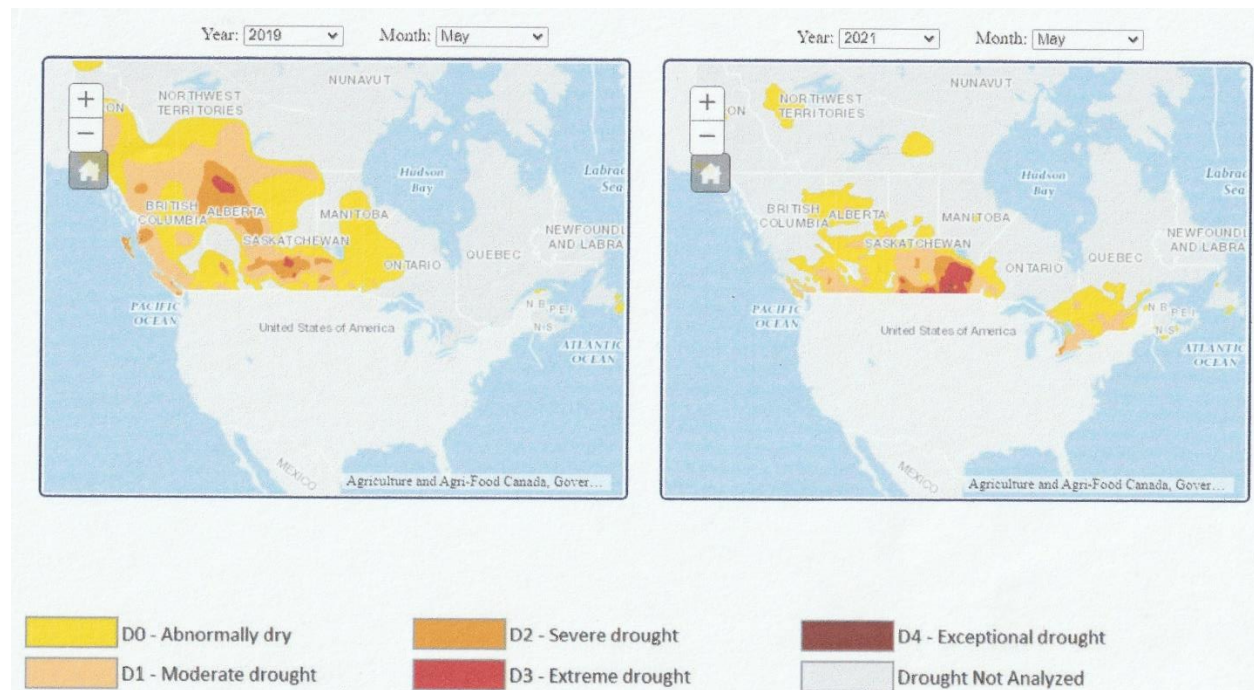
## APPENDIX A

In Manitoba, Severe (D2) to Exceptional Drought (D4) continue to dominate the southern portion of the province despite scattered storms bringing rain to most regions of the province.

The city of Brandon in southeastern Manitoba, and Dauphin in the east central region as well as Winnipeg in the southeast, were all rated to be in their driest 5 years on record based on precipitation from September 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

Source: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada <https://agriculture.canada.ca/en/agriculture-and-environment/drought-watch-and-agroclimate/canadian-drought-monitor>

### Drought condition comparison May 2019 to May 2021



## APPENDIX B

Highest Winnipeg temperatures in recent years (2017 to 2021)

| Date               | Max °C |
|--------------------|--------|
| August 18, 2020    | 34     |
| June 07, 2019      | 37     |
| August 12, 2018    | 37     |
| June 5, 2021       | 36     |
| September 12, 2017 | 35     |