

DOWNERS GROVE PARK DISTRICT

ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

It is the intent of the Downers Grove Park District to encourage its employees to set a high standard of leadership and competency in the promotion of sound environmental practices and lifestyles. Park and recreation employees, by the very nature of their chosen careers, have an obligation to set an example and assume a leadership position in the development and use of guidelines, practices and environmental opportunities which promote a healthy environment.

To meet this end, the Downers Grove Park District has drafted the below Environmental Guidelines to confirm the District's commitment to the environment and to provide a tool for staff use when carrying out this commitment. **The guidelines will be used when possible with consideration of other factors such as efficiency, cost, effectiveness/performance, product safety and availability.**

ENVIRONMENTAL GUIDELINES

Purchase and Use of Environmentally Safe and Sensitive Products

Purchase environmentally preferable products for use in facility and park operations which minimize negative environmental impacts, taking into consideration the effects of product production, use, safety, storage, disposal and cost.

Wise Use and Protection of Air, Water, Soil and Wildlife

Research and implement ways to conserve and protect water and soil, enhance air quality, limit the production and release of damaging pollutants, and protect plant and animal life.

Wise Use of Energy Resources

Continue to explore and implement ways to conserve energy resources and investigate methods of applying alternative energy technologies.

Reduction and Handling of Waste

Reduce waste production, reuse and recycle materials from facilities and park operations, and handle hazardous and all other wastes according to lawful and safe procedures.

Open Space Planning and Preservation

Continue the District's land management practices at Lyman Woods and the Belmont Prairie, and consider best land management practices in the planning and development of other District properties.

Environmental Education and Interpretation

Provide education and interpretation opportunities for staff and the public which increase appreciation for the natural world and promote environmentally conscious lifestyles.

Public Relations and Communications

Actively promote the District's green initiatives and partner with community groups and organizations that advocate the same.

SUGGESTED ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS

Purchase and Use of Environmentally Safe and Sensitive Products

The production, use and disposal of many office, recreation and maintenance products contributes significantly to the pollution of the air, water and soil and the destruction of natural communities of plants and animals. Educated product selection in the workplace and at home can mean the difference between an environment safe for all living things, including people, and a planet contaminated with toxic pollutants.

Purchase products with recycled content for use in recreation programs, offices, park maintenance and development projects.

Purchase materials and products that are extracted or manufactured locally.

Encourage the conservative use of paper and wood in place of plastics and other non-biodegradable and non-renewable products.

Encourage the use of alternatives to Styrofoam products by staff, concessionaires and park/facility users.

Minimize the use of petroleum-based products such as inks, stains and plastics.

Reduce the use of disposable products by staff, concessionaires and park/facility users.

Make use of electronic mail resources such as phone or computer message systems in place of paper memos.

Inventory all hazardous materials including cleaners, paints, solvents, sealants, wood preservatives, and office products, and investigate environmentally sensitive alternatives.

Avoid the use of chlorine-bleached paper products.

Reduce indoor air pollutants such as fluorocarbons from spray cans and fumes from cleaning solutions, sealants and paints by using less harmful alternatives.

Minimize or eliminate indoor pesticide use by incorporating integrated pest management within all facilities.

Avoid using products harvested from the rainforests or other endangered natural communities.

Develop an agency environmental statement for use in bidding documents.

Wise Use and Protection of Air, Water, Soil and Wildlife

All life on earth is dependent upon clean and reliable sources of air, water and soil. Without these basic life-support systems, the quality of life declines and the diversity of plants and animals on the planet is diminished.

Reduce vehicle emissions through regularly scheduled tune-ups and other applicable vehicle maintenance.

Identify sources of indoor and outdoor air pollution and implement a prevention program.

Continue to remove or manage asbestos as required.

Develop water conservation guidelines for District fields and facilities, and retrofit all facilities with water conservation hardware.

Minimize the impact of cleaners, solvents and other products on the water source and investigate environmentally sensitive alternatives.

Comply with safety standards regarding hazardous materials data sheets.

Consider the use of drought resistant and preferably native species for landscaping.

Investigate alternative snow melt products, using those which have the least impact upon the surrounding soil, water and plant life. Minimize the use of road salt.

Establish a comprehensive integrated pest management program for park grounds, including selection of plant species, preventative maintenance, early detection of problems, natural control methods, and minimized use of pesticides.

Ensure that fuel storage tanks do not leak and are registered, and remove or replace any defective equipment.

Practice soil management and appropriate landscaping to prevent erosion.

Wise Use of Energy Resources

The majority of energy produced in the United States is derived from non-renewable or limited resources such as oil and coal and from nuclear sources, releasing large amounts of pollutants into the air and/or creating other toxins. Careful conservation of energy resources will minimize pollution while prolonging the lifespan of the non-renewable resources until other alternative and less harmful energy technologies are readily available.

Plant shade trees near buildings to reduce energy consumption due to summer air conditioning.

Plant evergreens and shrubs as windbreaks along building foundations and walls, to reduce energy consumption due to heating.

Design and build energy efficient buildings, giving consideration to insulation and energy-efficient appliances and incorporating alternative, renewable technologies such as solar and wind energy.

Conduct energy audits and retrofit buildings with energy saving devices.

Improve the efficiency of existing lighting by retrofitting outdoor and indoor lighting with energy efficient bulbs and requiring all new lighting to be energy efficient.

Consider solar light fixtures in parks and parking lots and as exterior building lighting.

Properly maintain refrigerators and air conditioners for more energy efficient cooling.

Establish minimum and maximum thermostat temperature settings for all facilities, and reduce heating and cooling usage when buildings are unoccupied, utilizing energy management systems.

Insulate pipes and set thermostats for hot water heaters at energy efficient temperatures.

Consider alternative fuels such as propane and natural gas and alternative energy technologies such as electrically powered vehicles.

Maintain vehicles to reduce fuel consumption and implement energy saving fleet operation procedures.

Support the use of transportation alternatives such as bicycles, mass transit, car pooling and walking.

Reduction and Handling of Waste

Most trash could be reused, recycled or reduced at the source. Simple steps taken at the agency level to eliminate waste in the workplace, reuse materials and recycle discards could result in a significant waste reduction.

Investigate source reduction of waste, including purchasing in bulk, minimizing packaging, reducing excess use of paper, and choosing reusable and recyclable products.

Reduce paper use by sharing subscriptions, making double-sided reports, reducing junk mail, using memo routing slips and keeping mailing lists current.

Investigate ways to reuse office, recreation program, and maintenance/construction materials that are typically discarded.

Attempt to compost or reuse landscape waste.

Develop and implement a comprehensive in-house and parks recycling program that considers recycling of metals, glass, plastics, paper, cardboard, magazines and other recyclables.

Recycle batteries, antifreeze, motor oil, Freon and other automotive by-products.

Train staff in the proper handling, use, storage and disposal of hazardous materials.

Open Space Planning and Preservation

Open spaces and green places are essential to the health and happiness of all human beings, providing solitude, beauty and inspiration. Maintaining native natural areas is also imperative to the health, diversity and balance of all life on Earth.

Develop and implement plans for the re-establishment and/or restoration of native grassland and woodland ecosystems.

Re-establish and protect river corridors, wetlands and other wildlife habitats.

Provide appropriate recreational access to and enhance public awareness of such restored and protected natural sites.

Support local efforts to establish greenways.

Develop relationships with land trusts and preservation/conservation organizations to assist in open space and natural habitat preservation.

Develop a plan to balance appropriate recreational use of environmentally sensitive lands with preservation goals.

Utilize native species for park landscaping.

Eliminate or control exotic and invasive plant and animal species that inhibit ecological diversity and integrity.

Abide by existing laws to protect rare, threatened and endangered plant and animal species.

Follow a tree planting, maintenance, and replacement program to reforest park areas in the community.

Incorporate environmental impact considerations in the design process of facilities and parks.

Environmental Education and Interpretation

As leaders in park management and recreation programming, park and recreation agencies have a responsibility to increase environmental awareness, educate staff and patrons, and encourage appreciation of natural areas.

Organize an environmental committee consisting of agency staff from all facilities and/or departments.

Incorporate environmental education into staff training, including energy awareness, water conservation, and environmental disaster planning.

Continue to promote leisure activities that minimize environmental impact and energy use.

Develop and present programs that enhance awareness of natural areas and teach environmentally responsible lifestyles.

Interpret the natural resources specific to the community via programs, presentations, signage and brochures.

Public Relations and Communications

Communication of the District's environmental initiatives not only informs and educates the public about the District's environmentally friendly practices, but also encourages vendors and the public to do the same.

Develop a public relations program to inform the public about the agency's environmental efforts, provide community leadership, and serve as a role model.

Include environmental lifestyle information in publications and media.

Use Earth Day, Arbor Day or other environmentally focused days as vehicles to educate the public about the environment.

Reduce waste of printed materials by minimizing over runs and supporting electronic communications throughout the District.

Support other community agencies and organizations in the development and enhancement of a strong environmental ethic.

Pursue sponsors who are in support of the District's green initiatives.

Ensure that marketing vendors comply with the agency's adopted environmental guidelines.