



Wheaton Park District



Environmental Policy

The Wheaton Park District acknowledges the Illinois Parks and Recreation Environmental Committee which developed the original "Model Environmental Policy" after which this policy was written. The Wheaton Park District is committed to the environment and this policy will provide the guidelines for staff to use when carrying out this commitment. The environmental policy is and will always be a working document. This document will assist the Wheaton Park District to measure and achieve the goals and action plans that are decided by the Environmental Policy Committee and instituted by staff at park district locations, facilities and programs.

Our mission is to establish and maintain sound environmental policies, practices and educational opportunities for the employees and patrons of the Wheaton Park District.

Environmental Policy and Guidelines

Policy 1.0 Purchase and use Environmentally Safe and Sensitive Products

Purchase 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.

Policy Guidelines

1. Purchase products with recycled content wherever possible for use in recreation programs, offices, park maintenance and development projects.
2. Encourage the conservative use of paper and wood in place of plastics and other non-biodegradable and non-renewable products.
3. Eliminate the use of Styrofoam products by staff, concessionaires and park/facility users.
4. Minimize the use of petroleum-based products such as inks, stains and plastics.
5. Reduce the use of disposable products by staff, concessionaires and park/facility users.
6. Inventory all hazardous materials including cleaners, paints, solvents, sealants, wood preservatives, and office products, and investigate and use environmentally sensitive alternatives when possible.
7. Limit the use of chlorine-bleached paper products.
8. Minimize or eliminate indoor pesticide use by incorporating integrated pest management within all facilities.
9. Educate employees on minimal usage of products harvested from the rainforests or other endangered natural communities.
10. Purchase local products from local businesses whenever possible.
11. Develop an agency environmental policy statement for use in bidding documents.
12. Consolidate the purchases of common goods, i.e., cups, paper, etc among departments.

Policy 2.0 Wise Use and Protection of Air, Water, Soil and Wildlife

Actively seek and implement ways to conserve and protect water and soil, enhance air quality, limit the production and release of damaging pollutants, and protect wildlife.

Policy Guidelines

1. Consolidate all business trips within the park district.
2. Reduce vehicle emissions through regularly scheduled tune-ups, including maintaining appropriate tire pressures, and other applicable vehicle maintenance and utilize new and greener technologies when replacing older vehicles and equipment.
3. Adopt a resolution which reduces or prohibits second-hand tobacco smoke within facilities, vehicles and parks.
4. Replace all facilities with water conservation hardware, and develop a leak detection and correction program.
5. Develop a water conservation plan for swimming pools, spray grounds, skating rinks and other special facilities.
6. Evaluate the impact of current cleaners, solvents and other products on the water source and investigate environmentally sensitive alternatives.
7. Comply with safety standards regarding hazardous materials data sheets.
8. Use drought resistant and native species for landscaping where possible.
9. Investigate alternative snow melt products, using those which have the least impact upon the surrounding soil, water and plant life. Reduce the use of road salt.
10. 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.
11. Inventory underground storage tanks on our property and monitor them to ensure they do not leak and are registered.
12. Practice soil management and appropriate landscaping to prevent erosion.
13. Incorporate environmental impact considerations in the design process of facilities and parks.
14. Eliminate the use of helium.
15. Ban the release of balloons in parks.
16. Utilize permeable pavers and permeable concrete in parks.
17. Evaluate the impact of current mowing practices and incorporate “no mow” areas and “no mow” days in regards to weather conditions.

18. Utilize cisterns and rain barrels to harvest and use rainwater clean district vehicles and water landscapes.
19. Strive to limit the use of Round-Up and pesticide in parks.
20. Improve the nutrient content of the soil by planting clover, where possible, in district parks and facilities.
21. Ensure that staff does not mow over litter, which increases the amount of litter and makes it difficult to pick up.

Policy 3.0 Wise Use of Energy Resources

Actively seek and implement ways to conserve energy resources and investigate methods of applying alternative energy technologies.

Policy Guidelines

1. Plant shade trees near buildings to reduce energy consumption due to summer air conditioning.
2. Plant evergreens and shrubs as windbreaks along building foundations and walls to reduce energy consumption due to heating.
3. 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, when and where economically feasible.
4. Conduct energy audits and retrofit buildings with energy saving devices.
5. Improve the efficiency of existing lighting by retrofitting outdoor and indoor lighting with energy efficient LED bulbs and requiring all new lighting to be energy efficient when and where economically feasible.
6. Consider solar light fixtures in parks and parking lots and as exterior building lighting.
7. Properly maintain refrigerators and air conditioners for more energy efficient cooling.
8. Establish minimum and maximum thermostat temperature settings for all facilities, and reduce heating and cooling usage when buildings are unoccupied, utilizing energy management systems.
9. Insulate hot water heaters and pipes and set thermostats at energy efficient temperatures.
10. Consider alternative fuels such as propane and natural gas and alternative energy technologies such as electrically powered or hybrid vehicles.
11. Maintain vehicles to reduce fuel consumption and implement energy saving fleet operation procedures.
12. Support the use of transportation alternatives such as bicycles, mass transit, car pooling and walking and provide incentives for staff and park/facility users.
13. Consider use of light tubes in appropriate facilities, and install if feasible.
14. Use ceiling fans to circulate air and reduce energy consumed to cool buildings with air conditioning.
15. Paint facility roofs with white or silver to reflect heat, where possible.
16. Explore the implementation of alternate roof materials, such as metal and green (vegetative) roofs, when and where economically feasible.
17. Install smart thermostats to reduce energy used to heat and cool unoccupied rooms.

Policy 4.0 Reduction and Handling of Waste

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

Policy Guidelines

1. Investigate long term reduction of waste, including purchasing in bulk, minimizing packaging, reducing excess use of paper, and choosing reusable and recyclable products.
2. Reduce paper use by sharing subscriptions, making double-sided reports, reducing junk mail, using memo routing slips and keeping mailing lists current.
3. Expand use of electronic mail resources such as phone or computer message systems in place of paper memos.
4. Investigate ways to reuse office, recreation program, and maintenance/construction materials that are typically discarded.
5. Compost or otherwise reuse all organic waste. Strive to include food scraps from employees and the public.
6. Develop and implement a comprehensive in-house and parks recycling program including metals, glass, plastics, paper, cardboard, magazines and other recyclables.

7. Recycle batteries, antifreeze, motor oil, Freon and other automotive by-products.
8. Educate and train staff in the proper handling, use, storage and disposal of hazardous materials.
9. Share leftover food from special events and restaurant services with agencies that feed the underprivileged in this county within county health department regulations.
10. Encourage staff to reuse unwanted items by hosting White Elephant exchanges.

Policy 5.0 Open Space Planning and Preservation

Protect and restore indigenous natural communities such as prairies, woodlands and wetlands, and promote the reclamation, acquisition, preservation and management of other open space areas.

Policy Guidelines

1. Develop and implement plans for the re-establishment, restoration and protection of native ecosystems.
2. Provide appropriate recreational access to and enhance public awareness of such restored and protected natural sites.
3. Support local efforts to establish greenways and make accessible to all visitors.
4. Work with commercial or private land owners in an effort to acquire or otherwise ensure the use of these lands for open space.
5. Develop relationships with land trusts and preservation/ conservation organizations to assist in open space and natural habitat preservation.
6. Develop a plan to balance appropriate recreational use of environmentally sensitive lands with preservation goals.
7. Eliminate or control exotic and invasive plant and animal species that inhibit ecological diversity and integrity.
8. Abide by existing laws to protect rare, threatened and endangered plant and animal species.
9. Organize monthly natural area volunteer workdays.

Policy 6.0 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, emphasizing selective consumption and low-impact resource use.

Policy Guidelines

1. Organize an environmental committee consisting of agency staff from all facilities and/or departments.
2. Involve agency staff in an environmental education program which explains the commitment of the agency to the environment, provides information about environmentally-conscious lifestyle and workplace choices and habits, and stresses the need for staff input and involvement.
3. Develop and implement an energy and water conservation understanding and awareness program for employees and park/facility users.
4. Ensure that contractors and vendors understand and comply with the agency's adopted environmental policies. Include specifications in bidding documents and contracts.
5. Promote leisure activities that minimize environmental impact and energy use.
6. Develop a public relations program to inform the public about the agency's environmental efforts, provide community leadership, and serve as a role-model.
7. Include environmental lifestyle information in materials distributed to the public.
8. Develop and present public programs which enhance residents' relationship with the natural world and teach environmentally responsible lifestyles.
9. Develop nature interpretation and environmental education programs for schools and groups that incorporate hands-on activities to promote interaction with and appreciation of the natural world through discovery and exploration.
10. Create demonstration native gardens/landscapes.
11. Interpret the natural resources specific to the community via programs, presentations, signage or brochures.
12. Use Earth Day, Arbor Day and other conservation programs as a vehicle to educate the residents about the environment.
13. Work with community agencies and organizations to develop and enhance a strong environmental ethic.
14. Promote and educate people about water conservation by using rain barrels as a way to get individuals to conserve and be more aware of their water usage.
15. Promote green initiatives in park district brochures to educate the community and staff about sustainability.
16. Develop and present staff training on green practices of the park district upon hire.