

POL.A.05.01 - Environmental Philosophy

Statement of Philosophy

The community and the Park District are increasingly aware of the environmental issues that affect the quality of life. It is the intent of the Park District to assume a leadership role in the development and use of sound environmental policies, practices, and educational opportunities.

Environmental Principles

The Park District will to the greatest extent practicable:

- Promote the acquisition, protection, and environmentally sensitive management of open space and natural habitat areas.
- Protect, enhance, and interpret the Park District's natural resource heritage.
- Design, develop, and maintain parks, facilities, and natural areas in a manner that enhances and protects the environment through conservation of soil, water, and energy; by minimizing the adverse impact on air and water quality; by reducing waste; and by utilizing in the most efficient manner possible/practical.
- Encourage recycling practices that utilize renewable resources and minimize the use of non-renewable ones.
- Practice integrated pest management, which reduces the Park District's dependence on pesticides.
- Abide by the federal and state Endangered Species Protection Acts in order to avoid adverse impacts on endangered or threatened species during Park District operations.
- Function as a role model within the community by actively promoting public awareness and educational programs that encourage environmentally sensitive lifestyles.

Environmental Practices

a. Open Space and Natural Habitats Preservation. The Park District shall develop relations and agreements with public and private organizations and individuals in order to have open space and natural habitats preserved and or managed.

b. Bio-Diversity. The Park District will strive for the introduction and maintenance of naturalized areas within our parks for their many benefits to all forms of life. By incorporating biodiversity into our park system we can educate the community as well as foster a culture of

conservation. The park district will strive to use native planting and a mixture of tree species throughout the park system for best results. Additionally, the Park District will designate specific areas for native plantings.

c. Park & Facility Design and Construction. The Park District will adequately plan and construct using the latest available information for new and renovated open space areas and facilities. Whenever possible, these projects will not negatively impact the environment. The District will strive to conserve soil, water and energy resources, and protect indoor and outdoor air quality whenever practical.

d. Energy Resource Management. The Park District will continually upgrade utilities in a financially responsible way to improve efficiencies in energy use and seek alternative energy sources.

e. Tree Management. The Tree Management Policy is intended to facilitate the Park District's mission, recognizing the immense value of its trees, which provide residents and visitors to our village with beauty, shade, cooling and enhanced air quality, as well as reduction of storm water run-off and atmospheric carbon dioxide. Trees are the only asset in our park system that increases in value with age as other infrastructure components lose value with age. Fundamental to the Park District's tree management policy is the setting of specific strategies to enhance the long-term value of our trees and the tree inventory is the basis for developing these strategies. The Park District will strive to maintain a healthy tree system which includes pruning, inoculation, protection and replacement. Additionally, the Park District will keep an inventory of all trees within its system and provide an annual report to the Park Board.

f. Integrated Pest Management Program. The Park District recognizes the importance of both safe and attractive parks and open space and has established a balanced Integrated Pest Management Program. This program utilizes cultural methods that include:

- Selecting appropriate plant species and their proper location.
- Use of preventative maintenance procedures.
- Promoting early detection of problems
- Utilizing natural control methods, where possible
- Testing for better application methods
- Minimizing overall pesticide use

It is the policy of the Park District of Oak Park that Integrated Pest Management (IPM) will be used to prevent and control pest problems in all parks and facilities maintained by the District. The principles of IPM require that non-chemical methods of pest control be given preference over chemical controls and the least hazardous chemical controls be given preference over other chemical controls. The goal of IPM is the reduction of chemical pesticides used in outdoor landscapes and indoor facilities. IPM usually results in a graduated response to any potential

problem, with natural control methods being employed first and chemical pesticides used only as a last resort. In the park setting, IPM has become standard practice for many public agencies, which must consider the health of patrons, including young children and people with chemical sensitivities. Instead of relying on pesticides as the first choice for managing pest problems, IPM uses a hierarchy of pest control methods to maintain pest populations at or below levels determined by park management.

g. Green Operations. The Park District will strive to incorporate green cleaning products and practices within the daily operations where possible. When possible products that carry the Green Seal's GS-37 shall be used in both public and employee areas. Specific language for environmentally safe and sensitive products shall be included in RFP documents when appropriate. The District shall strive to purchase products for use in facility and park operations to minimize negative environmental impact. Contract award will be considered with a 15% premium for green products when considering lowest responsive and responsible bidder.

h. Recycle & Reuse. The Park District will reduce the amount of material going into landfills by recycling paper, cardboard, aluminum and glass whenever and wherever in the park system it is reasonably possible and by composting landscaping waste. The Park District engages the community with carry in/carry out.

i. Sports Fields. The Park District will encourage all of our affiliate users to exercise the philosophy of "Carry In / Carry Out" at all playing fields. By trying to be more conscious about generating less waste, using more reusable containers, increasing recycling, assuming responsibility for the trash we make and taking better care of our parks we improve the experience for all users. The waste minimization program's success depends on the cooperation of all coaches, players and families.

j. Festival Theater. Working with the Park District, Festival Theater will carry in/carry out with announcements beginning and the ending of performances as well as with signage on trash receptacles.

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