

- 4.07 Environmental Policy Statement - The Homewood-Flossmoor Park District acknowledges its obligation to serve as an environmental role model to the Homewood-Flossmoor community through the business of the district and the conduct of its employees. The district is committed to promoting and creating programs that encourage sound environmental practices and conservation.

Personnel at all levels are directed to make sound environmental practices a matter of continuing and mutual concern, equal in importance with all other operational considerations. Every employee is charged with the responsibility of supporting and cooperating with the environmental program outlined in this policy. Adherence to this policy will be considered, where applicable, an important measure in the yearly evaluation of Park District employees.

Policy Goals

- a. Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
Reduce, reuse and recycle are the basics of any environmental program. Reduce is our highest priority, as it conserves natural resources and eliminates materials from the waste-stream. Reuse is the secondary use of materials in their original forms. Recycling turns materials that would otherwise become waste into valuable resources.
- b. Purchase and Use of Environmentally Safe and Sensitive Products
The Park District will strive to purchase products for facility use and park operations that minimize negative environmental impacts, taking into consideration product production, potential toxicity, use, packaging, safety, storage, disposal and cost.
- c. Conserve Natural Resources
The Park District will seek and implement programs to conserve natural resources, while researching the use of new, energy-conserving technologies.
- d. Preserve Natural Ecosystems
The Park District will protect and restore natural communities whenever possible, while promoting the acquisition and preservation of open space.
- e. Actively Promote Public Education of Environmental Issues
The Park District will provide education and training to employees and patrons that enhance appreciation of the natural environment and promote increased awareness, lifestyle choices, and an overall commitment to preserving our natural resources.

Action Plan

- a. Establish an environmental committee with the responsibilities to conduct a yearly review of the policy, establish and meet short-term and long-term goals, monitor policy compliance, maintain periodic reports and submit to the Board of Commissioners a yearly written progress report.
- b. Alter new employee orientations to include a basic introduction to the environmental policy, including the responsibilities of individual employees.
- c. Schedule periodic environmental in-service training for all employees.
- d. Investigate possibilities for external audits.

- e. Create individual facility/department-specific policies that use the environmental policy as a general guideline.
- f. Consider environmental initiatives when developing departmental budgets.

Suggested Actions and Best Practices

a. Reduce-Reuse-Recycle

- Reduce paper use by making two-sided copies, eliminating multiple subscriptions, reducing mailings, printing only necessary documents and keeping all mailing lists current.
- Reduce the use of printer ink by choosing ink-saving fonts and using lower print quality where applicable.
- Work toward a paperless Park District by encouraging the use of electronic program guides, registrations, confirmations and receipts.
- Reduce the use of disposable products by staff and vendors (paper plates, cups, plastic bottles and washroom products, etc.).
- Eliminate the use of Styrofoam products by staff, vendors, and park and facility users. Include this specification in bidding documents and rental agreements.
- Reduce the use of and begin to replace pressurized spray products and fluorocarbons.
- Reuse organic landscape waste by mulching leaves in place, returning clippings to the turf, chipping brush and using the wood chips as landscape mulch, and composting.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive in-house recycle program to include glass, plastic, paper, cardboard, pallets, cans, metal, oil, antifreeze, batteries, electronics, etc.
- Install recycle bins in all parks and facilities, scheduling the proper removal and recycling of the contents.
- Encourage all users of facilities and parks to recycle.
- Require all contractual vendors to adhere to the Park District's recycling guidelines.
- Discourage the release of balloons and the use of helium at all parks and facilities.
- Incorporate environmental considerations in bid documents.
- Include recycling as a part of contracts with food vendors.

b. Purchase and Use of Environmentally Safe and Sensitive Products

- Purchase products with recycled content.
- Purchase products made from renewable resources.
- Encourage conservative use of paper, wood, and biodegradable products.
- Minimize purchase of petroleum based products (paint, fertilizer, pesticides, plastics, etc.).
- Purchase products in bulk or with minimal packaging.
- Only purchase 'Energy Star' appliances and make energy usage a major consideration in all electronic purchases.
- Avoid the use of chlorine-bleached paper products.
- Inventory all hazardous materials and investigate 'green' alternatives.
- Eliminate the use of products derived from rain forests or other threatened ecosystems.
- Purchase environmentally friendly cleaning products.
- Flooring should be non-toxic and preferably made of recycled or renewable materials.
- Where possible, batteries should be rechargeable.
- Purchase safer snow-melt products.
- Develop facility-specific recommended product-purchase lists.

- Properly dispose all fluorescent lighting products.

c. Conserve Natural Resources

- Schedule periodic audits of buildings for energy efficiency. Any deficiencies found during the audits should be rectified to prevent wasting energy.
- Install programmable thermostats in all buildings. Establish summer and winter temperature guidelines for daytime, evening, overnight and weekends.
- Retrofit all indoor and outdoor lighting with energy efficient bulbs.
- Set standards and schedules for proper maintenance of HVAC equipment and appliances.
- Insulate hot water pipes and water heaters. Set water heater thermostats to lowest reasonable temperature.
- Set district-wide standards for turning off lights, computers, electronic equipment, etc. Unplug unused phone chargers and disable unnecessary electronics (clocks, LCD read-outs, etc.).
- Consider alternative energy sources like passive lighting, solar, wind, and geo-thermal for new building construction, major remodeling, and retrofitting existing structures.
- Consider fuel efficiency when making vehicle purchases. Consider alternate-fuel, hybrids and electric vehicles.
- Reduce fuel usage by:
 1. Eliminating prolonged idling and turning off all vehicles when not in use at all parks and facilities.
 2. Car pooling
 3. Efficient routing
 4. Eliminating trips for lunch and breaks
 5. Mowing only when needed
 6. Selecting vehicles with lowest fuel usage that will accomplish desired task
 7. Encouraging bicycle use and walking
 8. Maintaining equipment for maximum efficiency
 9. Reducing fuel used in commuting by encouraging employees to live near the Park District
- Consider exhaust emissions as purchasing criteria for vehicles and equipment. Establish standards for all equipment and vehicles on the allowance of emissions.
- Switch to bio-diesel and bio 2 cycle oil.
- Limit the use of phosphorous fertilizers.
- Install automatic faucets and other water saving devices.
- Install 'forced-air' hand dryers to reduce the use of paper products.
- Host hazardous material or unwanted prescription drug turn-in events.
- Install vegetative buffer strips around all unprotected lakes and streams to reduce the amount of pollutants entering the water and to provide habitat for wildlife.
- Develop water, energy, and hazardous chemical conservation plans for pools. Update and standardize equipment using the latest technology.
- Recycle equipment wash-water.
- Properly store all chemicals and hazardous materials.
- Install rain-water barrels at facilities for small area irrigation.

d. Preserve Natural Ecosystems

- Utilize native species for parks and golf landscapes. Locate plants in appropriate habitats, i.e. trees that evolved in flood plains should be planted in wet areas.

- Develop a plan to control or eliminate non-native, exotic plants and animals.
 - Continue the ongoing tree planting program utilizing native species from the Park District's recommended tree list.
 - Obtain and maintain Audubon certification.
 - Establish a comprehensive integrated pest management, (IPM), program for all Park District green spaces.
 - Establish native-plant demonstration gardens with interpretative signs as example landscapes for Park District residents.
 - Conduct environmental impact studies for all major construction projects.
 - Where possible, develop parks utilizing and enhancing native ecosystems such as prairies, wetlands, woodlands, savannahs, etc. and provide appropriate recreational access to and public awareness of such restored and protected sites.
 - Where possible, create no-mow or low-maintenance areas in new or existing parks and convert to native vegetation.
- e. Actively Promote Public Education of Environmental Issues
- Establish an ongoing environmental committee.
 - Develop PR program to inform and educate the public and promote the Park District's effort.
 - Make environmental stewardship a part of contracts with park users, sports leagues, and for special events, etc.
 - Develop staff training programs with regularly scheduled events.
 - Develop recreation and Irons Oaks programs such as:
 1. How-to classes: landscapes, composting, energy efficient homes, etc.
 2. Summer conservation camps
 3. Volunteer conservation events
 4. Park Pride, Earth Day tie-ins
 5. Environmental tours of facilities
 6. Field trips