

## **CHAPTER FOUR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

### ***4.1 - Policy Statement***

The District is committed to developing and using sound environmental policies, best practices, and opportunities. The following environmental policy statements will be used to guide our decisions as we continue to develop environmental action plans for the future. The policies are based on the District's Mission and Benefits in the **Board Policy Manual: Chapter 2**.

1. **Purchase and Use of Environmentally Safe Products:** The District's support of the environment includes a commitment to the purchase, use, and disposal of products and materials in a manner that will best utilize natural resources and minimize any negative impact on the environment, taking into consideration the effects of product production, use, storage, and disposal.
2. **Protection of Air, Water, Soil and Wildlife:** The District actively seeks and implements ways to conserve and protect water and soil, enhance air quality, limit the production and release of damaging pollutants, and protect wildlife.
3. **Use of Energy Resources:** Staff actively seek and implement ways to conserve energy resources and investigate methods of applying alternative energy technologies including considering sustainable design and construction practices utilizing products with longer documented life spans, less waste and renewable materials.
4. **Reduction and Handling of Waste:** The District supports environmental awareness by encouraging recycling and waste management in its business practices and operating procedures. The District is dedicated to reducing the amount of waste that is generated and removed by the agency and to handling hazardous and all other wastes according to lawful and safe procedures.
5. **Open Space Planning and Preservation:** Based on Federal, State and local regulations, the District will protect and restore indigenous natural communities such as grasslands, woodlands and wetlands, and promote the reclamation, acquisition, preservation and management of other open space areas.
6. **Environmental Education and Interpretation:** The District provides education and interpretation opportunities for staff and the public to increase appreciation for the natural world and promote environmentally conscious lifestyles.

### **Purchase and Use of Environmentally Safe and Sensitive Products**

#### ***4.2 - Financial Analysis***

When evaluating the feasibility of implementing any of the guidelines outlined in this Policy or a "green" building project, staff will conduct a cost-benefit analysis as a means of evaluating all of the potential costs and revenues that may be generated if the project is completed. The outcome of the analysis will

determine whether the policy or project is financially feasible at the present time or if another alternative should be pursued.

#### **4.3 - Purchase of Environmentally Safe Products**

To foster the production, use and disposal of environmentally friendly products, staff continue to educate themselves and seek to utilize environmentally friendly products whenever available and cost justified. Examples of methods for reducing the use of non-environmentally friendly products are as follows:

- purchase products with recycled content wherever practical for use in recreation programs, offices, park maintenance and development projects;
- encourage the conservative use of paper and wood in place of plastics and/or other non-biodegradable and non-renewable products;
- reduce the use of Styrofoam products, petroleum based products (i.e. inks, stains and plastics), and chlorine-bleached paper products; and
- investigate and use environmentally sensitive alternatives to hazardous materials including cleaners, paints, solvents, sealants, wood preservatives, and office products (i.e. products with reduced toxicity and low volatile organic compounds).

#### **4.4 - Clean Fuel Fleet Program**

New vehicle purchases comply with the provisions of the State of Illinois Clean Fuel Fleet Program. When replacing vehicles and rolling stock, staff should consider recent trends and technology available for alternative fuels such as propane and natural gas and alternative energy technologies such as electrically powered and hybrid vehicles.

#### **4.5 - Specifications for Bidding**

The District will integrate the purchase of environmentally safe products into District bidding documents as appropriate.

### **Protection of Air, Water, Soil and Wildlife**

#### **4.6 - Air Quality (Amended December 2014)**

The District is committed to protecting and improving the environment as it relates to improving air quality including:

- voluntarily partnering with other organizations that pledge to preserve air quality on Ozone Action Days by avoiding activities that will contribute to air pollution;
- creating restrictions on smoking as outlined in Chapter 5: Section 5.29 – Smoking;
- reducing vehicle emissions through regular tune-ups, turning off vehicles when not in use, and other applicable vehicle maintenance; and
- monitoring and removing asbestos.

#### **4.7 - Water Quality**

In Chapter 5 of this Manual (User Policies for Parks and Facilities), the District prohibits the dumping of injurious substances or materials into water managed by the District, City of Elmhurst, or DuPage County (see Chapter 5: Section 5.24 – Dumping, Polluting and Littering).

The District also evaluates the impact of cleaners, solvents, snow melt products, and other products on water sources and investigates environmentally sensitive alternatives. To maintain the water quality of the lagoon at Eldridge Park, staff implement an “integrated maintenance” plan including aeration, manual cleanup, water testing, and appropriate and necessary chemical treatments (for algae and weed control) as needed.

#### **4.8 - Water Conservation (Amended December 2014)**

The District will develop water conservation plans for facilities, where appropriate, and retrofit all facilities with water conservation hardware, where practical, along with determining a leak detection and correction program.

#### **4.9 - Treatment of Wildlife**

In Chapter 5 of this Manual (User Policies for Parks and Facilities), the District protects wildlife including prohibiting persons from bringing a device or animal that may be used to hunt, catch or trap animals or birds, from giving or offering wildlife any harmful substance, or from disturbing or intentionally interfering with any wildlife (see Chapter 5: Section 5.50 – Attracting, Trapping, Catching, or Releasing Animals).

#### **4.10 - Gas Tank Monitoring (Amended December 2014)**

The District monitors the underground fuel storage tanks at Sugar Creek Golf Course for leaks and removes and replaces defective equipment as required by State law. Fuel for the District's park and facility operations is purchased through the City of Elmhurst.

#### **4.11 - Integrated Pest Management (Amended December 2014)**

The use of pesticides requires an increased sensitivity to the application of chemicals to control pests on District property. While providing pest free and attractive parks is an important part of the District's mission, it is not the only consideration as the District weighs the environmental impact of pesticides. All pesticides, whether organic or inorganic, may be hazardous to people and the environment. Therefore, the District uses pesticides as a last resort to address pest problems and has adopted an integrated pest management program.

Integrated Pest Management is defined as "the vital use of multiple tactics in a compatible manner in order to maintain pest populations below levels that cause economic or unacceptable aesthetic injury without posing a hazard to humans, domestic animals or other non-target life forms." The District currently controls pests in turf areas, trees and shrubs, natural areas, the Eldridge Park lagoon, greenhouses, the Conservatory, and various floral gardens around the community. The Integrated Pest Management procedures used in these areas include the following components: selection of plant species indigenous to this area or with few known pest problems, proper plant maintenance (fertilizer and water use, cultural practices), early detection of problems through monitoring and identification decision-making process, an environmental risk reduction system, a cost effective control procedure, and site-specific control remedies. By keeping turf, flowers, plants, trees, and natural areas healthy through the proper use of fertilizers, water and cultural management practices, the District reduces the need for pesticides.

*The Lawn Care Products Application and Notice Act (1994):* Since 1994, the District has complied with the State's pesticide handling requirements that apply to the loading and storage of lawn care chemicals and are meant to protect the applicator, public, and environment. To meet these requirements, the District contracts out the spraying of large, open areas to a qualified commercial pesticide application company. The applicator is required to follow the District's strict application guidelines as well as the State's regulations. The treatment of small areas is still performed in-house by State licensed operators. As part of this process, the Department of Agriculture and the District requires that...

- all persons applying the chemicals be licensed by the State of Illinois;
- all chemicals be applied according to label instructions;
- treated areas be posted immediately after spraying and remain posted for 24 hours; and
- persons that live adjacent to the property being treated be notified prior to spraying, if requested.

In addition, the following precautionary steps are also taken...

- every seasonal brochure includes information about the District's spraying operation;
- any residents that request notification are delivered a spray schedule; and
- spray applications are scheduled during periods when fewer park users are present.

*Chemical Safety:* Safety is the primary concern at all levels of pesticide application. The chemicals must be stored, transported, mixed and sprayed in a safe manner.

- a) Storage - Chemicals are stored in a fireproof room that is vented to the outside as per the law. If a fire or chemical spill occurs in the room, the hazardous chemicals can be contained. The storage of chemicals and pesticides should be minimized where possible.

- b) Transportation - Chemicals are transported in closed, clearly labeled containers and are moved in small quantities.
- c) Mixing - Mixing is completed according to the *Lawn Care Products Application & Notice Act of 1994*. Sugar Creek Golf Course has a rinsate storage area and mixes chemicals.
- d) Chemical Types - Organic chemicals differ from inorganics in that they contain the element carbon. As such, they are no more or less toxic than inorganic chemicals and must be treated as hazardous chemicals. Wherever possible, naturally occurring controls (the use of one species to control another) should be identified and used (e.g. *Bacillus Thurengensis* for caterpillar control).
- e) Record Keeping - All applications are recorded on log sheets that indicate the amount and type of chemical applied, weather conditions, and the applicator's name. All log sheets are filed and stored.

## **Use of Energy Resources**

### **4.12 - Conservation of Resources**

The District strives to implement, when practical, the following recommended practices to minimize pollution while prolonging the lifespan of non-renewable resources until other alternative and less harmful energy technologies are available:

- plant shade trees near buildings to reduce energy consumption due to summer air conditioning and around large paved areas (i.e. parking lots) to help reduce heat build-up and convection;
- 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, where cost effective;
- conduct energy audits and retrofit buildings with energy saving devices when cost effective;
- retrofit outdoor and indoor lighting with energy efficient bulbs;
- properly maintain refrigerators and air conditioners for more energy efficient cooling;
- maintain minimum and maximum thermostat temperature settings for all facilities and reduce heating and cooling usage when buildings are unoccupied;
- insulate hot water heaters and pipes and reduce temperature settings;
- use alternative fuels, where appropriate, such as propane and natural gas; and
- support the use of transportation alternatives such as bicycles, mass transit, car-pooling and walking and provide incentives for staff and park/facility users.

## **Reduction and Handling of Waste**

### **4.13 - Reduction of Waste**

The District's goal is to reduce waste through the following means when practical:

- Investigate source reduction of waste, including purchasing in bulk, reducing excess use of paper, and choosing reusable and recyclable products;
- Reduce paper use by sharing subscriptions, making double-sided reports, reducing junk mail, and using memo routing slips and keeping mailing lists current; and
- Investigate ways to reuse office, program and maintenance/construction materials that are typically discarded.

### **4.14 - Recycling**

The District has several recycling programs in place including:

*Office Waste:* Office waste is comingled and collected in blue bins at all District offices and collected daily by custodial staff in recycling bins placed at strategic locations around the District.

*Aluminum Cans and Plastic Bottles:* Aluminum can and plastic bottle recycling collection points are located in all District offices, concession stands, and adjacent to the coin-operated soda machines and placed in strategic locations around the District.

*Vehicle Batteries, Motor Oil, and Automotive By-Products:* Since the City of Elmhurst performs vehicle and equipment services for the District, City mechanics recycle batteries, motor oil, and other automotive by-products in appropriate City locations at the Maintenance Facility.

*Computer and Cell Phone Disposal:* The District recycles electronic components at an approved recycling center for processing. Cell phones that have hardware failure or are cycled out of the District's inventory are donated to a local non-profit agency.

*Landscape Waste:* Staff chip appropriately sized logs, limbs, and brush and use the generated mulch in shrub beds and around trees throughout the parks. Weeds, shrub clippings and debris that cannot be chipped is disposed of in appropriate landscape waste dumpsters.

*Household batteries:* Batteries are collected at various locations throughout the District and are recycled at an appropriate facility.

## **Open Space Planning and Preservation**

### ***4.15 - Open Space Planning and Preservation***

To protect open space, the District has the following goals:

- develop and implement plans for the re-establishment and/or restoration of native wetlands, grasslands and woodland ecosystems and other wildlife habitats;
- provide appropriate recreational access to and enhance public awareness of such restored and protected natural sites;
- work with commercial or private land owners in an effort to acquire or otherwise ensure the use of these lands for open space;
- develop relationships with land trusts and preservation/conservation organizations to assist in open space and natural habitat preservation;
- eliminate or control exotic and invasive plant and animal species that inhibit ecological diversity and integrity, and abide by existing laws to protect rare, threatened and endangered plant and animal species;
- consider establishment of prairie-style landscaping in open space areas that are not directly a part of active recreation features and utilize low-mow grass mixes in non-sports field areas to reduce the areas to be mowed;
- facilitate local efforts to establish greenways; and
- continue an aggressive tree planting and replacement program to create greater shade areas and reforest park areas in the community.

## **Environmental Education and Interpretation**

### ***4.16 - Employee Environmental Work Group (Amended December 2014)***

The District's permanent environmental work group is comprised of staff with the maximum opportunity to implement green practices. The purpose of the work group is to investigate, recommend and promote sustainability within the Park District.

### ***4.17 - Environmental Education***

*Staff:* The District provides staff training to new and current employees on the commitment of the District to the environment, including the guidelines of this policy and information about environmentally conscious lifestyles and workplace choices and habits.

*Community:* Park District staff provide environmental education programs for park and facility users in accordance with the guidelines of this policy.

*Vendors:* Contractors and vendors must demonstrate an effort to comply with the District's adopted environmental policies.

#### **4.18 - Environmental Awareness**

The District integrates into its public relations program information regarding environmental efforts and environmental lifestyle information. Additionally, the District assists park users with interpreting and respecting natural resources via programs, presentations, signage and brochures.

#### **4.19 - Community Organizations (Amended December 2014)**

The District participates in and partners with local agencies, organizations and coalitions whose missions it is to improve the environment. Current and past organizations include Elmhurst Cool Cities, Chicago Wilderness and Clean Air Counts.