



IAPD Best of Best Green Practices Narrative

In 2009 the Wheaton Park District established a Green Team which led to a Board adopted Environmental Policy comprised of six actions including:

1. Purchase and use Environmentally Safe and Sensitive Products
2. Wise Use and Protection of Air, Water, Soil and Wildlife
3. Wise Use of Energy Resources
4. Reduction and Handling of Waste
5. Open Space Planning and Preservation
6. Environmental Education and Interpretation

The Wheaton Park District (WPD) had implemented many of these practices long before 2009, but the establishment of the Green Team and the Environmental Policy has certainly helped to reinforce these efforts and created a bench mark for future progress. The Wheaton Park District is proud to be a leader in the community of green initiatives.

Long before the green movement began, The WPD has encouraged people to consider their environment. Since 1981, we have been providing environmental education to the community through programs at the Lincoln Marsh. Today this natural area comprises over 150 acres of wetlands, woodlands and prairies. School District 200 has incorporated the wetlands education program into their regular curriculum and over 1,000 students participate in that program alone. The Lincoln Marsh office was recently recognized by The Conservation Foundation's Conservation@Home program for its green practices.

The WPD includes green practices in the construction and renovation of its facilities. Two projects of note are the permeable paver parking lot at Cosley Zoo and the renovations at Northside Park. Parking improvements at Cosley include a rain garden in the middle of the existing parking lot and 14,500 square feet of new permeable pavement. Signage will educate the public about these green practices.

Northside Park, which was originally constructed by the WPA in the 1930's, was in need of improvements. Central to the renovations is the establishment of nine acres of naturalized buffer around the 15 acre lagoon. This stabilizes the shoreline, filters pollutants from runoff, increases infiltration, creates habitat, and improves the water quality. An additional benefit of the project includes improved access at specific points which allows the public to enjoy and appreciate nature. Plans are being developed to convert much of the asphalt parking and roads in the park to permeable pavement.

Nestled within thousands of acres of forest preserve lands, the Arrowhead Golf Course is another example of the district's green practices. The east end of the course is integral to a massive storm water project that provides capacity for much of the south end of Wheaton. Ten acres have been designated as no-mow, allowing reduced consumption of fuel and fertilizers, increased wildlife



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habitat, and an aesthetically pleasing backdrop for the course. At the clubhouse, the restaurant and banquets department do their part by providing biodegradable take home containers and recycling.

The WPD is working hard to reduce the environmental impact of its vehicles and other equipment. A vehicle idling policy was adopted several years ago to reduce fuel consumption and air pollution. Equipment is maintained regularly to keep it running efficiently. Fuel economy is tracked as a benchmark ensuring improvement with new purchases. Biodiesel fuels the mowers, trucks and other diesel powered equipment.

There are a number of smaller efforts as well. Staff has worked hard to improve recycling throughout the district. A paper recycling bin placed in the parking lot of the Community Center has saved over 13 tons of paper from being placed in landfills. The WPD has helped to coordinate a very successful native plant sale for the past 10 years through cooperative called the Landscape Diversity Committee. This group has also helped to organize classes about native plants, rain barrels and composting. This past year the Green Team worked with an Eagle Scout to make worm composting bins to place in various facilities including the pre-schools.

Beyond the day to day operations, WPD has begun to create a culture of thinking green not only at work, but at home and wherever we go. Our website features tips for being green and the Green Team emails staff with monthly suggestions. Conservation at Home training was offered to employees and several employees report they are taking the practices they learn at work and incorporating them in their everyday life.