

PARKS & ILLINOIS RECREATION WEB EXTRA!

March/April 2006

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD For Park & Recreation Agencies

Instructions

This is a self-evaluative tool. Please look over each category and determine who within the agency would best be able to answer the questions related to that category. Some questions are repeated in different sections. All questions require a simple “YES” or “NO” response. All “YES” responses score 1 point, unless indicated at the end of the question. A “NO” response scores no points on that question.

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD – GENERAL

| # | | YES | NO | POINTS |
|---|---|-----|----|--------|
| 1 | Does your agency have a board-approved environmental policy or set of guidelines that helps it become more environmentally responsible? (2 points) | | | |
| 2 | Do all staff members receive an orientation to your agency’s environmental policy? | | | |
| 3 | Does your agency offer training and reinforcement of the policy or guidelines? (2 points) | | | |
| 4 | Do staff members participate in an agency environmental committee and/or are there designated staff members to review, update and/or enforce environmental policy? (2 points) | | | |
| 5 | Does (or has) your agency made use of IPRA’s <i>Model Environmental Policy</i> and/or <i>Environmental Toolkit</i> ? | | | |

TOTAL POINTS _____

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD – ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE

| # | | YES | NO | POINTS |
|---|--|-----|----|--------|
| 1 | Does your agency dedicate funds in its operations and/or capital budgets to support achievement of environmental goals (e.g., recycling, energy audits, natural area acquisition, landscape restoration, environmentally friendly purchasing, etc.)? (2 points) | | | |
| 2 | Does your agency apply for grant funds for environmental initiatives (e.g., recycling, environmental education, natural areas restoration, alternative fuel use)? | | | |
| 3 | Are audit procedures in place to evaluate positive enduring effects and to examine the costs of environmental impacts, as well as costs and efficiency, of various plans and programs following implementation? | | | |
| 4 | Does your agency endeavor to purchase products and services using E.P.A.’s Environmentally Preferred Products (EPP) program, Green Seal.org or a similar set of guidelines to assist you in the purchase of environmentally preferred products and services? (2 points) | | | |
| 5 | Does your agency seek to identify vendors of environmentally friendly products via the IPRA Cooperative Purchase or similar program? | | | |
| 6 | Does your agency participate in collaborative environmental efforts with other public or private organizations? | | | |

TOTAL POINTS _____

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD – FACILITY MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

| # | | YES | NO | POINTS |
|----|--|-----|----|--------|
| 1 | Does your agency provide opportunities for staff and patrons to recycle waste products in office areas, classrooms, and public areas, including lobbies, facilities, etc.? (2 points) | | | |
| 2 | Are recycling containers visible, well marked and easy to locate? | | | |
| 3 | Are staff and the public encouraged to recycle via policies, training and memoranda? | | | |
| 4 | Does your agency make conscious efforts within all departments to purchase products made from recycled and recyclable content? (2 points) | | | |
| 5 | Does your agency encourage the use of electronic communication as a means of conserving paper? | | | |
| 6 | Is staff encouraged to use duplexing or double -sided copying of documents? | | | |
| 7 | Are outside concessionaries required to minimize the use of disposable products and provide recycling for patrons? (2 points) | | | |
| 8 | Does the agency seek to avoid the use of chlorine-bleached paper for printing needs? | | | |
| 9 | Do restrooms and locker rooms have water saving devices (low flow showers and toilets and/or motion activated faucets)? | | | |
| 10 | Do restrooms have motion activated hand dryers in lieu of paper towels? | | | |
| 11 | Does your agency conduct energy audits? | | | |
| 12 | Is energy-efficient lighting used (fluorescent, compact fluorescent, motion-activated lighting in restrooms)? | | | |
| 13 | Does or has your agency included energy efficiency as a specification when purchasing or replacing major appliances? | | | |
| 14 | Are hot water heaters and hot water pipes insulated? | | | |
| 15 | Do facility HVAC systems include energy saving features such as min/max settings designed to reduce use during down time, interior air recycling, regular cleaning and efficiency inspections, etc.? | | | |
| 16 | Does your agency have an integrated pest management program to reduce the use of pesticides within facilities? (2 points) | | | |
| 17 | Does your agency promote the use of environment friendly, low toxicity and/or fragrance-free cleaning products? (2 points) | | | |
| 18 | Does your agency seek to minimize the use of petroleum-based cleaners, solvents, and inks? | | | |
| 19 | Does your agency seek to purchase office supplies, carpeting and furniture with low VOCs (volatile organic compounds) as a way to improve and protect indoor air quality? | | | |
| 20 | Do any agency facilities make use of alternative energy systems to provide energy and/or conserve energy, such as passive or active solar systems, wind energy, or geothermal energy? (2 points) | | | |

TOTAL POINTS _____

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD – FLEET MAINTENANCE

| # | | YES | NO | POINTS |
|---|--|-----|----|--------|
| 1 | Does your agency perform regular engine tune-ups and scheduled maintenance of motorized vehicle fleets? | | | |
| 2 | Does your agency properly dispose of all vehicle fluids and engine parts? | | | |
| 3 | Does your agency properly use, store and dispose of hazardous materials according to material safety data sheets and/or manufacturers labels? | | | |
| 4 | Does your agency have a safety policy and training procedure in place regarding the handling of hazardous materials? | | | |
| 5 | Does your agency provide the proper work environment with appropriate ventilation and safety gear for employees when handling hazardous materials? | | | |
| 6 | Does your agency have a program to conserve energy (e.g., fuel for vehicles, water and electricity)? | | | |
| 7 | Does your agency actively fund or apply for grants that promote and provide the means for the use of clean energy (e.g., bio-diesel, E-85, LPG, etc.)? (2 points) | | | |
| 8 | As part of your equipment asset replacement program, has your agency replaced or does your agency have plans to replace vehicles with alternative fuel and/or hybrid vehicles? (2 points) | | | |
| 9 | Does your agency limit the use and refueling of, or not use at all, gas powered equipment and vehicles during ozone action days? | | | |

TOTAL POINTS _____

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD – PARKS & NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

| # | | YES | NO | POINTS |
|----|--|-----|----|--------|
| 1 | Does your agency's operating budget contain regular funding for natural resource management? (2 points) | | | |
| 2 | Does your agency have a maintenance and management plan in place for natural areas? | | | |
| 3 | Does your agency follow natural resource management best environmental practices in attempting to improve natural areas, control exotic species and increase biodiversity? (2 points) | | | |
| 4 | Does your agency try to reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides in parks by means of utilizing drought and disease resistant native plant species and eliminating mowing in some areas? | | | |
| 5 | Does your agency provide a no-mow buffer of native vegetation around water bodies to reduce erosion and non-point pollution and to deter Canada Geese from nesting? | | | |
| 6 | Does your agency practice soil and landscape management techniques to control exotic species establishment and prevent erosion runoff? | | | |
| 7 | Is landscaping around facilities designed with energy conservation in mind (e.g., windbreaks, and/or shade trees along south exposures, and/or drought tolerant native plants)? (2 points) | | | |
| 8 | Does your agency plant trees, shrubs and evergreens in strategic locations in and around paved areas to provide shade and wind buffers? | | | |
| 9 | Does your agency use alternative snowmelt products and equipment, and/or modify application rates to limit/reduce the impact on the surrounding area? | | | |
| 10 | Does your agency have an integrated pest management program to reduce the use of pesticides within parks? | | | |
| 11 | Does your agency use alternative and/or biological pest control practices in place of traditional chemical solutions (e.g., purple loosestrife, beetles, dormant oils)? (2 points) | | | |
| 12 | Does your agency actively fund or apply for grants that improve water quality and bank stabilization in wetlands, ponds, and streams? | | | |
| 13 | Does your agency distribute educational pamphlets that explain natural resource management practices? | | | |
| 14 | Does your agency use prairie or woodland restoration or bio-swales to reduce maintenance costs, control erosion or promote wildlife habitat? | | | |
| 15 | Does your agency have areas landscaped with native plants within golf courses or other more traditional park landscapes? | | | |
| 16 | Does your agency incorporate native planting schemes into the landscape of your offices, parks and facilities? | | | |
| 17 | Does your agency properly use, store and dispose of hazardous materials according to material safety data sheets and/or manufacturers' labels? | | | |
| 18 | Is your agency responsive to private landowner activities that impact your natural area management (encroachment, dumping, private waterway ownership, etc.)? | | | |

TOTAL POINTS _____

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD – PLANNING & OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

| # | | YES | NO | POINTS |
|----------|---|------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1 | Does your agency seek to identify and acquire remnant prairies, wetlands, streams, rivers, floodplains, greenways, etc. in order to protect/provide habitats for flora and fauna and/or to prevent erosion? (2 points) | | | |
| 2 | Does your agency follow natural resource management best environmental practices in attempting to improve natural areas and increase biodiversity? (2 points) | | | |
| 3 | Does your agency provide access for the public to recreate in natural/preserved areas using boardwalks, trails, fishing piers, platforms, etc.? | | | |
| 4 | Does your agency increase public awareness of natural/preserved areas with interpretive signs, educational brochures/posters and programs? | | | |
| 5 | Does your agency create/maintain relationships with other municipalities, land conservation organizations and private landowners to ensure community-supported protection of open spaces? | | | |
| 6 | Is your agency committed to incorporating best management practices when designing park property including the use of native landscaping, rain gardens, bio-swales, etc.? | | | |
| 7 | Does your agency actively fund or apply for grants that improve water quality and bank stabilization in wetlands, ponds, streams, etc.? | | | |
| 8 | Does your agency partner with other organizations and/or local developers in order to provide information to prospective home buyers on living around natural areas or man-made detection sites? | | | |
| 9 | Does your agency’s planning department and natural resource maintenance staff work together on site plans for traditional parks and facilities landscapes? | | | |

TOTAL POINTS _____

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT CARD – PROGRAMMING

| # | | YES | NO | POINTS |
|----|---|-----|----|--------|
| 1 | Does your agency own and operate a nature center? If not, does your agency provide regular nature education or nature interpretive programming for residents within its parks or facilities? (2 points) | | | |
| 2 | Does your agency partner with local groups to provide specific programming (e.g., Audubon Society, local garden clubs, Master Gardeners, etc.)? | | | |
| 3 | Does your agency provide programs for the public regarding environmental lifestyle choices/environmental living (e.g., native or organic gardening, living lightly, composting, etc.) | | | |
| 4 | Are educational programs, pamphlets, news articles or cable television utilized to inform residents and homeowner associations of alternative landscape options that would help resolve issues such as algal blooms and excessive goose droppings on lawns? | | | |
| 5 | Do staff members plan projects and purchase supplies using written environmental criteria that might include minimal packaging, recycled and recyclable content, made from renewable resources, etc.? (2 points) | | | |
| 6 | Does your agency provide recycling for facility rentals, special events and outside vendors? | | | |
| 7 | Does your agency have and/or support a volunteer program to aid in land management and/or environmental education? (2 points) | | | |
| 8 | Are program staff provided training and encouragement from supervisors in energy and resource conservation (thermostat settings, lights, recycling, etc.)? | | | |
| 9 | Does your agency actively fund or apply for grants to fund environmental programs or interpretative initiatives? | | | |
| 10 | Do public or special events provide opportunities for vendor and public participation in recycling efforts? | | | |
| 11 | Does your agency clearly communicate its energy conservation program to staff and park/facility users? | | | |

TOTAL POINTS _____

GRAND TOTAL POINTS _____

SCORING (out of a total of 100 possible points)

- 91-100** Your agency is an environmental leader in the field and has reason to be proud.
- 71-90** Your agency is doing a very good job and should keep up the good work. Look at those questions for which you answered NO and develop strategies to address those.
- 51-70** Your agency is doing a good job, certainly more than most public agencies. Look at those questions for which you answered NO, and develop a strategy to address those.
- 31-50** Your agency is doing OK and should be proud of what it has accomplished, but it still has much to work on.
- 30 or less** Your agency has nowhere to go but up in terms of improving its environmental practices.

FINAL QUESTION – Does your agency have a representative on IPRA’s Environmental Policy Committee?

The Environmental Report Card was developed by:

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