

LAKE COUNTY FOREST PRESERVE DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

Policy Purpose

This policy states how the Lake County Forest Preserve District (the “District”) promotes environmental sustainability and responsibility. It is the intent of this policy to: (1) promote environmental sustainability; (2) provide policy direction for employees and volunteers to use in making environmentally responsible decisions regarding District operations and planning; (3) facilitate development of action plans to implement the policy; (4) provide for monitoring and enhancing the effectiveness of the District’s environmental sustainability efforts; and (5) balance fiscal responsibility to District stakeholders while demonstrating environmental leadership.

Section 1: Introduction

Illinois Downstate Forest Preserve District Act (70 ILCS 805)

As a special district formed under state law, the District has the power to acquire and hold lands for “the purpose of protecting and preserving the flora, fauna, and scenic beauties within such district, and to restore, restock, protect and preserve the natural forests and such lands together with their flora and fauna, as nearly as may be, in their natural state and condition, for the purpose of the education, pleasure, and recreation of the public.”

Lake County Forest Preserve District Mission

The District has further defined its specific mission as, “To preserve a dynamic and unique system of natural and cultural resources and to develop innovative education, recreation and cultural opportunities of regional value, while exercising environmental and fiscal responsibility.”

Need For Environmental Sustainability Policy

The District’s Budget Development Policy for Fiscal Year 2008-2009 included the objective of “Develop and implement policy to establish the District as a leader in environmentally sustainable operations.” The District first formed its employee Green Committee in 1993 and has many successful past and current environmental sustainability initiatives, but not an overall policy to guide continued growth of such initiatives. This Environmental Sustainability Policy can provide Board-approved direction for how the District can pursue its mission “while exercising environmental and fiscal responsibility”.

Section 2: Environmental Sustainability Policy Goals

Purchase and Use of Environmentally Safe and Sensitive Products

- Purchase products for use in District facilities and preserve development and operations which minimize negative environmental impacts, taking into consideration the effects of product production, transportation, use, storage and disposal as well as relative product cost, quality and effectiveness.

Conservation and Protection of Air, Water and Soil

- Actively seek and implement ways to conserve and protect water and soil, enhance air quality, and limit the production and release of damaging pollutants.

Use of Energy Resources

- Actively seek and implement ways to conserve energy resources and substantially reduce emissions that adversely impact global climate change, including investigation, cost-benefit analysis, and application of alternative and renewable energy technologies.

Reduction and Handling of Waste

- Reduce waste production, reuse and recycle materials from facility and preserve operations, and handle hazardous and all other wastes according to lawful and safe procedures.

Open Space, Natural Areas and Wildlife Habitat Acquisition, Planning, Restoration and Management

- Prepare and implement master plans and capital improvement projects, and acquire, restore and manage District lands to improve and maintain ecological health of natural habitats, enhance biodiversity, and protect threatened and endangered species.

Environmental Education

- Provide and promote education opportunities for District staff and volunteers and for the public which increase appreciation for the natural world, highlight the connections between people and nature, and promote healthful and environmentally conscious lifestyles.

Section 3: Monitoring of Environmental Policy

The Green Committee shall monitor compliance with the Environmental Sustainability Policy. The Executive Director shall appoint employees to serve as members on this committee, with one representative from each Department.

The Green Committee shall prepare and maintain an Environmental Sustainability Action Plan, which shall be subject to review and final approval by the Executive Director. The Committee shall annually update the plan and report to the Executive Director at the end of each calendar year regarding progress toward goals and objectives outlined in the Action Plan, and make recommendations for future changes to the Environmental Sustainability Action Plan or the Environmental Sustainability Policy. The Executive Director shall inform the Board concerning the results of the annual plan and report.

Section 4: Past and Current Environmental Sustainability Initiatives

- A Green Committee of District employees was formed in 1993 to promote recycling, energy conservation and other environmental sustainability initiatives.
- The District adopted a Green Fleet Policy in October 2007 to meet ambient air quality standards, reduce the fleet's petroleum use and impact on the environment, and control fleet costs.

- The District's Green Printing initiative has shifted to use of soy inks, increased the percentage of post-consumer recycled paper used in most publications and begun using papers certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council.
- The District orders photocopy and fax paper with 100 percent post-consumer waste content for all facilities. Most copiers and printers used by the District can accommodate double-sided printing, and employees are actively encouraged to utilize that feature.
- The District actively promotes recycling of paper, plastic, glass, metals, batteries, CDs, cell phones, toner cartridges and used oil at most of its facilities, and also requires salvage, recycling or reuse of demolition and construction materials.
- The District designs preserves and facilities to avoid impacts to sensitive natural resources, and makes extensive use of native plants in landscaped areas to minimize the need to use water, fertilizer and herbicides.
- The District is a recognized leader in ecological restoration and natural areas management to enhance biodiversity and protect endangered and threatened species. The District is a founding member and active leader of Chicago Wilderness, a regional coalition working to preserve regional biodiversity.
- The District offers a comprehensive menu of award-winning environmental education offerings to improve public awareness, appreciation and understanding of the value of our natural areas, and to give people the critical thinking skills and knowledge needed to make informed decisions about environmental issues facing Lake County and the world.
- The District sells native plants and rain barrels, and provides information and programs to encourage homeowners to adopt environmentally responsible residential landscaping practices.
- The District has adopted a Mosquito Management Policy that addresses human health concerns posed by West Nile Virus while minimizing adverse ecological impacts.
- The District has earned and maintained certification for its golf courses through the Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary Program to enhance the wildlife habitats provided on the courses and minimize potential harmful environmental impacts of golf course operations.
- The District designed and constructed the Welcome Center at Ryerson Woods according to LEED standards to serve as a model of green architecture. The Welcome Center will earn LEED certification at the Gold or Platinum Level

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