



Best Practices

The Florida Recreation and Park Association adopted a comprehensive Strategic Plan in 2015. That Plan is based on four foundational pillars – Health, Community Building, Environmental Sustainability and Resiliency, and Economic Impact/Development.

The Association is in search of Best Practices in each of these four areas, which can serve as a resource for parks and recreation professionals. We realize that “Best Practice” can be broadly applied and the meaning varies depending on the environment and industry one works within.

For the purposes of the FRPA Strategic Plan, the Association’s Board of Directors has adopted and will apply the following definition:

FRPA Strategic Best Practices – Methods, professional guidance, benchmarks and technical expertise centered around a FRPA strategic pillar (Health, Environment, Community Building, Economic Impact) that are evidence-based or proven through experience to support positive results and may be replicated or utilized by other parks and recreation agencies toward achieving a similar desired outcome.

“Evidence-based or proven through experience” indicates that the best practice has had some research, or long term monitoring conducted to show that the practice is having a positive outcome when applied. For example: When applying the best practice of mowing and over-seeding in this manner, for a period of one year, we have been able to extend the life of our turf by 6 months thus reducing expenses \$X; OR When integrating physical activity and nutrition education in our after school programming, we partnered with the University of XYZ to measure increased health of participants, and have shown a 24% reduction in BMI of participants.

We realize that there may be a plethora of “success stories” that are not evidence based, but have produced positive results for an agency, and may also have value as a shared resource.

Submissions will be evaluated by the Best Practice Workgroup to determine if the submission meets the criteria of “Best Practice” as we have defined, or if it should be catalogued as a “success story”.



Best Practice Submission

Agency: City of Hialeah Department of Parks and Recreation

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Area of Best Practice: **ENVIRONMENT PILLAR:** Incorporating water recharge opportunities into communities and projects. (Ex: requiring or developing rain gardens and bio swales in redevelopment or new projects instead of traditional large retention areas.)

Summary of Best Practice: (include description of the practice, reason for adopting/implementing best practice, measurement of effectiveness of the practice, what is your evidence that the practice is working, etc.)

We are currently exploring ways to recharge water and create bio swales and rain gardens to minimize our impact on nature. What we have in place now in several of our facilities are drip irrigation systems to maximize the usage of our water resources. Drip irrigation is a low-pressure, low-volume watering system that delivers water to home landscaped in a variety of methods, including dripping, spraying and streams. By keeping the roots moist but not soaked, you use less water than other irrigation techniques. Basically, we are using a method that minimizes the consumption of water and maximizes what we use to directly affect our vegetation in a positive way.

In addition, we have installed rain sensors in our sprinkler systems to avoid usage when we have had rain showers. The sensors do not allow our systems to go off when ground is saturated. Another example of us reusing natural resources is in effect in our McDonald Park and Aquatic facility. This facility houses a large lake whereby our sprinkler system uses a filtered system to draw water into our system. We have also traditionally planted native species and in many cases these plant species are low water/low maintenance allowing us to further conserve our resources.

Frequency Best Practice is Applied: (daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, bi-annually, annually)

- Daily

Who Performs the Best Practice Function within your Agency: (contracted, in-house parks staff, in-house recreation staff, citizens, etc.)

- These services are provided by contracted and in-house park and streets staff.

Positive Outcome of the Best Practice (please summarize the evidence based benefit that has been derived by the agency from the best practice):

Through the efforts above, we have begun the tedious work to educate not only our employees but also our citizens that conservation combined with using the resources we have on hand will reduce the impact we have on our planet.

Awards/Recognitions/Designations Received as a Result of the Best Practice (please share any awards or designations received, or publications that have featured this best practice):

- N/A

Grants or Funding Received (if any):

- N/A

What other Best Practices would you suggest we collect?

- N/A

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