

**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: Collier County Parks and Recreation Division

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**Area of Best Practice:** ENVIRONMENTAL PILLAR: Invasive Exotics
ex: managing spread/public outreach/identification/eradication

**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.)

Description: Scheduled invasive/exotic monitoring and removal from park properties.

Reason: Collier County Land Development Code (LDC); Federal and State Permit requirements; and Land Management requirements.

Effectiveness: Pre- and post- removal inspections and monthly monitoring by County staff.

Evidence: In compliance with LDC, permit and land management requirements. Also, cost to remove is reduced annually due to less exotics needing to be removed due to regular, scheduled removal.

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

It depends on the permit and land management requirements. Most park properties have exotics removed annually with a few requiring bi-annual treatments.

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

Exotic work is conducted by contracted companies. County staff will pull exotics (samplings) during routine inspections of park sites.

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

Increase in recruitment of native vegetation in areas where exotics are removed. Mono-cultures are eliminated through exotic removal. We are stopping a “seed” source for the transmission (by wind and animal) of exotics to other properties adjacent to park sites. The removal of Australian Pines in our beach parks has removed a detriment to annual sea turtle nesting and due to the shallow root system of this tree we have removed the hazard of falling trees during tropical storms and hurricanes. Annual monitoring reports attest to the success of exotic removal. At one of our park sites, Fred Coyle Freedom Park, we requested a Vegetation Assessment and Mapping Survey in order to determine the success or failure of native recruitment, opportunistic, planted, and invasive species around treatment marshes. Based on the findings 90% of recruitment was native vegetation.

In addition to chemical and mechanical removal we partnered with the United States Department of Agriculture in 2013 on a biological agent to control air potato. Air potato leaf beetles, *Liloceris cheni*, were released in 2 park sites. Research ecologists from USDA visit the sites annually to measure the success. The beetles are doing their job.

**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):**

Tourist Development Council grant for exotic removal at beach park locations.

**What other Best Practices would you suggest we collect?**

**Submit this Form electronically to** **charla@frpa.org**

Type directly onto this document, and submit as a Word Document. Please DO NOT pdf the form.