

**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.)

One of the most important aspects of invasive exotic control is ongoing maintenance. Removing the growing exotics is only the beginning. Plants have likely been growing for some time and producing seed. Those seeds sit waiting within the “seed bank,” in addition to other seeds flown, carried, blown or washed into natural areas, for time and appropriate conditions to resprout and merrily continue the invasion. Once the regrowth gets large again, if no ongoing maintenance is done, the original sized problem will be back and the initial money spent to remove the plants (likely significant!) will have been wasted. Maintenance should be done annually to bi-annually, for **at least** 5 years before the seed bank is exhausted. After that, an annual sweep should be sufficient.

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

Depending on the site, it could be as much as quarterly, but generally it is bi-annually or annually.

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

Staff supervises and inspects contracted work and does some follow-up and small treatments. All staff are certified as natural areas pesticide applicators.

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

Exotics removal costs have been reduced by thousands of dollars per year after about 5 years for preserves where maintenance is funded and bi-annually or annually preformed, assuming no additional exotics invade. However, this is starting to become an issue – more and more different types of exotic plants invading. This makes it crucial to inspect and do exotic plant maintenance routinely/as needed.

**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)**:**

No awards but positive recognition from Florida Fish and wildlife Conservation Commission for land management practices in a recent conversation with staff.

*“I wanted to let you know that Linda King, FWC manager of the Invasive Plant Management Section, had some very nice words about our program.  She said she is impressed with the work we do and she thinks we’re doing a very good job.   This means a lot coming from her.”*

**Grants or Funding Received (if any):**

Conservation Collier has received significant grant funding from state and federal agencies that performs ongoing exotic maintenance on Conservation Collier properties. Since 2004, $710,672 worth of habitat and exotic plant management has been done on Conservation Collier lands using state and federal grant funds. State funding sources including the Invasive Plant Species Management Council and the University of Florida particularly recognize the important of maintenance funding for exotic control.

**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.