

Spring Valley

Nature Center & Heritage Farm

2019-2023 Master Plan

**(Balanced Scorecard Format aligned with
Schaumburg Park District Goals & Objectives)
Revised February, 2019**

Approved by Board of Park Commissioners March, 2019



CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

DISTRICT GOAL 1: PROVIDE FIRST CLASS PROGRAMS, SERVICES AND FACILITIES

District Initiative 1: Build Lifelong Programming to Enhance Wellness & Environmental/Historical Awareness

Division Objectives:	Measures:
<p>Maintain a nature playground and other nature play features designed to promote active, creative play in natural settings by youth.</p> <p>Provide new opportunities for visitors to interface with and learn about site's natural and historical features via technology.</p>	<p><i>A. Complete Nature Play Discovery trail linked to Bison's Bluff and promote via signs and programming by 2020.</i></p> <p><i>B. Complete planning for an 'agricultural play' feature at the Heritage Farm by 2023.</i></p> <p><i>Develop a downloadable app (s) by 2020 that can be used by any site user to access maps, virtual tours, interpretive information, upcoming program information, and visitor surveys.</i></p>

District Initiative 4: Create and Sustain Quality Programs and Facilities Focused on Education and Interpretation

Division Objectives:	Measures:
<p>Seek to align all programs, events, and visitor amenities with Spring Valley’s mission statement and interpretive plan.</p>	<p><i>Incorporate language from the mission statement and/or site interpretive plan into the written program plans for all events and program starting in 2019.</i></p>
<p>Maintain a system of trails and interpretive signs designed to place visitors in contact with particular natural features or ecosystems.</p>	<p><i>A. Develop a phased plan to modify trails in order to create thematic loops by Sept., 2020, to be implemented over the next 5 years, subject to funding availability.</i></p> <p><i>B. Begin the development of seasonal, updatable and temporary interpretive displays that will highlight particular features along the trails in 2019.</i></p> <p><i>C. Create a series of eco-cultural ‘interpretation stations’ along trails that can be used in programming or temporary displays and replace the Footprints on the Land trail by 2021.</i></p>
<p>Continue to improve the visitor experience at Nature Center and Farm visitor center.</p>	<p><i>A. Update visitor orientation AV program at Nature Center by 2020.</i></p> <p><i>B. Redesign the entrance areas at both visitor centers in order to invite additional engagement with site resources and staff by 2023, subject to funding availability.</i></p> <p><i>C. Include an interpretive element as part of all planned visitor amenities adjacent to Bison’s Bluff and Nature Center.</i></p>
<p>Maintain display plantings around Nature Center, Merkle Cabin and Heritage Farm for the purpose of education/interpretation and landscape aesthetics.</p>	<p><i>A. Create a pollinator display and interpretation garden display adjacent to the Nature Center by 2020.</i></p> <p><i>B. Develop a maintenance program for display plantings with assistance from Master Gardeners and other volunteer groups in 2019 and implement in 2020.</i></p>
<p>Establish and maintain other features that add value to the visitor experience and ecological integrity to the landscape.</p>	<p><i>A. Continue to maintain nest boxes and bird feeding program, in order to promote and encourage wildlife viewing by visitors.</i></p> <p><i>B. Maintain plantings of conifers and other trees and shrubs for the purposes of visual and noise screening along established site boundaries.</i></p>
<p>Maintain staffing levels that are adequate to handle both site maintenance and best-practice stewardship of natural resources.</p>	<p><i>Increase staffing levels and/or funds dedicated to contractual work starting in 2019 in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness of site maintenance, subject to budget approval.</i></p>

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

DISTRICT GOAL 2: OPTIMIZE AND LEVERAGE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

District Initiative 1: **Develop Dynamic Business Plans and Strategies**

Division Objectives:	Measures:
<p>Improve and maintain accessibility and functionality of the Merkle Cabin to maximize use of site for premium rentals and programs.</p> <p>Offer an annual pass/membership program that conveys special site use benefits to purchasers as a marketing and revenue production tool.</p> <p>Continue to offer facility rentals as a supplementary revenue source.</p>	<p><i>A. Resurface access road and enlarge parking lot to better accommodate groups renting or using site by 2021.</i></p> <p><i>B. Develop an outdoor restroom adjacent to picnic shelter by 2022.</i></p> <p><i>Further refine and 'rebrand' the annual pass program as a multi-level giving program that invites financial support and conveys benefactor status rather than merely tangible benefits in 2019.</i></p> <p><i>A. Establish new shelter rental program and pricing, to include Heritage Farm shelter as well as new program shelter adjacent to Nature Center by 2020.</i></p> <p><i>B. Establish new group admission fees and booking guidelines for youth groups visiting Bison's Bluff during peak season (April-October) in 2019.</i></p>

District Initiative 2: **Maximize Funding Opportunities**

Division Objectives:	Measures:
<p>Maintain gift sale areas that are attractive, profitable, meet visitor needs, and promote the site's mission.</p> <p>Continue to pursue supplemental revenue sources such as federal, state and local grants, corporate and foundation support, and support from local clubs and organizations (Spring Valley Nature Club and Schaumburg Community Garden Club).</p>	<p><i>A. Develop new layout of Nature Center gift sale and library area and implement by spring, 2020.</i></p> <p><i>B. Develop seasonal gift sale promotions for the website, starting in Nov., 2019.</i></p> <p><i>C. Incorporate gift sale redesign into Nature Center façade improvements by 2023.</i></p> <p><i>A. Develop strategies to connect potential individual and corporate donors to site, resources, programs, etc. and establish criteria for sponsor recognition and benefits by 2020.</i></p> <p><i>B. Continue to utilize Spring Valley Nature Club as an event and program sponsor as well as provider of group program scholarships.</i></p>

District Initiative 3: Achieve Accountability to Taxpayers through Meeting Budget Expectations

Division Objectives:	Measures:
<p>Manage the Spring Valley portion of the Recreation Fund as a balanced budget, per Schaumburg Park District business practices.</p> <p>Communicate accomplishments, impacts, business plans, etc. to the wider community on a regular basis.</p>	<p><i>Review budget balance sheets monthly to identify trending shortfalls and over-expenditures.</i></p> <p><i>A. Prepare a year-end annual report that summarizes annual attendance, accomplishments, highlights, and budget performance starting in 2019.</i></p> <p><i>B. Complete an economic impact study that highlights Spring Valley's impact on the local economy and tourism during 2020.</i></p>

District Initiative 3: Efficient and Effective Use of Resources

Division Objectives:	Measures:
<p>Continue to update site inventory (paths, fencing, benches, signage, etc.).</p> <p>Acquire and care for period appropriate livestock (where available) to support interpretive program, per Livestock Policy.</p>	<p><i>Update the equipment inventory at the maintenance building and Heritage Farm, to be completed by 2021.</i></p> <p><i>A. Continue to sell/trade all swine by December of each year in order to reduce winter livestock maintenance needs and costs, and acquire new young stock each March or April.</i></p> <p><i>B. Continue to replenish poultry stock each fall to insure adequate number of laying hens during spring and summer to support egg sales.</i></p>

District Initiative 4: Implement Sound Risk and Safety Management Practices

Division Objectives:	Measures:
<p>Ensure that trails, facilities and programs meet ADA accessibility requirements to the maximum extent possible.</p>	<p><i>Consult with District architect and NWSRA staff as needed prior to implementing any new exhibit and trail construction or improvements.</i></p>
<p>Continue regular surveys of grounds and trails to ensure that problems and repairs are addressed promptly.</p>	<p><i>A. Conduct bi-weekly safety/maintenance checks of grounds and trails. B. Conduct seasonal inspections of all conservation areas and schedule at least one staff/volunteer workday at each site annually.</i></p>
<p>Continue regular facilities maintenance inspections and replacement program per Facilities Dept. 5-year plan.</p>	<p><i>A. Review emergency response plan at the Heritage Farm and identify solutions for large group evacuation during severe weather by 2020. B. Implement new solution by 2023.</i></p>
<p>Continue to maintain clean and safe parking areas and accessible pathways per Parks Dept. 5-year plan.</p>	<p><i>A. Repave Cabin service road and expand parking area by 2020. B. Replace Heritage Farm access boardwalk by 2021. C. Look at resurfacing options for pathways between Farm and Cabin and between Cabin and service road by 2023.</i></p>
<p>Continue regular training for staff in risk management, emergency response, and first aid/CPR.</p>	<p><i>A. Ensure that at least one staff person attends all Safety Committee meetings and provides updates on meetings and trainings to all staff. B. Ensure that all staff receives annual safety and emergency response training. C. Ensure that all staff receive training and/or review of CPR and AED use prior to March 1 of each year.</i></p>

EMPLOYEE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

DISTRICT GOAL 4: FOSTER A MOTIVATED AND ACCOUNTABLE TEAM CULTURE

District Initiative 1: Cultivate Personal and Professional Growth

Division Objectives:	Measures:
<p>Continue to budget for and encourage staff involvement in professional organizations (IPRA, NAI, MOMCC, AVA) and attendance at professional workshops and conferences aligned with staff professional goals.</p> <p>Insure that all staff receives an annual performance review and opportunity to provide feedback to their supervisor.</p>	<p><i>Ensure that all supervisory and permanent program staff attends one professional development workshop or conference/year and that a summary of educational sessions is shared with other staff subsequent to attending.</i></p> <p><i>A. Schedule all full-time and permanent part-time staff performance reviews for March/April of each year.</i></p> <p><i>B. Program coordinators should schedule a performance review for all interpretive and program staff once/year at a pre-determined period of their employment .</i></p> <p><i>C. Work with Human Resources Dept. to establish salary/wage ranges for all staff and communicate these ranges to staff upon hire.</i></p>

District Initiative 2: Promote Teamwork

Division Objectives:	Measures:
<p>Develop and promote a team-oriented work atmosphere among all staff and volunteers at Spring Valley.</p>	<p><i>A. Conduct quarterly division staff meetings to review annual goals, budgets, program schedules, and discuss solutions to challenges.</i></p> <p><i>B. Schedule two annual staff workdays (winter and summer), at which all staff can work together on a defined grounds or facility improvement project.</i></p> <p><i>C. Conduct an annual all-staff meeting in early spring of each year to review emergency response and incident reporting procedures, update staff on new policies and procedures, budgets, etc.</i></p> <p><i>D. Integrate volunteers into mentoring program with new volunteers and staff.</i></p> <p><i>E. Continue to hold quarterly volunteer meetings.</i></p> <p><i>F. Continue to host an annual spring meeting of Farm volunteers to update them on changes.</i></p>

District Initiative 3: Develop Customer Focus

Division Objectives:	Measures:
Ensure that all staff is focused on high quality customer service.	<i>A. Conduct a Certified Interpretive Host (CIH) training for any new staff each year in spring, starting in 2019. B. Conduct a CIH review for all existing program and interpretive staff as well as visitor services staff each year, starting in spring, 2019. B. Ensure that all staff receives exposure to and training in district-wide customer service initiatives, such as the H.A.P.P.Y. program.</i>

District Initiative 4: Encourage Innovation and Creativity

Division Objectives:	Measures:
Constantly encourage all staff to develop and share new ideas designed to improve quality of programs, facilities, and services.	<i>Conduct quarterly program and project brainstorming meetings.</i>