



## Seattle Parks & Recreation

### MEMORANDUM

Date: July 25, 2019  
To: Board of Park Commissioners  
From: Joelle Hammerstad, Sustainable Operations Manager  
Subject: City of Seattle Wildfire Smoke Preparedness

#### **Requested Board Action**

The purpose of this briefing is to update the Board of Park Commissioners on the City of Seattle's response to anticipated poor air quality due to wildfire smoke, and the role that Seattle Parks and Recreation will play. It is the City's intention to become a Smoke Ready Community.

The in-person Park Board briefing will provide more detailed information on:

- Wildfires and heat, and how they relate to climate change
- Cleaner Indoor Air Centers, and how we evaluate their effectiveness
- Personnel Rule 3.9, and protections for employees who work outside
- The unique challenges of providing outdoor activities during extreme heat with wildfire smoke, and how we will address those challenges

#### **Wildfires, Wood Smoke, Particulate Matter and Heat**

For the past two summers, wildfire smoke from British Columbia and eastern Washington enveloped the entire Puget Sound region, creating unhealthy conditions.

The particulate matter in wood smoke is the chief concern. It can be inhaled into the deepest part of the lungs, which with prolonged exposure, and may cause long-term health problems. In 2017 and 2018, extreme heat exacerbated the wood smoke problem.

#### **Cleaner Indoor Air Centers**

In order to ensure SPR is meeting the needs of the community in the face of climate change, we have implemented two enhanced indoor air quality centers. These projects must be located at a facility that already has cooling, or we must add cooling to the building. Seattle Parks and Recreation has retrofit two centers – Rainier Beach and International District/Chinatown.

Seattle Center has also retrofit The Armory, Fisher Pavilion and the Exhibition Hall, bringing the City's total number of cleaner indoor air centers to five.

To evaluate our efforts, we have partnered with Dr. Dan Jaffe, Professor of Environmental Chemistry and Chair of the Physical Sciences Division at the University of Washington. Dr. Jaffe

and his students will analyze and interpret the air quality monitoring data collected inside and outside the community centers, letting us know if our efforts have successfully led to cleaner indoor air.

#### **Protections for Employees Who Work Outside**

In conjunction with departments and the labor unions, the Mayor's Office and the Seattle Department Human Resources, have updated Personnel Rule 3.9 – the Inclement Weather Policy. This policy governs employee compensation during inclement weather and other emergencies. Wildfire smoke will be categorized as inclement weather.

#### **The Unique Challenges of Providing Outdoor Recreation with Wildfire Smoke**

It is SPR's intention to keep facilities and programs operating during episodes of unhealthy air conditions, *as long as we have proper staff coverage to monitor and keep programs safe*. If, at any time, we do not have the proper coverage, programs may be modified or cancelled until a safe level of staffing is available.

#### **Environmental Sustainability**

This work is a climate change adaptation strategy, and intended to support frontline communities first and foremost.

#### **Budget**

<b>Facility Name</b>	<b>One-Time Costs</b>	<b>Ongoing Costs</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year Costs</b>
IDCCC	\$38,000	\$18,000	\$56,000
Rainier Beach	\$70,000	\$18,000	\$88,000
Totals	\$108,000	\$36,000	\$144,000

#### **Schedule**

- The indoor Cleaner Air Centers are already operational.
- The employee policy was finalized on July 15, 2019.
- Guidelines for outdoor recreation will be finalized by month's end.