Advancing Park Agencies and Professionals
The Institute

The Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands is dedicated to helping parks, recreation, and public land organizations overcome challenges and engage their communities more effectively. Eppley was founded in 1993 and has helped hundreds of agencies across the nation with strategic planning, workforce development, and technical assistance. Made up of a core team of parks and recreation experts, health professionals, researchers, educators, and a strong information technology staff, the Institute provides solutions to a range of industry challenges, creating positive impacts for agencies and their communities.

Advancing Park Agencies and Professionals

When you work with Eppley, you are working with the most experienced and diverse group of professionals in the industry, backed by the superior resources of Indiana University. The Eppley Institute is Indiana University’s outreach program for the fields of parks and recreation, active living, and protected lands management. Since 1946, the university has helped local, state, and national parks and public land agencies address operational challenges, train and develop staff, and plan for the future. This expertise is concentrated at Eppley, and faculty researchers partner with Eppley on complex issues. With a history of innovation and successful partnerships that stretches back more than 20 years, Eppley has the experience and expertise to help your agency meet any challenge. When you partner with Eppley, you are partnering with the very best!
Custom solutions for every parks and recreation agency

Eppley Institute Services
Service & Consulting • Planning & Operations • Training & Education • Research & Analysis
proValens Online Learning • World Parks Academy
Playground Maintenance Technician Training • Great Lakes Park Training Institute
Planning & Operations

Our plans aren’t made to sit on a shelf—we provide solutions ready for implementation.

Master Plans

Every agency needs a master plan: to assess its current system, to determine what its community members need, to set ambitious but attainable goals, and to create a plan for reaching those goals, with planned opportunities to evaluate and celebrate progress. The Eppley Institute’s plans fit each agency’s size, community, and mission.

Targeted Plans

Targeted planning is what makes the Eppley Institute unique. Working with your agency, the Institute customizes plans that can stand alone or accompany parks and recreation master plans. Using industry best practices, and creative problem solving, we develop clear, concise, and consensus built strategic plans that optimize your agency’s effectiveness.

Most importantly, Institute and agency staff complete these plans collaboratively; we work with your agency so that when plans are complete, you and your staff have a roadmap for immediate implementation. At Eppley, we don’t develop plans to sit on shelves. We advance park agencies and professionals now.

- Facility - Asset Management Planning
- Organizational Workforce Development Planning
- Business and Operational Planning
- Community Park Health Planning
- Visitor Education and Interpretation Plans
- Capital Improvement Planning
- Park Facility Asset Prioritization
- Climate Adaptation – Green Park Plans
- Site Plans/Design Reports for Parks
How is Eppley Different?

A lot of service providers can tell you how they’re unique; at Eppley we can prove it. The Eppley Institute’s planning services balance the needs of individual communities with practical considerations and economic realities. Our staff includes experienced park professionals who understand the challenges agencies face. Through extensive research and analysis, community involvement, regard for diverse approaches to public engagement, and a combination of local and national expertise, the Eppley Institute creates plans and services that are widely supported and successfully implemented. Just as importantly, the plans and services we create with you are designed to help address your community’s challenges from the day they’re implemented.

For all master plans and many targeted plans, community engagement is a key component for success, and no one does engagement better than Eppley. Using a variety of community engagement techniques, including the PathfindersSM workshop program, the Eppley Institute helps agencies better understand their communities, the challenges they face, and the partnership opportunities open to them. These community engagement strategies in turn help expand community education about local parks, public lands, and recreation opportunities and, as a result, grow community support and stewardship. Our engagement efforts focus on reaching community consensus and rallying support for parks, recreation, and public lands management decisions.

More than just an Institute: When you partner with Eppley, you also partner with Indiana University, a national leader in research and activity in the fields of parks, recreation, public health, and tourism services. Research is a vital component of our approach because it helps agencies better understand community needs, informs policy decision making, and allows agencies to implement high-quality, inclusive, and lasting plans and management strategies. Together with our partners, we create some of the most innovative and effective solutions in the industry!
Effective training is an essential solution to the challenges faced by parks agencies across the country. The Eppley Institute’s strengths—including 70 years of educational experience and a diverse team of professionals from one of the best public health, parks, recreation, and tourism studies programs in the nation—become your agency’s advantage when you partner with us! The Eppley Institute provides award-winning, cost-effective training and education programs for national, state, and local parks and recreation agencies. The Institute uses a variety of learning engagement methods—including online education, in-person training, and “train the trainer” programs—to support adult learners whose busy work schedules may prevent them from enrolling in other courses or degree programs. When your staff trains with the Eppley Institute, they’re equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to help your agency excel. The Eppley Institute’s training and educational programs can help you build your workforce capacity now as well as prepare your agency’s next generation of parks professionals, including:

- Maintenance Staff
- Senior Professionals
- Recreational Program Managers
- Aquatics Managers
- Seasonal Staff
- Park Board Members
- Interpreters
ProValens Learning

ProValens is the Eppley Institute’s distance learning platform. With more than 150 online courses, nine certificate programs, and a variety of workshops and webinars, ProValens gives you access to the best professional training on your schedule.

The Eppley Institute’s course catalog encompasses a broad range of topics, including wilderness stewardship, health and wellness, parks management, planning, and interpretation. Our courses are designed for the full range of professionals employed by your agency, from first-time seasonal staff to experienced professionals who want to expand their expertise or acquire new skills. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are also available for most of the Institute’s courses.

Our Approach

Eppley’s team of instructional designers apply adult learning theory and needs analyses to ensure effective workforce development. Using a collaborative and innovative approach, the Eppley Institute offers instructor-led online and blended learning courses, in-person workshops, and certification programs.

We Provide

- Mobile-friendly enrollment
- Interactive course design for 150+ online courses
- Live webinars and in-person trainings
- Certificate programs

- Accessible, differentiated course design
- Secure hosting environment
- 24-hour course support
- Award-winning instructional design
Workshops and Train the Trainer Programs

When your agency needs hands-on, face-to-face training, nobody does it better than Eppley! The Eppley Institute offers workshops to individual agencies, park units, and other organizations. Each workshop is customized to meet your agency’s goals and objectives and is delivered on-site at your location.

Some of the workshops offered include:

- Creating a Positive Customer Service Environment in Your Agency
- Discovering the Power of Health in Your Agency
- Exploring Your Organization’s Culture
- Exploring Your Strengths: Individual and Organizational Applications of Strengths-Based Leadership
- Financial Sustainability through Improved Fee-Based Programming
- Interpretive Talks for Seasonal Staff and Volunteers
- Leading Park, Recreation, and Public Land Organizations
- Making Mentoring Work for You
- Master Planning for Park and Recreation Agencies
- Universal Design for Park Facilities

Custom Training:

Does your agency need training that isn’t listed above? The Eppley Institute and our faculty colleagues at Indiana University are experts at instructional design. Contact us to discuss the needs of your department. We can solve your training needs and guide your agency toward its best performance.

Contact the Institute directly to inquire about setting up a workshop.
Eppley stewards the longest-running parks and recreation conference in the world.

Held annually since 1947, the Great Lakes Park Training Institute (GLPTI) is the oldest, best-known conference for parks and recreation professionals in the United States and beyond. The Eppley Institute’s strong connection to a worldwide network of parks professionals means that conference sessions are focused on today’s challenges and real solutions for your agency, resulting in an exceptional conference like no other.

What Makes GLPTI Unique?

- Educational sessions are specifically geared toward professionals working in maintenance, environmental education, conservation, and leadership.
- Keynote speakers include industry-leading experts and trendsetters.
- The conference offers unmatched networking opportunities. Attendees leave with the knowledge they need to address contemporary issues and professional contacts that will last a lifetime!

Where is GLPTI Held?

GLPTI is held at the beautiful Potawatomi Resort and Conference Center in Pokagon State Park, Angola, Indiana. GLPTI’s mix of educational and networking opportunities thrives in the unique environment of Pokagon State Park.

Learn more about the parks and recreation conference that will be the best investment you make all year!
The Playground Maintenance Technician Program (PMT) is a two-day training that focuses on playground maintenance practices, inspection principles, and best practices in maintenance and repairs—the knowledge and skills your staff needs to keep kids safe. This program doesn’t focus on play theory or memorizing standards. Instead, course modules explore the maintenance challenges associated with materials commonly found on playgrounds, including concrete, metal, wood, plastics, and various surfaces. Using videos and case studies, participants explore the types of playground inspections, learn how to repair damaged equipment, and discuss associated legal considerations. A virtual playground offers participants the opportunity to apply newly learned skills.

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

Learn by doing – Hands on learning that combines discussion with realistic virtual environments to understand playground maintenance tasks

Learn about materials – Learn how to maintain playground equipment made of metal, plastic, wood, and concrete

Learn about safety – Understand how to take damaged equipment out of service safely, keep proper records, and identify potential legal issues related to playground maintenance

Learn about surfaces – Learn how best to maintain unitary and loose-fill surfaces as well as fasteners and connectors

Receive resources to take back to your office – Receive a 250-page textbook and workbook for reference and, upon completion, a Playground Maintenance Technician Certificate

Keep costs low – Train front-line maintenance staff at an affordable price

Ensure your equipment lasts through its useful life – Improve playground user safety and prolong the useful life of equipment

Learn more ways to keep kids safe, host a training program, or enroll your agency’s staff at playgroundmaintenance.org.
The Playground Maintenance Technician (PMT) program empowers front-line staff to identify and correct dangerous situations to prevent injury. It is designed to complement, not replace, the Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) course.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities and Differences Between PMT and CPSI</th>
<th>Playground Maintenance Technician Course</th>
<th>Certified Playground Safety Inspector Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content designed for staff responsible for inspecting and maintaining playgrounds</td>
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<td>Playground maintenance Diamond of Care</td>
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<td>Maintenance of metal equipment</td>
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<td>Comprehensive textbook and student workbook covering the repair and maintenance of the equipment listed below</td>
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<td>Maintenance of plastic equipment</td>
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<td>Maintenance of wood equipment</td>
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<td>Maintenance of concrete equipment</td>
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<td>Maintenance of unitary surfacing</td>
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<td>A systematic approach to conducting repairs and taking equipment out of service</td>
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<td>Establishing inspection and maintenance programs</td>
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<td>Legal issues of maintaining playgrounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation for CPSI exam</td>
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<td>Certificate of Completion</td>
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<td>Renewal Requirements</td>
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*Note: If deciding whether to take the PMT course or CPSI course, it is important to consider job responsibilities. If you regularly inspect and physically maintain playgrounds and make repairs, the PMT is probably right for you. If you are required to do audits or need to know comprehensive standards, the CPSI is probably right for you. For the most well-rounded education, both courses are recommended because they complement each other.*
Indiana University’s World Parks Academy (WPA) is a program designed and operated by the Eppley Institute in partnership with World Urban Parks (WUP). The Academy’s goal is to create a global network of park professionals to share knowledge, tools, and expertise in park and recreation management. To achieve this goal, the WPA offers internationally recognized competency-based certification, training, and education programs to professionals interested in advancing their careers and becoming part of the global parks and recreation community.

Your agency’s staff will benefit by attending free monthly webinars and roundtable discussions led by experts in the field of parks and recreation management on topics such as Urban Green Space Structure Development, Parks and Public Health Issue Mitigation, and Identifying Our Community Needs. Participants are encouraged to contribute local knowledge and experiences during discussions, and CEU credit is available for each webinar on provalenslearning.com.

The WPA offers two certification programs for parks and recreation professionals who have international experience: the Certified Park Professional International (CPP-I) and the Certified Park Professional (CPP). Certificate holders receive a one-year membership to World Urban Parks programs and services.
Certified Park Professional International (CPP-I)

Certification is based on a universal competency-based framework for professionals who continually impact the international profession. The four parent competencies for CPP-I certification include:

- Transcontinental park management
- Global perspective
- Standards-based multidisciplinary issues
- Global management approaches

Certified Park Professional (CPP)

Candidates may apply for a general CPP or a national variant of the CPP as articulated through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WPA. Certification is based on a competency framework that assesses candidates’ knowledge, skills, and abilities in the following areas:

- Asset management
- Landscape and amenity horticulture
- Operations and maintenance
- Project management
- Resource management
- Business acumen
- Supervision
- Interpretation and education
- Public health
- Leadership
- Recreation

WPA is developing a training curriculum to advance capabilities of agencies and professionals in parks and recreation management. The curriculum will build on CPP competencies and consist of an in-country training workshop, online courses, and an experimental requirement.

The WPA has over 60 international certificate holders from the following countries:

Argentina  
Australia  
Canada  
England  
France  
Germany  
Ireland  
Israel  
Japan  
Netherlands  
New Zealand  
Norway  
South Africa  
USA
At the Eppley Institute, we have taken our solutions for park agencies across the nation…and around the world!

The Eppley Institute excels at providing personal, customized service for each of our partners. We recognize that each agency we work with has a unique organizational culture as well as distinct expectations, business practices, and goals. Our vision, values, and expertise enable us to meet each partner’s particular needs.

The Eppley Institute’s clients are located throughout the U.S., while the international partnerships developed through Indiana University’s World Parks Academy expand our network overseas.

Eppley Institute Clients
The Eppley Institute, An Extraordinary Resource

Below are specialty projects Eppley has developed to assist agencies with complex challenges. Have a unique challenge and need a tailored solution? Contact the Eppley Institute. We provide the resources agencies need to best serve their communities!

**Survey Research**
Knowing what citizens think about wide-ranging issues related to park use, their willingness to pay for services, and barriers to using the services of an agency is critically important for agencies. Eppley designs and administers surveys, engages the entire community to obtain results, and provides thoughtful and thorough analyses, allowing parks, recreation, and public lands agencies to make informed, data-driven decisions.

**Data Comparison and Analysis Research**
Using existing data from multiple sources, the Eppley Institute identifies key issues, trends, opportunities, and challenges for parks, recreation, and public lands agencies. By comparing national and regional data to similar service providers, Eppley can offer insight and guidance about your agency’s mission, goals, services, and level of service.

**Visitor Opinion Surveys**
Oftentimes, parks, recreation, and public land agencies overlook everyday park users, focusing instead on active recreation program registrants. This creates a gap in agencies’ understanding of frequent park users’ needs and opinions about park and facility maintenance, design, remodels, and supervision. Using this data, agencies can better promote active living, community cohesion, and positive use of agency assets.

**Trail User Research and Survey**
As a leader in trail research, the Eppley Institute communicates with users, trail neighbors, and agency personnel and uses a variety of research methods to uncover how trails may best fulfill their unique potential in individual communities. Trails are often positive assets for agencies and—with appropriate research, programs, and education—actively contribute to the health and economy of their communities.

**Benchmarking Research**
Sometimes it helps a parks and recreation agency to know how it compares to its neighbors, national leaders, or other specific agencies. But conducting and then interpreting the results of such comparisons can be tricky. Eppley’s 20+ years of experience in benchmarking ensures that comparable data are used, findings are carefully managed, and the review and citizen engagement process is unique to each community’s and agency’s needs.

**Recreation, Parks, and Facility Trends Analysis**
For most agencies, public investment in parks, trails, and recreation centers is the single largest expenditure on quality of life. Even regular use can overwhelm the available resources of an asset and agency, and overuse may hinder community enjoyment of parks, trails, and facilities. Eppley’s trend analysis looks for opportunities, conflicts, gaps, and ways to maximize and improve your community’s investment in its parks and facilities.
The Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands is a unit of the Department of Recreation, Park, and Tourism Studies School of Public Health – Bloomington

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