

Washington D.C. Parks and Recreation



PROJECT LEADER:

Derek Schultz, Operations
Program Manager

RAIN BIRD PRODUCTS:

- ESP-LXME Modular Controllers
- IQ-Desktop v. 3.0
- ET Manager™
- IQ NCC-GP GPRS/Cellular Communications Cartridge

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— Derek Schultz, Operations Program Manager
Washington D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

The Washington D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) is responsible for maintaining 115 natural turf athletic fields at 75 different sites. These fields are heavily used by community sports and recreation organizations throughout the metropolitan area.

THE CHALLENGES:

Because DPR has a small field maintenance team, a hired contractor traveled to the 38 irrigation sites to adjust watering schedules when necessary. Operations Program Manager Derek Schultz and the rest of the DPR team considered installing central control to save time and money, but none of the 38 sites had network or landline access, making it impossible for the satellite controllers to communicate with a central computer. The lack of central control also made it difficult to know whether the contractor was adjusting the schedules appropriately.

It was also challenging for Schultz and his team to find a central control system that didn’t require a large lump-sum purchase. “Other systems had to be installed all at once,” Schultz explained. “Due to budgetary constraints, we’d have to make a special request for additional funds.”

THE SOLUTION:

Rain Bird’s ESP-LXME Modular Controllers and IQ-Desktop v. 3.0 offered DPR the perfect control solution. With IQ NCC Communication Cartridges, DPR was able to upgrade the ESP-LXME Controllers to satellite controllers capable of being controlled by the IQ-Desktop. This cartridge option includes an embedded GPRS/Cellular Data Modem with antenna connector, allowing it to communicate without wired or landline access.

The flexible, modular nature of this new control solution also enables DPR to install the system in phases as funding and budgets allow. The project is still underway, but DPR is already enjoying its benefits at a number of sites. “We can now make automatic scheduling adjustments at these sites without having to physically travel to them,” Schultz said. “That’s especially helpful when special events are scheduled at the fields.”

THE SAVINGS:

While IQ-Desktop has saved DPR untold hours of time, it has also saved vast amounts of water. Because the team now has irrigation control at their fingertips, they’ve been able to fine-tune their watering schedules, improve turf coverage and eliminate the damage caused by overwatering. The team can also run reports to ensure that their contractor is doing exactly the work they’ve requested.

“We want this system to be used for years to come,” Schultz said. “IQ has improved our ability to do more and be more effective—even with our limited resources.”