



News & Information

Carol Stream Park District 391 Illini Drive Carol Stream Illinois 60188

Advocacy Update: Top Ten Reasons Parks are Important

The value of public parks and recreation in America by Richard J. Dolesh, Monica Hobbs Vinluan and Michael Phillips

Public parks and recreation facilities and programs offer countless values to our citizens and to our country. As advocates and supporters of parks and recreation who lives these values every day, we may sometimes take the uncounted benefits of parks and recreation for granted. So we don't lose sight of the forest for the trees, every once in awhile it is useful to remind ourselves of these basic value and reaffirm their essential worth.

The following "top ten" list of parks and recreation values are in particular order, but this list of values encompass the range of why we collectively believe that public parks and recreation are in essential part of our national heritage.

1. Public parks provide millions of Americans with the opportunity to be physically active. Physical activity is an essential part of an individual's efforts to stay healthy, fight obesity and prevent chronic condition that lead to coronary disease, high blood pressure and diabetes.
2. Parks have true economic benefits. Proximity to a developed state, regional or community park improves property value.
3. Parks provide vital green space in a fast-developing American landscape, and provide vegetative buffers to construction and development, thus reducing the effects of sprawl. Pars keep our living environment healthy.
4. Parks preserve critical wildlife habitat. Community parks allow natural wildlife to co-exist with people while providing enjoyment and educational opportunity for children and families.
5. Parks and recreation facilitate social interactions that are critical to maintaining community cohesion and pride. Parks provide a meeting place where community members can develop social ties, and where healthy behavior is modeled and admired.
6. Leisure activities in parks improve moods, reduces stress and enhances a sense of wellness. People go the park to get in a better mood, to reinvigorate themselves and to decrease the anxieties of daily life.
7. Recreational programs provide organized, structured, enjoyable activities for all ages. Quality recreational programs facilitate safety, good sportsmanship and community participation.
8. Community recreation services provide a refuge of safety for at-risk youth. Recreation programs lead by trained leaders offer children healthy role models and give valuable lessons to help steer youth to a future of promise and opportunity for success.
9. Therapeutic recreation is an outlet that individuals with disabilities have to be physically active, socially engages and cognitively stimulated.
10. Public parks embody the American tradition of preserving public lands for the benefit and use of all. A love of parks is one of the defining characteristics of our national identity. Americans love their parks, historic sites, national monuments, recreation areas and public open space because they bring such joy and pleasure to all people.

Agencies can publish this list in their program guides and post it on their community and virtual bulletin boards.

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