



**NRPA'S PARK AND RECREATION MONTH - JULY 2019**

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# **2019 PARK AND RECREATION MONTH OUTREACH TOOLKIT**

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## Toolkit Purpose

This toolkit is meant to make promoting and celebrating Park and Recreation Month in your community a little easier! This kit is designed to help you generate positive media coverage and support for your Park and Recreation Month activities, and ultimately, the work of your agency and the benefits you bring to your community.

This kit includes template media materials such as media alerts for special events, press releases, fact sheets, key messages for use during interviews, social media posts, and a sample editorial article you can submit to local publications. Feel free to customize these materials with localized information, quotes and details that best meet your needs.

When using social media, please make sure you are tagging NRPA in your Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts and using the hashtag **#GameOnJuly**.

Don't forget, we want to see your successes too — send us photos and videos from your Park and Recreation Month events and the creative ways you have used the marketing materials!

If you have questions or need further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us.

### **General Park and Recreation Month or Toolkit Questions**

Cort Jones  
Communications Manager, NRPA  
703.858.4730  
[cjones@nrpa.org](mailto:cjones@nrpa.org)

### **Press Release or Media Questions**

Heather Williams  
Sr. Public Relations Manager, NRPA  
703.858.4743  
[hwilliams@nrpa.org](mailto:hwilliams@nrpa.org)

### **Submit Photos or News Coverage**

Audrey Fox  
Communications Specialist, NRPA  
703.858.2160  
[afox@nrpa.org](mailto:afox@nrpa.org)

We hope this toolkit helps you generate great support for Park and Recreation Month!

Thank you,

Cort, Heather and Audrey

## Park and Recreation Month 2019 Fact Sheet

- Our main goal with Park and Recreation Month is to promote the great opportunities and resources that local park and recreation agencies provide and to let the public know that July is a great time to get out and see all of the incredible things that are happening in their communities.
- During Park and Recreation Month, NRPA is encouraging park and recreation agencies to showcase the ways that they are engaging their community through the many fun and exciting things offered at local parks and recreation centers.
- With everything from summer camps to sports leagues to special events, Park and Recreation Month is the perfect time to highlight all of the different things you offer for people of all ages and abilities.
- In addition to visiting a park or recreation area during July, you can get involved in Park and Recreation Month by:
  - Using the [social media graphics](#) and the hashtag #GameOnJuly throughout the month.
  - Participating in the Park and Recreation Month Open House Day on July 20, 2019.
  - Downloading the official [Park and Recreation Month poster](#) and hanging it up, taking pictures with it or sharing copies of it with your community.
  - Participating in our weekly contests throughout the month of July.
- NRPA is featuring the winning photo of our Park and Recreation Month Cover Contest this July in *Parks & Recreation* magazine.
- You can learn more about Park and Recreation Month and find additional resources by visiting: [www.nrpa.org/July](http://www.nrpa.org/July).
- Join the conversation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) with the hashtag #GameOnJuly.

## NRPA 2019 Park and Recreation Month Key Messages

### General Key Messages

- Since 1985, Americans have celebrated Park and Recreation Month in July to promote the importance of parks and recreation in health and wellness, conservation and social equity, and to recognize the thousands of park and recreation employees that maintain our nation's local, state and community parks.
- Through efforts by NRPA, the U.S. House of Representatives passed an official resolution for Park and Recreation Month in 2009 and introduced the resolution in 2017 and 2018.
- Park and recreation agencies across the country are recognizing the month with summer programs, events, contests, commemorations and celebrations.
- Park and recreation services are vital for our communities — from protecting open space and natural resources, to helping fight obesity and providing activities and resources for all walks of life — Park and Recreation Month encourages everyone to reflect on the exponential value parks and recreation brings to communities.

### 2019 Key Messages

- This July, explore all the fun and games offered in local parks and recreation! With everything from summer camps to sports leagues and special events, there are plenty of ways to get in the game.
- July is the perfect time to get out and see the great things happening at your local parks and recreation centers and meet the people who make it all happen.
- It's *Game On* at your local parks and recreation center! We're celebrating Park and Recreation Month with the National Recreation and Park Association by highlighting all of the great ways to play and have fun with us this July.
- NRPA encourages all people that support parks and recreation to share the fun, games and other exciting things offered at their parks and recreation centers with the hashtag #GameOnJuly.
- For more information visit [www.nrpa.org/july](http://www.nrpa.org/july).

## *Supporting Key Messages*

### **Messages promoting support for parks and recreation:**

- According to a 2018 study conducted by Wakefield Research and commissioned by the National Recreation and Park Association, an overwhelming majority of Americans assert that they personally benefit from local parks and that their communities benefit from local parks.
  - Americans, on average, visit their local park and recreation facilities more than twice a month.
  - Three in four Americans live within a 10-minute walk of a local park or other recreational facility.
  - 85% of Americans consider high-quality park and recreation amenities important factors when choosing a new place to live.
  - More than nine in 10 Americans agree that parks and recreation is an important local government service.
  - Support for local parks is widespread, spanning different age groups, income strata, household types and political affiliations.

### **Messages promoting health and wellness benefits of parks and recreation:**

- The Centers for Disease Control found that increased access to places for physical activity led to a 25.6 percent increase in people exercising 3 or more times per week.
- Living close to parks and other recreation facilities is consistently related to higher physical activity levels for both adults and youth.
- On average, children who live in greener environments weigh less than children who live in less green areas.
- Children that have easy access to a playground are approximately five times more likely to have a healthy weight than children that do not have easy access to playgrounds.
- The nation's park and recreation facilities are on the frontline in the battle against the obesity epidemic and other chronic health issues.

### **Messages promoting environmental benefits of parks and recreation:**

- A park with one acre of trees absorbs the carbon dioxide produced by driving a car 11,000 miles.
- Parks do a great deal to contribute to species richness in urban settings — a review of more than 60 studies by IFPRA shows that there is strong evidence to support the concept that parks support both plant and animal biodiversity. This offers not only an important educational opportunity, but additionally supports overall ecosystem functionality.
- Parks reduce the impact of large storms and flooding by serving as sponges that soak up run off from nearby paved surfaces during rain events. This in turn prevents flooding and decreases property damage. Parks that are well-designed also reduce water usage by recycling and storing this water for use during times of low precipitation.

- Evidence not only shows that parks are cooler than their surrounding cities, but actually shows that parks contribute to overall urban cooling — parks make our cities more comfortable in the summer!
- According to a 2017 NRPA Park Pulse poll, 83% of Americans believe it is important that their local government makes environmental initiatives a priority.

**Messages promoting the economic benefits of parks and recreation:**

- According to a study conducted by the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University and the National Recreation and Park Association, America's local park agencies generated more than \$154 billion in economic activity and supported more than 1 million jobs from their operations and capital spending alone in 2015.

## Template Media Advisory

# [GROUP LOGO/LETTERHEAD]

### MEDIA ADVISORY

Media Contact:

[Contact Name]

[Agency Name]

[Phone]

[Email]

**[Agency Name] to Kick Off Park and Recreation Month at [Park/Facility Name]**  
***[Add a second-line description for a special appearance by VIP or specific highlight.]***

WHO/WHAT: [Name of major public officials or celebrities who are participating, as well as the number of people who will be in attendance.]

[List and briefly describe any programs or activities that will take place. Concentrate specifically on the highlights.]

WHEN: [Date/Time]  
[Be sure to mention individual start times for notable speakers/happenings.]

WHERE: [Location/Address]  
[Provide parking information, if relevant.]

WHY: Since 1985, America has celebrated July as Park and Recreation Month. A program of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the goal is to raise awareness of the vital impact that parks and recreation has on communities across the U.S.

This July, [Agency Name] is *Game On* for Park and Recreation Month. All month long, we'll be celebrating the fun and games that local parks and recreation offers to residents of all ages and abilities. For more information, go to [www.nrpa.org/july](http://www.nrpa.org/july) or search Twitter and Instagram using #GameOnJuly.

EDITOR'S NOTE: [Mention any opportunities for interesting visuals and tours. Provide onsite contact information.]

###

## Template 2019 Park and Recreation Month Press Release

# [GROUP LOGO/LETTERHEAD]

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

[Contact Name]

[Agency Name]

[Phone]

[Email]

### **This July, it's *Game On* at [Agency Name]**

*Month-long celebration highlights the fun and games of local parks and recreation*

[CITY, STATE ABRV] – [DATE] – Summer is here, which means it's time to get out and explore the great things happening at your local parks and recreation centers. This July, join in on the fun and games offered by local parks and recreation with [Agency Name] as they celebrate Park and Recreation Month. A variety of fun activities are planned for residents of all ages and abilities — including [list top activities].

[Agency Name] is celebrating Park and Recreation Month, an initiative of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), by inviting you to get in the game. With everything from [list examples of offerings], there are plenty of ways that you can celebrate with us!

[QUOTE from Agency leadership, discussing ways you impact your community through health and wellness, social equity, conservation, etc. and tie to the celebration of Park and Recreation Month.]

[Agency Name] will celebrate Park and Recreation Month through [provide brief summary of local activities].

NRPA encourages people that support parks and recreation to share why they think it's important with the hashtag #GameOnJuly.

To learn more about Park and Recreation Month, visit [Add local website information] and [www.nrpa.org/July](http://www.nrpa.org/July).

[Agency boilerplate/ "about" information]

### **About the National Recreation and Park Association**

The National Recreation and Park Association is a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all Americans have access to parks and recreation for health, conservation and social equity. Through its network of 60,000 recreation and park

professionals and advocates, NRPA encourages the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles, conservation initiatives and equitable access to parks and public space. For more information, visit [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org). For digital access to NRPA's flagship publication, *Parks & Recreation*, visit [www.parksandrecreation.org](http://www.parksandrecreation.org).

# # #

## 2019 Park and Recreation Month Social Media Materials

### *Social Covers and Badges*

You can find social media covers at <https://www.nrpa.org/events/july/toolkit/>. We encourage you to update your Facebook and Twitter pages with these images to show your support of Park and Recreation Month all throughout July!

### *Sample Social Media Posts*

If you have social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, here are some sample messages to generate awareness among your friends and followers. Customize these posts for Park and Recreation Month and feel free to develop some more on your own!

Tag NRPA in your posts, too.

- Facebook: @National Recreation and Park Association
- Twitter: @NRPA\_News
- Instagram: @nrpa

### **Official 2019 Park and Recreation Month Hashtags**

- #GameOnJuly

### **Sample posts for Facebook:**

- July is Park and Recreation Month and we're celebrating by highlighting all the fun and games (insert park/facility/agency name) has to offer! #GameOnJuly (insert activity photos)
- It's Game On at (Insert park/facility/agency name) for Park and Recreation Month. Did you know we offer (insert activities/programs) and more? #GameOnJuly (insert activity photo)
- Check out all the fun and games at (insert park/facility/agency name) #GameOnJuly (insert photos from activity)
- We're getting in the game with the @NationalRecreationandParkAssociation for Park and Recreation Month! (share toolkit poster image)
- Stop by (insert event location event and time) to help us celebrate Park and Recreation Month! #GameOnJuly (insert link to event details on your website)

### **Sample posts for Twitter:**

- It's Park and Recreation Month! Join us and @nrpa\_news as we celebrate! #GameOnJuly
- Check out all the fun and games at (insert your park/agency/facility)! #GameOnJuly (insert activity photo)
- We're celebrating the fun and exciting offerings at (insert your park/agency/facility). #GameOnJuly (insert photo of an activity)
- Find the perfect summer activity for you and every member of your family at (insert your park/agency/facility). #GameOnJuly (insert link to website or activity calendar)

- Help us celebrate Park and Recreation Month by stopping by our (event name/date/time)! #GameOnJuly (insert link to event details on your website)

### Sample posts for Instagram

- We're highlighting all the fun and exciting offerings at (insert park/facility/agency name) as we celebrate Park and Recreation Month with @nrpa! #GameOnJuly (tag your town or community as your location)
- Park and Recreation Month is the perfect time to find a summer activity at (insert park/facility/agency name) for you and your whole family! #GameOnJuly (tag your town or community as your location) (insert multiple activity photos)
- (Insert park/facility/agency name) is Game On for Park and Recreation Month with @nrpa! #GameOnJuly (tag your town or community as your location) (insert multiple activity photos)

### General Social Media Guidance

- **Polish Your Language**  
Even if you normally pay little attention to spelling and grammar, try to use good punctuation and spelling so that your messages will be easily understood. When posting on Twitter with character limits, try to rephrase your post versus just shortening and abbreviating words.
- **Be Consistent with Your Posts**  
Decide how often you plan to post and try to be consistent. Maybe you plan to post one Instagram post a day and three Facebook posts a week. You can increase your postings over time, just try to avoid posting 20 times in one day and then going ghost for two weeks.
- **Be Inclusive, Be Diverse and Be Positive**  
Use positive language that doesn't hurt others' feelings. Be respectful of those you take photos of, etc. Be sure to capture great moments outside your main area of work as well.
- **Use Photos and Videos**  
Photos and videos catch people's attention, but make sure you mix it up and post different types of photos, people, activities and events to keep your followers' interest. Free web and mobile apps like Canva ([www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com)) can help you create stylized photos that you can use too.
- **Think of What You Want Your Audience to Do and Shape Your Message Around That**  
You may not raise a lot of interest in a single tweet by simply inviting people to your parks or recreation centers, but you can give them specific things they can do to let them know why they should visit. Instead of just saying, "Come to X park," say, "Here are 5 things you and your family can do at X park."

## Template 2019 Park and Recreation Month Editorial Story Sample

Headline: **[Agency Name]** is *Game On* for Park and Recreation Month

Subhead: **Get in the game with us this July by (list a few planned activities here)**

Get ready to get in the game this July with **[Agency Name]** and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

Since 1985, America has celebrated July as the nation's official Park and Recreation Month. Created by NRPA, Park and Recreation Month specifically highlights the vital and powerful role local parks and recreation, such as **[Agency Name]**, play in conservation, health and wellness, and social equity efforts in communities all across the country.

This year, it's all about highlighting the fun, games and exciting offerings at your local parks and recreation centers. From providing special events to exciting sports leagues and everything in between, **[Agency Name]** has a wide variety of programs that are not only fun, they also bring the community together. NRPA and **[Agency Name]** are encouraging everyone to get out there and get in the game in their own way at their local parks and rec centers.

In **[city/town]**, you can celebrate Park and Recreation Month by **[complete sentence with local activities/ events /contests etc.]**.

"July is the perfect time to highlight all the benefits parks and recreation provides right here in **[city/town]**," said **[Agency Leader]**. Our local parks and recreation directly contribute to reduced obesity rates, an improved ecosystem and increased property values."

**[Agency name]** is leading initiatives and providing opportunities for people of all ages to achieve healthier lifestyles, promote and understand nature and conservation as well as bringing the community closer through a variety of programs and services. **[Add more details on any specific ways you make a difference in your community or any stats or success stories you may have that back up the impact you make.]**

NRPA also encourages everyone that supports parks and recreation to share how they are Game On for parks and recreation with the hashtag #GameOnJuly. For more information about Park and Recreation month, visit [www.nrpa.org/July](http://www.nrpa.org/July).

Learn about the exciting Park and Recreation Month activities planned for **[town/city name]** and more at **[Fill-in local contact information here]** or visit online at **[Fill-in local park website URL here]**.

## Media Outreach – “How To”

*The following are general guidelines for conducting media outreach for both special events you may be hosting in July and in general for Park and Recreation Month.*

### *Leveraging the Press Release*

To announce your involvement in Park and Recreation Month and what activities you will have going on throughout the month, customize the **Press Release** template and distribute it to appropriate reporters, bloggers and broadcast media in your local area.

1. Search online for the “**news desk**” emails and/or submission guidelines of your local TV stations and radio stations.
2. Search for the contact information for reporters and publications in your local area that cover topics related to parks, the outdoors and community affairs. Be sure to pitch to only one reporter from each newspaper/print agency. It is a good idea to review the stories the reporter writes to get a feel for what they are most interested in so that you can tailor your outreach to meet their interests. Most reporters prefer email.
3. Search online for bloggers in your area; these social media journalists are powerful influencers and can virally spread the word about the events you have going on for Park and Recreation Month.
4. Once you have your list together, prepare your pitches. Make sure you tailor the pitch for the type of outlet and personalize it as much as possible for the journalist or blogger you are contacting. Keep it brief.
5. You’ll want to send the release out at the end of June or beginning of July to journalists and reporters, and to TV/radio stations approximately two days before an event you want them to attend.
6. Customize the press release template with the appropriate information, as marked with brackets and yellow highlight, EX: [NAME].
7. You can distribute your press release on any newswires you subscribe to or use regularly. This will give you added visibility in news rooms and with online media.
8. In addition to wire distribution, reach out directly via email to journalists and bloggers. Insert your pitch and paste the text of the press release into the email.
9. Put an engaging tag line or sentence in the “Subject” line of the email to entice reporters.

10. Once you have sent your release, follow up with a phone call to reporters. Be sure to have a short pitch ready, and be prepared to answer questions about why your event or story is a “must see/cover.”

### *Using the Editorial Article Template*

Many local newspapers and online media outlets are very interested in receiving already written editorial content that they can instantly use in their outlets. The template editorial article is a great way to get coverage for your agency and what you are doing for Park and Recreation Month.

1. Contact your local community print publications and ask them if they take “drop in” articles or editorial content submissions.
2. Find out if they have any requirements such as a particular word count and preferences such as submission process and deadline. They may only take submissions on a certain day or require that submissions be made via an online entry form only.
3. If they take submissions, keep note of that in your records for the future. You may even want to explore the option of regularly contributing content from your agency.
4. Confirm the lead time, or time it takes for content to appear once submitted. You will want to make sure that you provide the article in enough time to the publication so that it appears timed to your event you may be highlighting or within the month of July.
5. Customize the sample editorial article with the appropriate information, as marked with brackets and yellow highlight, EX: [NAME].
6. Submit your completed article per the outlet’s instructions and confirm when you can expect to see the coverage in print or online.

### *Inviting Press to Your Event*

If you are hosting a special event during the month of July and would like to invite reporters to cover your event on site:

1. Search online for the “**news desk**” emails and/or submission guidelines of your local TV stations and radio stations.
2. Search for the contact information for reporters and publications in your local area that cover topics related to parks, the outdoors, and community affairs. Be sure to pitch to only one reporter from each newspaper/print agency. Most reporters prefer email.

3. Consider inviting local bloggers to your event as well or creating a special opportunity for them to come out and get sneak peek of your Park and Recreation Month event. These social media journalists are powerful influencers and can virally spread the word about the events you have going on for Park and Recreation Month.
4. It's a good idea to send Media Advisories to journalists and reporters at least two weeks in advance and to TV/radio stations approximately two days before an event.
5. Customize the media alert template with the appropriate information, as marked.
6. Write a brief, one-paragraph pitch to the reporter, and attach the Media Advisory as a PDF or Word Document, or paste the text into the email, beginning with "Media Advisory."
7. Put an engaging tag line or sentence in the "Subject" line of the email to entice reporters.
8. Once you have sent your Media Advisory, follow up with a phone call to reporters you are particularly interested in having attend. Be sure to have a short pitch ready, and be prepared to answer questions about why your event is a "must see."
9. Consider sending a post-event press release to generate coverage after the event. It is a good idea to send this immediately following the event or the next morning. Often times, this means drafting most of the release in advance, and adding a few pertinent details afterward.
10. Reach back out to the reporters that you previously contacted. If you can, offer footage from the event or high resolution photos.

### *Tips and Tactics*

- Remember that timeliness is a big factor in press coverage.
- Try to keep the message brief. One page is best — do not exceed two.
- Don't forget to add complete contact information. If a reporter is interested, they may wish to email or call you with questions or requests for clarification.
- Write using short paragraphs and sentences, and in the third person — don't refer to yourself as "I" or "we," except in a direct quote.
- Avoid testimonials or other promotional language. A press release is news; not advertising.

- Don't be discouraged if you do not receive interest, or if a reporter doesn't make it to your event. Reporters receive hundreds of press releases every day and cover news based on many factors (timeliness, the amount of current events taking place, space, editor approval, capacity, etc.). It's never personal.
- If a reporter does email or call with interest, be sure to respond in a timely manner.

***Let us know if your Park and Recreation Month event is covered in the news! Send links of online coverage to [cjones@nrpa.org](mailto:cjones@nrpa.org).***