





61,418 <u>B</u>



Data as of June 30, 2023

The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the leading not-forprofit organization dedicated to building strong, vibrant and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreation. With more than 60,000 members, NRPA advances this mission by investing in and championing the work of park and recreation professionals and advocates — the catalysts for positive change in service of equity, climate-readiness, and overall health and well-being.

NRPA is the voice for the park and recreation profession; we invest in and advocate for park and recreation professionals, because we know that an investment in parks and recreation is an investment in building communities that thrive. The evidence is in the data and the countless stories of everyday people whose lives are better because of their local parks.

Photo courtesy of Gwinnett Parks and Recreation

ABOUT THE NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

LETTER FROM THE CEO AND CHAIR OF THE BOARD

This past year, we traveled coast to coast to visit park and recreation professionals. We checked out new and innovative parks and programs, spoke at events, and stood alongside the members of this organization as they showed us firsthand how parks and recreation grows community.

In Seattle, we got to see how park and recreation professionals are growing community through an ambitious, multi-phased project — Waterfront Park.¹ While on a tour of the 20-acre project, an adult and child walked by, hand-in-hand, exploring the beach — a testament to how the park is a successful response to the overwhelming public desire for an open,, accessible waterfront.

The park will function as a Community Wellness Hub², a trusted gathering place where all people can connect to social services, access community programming, and experience countless health and well-being benefits. This amazing hub is delivering vital services to the environment by providing numerous ecological benefits like local fish habitat and removing pollutants from stormwater.

These visits with park and recreation professionals reinvigorate our spirit and reinforce our mission. We know and are driven by some powerful truths:

- Park quantity, quality and accessibility are predictors of overall well-being.³
- Climate-ready parks provide proven, cost-effective and sustainable environmental solutions.⁴
- A lack of green space correlates to a 33 percent higher rate of physician-diagnosed depression.⁵
- We have a nationwide epidemic of loneliness and isolation.⁶

For these truths and so many more challenges, park and recreation professionals provide a set of clear and effective solutions that NRPA continues to advance through funding, education and advocacy. That's why we worked with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on a guide that shows park and recreation professionals how to increase the use of parks, trails and greenways for **proven health benefits**. That's why we pioneered the concept of Community Wellness Hubs with funding, training and technical assistance to more than 175 communities.

From advancing stormwater resilience through parks in New Orleans to creating mentorship programs in Mount Airy, North Carolina, NRPA is ensuring that the people who strengthen and grow our communities have the resources, funding and research they need and deserve, as well as a community of their own.

We are in awe of the power of park and recreation professionals, and we're here to do everything we can to champion them. After all, parks and recreation is Where Community Grows.



KRISTINE STRATTON
NRPA President and CEO



CAROLYN MCKNIGHT FREDD, CPRP
Chair of the NRPA Board of Directors

Photo: An adult and child walk along Habitat Beach in Seattle, Washington — part of what will be the new Waterfront Park. Photo courtesy of Kristine Stratton, NRPA.

⁴ NRPA, bit.ly/3RvDQqK ⁵ NIH, bit.ly/44Z86xh ⁶ HHS, bit.ly/3PKXDRM

PARKS AND RECREATION: WHERE COMMUNITY GROWS

10K+ park and recreation agencies⁸



164K+

of local park and recreation agencies in the United States plus hundreds of thousands of part-time workers¹²

> 84% *** **合合合**合

of U.S. adults seek high-quality parks and recreation when choosing a place to live¹⁵ \$218B

in economic activity plus support for 1.3 million jobs⁹



9 in 10 U.S. adults want their local park and recreation agency to ensure all community members feel welcome¹³

280M+

people in the **United States** visited a local park or recreation facility during the past year¹⁶

7 in 10 **U.S. RESIDENTS**

have at least one local park, playground, open space or recreation center within walking distance of their homes¹⁰

40M YOUTH

participate in at least one local park and recreation program annually¹⁴





of U.S. adults want their local government to make investments that ensure children have access to safe and inclusive playgrounds¹¹



of U.S. adults support their local park and recreation agency implementing sustainability initiatives¹⁷

Photo courtesy of Adobe Stock



Isaac Alonso and his brother Abraham sit in front of their parents, Zacarias and Juana Alonso, after receiving the Park and Recreation Month proclamation made by the Glenwood Springs (Colorado) City Council. Photo courtesy of Glenwood Springs Parks and Recreation.

HOW WE GROW EQUITY IN PRACTICE



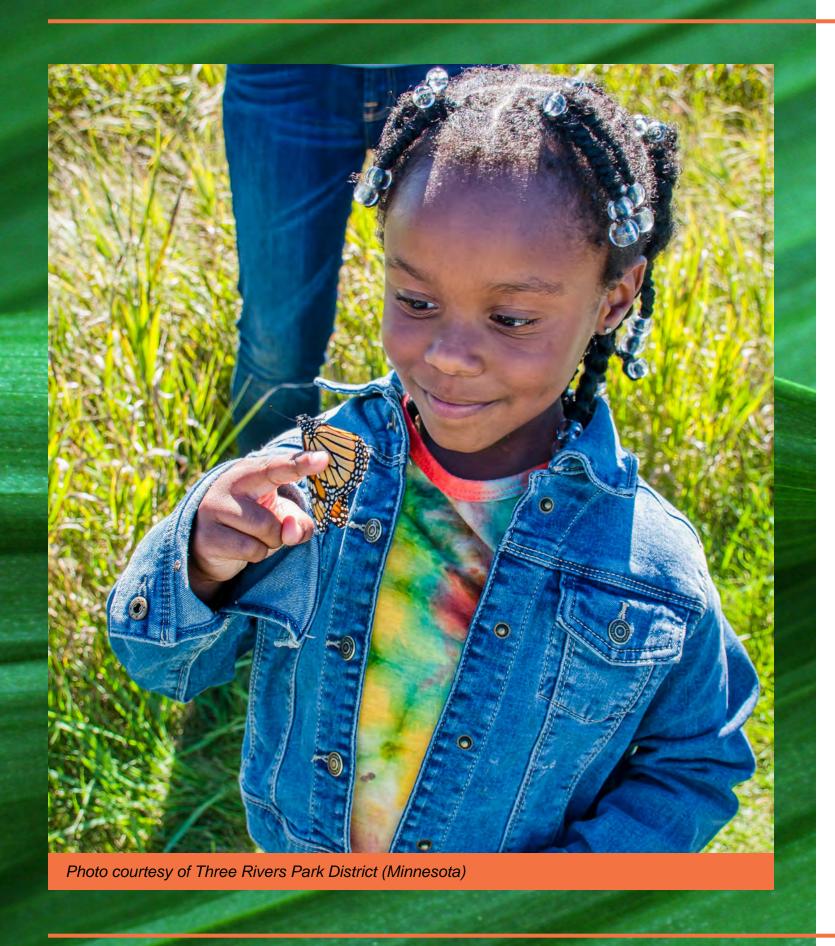
Every year, NRPA promotes July as Park and Recreation Month — a nationwide celebration that in 2023 reached a record-breaking 6 million social media impressions and 23 million traditional media impressions.

As part of this celebration, NRPA hosts a photo contest. If selected, the photo (and the story behind it) is featured on the front cover of the July issue of NRPA's Parks & Recreation magazine. This year's winning photo features Isaac Alonso, a participant in Glenwood Springs' (Colorado) therapeutic recreation program.

The story of Isaac, his family and the city's therapeutic recreation specialist, Helaine "Laine" Fabijanic, is a testimony to what park and recreation agencies can do when they are focused on inclusivity and equity.18

Winning this year's cover contest meant the world to Isaac and his family. They were even invited to share in the city council's proclamation of July as Park and Recreation month while holding a copy of the magazine featuring Isaac's photo on the cover.

This is what equity in practice looks like — working every day to ensure everyone has a place where they feel welcome. NRPA helps create this kind of inclusion across the country through its Equity in Practice online learning series and a host of other resources. 19 We do this because the only thing better than seeing this amount of joy from one family is replicating it everywhere.



"We have worked with the **National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) for the last** five years to build and maintain quality mentoring programs. I have continued to see growth, not just at NRPA, but through the work of their members in different communities. They value and embrace quality mentoring standards and benchmarks. NRPA is, and will continue to be, a national partner with us here at **MENTOR National.**"

Desireé Robertson,
Director of Training and Product Design
at MENTOR National



New Orleans is a city known for its vibrancy and deep cultural heritage. It is colorful and proud. Unfortunately, it has also weathered some of our country's worst storms and floods.²⁰ In spite of the challenges, New Orleans is using its parks to create spaces that improve climate resilience and provide equitable access to green space for all.²¹

New Orleans, one of NRPA's Resilient Park Access grantees, is using an equity lens as it participates in a citywide update to its master plan for green spaces.²² The plan includes turf management projects, planting 1,100 canopy trees, renovating recreation centers, and installing underground water reservoirs to store up to 5 million gallons of stormwater. With 4.2 acres of underground stormwater detention, it's the largest underground storage chamber system in the region.

With the history of flooding in New Orleans, it is imperative to create green infrastructure to help the city face natural disasters more efficiently and effectively. As the city works to combat these issues, they are ensuring they do so fairly — acting as a model for other park and recreation agencies doing this work. NRPA is both providing funding for this work and collecting lessons learned, sharing what we've learned from the bayou with all of you.

NRPA's Resilient Park Access program, supported by The JPB Foundation, aims to advance community-driven, systems-level strategies for equitable park access that improve the environmental resilience and health of communities through public parks and recreation.

Staff from New Orleans share plans for their stormwater resilience projects across the city, including a new athletic field that will include underground storage of up to 5 million gallons of stormwater. Photo courtesy of New Orleans Recreation Development Commission.

HOW WE GROW CLIMATE RESILIENCE

²⁰ NRPA, bit.ly/48nmAtN

²¹ NRPA, bit.ly/3ZqDL9F

²² New Orleans, bit.ly/3Pr6x5p



Forming and growing social connections isn't just about creating a space to gather. While the spaces are vitally important and will bring people together, our park and recreation professionals meet people where they are by providing high-quality programs and services. When it comes to youth development, many young people just need a bright star to provide a guiding light.²³

Throughout the past four years, NRPA has supported five communities in rural central Appalachia through the Mentoring in Parks and Recreation initiative.²⁴ This program builds effective mentorship programs that connect youth with caring and compassionate adults and strengthen connections across the community through social, church, sports and community groups. These mentor relationships and community connections provide a stronger foundation for the youth participants to grow and thrive.

At the end of the grant period, 133 mentees and 131 mentors participated in these programs with 42 percent of mentees demonstrating positive increases in their ability to share openly with the adults in their lives. Building on this success, NRPA will expand this work by supporting 10 new agencies in New England and broader Appalachian regions to develop youth mentoring initiatives, and \$2.4 million in new funding will be allocated to an additional 40 agencies to support 9,000 youth through 2025.²⁵

These awards are supported by Grants #2018-JU-FX-0036, #2020-JY-FX-0002, #15PJDP-22-GG-03735-MENT and 15PJDP-22-GG-03844-MENT awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice.

FACH

FORT

FACH

FORT

A mentor and mentee celebrate the catch of a fish as part of the Mount Airy (North Carolina) Parks and Recreation GRANITE Youth Mentorship Program. Photo Courtesy Mount Airy Parks and Recreation.

HOW WE GROW COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

²³ NRPA, bit.ly/48oP6Lu

²⁴ NRPA, bit.ly/44YxUK3

²⁵ NRPA, bit.ly/46j6Bva



Attendees at the 2022 NRPA Annual Conference in Phoenix wait to enter the exhibit hall. Photo courtesy of Caught in the Moment Photography

HOW WE GROW OUR COMMUNITY



Park and recreation agencies and professionals create and nurture community connections — connections that have never been more important. It's what they do best. But these community heroes need someone who champions them. That's where NRPA comes in. NRPA not only supports park and recreation professionals through the grants and technical assistance described in the stories in this report, we also provide resources, research, education, advocacy and — most important of all — community.

The best example of this community is at the NRPA Annual Conference. The 2022 NRPA Annual Conference brought more than 8,000 park and recreation professionals, suppliers and allies together in Phoenix and virtually. Attendees had access to nearly 400 industry exhibitors, networking events and more than 200 education sessions, including a keynote address by Dr. Sanjay Gupta, chief medical correspondent for CNN.

"The NRPA Annual Conference is my favorite week of the year," says Jay Tryon, superintendent of community recreation, Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation in Charlotte, North Carolina. "I look forward to the conference every year and return home motivated and energized to continue to grow our teams and improve the lives we serve. When you bring thousands of passionate professionals together, amazing things happen, and impacts we make every day become known and shared so we can continue to serve."

MEMBERSHIP MAP

NRPA represents more than 60,000 park and recreation professionals and advocates in urban communities, rural settings and everywhere in between. NRPA champions and supports the field of parks and recreation through professional development, advocacy, grants and programs, research, publications and more.

• 60,000+ NRPA members

• \$3,688,150 invested in communities

• 194 communities supported

• **688,749** people impacted through partnerships, including:

• 83% people living in low-income households

• 45% people of color

• 25% Hispanic or Latino

3,567 new certifications awarded to park and recreation professionals

• 22,816 online course registrations delivered

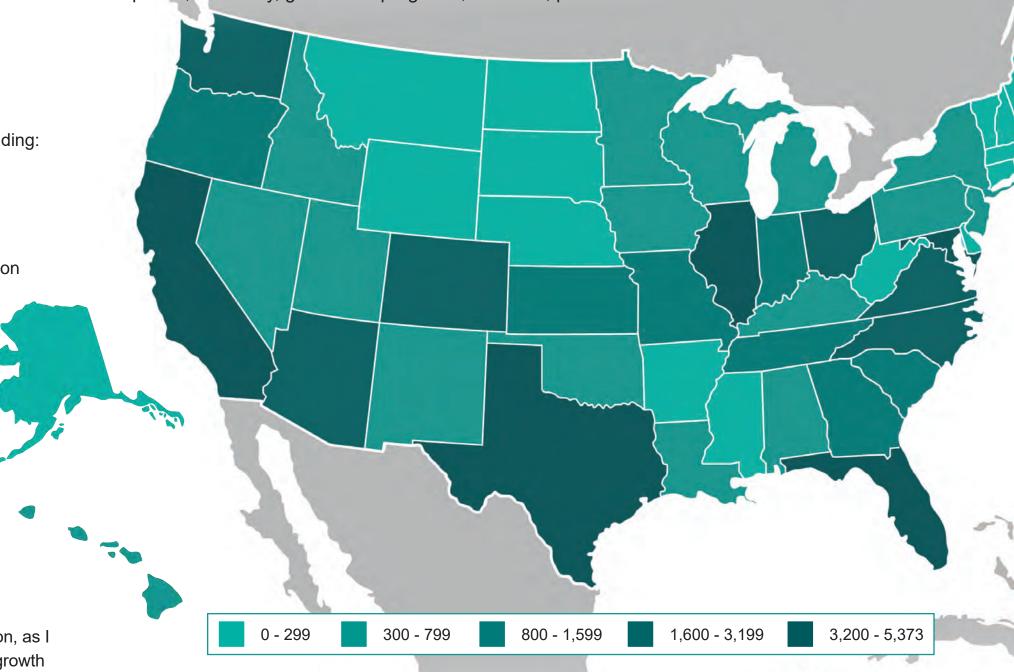
192 total CAPRA accredited agencies

"[CAPRA] is a blueprint for success to get us where we need to be, to make sure we were using best practices — not just updating our existing policies and procedures but identifying what our deficiencies are and enabling us to correct those."

Michael Wargo, CPRP, executive director, Willamalane Park and Recreation District (Oregon)²⁷

"It took me some years to finally get started on my certification, as I was really focused on developing as a leader and pursuing growth opportunities.... No one really loves tests, but it was worth it. Everyone — and I do mean everyone — in our industry recognizes it."

Kelli Beavers, CPRP, director of recreation, parks, and tourism, Charles County (Maryland) Government²⁸



"I call up other grantees all the time asking, 'What's going on and how do y'all deal with this?'...

None of that would have been possible without the NRPA initial training."

Tony Maxwell, Director of Instructional Services, Middlesboro Independent Schools (Kentucky)²⁹

²⁷ NRPA, bit.ly/3PsHcs9

²⁸ NRPA, bit.ly/3PjJo

²⁹ NRPA, bit.ly/3Znh5qO

KEY PROGRAM AREAS



Equity in Practice

Equity is at the center of all we do. We estimate that as many as 100 million people — 30 percent of the U.S. population — lack access to the lifesaving and life-enhancing benefits parks and recreation provides. We cannot rest until we close the gap and ensure all can benefit.



Climate Resilience

Resilient and climate-ready communities depend on park and recreation facilities. Park and recreation professionals are one of the largest groups of land managers in the nation, with 11 million acres, and are key to climate change solutions.



Health and Well-Being

All people must have access to the spaces and services that improve individual and community-level health outcomes and enhance quality of life. Park and recreation professionals are key to a fully integrated public health system.



Research

NRPA is the ultimate resource for best practices, case studies and comprehensive data about and for the field of parks and recreation. Our research offerings and publications are the best source for park and recreation insights.



Certification and Accreditation

NRPA offers four certification programs for park and recreation professionals, as well as accreditation for park and recreation agencies. These programs demonstrate our field's commitment to the highest standards of ethical and professional practice.



Education

NRPA provides the most robust learning opportunities available to park and recreation professionals, including the nation's largest park and recreation conference. From an extensive online learning catalogue to in-person schools and award-winning publications, we are preparing the profession for the future.



Advocacy

NRPA's Public Policy team advocates for federal policies and funding to ensure lasting investment in parks and recreation, as well as trains park and recreation professionals to be effective advocates at the local and state level.



Movement Building

Park and recreation professionals are experts in creating community, and NRPA is an expert at giving them a community of their own. We provide members with spaces to collaborate, learn, grow, and celebrate together. We promote the field through annual celebrations, like Park and Recreation Month.

OUR SUPPORTERS



Corporate, Foundation, **Government and Individual Philanthropic Partners**

Our partners share our vision for a future where the full power of parks and recreation is recognized for creating a better life for everyone. Our partners invested more than \$3,688,150 in parks and recreation in 2023.



Business Council

Centered on research, relationship-building, advocacy and innovation, the NRPA Business Council brings together company leaders to explore, share and deploy solutions that improve parks and recreation. In 2023, we had 13 companies representing 28 industry/product categories of the park and recreation business sector.



Stewards for the Future

Stewards include NRPA in their estate plans and, as of September 2023, have committed more than \$10.5 million in bequests and contingent residual gifts to preserve access to vibrant parks and recreation for generations to come.



Industry Supporters

Industry Supporters sponsor and exhibit at the NRPA Annual Conference; advertise in Parks & Recreation magazine and our digital properties; sponsor research, education opportunities and awareness campaigns; and support the creation of innovative products and services.



NRPA President and CEO Kristine Stratton and National Park Service Director Chuck Sams sign an agreement to advance excellence in park and recreation management and equity.

Strategic Partnerships

NRPA strategically collaborates with federal government agencies and nongovernmental organizations to advance our mission and extend our reach. Examples of these partnerships include advancement of park and recreation management with the National Park Service,30 advancing equitable access to parks with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,³¹ supporting mentorship programs with MENTOR,32 and improving health and well-being with the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health.33

THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

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Aquatics International

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AQUAWORX

Arizona State University

Artificial Ice Events/Fall Fest Events

ATA Group Inc. Athletic Business Away With Geese

Background Investigation Bureau

(BIB) P
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BCI Burke

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Cadron Creek Play

NRPA thanks our supporters for helping to build strong, healthy and resilient communities for all people through parks and recreation during this past year (July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023).

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Mark Alan Young

*Includes a memorial or tribute donation

We regret any errors or omissions. For corrections, please contact development@nrpa.org.

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Stewards for the Future

NRPA thanks the following individuals who have included NRPA in their estate plans as of June 30, 2023.

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Zeshun Cai

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Incoming and outgoing NRPA Board of Directors at the annual fall meeting, which coincides with the NRPA Annual Conference. Photo courtesy of Caught in the Moment

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