


EVERY PARK. EVERY PERSON. EVERY PLACE.



NRPA National Recreation
and Park Association

Because everyone deserves a great park

2018 Annual Report



The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the leading nonprofit dedicated to the advancement of public parks. We work to ensure all parks in all places are benefiting all people. We partner with our network of 60,000 park and recreation members to strengthen communities by offering equitable access to healthy activities and safe play spaces and protecting our natural resources. Parks are essential to healthy lifestyles, vibrant communities and a healthy environment, but not everyone has a great park.

PHOTO CREDIT:

Cover:

Summer Camp Celebration at Liberty Park.
Town of Mooresville Parks & Recreation,
North Carolina

Back Cover:

Jazz Concert in Freedom Park.
Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation,
North Carolina

This page:

River Festival on Mississippi River.
Three Rivers Park District, Minnesota

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NRPA President and CEO Barbara Tulipane, CAE, speaks at the 2018 NRPA Annual Conference in Indianapolis.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

EVERY PARK. EVERY PERSON. EVERY PLACE.

Because everyone deserves a great park. It's easy to say – not so easy to accomplish. In today's volatile political climate and with crises like the opioid epidemic, climate change, immigration debates and the fight for human rights, parks could seem like something to be prioritized for another day.

While parks and recreation is often overlooked as a solution to these crises, it is in fact on the front lines offering creative and cost-effective solutions. Safe needle exchange programs are offered in parks to minimize contagious diseases. Parks are replacing gray infrastructure with green for cleaner water, and parks are restoring urban forests for cleaner air. Parks are building living shorelines to minimize the destruction from sea-level rise, making communities more climate resilient. Parks connect people – creating a bond that is the crucial element for a community's ability to rebound from natural disasters.

I am proud of the work NRPA and our field have accomplished this past year. Despite an increasing number of challenges, we have continued to pursue our goal of ensuring that everyone has a great park – not just in spite of the crises, but because of them.

Building and maintaining parks require funding, political will and community support – all things that are often lacking in today's communities. It's hard work, but the rewards are worth it. Parks are a place of acceptance, where everyone is welcome regardless of who they are or what they have. Our nation was built on the principle of equality and parks exemplify this belief today. Parks are a place where *everyone* is welcomed.

Sincerely,



Barbara Tulipane, CAE
President and Chief Executive Officer



Futsal soccer at Judkins Park.
Seattle Parks and Recreation, Washington

EVERY IMPACT MATTERS

**1.2 MILLION INDIVIDUALS REACHED
THROUGH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS**

680,000

**PEOPLE WITH GREATER ACCESS
TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

300,000

PEOPLE CONNECTED TO NATURE

**7.2 MILLION
HEALTHY MEALS SERVED**

**\$4.3 MILLION IN
GRANTS DISBURSED**

**12,000 REGISTRATIONS FOR
NRPA ONLINE COURSES AND WEBINARS**

**3,800 CONTINUING EDUCATION
UNITS OBTAINED BY THE FIELD**

**910 COMMUNITIES
BENEFITED**

**60,000
MEMBERS**

**12 MILLION GALLONS
OF STORMWATER DIVERTED**



Falls Park
City of Greenville, South Carolina



EVERY PARK



Kids and counselors test out the play equipment.
Sarasota County Parks, Recreation and Natural
Resources, Florida

EVERY PARK IS AN ECONOMIC DRIVER

The mere existence of a park provides benefits – carbon pollution offset, stormwater management, native species habitat – all of which have a tangible value. Make an investment in a park and watch the ROI multiply.

We know parks, open space and facilities increase real estate values and improve quality of life, but these amenities are also driving corporate placemaking. According to a recent survey in *Area Development*, three-quarters of corporate executives rate quality-of-life features as important factors when choosing a location for a headquarters, factory or other company facility.

It's not just placemaking and environmental benefits either. Local parks generate more than \$154 billion in U.S. economic activity and support more than 1.1 million jobs, according to NRPA's *Economic Impact of Local Parks Report* released in March 2018.

We know every park is important – and each one is paying off in more ways than one. When we pair these economic benefits with intentional community placemaking and thoughtful planning, investment in parks and recreation becomes a no-brainer.

Eighty-five percent of people seek high-quality park and recreation amenities when they choose a place to live.

– 2018 NRPA *Americans' Engagement with Parks Report*

EVERY PARK CAN BUILD CLIMATE- RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Eighty-seven percent of people agree that their local government and park and recreation department should invest in their communities' natural disaster resiliency efforts.

—2017 NRPA *Americans' Engagement with Parks Report*

Our climate is rapidly changing. According to a recent report by Environment America, 96 percent of the U.S. population was affected by federally declared weather-related disasters since 2010. Especially susceptible to these challenges are some of our most vulnerable communities – including low-income neighborhoods and communities of color that suffer from a history of discriminatory policies, failing infrastructure and a lack of access to quality green space.

Local parks are key to climate change mitigation and adaptation. Not only do they work to mitigate the health impacts of climate change and enhance the ability of parkland to store carbon, process stormwater and combat urban heat islands, but park and recreation agencies are also playing an increased role in disaster response. From setting up shelters to restoring ecosystems, parks and recreation is becoming a leader in creating resilient communities.

NRPA is committed to elevating the role of parks and recreation in protecting our communities against the effects of climate change. By ensuring that our industry has access to information and tools that allow for data-driven planning and decision making, funds for green stormwater infrastructure, and connections to climate change leaders and partners – every park can play a key role in the climate resiliency of the communities they serve.



Kids enjoy Ambrose Kennedy Park, which was revitalized with green infrastructure through funding from NRPA's Great Urban Parks Campaign.
*Parks and People Foundation
Baltimore, Maryland*



Park Champion events are held throughout the country in support of local parks and recreation.



EVERY PARK IS AN ADVOCATE

In our current challenging political environment, it is easy to become jaded, but NRPA is encouraging park and recreation professionals to take a fresh approach to advocating for vital federal funding and legislature.

NRPA's Park Champion initiative, now in its fourth year, highlights the importance of inviting federal legislators to visit parks, programs and facilities for a first-hand view of their impact on the community. It's harder to overlook the truth when policymakers see the influence of local parks and recreation for themselves.

To date, more than 1,350 NRPA members and community advocates have stepped up as Park Champions, amplifying the voice of NRPA's public policy team throughout the country. As a result, several top NRPA priorities – all of which were targeted for elimination by the President's budget – benefited with historic success.

- The Land and Water Conservation Fund State Assistance Program was funded at its highest level since 1981 at \$124 million.
- The 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program was funded at \$1.2 billion, an increase of \$20 million.
- The Community Development Block Grant Program was funded at \$3.3 billion, a boost of \$300 million.
- The Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grants were funded at \$1.5 billion, up \$500 million.

“The Park Champion initiative helps us to understand the needs of our community, build trust with community members and connect citizens to government services. It helps us bridge the gap between the local and federal level. It is a win-win for all sides.”

—Som Subedi, Program Coordinator, Parks for New Portlanders



Summer friendships form at Hall Quarry Beach.
Batavia Park District, Illinois



EVERY PERSON



Community Park
Anthem Community Council, Arizona

EVERY PERSON IS WELCOME

Safety and inclusion should be a basic right for every person. Park and recreation facilities have long been places where all should be welcome, but unintentional barriers can prevent true inclusion from happening.

To ensure every member of every community feels welcome at their park and recreation facilities, NRPA has developed resources and technical assistance for park and recreation professionals. This initiative, Parks for Inclusion, places an emphasis on reaching people of color, those who identify as LGBTQ+, people with physical or cognitive disabilities and new Americans.

In February 2018, NRPA released its *Parks and Recreation Inclusion Report* which found that while park and recreation professionals agree that their facilities and services should be available to all, they may lack the resources to make that a reality. NRPA continues to expand the resources for the Parks for Inclusion initiative, including online tools, microgrant opportunities and policy guidelines. And progress is being made. In the past year, NRPA improved health and wellness opportunities for more than 890,000 individuals in the identified target groups.

Seventy-four percent of park and recreation agencies offer programming and services to individuals with disabilities.

—2018 Parks and Recreation Inclusion Report

EVERY PERSON CAN GET THEIR PLAY ON

**Park and Recreation Month
generated more than
25 million social media
impressions.**

The breadth and depth of the role park and recreation professionals play in their communities isn't widely known. Many community members would be surprised to learn that in addition to maintaining clean parks and running community sports leagues, the park and recreation department hosts town festivals, ensures biodiversity in parkland, mentors at-risk youth, cares for older adults and much, much more.

That's why we take one month each year to celebrate this critical profession.

In July 2017, we celebrated Park and Recreation Month by encouraging everyone to get their play on. Park and recreation departments in every region of the country celebrated by hosting events, sharing the same messaging and highlighting why it's important for people of all ages to take time out to play.

Park and Recreation Month is a time to celebrate great parks and the hard work it takes to create them. It's essential that our communities, elected officials and stakeholders recognize the many critical roles park and recreation professionals take on each and every day.



Skate Park
St. Charles Park District, Illinois



Photo Credit: Mae Wolf



Top: Nishinomiya Tsutakawa Japanese Garden
in Manito Park
Spokane, Washington
Left: Red Maple Park
Durham Parks and Recreation, North Carolina
Right: Walking Program
Baltimore County, Maryland



EVERY PERSON DESERVES TO BE HEALTHY

While parks and recreation has served the older adult population for some time, the growing percentage of older adults in our country is increasing the need for health and wellness services outside the healthcare setting. In addition to fitness classes and social opportunities, park and recreation agencies provide meals, nutrition classes and wellness resources to their older adult populations.

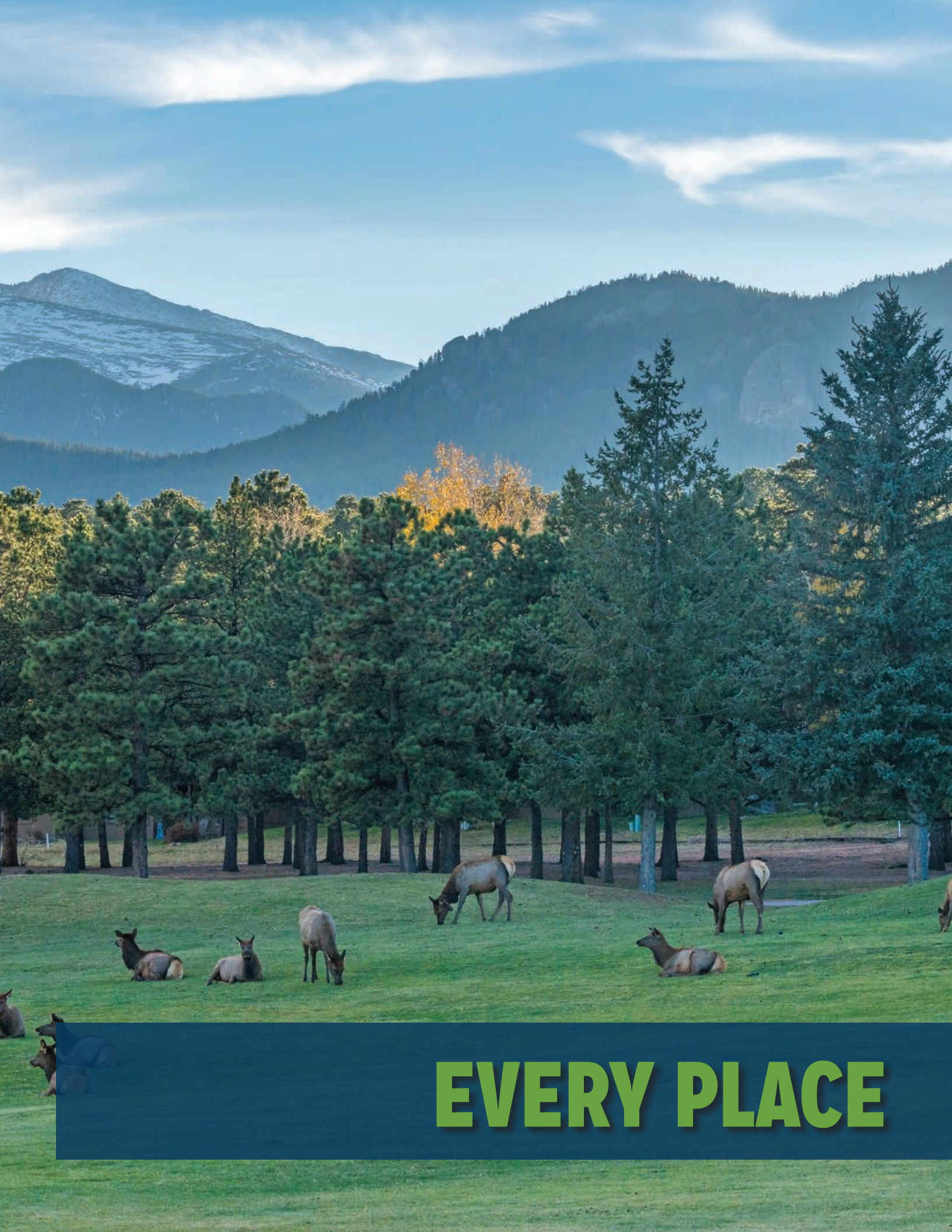
This past year, NRPA worked with park and recreation agencies in Westminster, Colorado, and Shreveport, Louisiana, on community-integrated health services. These two park and recreation agencies partnered with healthcare organizations to identify and refer older adults with chronic conditions to evidenced-based physical activity programs provided by the park and recreation departments.

These types of partnerships are changing the landscape of how and when healthcare is being delivered. They are making it easier and more accessible for patients to treat the cause and symptoms of their conditions. This type of community-based healthcare is the future – and parks and recreation is leading the way.

More than 240 park and recreation departments have actively engaged older adults in CDC-recommended physical activity programming – reaching more than 15,000 participants.



Elk meet during mating season on the
Estes Park 18-Hole Golf Course.
*Estes Valley Recreation and Park District,
Colorado*



EVERY PLACE



Photo Credit: Matt Bradley

NRPA awarded nearly \$500,000 to 12 cities to help them achieve a 10-minute walk to parks for all of their residents.



Top: Animas River Trail
Durango, Colorado
Bottom: Wheelchair Basketball
Pearland Parks & Recreation, Texas

EVERY PLACE DESERVES ACCESSIBLE PARKS

No matter where you live or who you are, you should be able to access a great park within a 10-minute walk from home. More than 100 million Americans lack access to a nearby park and many more lack parks that provide quality resources and benefits. Without access to great parks, people lose opportunities for physical activity, community connection, improved mental health and the many other benefits local, public parks provide.

In fall of 2017, NRPA, along with The Trust for Public Land (TPL) and the Urban Land Institute (ULI), launched the 10-Minute Walk Campaign. Through the campaign, NRPA, ULI and TPL are driving the movement to get mayors and other city officials to increase long-term support for parks. In this past year, more than 200 bipartisan mayors have signed on to support the vision.

In addition to mayoral support, NRPA and its partners are creating transformative change in park systems by providing grants, technical assistance, communication support, peer networking and more. Together, these resources are increasing dedicated funding, empowering communities to actively plan our future parks and creating policies that ensure everyone has a great park within a 10-minute walk of home.

More than 200 bipartisan mayors have signed on to support access to a park within a 10-minute walk of home for their residents.

EVERY PLACE IS TOUCHED BY NRPA MEMBERS

More than 21,000 certifications are being maintained by professionals – demonstrating commitment to the highest standards of ethical and professional practice in parks and recreation.

With more than 60,000 members stretching from Alaska to Florida and internationally from Canada to Australia, NRPA members are making their mark in the field and on the world. The roles NRPA members take on are as diverse as the communities they serve, but one thing is certain – they are creating healthier, more vibrant places to live each and every day.

Creating great parks takes a lot of hard work. Not just through physical labor or long hours spent at the office, but also through constant professional development, best practices and research. NRPA ensures that park professionals have access to the latest resources through online learning, in-person events and trainings, certifications, accreditations and its online community, NRPA Connect.

NRPA members work tirelessly to improve their communities through everything that they do, and NRPA is supporting them every step of the way.



2018 NRPA Annual Conference in Indianapolis.



Participants in the Parks After Dark Program.
Los Angeles County Department of Parks and
Recreation, California

EVERY PLACE IS DISCOVERING PARKS AND RECREATION'S IMPACT

As a national organization, NRPA uses its position to spread the message about the power of parks and recreation to every place possible. Through *Parks & Recreation* magazine, the Open Space Radio podcast, media outreach and social media marketing efforts, we bring the national spotlight to local parks and recreation.

Regularly securing news stories in publications, like *The Huffington Post*, *USA Today* and *The New York Times*, NRPA also promotes the field through creative marketing efforts.

In 2018, NRPA launched a makeover of its national awards by introducing the Innovation Awards – a way to honor park and recreation agencies that are innovatively serving their communities through health and wellness, conservation, social equity and park design. NRPA chose winners for each category, but left it to the public to decide which agency was the most innovative. In its inaugural year, the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation took home the Best in Innovation award for its Parks After Dark Program that gives at-risk youth a safe place to be.

**1.3 BILLION PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH
PRINT AND ONLINE MEDIA.**





Youth investigate nature in Founders Park at
Campbell Station.
Town of Farragut, Tennessee



EVERY FUTURE



Participants in the Parks After Dark Program.
*Los Angeles County Department of Parks and
Recreation, California*

EVERY FUTURE RELIES ON PARKS

Analysts aren't softening the blow when it comes to forecasting the future – our world is living through times that require urgent human intervention to major issues, like climate change, opioid addiction, immigration debates and more. Government agencies and nonprofits from every sector are jumping in to help, but parks and recreation is in the unique position to be on the front line of them all.

This year, 1.2 million individuals were reached through NRPA's partnership programs.

Coastal park and recreation agencies are creating parks that can withstand significant flooding and help communities recover faster after natural disasters. As the largest holders of open space in urban environments, parks and recreation will be an essential player in creating the climate-resilient city.

From rural America to the buzzing metropolis, the opioid epidemic is forcing everyone to take notice. Park and recreation professionals are providing safe needle disposal and exchange programs in parks, administering Naloxone to reverse overdoses and helping refer opioid users to treatment services in their communities. Serving on the front lines of this epidemic, parks and recreation will also play a role through upstream prevention efforts aimed at providing mentoring support and services to youth impacted by opioids.

The future holds many challenges for the world, but there is also hope. And NRPA knows no better horse to place a bet on than the field of parks and recreation.



4th of July Spectacular
City of Riverside Parks, Recreation
and Community Services Department, California

EVERY PARTNER HELPS

WHY PARTNER WITH NRPA?

NRPA boasts more than 50 years of experience working with corporate and philanthropic leaders, municipal officials and dedicated individuals to:

- Impact local communities
- Reach into every community to make a national impact
- Expand evidence-based programs across communities of all sizes and demographics
- Offer opportunities for community and employee engagement
- Lead in facilitating community-oriented park improvement projects

To learn more about partnering with NRPA, contact Vice President of Programs Kellie May at 703.858.2176 or kmay@nrpa.org.

GIVE TO NRPA AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Public funding alone will never be enough to pay for the great parks our communities deserve. From improving childhood nutrition to creating healthy, sustainable communities, your gift to NRPA makes a difference:

- Provide summer meals and activities to children in low-income, underserved areas
- Enable communities to make much-needed park improvements and build new parks
- Provide scholarships and fellowships to park and recreation professionals and students
- Fund advocacy efforts on behalf of parks on Capitol Hill

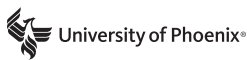
NRPA relies on partnerships to help expand our impact.

To contribute, visit: nrpa.org/Donate



A young boy practices his balance and coordination.
Schaumburg Park District, Illinois

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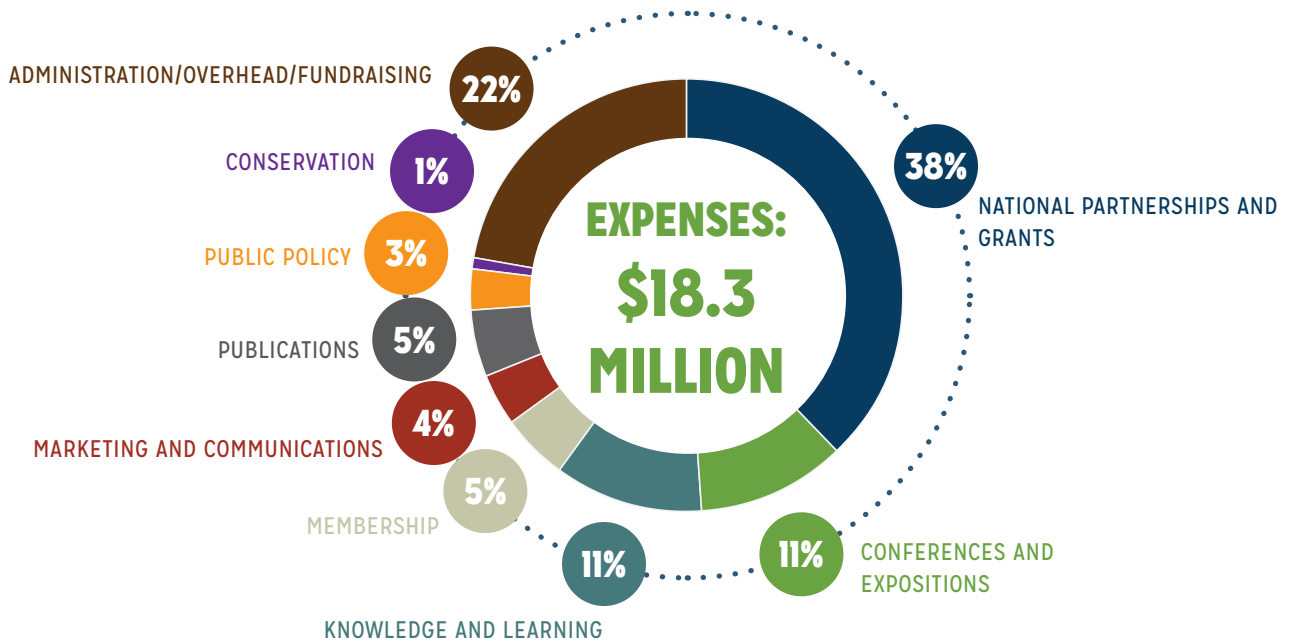
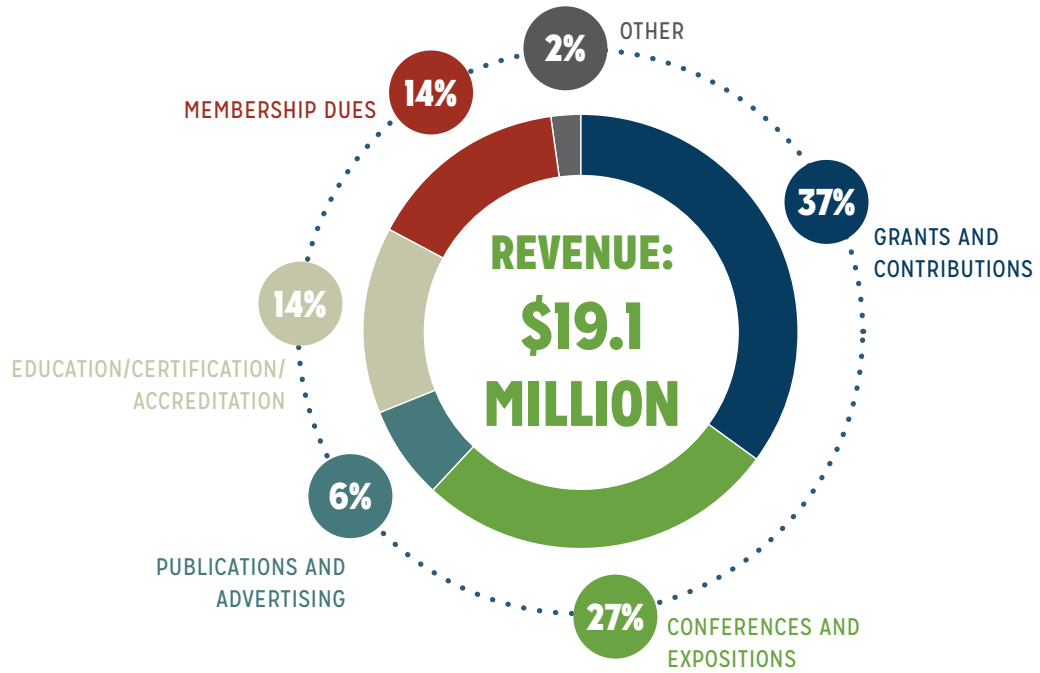
Howell Wechsler

OUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

REVENUE	2018		2017	
Grants and Contributions	7,142,152	37%	6,827,751	38%
Conferences and Expositions	5,064,459	27%	4,523,834	26%
Publications and Advertising	1,217,405	6%	1,055,050	6%
Education/Certification/Accreditation	2,659,958	14%	2,388,705	14%
Membership Dues	2,714,604	14%	2,421,040	14%
Other	333,541	2%	350,809	2%
TOTAL REVENUE	19,132,119	100%	17,567,189	100%

EXPENSES	2018		2017	
National Partnerships and Grants	6,873,633	38%	6,686,763	39%
Conferences and Expositions	2,098,874	11%	1,920,471	11%
Knowledge and Learning	2,022,695	11%	1,826,252	11%
Membership	894,374	5%	910,626	5%
Marketing and Communications	810,926	4%	695,082	4%
Publications	876,277	5%	820,782	5%
Public Policy	620,183	3%	594,747	3%
Conservation	161,941	1%	149,037	1%
TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICE EXPENSES	14,358,903	78%	13,603,760	79%
Administration/Overhead/Fundraising	3,967,426	22%	3,565,336	21%
TOTAL EXPENSES	18,326,329	100%	17,169,096	100%

NET ASSETS	2018		2017	
Change in Net Assets	442,858		137,241	
Net Assets Beginning of Year	9,456,229		9,318,989	
NET ASSETS END OF YEAR	9,899,087		9,456,229	





Kids show their strength.
St. Charles Park District, Illinois

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