

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HILDA L. SOLIS

JULY 7, 2026

Proclaiming July 2026 as Parks Make Life Better! Month

Across the state of California, July is recognized as “Parks Make Life Better!” Month in celebration of the important role parks and open space play in community wellbeing. The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (LA County Parks) serve as both the local municipal parks and recreation agency for unincorporated communities and the regional park system for more than 10 million residents. While parks are widely recognized as places of celebration, recreation, and connection with nature, they also serve as a foundational element of the County’s safety net infrastructure—providing stability, support, and essential services in times of community need, crisis, and recovery. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, 85 percent of park and recreation agencies are at the forefront of their communities’ emergency response.

LA County Parks stewards more than 31,000 acres of parkland, including 185 parks, nine regional parks, 38 neighborhood parks, 20 community parks, 16 wildlife sanctuaries, eight nature centers, 44 public swimming pools, 25 splash pads, 14 lakes including three with swimming beaches, more than 240 miles of multi-use trails, and the largest municipal golf system in the nation with 20 golf courses across 18 facilities. LA

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County Parks also maintains four botanical centers—the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanic Garden, the South Coast Botanic Garden, Descanso Gardens, and Virginia Robinson Gardens—and owns iconic cultural assets such as the Hollywood Bowl and The Ford. This wide range of facilities ensures that every community has a place to gather, grow, and thrive.

Parks are here in the Hard Times

LA County Parks stands with communities in the hard times. The last 24 months have been particularly challenging. From budget reductions to destructive wildfires, to the federal shutdown, to communities destabilized by heightened immigration enforcement, and environmental justice issues, LA County Parks, in lockstep with the Board of Supervisors, various County departments and community and private partners, has stood with residents through each moment.

When emergencies, climate driven events, or community disruptions arise, LA County Parks is uniquely positioned to center its response on children and families. Park sites quickly transition into safe spaces where residents can find stability and support from park and recreation professionals trained in trauma informed care and emergency response.

This capacity to mobilize quickly and provide support was especially evident during the Eaton Fire. When the 2025 Fire devastated Altadena, LA County Parks launched Care Camp within 72 hours, creating immediate, trauma informed refuge for children while families navigated recovery. Over three weeks Care Camp served more

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than 2,700 youth and delivered over 36,00 meals. More than 80 partner community-based organizations contributed field trips, donations, and over 300 workshops and performances—bringing moments of healing through play during profound upheaval.

Similarly, during the federal government shutdown this past winter, LA County Parks again demonstrated its responsiveness by expanding food safety net programs. LA County Parks provided food assistance by expanding free meal programs at parks. More than 20,000 residents were served through the expanded senior meals, youth lunches and snacks, and teen suppers. Additionally, four park sites operated food distribution centers, providing nearly 4,000 free meal kits to families facing food insecurity.

In several instances, LA County Parks staff faced challenges when ICE agents entered County parks, disrupting normal operations. To ensure public safety and uninterrupted access to essential services, LA County Parks provided transportation for residents so they could continue participating in critical programs such as senior activities and meal services. LA County Parks advanced new public safety strategies and became the first agency to establish a Park Ambassador Program. This innovative model was later shared with cities throughout the County.

After several violent incidents involving Our SPOT teens in the evening, LA County Parks responded with a transportation program for teens. LA County Parks provides transportation to teens in communities of high violence to ensure they can safely access Our SPOT Teen Center for youth prevention programming, mentoring,

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and a warm supper.

LA County Park's emergency readiness was further demonstrated during the Lineage Warehouse Fire. City Terrace Park was activated as an emergency shelter for displaced residents, while Belvedere Regional Park, Obregon Park, and Salazar Park served as critical distribution sites for air quality resources, including face masks and air filters.

These efforts reflect the essential role LA County Parks plays in emergency preparedness, response, resilience, and recovery throughout Los Angeles County. LA County Parks serves as a critical community resource by operating cooling centers during extreme heat events, supporting wildfire and disaster response efforts, and providing emergency medical response, water rescues, public safety education, and drowning prevention through its pool and lake programs. As some of the first County facilities activated, especially in underserved communities, LA County Parks maintains 35 Mass Care and Shelter sites ready to support evacuation, sheltering, and mass care for vulnerable residents, including those with access and functional needs, in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. LA County Parks also partners with community organizations and County agencies to distribute food, vaccinations, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), health screenings, and other essential resources during emergencies.

Parks offer safe community spaces, support emergency communication, and strengthen resilience before, during, and after disasters.

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These emergency response efforts underscore not only the indispensable role of parks, but also the people who make that work possible. LA County Parks proudly hires from the local community, and that makes all the difference. In moments of crisis, LA County Park staff aren't just responding to an emergency, they bring a deep, lived understanding of what our communities are going through and lead with compassion, providing care when it is needed most.

Collectively, these examples illustrate that parks are indispensable public spaces deeply rooted in the well-being of every community they serve. That same commitment to community is reflected in the everyday experiences parks create.

Parks are here in the Good Times

To bring joy in the wake of these challenging years, LA County Parks, together with its dedicated funding partners, remains committed to fostering community connection. Thanks to the support of the Board of Supervisors and the Los Angeles County Departments of Arts and Culture, Justice Care and Opportunities/Care First Community Investment, Mental Health, Probation, Public Health, Youth Development, as well as the LA County Parks Foundation, this summer LA County Parks will offer an array of free and low-cost programs:

- **World Cup Watch Parties** with live broadcast of the World Cup on large LED screens at local parks.
- **Sounds of LA County Concert Series** this summer, LA County Parks and Next Fest LA are doing something that has never been done before: Investing in the

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independent artists and musicians who define the sound of LA County and bringing that festival experience straight to your neighbor park all for free. This isn't your typical County concert series: 108 free concerts. 27 parks. One County.

- **108 Free Movie Nights** provide eight weeks of outdoor family entertainment from July through August.
- **Overnight Family Camping** every Friday night at a County regional park families can enjoy a low-cost camping experience with hikes, stargazing, campfires, and fishing July through August.
- **Pool and Water Programs** offer a full range of aquatic activities, including expanded hours for Every Body Swims free swim sessions, low-cost youth swim lessons, adult water exercise, swim teams, lap swim, and special hours for older adults and individuals with disabilities.
- **Junior Lake Lifeguard Program** teaches youth ages 9–17 open water safety, first aid, CPR, and rescue skills.
- **ESTEAM Summer Camp** immerses youth ages 6-11 in science, creativity, hands-on projects and field trips.
- **Every Body Plays Summer Adventures** invites youth ages 7–17 to drop in and enjoy free sports, arts, fitness, and creative activities.
- **Summer Lunch & Snack Program** delivers free weekday lunches and snacks for youth ages 18 and under from June 15–August 7 at 49 parks.
- **Youth Sports Leagues** give youth and girls only teams an opportunity to learn a

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sport and build teamwork for a low registration fee that includes uniforms and awards.

- **Our SPOT Teen Centers** provide sports, arts, leadership, wellness programs, transportation and free suppers for teens throughout the summer.
- **Youth@Work program** connects young people ages 14-24 to paid work experience at parks, mentoring, and hands-on leadership opportunities.
- **Nature Center Programs** provide hikes, crafts, animal encounters, and community events. While Every Body Explores allows visitors to borrow free naturalist backpacks for self-guided outdoor exploration.
- **Golf Programs** welcome players of all ages to accessible public courses with affordable public golf, junior golf camps, and youth and senior discounts.
- **Community Classes** offer arts, fitness, wellness, and lifelong learning opportunities for all ages at multiple locations.
- **Senior Centers** and programs help adults age 55+ stay active and connected through fitness and wellness classes, cultural events, excursions to the Hollywood Bowl and The Ford, and Senior Summer Kick Off Dances.

Together, these efforts demonstrate that parks are essential public spaces—providing stability in hard times and daily connection across every community.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors proclaim the month of July 2026 as Parks Make Life Better! Month in Los Angeles County.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors recognize the County of Los

AGN. NO. _____

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Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation for its vital role as both a source of community wellbeing and a cornerstone of County safety net infrastructure; and commend the dedicated LA County Parks employees for their service and providing quality programming and exemplary stewardship of parklands for all to enjoy.

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HLS:gdm