



A guide to planning your own National ParkRx Day celebration on April 28, 2019

Basics

What is National ParkRx Day?

National ParkRx Day is a day celebrated across the United States to promote the growing movement of prescribing parks and nature to patients to improve human health. Additionally, National ParkRx Day encourages everyone to start viewing parks and public lands as important resources for their health.

This year's ParkRx Day is focused on engaging and thanking health care providers for bringing their patients outdoors for better health!

The four main goals of National ParkRx Day are:

- **To amplify** the visibility of the nation-wide ParkRx movement in parks and communities across the nation.
- **To celebrate** existing ParkRx programs across the country.
- **To jump-start** opportunities for new ParkRx programs in parks and communities across the nation.
- **To increase** the relevance of parks for all people; how people can connect with parks daily for their improved physical, mental, and spiritual health and create a new generation of park stewards.

When is National ParkRx Day?

In 2019, National ParkRx Day is Sunday, April 28. This is the last day of [National Park Week](#), which runs from April 20 to April 28. To kick off National Park Week, all national parks will offer free admission on Saturday, April 20, and people are encouraged to find their parks no matter where they are, whether they are local, regional, state, or national parks.

Who is organizing National ParkRx Day? Can my agency join?

The National Park Service's Office of Public Health is organizing National ParkRx Day with input from the National ParkRx Initiative, which is a coalition of health providers, public land agencies, national nonprofits, and community organizations offering park prescriptions programs across the nation. The National ParkRx Initiative is co-led by the National Park Service, National Recreation and Park Association, and the Institute at the Golden Gate.

National ParkRx Day events can be organized by health providers, any park agency (see "Appendix" for broad definition of park), local leaders, and other local environmental and community nonprofits. The organizers do not need to be affiliated with the National Park Service, as there are many ParkRx programs based in local and regional parks, public lands and health agencies. The only requirement is that you sign up your National ParkRx Day event using our [online registry](#), and plan your event to include health-promoting activities. For programming ideas and ways to engage local health providers, see the "Suggested Activities" section.

Where is National ParkRx Day being celebrated?

ParkRx Day is a national celebration with activities taking place in parks and green spaces around the country. Park managers, community leaders and health care organizations are encouraged to highlight the work they are doing currently to deliver park experiences as a healing tool and to promote understanding and excitement for ParkRx programs in parks and public lands.

Why celebrate National ParkRx Day?

Every agency involved or interested in being involved in a park prescription program is encouraged to celebrate National ParkRx Day to:

- **Inspire individual action:** Host an event in a park to promote visitation and renewed awareness of local green space and gives the visitors a dose of the health benefits of nature.
- **Educate the community:** Celebrate National ParkRx Day to raise awareness and understanding.
- **Connect our health care system:** Have a health care provider highlight the health benefits of nature to show the importance of integrating nature-based medicine into practice.
- **Start culture change:** The link between human health and ecological health is not new knowledge, but the burgeoning movement of the health care sector prescribing parks to highlight this link is. This growing movement shows that park prescriptions have the potential to shift human health care to include nature-based interventions.

Hosting your own celebration

Register your National ParkRx Day celebration

Please [register](#) online and look for communication guidance and free communication tools on the [National ParkRx website](#).

Suggested activities

Involvement in National ParkRx Day can vary from virtual celebrations to large, public events. Agencies and organizations are also encouraged to celebrate National ParkRx Day by starting the conversations to create a park prescription program in their own communities. See examples and case studies of park prescription programs on the [National ParkRx website](#).

Public Celebrations

For public celebrations, remember to keep the levels introductory and account for participants of all ages and abilities.

- Organize guided group walks from clinics to parks or on walking paths
- Organize mini fitness classes that empower people with simple exercises that they can do on their own (e.g. low impact [yoga, tai-chi, meditation] or age-specific [older adults, children])
- Seek support from local health providers to organize health screenings (e.g. blood pressure tests, BMI measurements)
- Coordinate volunteer stewardship projects such as trash pickup, clearing trails, beautifying the park
- Organize speakers to talk about the importance of visiting parks and public lands as a part of taking care of one's health

Agency Celebrations

Start a dialogue with your community partners to create a park prescription program in your own community. Refer to the appendix for information to get started.

Social media

Social media outreach and engagement is an easy way to spread the good news that parks promote healthy living. Share the pre-written social media messages below through your channels, or write your own. Write a blog post or article to engage or thank healthcare providers for promoting parks for people's health.

Use #ParkRx across all channels. Also include #FindYourPark and #HealthyParks if possible. Encourage people to share posts on their personal story of the health benefits of parks. Show off the positive affect of parks on health with #BeforeParkRx and #AfterParkRx comparisons. Personalize posts with your own organization's hashtags.

For Twitter:

- Celebrate National #ParkRx Day on April 28th by taking a walk in the park. Doctor's orders! #FindYourPark
- #FindYourPark and a healthy you on National #ParkRx Day this April 28th. We're hosting a program at xxx am/pm #EncuentraTuParque
- Where are you going outside on #ParkRx Day? Reply to share how you're taking control of your health by going outdoors! #FindYourPark

For Facebook:

- On National #ParkRx Day Sunday, April 28th, join patients and health providers in building a healthier nation by creating a strong connection between the American people and parks and open spaces. #FindYourPark
- A big part of celebrating National Park Week is celebrating your health! Attend a National #ParkRx Day program near you. #FindYourPark
- Have you taken your #ParkRx today? Spending time in nature can actually benefit your physical, mental and emotional health! Celebrate ParkRx Day on April 28th by visiting your favorite park - doctor's orders!

For Instagram:

- Give yourself the gift of health by joining us for our #ParkRx Day activities! We're hosting a program at xxx am/pm #FindYourPark
- Skip a trip to the pharmacy, fill your #ParkRx in the great outdoors! #FindYourPark
- Use as many hashtags as you'd like including #ParkRx #FindYourPark #EncuentraTuParque #HealthyParks #Health #SelfCare

Planning process

Planning

If you are planning to host a public, in-person event, follow these steps for a successful day:

- Hold your event on Sunday, April 28, 2019 *during National Park Week*. Your event can be in a national park or any other type of park, forest, or greenspace.
 - Choose the ideal setting for your event. Think about locations with easy access to communities and public transportation nodes (i.e. bus, train, bike share, etc.).
 - Contact and involve the managing park agency as a part of this process. If you do not know who owns the park, call your local county government offices or parks and recreation department.
 - You may need to complete and submit a park permit for your event. Depending on the managing public land agency, permits may be submitted up to a year in advance. This may impact your desired park location.
 - Consult ADA.gov for proper accessibility guidance.
- If you are a park, or public land agency, remember to engage healthcare providers (pediatricians, primary care physicians, nurses, physical therapists, art therapists, wellness coaches, etc.) in the planning of your event, and encourage them to bring their patients to the event. Invite a health practitioner to provide health screening as part of the event (Blood pressure screening, BMI measurements, etc.).
- If you are a doctor, or healthcare provider, remember to invite colleagues, patients, and staff to get out in the park to celebrate ParkRx Day.
- Consider what activities would be relevant to your target audience and whether the park you've identified allows these types of activities.
- Invite and engage community organizations in the planning process to provide input and ideas on what will work with the community. Have multiple community organization lead activities if possible. Make sure that there is alignment with their work with ParkRx (i.e. connections with nature/parks and the improvement of human health).

Establishing visions and objectives

What do you want participants to get out of this event in relation to the ParkRx movement in general?

- Examples: Knowledge of how the ParkRx program works and health benefits of parks.

What do you want participants to walk away thinking/feeling/knowing about the ParkRx movement?

- Examples: Walk away from event feeling confident that ParkRx can help the health of their communities at large.

How do you plan to empower people to actually participate in the ParkRx program?

- Examples: Educate physicians, health care providers, etc. about how to prescribe parks as legitimate treatment/preventative care methods. If they are well informed, they will be more likely to implement ParkRx into their practice.

Logistics

There are four main questions to ask in order to host a successful ParkRx Day:

1. Where will you host the event?
2. Who are your partners?
3. What resources do you need?
4. Who will help promote the event?

To help you answer the questions, more detailed guidance is provided below:

- **Planning/Logistics Team:** If you are planning a large event, consider collaborating with others to divide the following amongst the team:
 - Secure park permit.
 - Invitations to dignitaries.
 - Set event schedule for day.
 - Coordination of partner organizations with activities
 - Coordinate with event crew
 - Plan for visible first aid station, security, etc.,
 - Set up and clean up
- **Budget**

- **Promotional materials** (e.g. save the date email invitations, flyers in English, Spanish, and other languages relating to the community, briefings for special guests, local dignitaries, physicians, park and health agency directors).
- **Communications support to post to social media accounts, write blogs, and provide outreach to local media to get coverage on the day of the event.**
- **Enlist an event photographer to get a few high resolution photographs of people having fun getting healthy in the park.**
- **Schedule for the day:** It will be wise to also include a rain plan.
- **Concessions**
 - Offer healthy foods and beverages for the public
 - Consider not selling plastic bottled water, and instead working with a local entity to provide potable water so participants can refill their reusable water bottles.
- **First aid area**
- **Event crew support**
 - Tables, chairs, and tents (check if permitted)
 - Rental of a stage/riser, sound system and speakers, podium
- **City Street permits** if there are large street closures or mobile vans during the event.
- **Volunteer support**
- **Local police security** if determined by the anticipated number of people
- **Clean up materials**
 - Have separate receptacles for recycling and trash.

Partnerships

Key partners to consider including in the planning, promotion, and execution of a ParkRx Day event:

- Local health providers
- Local public land agencies
- Community leaders
- National and local environmental, recreational, and community nonprofit organizations
- YMCA chapters, Boys and Girls Clubs
- Local businesses (to donate: food, beverages, tools and equipment, raffle giveaways, etc.)
- Outdoor retailers
- Schools and colleges
- Transportation planners
- Educators
- Senior citizen groups
- Fire and police departments
- Interfaith community - churches representing multi denominations

Impact and follow-up

Celebrations for National ParkRx Day will catalyze more discussions and dialogue regarding both park prescriptions programs and the connection between human health and nature. To help show the impact of National ParkRx Day across the country, please:

- **Document** your event with photos and share on social media channels.
- **Encourage** event participants to share their experiences on social media too.
- **Document** how many people participated in your event.
- **Evaluate** your event for improvement and lessons learned from the celebrations.
- **Thank partners** for their commitment to the day and also for their sustained partnerships with park prescriptions.
- **Ramp up** your park prescriptions program by joining the National ParkRx movement. You can share and learn from other groups all across the nation on the [ParkRx website](#).

Appendix

What is the concept of ParkRx?

ParkRx (park prescriptions) are programs designed in collaboration with healthcare providers and community partners that utilize parks, trails, and open space for the purpose of improving individual and community health. Other community and environmental nonprofits and local businesses may support free programming for patients and communities as it connects with a patient's park prescriptions.

The National ParkRx Day was created with input from the National ParkRx Initiative, which is a movement to strengthen the connection between health care and parks and public lands to improve the physical and mental health among individuals and communities. The Initiative involves a collaboration of national partners and subject-matter experts to advance the movement and create awareness among various audiences, including park and health professionals, to address the operational hurdles present in parks and health collaborations, and hone and measure the best delivery models currently in practice. The park prescriptions concept has grown out of a conceptual phase into a period of rapid implementation. There is ripe opportunity to communicate and build on early successes and lessons learned that can contribute to building a community of practice to support broader park and community-based application nationally.

Definition of parks and open space

"Parks" is a broad term to include many types of parks with green space/open space where people can participate in active and/or passive recreation. Parks may include; city/local parks, county parks, regional parks, state parks, and all types of national park units, including national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, preserves, seashores, and recreation areas.

Parks also encompass national forests, national grasslands, agricultural areas; national wildlife refuges; recreation trails, landmarks, historic sites; state forests and nurseries.

Active and passive recreation

The health benefits of nature go beyond just physical health. There are well-documented benefits of nature that improve mental health, spiritual health, and social health.

Having both active and passive recreation opportunities in parks allow for people with different abilities and preferences to reap the health benefits of nature.

Active recreation includes any individual or group activity such as walking, hiking, running, biking, skateboarding, rock climbing, horseback riding, dancing, organized sports, and playground activities. These active recreation activities may improve physical and mental health of individuals.

Passive recreation includes more low impact activities such as yoga, tai chi, meditation, Pilates, stretching, reading, art (painting, photography, sketching, nature journaling, poetry, song, etc.) fishing, wildlife observation, stargazing, attending an outdoor music/performance/play, picnicking, etc. These passive recreation activities may improve mental/emotional and spiritual health of individuals.