



JULY...
**PARK AND
RECREATION
MONTH**

Implementation Kit

**It Starts
in Parks**

July Is Park and Recreation Month

“July is Park and Recreation Month” is the one annual observance that specifically celebrates “Park and Recreation” and as such, we need to take a lead role in the month long celebration within communities throughout the State of Florida.

The *It Starts in Parks* philosophy provides a call to action for parks and recreation professionals to create a heightened awareness of the benefits of parks and recreation. This can be achieved in many ways. One such way is to begin to “speak differently” about what you do. Rather than stating your job title, convey your every day job responsibilities by framing what you make happen each day. “July is Park and Recreation Month” and the July 4th Independence Day celebrations which draw millions to our parks and open spaces, both provide an opportunity to begin the community conversation about the benefits of parks and recreation.

Suggested Ways to Involve your Department

Program Ideas

- Hold a “Here Comes Summer Party”; after all everybody likes to celebrate summer.
- Send pre-teens or campers in an arts camp out with a video camera to capture people having fun in local parks.
- Encourage local sports or crafts store to hold clinics and workshops helping people become involved in recreation activities.
- Hold an ISIP July Sampler where you package 4 or 5 of the more popular programs or active recreation activities into one for people to try out.
- Hold a series of “Getting Started” mini-workshops where people can attend and learn the important elements, equipment, location, lessons, etc. related to taking up a new recreation activity.
- Develop an “ISIP Fun Pack” and include one day passes for water parks, nature centers, pools, etc. for a family or small group.
- Thirty Day Challenge. Create a one page, attractive challenge resolution where people challenge themselves to incorporate at least 10 additional minutes of recreation or physical activity into each of the 31 days of July. Please note: they get one day off for good behavior.
- Sponsor a Play Day – something similar to a health fair but with a focus on recreation activities and vendors

Promotional Ideas

- Create a one month calendar for July complete with your Department’s logo and the *It Starts in Parks* slogan and feature one program, park, or community center for each day.
- Hold demonstrations of fun recreation events or mini-performances by department participants in high traffic areas such as downtown or local mall.
- Tell 5 people you know to tell 5 other people that this is Parks and Recreation Month and encourage them to be more leisurely.

- Sponsor a poster contest at your camp and playground programs so kids can draw their perception of what is best about ISIP.
- Enlist your elected officials in kicking off the month by participating in a lunch hour walk and talk.
- Attach small, additional messages to current signage reminding people that July is Park and Recreation Month, and *It Starts in Parks*.

Communication Ideas

- Change the message on your answering machine every few days to highlight the many benefits of parks and recreation.
- Walk your talk. Make a special effort to be re-creative and leisurely this month and encourage others in the department to do so also.
- Distribute July is...It Starts in Parks promotional messages in the paycheck of each public employee; include a coupon or invitation to participate.
- Distribute fortune cookies or balloons at some of your outside free events with ISIP messages inside.
- Work with the local media for placement of a new “recreation tip – ISIP” message each week.
- Have staff wear additional nametags, perhaps the plastic insert type, with the July is...ISIP message on it that includes a space for them to write down a favorite childhood activity.
- Ask local restaurants to include July is...ISIP messages on place cards or tray liners during the month of July.
- Print a one-page “Fun and Healthy Recreation Activities” and share with physicians in the community to distribute to patients.
- Get a local radio station to do a remote broadcast at one of your park sites or centers during a time period of activity.

Sample Press Release: Your Department Celebrating July is Park and Recreation Month

Press Release: July is Park and Recreation Month – It Starts In Parks

Color Codes: **Green = Information Specific to your Department**
 Red = Information related to ISIP Messages

For Immediate Release
(Today's date)

Contact: (Your Name)
(Your Phone Number and e-mail address)

Celebrate July is Park and Recreation Month - It Starts in Parks

Where can you improve your health without going to a doctor? How do you spend time with friends or meet new ones if you don't go to a party? Where can children learn and grow without necessarily going to summer school? Right here with the **(Your department)** Parks and Recreation Department. What better time than July to celebrate Recreation and Parks Month by recalling that actually many of the good things in life actually do Start In Parks.

As part of a nation-wide celebration, the **(insert name of community)** is pleased to be a part of recognizing the many values and benefits of parks and recreation. Did you know that citizens who had better access to parks, visited parks more frequently, and engaged in physically-active park behaviors also made fewer visits to their doctor other than getting a regular checkup? Are you aware that adolescents who participate in extra-curricular activities are more likely to avoid "at risk" behaviors? Have you ever considered the economic impact that visitors to parks, tournaments, and special events bring to the community?

After signing a proclamation declaring July is Park and Recreation Month – It Starts in Parks, **(insert name of Mayor or appropriate public official) said parks and recreation is one of the public departments that touches almost everyone from the very young to older residents as well. The (Mayor or appropriate public official) also gave recognition to the hundred of volunteers from the community who serve the parks in a variety of different ways.**

Please join the Department as it recognizes parks and recreation this month by attending, participating, or dropping-in to one of more of the following: **(insert a list of activities being held in July by your department)**

To learn more about these opportunities within your community, call (list area code and phone number) for additional information.

Interesting Quotes for Use in Press Releases, Messages, etc.

“We do not cease playing because we are old; we grow old because we cease playing.” **Joseph Lee**

“The right of children to play, to sing, and to dance; the right of youth to sport for sport’s sake; the right of men and women to use leisure in the pursuit of happiness in their own way, are basic to our American heritage.” **Harry S. Truman**

“Recreation is no longer simply having fun. Rather, it involves the kind of America we have, and want to have, and the kind of people we are and are likely to become.” **Laurence S. Rockefeller**

“Play for grown people is recreation – the renewal of life. For children, it is growth – the gaining of life.” **Joseph Lee**

STATE PROCLAMATION SAMPLE



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH

WHEREAS, parks and recreation programs enhance our quality of life by contributing to healthy lifestyles, increasing communication skills, building self esteem, teaching life skills, and providing places for enjoyment; and

WHEREAS, parks and recreation programs boost the economy, enhance property values, attract new business, increase tourism, and reduce crime; and

WHEREAS, recreation builds family unity, strengthens neighborhood involvement, offers opportunity for social interaction, enhances education, develops creativity, and promotes cultural diversity; and,

WHEREAS, our parks and trails ensure ecological beauty, provide space to enjoy nature, help maintain clean air and water, preserve plant and animal wildlife, and

WHEREAS, recreation, therapeutic recreation and leisure education are essential to the rehabilitation of individuals who have been ill or disabled; and

WHEREAS, Florida recognizes the benefits derived from quality public and private recreation and park resources at the local and state level; and

WHEREAS, to increase enjoyment for those individuals and families who want to enjoy a healthy environment, the state recognizes that Florida's citizens, visitors and wildlife deserve clean air and surroundings free from tobacco related pollution and hazards; and

WHEREAS, during the 2009-2010 fiscal year more than 20.1 million people visited Florida's 160 state parks, contributing more than \$800 million to Florida's economy and generating more than 16,000 jobs; and

WHEREAS, the National Recreation and Park Association and the Florida Recreation and Park Association designated July as Recreation and Parks Month.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Rick Scott, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby extend greetings and best wishes to all observing July 2011 as Recreation and Parks Month.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the Capital, this 14th day of April in the year two thousand eleven.

A blue ink signature of Rick Scott, Governor of Florida.

Governor

PROCLAMATION SAMPLE

WHEREAS public parks and lands provide for the critical “green” infrastructure that collectively enhances both community spaces and wild places making the great State of Florida the best place to live in the country;

WHEREAS local parks and recreation experiences enhance the citizens of (insert your City/County) quality of life by contributing to a healthy lifestyle, increasing communication skills, building self esteem, teaching life skills, and providing places for enjoyment; and

WHEREAS, parks and recreation programs, tournaments and events boost the economy, enhance property values, attract new business, increase tourism, and reduce crime; and

WHEREAS, opportunity for recreation builds family unity, strengthens neighborhood involvement, provides for social interaction, enhances education, develops creativity, and promotes cultural diversity; and,

WHEREAS, (insert your City/County) parks and trails ensure ecological beauty, provide space to enjoy nature, help maintain clean air and water, preserve plant and animal wildlife, and

WHEREAS participation in recreation and outdoor activities provides education and therapy for stress relief, improved health and are essential to the rehabilitation of individuals who have been ill or disabled; and

WHEREAS, (insert your City/County) recognizes the benefits derived from quality public and private park and natural land resources at the local and regional level; and

WHEREAS, the National Recreation and Park Association and the Florida Recreation and Park Association designated July as Park and Recreation Month;

NOW THEREFORE, (insert your City/County), hereby proclaims July 2010 as Park and Recreation Month and encourages residents and visitors to enjoy using the parks, trails, programs and special places that enhance the quality of life of our community.

Signature Authorities _____ Date _____

CITY/COUNTY SEAL

DRAFT TIMELINE

March/April – Agency determine level of engagement for support of JULY IS PARK AND RECREATION MONTH

- Sample Proclamation presented to City/County Administrator
- Marketing Plan established for press release and events through summer program brochures, newsletters
- Determine Special Programs or Events scheduled for July or utilize existing events such as summer camps or July 4th celebrations etc...
- Educate all staff about the importance of programs/events highlighting the campaign

April/May

- Schedule event/committee meeting for any programs and activities that will be conducted
- Schedule Proclamation on City/County Commission Agenda for mid/late June or first of July consider inviting a diverse group of park supporters to attend meeting
- Initiate marketing campaign on websites and newsletters highlighting the event as “teasers”
- Send out invitations to elected officials or SAVE the DATE for an special programs or events

June

- Hold final meetings on all event and program logistics
- Distribute all marketing, invitations and media releases to elected officials, media, advisories boards etc...
- Promote and attend City/County Commission meeting for Proclamation reading. Take photos and document event.
- Distribute press release after meeting on proclamation
- Post Proclamation/copies at P & R Facilities, on – line etc...

July

- Hold events celebrating Parks and Recreation Month; take plenty of photos of elected officials and advisory board members in parks and participating in programs
- Emphasize and educate the public and program participants on the importance of IT STARTS IN PARKS messages
- Invite media to all events and send after event press releases and photos to media
- Publish event and photos on agency website
- Celebrate successes with staff at the end of the month

August

- Conduct evaluation on events and program for next year’s celebration