

April 2007: 30 Days of Green

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

April is National Garden Month® — When you garden, you GROW!

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April 19

Support Your PARKS



Cultivate responsible citizens and promote green space in your community!

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background Close your eyes and imagine your favorite park. Picture the trees, plants, views, animals, and activities that you enjoy there. Then imagine what it would be like if that park weren't there, and a parking garage or office building was there instead. Thank goodness that green space is there for you to enjoy!

Parks are very important to the social and economic health of a community, though it may be hard to put a dollar value on them. They provide citizens with a place to enjoy natural beauty, and offer habitat to wild creatures. With the high demand and cost of land in urban and suburban areas, preservation of green spaces requires support from citizens and the government to protect them from commercial development and private ownership.

Because parks are a shared benefit for the entire community, they are also a shared responsibility. In most places, taxpayers finance the installation and maintenance of public parks. In addition to contributing financially, community members can show their support by:

- Using park spaces responsibly. Follow all regulations. Do not litter or destroy property, and pick up after your pets.
- Visiting your local parks regularly. If your local government can't document active use of the property they may decide to use the space to build different projects.
- Showing your appreciation for the space by communicating with local government officials. Make sure they know that the park is important it is to you.
- Volunteering time and additional money for development of new parks and maintenance of existing parks. Many parks allow people to dedicate a bench or adopt a tree for a fee to finance new and ongoing projects. Some host special service days when community members to help with spring or fall cleanup.

activity

- Find out who in your local government makes decisions about parks and green spaces. Are any of these people elected officials? How often are they elected? Make a list of all departments that are involved in park operations. What does each department do?
- If possible, invite a guest speaker to your class to talk about the local park system.
- Follow up by asking each student to write a letter expressing the importance of the local parks and green spaces in their lives. These letters can help parks staff as they seek funds for new and existing projects. Students can also include their ideas and suggestions for renovations or new park spaces.
- Support your parks with direct action. Work with your parks department to organize a workday so that students can pick up litter, or plant flowers or a



tree at a nearby green space.



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