

Director's Highlights

Parks, Recreation, Marine and Animal Care Services

May 2022 Highlights

Prepared by Director Brent Dennis

1. Earth Day & Arbor Day weeks have come and gone, and we saw some continued progress in tree plantings in some of our parks. This time of year, the colorful beauty of the urban forest is highlighted by the lavender blooms of the jacaranda trees. Our park maintenance team is facing a delicate balance in the coming year with the hope to plant more trees with our community partners in the face of reality of the extreme drought. Water restrictions will certainly be in our future and our positive collaboration with the Water Department will be a key ingredient for success.
2. One Earth Long Beach, the non-profit partner with our Department, with a goal of planting 1,000 trees to expand the city's urban forest, will be planting trees in Recreation Park on Saturday, May 14th. The park lost scores of trees in the past few years due to storm damage to the aging wooded landscape. More trees are being planned for next autumn if conditions allow.
3. The new Recreation Park adventure playground is nearing completion with the arrival and installation of many of the dinosaur and pre-historic era themed play elements. Of cool, botanical note is the inclusion of gingko trees in the new surrounding landscape. The gingko tree is the only surviving tree species from the pre-historic period and will be a great educational facet of the playground environs.
4. The final touches are being made to prepare the office area at Jenny Oropeza Community Center for Centro CHA. This community partner will have a regular site presence to connect residents to an array of essential services that they provide. An open house celebration will be planned to occur sometime this summer.
5. A full concert season is ahead for the Municipal Band and under the second year for the new Conductor Kurt Curtis. The concert schedule will be included in the upcoming production of the 2022 Summer Entertainment Guide. The kickoff concert will be held in Whaley Park on Tuesday, June 28th and the summer series concludes on August 5th.
6. The amazing mosaic-laden sculptures by artist Katherine England are under production now and will be installed within the Red Car Greenbelt later this year. This project joins a growing number of artistic endeavors across our park system that also highlights local artists' murals.
7. The new WiBit, our second floating water playground, will be installed for summer fun at Alamitos Beach on the oceanfront. The opening date will be

following the end of the LBUSD school year to allow us enough time to train the summer lifeguard team on the safety aspects of the WiBit.

8. A special thank you is extended to Parks and Recreation Commission Chair David Zanatta for taking the lead on getting the professional photo portraits of all our Commissioners completed. Chair Zanatta's accomplishment now allows for the prominent display of the Commissioners, suitably framed at the PRM Administration Building in El Dorado Park West.
9. Several our parks are offering Vote by Mail Drop Boxes for the current elections. Those sites are included within the following list and are open through Election Day, Tuesday, June 7th.

The 17 Long Beach locations include:

- Bixby Park Community Center (130 Cherry Ave.)
 - Bret Harte Neighborhood Library (1595 W. Willow St.)
 - Burnett Neighborhood Library (560 E. Hill St.)
 - Dana Neighborhood Library (3680 Atlantic Ave.)
 - El Dorado Park West Community Center (2800 N. Studebaker Rd.)
 - Freeman Community Center (1205 Freeman Ave.)
 - Heartwell Park Community Center (5801 Parkcrest St.)
 - Houghton Park Community Center (6301 Myrtle Ave.)
 - Long Beach City Hall (411 W. Ocean Blvd.)
 - Long Beach Senior Center (1150 E. Fourth St.)
 - Marina Vista Park (5355 E. Eliot St.)
 - Mark Twain Neighborhood Library (1401 E. Anaheim St.)
 - Michelle Obama Neighborhood Library (5870 Atlantic Ave.)
 - Ramona Park (3301 E. 65th St.)
 - Scherer Park (4600 Long Beach Blvd.)
 - Stearns Champions Park (4520 E. 23rd St.)
 - Veterans Park (101 E. 28th St.)
10. Director Dennis will be out of the office the week of May 30th, returning on Monday, June 6th. Deputy Director Steve Scott will be covering any urgent administrative needs.