



CITY OF CONCORD

REPORT TO THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: David Gill, Parks and Recreation Director
DATE: June 15, 2026
SUBJECT: July is National Parks and Recreation Month

Recommendation:

Accept this report

Discussion

National Park and Recreation Month, celebrated every July, is a dedicated time to highlight the critical role local parks, green spaces, and community recreation centers play in our health, wellness, and conservation efforts. Established in 1985 by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), the annual campaign features a new theme every year to inspire community connection.

The City of Concord and our residents have acknowledged the importance of community parks since the mid-1850's, however it was not until 1881 when the first park was created. Parks and Recreation back then, as there are today are considered an essential community infrastructure that promotes physical and mental well-being, drives local economic growth, and fosters social cohesion. These accessible spaces offer a high return on investment by reducing healthcare costs, boosting property values, and protecting the environment.

Without the support of private citizens Concord would not be a "city of parks". The land for many of our most loved parks where donated to the City:

1884 land to create White Park
1892 land to create Rollins Park
1910 land to create Kimball Park
1920 land to create Rolfe Park
1926 land to create Memorial Field
1938 land to create for Merrill Park

This July the National Parks and Recreation Association highlights "***The Power Of***" parks and recreation and the people who make it all possible.

Parks and Recreation brings us together, strengthens our health and well-being, and builds more resilient and connected communities.

Throughout the month, we're celebrating the many ways parks and recreation reveals the power of what connects us:

- **The Power of Connection:** Parks and recreation is where relationships grow, cultures meet and communities bond.
- **The Power of Play:** From playgrounds to programs to youth sports, play fuels creativity, joy and lifelong learning.
- **The Power of Community:** Public spaces offer room for everyone to gather, celebrate and heal.
- **The Power of Nature:** Nature restores and inspires us, and parks ensure everyone can access its benefits.
- **The Power of Belonging:** Welcoming parks and programs make every person feel valued.
- **The Power of Well-Being:** Parks and recreation advances health, resilience and shared community benefits.

As Concord and Penacook celebrate National Parks and Recreation Month, it is important to recognize not only the value of our parks and recreational spaces today, but also the rich history behind them. Many of these parks exist because of the generosity and vision of individuals and families who donated land for public use. It is equally important to remember and honor the people for whom many of our parks are named.

The attached PowerPoint presentation is intended to be a living document that will continue to evolve as additional historical information is discovered and verified. Updates will be made periodically and made available online so that residents and visitors can learn more about the history of our community's parks.

Looking to the future, it is my hope that informational signs can be installed at each park to highlight its history, recognize the individuals and families connected to it, and help tell the story of how these treasured community spaces came to be. By preserving and sharing these stories, we can better appreciate the legacy of those who helped shape Concord and Penacook for future generations.