



RivCo Parks

ParkTalk



JULY 2024

JULY IS ALL ABOUT PARKS & RECREATION!



Summer is in full swing, bringing with it summer camps, special events, packed parks, trails, and more. It's no wonder that July is celebrated nationwide as Parks and Recreation Month. In California, it's also Parks Make Life Better® Month! Agencies and their elected officials are proudly proclaiming and celebrating the wonderful work park and recreation professionals do for their communities. In fact, this is why we also celebrate Park and Recreation Professionals Day and World Ranger Day in July!

Summer is a wonderful time to remember the incredible impact of parks and recreation professionals. You all are the heart and soul of our communities, creating vibrant spaces and fostering connections in the places we treasure for their beauty and amenities. Your work goes beyond organizing activities and maintaining facilities; you are community builders, forging personal connections and relationships that strengthen the fabric of Riverside County.

What initiatives and programs are you excited about? What questions do you have about the year ahead? I'm excited about the range of innovative strategies we are using for marketing, patrol, operational planning, project management, and more. We're continually exploring new methods to improve our services and better serve our community. I look forward to hearing from you in person, or through our newly updated Ask the GM Blog on our ParkBuzz intranet site.

Together, we can enhance our park and recreation services and build stronger, more connected communities.



PARKS DIRECTOR

**ASK THE
GM**

ASK THE GM is your go-to spot for getting in touch with your RivCoParks General Manager, all while keeping things anonymous and fun. Got a burning question, a quirky idea, or just something on your mind? This is the place to share it! No names, no worries—just open, friendly communication to make our RivCoParks team even stronger. So go ahead, ask away, and let's keep the conversation going.

[CLICK HERE: INTRANET.RIVCOPARKS.ORG/BLOG-1](https://intranet.rivcoparks.org/blog-1)

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PARK HIGHLIGHT: HURKEY CREEK

Hurkey Creek Park spans over 130 acres and is situated near the small town of Mountain Center, approximately 13 miles southeast of the picturesque Idyllwild. The park is managed by Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District and is a popular destination for camping, hiking, picnicking, and mountain biking.

The park is characterized by its lush meadows, towering pine trees, and the gentle flow of Hurkey Creek. The area is rich in wildlife, including deer, rabbits, and various bird species, making it an excellent spot for wildlife observation and photography. The elevation of around 4,500 feet ensures a cooler climate, providing a refreshing break from the hot summers typical of Southern California. Hurkey Creek Park boasts a well-maintained campground with 130 campsites, accommodating both tents and RVs. The campsites are equipped with picnic tables, fire rings, and access to clean restrooms and hot showers. There are also group camping areas available, making it an ideal location for family gatherings, scout troops, or any large group looking to enjoy the great outdoors together. The park also offers a handful of primitive sites that provide a closer connection to nature.

One of the main attractions of Hurkey Creek Park is its extensive network of trails suitable for hiking and mountain biking. The trails vary in difficulty, catering to both beginners and experienced adventurers. Among the most popular trails is the Hurkey Creek Loop, a moderate 6.7-mile trail that offers stunning views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. For mountain bikers, the nearby Thomas Mountain and Ramona Trail provide thrilling rides through diverse terrains. The creek itself is a serene spot for fishing and wading, particularly enjoyed by families with young children. The park's spacious picnic areas, complete with tables and barbecues, make it an ideal location for a leisurely outdoor meal. There are also playgrounds and open spaces where children can play and explore safely.

CA TRAILS AND GREENWAYS AWARD: SARB



In May 2023, the Santa Ana River Bottom Unit (SARB) brought home the California Parks and Recreation Trails and Greenways Award for their Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) efforts alongside the Santa Ana River Trail. The unit focused on connecting unsheltered individuals to housing resources, addressing the rising number of abandoned vehicles and dumped debris, while prioritizing the preservation of natural habitat and deterring criminal activity.

The MDT program is critical to protecting a natural and scenic environment for wildlife and recreational users. The SARB Unit collaborates with key stakeholders, including outreach organizations and law enforcement agencies, to mitigate the ecological consequences that Riverside County would face without the diligent efforts of this program. In June 2023, the first large-scale operation between the RivCoParks SARB Unit and Riverside County Sheriff's

Department- R.A.I.D Task Force was conducted, resulting in the removal of 52 stolen and/or abandoned vehicles. The cumulative impact of abandoned vehicles can be significant, considering multiple instances in one given area, leading to environmental pollution, habitat disturbance, fire hazards, soil erosion, the spread of invasive species, and public safety risks to those hiking or cycling on the adjacent trail.

Since June 2023, regular monitoring, enforcement of environmental regulations, and prompt removal of abandoned vehicles have helped mitigate damages and preserve the health and integrity of the natural environment. Other resources such as housing assistance, trash cleanup, and animal services were offered to nearly 200 individuals, while 172 vehicle and over 100 tons of trash were removed during this joint effort.

RIVCOPARKS SUMMER PHOTO CONTEST - WINNERS



BEHIND THE SCENES

Ramon Barrera, Trails Maintenance Worker



NATURE

Laine Gonzales, SRP Ecological Reserve Volunteer



SCENIC

Laine Gonzales, SRP Ecological Reserve Volunteer



SITES

Jacquelyn Muller, Public Information Specialist

EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHT: LOREE BRODERICK



What is your favorite way to spend a day off?

Going to a Ontario Reign hockey game with my husband

What is your hidden talent?

My discernment

What are you passionate about outside of work?

My Faith AND my husband

What is your favorite season for outdoor activity?

Why?

Fall - because it is brisk (sometimes - Lol) and the changing of the colors of leaves

What is your favorite RivCoParks location? Why?

Lake Cahuilla - beautiful sunset and sunrises can be witnessed

Describe your favorite vacation/trip you've ever taken. Why was it your favorite? Canada - visited with my mom (while she lived there), saw the CN tower, Niagara falls and Quebec

What is your favorite food?

Mexican

What is your favorite movie?

Beaches

Who is your favorite singer or band? Favorite song?

Luther Vandross - Here and Now (my wedding song) AND If Only for One Night

What is your favorite aspect about working for RivCoParks?

My colleagues

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT: SUSAN BOCANEGRA



What is your favorite way to spend a day off?

I enjoy spending time with family and friends. I also like exploring new places. I like to take my fur baby with me, if at all possible.

What is your hidden talent?

I don't know if I have a hidden talent I do love to quilt.

What are you passionate about outside of work?

I love traveling this beautiful country and visiting different places. I have been in every state but Alaska.

What is your favorite season for outdoor activity?

Why?

I love Autumn for the cool crisp weather and beautiful changing leaves.

What is your favorite RivCoParks location? Why?

Lake Cahuilla is my favorite RivCo Park. I think of it as a diamond in the desert.

Describe your favorite vacation/trip you've ever taken.

Why was it your favorite? My favorite trip was traveling up the west coast from just north of LA to the Canadian border. It took us 4 months. We visited so many beaches

and attractions. We flew kites on the beaches in Oregon, visited Portland and Seattle.

What is your favorite food?

I love Mexican food. My husband taught me how to make tortillas and my sister-in-law taught me how to make tamales.

What is your favorite movie?

Any movie with Denzel Washington is my favorite. I love his acting and admire him. I have followed him since his days on St. Elsewhere.

Who is your favorite singer or band? Favorite song?

The Beatles are the first band I ever went crazy over. Over the years my taste in music has changed, but I still listen to The Beatles and the Rock 'n Roll bands of the 60's and 70's.

What is your favorite aspect about working for RivCoParks?

Working at RivCoParks is fun. The people I work with are friendly, helpful, and willing to share their knowledge. Of course, the work climate starts from the top with Nori, May, and Joey.

PDI: PROJECT UPDATES

- **PK-ARPA015 CAH Master Plan & Amenity Updates:** Master Plan process has begun and consultant will be selected in June 2024. Pavement construction on Jefferson Road, both day-use parking lots, and campground roads to begin August 2024. Construction for amenity upgrades including lagoon repair, restroom rehabilitation, new shade structures & playground, and campground equipment (tables, fire pits, RV pedestals) due to begin in October 2024.
- **PK-9727 Lawler Lodge Reroofing:** Bid process to begin June 2024 for a Fall 2024 construction window.
- **PK-ARPA011/PK-9716 SKN Boat Launch Improvements:** Design phase 90% complete. Construction due to begin November 2024.
- **PK-ARPA016 Hidden Valley Nature Center Modernization:** Design phase 100% and beginning plan review June 2024.
- **PK-ARPA012 SRP Broadband Upgrade:** Construction to the conduit path complete. Anticipated Frontier connection due to happen June 2024.
- **PK-ARPA010 SART Wayfinding:** Construction to begin August 2024.



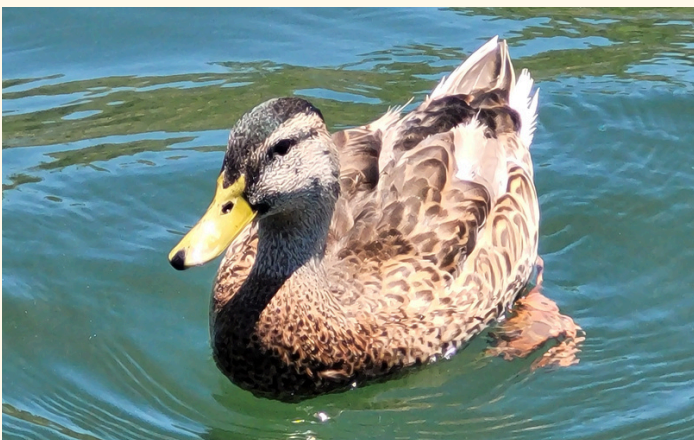
BIRDS OF LAKE SKINNER:

Written by: Ramon Victorio
Park Ranger

Over a hundred years ago John Muir wisely explained, “in every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.” The truth to that statement is confirmed within minutes of exploring the grounds of our beautiful Lake Skinner. From subsurface dwellers like the Burrowing Owl to high-flyers like the Turkey Vulture, our park has myriad bird species to delight and excite any level of bird lover.

To identify a bird species is to be a bird watcher, wether or not it is correct. Correctly identifying a species that once eluded you is one of the great joys of birding. The shock and excitement of finally seeing an actual Clarks’s Grebe when all you’ve seen are Western Grebes will leave you eager for more. The constant tug of war for control of prime fence real estate between Western Meadowlarks, Kingbirds, and even sometimes Mountain Blue Birds is something straight out of a History Channel documentary; these birds are not afraid to fight! You learn so much from simple observation.

Once one can identify a few bird species, they truly understand the variety of life here at Lake Skinner. Jet black Ravens and porcelain Snowy Egrets, resplendent American Kestrel wearing a coat of many colors, massive Great Blue Heron and miniature Anna’s Hummingbird, the birds of Lake Skinner remind us of the diversity of nature and the beauty it exudes.



SSSSAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH: RATTLESSSSNAKE SSSSEASON

Written by: Cindy Munoz
Safety Inspector



As the weather warms up, rattlesnakes become more active in our parks and outdoor areas. While generally not aggressive, these venomous snakes will defend themselves if threatened or provoked. Prevention is key, as rattlesnake bites can potentially cause severe injury or death, though incidents are uncommon.

By giving these reptiles space and taking precautions, we can safely coexist during their active season from April through October.

Here are some key facts about Rattlessssnake behavior and Ssssafety:

Rattlesnake Behavior:

- May not rattle before striking defensively when startled.
- Keep an open ear to the sound of a rattle.
- Can deliver a "dry bite" as a warning to conserve venom.
- More active at dawn, dusk, and night during hot months to avoid overheating.
- Some enter brumation (dormancy) in cold months, denning in rock crevices or burrows.

Staying Safe:

- Give rattlesnakes a wide berth and do not attempt to touch or handle them.
- Wear sturdy boots and loose pants in brushy areas.

- Stay on marked trails and avoid tall grass/underbrush.
- Check around logs, rocks before sitting and shake out tents/bags. Keep dogs leashed as they are at higher risk.
- Do not grab "sticks" or objects in water where snakes could be submerged.

If Bitten:

- Remain calm but act quickly to seek medical care!
- Do NOT apply a tourniquet.
- Do NOT pack the bite area in ice.
- Do NOT cut the wound with a knife or razor.
- Do NOT use your mouth to suck out the venom.
- Remove restrictive jewelry/clothing which may constrict swelling (e.g., rings, watches, shoes).
- All rattlesnake bites should be treated as venomous until evaluated.
- In case a pet is bitten – seek veterinarian care about canine rattlesnake vaccine options.

If an emergency, call 9-1-1 and seek medical attention immediately. *For more information or in case of a rattlesnake bite, call the California Poison Control System at their toll-free Poison Hotline: 1-800-222-1222.*

The Poison Control hotline provides free, confidential treatment advice from experts including pharmacists, nurses, and physician specialists in poisoning care; <https://calpoison.org/>.

Resources:

- <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Reptiles/Rattlesnake#574773466-rattlesnakebehavior>
- <https://calpoison.org/about-rattlesnakes>
- <https://www.advnture.com/search?searchTerm=rattlesnake>

EVENTS UPDATE

Written by: Eric Boor
Park Facilities Coordinator

Bang Bang! The Wild West Festival at Gilman Historic Ranch and Wagon Museum welcomed close to 1000 area residents to its location to enjoy the festivities. Guests were able to witness shootouts, hang out at the local saloon, enjoy live music, take a tour of the ranch, catch a ride in a carriage and appreciate the wonderful art on display.

The 45th Annual Wildflower Show was a huge success as it welcomed the residents and tourists of Idyllwild to take a stroll through the forest. Guests were able to learn more about native plants, visit with local vendors and learn about botany from Bruce E. Watts.

As we get closer into summer, we have a whole lineup of events and camps to engage Riverside County residents



VISITORS AT THE 45TH ANNUAL WILD WEST FESTIVAL AT GILMAN SPRINGS

this summer. Starting off with the Nature Fest at Lake Skinner in June along with the Lemon Lily Festival in the mountains at Idyllwild.

Twilight Tales will take place at the Hidden Valley Nature Center in July. The Summer will be capped off in August.

These events will provide residents with knowledge on the conservation and restoration of plants. Along with providing them with activities and unique experiences.

We're looking forward to these exciting events this summer and hope to see you and your loved ones in attendance.



WILD WEST REECAMENT ACTORS. SALOON BUILT BY SONNY WALDRON.

JOIN THE
DEIA
COMMITTEE

Are you passionate about promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility? The RivCoParks DEIA Committee is looking for dedicated individuals to help drive positive change in our community. Be part of a team committed to creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for everyone. Join today and make a difference!

For more information, email Robert Williams at RoWilliams@rivco.org

VOLUNTEER EVENTS: EARTH DAY + ARBOR DAY

Written by: Janae Pudillo
Volunteer Services Coordinator



As part of a department-wide initiative, Volunteer Services recruited community members for Earth Day and Arbor Day planting events.

Earth Day (April 20)

Big Brother Big Sister of the Inland Empire invited their members to join us for a tree planting event at the Hidden Valley Nature Center. Twenty-four participants not only planted seventy-five trees, they also cleared an overgrown trail and prepared a new home for Sela, Hidden Valley's collaborative rock sculpture. Members of the public participated in a trash clean-up event at Lake Skinner. All centers offered arts and crafts activities and Mayflower Park held an art contest, with three selected winners!

Arbor Day (April 27)

For Arbor Day, we partnered with Target to host a tree planting at the Hidden Valley Wildlife area. Sixty-five volunteers participated, planting nearly seven hundred plants, trees, and shrubs! With Eric on the grill and Angel helping serve, volunteers and staff joined together for a BBQ to celebrate another successful event.

Employee & Volunteers

March



Gaby Adame



Larry Zamora

April



Richard Tolson



Nori Gardner



Jo Daugherty

May



Loree Broderick



"Boomer" - Rick Boomer



Third Grade Docents

