April 2024



NATIONAL PARK WEEK

What is National Park Week?

National Park Week is a celebration and recognition of our National Parks and this year it will be observed from Sunday, April 14 through Saturday, April 20 2024. The <u>National Park Service</u> states, "Your National Parks are

living examples of the best this Nation has to offer-our magnificent natural landscapes and our varied yet interrelated heritage. Parks can provide recreational experiences, opportunities to learn and grow, and places of quiet refuge."



Find a National Park event!

Free National Park Entrance Days!

Benefits of the Great Outdoors:

- According to <u>UC Davis Health</u>, nature can:
 - ♦ Improve our thinking, reasoning and other mental abilities (our minds and bodies relax in nature and it can also boost our creative and problem -solving abilities!)
 - ♦ Improve our physical wellness by walking, biking, hiking and more
 - ♦ Nature can also reduce our cortisol levels, the demands on our cardiovascular systems (lower heart rate/blood pressure), and increase our Vitamin D level
 - ♦ Improve our mental health by decreasing our anxiety, lessen stress, and even help us sleep better
 - Green spaces have also been linked to lower risks of depression and improve concentration and attention
- <u>UW Medicine</u> shared that outdoor time even benefits children in areas of mental health and may also be crucial for normal eye development
- Heather Eliassen, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at <u>Harvard T.H.</u>
 <u>Chan School of Public Health</u> noted the following benefits:
 "improvements in sleep, blood pressure, cognitive function and physical activity, as well as reduced risks of chronic disease, such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancer."



Adventure Awaits:

- Visit a local, state or national park
- Discover a community garden or start your own garden
- Plan a picnic with friends or family
- Go on a hike (pick a new trail)
- Play games outside with your kids or kids in your care (you can even read books by a shade tree)
- Visit the ocean, mountains or rain forest
- Start a walking club or join one
- Lay and watch the stars or clouds
- See what outdoor activities your community offers

Resources

- National Park Service
- UC Davis Health: 3 ways getting outside into nature helps improve your health
- Right as Rain by UW Medicine:
 How Going Outside Can Benefit
 Your Health
- Harvard T.H. Chan: Spend time outdoors. It'll improve your health, say experts
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Benefits of Physical Activity