

Washoe County Commissioners
1001 E. Ninth Street
Reno, NV 89512

Dear Washoe County Commissioners:

As Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space Commissioners, we are writing to express our strong support for our public parks. Last budget cycle, citizens began a campaign to push for more investment in our public parks. This year, we join the public in achieving the goal to highlight the fact that well-maintained, high quality parks provide essential services to all people living in Washoe County. This Commission believes that we are doing ourselves a great disservice by neglecting these vital public spaces.

Despite the economic recovery, the 2015-16 parks budget remains at around 40% of its pre-recession level. This disinvestment has resulted in the general deterioration of our parks and recreation facilities. As you consider the next fiscal year budget, please consider the economic, health, and social benefits provided by our parks.

An adequately-funded park system will contribute to the economic growth and well-being of our county. When businesses and home buyers consider Washoe County as a place to relocate, they invariably weigh the quality of our parks in their decision making process. Due to budget and staffing cuts, the current demands on our parks far outweigh the resources available to support the park system. This means that season after season we are watching our parks and open spaces slowly decline in quality, which reduces our potential for economic growth.

The quality of Washoe County parks directly affects the health and well-being of residents living in our community. The 70 parks and recreation facilities operated by the county not only provide common space for play, sports, concerts, swimming, and public events, they also act as places for relaxation and the enjoyment of nature. As people get outside and receive physical and mental health benefits of spending time in parks, citizens develop a deeper appreciation for Washoe County and that strengthens our community as a whole.

This Commission believes an investment in our parks is an investment in the future of Washoe County. As we enter this new period of development, it is essential that we think about our public parks as drivers of economic growth and appreciate them for their environmental and community health benefits. In order for Washoe County to meet its economic potential and prove that it is a region that values a high quality of life, we need to increase the Parks and Open Space Division's budget from its unsustainable levels.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____