



A Century of Service Centennial

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HISTORY OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Clark County Department of Parks and Recreation is an award-winning and nationally accredited agency which provides parks and leisure services throughout unincorporated Clark County. Established in 1963, Parks and Recreation has grown from managing a single facility, historic Camp Lee Canyon, to managing more than 80 park sites, 25 community centers, 15 aquatic sites and 15 special use facilities countywide. Parks and Recreation manages programs and facilities from Laughlin on the Arizona border, to Sandy Valley near the California state line, to Bunkerville on the Utah border.

The Department provides a wide variety of recreational and cultural services for children, adults and seniors. For young people there are classes, sports, the Safekey after school program and summer day camp programs. For adults and seniors there are workshops, classes, field trips, fitness rooms and aquatics services. Concerts, special events, visual art, museums and other cultural programs are available for all ages.

The Department's programs and facilities are funded by the County's general fund, by an enterprise (self-supporting) fund through which program fees cover program costs; by federal grants such as HUD Community Development Block Grants and the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act; state of Nevada Wildlife grants; by the Residential Construction Tax and by a variety of other sources. Partnerships with other agencies such as the Clark County School District play a big part in achieving the goal of efficient and cost-effective service delivery. Growth of the department's parks and facilities has mirrored residential and commercial growth in Clark County, starting with a relatively slow rate during the first twenty years, then building to an explosive pace starting in the nineties.

PARKS AND RECREATION'S OFFICE MILESTONES

1959 Clark County upgraded Camp Lee Canyon, which it managed on a lease from the U.S. Forest Service, building a bathhouse and other facilities. This historic 1930s facility, built by the WPA, will be Parks and Recreation's first facility

1963 Clark County Commission established Parks and Recreation and hired Elmer

	Anderson, formerly Superintendent of the Washington Parks Commission. His first job was to create a parks and recreation master plan for unincorporated Clark County and to coordinate planning with the four cities. His first yearly budget was \$66,000.
1964	Parkdale and Paradise Parks acquired. Department headquarters were located in a building donated by Parkdale Homes, which was later moved to Horseman's Park
1967	Sunset Park, formerly the Houssels Ranch, was purchased to be Clark County's first regional park. Federal funds were obtained to develop it over the next few years. A pool was added in 1974. Programs were conducted out of an existing historic building, which now houses the Safekey office.
1974	Sunrise Community Center and pool built in the southeast section of the valley. Robert O. Forson was director at the time and through the 1970s
1977	Paradise Park, one of the first two acquired, added community center and pool.
1977	1977 Wetlands Park land acquisition began, following the guidelines of the Wetlands Park Master Plan. By 1985 1,000 acres had been acquired.
1979	Parks and Recreation acquired the Southern Nevada Museum, the oldest museum in the Las Vegas Valley. Now called the Clark County Museum, it was originally housed in the relocated 1931 Boulder City Depot on land donated by the City of Henderson. Today it includes a new exhibit and collections building, offices, and a number of restored historic buildings on "Heritage Street."
1979	East Las Vegas Community Center (later Whitney) opened in remodeled fire station. ELV Senior Center located in doublewide trailer.
1980	New Parkdale Community Center opened. Winchester Center and Park followed in 1982.
1982	Total park acreage: Developed, 507.50. Undeveloped, 1,754.90
1984	Glenn Trowbridge, former County Human Resources Director, named Parks and Recreation Director.
1987	1987 Cultural Division established, with Patricia Marchese hired to begin programs. Winchester Center becomes Winchester Cultural Center. First funded programs in 1989 include concerts, Jazz in the Park series, rural touring programs, art exhibits and the first resident Lee Canyon Arts Camp.
1990	First Annual Native American Festival held at Clark County Museum.

1990	State bond issue provides \$13.3 million to save, then enhance, Las Vegas Wash, to be part of the Wetlands Park, working with numerous local, state, regional and national agencies as well as citizen groups.
1993	Howard W. Cannon Aviation Museum is opened at McCarran Airport
1995	Government Center Amphitheater opened; free Jazz in the Park series is first public offering.
1998	Whitney Senior Center, West Flamingo Senior Center, Helen Meyer and Desert Breeze Centers opened.
2001	2001 Glenn Trowbridge retired. Patricia Marchese named new director. Parks and Recreation was reorganized into Parks and Community Services, folding in Code Enforcement, Senior Advocate, Commissioner Liaison Units and other functions.
2002	Clark County Parks and Community Services became nationally accredit
2002	Voters approved another bond issue for \$10 million, which was used to match Federal dollars. By this time 160 acres were developed and plans were finalized for the Visitor Interpretive Center, to open in 2010.
2005	Department reorganized again, going back to Parks and Recreation
2006	Parks & Recreation had 67 urban park sites, 3 open space preservation areas, 15 special use facilities, 15 urban centers, 12 urban aquatic sites, 16 rural park sites, 11 rural centers and 4 rural aquatic sites. The annual budget included \$28 million from the general fund and \$10 million from the Enterprise (self-supporting) fund. There was almost \$130,000,00 available for Capital Improvement from SNPLMA funds, Fund 416 (Ad Valorem Tax) Fund 414 Revenue Bonds, Residential Construction Tax (Fund 211) and grants.
2007	2007 Patricia Marchese retired. County hired Leonard Cash as director. Department adopted the slogan, "Where Fun Happens."
2008	As of January 2008, Parks and Recreation had a total of 1,253 developed acres in 75 urban park sites; 6,846 acres of open space and preservation areas (including the Wetlands Park and the future Shooting Park.) There were 30 urban and rural centers, 16 special use facilities including Camp Lee Canyon and Desert Rose Golf Course and 17 urban and rural aquatic sites.

