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How to Advocate for Public Parks in Rural Areas

At [Power of Rural](#), we know that rural communities rely on public parks. Public parks bring people together, encourage us to reconnect with our natural roots, and develop an appreciation for mother nature. Public park advocates play an important role in keeping our parks safe and inviting for both people and wildlife. If you're looking for ways to get involved in your community, consider stepping up and advocating for your public parks! Here are some impactful ways you could improve the public parks in your area.

Improve Lighting in Public Parks

Good lighting is essential for creating safe and welcoming public spaces. If you want to encourage more people to use the parks in your community, consider improving the lighting on trails, pathways, and parking lots. Visibility in parking lots is particularly important for ensuring the safety of drivers and pedestrians, especially in parking garages with limited natural light in the daytime. Good [canopy lighting](#) in parkades and pedestrian tunnels will ensure public spaces are safe by deterring criminal activity and encouraging people to use these areas as intended.

Promote New Uses for Public Spaces

If you want to get more people to use public rural parks, consider launching a marketing campaign promoting all the fun and unique ways people can enjoy these public spaces. For example, public areas make for fantastic networking opportunities. By getting out of the house

and connecting with other locals in a shared space, you can make valuable [professional and personal contacts](#) that will last for years to come.

New to networking? If you're shy or lack the confidence to introduce yourself to a stranger, TheLadders.com suggests starting by [practicing with friends and family](#). You could also bring an extrovert along to networking events who will naturally draw you into conversations and break the ice with strangers.

Host Public Events in Rural Parks

Hosting events is another great way to bring traffic to public parks. Rural parks, in particular, are excellent locations for stargazing events as they're less likely to receive light pollution from nearby urban areas. You could also host a concert, festival, food fair, art class, outdoor yoga session, or any other type of event that you think community members would enjoy. Be sure to [talk to your local council](#) to find out if you need any permits and licenses before going ahead with your event.

Focus on Conservation

All levels of public parks and recreation should support the conservation of the natural environment. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, parks play a vital role in the [preservation of healthy ecosystems](#). Parks clean the air, filter the groundwater, replenish aquifers, reduce stormwater runoff, and provide a safe habitat for local wildlife.

Advocating for conservation in public parks means empowering public park users to do their part to protect the natural landscapes they know and love. Make it as easy as possible for park users to minimize their impact on the environment. For example, clearly marked trails can prevent people from wandering off paths and trampling [native shrubs and grasses](#). Placing wildlife-proof garbage bins around trails will deter people from littering or leaving bags of dog poop on trails. Speaking of dogs, consider placing signs around the park encouraging pet owners to [keep their furry friends on a leash](#) to prevent disturbance to natural wildlife.

You could even create some [community classes focused on conservation education](#). Alternatively, look for ways to incorporate a discussion of conservation into existing community classes, such as those on gardening or home improvement. As more people start to think and talk about conservation, community members will develop a greater respect for our natural green spaces.

By becoming a public park advocate and working with your local government to improve shared spaces in your community, you can help ensure these areas are enjoyed for years to come. Look for opportunities to improve lighting in parks, encourage conversation by the public, and bring respectable users to parks with networking events and festivals. Your contribution can have a big impact!

Are you looking for more ways to drive positive change in your rural community? Get involved in National Rural Health Day with [Power of Rural!](#) Check out our website to learn more!