The COVID-19 International Parks Expert Panel: Statement No. 2

INTRODUCTION

On April 2nd World Urban Parks with its key global partners held the first COVID19 International Parks Expert Panel to discuss how to further collaborate both during and after this global crisis on the importance of urban parks for people in our rapidly changing world.

THE PANEL WAS CO-CHAIED BY:

Kristine Stratton – President and CEO, NRPA (National Recreation and Park Association, USA)
Clare Shine – Vice President and Chief Program Officer, Salzburg Global Seminar and
Jayne Miller – Chair, World Urban Parks

And strongly supported by our partners: ICLEI Cities Biodiversity Center (and CitiesWithNature), IUCN (#NatureforAll) and the National Park City Foundation.

There is overwhelming endorsement that parks are a critical public health and social resource and we recognize that stay-at-home measures and physical distancing will likely take a toll on our mental health, especially during high-stress and anxiety-producing global public health emergencies. We also know from medical research how important nature is in urban life and how access to parks and open space provides that “nature fix” for human survival – providing opportunities for physical activity and regaining our emotional, psychological and mental balance all of which are critical to reducing stress and improving our physical and mental health. Urban communities can continue to unite, take collective action, and remain connected to nature and each other at this time.

CALL TO ACTION

We believe parks and open spaces are critically important for the post COVID-19 future. Sign our campaigns to show your support.
The COVID-19 global crisis needs a response that is far from the norm or business as usual as it is clear that the world has changed substantially. COVID-19 International Parks Expert Panel’s joint actions going forward will be shaped around three main themes.

1. Develop New Narratives
2. Lead & Collaborate
3. Building Together in 2020
It is clear the future will be different, and we will need to think differently about the role of parks and nature in cities and in society. We need to make significant shifts in our paradigms to mainstream parks and nature as a core and funded service. The COVID-19 International Parks Expert Panel will:

**DEVELOP NEW NARRATIVES**

- Invest and encourage emerging leaders and disruptors - Further develop emerging leaders, invest in “accelerators” demand our members to innovate, share and not be restricted by present thinking
- Become the Economic / Social Stimulus for Cities - develop different approaches to leverage ‘trust capital’ to work with leaders of finance, business, urban and health systems on long-term implications for societies and economies
- Allow the emergence of new thinking by encouraging communities to ask and explore the “What If” question
- Explore new Paradigms that harness community response and social networks

**LEAD & COLLABORATE**

The COVID-19 International Parks Expert Panel will build upon their strengths and existing programs by:

- Jointly endorsing each other’s COVID-19 Global Campaigns
- Seeing who has supported the NRPA Joint Statement
- Showing one’s support by signing here: WUP
- Establishing the COVID-19 International Parks Expert Panel
- Issuing joint statements
- Developing and sharing common resources that build upon existing programs and focus
- Encouraging the adoption of and participation in key lead global campaigns and initiatives:
  - World Parks Week (WUP)
  - National Park City (NPC Foundation)
  - CitieswithNature (ICLEI)
  - #NatureforAll (IUCN)
- Develop going hyper-local - giving people the ability to access quality park spaces close to home
BUILDING TOGETHER IN 2020

The COVID-19 International Parks Expert Panel will build upon the events and activities from our collective programs to enable a strategic voice to be heard regarding the value of parks and nature for cities.

We will launch our intent as part of Parks Week (25th April to 3rd May) and plan to celebrate parks as the world adjusts to a new “normal.”

We will build a program of inter-connected events and opportunities from the rescheduled:

- Salzburg Global Seminar – Parks for Planet
- IUCN – World Conservation Congress and
- WUP regional and World Urban Parks Congress

That will include key virtual summits.

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