

**From the desk of the Parks & Recreation Director
Jeff Temple**



The City of Lawton is Ready for Park and Recreation Month
We're Telling 'Our Park and Recreation' Story this July

Since 1985, America has celebrated July as the nation's official Park and Recreation Month. Created by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), Park and Recreation Month specifically highlights the vital and powerful role local park and recreation professionals, such as our staff at Lawton Parks & Recreation, play in building stronger, more vibrant and resilient communities all across the country.

Parks are at the center of so many experiences and memories – moments that park and recreation professionals help make happen. Our local Lawton parks are often our first experiences in nature, our introduction to a favorite hobby or physical activity. They are places to gather with friends and family, spaces to celebrate life's special moments, spots of respite and healing, sites that connect us with essential community services, and so much more.

In Lawton, you can celebrate Parks and Recreation Month by enjoying a family picnic in one of our many parks, cool off in the Mattie Beal pool or one of our splash parks, watch a movie in the park, or even take a fitness class in Elmer Thomas Park. And that's just in Lawton. How about a day at either Lake Lawtonka or Lake Ellsworth where a day can include a wide variety of activities like boating, swimming, fishing or just picnicking in a beautiful environment. Your Lawton Parks & Recreation Department works hard to provide diverse year-round leisure opportunities through the preservation of open space, park settings, recreational facilities and programs for Lawton citizens.

"July is the perfect time to create all the stories, memories and experiences that parks and recreation professionals help make happen right here in Lawton," said Jeff Temple, Parks & Recreation Director. "We encourage everyone in the Lawton Fort Sill area to come create their own parks and recreation story with us this month."

Lawton Parks & Recreation is leading initiatives and providing opportunities for people of all ages to achieve healthier lifestyles, promote and understand nature and conservation, as well as bringing the community closer through a variety of programs and services. To that end, the City of Lawton has initiated a master plan process to assess the existing conditions and identify future needs for parks, sports & recreation, trails, and open space in the community. The resulting Parks, Sports & Recreation, Trails and Open Space Master Plan will be the first comprehensive master plan of its type for the City of Lawton. More information on this plan can be found at lawtonparksplan.com.

As Lawton continues to grow and evolve, the City of Lawton will continue to evaluate public parks, recreation amenities and programs. The result of this master plan process will be a defined

blueprint for the next ten years of parks, sports & recreation, trails and open space improvements in Lawton. In addition, preliminary plans are underway to design and build the new indoor Youth Sports Complex that was approved by residents in the 2019 Capital Improvement Program (PROPEL).

Learn more about the exciting Park and Recreation Month activities planned for Lawton and more at 580-581-3400 or visit us online at lawtonok.gov/departments/parks-and-recreation.

Portions of this article were provided by the National Recreation and Park Association.

