FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 24, 2018

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CITY PARKS ALLIANCE PRESENTS GREATER & GREENER 2019: EXPLORING NATURAL CONNECTIONS

More than 1,000 international urban park leaders will convene in Denver, CO to focus on the role of parks and green space in healthy, resilient, and economically competitive cities.

Washington, DC: Park and recreation leaders, city planners, design professionals, urban park advocates, and funders from 200+ cities will gather in Denver, Colorado July 20-24, 2019, for Greater & Greener 2019: Exploring Natural Connections. This five-day indoor and outdoor conference will focus on the role of urban parks in creating healthy, resilient, equitable, and economically competitive cities. Greater & Greener 2019 is presented by City Parks Alliance in partnership with Denver Parks and Recreation.

“City parks promote environmental, social, and economic well-being and are critical to city-building strategies in the 21st century,” said Catherine Nagel, Executive Director of City Parks Alliance. “Cities are facing unprecedented challenges, growing populations, scarce or underutilized land, aging infrastructure and limited budgets, and city leaders are looking at how to leverage parks and recreation assets to help solve many of these issues. We are excited to bring the international urban parks conversation to Denver—with its unique city park system that connects the downtown parks to the mountain parks, fosters an outdoor way of life, and features strong collaboration between the public and private sectors—for an interactive learning experience with leaders from around the globe.”

For more than a decade, Greater & Greener has been the leading international conference for exploring the role of parks in addressing some of the biggest challenges in cities. The highly curated sessions, workshops, and tours facilitate an honest dialogue around solutions, cross-sector and peer-to-peer networking, and tools for building successful park partnerships. Greater & Greener 2019: Exploring Natural Connections will emphasize the natural connections between parks and quality of life, parks and economic benefits, parks and environmental resilience, and the role of parks and city-building. The varied sessions, plenaries, tours, and mobile workshops will emphasize the natural connections between agencies, across sectors, and with communities.

“We’re excited and honored to partner with City Parks Alliance in hosting the 2019 Greater & Greener Conference to create a unique experience showcasing Denver’s urban and mountain parks system that defines our outdoor culture,” says Happy Haynes, Executive Director of Denver Parks & Recreation. “Our park system is a vital element of Denver’s infrastructure and directly influences the health and livability of our city. We look forward to welcoming you to the Rocky Mountain region to engage in enriching conversations on national and international issues facing our cities’ urban parks systems; and to explore Denver’s parks, trails, rivers and open spaces that our residents embrace and visitors enjoy.”

The Denver metropolitan region is one of the fastest growing in the U.S., due in part, to an ongoing commitment to an outdoor urban lifestyle. Historic vision and modern execution of the Denver park system offer leading examples of urban park planning, partnerships, design, and programming. Denver Parks and Recreation facilities are unrivaled in the Rocky Mountain West. The system’s 150-year history began only a decade after the mining town was founded when Denverites dedicated their first park, Mestizo Curtis, in 1868.

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Today, the system includes nearly 20,000 acres of urban and mountain parkland including off-street trails, parkways and natural areas, eight golf courses, 24 lakes, more than 78,000 trees, over 80 miles of trails, nine off-leash dog parks, and over 300 athletic fields. The recreation system includes 28 recreation centers, 16 outdoor pools, and 15 indoor pools serving more than one million visitors annually. Recreation efforts include arts and cultural classes and events, aquatics, sports and fitness opportunities, and youth programming. In addition, the department offers programs focused on outdoor education, instructional programs, youth and adult sports leagues, and out of school programs offered in conjunction with Denver Public Schools.

**Greater & Greener 2019** Conference Tracks include:

- **Activating Urban Parks Through Recreation** - exploring the role of parks and recreation in promoting active, healthy lifestyles, activating neighborhood and downtown public spaces through programming and playful design, and making urban cores more livable and family-friendly.

- **City Parks Essentials** - this popular track at Greater & Greener will focus on strategies to establish, grow and sustain public, private and nonprofit partnerships and is designed to maximize interaction and sharing between participants.

- **Equity** - equity is a focus of discussion in all Greater & Greener sessions, and in Denver the track will offer a deeper dive into building more equitable cities through parks and recreation. Sessions will explore equitable access to park resources, funding, workforce equity, community participation and the role of parks and recreation in addressing broader equity challenges our cities face, including affordable housing, environmental justice, youth development, and other topics.

- **Funding** - consistent funding for parks and recreation programs is always a challenge as municipal budgets are stretched more than ever. This track looks at a variety of funding approaches that public, private, and nonprofit partners have developed to successfully pay for park development, maintenance, and programming.

- **Parks as Infrastructure** - with growing urban populations and aging infrastructure, local governments, city planners and others are taking a fresh look at parks and green space as tools to address some of our greatest urban challenges. From stormwater management and flood prevention to reducing public health costs to economic revitalization and job growth parks are a driver of urban sustainability.

- **Urban Greening and Biodiversity** - one of the connections explored at Greater & Greener 2019 is the one between cities and nature and the role greening and biodiversity plays in making our cities more livable and more sustainable. Sessions in this track examine strategies for developing, stewarding and measuring urban greening efforts, with a particular focus on building biodiversity and resilience.

Registration for Greater & Greener 2019 will open in January 2019. For program information, sponsorship opportunities, and updates visit [greatergreener.org](http://greatergreener.org) and connect with City Parks Alliance on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/CityParksAlliance), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/city-parks-alliance) and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/CityParksAlliance), using the hashtag #greatergreener.


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**City Parks Alliance** is the nation’s leading advocacy group for urban parks and open spaces. As the only independent, nationwide membership organization solely dedicated to urban parks, City Parks Alliance leads and serves a growing network of civic and community leaders, government agencies, parks and recreation authorities, funders and others committed to the creation, revitalization and stewardship of parks and green spaces that contribute to dynamic and more equitable cities. For more information, please visit [cityparksalliance.org](http://cityparksalliance.org).

**Denver Parks and Recreation** facilities are unrivaled in the Rocky Mountain West. The system’s 150-year history began only a decade after the mining town was founded when Denverites dedicated their first park, Mestizo Curtis, in 1868. Through multiple eras of innovative and intentional planning, design and policy, a rich legacy of parks and open space has been shaped in Denver. Today, the system includes 28 recreation centers and nearly 20,000 acres of urban and mountain parkland including off-street trails, parkways, and natural areas.