



# Parks Engage the Public in Decisions

Parks and greenspaces energize community members to become engaged to protect important places.

Residents often mistakenly assume lands that do not have houses on them are protected. This is not always the case, and it is only when a very real threat to the land emerges that they become engaged in the governmental process to speak up and have their voices heard. In many cases, this public engagement removes the threat. In other cases, it may be too late.

Threats to our quality of life and habitat lands and loss of staffing and budget cuts create direct negative impacts to our community. These threats often mobilize a previously unengaged public. From that activism, a sense of community is built, rallying cries are defined, public testimony is made, and attention is focused. This is the way democracy takes form.

Our government, our lands, and our communities

are always better served when the public engages in the democratic process.

As a resident, one way to engage in government is to focus on land use. Because of California's environmental laws, significant land use decisions must be made with notice to the public and decisions can only be made after public hearings. Participating in this experience will focus your attention, hone your skills, encourage you to speak publicly, meet with your elected representatives, help craft better policy, and unfurl a suite of tools you may never have known existed. Parks offer residents the opportunity to become advocates and engage with local government in a direct and personal way.

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