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**Monthly Insight into the Elizabeth Park & Rec District**

# *EPR* connections

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## **District Project Updates**

The District will finally begin its planned renovation of the campground in Casey Jones Park following the conclusion of the Celtic Festival on July 15-16. The project includes adding sewer connects to 23 of the 25 campsites, re-grading the roadway and campsites, installing a second access point to improve emergency vehicle access, and updating site signage. The improvements are well-needed and will allow the District to increase revenues through higher permit fees for the full-access sites. This project is partially funded through Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO). The District is also completing construction documents for the installation of pickleball courts and an artificial turf baseball / softball field within Casey Jones Park. A new improved roadway will be built into the park from County Road 17, leading to a parking lot between the two new park amenities. Dependent upon the availability of contractors, work may begin as early as late Summer / early Fall. At Evans Park, the District is working to replace broken / cracked concrete walkways to improve the safety of park users and expand the artificial turf lawn around the splashpad, which seems to have become the Elizabeth beach..

## **Upcoming Special Events**

### **Independence Day 5K**

Come support the EHS Cardinal Club for a fun run / walk the morning of July 4<sup>th</sup> at Evans Park. Although pre-registration is closed, participants can register the day of the event. There will also be a free pancake breakfast offered by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as well as car show in the Church parking lot. It will be a great morning in the park to start a festive fourth of July. See ya there!

### **Elizabeth Celtic Fest – July 15-16**

Get yer kilt on at the 2023 Elizabeth Celtic festival in Casey Jones Park. Enjoy authentic Scottish food, Irish Whiskey ice cream, beers and ales, live music, bagpiping, local artisans, and the Heavy Athletics competitions such as the always entertaining caber toss. The activities kick-off at 9am and continue until 5pm on Saturday and 4pm on Sunday. For more info visit [www.elizabethcelticfest.org](http://www.elizabethcelticfest.org)

### **Board Member JC Cook Steps Down**

Long-time Board Member JC Cook ended his time as a Board Member for the District this past Spring. JC joined the Board in 2010, serving close to 13 years in various leadership capacities including President of the Board from 2016 through 2021. JC was an active and driven board member who was instrumental in negotiating the purchase of the 91-acre Silver J Ranch property around Casey Jones Park, pursuing the addition of the splashpad to Evans Park, and many other projects during his time. He was a relentless advocate for parks and recreation within the Elizabeth Community and will be sorely missed as we continue to pursue the vision he helped develop. On behalf of the District and the community, thanks for your dedication and service JC!

# Open Program Registrations

## Youth Flag Football

This is a recreational level co-ed league. All games and practices are held in Elizabeth. Teams practice 1-2 times per week and play games on Saturday afternoons. Games begin 8/26 and tournament is on 10/14. Volunteer coaches are needed.

Divisions: 4-6, 6-8, 9-12 Youth that overlap two divisions should choose the division that best suits their skill level

## Youth Soccer

This is a recreational level co-ed soccer league. All games and practices are held in Elizabeth. Teams practice 1-2 times per week and play a game on Saturday mornings. Games begin 8/26 and tournament is on 10/14. Volunteer coaches are needed.

Divisions: 4-6, 6-8, 8-10, 10-12 Youth that overlap two divisions should choose the division that best suits their skill level

## Water Wise Gardening

Join local Landscape Architect Cindy Angers for this informative class on lush and low water landscapes. Plant types and watering methods for our local conditions will be discussed and participants will leave with a good understanding of what to plant, where to plant it, and how to care for it. This is a fun and active class with prizes given out to help you get started or improve your garden / landscape. Register online. Class is July 23, 1-2pm in the Casey Jones Pavilion.

**YOUTH SOCCER AND FLAG FOOTBALL REGISTRATION ENDS JULY 17 - REGISTER NOW TO ENSURE A SPOT FOR YOUR CHILD - UNFORTUNATELY, WE CANNOT ALWAYS ACCOMMODATE LATE REGISTRATIONS**

## Missoula Children's Theatre Camp

Returning for its 3<sup>rd</sup> season, the Missoula Children's Theatre Camp is back in Elizabeth from July 24-29. This unique experience offers local youth ages 6-18 an opportunity to work behind the scenes as well as star on the stage for a production of *The Secret Garden*. Rehearsals are held all week and the camp concludes with two live performances for the community on Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup> at 3pm and 5:30pm. Tickets are \$5 and may be purchased at the door. All activities are held at Elizabeth Middle School. Be sure to get your star signed-up before July 20<sup>th</sup> at [www.elizabethpr.com](http://www.elizabethpr.com) or call us with any questions.

## Photography Camp

Youth that are interested in photography should check out this educational program designed to teach introductory skills. Camp begins on Aug 2 and finishes on Aug 4. Sessions held from 9am – noon. Cameras are provided if participants need one. Register online or call us for more info.

**Every child has a right to play. If registration fees are a barrier to your child's participation, give us a call and we will figure something out.**

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

### Property Tax Concerns

It certainly is no secret that there is continued concern regarding increased property values and taxes and its impact to residents. It is an issue that has attracted a lot of attention. I recently attended a presentation / discussion with the County Commissioners on the matter and wanted to share some thoughts. The Commissioners invited representatives from all special districts in the County to the meeting, and facilitated a healthy discussion about how the County and special districts could best manage the situation and possibly help residents. After initially floating the prospect of potentially lowered mill levies, discussion soon turned to the existing gap between where service levels are currently, compared to where residents want or expect them to be. It became apparent that while all special districts present at the meeting shared the Commissioners concern for residents, particularly those residents with limited or fixed incomes, the opportunity to address unmet needs or improve service levels across the system for all was a higher priority for most attendees. Here at EPR District, our mill levy is 2.466, which means that a property with a residential property value of \$600K is assessed \$103 per year. While not insignificant, it is one of the lowest park and recreation special district mill levies in the state, and we consistently strive to do a lot with a little. While we have not yet received projected property values and had an opportunity to assess associated projected revenues for 2024, we do know that we have a list of mandates, needs, and desires that residents expect of their park system and want us to deliver on. While a recreation center will remain outside our ability to fund without successful passage of a ballot initiative, we can continue to pursue other elements of the Casey Jones Park Master Plan, build additional athletic fields / courts that are needed to meet demand, expand programming, and begin to develop new parks, trails, and spaces to support play. We can and will continue to use all funds available to enhance your life as a resident of the district and we hope you hold us accountable for doing so.