



## **OC Parks Pivots Programming – Connects Digitally**

OVERVIEW: OC Parks hosts numerous events and programs throughout the year for the public to enjoy. COVID-19 canceled in-person events, pushing OC Parks to go virtual.

CHALLENGE: OC Parks manages 60,000 acres of parks and beaches. Many OC Parks facilities feature free community events and programs year-round. Since mid-March, due to COVID-19, community events and programs across all county-owned parks have paused, and some amenities closed temporarily.

SOLUTION: The OC Parks communications team pivoted strategies to safely bring virtual events and programs to the community, while following national, state and local health guidelines. OC Parks' objectives for modifying social media strategy were to keep the community informed on relevant and operational updates during the evolving stages of the pandemic, as well as deliver daily content to maintain audience visibility and increase community engagement while events and programming were not accessible in person. Social media programming includes daily themed content such as "Scat Chat" videos and a virtual concert series. Later, a drive-in movie experience was created to safely bring outdoor movies to the public.

INNOVATION: "OC Parks Sound Check," a virtual concert series, was designed to stream via social media platforms. The strategy involved video and visual production, development of a weekly content campaign to promote the series and increased community engagement efforts to maintain momentum and interest. The final videos were released on Facebook and IGTV each Saturday beginning April 25 through May 30, 2020.

OC Parks organized two OC Parks Drive-In movie events. The same movie was shown for three consecutive nights giving additional opportunities for the public to enjoy the experience. To abide by physical distancing requirements, attendance was limited to approximately 300 guests per night. Vehicles were parked allowing for households to set up blankets or chairs just outside their vehicles and still maintain safe distance from others.

For their weekly social content plan, resource specialists recorded short features while working remotely. The clips were then edited to include branding and posted weekly. OC Parks used the staff clips to post weekly themes such as “Feature Friday,” including a light-hearted series on recognizing animal scat, and “Week in Review at the OC Zoo.”

RESULTS: “OC Parks Sound Check” generated 71,001,624 impressions overall, which included 140,000+ video views on all platforms. The adjusted weekly social content began in mid-March and through mid-July, impressions and engagement increased across OC Parks’ Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter by more than 200% total with a 15.9% net audience growth across all platforms. OC Parks’ channels gained a total of 10,357 followers and 450 new email subscribers from mid-March to mid-July. The drive-in events have received overwhelmingly positive feedback and all events sold out within the first day of being announced. More drive-ins are being planned.

REPLICABILITY: Leveraging a robust social media following to bring events and programs to people’s homes when they may be isolated, bored and frustrated helps provide much-needed distraction, entertainment and education. While nothing can fully replace in-person interaction traditional events and programs provide, many can be repurposed to deliver them in a virtual environment.

With minimal equipment – often just an iPhone and tripod – field staff collaborating with communications staff can continue to provide content to visitors when in-person interaction is not possible. This also allows for much greater participation. Many of the programs that were done in-person typically had a maximum of 20 attendees. By pivoting and offering these same programs virtually, resource specialists can reach and educate a much larger and expanded audience.

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OPTIONAL SUBMISSION – “OC Parks Sound Check” Virtual Concert Series; “Feature Friday” Weekly Video Programming