

SETTING YOUR GOALS

Setting the goals of your group is one of the first things you will do all together. As you determine your goals, it's important to make a distinction between your group's overarching mission and the steps that you will take to achieve that mission. Achieving a lofty mission requires taking small, tangible steps. These steps are your group's **goals**. Your **mission** is most likely one or more of these three things:

- ✓ **Physically Improving the Park:** from cleaning and planting to major renovations
- ✓ **Programming the Park:** hosting regular and special events, from concerts to a day camp
- ✓ **Increasing/Improving Park Usership:** Bringing children into a playground, or school groups into a natural area, or dog lovers into a dog run.

Your short-range goals should be simple and easily achievable; your long-range goals can be more complicated. For example, the first step to taking your park back from crime may be painting over graffiti and meeting your police officers, while it will take a lot more time, effort, and expertise to form a citizens' patrol.

What follows is a list of actions commonly taken by parks groups that should give you an idea of what is achievable right now, and what is achievable in the future. Of course every situation is unique, and you should take this guide as an approximation only.

Also notice that we've divided the lists into two sections—goals for your park and goals for your group. Remember that you're not just helping your park, you're growing a community group. As your group gains experience and sophistication, your effectiveness in the park will grow too.

SHORT-RANGE GOALS: EXAMPLES

For the Park

- ✓ Removing graffiti & trash
- ✓ Planting flowers
- ✓ Hosting a concert or other event
- ✓ Removing invasive species from a natural area

For Your Group

- ✓ Meeting with the park supervisor and manager
- ✓ Holding regular well-attended meetings
- ✓ Creating a membership mailing list
- ✓ Introducing your group to elected officials, other civics, schools, and churches
- ✓ Becoming a member of the community board committee that deals with parks
- ✓ Becoming a member of your precinct community council

MID-RANGE GOALS: EXAMPLES

For the Park

- ✓ Hosting regular clean ups
- ✓ Buying tools and supplies
- ✓ Buying and planting shrubs and trees
- ✓ Regularly weeding & watering planting areas
- ✓ Planting native species in natural areas
- ✓ Regular birding tours
- ✓ Increasing police presence
- ✓ Hosting a performance series, festival, sports tournament, or other larger event

For Your Group

- ✓ Expanding your membership
- ✓ Sending out a mailing
- ✓ Holding elections
- ✓ Developing strong working relationships with parks, the police, elected officials, merchants, other civics, schools, churches, etc.
- ✓ Finding a fiscal sponsor
- ✓ Writing your by-laws
- ✓ Opening a bank account
- ✓ Becoming incorporated
- ✓ Receiving a small grant
- ✓ Soliciting contributions from local neighborhood businesses
- ✓ Getting publicity in local media outlets

LONG-RANGE GOALS: EXAMPLES

For the Park

- ✓ Attracting regular programming by local or citywide organizations
- ✓ Hosting a regular summer program for kids (basketball league, arts and crafts)
- ✓ Hosting regular environmental education/restoration projects
- ✓ Creating a citizens safety patrol
- ✓ Raising money for a major renovation or redesign
- ✓ Acquiring funding for a playground associate or gardener

For Your Group

- ✓ Hosting a small fundraising event
- ✓ Recruiting a board of directors
- ✓ Building long-term relationships with funders and supporters
- ✓ Publishing a regular newsletter
- ✓ Getting 501(c)3 tax-exempt status
- ✓ Compiling an archive of your accomplishments (photographs, newspaper articles, old newsletters and flyers, etc.)
- ✓ Linking with other groups in your neighborhood to work together on larger projects