

# Innovative Play Equipment



Queenston Park, Coquitlam, BC, Canada

## ***What Is Innovative Play Equipment?***

Innovative play equipment goes beyond the standard playset. There is a wide range of innovative play equipment available, including web style play structures, balance pads, freestanding/freestyle play, zip lines, obstacles, youth fitness equipment, musical instruments, and themed play equipment. It offers children choices that go beyond swings and slides, encouraging them to interact with new elements and with each other.



## ***Examples of Innovative Play Installation Needs***

- Concrete to secure play structures
- Play equipment
- Soft play surfaces

## ***Why Is Innovative Play Equipment Important?***



Central Park, Maple Grove, MN

Innovative play equipment gets children more active and involved. It increases the amount of exercise they get when they visit a park. The new and different equipment engages children immediately and challenges their creativity. It also allows new opportunities to install accessible and inclusive play structures.



Creating innovative play structures drives greater interest in parks; people are willing to travel to areas with innovative play equipment.



### **Resources**

- National Recreation and Park Association

<https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2018/february/some-innovative-playground-design-trends-and-fundraising-resources/>

- Fatherly, The 11 Most Innovative, Beautiful, and Inspired Playgrounds on the Planet  
<https://www.fatherly.com/play/the-11-most-innovative-beautiful-and-inspired-playgrounds-on-the-planet/>

# Ornamental Gardens



## ***What Is an Ornamental Garden?***

An ornamental garden is designed more for aesthetic appearance than for crops. Ornamental gardens vary widely, from flower gardens to rock gardens, from sensory gardens to arboretums. They can provide links to historical events, learning experiences, or accessible activities.

There are many different types of ornamental gardens. Traditional English gardens present an idealized view of nature, like a painting. Educational gardens offer ways to learn about the region, focusing on topics like history (ex. Fort Vancouver gardens), nature (ex. Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Art Walk), or literature (ex. Shakespeare Garden). Sensory gardens create an accessible experience for everyone, providing elements like scented gardens, bright blocks of color, water features, textured paths, or soundscapes.



## ***Examples of Ornamental Garden Equipment***

- Variety of plants, trees, flowers, shrubs
- Landscape and/or architectural elements
- Treated wood to create garden beds
- Soil and soil amendments
- Garden tools
- Access to water and hose(s)



## ***Why Are Ornamental Gardens Important?***

Ornamental Gardens provide the opportunity for everyone to enjoy the beauty of nature. They provide a sense of community and connection to the environment. They also provide an opportunity to create green, natural spaces in urban or suburban areas. And they improve community health by serving as a venue for exercise and activity, as well as a place to gather.

**English Gardens**





## Sensory Gardens



## Portland Japanese Garden



## Resources

- Gardening Know How <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/ornamental>
- Hill Agricultural University of India  
<http://www.hillagric.ac.in/edu/coa/horticulture/lecture/Types%20of%20Gardens%20%5bCompatibility%20Mode%5d%20pdf.pdf>
- American Society of Landscape Architects  
<https://thefield.asla.org/2016/10/25/sensory-gardens/>

# Community Gardens



## ***What Is a Community Garden?***

A community garden is a plot of land that is gardened collectively by a group of people. Community gardens can have either individual or shared plots. They can be placed on public or private land.



## ***Examples of Ornamental Garden Equipment***

- Variety of plants and flowers
- Treated wood to create garden beds
- Soil and soil amendments
- Garden shed
- Garden tools
- Access to water and hose(s)



## ***Why Are Community Gardens Important?***

Community gardens provide fresh produce and flowers for participants, some of whom may not be able to have their own garden plots at home. The communally tended gardens provide a sense of community and

connection to the environment. They also provide an opportunity to create green, natural spaces in urban or suburban areas.

Locally, they have been used as a teaching tool for elementary schools and as a resource for area food banks. They improve community health with increased fruit and vegetable consumption and by serving as a venue for exercise and community gathering.



## **Resources**

- Clark County, Community Gardening  
[www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/community-gardening](http://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/community-gardening)
- American Community Gardening Association [www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org)
- Aggie Horticulture <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>
- U.S. Department of Agriculture <http://peoplesgarden.usda.gov>

# Dog Parks



New York City  
Dog Park

## ***What Is a Dog Park?***

A dog park provides a fenced area for dogs to exercise and play off-leash while being supervised by their owners. Typically a dog park has four to six foot fences, with double gated entrances and exits. There are often separate places for large and small dogs to play. It can contain play equipment for dogs as well as benches and trails.



## ***Examples of Dog Park Equipment***

- 4' - 6' fence with double gated entrances and exits
- Play features
- Benches
- Trees for shade
- Access to water
- Animal waste disposal areas
- Trail building material



Seattle Dog Park

Rooftop Dog Park  
at Amazon



## ***Why Are Dog Parks Important?***

Dog parks allow dogs and owners to spend time together for play and exercise in a safe space. This can decrease barking and other problem behaviors in the neighborhood.

Dog parks promote responsible dog ownerships. They allow socializing for both dogs and their owners.

## **Resources**

- Seattle Parks & Recreation People Dogs & Parks Plan  
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/about-us/policies-and-plans/people-dogs-and-parks-strategic-plan>
  - MRSC Off-Leash Areas and Dog Parks: Planning and Policy  
<http://mrsc.org/Home/Explore-Topics/Parks-and-Recreation/Park-Facilities/Off-Leash-Areas-and-Dog-Parks-Planning-and-Policy.aspx>
  - Dog Paw Off-Leash Dog Parks <https://dogpawoffleashparks.org/>

# Fitness Parks



## ***What Is a Fitness Park?***

A fitness park is a structured outdoors fitness areas, sometimes called outdoor gyms or fitness zones. Equipment can include basic fitness equipment or stations, or it can be an entire outdoor obstacle course. It can be a single aerial climbing net or artistically styled equipment that encourages movement. They can be located beside a trail, in a city center, or in a forest. It allows people to challenge, strengthen, and improve their fitness levels.



## ***Examples of Fitness Park Equipment***

- Fitness equipment
- Concrete for securing fitness equipment
- Play surfacing

## ***Why Are Fitness Parks Important?***

Fitness parks provide a free and accessible exercise option for the community. They provide a well-balanced variety of exercise routines, including aerobic, balance and



flexibility, core, and strength. People who exercise outdoors are more likely to repeat the activity, and to participate for a longer period of time. Outdoor exercise also improves mood and boosts self-esteem.



## **Resources**

- Lvblcity.com (promoting livability in cities)  
<https://www.lvblcity.com/blog/2016/10/how-to-build-an-outdoor-fitness-park>
- National Recreation and Parks Association  
<https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/parksbuildcommunity/>

# Mountain Bike Trails



## ***What Are Mountain Bike Trails?***

Mountain bike trails are designed for riding mountain bikes off-road, often over rough terrain. There are several different types of mountain bike trails, including cross country, trail riding, all mountain/Enduro, downhill, freeride, and dirt jumping. Most mountain bike trails fall in the first two categories.

Mountain bike trails can be placed in areas other parks and trails can not. Single track trails, back-country roads, and fire roads are examples of areas that can be converted to mountain bike trails. Trail grade and contour are controlled to create a progressive, challenging course.



## ***Examples of Mountain Bike Trail Equipment***

- Equipment for clearing trails
- Dirt for jumps, berms, and rollers
- Wood for trail reinforcement, bridges, etc.
- Natural or constructed obstacles

## **Why Are Mountain Bike Trails Important?**

Mountain bike trails provide public access to remote or rough terrain. Planning and building trails promotes a sense of community as individuals, groups, and agencies work together to create a sustainable trail. Mountain biking builds endurance, core strength, balance, and self-reliance. It is an activity that can be done as an individual, a family, or a group.



Bells Mountain Trail, Yacolt

## **Resources**

- International Mountain Bicycling Association  
<https://www.imba.com/explore-imba/trail-creation-and-enhancement/trail-solutions?param=trail-solutions-project> and  
[www.wnymba.org/static/report/trail\\_manual/BBT\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.wnymba.org/static/report/trail_manual/BBT_Manual.pdf)
- Trails Near Me  
[www.singletracks.com/Mountain-Bike-Trails-bike-trails\\_o.html?filterBy=%7Cloc:45.638889~-122.660278~25~Vancouver%2C+WA](http://www.singletracks.com/Mountain-Bike-Trails-bike-trails_o.html?filterBy=%7Cloc:45.638889~-122.660278~25~Vancouver%2C+WA)

# Nature Parks



## ***What Are Nature Parks?***

Nature parks promote contact with our natural environment and outdoor space. Instead of traditional play structures, nature parks emphasize natural materials, like climbing logs, tree stumps, and boulders. These can be natural or artificial. The play is open-ended, allowing children to decide how to play. Nature parks are fun but can also be educational, teaching children about different elements of the environment.



## ***Examples of Nature Park Equipment***

- Elements of nature, such as logs, boulders, and tree stumps (real or artificial)
- Soft play surface
- Variety of plants and flowers

Silver Falls State Park, OR

## **Why Are Nature Parks Important?**



Silver Falls State Park, OR

Nature parks encourage children to use their imaginations, with less structured play and more creativity. They allow children to engage with nature and learn about the environment. Nature parks promote both physical and social skills.



Birding Tower, Auburn Environmental Park, Auburn, WA

## **Resources**

- Natural Playgrounds for Kids: Advantages and Problems  
<https://wehavekids.com/parenting/Natural-Playgrounds-For-Kids-Advantages-and-Problems>
- Bend Parks and Recreation Natural Play Areas, Bend, OR  
<https://www.bendparksandrec.org/parks-trails/natural-play-areas/>
- Westmoreland Park Nature Play Area, Portland, OR  
<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/57822>

# Public Art in Parks



**Photo: Willapa National Wildlife Refuge Art Walk**

## **What Is Public Art?**

Public art can take a wide range of forms, sizes, and scales, and can be temporary or permanent. Examples include murals, sculpture, landscaping, architectural work, and even interactive exhibits. Whether it is a single tile or a large sculpture, it is designed to evoke a response from park visitors.



## ***Examples of Public Art in Parks Equipment***

- Artwork itself
- Concrete for bases
- Paint, tiles, and other artistic materials
- Signage
- Landscape and/or architectural elements

**Photo: Ridgefield Overlook Park**

**Photo: Portland Park**



## **Why Is Public Art in Parks Important?**

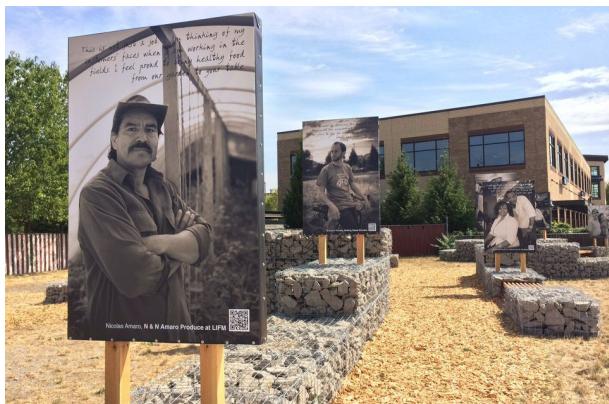
Public art in parks provides everyone the opportunity to enjoy the arts. Because the artwork is free and accessible, it has less barriers than a museum or paid exhibit. Public art is often site-specific, created in response to the community and place in which it resides. Public art provides moving, meaningful experiences that enhance the community's enjoyment of the parks.



**Photos: New York City Parks**



## Photo: New York City Parks



### **Photo: Portland Temporary Park**



### **Photo: Hillsboro Park**

## Resources

- Americans for the Arts <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-topic/public-art>
- National Recreation and Parks Association  
<https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2016/september/making-small-towns-special-how-to-afford-public-art/>
- New York City Art in the Parks Program  
<https://www.nycgovparks.org/art-and-antiquities/art-in-the-parks>

# Spray Parks, Splash Pads, and Fountains



Willis Tucker  
Park,  
Snohomish, WA

## ***What Are Spray Parks, Splash Pads, and Fountains?***

Spray parks, splash pads, and fountains are recreational water features within park. They encourage interaction with water in different ways. Spray parks and splash pads provide zero-depth water attractions, such as spray, mist, or cascade features. Fountains are designed to be visually appealing as well as interactive. Some fountains have standing water, but they can also be designed to be zero-depth.



## ***Examples of Spray Park, Splash Pad, and Fountain Equipment***

- Water play features
- Non-slip concrete or other non-slip surface
- Treated water

Green Lake Village “Pocket Fountain”, Seattle, WA

## **Why Are Spray Parks, Splash Pads, and Fountains Important?**

They allow children to enjoy the water without the need for lifeguards. Spray parks and splash pads can be designed to be more inclusive, so people of all ages and abilities can enjoy them.



Seattle Center International Fountain, Seattle, WA

Spray parks, splash pads, and fountains provide a sensory experience that differs from a standard park. And they are a welcome way to cool off during hot weather.



Quarry Splash Pad, Williamson County, TX



Esther Short Park, Vancouver, WA

## **Resources**

- Splash Park Design, Great Lakes Park Training Institute  
[http://www.glti.org/proceedings/2009/sessions/03\\_Splash\\_Park\\_Design.pdf](http://www.glti.org/proceedings/2009/sessions/03_Splash_Park_Design.pdf)
- Best Practices for Splash Pads, Case Studies from Georgia and Florida  
[http://www.archwaypartnership.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Best-Practices-for-Public-Splash-Pads\\_Taha-Hameddudin\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.archwaypartnership.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Best-Practices-for-Public-Splash-Pads_Taha-Hameddudin_FINAL.pdf)

# Skate Parks and Skate Spots



Skate Park, LaCenter, WA

## ***What Are Skate Parks and Skate Spots?***

A skate park is a recreational area designed for the purpose of skateboarding, BMX bike and scooter riding, and/or inline skating. The amount of allocated area for the location of skating and riding can differ:

- **Skate Spots** are approximately 3,000 sq. ft. and generally have a single structure or feature that encourages skating. They might be incorporated as part of a public space or art space.
- **Skate Parks** are generally around 10,000 sq. ft. and will contain a mix of terrain and amenities. They are standalone parks or park areas that focus specifically on skate sports.



Skate Spot, Vancouver, WA

## ***Examples of Skate Park or Skate Spot Equipment***

- Concrete features
- Additional features for tricks and practice
- Landscaping

## **Why Are Skate Parks Important?**



Skate Park, Kelso, WA

Skate parks provide a safe place for recreation and encourage a healthy, athletic outlet for youth. Unlike traditional play structures, which typically serve children from 0 to 11, skate spots and skate parks serve a wide range of ages.

A quality built skatepark will last for a number of years, requiring very little ongoing maintenance. Skate parks can also be an economic draw for the community through skateboarding and biking tourism.



Skate Spot, Vancouver, WA

## **Resources**

- <https://efficientgov.com/blog/2017/06/19/argument-skate-parks/>
- <http://economicdevelopment.org/2015/07/urban-area-development-the-benefits-of-skate-parks/>
- <https://publicskateparkguide.org/vision/types-of-skateparks/>

# Pump Tracks



Asphalt Pump Track, New York, NY

## ***What Are Pump Tracks?***

Pump tracks are off-road terrain for cycle sports, small looping trail systems consisting of a circuit of banked turns. It is designed to be ridden completely by a rider “pumping” or creating momentum with up and down movements rather than pedaling. They can have either individual or shared plots. The track is a freestyle course with steep-bermed corners, smooth rollers, and criss-crossing interconnected lines. They can be built in a space as small as 10' x 30'.



## ***Examples of Pump Track Equipment***

- Structures for practicing tricks and techniques
  - Treated wood
  - Dirt for berms and rollers

## **Why Are Pump Tracks Important?**



Poulsbo Pump Track

Pump tracks build confidence, strength, and bike handling skills. It allows children and adult to practice riding skills in a safe environment. And they promote physical activity and outdoor exercise.

Pump tracks stand out from other conventional sports facilities. They draw people to your neighborhood or town as a special activity that can not be found in most parks.



## **Resources**

- [adventuresportsjournal.com/pumpin-an-introduction-to-the-world-of-pump-tracks/](http://adventuresportsjournal.com/pumpin-an-introduction-to-the-world-of-pump-tracks/)
- [velosolutions.com/pump-track/en/pump-tracks/10-reasons-for-having-a-pump-track/](http://velosolutions.com/pump-track/en/pump-tracks/10-reasons-for-having-a-pump-track/)
- [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pump\\_track](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pump_track)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fDEmygcJ1Eg>
- <http://www.clarkkentcontractors.com/bmx-articles/designing-good-pump-track.html>

# Sport Courts



## ***What Is a Sport Court?***

Sport courts provide a synthetic surface that can be used indoors and outdoors for basketball, tennis, pickleball, or any sport requiring a hard surface to play on. Often these are striped or lined to allow multiple sports to be played in the same space. They can also be used as a primary surface for play equipment as an alternative to bark or grass.



## ***Examples of Sport Court Equipment***

- Sport court play surface
- Sport specific equipment (nets, goals, striping, etc.)
- Fencing

## ***Why Are Sport Courts Important?***



Urban Sport Courts, Singapore

Sport courts encourage physical activity and exercise. They can be customized to meet the needs of the community or activity. Sport courts can often be utilized in smaller spaces compared to a project requiring asphalt and or concrete. Installation and maintenance costs can be less than traditional methods, and provide more creative opportunities for use. Sport court surfaces are generally safer than comparable surfaces and can reduce the chance of injury. Additionally, these features can bring in participants from other communities that provide an economic benefit to the neighborhood.

### **Resources**

- <https://www.sportcourtma.com/multi-sport-game-courts>
- <https://sportifcities.com/singapore-sporting-hdbs/>
- <http://www.sportcourt.com/about-us>

# Alternative Recreation Courts



Design layout for multi-use game courts, including baseball, softball, soccer, rugby, ultimate frisbee, band, soccer, and football

## ***What Are Alternative Recreation Courts?***

Alternative Recreation Courts provide an opportunity to play games and sports not commonly found elsewhere in the community. Bocce ball courts, lacrosse and rugby fields, and horseshoe pits are some common types of Alternative Recreation Courts.



## ***Examples of Alternative Recreation Court Equipment***

- Sport court play surface
- Sport specific equipment (nets, goals, bocce balls, horseshoes, striping, etc.)
- Fencing

## ***Why Are Alternative Recreation Courts Important?***

Alternative recreation courts encourage physical activity for all ages. When a community provides Alternative Recreation Courts, it allows its citizens to experience games and sports they may not have otherwise had the opportunity to participate in. Additionally, these features can bring in participants from other communities that can provide an economic benefit to the neighborhood.



Kansas City  
Public Bocce  
Ball Courts

## **Resources**

- <http://kcparks.org/places/columbus-square/>
- [http://www.capemaycountyherald.com/community/article\\_oce985eo-02cc-11e7-88e5-0b2e86d9de04.html](http://www.capemaycountyherald.com/community/article_oce985eo-02cc-11e7-88e5-0b2e86d9de04.html)

# Sport Fields



Sport Field in Australia for football, soccer, and track

## ***What Are Sport Fields?***

Sport Fields provide are traditional grass and dirt fields where games such as soccer and baseball are played. Due to the natural elements, additional maintenance is required, along with irrigation.



## ***Examples of Sport Field Equipment***

- Field maintenance equipment
- Sport specific equipment (nets, goals, bocce balls, horseshoes, striping, etc.)
- Fencing

## **Why Are Sport Fields Important?**

Sport Fields attract participants of traditional sports such as baseball, softball, and soccer, increasing the usage of the open areas. Since the games are publicly popular, participants generally supply their own equipment, reducing costs and coordination on behalf of the jurisdiction.

Public tracks are also a low maintenance, attractive option for runners that can be safer to use than running on streets and sidewalks.

Multiple, high quality, sports fields have the opportunity to attract tournaments for their respective sports, presenting an economic opportunity to the community.



Flexible Use Field  
(showing t-ball and  
soccer),  
Woodinville, WA

## **Resources**

- <https://www.tualatinoregon.gov/recreation/reserve-park-shelter-or-sports-field>
- [http://www.jgm-inc.com/projects/parks\\_trails/Woodinville.htm](http://www.jgm-inc.com/projects/parks_trails/Woodinville.htm)
- <http://www.grassman.com.au>

# Disc Golf Course



Pier Park Disc Golf, Portland, OR

## ***What Is a Disc Golf Course?***

Disc Golf is a flying disc sport where players throw a disc at a target. The rules are similar to golf. Usually there are 9 or 18 holes on a course, as well as a practice tee. Disc Golf is one of today's fastest growing sports.



## ***Examples of Disc Golf Course Equipment***

- Tee positions (usually a small pad of asphalt, concrete, rubber, gravel, or turf)
- Signage for tees and safety
- Targets (usually golf disc baskets with a central pole supporting hanging chains)



Professional Disc Golf Association Championship, Las Vegas, NV

## ***Why Is a Disc Golf Course Important?***

Disc Golf is an inclusive sport that can be played by a wide range of ages and fitness levels. In addition, there is little investment required to start playing, as the only equipment to purchase is a golf disc.

Because each course requires a different combination of throws to complete, courses can be designed around natural areas. Trees and terrain can be features on the course, challenging players and engaging them in the environment.

## **Resources**

- Disc Golf Association [www.discgolf.com](http://www.discgolf.com)
- Professional Disc Golf Association <https://www.pdga.com/>
- Stumptown Disc Golf Association (Portland, OR)  
<http://www.stumptowndiscgolf.org/>
- Vancouver Clark Disc Golf (Vancouver, WA) [www.vcdg.org](http://www.vcdg.org)
- Disc Golf Course Development Guide  
<https://www.discgolf.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-DGA-Disc-Golf-Course-Development-Guide-sm.pdf>