

Director's Highlights

Parks, Recreation, Marine and Animal Care Services

December 2024 Highlights

Prepared by Director Brent Dennis

1. We are extremely proud of Linda Rubio, our stellar team member who will be recognized by Long Beach City Council at their January 21, 2025, meeting as our Department's Employee of the Month. Linda was selected by our Employee Recognition Committee out of the entire year of honorees. Linda continues to do an amazing job in her leadership role on the Community Recreation Services team in the Registration and Permits Office. Congrats, Linda!
2. Congratulations to our El Dorado Nature Center staff and volunteers led by Meaghan O'Neil for a very successful Annual California Native Plant Sale that was offered to area gardeners from November 5 – 26 on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 am – 1pm. Over \$9K was raised with proceeds benefiting the Nature Center programs and special events. Native garden enthusiasts took advantage of the popular sale to enhance their garden, patio or balcony, while increasing habitat for wildlife.
3. December brings some big changes within Council District 8 as Councilman Al Austin heads into the final weeks of the conclusion of his 12 years of leadership and service as a Long Beach Councilmember. Great Council District 8 highlights this year included the approval of the Scherer Park Vision Plan and the ribbon cutting celebration of Davenport Park, both being great examples of the effectiveness of his advocacy and support of parks and open space in Council District 8. Newly elected Councilwoman to take on the leadership for Council District 8 is Tunua Thrash-Ntuk. I was pleased to have a productive 'meet and greet' Teams meeting with the Councilwoman in early December to begin a good working relationship to continue the advancement of parks and recreation initiatives and projects in Council District 8. She will be sworn into office at the December 17, 2024, City Council meeting.
4. The evening of Black Friday saw the official lighting of the 2024 holiday season for Trees on the Bay. Sixty-eight trees have been installed citywide with most on the waterfront or in park lakes. Ten of the trees this year are being Introduced as solar-powered, LED illuminated trees in the Colorado Lagoon. This popular Long Beach holiday tradition is shining brightly with its embrace of sustainability and innovative improvements. Congratulations to our Marine Bureau team led by Todd Leland for this incredible forward-thinking "green" initiative that sets a new standard for holiday illumination worth celebrating.
5. Still pending is a final announcement for the long-awaited dedication of the Junipero Beach Sports Courts. Unfortunately, some important finishing details within the project and the arrival of several important shade structures are delaying an eagerly anticipated ribbon cutting and opening celebration. A new opening date will most likely occur in the early part of the new year. The project brings a new basketball court and roller skating plaza to this popular beachfront active recreational area.

6. The new 2025 Calendar of Long Beach Utilities features a number of months with photos highlighting many of our parks, marinas, animal care, and PRM Department programs. The strong association of Long Beach with the countless positive dimensions of Parks, Recreation, Marine and Animal Care Services is certainly something our Department is very proud of. February showcases Long Beach Animal Care with Superintendent Alma Vera-Lima and furry friend Murdock taking a walk on the ACS campus.
7. 2024 has been another great year of important accomplishments by our Parks, Recreation, Marine and Animal Care Services team. We look forward to embracing the challenges and opportunities that the new year will bring in 2025. Happy Holidays to you and yours. May the new year bring you health, happiness and a greater sense of community. Parks Make Live Better and Parks Make Long Beach.