parksportal
what's happening in San Francisco parks

ParksPortal.com Organization Guide

ParksPortal is a new online source for what's going on in San Francisco parks, recreation centers and open spaces– from classes, concerts, walks and races, to clean-up days, gardening events, and neighborhood meetings. ParksPortal is specifically oriented to help non-profits, community groups, and other organizations market themselves and their events to a ready audience. ParksPortal is designed around *events,* what type of event or class, where and when they are, and who is hosting them. The public can search the portal to find out when the swim lessons at their local pool will be or when the next concert in Golden Gate Park will be, and everything in between. ParksPortal was developed by the San Francisco Parks Trust in collaboration with the San Francisco Recreation & Parks Department, which has adopted ParksPortal as its online public calendar.

Getting Started– Register

Anyone can search or post an event on ParksPortal. However, if you are an organization or an individual posting often, it is a good idea to also register. Registered users enjoy advanced features such as ParksPress, can utilize Sponsor Banners, and may create a profile that will automatically display on their event pages– a great way to gain visibility for your organization. Registered users can also manage all their events from within ParksPortal.

- Register by following the register link in the top navigation bar or in the footer

- You will receive a confirmation email with instructions on how to send in your organization profile. Please email parksportal@sfpt.org with a profile of about 150 words. You may also include a logo that will display with your profile. It must be no more than 175 pixels wide, in jpeg or gif format, and RGB color mode. Also provide contact information for your organization that you would like to display on your events. At a minimum, this should include a website address and contact email, and preferably a phone number and contact name as well. If you are an advocate for a specific park, you may also submit a historical profile on the physical park, which will also be displayed on event pages.

- A helpful hint- register only one username for your organization, and post all your events using that username. This way, any staff member may manage and edit any event for your organization.

Post an Event

Your event page includes basic information about your event, a map and link to directions, contact information for your organization, and an optional photo and/or document (Word or PDF Document) that viewers can download. This downloadable document can be a flyer, sign-up form, press release, etc. Also on your event page, your organization profile will display as well as information, if any, about the location.

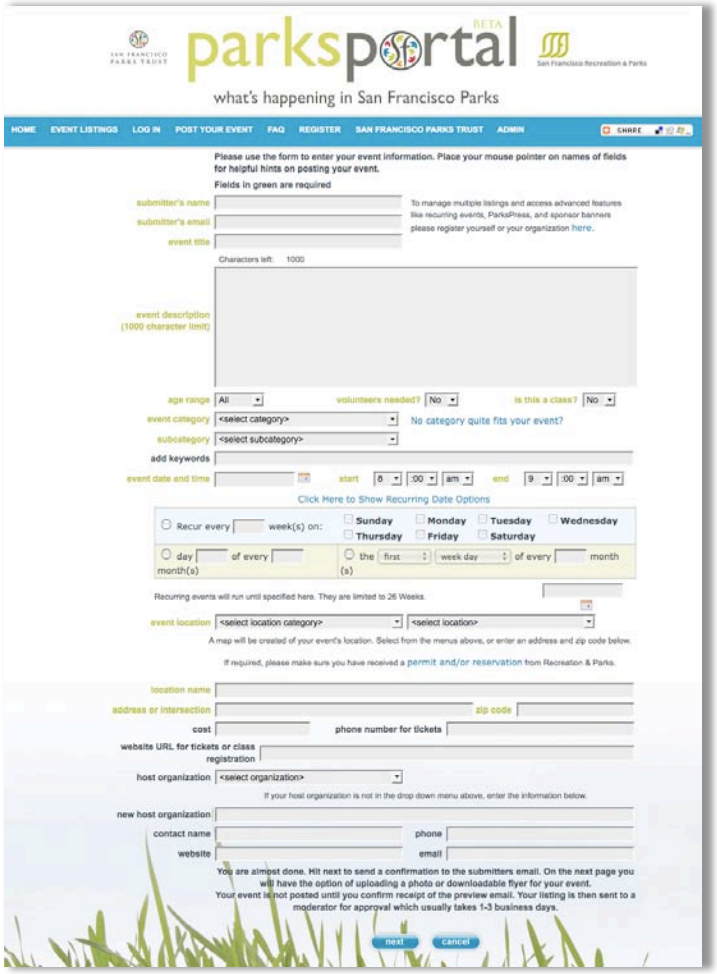


- To post an event, first log in. In order to manage your events through your user account, *you must post your event while logged in.*

- Click the post button on the home page, or in the top the navigation bar. Posting an event works much like Craigslist. You post an event, receive an email notice, confirm the event, and then it gets sent to our moderators and posted.

- Fill out the event form, making sure to include as much information as possible about your event. There are various drop down menus for important details, such as if you need volunteers, for categorizing your event so people can find it easier, for assigning a location, and selecting your organization as host. Pop-up balloons on the page will help you along the way.

Submitter's name and email address
These will not be displayed on your event, and are kept private. The confirmation email will be sent to the "submitter's email". If you are posting an event, but want another person to review and approve it, you can use their email.



Event Description
Please add general details about your event here, including what activities are happening, or what volunteers might need to bring or wear.

Age, Volunteer, and Class
By default, your event is for ALL ages. You may select a different age group if appropriate. If you need volunteers, please select Yes. Also, if your event would be considered an "instructional" class, whether free or for a fee, please select Yes.

Category/Subcategory
Categorize your event as best you can to make it easier for people to find.

Keywords
ParksPortal's text search methods always search ALL the text of your event, including its description, category, location, event title, etc. Keywords are not necessarily needed, but may be used to "code" certain events you are posting to group them together later. For instance, if you are organizing an outdoor festival that has many different types of events, over several days, at different locations, you may add a unique keyword to each of the events to find the entire group easier. You can add a keyword such as "julyevents999" that only you know, so you can create a search link to these events quickly and easily. See the FAQ page for more information on creating links to your events.

Enter a date, start time and end time for your event.
If your event is recurring, such as a weekly or monthly workday, you may use the recurring settings- available only to registered users. Make sure you select an end date for your series of events, up to a maximum of 26 weeks.

Location
ParksPortal's database includes many of the City's park and recreation locations already, and you may find them in the drop down menus. First select a category, then the location itself. You may enter your location manually if it is not in the menu. Intersections must be entered with "and", such as "Lincoln and 9th Avenue". Note that some locations within larger parks use latitude and longitude, so will not have addresses.

Cost and ticket information
If your event costs money, please enter the ticket price, including a phone number to call for tickets.

Website URL for ticket, registration, or sign up
Your event may have a site to buy tickets (such as Ticketmaster) or a website to register/sign up. Enter the entire URL here, starting with http://. It is a good idea to mention this link in your event description.

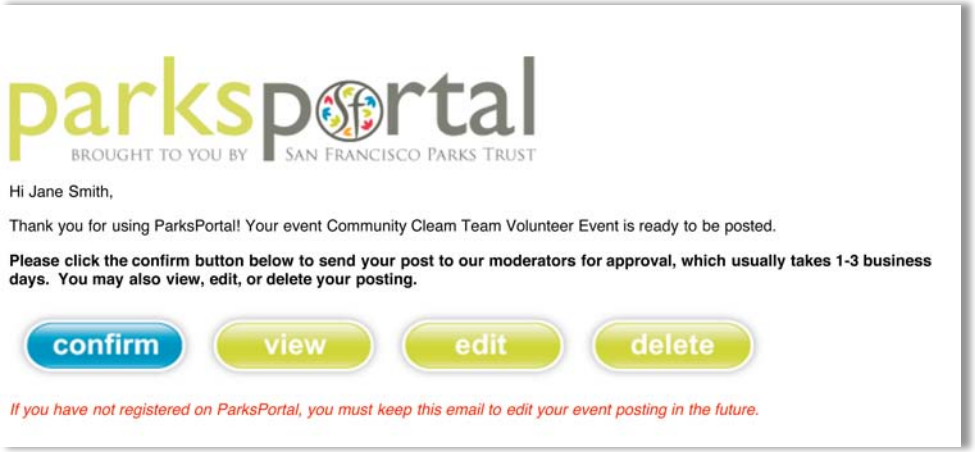
Host Organization
Select your organization from the menu, and the contact information you provided will automatically fill the fields. You may edit this information for a particular event, for instance, if there is an RSVP email or information email that is different than the default contact email for your organization. If your organization is not in the menu, enter the information manually.

Click *next* when you are done.

Upload a Photo or Document
On the next page, you may upload a photo that will display with your event. Please keep your photo to under 5MB. You may also upload a Word or PDF document that will be able to be downloaded from a link in your event. This may be used for a flyer, a signup form, press release, or any other material for your event. It is a good idea to note this downloadable item in your event description. Uploading a photo or document is optional.

Click *upload and submit* or *submit* when you are done.

Approval Process
After you have clicked submit, a confirmation email will be sent to the email address you entered in the "submitter's email" field. You may view and edit your event before confirming it. Your event will not be sent to our moderators for approval until you click the blue confirm button. After which it will usually take 1-3 business days before your event is posted on ParksPortal.



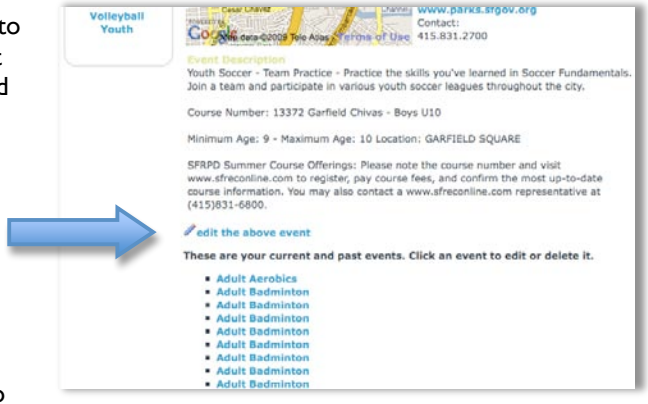
If we can't approve your event or we need additional information, we will send a notice to the "submitter's email."

Editing or Deleting Your Event After It's Posted
If you are not registered, you must keep the confirmation email to edit or delete your event in the future. Registered users can edit their event, and see all the events they have posted- when logged in. Edit links are at the bottom of your event pages.

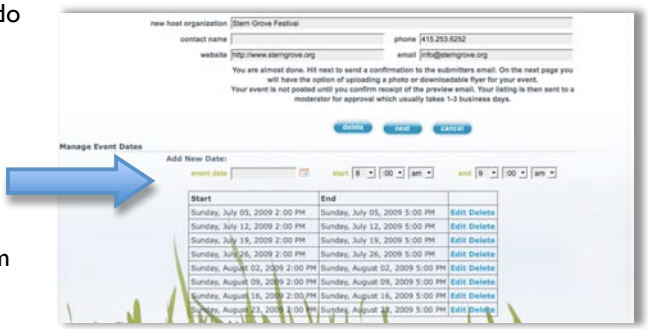
- Log in, find your event, and click the edit link at the bottom of the event. You will be taken to the same post form you filled out initially.

- Edit your event, and hit next. Or delete it by pressing the delete button.

- On the next page, you can delete your attached photo or download document, or attached a new one. If you do nothing, your previous photo and/or document will be unaffected.



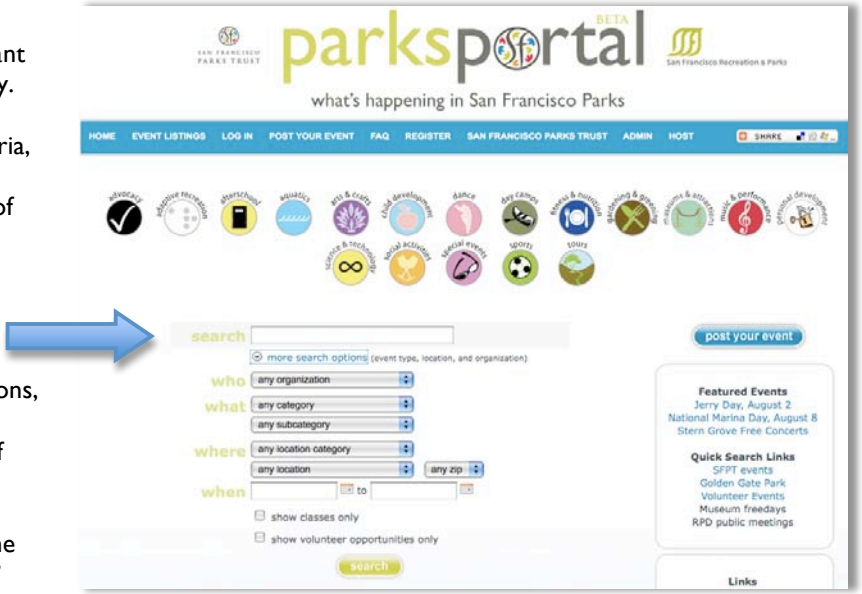
When editing a recurring event, click the edit link at the bottom of any of the series' event pages. You may make global changes to the event information, delete a date in the series, or add a new date. To customize a single date within a series of recurring events, ParksPortal will remove that event date from the series and post it as a single event.



Edits to events still go through the moderator process. The previous unedited version of your event still displays until changes to your event have been approved.

Searching ParksPortal

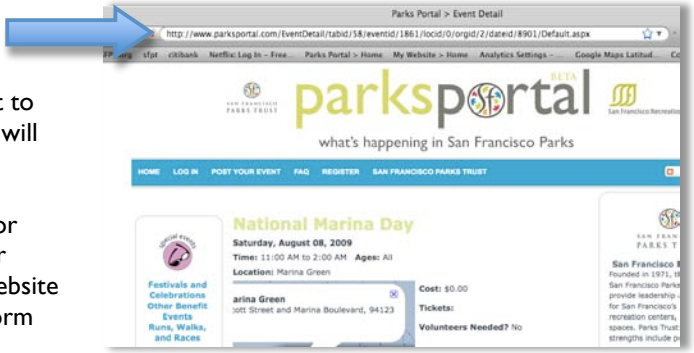
You may search in a number of ways, all meant to cater to varying levels of computer fluency. ParksPortal's default search brings back ALL events, from today onward. Using text, criteria, or dates all further targets your search. You may click the category icons across the top of the home page to browse by event type.



You may enter text in the search field like a normal internet search engine, or you can use the drop down menus (after expanding them) to select specific organizations, event types, or locations. Search criteria are additive, so you can search by any number of criteria from the menus, just text, or any combination of text and criteria from the menus. For instance, typing "basketball" in the text field and selecting "Recreation Centers" from the drop down menu will give results for all basketball events in recreation centers in the City. Selecting simply "Dolores Park" will return all events at that location. You may limit your search by classes or volunteer events, or select a specific date, or date range. Click *search* and your results are displayed on the next page. Click on the view button or event title to open the event details.

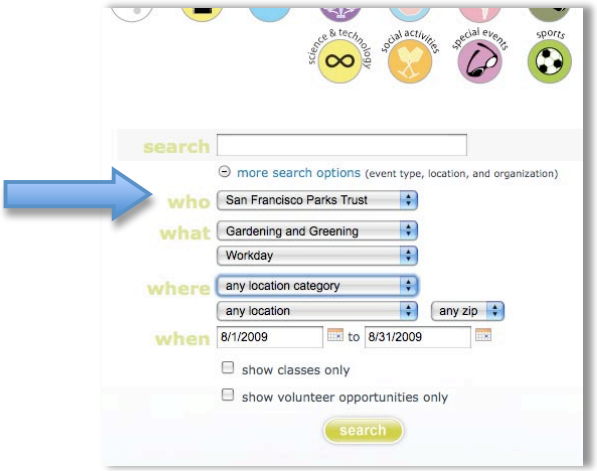
Links and Pre-Loaded Searches

If you would like to create a link to your event page to place on a website, or email to someone, simply find your event page on ParksPortal. Copy the URL, and use that to create a link. The URL contains your event's unique ID, and will link directly to your event page.



You can also create a pre-loaded search link, assigning text or search criteria. For instance, if your organization posted four events in August and you would like to add a link to your website for those events, simply add those criteria into the search form on the ParksPortal home page- your organization and a date range- and click *search*. On the search results page that shows your organization's four events, copy the URL and use that as a link. If you have used a unique keyword to "code" your events, you may also simply use that keyword in the text search field on the home page to create a search link to those specific events. Any combination of text and criteria may be used to create a pre-loaded search link.

It is important to note that the pre-loaded search links you create actively search each time, so if events expire (ParksPortal does not display events in the past) or no events meet the criteria in your pre-loaded search link, the results page will display no events. This also means that you can create a link or button on your website that always searches for your organization's events at any one time.





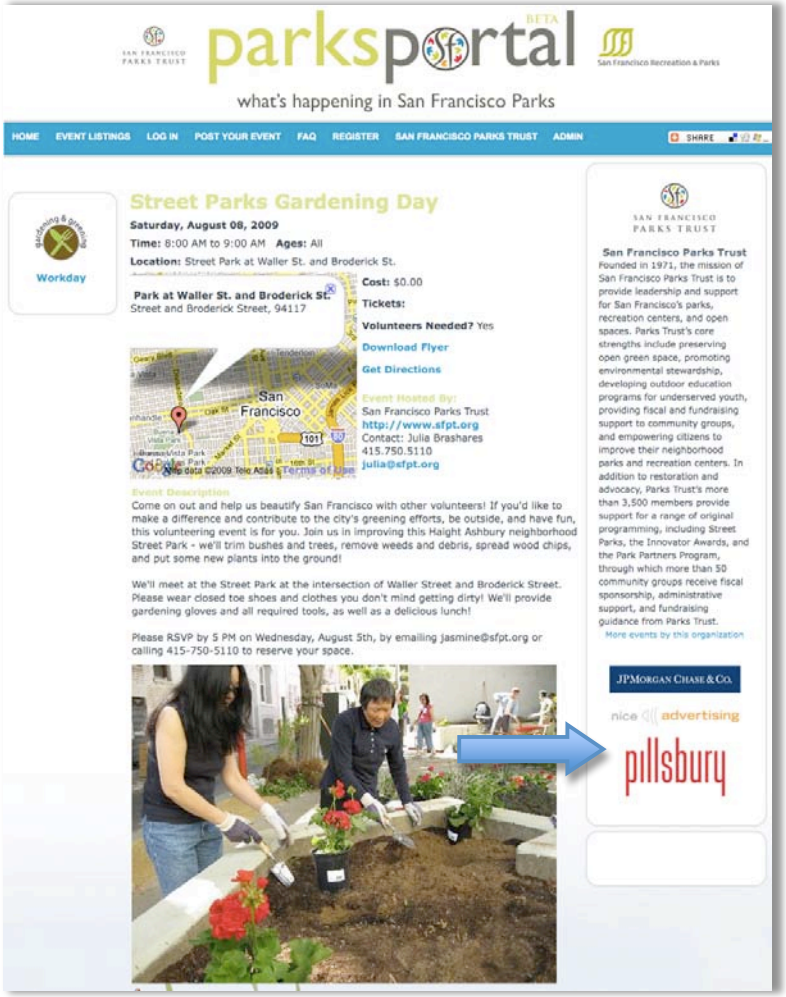
Other Advantages for Organizations
ParksPortal can be an important tool to help market your events, connect with volunteers, and also tell those people viewing your events a little about you in your profile.

Sponsor Banners
As fundraising has become more challenging, we also built in a way to give your sponsors visibility on ParksPortal with Sponsor Banners. As a registered user, you may create a banner that will display within your profile and link to an external website.

You may also create a single banner to place at the bottom of a single event, for a special event sponsor or even the corner deli that donated food for your volunteer workday. Sponsor Banners also have supporting metrics, so you can track impression value and click-throughs. For more information about Sponsor Banners, please contact parksportal@sfpt.org.

ParksPress
All events posted by registered users are included in ParksPress notifications, which are email digests sent to ParksPortal's extensive media and press lists, which includes newspapers, TV, radio, and other media outlets. This is another way that we can help you get the word out about your events, inspire press coverage, and help your organization achieve more visibility.

Social Networking Links
At the top upper right of each event page is an easy way that viewers can share events through a myriad of social networking sites and help spread your events virally.





If you have additional questions, please visit the ParksPortal FAQ page, or email parksportal@sfpt.org. We would also love to hear your feedback or ideas, as we strive to improve ParksPortal and meet the needs of park lovers.

Founded in 1971, San Francisco Parks Trust, fiscally sponsors more than 50 community organizations and provides financial services, fundraising advice, and support to their missions. If you are interested in forming a community group and want to learn more about our Park Partners program, please visit www.sfpt.org or email partner@sfpt.org