



# News Release

Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District

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## THPRD Welcomes Staff to New Leadership Roles

**March 9, 2023:** THPRD has recently welcomed four long-serving staff into new roles at the district. “Like all employers, we’ve experienced a great deal of change and reorganization coming out of the pandemic,” said Doug Menke, General Manager. “I am pleased to see these tremendous leaders step forward in new ways for the district.”

All four managers were recognized at yesterday’s Board of Director’s meeting. “It’s fitting that as we’re celebrating Women’s History Month, and reflecting on the vision and leadership of THPRD’s founder, Elsie Stuhr, we’re able to continue that tradition by celebrating the work of today’s amazing female leaders. We’re better because of the strength, diversity, and wealth of experience of our team,” said Felicita Monteblanco, THPRD Board President. The following staff were recognized.

### **Aisha Panas, Deputy General Manager**

Aisha Panas has been named Deputy General Manager, in addition to her responsibilities as Park Services Director. “Aisha is a hands-on leader who has been instrumental in helping oversee our day-to-day operations, serving as our Incident Commander during emergencies, and leading cross-organizational teams on district priorities,” said Menke.

Aisha Panas has spent more than 20 years in the fields of long range planning and parks and recreation. She currently oversees the planning for, acquisition of, design, construction, and maintenance of parks, trails, and natural areas. Aisha holds a degree in Community Development from Portland State University as well as a Master’s in Business Administration. She is a past president of the Oregon Recreation and Park Association, where she developed the association’s inaugural Leadership Academy.

### **Lulú Ballesteros, Equity and Engagement Manager**

Lulú Ballesteros was recently selected as THPRD’s first Equity & Engagement Manager. Lulú immigrated to Oregon six years from Mexico. Lulú has been with the district for four years, her prior position was Cultural Inclusion Specialist. In Mexico, Lulú led the creation and management of a local school for 15 years. She has previously worked for the Protection and Legal Affairs Department of the Mexican Consulate in Portland and the Latino Network. Lulú is a graduate in International Business from CETYS University in Mexico and holds a Master’s Degree in European Higher Education from the University of Oslo, Norway.

### **Emily Kent, Sports and Inclusion Manager**

Emily Kent has been selected as the district’s Sports and Inclusion Manager. Emily has worked for THPRD for 23 years, most recently serving as a Center Supervisor leading both the Garden Home Recreation Center and the Elsie Stuhr Center. Emily has a deep history in leading sports and inclusion programming at THPRD, including serving as the lead coordinating the district’s mobile recreation program, which serves a vital role in providing accessible free programming to people in need. Emily graduated from Eastern Oregon University with a Bachelor of Science degree focused on Business Administration.

**Kristin Smith, Recreation Manager**

Kristin Smith was selected as the district's Recreation Manager. Kristin has worked for THPRD for 13 years previously serving as the Interpretive Programs Supervisor overseeing the Tualatin Hills Nature Center. Prior to working for THPRD, she was the Director of Programs at Project Exploration in Chicago, Illinois, and has more than 25 years of program management experience working at nonprofits, museums and in parks. Kristin is a graduate of the University of Michigan where she earned a bachelor's degree in resource ecology management and environmental policy and currently serves as President-elect for the Association of Nature Center Administrators.

**About THPRD**

Formed in 1955, THPRD is the largest special park district in Oregon, spanning 50 square miles and serving about 270,000 people in the greater Beaverton area. The district oversees year-round recreational opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. Offerings include thousands of recreational classes, 117 parks, nearly 70 miles of trails, and 162 natural areas.