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Burbank extends summer pool season amid high demand

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Construction workers remove the patio area around the Verdugo Recreation Center pool on Monday, July 16, 2012. (Times Community News / August 1, 2012)

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By Maria Hsin, maria.hsin@latimes.com
August 1, 2012 | 12:01 p.m.

With construction on a major overhaul of Verdugo Park pool keeping demand high, Burbank will divert nearly \$46,000 to extend the aquatic season at McCambridge Park for an additional five weeks.

The City Council unanimously agreed to extend the swim season to mid-October by using money set aside for the swim season at Verdugo Park.

Burbank's aquatic season usually runs from Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day weekend.

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Mayor Dave Golonski said last week that he wanted to look at extending the swim season because the community was upset about the Verdugo pool not being open.

Councilman Gary Bric said he supported extending the swim season because the pool at Verdugo Park was shut down.

"I would normally say, 'Save [the money] for a rainy day,'" he said, but with the funding available and warm weather likely to extend to October, he supported the extension.

Golonski also said the city should look into establishing a year-round swim season, which residents at the meeting supported.

The city, he added, should "think outside the box," adding that there were probably 10 different models for year-round use, including the possibility of aquatic therapy centers renting space to provide the city with an income stream.

Judie Wilke, who recently stepped into the role of park, recreation and community services director, said officials had begun the process of finding creative ways to have a year-round swim season and possible public-private partnerships.

More details on what the extended swim season will look like will come back to the council for further discussion.

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Extending the hours would be great, but I think they use the pool for lessons in the evening after Rec Swim ends. I wish they could find another way to accommodate rec swimmers during that time though. I do like that they're extending the season, as it often stays hot thru October, and I know our family will use the pool then. Oh, and my beef with the Deep Dive Club, at least on weekdays, is that the lifeguards testing the swimmers aren't exactly carefully watching the swimmers while they're being tested - they're looking around and talking to the kids who've just gotten out of the pool but sort of ignoring the actual swimmers, which defeats the purpose of the test IMHO. I guess they can generally tell if someone's struggling, but I've always wondered how they're judging the kids without even looking at them. And I think the lifeguards try to do their best when the pool is crowded, but I agree it's like a military operation with all the rules, some of which are really unnecessary and are not enforced consistently.

Irwin Fletcher at 8:52 PM August 01, 2012

Forget extending the season, just extend the hours so that there is open swim all day until at least 8pm in the summer. Also, what's with the overly-protective "Deep Dive Club" where everyone has to prove they can swim before jumping off the diving board? McCambridge is nice, but it's practically a kiddie pool with all the rules and ropes to keep you "safe". Isn't that what the lifeguards are for?



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