

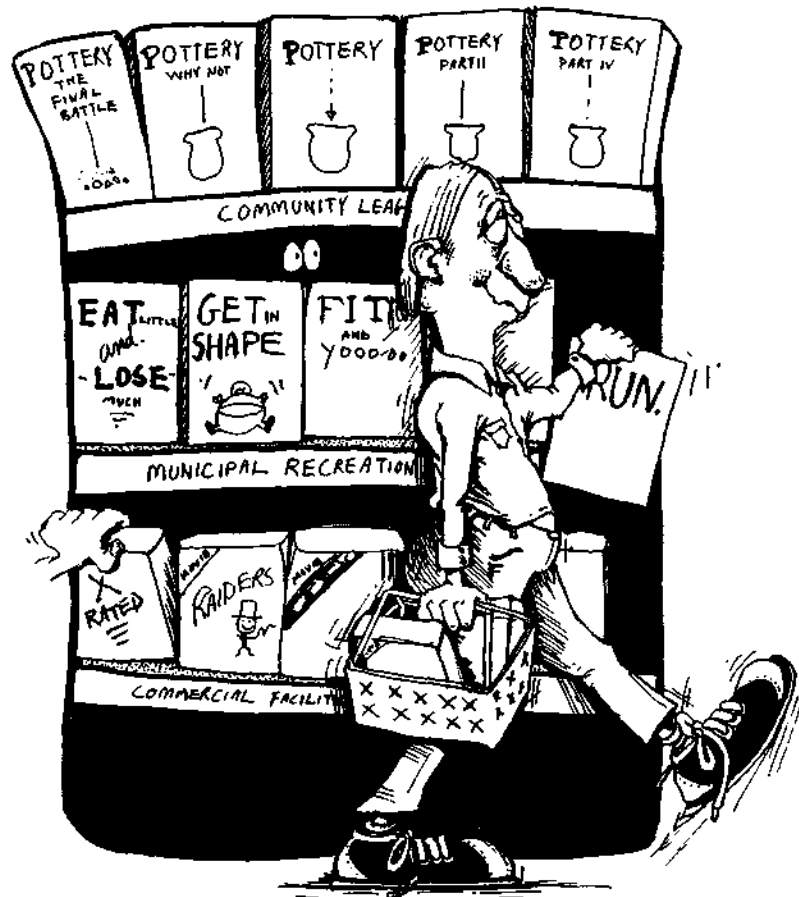
# A Look at Leisure

Results of the 1981 Public Opinion Survey on Recreation conducted by Alberta Recreation and Parks

No. 10

## A LOOK AT RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

This is the tenth bulletin in a series published by Alberta Recreation and Parks which presents results from the 1981 Public Opinion Survey on Recreation. This issue focuses on organizations that offer recreational programs and services.



## INTRODUCTION

There are a variety of organizations in the province which provide recreation services to Albertans. The survey asked respondents about their use of the recreation programs and services offered by a number of different organizations. Some of these organizations provide recreation services as a primary role (e.g., municipal parks and recreation agencies) while others (e.g., churches) provide it only as a secondary role. Each organization, however, is used by some portion of the population for their recreation services.

These organizations also attract certain types of people to their recreation programs and services. The study determined the profiles of people who were most likely to use the recreation services of each organization.

The responses to the following questions are examined in this bulletin:

8 (a) Do the following provide recreational programs or services in the rural area, village, town or city in which you live? (Check all items.)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Preventive Social Services Boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Churches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service groups or community organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Municipal parks and recreation departments or boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibition boards or agricultural societies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools, Universities or colleges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further Education Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private clubs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) How often do you use the recreational programs or services provided by the following? (Check all that apply.)

	Never	Sometimes	Often
Preventive Social Services Boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Churches	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service groups or community organizations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Municipal parks and recreation departments or boards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exhibition boards or agricultural societies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schools, universities or colleges	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Further Education Councils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commercial facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private clubs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Some of the major findings based upon the responses to the survey were:

- o The majority of respondents used the recreation programs and services provided by the following organizations to some extent: municipal park and recreation agencies (89%); commercial facilities (76%); service or community groups (71%); exhibition boards or agricultural societies (70%); and schools, universities or colleges (67%).
- o The recreation services of most organizations were used on a "sometimes" or occasional basis rather than "often".
- o Different types of people used the recreation services of different types of organizations. For example, municipal parks and recreation agencies appealed to a wide range of respondents but particularly to those between 25 and 44 years of age and those with families. Schools, universities and colleges tended to serve a narrower range of respondents (e.g., young and single people, single parents, students and professionals, and apartment renters).

The first section of the bulletin looks at how often respondents use the services of various types of organizations for their recreation. The second section describes the type of people who are most likely to use the recreation services offered by these organizations. The final section suggests some implications of the findings for the recreation practitioner.

when interpreting these results, there are a few things to consider. These findings represent a combination of both questions 8(a) and 8(b) of the survey. Therefore, the results tell us whether respondents used the recreation services of various organizations given that they were aware that the organizations existed in their area.



The study results are limited in that the types of organizations listed in the questions were quite broad in scope. Therefore, it is not known what programs, services or specific agencies respondents associated with each major type of organization.

USE OF RECREATION SERVICES PROVIDED ORGANIZATIONS

The survey examined how often people used recreation programs and services offered by BY various types of organizations (Table 1).

TABLE 1 USE OF RECREATION SERVICES PROVIDED BY ORGANIZATIONS

	Never %	Sometimes %	Often %	Total Sometimes + Often %
Municipal Parks and Recreation Agencies	11	57	32	89
Commercial Facilities	24	55	21	76
Service or Community Groups	29	56	15	71
Exhibition or Agric. Boards	30	60	10	70
Schools, Univ., Colleges	33	50	17	67
Private Clubs	42	42	16	58
Employers	46	39	15	54
Churches	50	36	14	50
Further Education Councils	52	43	5	48
Preventive Social Services Boards	80	19	1	20

The results indicated that a variety of organizations play an important role in providing recreation programs and services to Albertans. Almost 90% of respondents used recreation services of municipal park and recreation agencies, while two-thirds to three-quarters of the respondents indicated use of the recreation programs and services provided by commercial facilities, service or community groups, exhibition or agricultural boards, and schools, universities, and colleges.

Fewer respondents used the recreation services provided by the remaining organizations listed in Table 1.

There are likely a number of reasons for this. For example, some organizations may restrict participation to fewer people (e.g., private clubs), or it may be a result of fewer recreation programs and services being provided by organizations which do not have the provision of recreation services as their primary role or mandate (e.g., churches).

One finding that was consistent for all organizations was that respondents used the organization's recreation programs and services more on a "sometimes" or occasional basis rather than "often".

#### IDENTIFYING USERS

Do the people who use the recreation programs and services of municipal parks and recreation agencies differ from those who use the recreation programs and services of private clubs? If so, these differences may be important to recognize when organizations attempt to recruit potential users or participants. The survey results were examined to determine whether there were specific groups of people most likely to use the recreation programs and services provided by each of the organizations listed in Table 1. Such user profiles are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2 PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS MOST LIKELY TO USE THE RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

1. Municipal Parks and Recreation Agencies: representative of much of the Alberta population but most likely to be between the ages of 25 to 44, and have family households (eg. couples with children or single parents).
2. Commercial Facilities: single people and those under 44 years of age.
3. Service Groups or Community Organizations: between 35 to 44 years of age, married, with family households (eg. couples with children, single parents), homeowners and longer term residents, farmers and rural people.
4. Exhibition Boards or Agricultural Societies: male, middle aged (between 35 and 64), farmers, and rural people.
5. Schools, Universities or Colleges: females, single people, single parents, under the age of 34, the higher educated (particularly university trained), professionals and students, renters and apartment dwellers.
6. Private Clubs: males and those with incomes above \$40,000.
7. Employers: people under the age 34, senior high school educated, renters, and those living in attached houses, mobile homes and apartments.
8. Churches: middle aged and older people (particularly those over 65), those having family households (especially single parents), the lower educated and those with incomes under \$10,000, farmers and rural people.
9. Further Education Councils: females and those living on farms or acreages.
10. Preventive Social Services Boards: people 65 years of age and older, and those with incomes less than \$10,000.

## IMPLICATIONS

The survey findings show the degree of use that respondents made of various organizations which offer recreation programs and services. Public, private, non-profit, and religious sectors were represented in the ten types of organizations examined. All organizations, whether having primary or secondary mandates to provide recreation, were used to some extent by respondents. Therefore, they all have a role to play in the recreation delivery system and cannot be ignored as potential service providers.

The results also provided profiles of respondents most likely to use the recreation services of the ten types of organizations. An understanding of the characteristics of typical users may be important to recreation practitioners and service providers since it can provide a basis for developing a marketing strategy for an organization. Marketing consists of the ways in which a recreation organization directs its programs and facilities toward current and potential recreation participants. The goals of marketing are to satisfy the participants' needs and achieve the organization's objectives.

One important aspect of recreation marketing is finding out which segments of a population are most likely to be attracted to certain recreation programs, activities or facilities. A "market segment" is a group of individuals who have similar recreational preferences or needs, social characteristics, and the necessary resources (i.e., income, discretionary time, etc.) to satisfy these needs.

The respondent profiles described in this study provide an idea of the market segments of ten organizations providing recreation programs and services. Do any of these profiles describe users of your recreation services? Or do your programs attract different types of participants? Have you recently looked at the types of participants in your programs? It is useful to know which market segments you are serving so that you can better identify and service the recreation needs of these sectors of the population.



Knowledge of existing market segments can also help practitioners identify potential client groups. For example, practitioners can attract additional clients to their programs by appealing to people who are similar to those already using their services. In order to do this, however, it is necessary to make these people aware of the recreation opportunities your organization offers.

Do your potential clientele know about your programs? Promotion is an important part of marketing and it involves advertising techniques and the use of various types of media to get the message across to particular groups. Do you use effective promotional techniques in your organization? Are your messages finding their way to the people you want to attract? You may also want to look at your recreation programs to see if there are any barriers that prevent recreation participation by those people you desire to serve (e.g., admission fees, user charges, overcrowding of facilities, inflexible scheduling, etc.)

Knowledge of the characteristics of users of a recreation program or service can be important to a recreation practitioner or organization in identifying potential clients, and in developing appropriate recreation programs and effective marketing strategies.

#### NEXT ISSUE

A Look at Leisure Patterns in 1981 - this is the final bulletin in the series which describes the results of the 1981 Public Opinion Survey on Recreation. This issue presents some of the major patterns and relationships found in the last ten A Look at Leisure bulletins.



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INFORMATION

If you require further information or would like to change your mailing address please contact:

Recreation Planner Planning  
Support Branch Recreation  
Development Division Alberta  
Recreation and Parks 8th Floor,  
Standard Life Centre 10405 -  
Jasper Avenue Edmonton, Alberta  
T5J 3N4

Telephone: 427-4685

We have just recently published the full report *A Study of Voluntarism in Recreation* by P. Kreisel and M. J. Cox. This report will be provided to major libraries and universities in Alberta. We have also published the Executive Summary of the report, which will be available upon request to those who wish to obtain more detailed information than was provided in the seventh *A Look at Leisure* bulletin. Those who desire further depth are advised to refer to the full report. In the near future we will also be publishing the full report *A Study of the Social Setting in Recreation* by Dr. Kenneth Fairbairn. The report and summary will be distributed in the same manner as the Voluntarism report.



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