

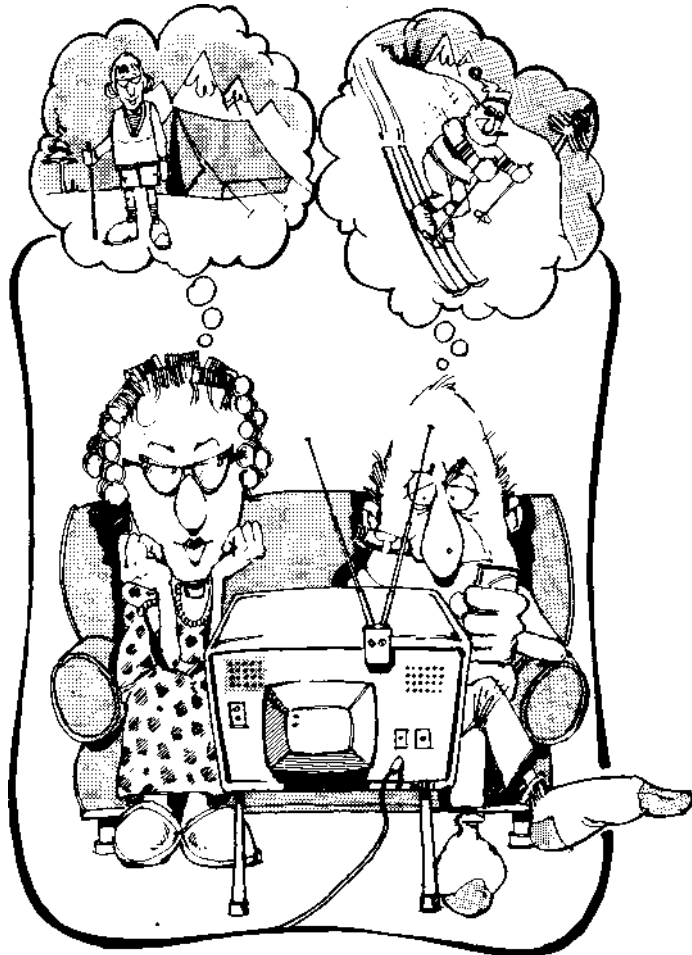
A Look at Leisure

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

No. 3

FAVORITE RECREATION ACTIVITIES

This is the third bulletin in a series published by Alberta Recreation and Parks that looks at the leisure of Albertans. The series is designed to describe the responses from the 1981 Public Opinion Survey on Recreation for the use of practitioners involved in the delivery of recreation services to Albertans.



What people do, and what they would like to do

Alberta

RECREATION AND PARKS



Appropriate Use of Documents: Documents may be downloaded or printed (single copy only). You are free to edit the documents you download and use them for your own projects, but you should show your appreciation by providing credit to the originator of the document. You must not sell the document or make a profit from reproducing it. You must not copy, extract, summarize or distribute downloaded documents outside of your own organization in a manner which competes with or substitutes for the distribution of the database by the Leisure Information Network (LIN). <http://www.lin.ca>

SECTION 2
ABOUT YOU PERSONALLY

Please answer the following questions about your own recreational activities and your personal views on recreation.

I (a) Please rank your three favorite recreational activities and indicate how many times you participated in each activity during the past 12 months.

**NUMBER OF TIMES YOU PARTICIPATED
IN THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS**

	1 to 10 times	11 to 20 times	31 to 50 times	51 or more times
Favorite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2nd Favorite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3rd Favorite	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I(b) People have many reasons for participating in recreation. Based on your favorite recreational activity, how important are each of the following to you? (Check one box for each)

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important
to compete with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
for physical health or exercise	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
because I am good at it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
to relax	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
to socialize with others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
to be alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
for pleasure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
to improve my skills or knowledge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
for a challenge	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

to contribute to my community

to do something different from work

to feel committed to something

for excitement

to be recognized

to be with my family

to be in pleasant surroundings

other (please specify)

I(c) We would like to know to what extent your personal needs are satisfied through your favorite recreational activity. Please read each statement and indicate how it applies to you. (Check one box per statement).

	Never	Sometimes	Often
It gives me a sense of accomplishment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It increases my knowledge about things around me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It provides opportunities to try new things	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I socialize with others through this recreational activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It helps me to relax	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is physically challenging	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
It helps me to stay healthy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The areas or places where I engage in this recreational activity are pleasing to me	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This issue discusses three topics: the respondents' favorite activities (what they would like to do most); the main reasons for participating in these favorite activities, and the main needs satisfied by participating in favorite activities. It also looks at some of the socio-economic factors that influence the choice of a favorite activity.

Some of the major findings are:

- . the five favorite activities are camping, golf, downhill skiing, fishing and hockey;
 - outdoor activities and/or those undertaken for physical exercise accounted for the majority of favorite activities;
- . the reasons most often given as important for participating in a favorite activity were pleasure, relaxation, health and exercise;
- . the needs satisfied most often were concerned with relaxation, health, pleasure, a sense of accomplishment and physical challenge.



Table 1 : The Top 20 Preferred Recreation Activities

1	Camping	11	Hunting
2	Golf	12	Dancing
3	Downhill skiing	13	Bowling
4	Fishing	14	Bicycling
5	Hockey	15	Jogging
6	Walking for pleasure	16	Crafts
7	Reading	17	Horseback riding
8	Swimming	18	Tennis
9	Racquetball, handball	19	Cross-country skiing
10	Curling	20	Board games, cards

Later in the bulletin these activities are regrouped into 11 categories for further analysis. However, several general points should be considered before the detailed review.

The results show what people say they would like to do, not what they actually do. Results discussed in bulletin #2 show the actual three main recreational activities of Alberta households are visiting friends, watching television and listening to the radio. There is a major difference between these pursuits and the three favorite ones identified : camping, golfing and downhill skiing. Although some of this discrepancy can be explained by such things as seasonal or lifestyle constraints (time, money), this drastic contrast should be a thought-provoking one for recreation practitioners.

As with all surveys, there are some limitations that affect the data. A breakdown of the returns shows a bias towards males (65% were from males; 34% from females; 1% was unknown). The survey thus tends to reflect adult male preferences in favorite activities.

The preference for certain favorite activities will vary across the province and will likely change from year to year. If recreation practitioners were to base their planning on individuals' preferred activities, there could be continual upheavals in programming, budgeting and facility provision.

What is useful, however, is to look at the reasons people give for participating in their favorite activity, and the needs they perceive that are being met. By looking at these reasons, recreation programmers, administrators and facility operators might find clues about why people don't participate in some activities.



REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION

Why do people participate in their favorite activity? The survey showed that the large majority (82 per cent) said an "important" reason for participation is pleasure. Other important reasons were relaxation, health and exercise, an alternative to work and pleasant surroundings.

The needs "often" satisfied by participation in the favorite activity were for: relaxation, staying healthy, a pleasant place, a sense of accomplishment and a physical challenge.

A comparison of the list of reasons for participating with the needs said to be often satisfied shows that, for the most part, the favorite activity adequately satisfies the reasons which motivate that choice.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

The choice of a favorite activity is influenced by many socio-economic factors. For this survey, the variables examined were: age, sex, income, education and type of household (single parent family, childless couple, etc.). The results showed that no one single factor emerged to explain why people choose their favorite activity. The choice seems to be a complex process reflecting interacting motivations, needs and situations.

Age and sex appeared to have the greatest influence on choice, while education and type of household were factors in some of the 11 categories of activities; income had almost no bearing on the choice of a favorite activity. Participation in exercise-oriented activities, for example, decreased with age, but increased with age for golf, social and passive activities. Higher proportions of males favored team sports, golf, hunting and fishing, while more females preferred creative-cultural, social, passive and exercise-oriented activities. Both sexes equally preferred downhill skiing and camping.

Three special populations were evident in the analysis--those 65 and older, those with annual incomes less than \$10,000 and single parent families. A further analysis of the data shows that their circumstances may determine their choice of a favorite activity, overriding the more general reasons given by others for choice of favorites. These special groups, and the barriers they face in participating more fully in recreation, will be discussed in an upcoming bulletin.



CLASSIFICATION To allow for a more specific analysis of the reasons, CLASSIFICATION needs and socio-economic factors behind the selection OF ACTIVITIES of a favorite recreational activity, the list of favorites was grouped into 11 categories. These categories of favorite activities, along with the percentage of respondents included in each, are listed in rank order below, followed by category profiles.

1	Exercise	21.1%	7 Creative/Cultural	4.8%
2	Team Sports	12.1%	8 Golf	4.7%
3	Camping	7.9%	9 Social	4.7%
4	Hunting/Fishing	7.3%	10 Downhill Skiing	4.7%
5	Passive indoor	5.5%	11 Outdoor	4.0%
6	Outdoor (mechanized)	5.2% (non-mechanized)	12 None of the above (either unknown or other)	18.1%

Table 2: Category Profiles

1. Exercise-Oriented Activities 21.1%

Reasons: health, exercise.

Needs: staying healthy, physical challenge, relaxation.

Variables: preference declines with age, increases with education; more frequent among females, single parent families, and households with unrelated adults.
2. Team Sports 12.1%

Reasons: pleasure, health and exercise, socialization, alternative to work, challenge, excitement.

Needs: staying healthy, physical challenge, socialization.

Variables: preference declines with age; more frequent in males, those with high school education and middle-level income,
3. Camping 7.9%

Reasons: pleasure, pleasant surroundings, relaxation, being with the family, alternative to work.

Needs: relaxation, pleasing places, increase in knowledge.

Variables: preference equal among sexes; declines with education; more frequent in intermediate age and income, and couples, especially those with children.
4. Hunting/Fishing 7.3%

Reasons: pleasure, pleasant surroundings, relaxation, alternative to work, being with the family.

Needs: relaxation, pleasing places, increase in knowledge.

Variables: preference almost exclusively among males; more frequent in intermediate age groups and couples; declines with education.
5. Passive Indoor 5.5%

Reasons: pleasure, relaxation, solitude.

Needs: relaxation, increase in knowledge.

Variables: preference more frequent in older age groups, females and better educated.



6. Outdoor (mechanized) 6.2%
 - Reasons: pleasure, an alternative to work, relaxation, challenge, excitement.
 - Needs: relaxation, pleasing places.
 - Variables: preference declines with education; more frequent among intermediate age groups, single parent families.
7. Creative/Cultural 4.8%
 - Reasons: pleasure, relaxation, alternative to work, improvement of skills and knowledge, pleasant surroundings, commitment, egoism, solitude.
 - Needs: sense of accomplishment, relaxation, pleasing places, trying new things, increase in knowledge.
 - Variables: preference more frequent among females, and couples with no children.
8. Golf 4.7%
 - Reasons: pleasure, relaxation, health and exercise, pleasant surroundings socialization.
 - Needs: pleasing places, socialization.
 - Variables: preference more frequent among males, couples with no children, intermediate levels of education; increases with age and income.
9. Social 4.7%
 - Reasons: pleasure, relaxation, alternative to work, socialization, contribution to community, recognition.
 - Needs: relaxation, socialization.
 - Variables: preference increases, with age; more frequent among females, those with high school education, and single parent families.
10. Downhill Skiing 4.6%
 - Reasons: pleasure, health and exercise, pleasant surroundings, excitement, challenge.
 - Needs: staying healthy, physical challenge, pleasing places, excitement, challenge.
 - Variables: preference increases with education and income; declines sharply with age; more frequent in households with one or more unrelated adults.
11. Outdoor (non-mechanized) 4.0%
 - Reasons: pleasure, pleasant surroundings, health and exercise, relaxation, solitude.
 - Needs: staying healthy, physical challenge, pleasing places, relaxation.
 - Variables: preference increases with education; prevalent among intermediate age groups.

IMPLICATIONS

what are the implications of these findings for recreation practitioners? It is apparent from the results that there is no easy answer to explain what makes people tick when it comes to choosing recreation activities.



Appropriate Use of Documents: Documents may be downloaded or printed (single copy only). You are free to edit the documents you download and use them for your own projects, but you should show your appreciation by providing credit to the originator of the document. You must not sell the document or make a profit from reproducing it. You must not copy, extract, summarize or distribute downloaded documents outside of your own organization in a manner which competes with or substitutes for the distribution of the database by the Leisure Information Network (LIN). <http://www.lin.ca>

It is clear, however, that a great many inactive people have a wish to get out and do things, and experience "pleasure".

As a recreation practitioner, you may want to think about the findings as a springboard to help ask questions about your own programs. Are they, for instance, appealing to only a narrow range of needs and the same type of person in your community? Can you use the survey results to help develop new programs, or enhance existing ones to fit more needs? If women tend to be interested in creative-cultural and exercise-oriented activities, would a craft course with an optional exercise break have appeal? Does preference for exercise-oriented activities decline with age because of a need for special programs tailored for older age groups?

If your programs are serving a wide variety of needs but participation remains low, are you getting your message out in the most effective way to the people who want to know?

It may be significant that many of the favorite activities in Table 1 have high advertising profiles generated by the commercial sector. That does not necessarily mean you need a large advertising budget to attract participants -- it might be that people participate because they've been informed about the opportunities. Take another look at your existing public relations and publicity strategies. Is your message appealing to the reasons and needs discussed in this bulletin? Are you reaching the people who need to know about your programs? Can you think of new ways of getting your message out to the many audiences in your community? Are you plugged into the numerous communications networks in your community, networks you can often use at no cost?

"Pleasure" is a difficult element to program into activities, since it depends to a large extent on individual attitudes. It can, however, be a challenging and interesting exercise to think of programs in terms of pleasure. Ask yourself if you would find your programs pleasurable if you were in the shoes of the participants. Can you help foster or enhance pleasure by considering the various reasons and needs identified in this survey?



The survey results are representative of the general Alberta population. Each community has its own unique character and recreation needs. It remains the challenge of those working in recreation to help their clientele satisfy their recreation needs, and encourage as many opportunities as possible to meet that goal. The survey results can be used as a stimulus for ideas to help meet that challenge.

REFERENCES

- 1) Rick Crandall and Karla Slivken: A New Leisure Ethic Scale A paper presented at the Texas Academy of Science Meeting, March, 1978
- 2) Howard E.A. Tinsley, Thomas C. Barret and Richard A. Kass: "Leisure Activities and Need Satisfaction" Journal of Leisure Research, Volume 9, Number 2, 1977
- 3) John Neulinger and Miranda Breit: "Attitude Dimensions of Leisure: A Replication Study" Journal of Leisure Research, Volume 3, Number 2, 1971.

FUTURE ISSUES

This bulletin is part of a series interpreting the 1981 Public Opinion Survey on Recreation. Each bulletin focuses on different issues and factors in recreation. Some future topics include:

- EXPENDITURE PATTERNS - How much do people spend on Recreation? What factors influence this?
- BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION -why don't people take Part?
- LIFESTYLES - Values in Recreation. Are people being educated for leisure?
- SOCIAL SETTING - Who do people participate with and how important is the social setting?

INFORMATION

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

G. Burn Evans
Research Coordinator, Planning Support Branch,
Recreation Development Division
Alberta Recreation and Parks
Standard Life Centre
10405 - Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3N4
Telephone: 427-6775



Appropriate Use of Documents: Documents may be downloaded or printed (single copy only). You are free to edit the documents you download and use them for your own projects, but you should show your appreciation by providing credit to the originator of the document. You must not sell the document or make a profit from reproducing it. You must not copy, extract, summarize or distribute downloaded documents outside of your own organization in a manner which competes with or substitutes for the distribution of the database by the Leisure Information Network (LIN). <http://www.lin.ca>