

HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS

2008 ALBERTA RECREATION SURVEY

In September 2008, 10,000 randomly selected Alberta households received a copy of the Alberta Recreation Survey. It is the eighth such survey since 1981. The information we gathered is helping us to determine participation patterns of Albertans and the factors influencing their recreation choices.

The survey was divided into several sections. The first dealt with respondent and household participation in a number of recreation, sport, outdoor, creative, cultural, outdoor and social activities. The second part asked about the respondent's favourite activities, any activity they would like to start, and if they were involved in volunteer work. Section three asked the respondent's opinions on a number of topics such as the benefits of recreation and parks while the final section requested information about the respondents and their household.

The information was collected by mail during September, October and November 2008. Returns were received from 2,254 individuals or 22.5 percent of the sample.

The 2008 Alberta Recreation Survey is a cooperative effort between Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation and the Cities of Calgary, Edmonton, and Lethbridge. The following are a few major findings from those results.

Household Participation

The first section asked about the recreation activities of the household. The ten activities most frequently mentioned were:

1. walking for pleasure
2. gardening
3. attending a fair or festival
4. attending sports events
5. doing a craft or hobby
6. playing video, computer or electronic games
7. visiting a museum, art gallery
8. bicycling
9. swimming (in pools)
10. aerobics/fitness/aquasize/yoga

Favourite Activities

The survey then focussed on the respondent. We asked about their three favourite leisure or recreational activities. The responses varied, with the following ten being most frequently mentioned:

1. walking
2. golf
3. camping
4. reading
5. swimming
6. hiking
7. bicycling
8. jogging/running
9. fishing
10. gardening

People have many reasons for taking part in leisure activities. The following five reasons were stated to be most important:

1. for pleasure
2. for physical health or exercise
3. to relax
4. to enjoy nature
5. to be with family

Desired Activity

About 53 per cent of respondents indicated that they had no desire to take up a new activity at this time, while 41 per cent expressed such a wish. (6 per cent did not answer this question.) The ten most desired activities mentioned were:

1. gym/fitness
2. swimming
3. yoga
4. dancing
5. canoeing/kayaking
6. curling
7. bicycling
8. golf
9. cross-country skiing
10. aquasize
weight training

An important concern today is why people do not take part in recreation or leisure activities. We asked why respondents have not started the recreation activity they desire. The five reasons mentioned most often were:

1. too busy with work
2. the cost of buying or renting equipment or supplies
3. too busy with family
4. admission fees/charges for facilities or programs
5. too busy with other activities

Volunteer Work

The survey results indicated that 37 per cent of respondents have done volunteer work connected with recreation, sport, parks or culture in the past 12 months. The majority of volunteers spent, on the average, one to five hours per week volunteering.

Benefits of Recreation and Parks

We asked for respondents' opinion about the importance of seven benefits of recreation and parks. The majority of those responding rated the following benefits as very important:

1. Recreation opportunities make it possible for children and youth to take part in a variety of activities.
2. Parks and open spaces provide opportunities for the preservation of Alberta's landscapes, plants and animals.
3. Recreation opportunities make it possible for families to spend time together.
4. Recreation and parks facilities and services improve quality of life.

Visiting Alberta Provincial Parks

We asked respondents if they had ever visited an Alberta provincial park. Approximately 88 percent of respondents had visited a provincial park and a majority of respondents indicated their visits were within the past three years. The top five most reported Alberta provincial parks visited were:

1. Dinosaur
2. Peter Lougheed
3. Fish Creek
4. Cypress Hills
5. Bow Valley Wildland

Who responded to the survey?

Approximately 52 per cent of the respondents were male and 46 per cent were female. One quarter of the respondents (25 per cent) were between 46 and 55 years of age, with 19 percent between 56 and 65 years of age and 16 percent between 36 and 45 years. Just over one-third of the respondents were in a household comprised of a couple with children and another third were a couple with no children. Just over 50 percent of the respondents had post-secondary education. Respondents were from all over the province but a majority of the respondents were from Calgary, Edmonton and Lethbridge. A majority of the respondents (87 per cent) had lived in Alberta for 11 years or more.

Where to from here?

As stated above, these are only a few of the highlights from the 2008 Alberta Recreation Survey. We hope that you find this material interesting. It is helping us to identify recreation trends and preferences, forecast future demands, and assist in providing better programs and services to Albertans. We will continue to review the results of the survey in detail, and will share the information with those involved with recreation and sport services and programs.

If you would like more information visit our website at <http://www.tpr.alberta.ca> or contact:

Alberta Tourism, Parks and Recreation
Sport and Recreation Division
9th Floor, Standard Life Centre
10405 Jasper Ave
Edmonton, AB T5J 4R7
Phone: (780) 427-6549
Fax: (780) 427-5140
<http://www.tpr.alberta.ca>