

HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS

2000 ALBERTA RECREATION SURVEY



In May 2000, 10,000 randomly selected Alberta households received a copy of the Alberta Recreation Survey. It is the sixth such survey since 1981. The data 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 social, creative, cultural, outdoor and sports activities. The second part asked about the respondent's favorite 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 May and June 2000. Returns were received from 2,719 individuals or 27.2 percent of the sample.

The 2000 Alberta Recreation Survey is a co-operative effort between Alberta Community Development, Alberta Environment, Alberta Centre for Well-Being, and the Cities of Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge and Red Deer.

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. visiting a museum, live theatre, art gallery
4. doing a craft or hobby
5. attending sports events
6. bicycling
7. attending a fair or festival
8. swimming (in pools)
9. playing video, computer or electronic games
10. overnight camping

Favorite Activities

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

1. walking for pleasure
2. golf
3. camping
4. bicycling
5. crafts and hobbies
6. gardening
7. swimming
8. reading books or magazines
9. hiking/backpacking
10. fishing

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 do something different from work

Desired Activity

About 51 per cent of respondents indicated that they had no desire to take up a new activity at this time, while nearly 42 per cent expressed such a wish. (7 per cent did not answer this question.) The ten most desired activities mentioned were:

1. aerobics/fitness/aquasize
2. golf
3. canoeing/rowing/kayaking/rafting
4. bicycling
5. swimming
6. in-line skating
7. hiking/backpacking
8. martial arts
9. skiing/downhill skiing
10. running/jogging

An important issue 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. the cost of buying or renting equipment or supplies
2. admission fees/charges for facilities or programs
3. too busy with work commitments
4. too busy with family commitments
5. facilities overcrowded

Volunteer Work

The survey results indicated that 44% of respondents have done volunteer work connected with culture, recreation, sports or parks in the past 12 months. The majority of volunteers spent, on the average, one to five hours per week volunteering.

Respondents' Opinions

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

1. recreation provides opportunities for children and youth to participate in a variety of activities
2. parks and open spaces preserves Alberta's landscape, plants and animals
3. recreation provides opportunities for families to spend time together
4. recreation and parks facilities and services improve quality of life

We also asked about the provision of activities and services in municipal parks and recreation areas. Respondents were in favour of permitting picnic areas, playing fields (baseball, soccer), courts (tennis, volleyball), cross country ski trails, tents and campgrounds, mountain biking, restaurants or snack bars, horse rentals, golf courses, and downhill ski areas. Snowmobiling and ATV use were felt to be undesirable, while on the question of permitting hostels and dormitories opinion was almost equally divided.

Where to from here?

As stated above, these are only a few of the highlights from the 2000 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 programs.

If you would like more information please write to:

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