



THE BENEFITS

OF LOCAL RECREATION AND PARK SERVICES:

A NATIONWIDE STUDY OF THE PERCEPTIONS OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC



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FOREWORD

Local recreation and park services have evolved from a century of social reforms in response to conditions arising from industrialization and urbanization. While such services become tax-supported functions of local governments through "health and welfare" clauses, mounting societal costs have caused all government services to be more highly scrutinized, and to experiment with privatization of services and increasingly the imposition of fees and charges for a broad array of services.

Administrators of local recreation, park and leisure services today are under increasing pressure to more explicitly justify public services, not in traditional terms such as attendance at programs and facilities, but in terms of the benefits such services provide to the public. Numerous studies have documented benefits of recreation to health, the economy, environment and education. Critically important now is the public's perception of benefits, since it is public understanding that ultimately determines the mandate for service.

The present study conducted by Dr. Geoffrey Godbey and Dr. Alan Graefe, assisted by doctoral candidate Steven W. James at The Pennsylvania State University, was undertaken to assess and define the public mandate for local park and recreation services. Their findings support our continuing belief that public recreation and park services are recognized by most Americans as a valued benefit. In this era of declining resources, we anticipate that the findings of this study will be used by all administrators of public recreation and park agencies to guide public processes which support these functions.

R. Dean Tice
Executive Director
National Recreation and Park Association

Executive Summary

- ◆ While the provision of recreation and park services by local government has become a common feature of American life, there has historically been comparatively little systematic investigation of what benefits are provided by the existence of such services. More recently, however, perhaps spurred by economic cutbacks and declining federal support to recreation and parks, there has been increased interest in determining the benefits associated with these services.
- ◆ As a practical matter, perception is all important in terms of community acceptance of and support for such services. "Objectively" demonstrating a benefit may be less important than understanding the public's perception of the reality of such benefits. As Crompton and Lamb pointed out: "People spend their time, money and energy resources with the expectation of receiving benefits, not for the delivery of services themselves. Citizens don't buy programs or services, they buy the expectation of benefits" (Crompton and Lamb, 1986). At the local government level we know precious little about what benefits citizens think they are buying or how they conceive "benefits."
- ◆ The purpose of this study was to determine the benefits of local recreation and park services perceived by the American Public. The study was concerned with types of benefits (at the individual, household and community level), comparative importance of such benefits, perceived performance of the respondent's local recreation and parks agency in providing such benefits, and the relationship between perceived benefits and the respondent's socio-economic and demographic statuses, and use of local recreation and park services.
- ◆ A telephone interview was designed for a nationally representative sample of 1300 individuals age 15 and older. All interviewing was completed between January and February 1992. A total of 1305 interviews were completed.
- ◆ Although not required under the terms of our contract, it was decided by the researchers to include a follow-up questionnaire to each respondent to the telephone interview. This questionnaire dealt with the individual's state of health, wellness and life satisfaction and made it possible to examine in greater depth the relationship between use of local recreation and park services, benefits derived from such services, and health-related issues. This additional data was intended to begin the process of empirical documentation of the health benefits of such services.
- ◆ The questionnaire was mailed within two weeks of the interview to all telephone respondents who consented to give their name and address during the telephone interview. A total of 882 were mailed. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, a copy of the brief questionnaire and a postage paid return envelope were enclosed. The

questionnaire was mailed first class. Ten days after the mailing, a follow-up "thank you/reminder" post card was sent to everyone on the mailing list. Of the questionnaires mailed, 45 were returned based upon some problem with the address or because the intended respondent had moved. Of the remaining valid addresses, returns were received from 503, a 60% rate of return. This resulted in a sampling error of +/- 4-5 % for data from the mail survey.

- ◆ This study, like many others, found that most Americans feel they have less time available for recreation and leisure than they had five years ago, even though leisure is highly valued. Compared to five years ago, 47 percent of the sample said that today they had less time for recreation and leisure while only 22 percent reported more time. The remaining 31 percent said the amount of time had stayed the same.
- ◆ Additional evidence of unleisurely lifestyles was the fact that 35 percent of respondents, when asked how they felt about their time, said that they always felt rushed. Only 18 percent reported never feeling rushed, while 48 sometimes felt rushed. These percentages are extremely similar to other studies (Robinson, 1991) which have asked this question.
- ◆ In spite of the fact that large percentages of the population felt rushed and don't have as much time for recreation and leisure as they would like, their leisure is important to them. When asked whether work or leisure was more important to them only 35% of the population said work. The largest percentage, 38%, said work and leisure were equally important while 26% said leisure was more important. These percentages vary from a recent Roper Poll (1989) which found that 41 percent of the population believed that leisure was more important than work, 36 percent believed that work was more important than leisure and the remaining 23 percent said both were equally important.
- ◆ Slightly more than one out of five Americans reported taking up a new recreation activity during the last twelve months. The majority of these new activities could be characterized as sport and exercise. The likelihood of taking up a new leisure activity was statistically related to age, residence type, marital status, education level, income level, race, and political affiliation.
- ◆ Slightly more than seven out of ten respondents reported there was a park or playground within walking distance of their home. When rural residents are excluded, 75% of all respondents have a park or playground they can walk to.
- ◆ Past studies, usually limited to one or two cities, have generally found that parks and playgrounds are used by a fraction of the population. Our study, by contrast, found that 75% of all respondents used such parks and playgrounds; 51% using them occasionally and 24% using them frequently. When rural residents (who, by definition, have no local government) are excluded, 76% of the sample used such parks and playgrounds. While those over 55 years of age were more likely to report not using parks at all, a sizeable minority of older respondents did report either occasional or frequent park use. Those

between the ages of 65-74 were more likely to use local parks "frequently" than any other age group. Thus, retirement appears to play a large role in frequency of park use.

- ◆ Use of local parks by other household members was statistically related to every demographic variable in our study except race, type of residence and size of community.
- ◆ Respondents to the telephone survey were asked about benefits received from local parks at an individual, household and community level. Perhaps what is most startling about these results is that the vast majority of respondents perceived benefits at all three levels and the strongest level of perceived benefit was the community level, where over six out of ten respondents said their community as a whole received a great deal of benefit from local park areas.
- ◆ Those most likely to report a great deal of **personal** benefit from local parks were middle aged (36-55). Forty-one percent of them perceived a great deal of benefit from such parks while only 21% of those age 15-20 perceived a great deal of benefit.
- ◆ In terms of perceiving benefits for other members of the **household**, there were significant relationships with age, gender, income, education level, marital status and the number of people in the residence. Finally, perceiving **community** level benefits was statistically related to age, gender, income, education level, community size and type of residence.
- ◆ At the individual and household levels, personal benefits were mentioned more than any other while at the community level social benefits were most frequently mentioned. Economic benefits were mentioned less than any other type, with less than five percent of the responses at any benefit level citing them. This would seem to indicate that attempts to convince the public of the economic benefits of local park and recreation services may be misguided, since such a tiny base of the public currently recognizes such benefits. The largest benefit categories are individual and social, relating to people rather than to economic or environmental considerations.
- ◆ These benefits show that individuals go to local parks and playgrounds both *for* recreation and *as* recreation. That is, one may realize a benefit because they go there to exercise or one may view the simple act of going there as a benefit in and of itself.
- ◆ To further understand the extent to which people's perceptions of benefits from public parks are tied to their direct use of these parks, the statistical relationships between these variables were examined. The extent of benefits received at all three levels (individual, household and community) were examined in relation to both personal and household use of parks. In every case, the degree of perceived benefit was directly related to extent of park use. At the personal benefit level, the extent of benefit received was strongly linked to the extent of both personal and household use. At the community level, on the other hand, the majority of respondents perceived a great deal of benefits from parks regardless of how much they personally used them.

- ◆ Respondents were asked if, during the last twelve months, they had participated "in any recreation activities organized by your local government's recreation and parks department". In terms of use of local recreation and park services, 30% of the public had participated in such services during the previous year. Of those who said they had not participated in the last 12 months, an additional 35% said they had participated at some time in the past in such services. Thus, almost 55% of the population surveyed had used such services at some time. Among non-rural residents, 61% of all respondents have used these services at some time.
- ◆ In terms of other household members participating in activities sponsored by local recreation and park services, 37% of all respondents said other members of their household participated in a recreation or leisure activity "that was sponsored by or took place on areas or facilities managed by your local recreation and parks department."
- ◆ Age, education, income, political affiliation, educational level, marital status, number of people in the residence, and youth in household were related to other household members participating in activities sponsored by local government recreation and park services.
- ◆ By far the two most popular classes of activity, for both individual respondents and household members were team sports and cultural activities, ranking numbers one and two.
- ◆ By combining responses to the use of parks question with the participation in activities sponsored by local recreation and park departments question, it was possible to identify the percentage of the population who makes any direct use of such services. Nearly four-fifths of the American Public made some use of such services during the last twelve months.
- ◆ The greatest percentage of respondents, 49%, used only parks, while over one-quarter of the sample, used both parks and participated in other activities sponsored by local government recreation and park services. Only 4% participated in such activities without using parks.
- ◆ Of those who never participated, only 14% said they were not interested in such services. About one-third said they did not have enough information about such services. Almost one in four, 23%, said that such services "were not planned for people like me." Over one-half, 52%, said their non-participation was due to lack of time. About 15% of those who didn't participate said they didn't due to lack of someone to participate with.
- ◆ Both users and non-users were asked about benefits of local recreation and park services. A surprising 71% of non-user said they received a benefit. This response seems consistent with earlier responses in which over six of ten responded that the community benefitted "a great deal" from having local parks. It reinforces the idea that use and benefit are not necessarily linked.
- ◆ Non-participants were also asked to name the most important benefit they received from such services. The benefit categories which non-users mentioned were, in order of

frequency: Social benefits (45%), Personal benefits (19%), Economic benefits (18%), Facility/activity (12%), and Environment (7%).

- ◆ The most prevalent specific benefits mentioned by non-users had to do with kids. Five out of the top ten benefits involved children. It is interesting that this study found that those aged 65-74 were a major user group of local parks but the elderly were not mentioned once as a specific group benefitting from local parks and recreation services.
- ◆ Benefits of local recreation and park services were most likely to be personal and social. Less than 10% of the public associated environmental benefits with such services at any benefit level. Economic benefits were generally not associated with such services.
- ◆ When current recreation and park service participants, in their own words, identified activities they participated in sponsored by local government recreation and park services and then identified the benefits they derive from such activities, personal benefits were mentioned more than any other, constituting 42% of all identified benefits. Social benefits were mentioned second most frequently and represented 38% of all benefits. Benefits associated with the facility or activity itself represented 12% of all benefits while environmental benefits were 6% of the total and economic benefits represented only 2% of the total.
- ◆ The major finding about the relationship between activities and benefits was the sheer breadth of recreation and leisure activities for which benefits were perceived. They ranged from sport to culture to activities for special groups such as seniors and special populations to outdoor activities.
- ◆ When evaluating services provided by local government, the respondents evaluated parks and recreation services favorably. Parks and open space were ranked very high among local government services, with almost four out of five respondents rating them good or very good. There was considerably more dissatisfaction with indoor recreation facilities, which were ranked very poor or poor by slightly over 17% of all respondents. Recreation programs were rated comparatively highly, with over 71% rating them as good or very good. In terms of rating local parks and open space, there were statistically significant relationships to marital status, education level, ethnic status and income.
- ◆ When respondents were asked if they thought their own local recreation and park services were worth the amount of money per year which reflects the national average expenditure for such services, \$45 per household resident per year (U.S. Bureau Of The Census, City Government Finance, 1988-89, 1991), the results were extremely supportive. Over 3/4's of the entire sample thought that local park and recreation services were worth \$45 per person per year or more. Only 16.3 percent thought they were worth \$25 per year per person or less. Conversely, more than 20 percent thought they were worth from \$60 to \$150 per person per year.

- ◆ When asked how local recreation and park services should be funded, respondents were given the option of choosing the following categories: mainly through taxes, mainly through user fees and equally through taxes and user fees. The vast majority, 69%, said such support should come equally from taxes and user fees, 20% said mainly through taxes and 10% said mainly through user fees. The method of financing local park and recreation services was related statistically to type of residence, community size, race and income.
- ◆ The Health and Wellness questions revealed a number of significant relationships. Park users were generally more healthy than non-users. Disabled individuals reported greater free time and feeling less rushed and less likely to have a park within walking distance. Other Health and Wellness factors that produced significant relationships included level of happiness, socialization, participation with others or alone, number of organizations an individual belonged to, level of stress, exercise level per week, and blood pressure.
- ◆ The major conclusions of this report are: local recreation and parks services are used by the vast majority of the public; use continues across the life-cycle; substantial perceived benefits are derived by both users and non-users; community benefits are an important aspect of local recreation and park services; benefits are mostly associated with individual or social domains, while economic benefits are not highly associated with services; services are not specifically identified with the disadvantaged citizens, however they are associated with improving the community; ethnicity and gender are not strongly related to use of local services; the majority of respondents believe the recreation and parks services are worth as much or more than they are currently paying in taxes; local recreation and parks services provide places where people go as recreation in addition to going for recreation; recreation and parks services provide benefits to a wide range of individuals and families both as users and non-users.

INTRODUCTION

While the provision of recreation and park services by local government has become a common feature of American life, there has historically been comparatively little systematic investigation of what benefits are provided by the existence of such services. More recently, however, perhaps spurred by economic cutbacks and declining Federal support to recreation and parks, there have been numerous attempts to determine the benefits associated with these services. Some of these attempts have been to determine domains of benefits associated with outdoor recreation (See, for instance, Driver, B. L., P. Brown, and G. L. Peterson, 1991). Others have attempted to focus upon a specific domain or type of benefit, such as economic benefits (See, for instance, Loomis, 1989). Still others have attempted to rate recreation services within a framework of community satisfaction or quality of life (See, for instance, Allen, 1991). Finally, a few studies have sought to focus upon the specific benefits associated with community recreation and parks or related services (See, for instance, Balmer and Harper, 1989).

While all these approaches have academic usefulness, none have focused extensively upon the perceived benefits that the public associates with such services. Rather, they have sought to either: 1. objectively identify and measure benefits, such as economic benefits, 2. classify benefit domains from previous research and then ask various populations to rate them in importance, or 3. compare parks and recreation facilities, programs and opportunities with other factors in community life in terms of their importance in contributing to satisfaction with community or quality of life.

To a great extent, no approach has been within the spirit of sociological inquiry which has been labeled "ethnomethodology" (Garfinkel, 1970). In such an approach the emphasis is upon the order that is produced in social settings by the cognitive symbol systems (accounts) employed by individuals to provide a basis for action (Kelly, 1987). Order is based upon

those accounts which are indices of the situation. For such sociological inquiry, the beginning point is always the perception of the self embodied in the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1964) In effect, the perceived world is all we have. ". . . it is in the world as perceived that we take action, a world from which we have selected out certain factors as relevant to our action possibilities" (Kelly, 1987). From this line of reasoning, examining the benefits individuals associate with local recreation and park systems would have to seek an understanding of what the individual perceives rather than to seek the individual's agreement or disagreement with the "accounts" developed by researchers.

It should be noted that one study (Harper and Balmer, 1989) sought to measure the relative benefits associated with each of the park and recreation services perceived by professionals and decision-makers. These experts included economists, environmentalists, planners, consultants and leisure and recreation specialists from business, government, academic and volunteer agencies. Steps in the study included defining each benefit, assessing the value of services provided by the parks and recreation department, ranking each benefit in priority order and then evaluating the services of the department under study with respect to the benefits described. A typology of benefits was developed and reviewed by the panel of experts. This typology of benefits included Personal, Social, Economic, Environmental and Intangible Benefits (Table 1).

Table 1: Order of Importance of Benefits Ranked by Recreation and Parks Professionals (Harper and Balmer, 1989)

Rank	Benefit
1.	Basic Services to Poorer Residents
2.	Protection of natural Environment
3.	Civic Identity and pride
4.	Community Visual Appeal and Function
5.	Develops Strong Communities
6.	% of Population Using Regularly
7.	Individual Growth and Development
8.	Avoidance of Costly Damage Due to Mismanagement of the Ecological System
9.	Prevents Social problems
10.	Reduces Health Problems and Costs
11.	Integrates Disabled, Disadvantaged and Socially Alienated
12.	Job Creation
13.	% of Population Who Might Use
14.	Assists Tourist Industry
15.	Attracts Industry
16.	Prepares Individual To Cooperate With Others
17.	Increase Property Values and Tax Revenues
18.	Opportunities for Underemployed
19.	Desire to Replace Volunteer Effort
20.	Saves Property Owner Expense
21.	Stimulates leisure Retail Industry

Although this study took a first step toward understanding how various experts and decision-makers, including recreation and park officials, perceive the benefits of local park and recreation services, no identified study directly examined the perception of benefits of the public, starting with the public's conceptualization of such issues rather than the researcher's. Thus, we know comparatively little about how the public conceptualizes benefits derived from local recreation and park services, the extent to which they think such perceived benefits are realized, the relationship between perceived benefits and use of such services, economic valuation of such services and the relation of the previous to various individual characteristics, such as demographic and health statuses. Nor do we know how the benefits perceived by the public correlate with those benefit typologies developed by various researchers.

As a practical matter, perception is all important in terms of community acceptance of and support for such services. "Objectively" demonstrating a benefit may be less important than understanding the public's perception of the reality of such benefits. As Crompton and Lamb pointed out: "People spend their time, money and energy resources with the expectation of receiving benefits, not for the delivery of services themselves. Citizens don't buy programs or services, they buy the expectation of benefits"(Crompton and Lamb, 1986). At the local government level we know precious little about what benefits citizens think they are buying or how they conceive "benefits."

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine the benefits of local recreation and park services perceived by the American Public. The study was concerned with types of benefits, comparative importance of such benefits, perceived performance of the respondent's local recreation and parks agency in providing such benefits, and the relationship between perceived benefits and the respondent's socio-economic and demographic statuses, and use of local recreation and park services.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What benefits does the American Public associate with the existence of local recreation and park departments?
2. What is the relative strength of importance of individual perceived benefits?
3. What benefits are perceived at the individual, household and community level and how do they differ in importance?
4. How does the respondent judge the performance of his or her local recreation and parks department in performing or providing such benefits?
5. What programs, areas and facilities are associated with such benefits?
6. To what extent does the respondent and/or members of his or her household use local recreation and park services?
7. What are the socio-economic, demographic and health statuses of the respondent and how are they related to the perception of benefits accrued from local recreation and parks departments?
8. What is the relationship between perceived benefits, use of local recreation and park services, and economic valuation of such services?

PROCEDURES

The following represent the major procedures employed in this study.

Review of Literature

Literature pertaining to benefits of recreation, leisure and recreation and park services was reviewed in order to gain a better understanding of the state of research in this area. This review included not only a review of research journals, but also informal interviews with colleagues at conferences and via telephone and letter. Dr. Godbey had been a participant at a conference dealing with the benefits of leisure and had the opportunity to discuss benefits measurements with numerous scholars. All three researchers in this investigation reviewed the book which resulted from that conference *The Benefits of Leisure*, edited by B.L. Driver, Perry Brown and George Peterson. This book essentially serves as a reference of the bulk of literature in existence concerning the benefits of recreation.

Development of the Telephone Interview

Based upon the literature review, the research team made numerous decisions concerning subjects for questioning and question format. Among such decisions was to use an open-ended questioning format concerning perceived benefits of local recreation and park services benefits rather than an existing typology. While some benefit typologies have been developed, it was felt that it would be more consistent with the study's purposes to use open-ended questions to establish the respondent's definition of the situation with regard to benefits of local recreation and park services. Since the purpose of the study was to examine public

perception of benefits of such services rather than to attempt to document such benefits in an "objective" manner, it was felt that the frame of reference from which the public would answer such questions should not be assumed in advance.

It was also decided that perceived benefits should be measured at an individual, household and community level. There is evidence that many individuals who do not use local recreation and park services still ascribe benefits to them either for other family members or for the community as a whole. In retrospect, this decision was a good one since community level benefits were found to be the most powerful.

After much deliberation and consultation with colleagues, it was decided to partially "mask" the purpose of the study to respondents. That is, it was felt that unless the study was identified as one dealing with recreation and leisure activity in general, as opposed to a study dealing with benefits of local recreation and park services, respondents might be predisposed to report a higher level of benefits of such services. The initial questions in the telephone survey, therefore, dealt with issues such as amount of free time and whether or not the respondent had begun any new recreation activities during the last twelve months.

The interview was designed using the term "local government's recreation and parks department" rather than "municipal" or "urban" based upon the belief that many respondents would be uncertain of what municipal meant and "urban" would seem inappropriate for many respondents living in non-urban areas. Attempts were made in specific questions to define what was meant by this term but certainly there could have been differing interpretations on the part of the respondent, as there would have been with any other descriptor.

★ The preliminary instrument was critiqued by a number of experts in the field. These individuals were chosen based largely upon previous academic work they had done dealing with leisure or public recreation and park benefits. Additionally, most of them were invited presenters at one of two conferences sponsored by the U.S. Forest Service dealing with benefits of leisure. Most of these critiques were done in writing, although a few were done via telephone or personal interview. These experts included: Dr. Dan Stynes, Department of

Parks and Recreation Resources, Michigan State University; Dr. Howard Tinsley, Department of Psychology, Southern Illinois University; Professor Elery Hamilton-Smith, Department of Leisure Studies, Phillip Institute of Technology (Australia); Dr. Jack Harper, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, University of Manitoba (Canada); Dr. B. L. Driver, U.S. Forest Service; Dr. George Peterson, U.S. Forest Service; Dean A. T. Easley, School of Natural Resources, Sir Sanford Fleming College (Canada); Dean Perry Brown, College of Forestry, Oregon State University; Dr. Thomas Goodale, Department of Leisure Studies, George Mason University; Dr. Joseph Roggenbuck, Department of Forestry, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University; Dr. Roger Mannell and Robert Graham, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Waterloo (Canada); Dr. Roger Ulrich, College of Architecture, Texas A&M University; Dr. Andrew Baum, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, Department of Defense; Dr. Judy Selfton-Wankel, Alberta Centre for Well Being, University of Alberta (Canada) and Dr. Larry Allen, Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management, Clemson University.

Additionally, Mr. Joseph Doud, Executive Director of the Northbrook, Illinois Park District and President Elect of the American Park and Recreation Society critiqued the instrument. He also asked a staff member of his, familiar with research methodologies, Ms. Sandra Whitmore, to provide further input, which was done in writing.

The instrument was then revised based upon this input and the revised instrument was again sent to our panel of experts for further critiquing. The majority of respondents to the first critique also participated in the second one.

The revised instrument was also pilot tested. Approximately 30 telephone interviews were conducted using an available sample of residents within Centre County, Pennsylvania. Changes were made in the instrument based upon their responses and the final instrument was designed. Appendix A shows the completed telephone interview and a summary of responses to it.

Administration of Telephone Interviews

Several meetings were held with Database Inc. of State College PA., a company specializing in survey research, which had considerable experience in conducting telephone interviews. The conduct of the telephone interviews as well as the proposed interview schedule were discussed in detail and reviewed by their manager and computer programmer. Other specifics of the sample, training of interviewers and coding of the data were discussed. Subsequently, a contract was drawn up by Database for their participation in this study. The contract specified that 1300 respondents were to be contacted a minimum of four times via telephone using a nationally representative, multi-stage probability sample of all households in the continental United States which have telephones. The sample was obtained from Survey Sampling Incorporated, a firm that specializes in designing such samples. Any respondent age fifteen or over was eligible to participate. Interviewing was to be done in such a way that no more than 55 percent of the total respondents would be either males or females.

The researchers also participated in interviewer training, which was done in two sessions. During this training the interviewers, most of whom had been involved in previous telephone interviews, were familiarized with the study and its purposes. Additionally, each question was reviewed and final procedures established for dealing with unanticipated situations. Additionally, the investigators met with the computer programmer from database to determine coding procedures. The first one-hundred interviews were conducted as a further pilot test and to develop a list of response codes for the open-ended benefits questions. After these first one-hundred interviews, meetings were held between the researchers and Database officials to make any additional changes deemed appropriate. Based upon finding almost no problems with these completed interviews, the decision was made to utilize the first one-hundred interviews in the final analysis.

All interviewing was completed between January and February 1992. A total of 1305 interviews were completed from a pool of 5500 telephone numbers. Table 2 shows the

number of interviews attempted, the outcome of each attempted telephone contact and the completion rate.

Table 2: Breakdown of Telephone Interview Schedule

Telephone Code	Number of Calls
Terminated within Interview	93
Completed Survey	1305
Refusal	1557
No Answer	3541
Answering Machine	1550
Busy	431
Language	89
Over Quota	7
Call Back	517
Disconnected	1116
No Qualified Respondent	216
Manual Callback	280
Government/Business	463
Total Calls	10,600

The sampling error for this study was +/- 2-3 %. This means that, for instance, if we obtained a given response from 75% of our sample, in the entire population it might be as much as 78% or as little as 72%. The completion rate for this study was typical of those obtained from telephone surveys using random samples (Survey Sampling Incorporated, 1991).

Follow-up Questionnaire

Although not required under the terms of our contract, it was decided by the researchers to include a follow-up questionnaire to each respondent to the telephone interview. This questionnaire dealt with the individual's state of health, wellness and life satisfaction and made it possible to examine in greater depth the relationship between use of local recreation and park services, benefits derived from such services, and health related issues. This additional data was intended to begin the process of empirical documentation of the health benefits of such services. Appendix B shows the completed mail questionnaire and a summary of responses to it.

The major parts of the mail questionnaire study were developed from existing national surveys or scales. The Health Promotion Survey developed by Statistics Canada for a national survey of Canadian health practices was utilized as a source for many questions. Questions concerning self esteem utilized the Rosenberg Self Concept Scale (Rosenberg, 1979).

The questionnaire was mailed within two weeks of the interview to all telephone respondents who consented to give their name and address during the telephone interview. A total of 882 were mailed. A cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, a copy of the brief questionnaire and a postage paid return envelope were enclosed. The questionnaire was mailed first class. Ten days after the mailing, a follow-up "thank you/reminder" post card was sent to everyone on the mailing list. Of the questionnaires mailed, 45 were returned based upon some problem with the address or because the intended respondent had moved. Of the remaining valid addresses, returns were received from 503, a 60% rate of return. This resulted in a sampling error of +/- 4-5 % for data from the mail survey. Since each questionnaire contained an identification number, it was possible to merge the telephone interview and the mail questionnaire into one data set for each respondent.

Appendix C provides information concerning the characteristics of our sample. Since rural respondents, by definition, have no local government recreation and park services but

may use those of neighboring towns, a decision had to be made concerning how to treat rural respondents. Appendix D examines rural respondents to our interview. As can be seen, it was decided to include them in the larger sample since they generally showed no statistically different patterns in their responses to questions.

Finally, the responses of ethnic minorities, who were somewhat underrepresented in our telephone interview, as in most such interviews, were examined (Appendix E). If responses from ethnic minorities had been systematically different from others, we would have weighted their responses numerically so that they represented their percentages in the population. Again, since responses to most key questions in the survey didn't differ by ethnic status, a weighting procedure was not undertaken.

Data Analysis

Data gathered through the telephone and follow-up mail surveys were analyzed in several ways. First, frequency distributions for all questions were tabulated separately for the two surveys. These results are shown on copies of the survey instruments provided in Appendices A and B. Data from the two surveys were then merged into a single data file to enable more detailed comparisons and cross tabulations.

Statistical comparisons were made to assess relationships between study variables called for in the study's underlying research questions. The statistical tests used depended on the types of variables involved. For example, relationships between categorical variables such as extent of park use and type of residence were analyzed with the chi square statistic, while continuous variables were analyzed using analysis of variance tests. Unless otherwise specified, all comparisons included in the tables represent relationships that are statistically significant at the .05 level or greater. This means that there is less than a five percent probability that the differences observed in the sample could have occurred by chance. The

actual chi square and F values are not presented in order to improve readability. In some instances, totals within the tables do not equal exactly 100 percent due to rounding.

BACKGROUND FACTORS RELATED TO VOTING

Changes in Amount of Free Time

This study has many reports about the amount of free time that voters have had over the years. For recreation and leisure time they had five years ago, even though leisure is highly valued. Compared to five years ago, 47 percent of the sample said that today they had less time for recreation and leisure while only 22 percent reported more time. The remaining 31 percent said the amount of time had stayed the same.

There were statistically significant relationships between the amount of free time reported and type of residence, education level, political affiliation, number of people in the household, age of people in the household and age of respondent (Table 3). Appendix 1 shows all demographic variables which showed a statistically significant relationship to all five free time survey questions. Those who lived in mobile homes and apartments were significantly more likely to feel that they had less free time available to five years ago than others. In terms of education level, those who had some college or an undergraduate degree were more likely to say they had less time for leisure (52%) than those who had less than high school. Those between the ages of 24 and 29 were more likely to say they had less free time than any other age group (63%), while those between the ages of 60 and 74 were more likely to say they had more time (47%). These findings reflect a concern of voters only with one of seven individuals over the age of fifty-five in the labor force, but also one in which two worker families are typical among younger adults.

FINDINGS

BACKGROUND LEISURE/RECREATION VARIABLES

Changes in Amount of Free Time

This study, like many others, found that most Americans feel they have less time available for recreation and leisure than they had five years ago, even though leisure is highly valued. Compared to five years ago, 47 percent of the sample said that today they had less time for recreation and leisure while only 22 percent reported more time. The remaining 31 percent said the amount of time had stayed the same.

There were statistically significant relationships in terms of how this question was answered with type of residence, education level, political affiliation, number of people in the household, age of people in the household and age of respondent (Table 3). (Appendix F shows all demographic variables which showed a statistically significant relationship to all fixed-response survey questions). Those who lived in mobile homes and apartments were significantly more likely to feel that they had less free time compared to five years ago than others. In terms of education level, those who had some college or an undergraduate degree were more likely to say they had less time for leisure (52%) than were those with more or less education. Those between the ages of 21 and 35 were more likely to say they had less time for leisure than any other age group (63%), while those between the ages of 66 and 75 were most likely to say they had more time (47%). These findings reflect a society in which only one out of seven individuals over the age of sixty-five is in the labor force, but also one in which two-worker families are typical among younger adults.

Table 3: Respondent Demographic Characteristics by Perception of Amount of Time Available for Recreation and Leisure Compared to Five Years Ago

	Time Available for Leisure and Recreation Compared to Five Years Ago		
	More Time	About the Same	Less Time
Age			
15-20	15%	29%	56%
21-35	13	25	63
36-55	21	33	46
56-65	33	38	29
66-75	47	38	15
76-95	43	37	20
Level of Education			
High school or less	22	34	44
Some college to college grad	20	28	52
More than 4 years of college	32	30	38
Political Affiliation			
Republican	25	29	46
Democrat	20	35	46
Independent	17	32	51
Other	28	26	45
Type of Residence			
Single family home	22	32	46
Town house/Condominium	22	44	34
Apartment	19	24	56
Mobile home	24	22	55
Other	27	29	44
Size of Household			
Single person	29	36	35
Two people	28	31	41
Three to four people	16	30	54
Five or more people	17	28	55
Age of Children in Household			
12 and Under	15	25	60
13 - 19	20	26	55
Both 12 and Under and 13 - 19	17	36	47
No Children Under Age 20	27	34	39

Republicans (25%) were significantly more likely than Democrats (20%) to think that they had more time for leisure today.

The households in which respondents were most likely to feel they had less time for leisure (60%) were those in which there was one or more children age 12 or under while those least likely to feel there was less time for leisure were those where there was no occupant under 20 years of age (39%).

Finally, the relation between number of people in the household and feeling that there was less time for leisure was such that the larger the number of residents in the household, the more likely the feeling that there was less time for leisure.¹

Feeling Rushed

Additional evidence of unleisurely lifestyles was the fact that 35 percent of respondents, when asked how they felt about their time, said that they always felt rushed. Only 18 percent reported never feeling rushed, while 48 sometimes felt rushed. These percentages are extremely similar to other studies (Robinson, 1991) which have asked this question.

Among those most likely to always feel rushed are people between the ages of 20 and 35 (Table 4). In each succeeding older age group, this feeling is less prevalent. In terms of education level, those with the highest level of education were most likely to always feel rushed, while those with the least education were most likely to almost never feel rushed.

¹statistically significant relationships, in these discussions, refer to any instance in which a relation observed could not have occurred by chance in 95 or more cases out of 100.

Table 4: Respondent Demographic Characteristics by How They Feel About Their Time

	How Respondents Feel About Their Time		
	Always Feel Rushed	Sometimes Feel Rushed	Almost Never Feel Rushed
Age			
15-20	24%	62%	15%
21-35	41	53	6
36-55	39	48	13
56-65	28	39	34
66-75	18	32	50
76-95	11	26	64
Level of Education			
High school or less	32	47	21
Some college to college grad	36	49	15
More than 4 years of college	38	44	18
Income			
Less than \$20,000	30	45	25
\$20,000 to \$60,000	36	50	14
More than \$60,000	41	47	12
Marital Status			
Single/Divorced/Widowed	30	49	21
Married	38	46	16
Size of Household			
Single person	28	40	32
Two people	28	47	25
Three to Four People	39	52	21
Five or More People	43	47	10
Age of Children in Household			
12 and Under	45	49	6
13 - 19	36	50	14
Both 12 and Under and 13 - 19	40	49	11
No Children Under Age 20	29	46	25

The relation between feeling rushed and income was positive, and those whose incomes are between \$60,000 and \$80,000 were more likely to feel rushed than those with other income levels.

Those with children 12 years of age and under in the household were most likely to always feel rushed (45%) while those with no one under 20 years of age were least likely (29%).

In terms of household size, the more residents in the household, the greater the likelihood of always feeling rushed. People who lived alone were least likely to feel rushed (28%) while those in households with five or more residents were most likely (43%) to always feel rushed.

While books such as *The Second Shift* by Arlie Hochschild have argued that women are more rushed than men, our study found no relation between feeling rushed and gender (or between gender and the belief that one had less free time than five years ago).

There was, however, a statistically significant relation between being married and feeling rushed. While only 30% of single people always felt rushed, 38% of married people did. Thus, it would appear that marriage is associated with both males and females feeling more rushed.

Priority of Work and Leisure

In spite of the fact that large percentages of the population felt rushed and don't have as much time for recreation and leisure as they would like, their leisure is important to them. When asked whether work or leisure was more important to them, only 35% of the population said work. The largest percentage, 38%, said work and leisure were equally important while 26% said leisure was more important. These percentages vary from a recent Roper Poll (1989) which found that 41 percent of the population believed that leisure was more important

than work, 36 percent believed that work was more important than leisure and the remaining 23 percent said both were equally important.

There were statistically significant relations between work or leisure being more important and community size, ethnic status and age (Table 5). Respondents between the ages of 36 and 55 were most likely to consider their work more important than their leisure time (41%) closely followed by those aged 56 to 65 (39%) and 21 to 35 (35%). Conversely, those over 65 years of age were more likely to feel their leisure is more important. Those who lived in rural areas or villages were most likely to say that leisure was more important (30%) while those who lived in cities of 50-100,000 were most likely to say that work was more important (45%).

In terms of ethnic status, blacks were much more likely than whites to say that work was more important (50% to 34%) while whites were more likely to cite leisure (28% versus 13%). Hispanics were most likely to say both work and leisure were equally important (44%).

Beginning New Recreation Activities

Slightly more than one out of five Americans reported taking up a new recreation activity during the last twelve months. The majority of these new activities could be characterized as sport and exercise. In terms of specific activities, Table 6 shows the ten most frequently begun recreation activities of the 346 our respondents reported.

Table 5: Respondent Demographic Characteristics By What Is More Important To Them, Their Work Or Their Leisure

	What is more important to you:		
	Your Work	Your Leisure	Work and Leisure
Age			
15-20	29%	29%	42%
21-35	35	24	40
36-55	41	23	36
56-65	39	26	35
66-75	25	39	36
76-95	18	38	43
Race			
White	34	28	39
Black	50	13	37
Hispanic	36	21	44
Other	46	26	28
Size of Community			
Rural area/village under 10,000	31	30	39
Town of 10,000 to 50,000	35	22	43
City of 50,000 to 100,000	45	29	26
Metropolitan area (over 100,000)	38	25	37

Table 6: New Recreation Activities Begun During Last Twelve Months by Respondents

Activity	Count	Percent
Walking	25	7.2
Aerobics	17	4.9
Weight Lifting	16	4.6
Exercise	14	4.0
Swimming	13	3.8
Exercise Work Out At Club	12	3.5
Golf	10	2.9
Jogging	10	2.9
Basketball	9	2.6
Skiing	10	2.3

As may be seen, virtually all the activities which our respondents were most likely to start were forms of sport or physical exercise. Hobbies, reading, high culture activities and others were mentioned much less frequently.

The likelihood of taking up a new leisure activity was statistically related to age, residence type, marital status, education level, income level, race, and political affiliation (Table 7).

In terms of age, the older the respondent, the less likely they were to begin a new activity. While 39% of those between the ages of 15-20 began a new activity, only 12% of those 66-75 did so. Those 76-95, however, did not show further decline in this likelihood and actually increased slightly (15%). Single people were significantly more likely to have begun a new recreation activity (25%) compared to married people (19%).

Our study found that the higher the education level, the greater the likelihood of having begun a new recreation activity. While only 18% of those with a high school degree or less began a new activity, 29% of those with more than four years of college did so.

The same was true for income level. As income rose, so did the likelihood of beginning a new leisure activity. Those with incomes of \$60,000 or over were twice as likely (32%) to have begun a new leisure activity as those with incomes of less than \$20,000 (16%).

Ethnic status was also related to beginning new activities. While 38% of Hispanics reported beginning a new activity, only 22% of white respondents and 16% of blacks did.

Republicans were significantly more likely to have begun a new leisure activity than Democrats. One reason for this may be that Republicans were more likely than Democrats to say that they had more time for leisure compared to five years ago.

Finally, in terms of type of residence, those who lived in townhouses or condominiums were more likely to have taken up a new activity than others.

Table 7: Respondent Demographic Characteristics By Whether Or Not Respondents Had Begun Any New Recreation Activities During The Past Twelve Months

	Started Any New Recreation Activity(s)	
	No	Yes
Age		
15-20	61%	39%
21-35	74	26
36-55	81	19
56-65	86	14
66-75	88	12
76-95	85	15
Level of Education		
High school or less	82	18
Some college to college grad	76	24
More than 4 years of college	71	29
Income		
Less than \$20,000	84	16
\$20,000 to \$60,000	79	21
More than \$60,000	68	32
Race		
White	78	22
Black	84	16
Hispanic	62	38
Other	74	26
Marital Status		
Single/Divorced/Widowed	75	25
Married	81	19
Political Affiliation		
Republican	73	27
Democrat	83	17
Independent	78	22
Other	79	21
Type of Residence		
Single family home	79	21
Town house/Condominium	62	38
Apartment	81	19
Mobile home	84	16
Other	69	31

Existence of Park or Playground Within Walking Distance

Slightly more than seven out of ten respondents reported there was a park or playground within walking distance of their home. When rural residents are excluded, 75% of all respondents have a park or playground they can walk to.

Those most likely to have a park within walking distance of their home were generally younger people (Table 8). Eighty-four percent of those between the ages of 15-20 reported a park within walking distance. The likelihood of having such an area declined with each succeeding age group.

The higher the education level, the greater the likelihood of having a park or playground within walking distance. While only 65% of those with a high school education or less had a park within walking distance, 79% of those with more than four years of college did. Similarly, the higher the income, the greater the likelihood of having parks nearby. Seventy-six percent of those with incomes of over \$60,000 had a park within walking distance while only 65% of those with incomes of less than \$20,000 had such an amenity.

Females were less likely to have a park or playground within walking distance than males. While 75% of males reported such a park, only 69% of females did. This may reflect females' generally lower income level. In spite of this, as we will see shortly, women were no less likely to use parks than men.

Republicans and political independents were significantly more likely to have such areas within walking distance. While 74% of Republicans and 76% of Independents had parks within walking distance, only 66% of Democrats did. In spite of this, as we will shortly see, there was no difference in the frequency of use of such parks among those with differing political affiliations. Nor was there any difference in the perceived level of benefit of such parks.

There was a relationship with community size such that those who lived in apartments and townhouses or condominiums were more likely to have a park or playground near them

than others. In terms of community size, rural-village dwellers were least likely to have such a facility within walking distance while those who lived in towns of 10,000 to 50,000 were most likely to have parks or playgrounds within walking distance (78%).

Community Size	Facility Type	Percentage
Rural-village	Parks	15%
	Playgrounds	10%
Town (10,000 - 50,000)	Parks	78%
	Playgrounds	65%
City (50,000 - 100,000)	Parks	60%
	Playgrounds	55%
City (100,000 - 500,000)	Parks	45%
	Playgrounds	40%
City (500,000 - 1,000,000)	Parks	35%
	Playgrounds	30%
City (1,000,000 - 5,000,000)	Parks	25%
	Playgrounds	20%
City (5,000,000 - 10,000,000)	Parks	15%
	Playgrounds	10%
City (10,000,000 - 50,000,000)	Parks	10%
	Playgrounds	5%
City (50,000,000 - 100,000,000)	Parks	5%
	Playgrounds	2%
City (100,000,000 - 500,000,000)	Parks	2%
	Playgrounds	1%
City (500,000,000 - 1,000,000,000)	Parks	1%
	Playgrounds	0%

Table 8: Respondent Demographic Characteristics By Whether Or Not Respondents Lived Within Walking Distance Of A Park Or Playground

	Live Within Walking Distance of Park/Playground	
	No	Yes
Age		
15-20	16	84
21-35	26	74
36-55	27	73
56-65	35	65
66-75	36	64
76-95	44	56
Level of Education		
High school or less	35	65
Some college to college grad	25	75
More than 4 years of college	21	79
Income		
Less than \$20,000	35	65
\$20,000 to \$60,000	26	74
More than \$60,000	24	76
Gender		
Female	31	69
Male	25	75
Political Affiliation		
Republican	26	74
Democrat	34	66
Independent	24	76
Other	27	73
Type of Residence		
Single family home	29	71
Town house/Condominium	23	77
Apartment	23	77
Mobile home	47	53
Other	31	69
Size of Community		
Rural area/village under 10,000	36	64
Town of 10,000 to 50,000	22	78
City of 50,000 to 100,000	31	69
Metropolitan area (over 100,000)	25	75

USE OF PARKS

Past studies, usually limited to one or two cities, have generally found that parks and playgrounds are used by a fraction of the population. Carberry, (1975) for instance, estimated that only one in ten adult residents of Nashville, Tennessee used a public park and/or recreation facility during the last twelve months. Gold (1976) stated neighborhood-type parks accommodated only five percent of the population. Howard and Crompton found that parks and playgrounds were used by only 47 percent of the residents of Dade County, Florida, 51 percent in Springfield, Oregon but by 81 percent in Austin, Texas. Our study, by contrast, found that 75% of all respondents used such parks and playgrounds; 51% using them occasionally and 24% using them frequently. When rural residents (who, by definition, have no local government) are excluded, 76% of the sample used such parks and playgrounds. This small percentage increase from excluding rural residents suggests that rural residents are highly likely to use local parks and playgrounds in nearby communities.

While there may be the perception that parks are for younger people, our study found that park use remained quite consistent across age brackets (Table 9). While those over 55 years of age were more likely to report not using parks at all, a sizeable minority of older respondents did report either occasional or frequent park use. In fact, those between the ages of 65-74 were more likely to use local parks frequently (26%) than any other age group.

Use of parks was also related to household size. Respondents who lived alone were less likely to frequently use parks (21%) while those with 3-4 household members were most likely to do so (26%).

Table 9: Respondent Demographic Characteristics By Extent Of Personal Use Of Local Park Areas

	Extent of Personal Park Use		
	Not at All	Occasionally	Frequently
Age			
15-20	20	57	23
21-35	18	56	25
36-55	22	53	25
56-65	38	42	21
66-75	39	35	26
76-95	56	29	15
Level of Education			
High school or less	31	49	20
Some college to college grad	22	52	26
More than 4 years of college	19	49	31
Income			
Less than \$20,000	32	49	19
\$20,000 to \$60,000	22	52	26
More than \$60,000	23	50	27
Race			
White	26	49	25
Black	29	52	19
Hispanic	10	69	21
Other	18	60	22
Size of Household			
Single person	38	41	21
Two people	31	47	22
Three to four people	19	54	26
Five or more people	16	59	25
Age of Children in Household			
12 and Under	14	54	32
13 - 19	21	58	21
Both 12 and Under and 13 - 19	17	57	26
No Children Under Age 20	33	46	21

In terms of having youth in the household, respondents who had children age 12 and under were most likely to frequently use the park (32%) while those who had no children were most likely not to use parks at all (21%).

Those in higher income levels were more likely to use local parks. While 32% of those with incomes under \$20,000 didn't use parks at all during the last twelve months, only 23% of those with incomes over \$60,000 didn't use them.

Use of parks was similarly related to education level. A statistically significant relation was found in which those with at least four years of college were more likely to use local parks frequently (31%) than those with less than twelve years of education (20%).

Finally, while the relationship between ethnic status and using parks was not statistically significant, it approached significance ($p=.10$). As may be seen, those most likely to use local parks were Hispanics. Only 10% of Hispanics interviewed don't use local parks at all. Whites, however, were more likely to use local parks frequently (25%) than any other group, while blacks use local parks somewhat less than other groups.

Use of Local Parks By Other Household Members

Use of local parks by other household members was statistically related to every demographic variable in our study except race, type of residence and size of community (Table 10).

Those who were married were much more likely to report that other members of their household used local parks compared to those who were single. Among married respondents, 27% reported that other members of their household frequently used local parks while for single respondents the corresponding percentage was 19%.

Those with higher incomes were more likely to report that other household members use local parks than others. Similarly, those with higher levels of education were more likely to report other members of their household using parks.

Females were more likely to report that other members of their household used local parks than males. This may reflect the fact that female led households are far more likely to have children under the age of eighteen in them than male led households. Eighty-five percent of children whose parents are divorced reside with their mother.

Those between the ages of 36 and 55 were more likely to report that other members of their household frequently used local parks than any other age group (31%). This may reflect the fact that such respondents are most likely to have school age children.

In terms of political affiliation, Democrats were more likely to report no use by other household members (29%) than Republicans (23%).

Frequent use by other members of the household was far more common (39%) with those who had five or more household members than those who had 3-4 (27%), or those who had two members (14%).

Finally, those households with children age 12 and under were more likely to report frequent household use (38%) than any other type of household.

Table 10: Respondent Demographic Characteristics By Extent Of Use Of Local Park Areas By Other Household Members

	Extent of Park Use by Household Members		
	Not at All	Occasionally	Frequently
Age			
15-20	39	42	19
21-35	19	55	25
36-55	19	50	31
56-65	44	44	12
66-75	39	39	22
76-95	53	30	17
Level of Education			
High school or less	31	46	23
Some college to college grad	22	52	26
More than 4 years of college	21	52	27
Income			
Less than \$20,000	34	41	25
\$20,000 to \$60,000	21	54	25
More than \$60,000	25	50	25
Marital Status			
Single/Divorced/Widowed	32	49	19
Married	23	50	27
Gender			
Female	24	48	28
Male	28	52	20
Political Affiliation			
Republican	23	57	20
Democrat	29	45	27
Independent	23	48	29
Other	29	44	27
Size of Household			
Two people	37	49	14
Three to four people	20	53	27
Five or more people	16	45	39
Age of Children in Household			
12 and Under	13	49	38
13 - 19	22	55	23
Both 12 and Under and 13 - 19	17	47	37
No Children Under Age 20	37	49	14

PERCEIVED BENEFITS FROM LOCAL PARKS

Level of Benefits From Local Parks

Respondents to the telephone survey were asked about benefits received from local parks at an individual, household and community level. "By benefit we mean anything good that happens because public parks are there. To what degree do you feel you *personally* benefit from your local parks." Next they were asked about benefits to other members of the household and finally the community as a whole (Table 11).

Perhaps what is most startling about these results is that the vast majority of respondents perceived benefits at all three levels and the strongest level of perceived benefit was the community level, where over six out of ten respondents said their community as a whole received a great deal of benefit from local park areas. Only 6% of the respondents said there was no community benefit derived from local parks.

Table 11: Level and Degree of Benefit From Local Parks

	Individual	Household	Community
Not At All	16.3	20.8	5.6
Somewhat	47.0	47.9	33.1
A Great Deal	36.7	31.3	61.3

Those most likely to report a great deal of personal benefit from local parks were middle aged (36-55). Forty-one percent of them perceived a great deal of benefit from such parks while only 21% of those age 15-20 perceived a great deal of benefit (Table 12).

Table 12: Respondent Demographic Characteristics By Extent Of Perceived Personal Benefits From Local Park Areas

	Extent of Personal Benefits		
	Not at All	Somewhat	A Great Deal
Age			
15-20	12	66	21
21-35	10	50	40
36-55	15	44	41
56-65	30	40	30
66-75	26	40	34
76-95	32	44	24
Level of Education			
High school or less	20	50	30
Some college to college grad	14	45	41
More than 4 years of college	12	44	44
Size of Household			
Single person	24	41	35
Two people	19	48	33
Three to four people	13	47	40
Five or more people	11	52	38
Age of Children in Household			
12 and Under	9	44	47
13 - 19	15	55	30
Both 12 and Under and 13 - 19	12	47	41
No Children Under Age 20	20	47	33
Size of Community			
Rural area/village under 10,000	22	43	34
Town of 10,000 to 50,000	13	49	38
City of 50,000 to 100,000	15	50	35
Metropolitan area (over 100,000)	12	48	41

Similarly, there was a significant positive relation between education level and perceived level of benefits received from local parks. Those with higher levels of education were much more likely to perceive a great deal of benefit from local parks compared to those with less education. This pattern held true for personal, household and community benefits (Tables 12-14).

The number of people in a residence, age of household members and community size were related to perceived benefit levels. Those most likely to perceive a great deal of benefit from parks (40%) had 3-4 family members while those most likely to perceive no benefit (24%) lived by themselves. Similarly, those households with children, especially children under the age of 13, were most likely to perceive a great deal of benefits from local parks (47%), while those with no children were most likely to perceive no personal benefits (20%). Those who resided in cities of over 100,000 population were most likely to respond that they received a great deal of benefit (41%) while those who resided in rural areas and towns of under 10,000 were most likely to perceive no benefit from such services (22%). Obviously, those who live in rural areas and townships under 10,000 are least likely to have such services.

In terms of perceiving benefits for other members of the **household**, there were significant relationships with age, gender, income, education level, marital status and the number of people in the residence (Table 13). Those between the ages of 36-55 were more likely than others to perceive a great deal of benefit to other members of the household (39%). Those with higher levels of education and income were more likely to perceive benefits to their household from local park areas than those with lower levels.

Table 13: Respondent Demographic Characteristics by Extent Of Perceived Household Benefits From Local Park Areas

	Extent of Benefits to Household Members		
	Not at All	Somewhat	A Great Deal
Age			
15-20	31	59	10
21-35	16	51	33
36-55	16	45	39
56-65	33	45	22
66-75	31	40	29
76-95	45	38	17
Gender			
Female	19	45	36
Male	23	52	25
Level of Education			
High school or less	28	46	27
Some college to college grad	17	49	35
More than 4 years of college	12	54	34
Income			
Less than \$20,000	28	39	33
\$20,000 to \$60,000	18	50	32
More than \$60,000	18	52	30
Marital Status			
Single/Divorced/Widowed	26	50	24
Married	18	47	35
Size of Household			
Single person	45	36	19
Two people	28	49	23
Three to four people	16	49	35
Five or more people	14	46	40
Age of Children in Household			
12 and Under	10	43	47
13 - 19	21	54	25
Both 12 and Under and 13 - 19	14	48	38
No Children Under Age 20	29	49	23

Those most likely to live in a family unit were more likely to perceive a great deal of benefit for other household members from the existence of local parks. That is, females (36%) were far more likely to perceive a great deal of benefit to other household members than were males (25%). Married respondents (35%) were similarly much more likely to perceive a great deal of benefit to other household members than single respondents (24%).

The larger the household, the more likely that our respondents perceived a great deal of household benefit. Additionally, those with children age 12 and over were more likely to perceive a great deal of benefit (47%) than any other group.

Finally, perceiving community level benefits was statistically related to age, gender, income, education level, community size and type of residence (Table 14). In terms of age, those between the ages of 66-75 were more likely to perceive a great deal of community benefit from having local parks than any other age group (70%). This seems logical, since this age group is more likely to be frequent users of such facilities than any other age group. Our youngest age group surveyed, 15-20, was least likely to perceive a great deal of community benefit (49%).

Females were more likely to perceive community benefits than males. While only 58% of males perceived a great deal of benefit to the community from local parks, 64% of females did.

Those with more than four years of education were more likely to report a great deal of community benefit from local parks (68%) than those with a high school degree or less (58%). Those with higher income were also more likely to report some community benefit than lower income respondents.

Those who lived in apartments were most likely to perceive a great deal of community benefit (70%) while those who lived in mobile homes were most likely to perceive no benefit (15%).

In terms of community size, respondents living in cities of 100,000 or larger were most likely to perceive a great deal of benefit to their communities (64%). Rural residents and those in villages with less than 10,000 people were most likely to perceive no benefit (11%)

Types of Benefits From Local Parks

In addition to questions about the level of benefit received from parks at the individual, household and community level, respondents were also asked about the type of benefits they received at the individual, household and community level. That is, those who indicated they received some benefit were first asked "What is the most important benefit you feel you receive from your local parks?" They were then probed for any additional benefits. These responses were recorded verbatim and a two part code was constructed from their responses

Table 15 shows this coding scheme. As may be seen, the verbatim responses of respondents were first coded into 83 categories. These categories were then further collapsed into five major categories. These categories included Personal, referring to benefits which directly pertained to the respondent; Environmental, which dealt with any aspect of the natural environment in a positive way; Social, which was concerned with some aspect of group behavior; Economic, which dealt with some positive monetary outcome; and Facility/Activity-Oriented which related to the benefits of the activity itself.

Table 14: Respondent Demographic Characteristics By Extent Of Perceived Benefits To the Community From Local Park Areas

	Extent of Benefits to the Community		
	Not at All	Somewhat	A Great Deal
Age			
15-20	8	43	49
21-35	5	35	60
36-55	4	33	63
56-65	10	29	51
66-75	7	23	70
76-95	6	36	58
Gender			
Female	6	30	64
Male	5	37	58
Level of Education			
High school or less	8	34	58
Some college to college grad	4	33	63
More than 4 years of college	2	31	68
Income			
Less than \$20,000	9	31	60
\$20,000 to \$60,000	4	33	62
More than \$60,000	4	37	59
Type of Residence			
Single family home	6	33	61
Town house/Condominium	5	41	55
Apartment	3	27	70
Mobile home	15	33	52
Other	4	38	58
Size of Community			
Rural area/village under 10,000	11	31	59
Town of 10,000 to 50,000	3	35	61
City of 50,000 to 100,000	2	36	62
Metropolitan area (over 100,000)	2	34	64

Table 15: Codes For Recreation and Parks Benefits

Personal Benefits	Social Benefits Continued
Enjoy Being Outdoors/Natural resources	Group Participation
Escape	Helping
* Exercise-Fitness & Conditioning	Keeping in touch with friends
Feel Good Because they (parks) are there	Kids-get pleasure from it
Freedom	Kids-good for them
Fun/Entertainment	Kids-keep busy-occupied
Getting out of the house	Kids-keep off street
* Health	Kids-keep out of house
Involvement -getting more involved	Kids-place to go
Keeping mind occupied	Interaction-kids and adults
Learning-education	Learning discipline/following instructions
* Mental benefits	Place for elderly to socialize *
Passing the time-providing something to do	Place to meet people *
Peace and quiet	Place to take children
Pursuit of happiness	Place to take grandchildren *
Relaxation -place to relax	Respect for others
Rest	See Others enjoy themselves
Safety -feel safe-secure environment	Team spirit-being on a team
* Stress Release	Economic Benefits
Time alone/place to be alone	Availability
Environmental Benefits	Affordable-inexpensive-low cost
Aesthetics	Bring dollars into the community
Fresh Air	Convenience
Green area	Influence property values
Land preservation	Facility-Activity Oriented Benefits
Nature	Activities
No buildings	Arts
Open Space	Exposure to different crafts
Out of City	Facilities-play area for children
Place for Kids that isn't asphalt	Instructional classes
Place to be outdoors	Joy of playing
Scenery	New forms of activities
Wildlife-habitat-place for wildlife	New sports
Wildlife-place for seeing	Place for picnics
Social Benefits	Place for recreation
Completion	Place to exercise pets
Cooperation	Place to go
Community awareness/sense of community	Planned activities
Cultural awareness-heritage	Play-Place to play
Exposure to role-models	Play organized sports
Family time-togetherness	Provide activities not otherwise available
Fellowship	Special events
Gathering Place- hang out with friends	Watch organized sports
Getting to know people	

Table 16 shows the percentage of respondents who mentioned various types of benefits at the individual, household and community level.

Table 16: Type of Benefit Received at Individual, Household and Community Level From Local Parks.

	Personal	Environmental	Social	Economic	Facility
Individual	35.5	20.1	23.5	3.2	17.7
Household	36.5	12.6	27.4	3.1	20.4
Community	20.4	12.5	36.9	4.8	25.4

As may be seen, at the individual and household levels, personal benefits were mentioned more than any other while at the community level social benefits were most frequently mentioned. Economic benefits were mentioned less than any other type, with less than five percent of the responses at any benefit level involving them. This would seem to indicate that attempts to convince the public of the economic benefits of local park and recreation services may be misguided, since such a tiny base of the public currently recognizes such benefits. The largest benefit categories are individual and social, relating to people rather than to economic or environmental considerations.

In terms of specific individual benefits, of the 2057 benefits mentioned, the most frequently mentioned are listed in Table 17.

Table 17: Most Frequently Mentioned Specific Individual Benefits of Local Parks

Benefit	Count	Percent
Exercise Fitness Conditioning	236	11.5
Relaxation and Peace	125	6.1
Open Space	88	4.3
Place For Kids to Go	67	3.3
Nature	63	3.1
Family Time Together	57	2.8
Fun and Entertainment	56	2.7
Enjoy Being Outdoors/ Natural Resources	52	2.5
Place to Go	51	2.5
Place For Recreation	51	2.5

These benefits show that individuals go to local parks and playgrounds both *for* recreation and *as* recreation. That is, one may realize a benefit because they go there to exercise or one may view the simple act of going there as a benefit in and of itself.

While the most frequently mentioned benefits are exercise-related, the second most frequently mentioned are relaxation and peace. Thus, individuals change their level of stimulation in parks both by becoming more active and narrowing their field of attention, such as by playing a sport; or becoming less active and broadening their field of attention, such as by relaxing. Appendix G shows the frequency of response to all personal, household and community benefits.

In terms of household benefits, of the 1065 specific benefits mentioned, the most common are listed in Table 18:

most frequent benefit

Table 18: Most Frequently Mentioned Specific Household Benefits Of Local Parks

Benefit	Count	Percent
Exercise, Fitness, Conditioning	144	13.5
Relaxation and Peace	58	5.4
Fun and Entertainment	53	5.0
Place For Kids to Go	46	4.3
Place to Play	41	3.8
Facilities Play Area Kids	33	3.1
Family Time Together	32	3.0
Kids Keep Busy/Occupied	27	2.5
Open Space	26	2.4
Enjoy Being Outdoors Natural Resources	25	2.3

While these specific household benefits show much in common with individual benefits, children are mentioned in three out of ten responses here. In both individual and household benefits, spending family time together is among the top ten.

Finally, in terms of specific community benefits of local parks and playgrounds, the highest number (2139) of specific benefits were identified by our respondents (Table 19).

These responses, in addition to stressing the themes of exercise, children and sports, stress the benefit of local parks as gathering places which help foster community awareness. Although community awareness was among the top five, "cultural awareness" was mentioned only nine times as a benefit. While people typically exercise their pets in parks, it was mentioned only once.

Table 19: Most Frequently Mentioned Specific Community Benefits of Local Parks

Benefit	Count	Percent
Exercise, Fitness, Conditioning	136	6.4
Place For Kids to Go	132	6.2
Gathering Place	87	4.1
Activities	79	3.7
Community Awareness	79	3.7
Place for Recreation	75	3.5
Fun and Entertainment	68	3.2
Family Time Together	66	3.1
Good For Kids	65	3.0
Place to Go	63	2.9
Play Organized Sports	63	2.9
Keep Kids off Street	61	2.9

Relationship Between Perceived Benefits and Use of Local Parks

To further understand the extent to which people's perceptions of benefits from public parks are tied to their direct use of these parks, the statistical relationships between these variables were examined. The extent of benefits received at all three levels (individual, household and community) were examined in relation to both personal and household use of parks (Table 20). In every case, the degree of perceived benefit was directly related to extent of park use. At the personal benefit level, the extent of benefit received was strongly linked to the extent of both personal and household use. For example, those who frequently used parks were much more likely to perceive a great deal of personal benefits (71%) than those who only occasionally used parks (32%) or those who don't use parks at all (14%). At the community level, on the other hand, the majority of respondents perceived a great deal of benefits from parks regardless of how much they personally used them.

A similar pattern may be seen for household benefits in relation to park use by household members. Seventy-two percent of those in households where no one used parks

perceived no benefits to their household, while 81% of respondents from households where someone in the household uses parks frequently perceived a great deal of benefits to their household. Again, most people perceived a great deal of benefits of parks to the community whether anyone in their household used the parks or not.

results, there were statistically significant relations with number of people in a household, years of residence, education level, income level and age (Table 2.1). Those with higher levels of education were considerably more likely to have participated in such activities than those with lower levels of education. Only 24% of those with a high school education or less, for instance, had participated in such activities while 57% of those with more than four years of college had done so.

Table 20: Perceived Extent Of Benefits From Local Parks By Extent Of Use Of Local Park Areas

	Extent of Personal Park Use		
	Not at All	Occasionally	Frequently
Extent of Personal Benefits			
Not at all	46	7	4
Somewhat	40	61	25
A great deal	14	32	71
Extent of Household Benefits			
Not at all	46	14	12
Somewhat	39	58	36
A great deal	15	29	52
Extent of Community Benefits			
Not at all	11	3	5
Somewhat	36	32	31
A great deal	53	65	63

	Extent of Park Use by Household Members		
	Not at All	Occasionally	Frequently
Extent of Personal Benefits			
Not at all	37	8	4
Somewhat	43	59	34
A great deal	20	33	62
Extent of Household Benefits			
Not at all	72	4	1
Somewhat	23	76	18
A great deal	5	20	81
Extent of Community Benefits			
Not at all	12	3	4
Somewhat	38	34	29
A great deal	50	63	67

USE OF LOCAL RECREATION AND PARK SERVICES

Respondents were asked if, during the last twelve months, they had participated "in any recreation activities organized by your local government's recreation and parks department. This would include such things as sports leagues, educational or instructional classes, and special artistic or cultural events in your community. During the last twelve months have you participated in any recreation or leisure activity that was sponsored by or took place on areas or facilities managed by your local government's recreation and park department?"

In terms of use of local recreation and park services, 30% of the public had participated in such services during the previous year. Excluding rural respondents, 31% used such services. Again, this indicates that rural residents make considerable use of neighboring local recreation and park services. Of those who said they had not participated in the last 12 months, an additional 35% said they had participated at some time in the past in such services. Thus, almost 55% of the population surveyed had used such services at some time. When rural residents are excluded, an additional 37% of respondents said they had used such services at some time in the past. Thus, among non-rural residents, 61% of all respondents have used these services at some time.

Among those who had used local recreation and park services during the last 12 months, there were statistically significant relations with number of people in the residence, youth in residence, education level, income level and age (Table 21). Those with higher levels of education were considerably more likely to have participated in such activities than those with lower levels of education. Only 24% of those with a high school education or less, for instance, had participated in such activities while 37% of those with more than four years of college had done so.

Table 21: Respondent Demographic Characteristics By Personal Participation In Locally Sponsored Recreation Programs During The Past Twelve Months

	Individual Participation in Locally-Sponsored Programs	
	No	Yes
Age		
15-20	61	39
21-35	67	33
36-55	66	34
56-65	80	20
66-75	82	18
76-95	89	11
Level of Education		
High school or less	76	24
Some college to college grad	67	33
More than 4 years of college	63	37
Income		
Less than \$20,000	79	21
\$20,000 to \$60,000	67	33
More than \$60,000	64	36
Size of Household		
Single person	80	20
Two people	73	27
Three to four people	64	36
Five or more people	69	31
Age of Children in Household		
12 and Under	66	34
13 - 19	70	30
Both 12 and Under and 13 - 19	58	42
No Children Under Age 20	74	26

Similarly, participating in such activities increases considerably with income level. In terms of age, younger respondents were much more likely to participate in activities sponsored by local government recreation and park services. Thus, while local parks are used more by those between the ages of 64-75 than others, participation in activities organized by recreation and park services are used more by the young.

In regard to household size, respondents in households with 3-4 people were most likely (36%) to report that they had participated in an activity sponsored by a local recreation and parks department. Those who lived alone were least likely to (20%). Respondents from households with one or more children age 12 or less and one or more age 13-19 were more likely than others (42%) to say they had participated.

Finally, while Hispanics were slightly more likely (36%) to participate in such activities than whites (31%) or Blacks (24%), the difference among ethnic statuses was not statistically significant.

Participation By Other Members of the Household

In terms of other household members participating in activities sponsored by local recreation and park services, 37% of all respondents said other members of their household participated in a recreation or leisure activity "that was sponsored by or took place on areas or facilities managed by your local recreation and parks department."

Age, education, income, political affiliation, educational level, marital status, number of people in the residence, and youth in household were related to other household members participating in activities sponsored by local government recreation and park services (Table 22). Those between the ages of 36-55 were most likely to report that other members of their

Table 22: Respondent Demographic Characteristics By Participation Of Other Household Members In Locally Sponsored Recreation Programs During The Past Twelve Months

	Household Participation in Locally-Sponsored Programs	
	No	Yes
Age		
15-20	67	33
21-35	66	34
36-55	52	48
56-65	78	22
66-75	78	22
76-95	77	23
Level of Education		
High school or less	69	31
Some college to college grad	61	39
More than 4 years of college	52	48
Income		
Less than \$20,000	73	27
\$20,000 to \$60,000	62	38
More than \$60,000	53	47
Marital Status		
Single/Divorced/Widowed	68	32
Married	61	39
Political Affiliation		
Republican	56	44
Democrat	70	30
Independent	62	38
Other	70	30
Size of Household		
Single person	73	27
Two people	76	24
Three to four people	57	43
Five or more people	53	47
Age of Children in Household		
12 and Under	56	44
13 - 19	61	39
Both 12 and Under and 13 - 19	43	57
No Children Under Age 20	74	26

household participated in such activities. This is logical since those between the ages of 15-20 were most likely to participate and those between the ages of 36-55 would be likely to have children in this age range. Those with higher levels of education again were more likely to report that other members of their household participated than were those with lower levels. Similarly, there was a large gap in participation of other household members between those with high incomes and those with low incomes. Among those whose incomes were \$60,000 or more, 47% said other members of their household participated while among those with incomes of \$20,000 or less, only 27% said so.

In terms of marital status, respondents who were married (39%) were more likely than single respondents (32%) to report that other members of their household participated in such activities. Republicans were far more likely to report that other family members participated in such services (44%) than were Democrats (30%).

Not surprisingly, respondents from larger households were much more likely to report that someone in their household had participated in a locally sponsored program in the past year. Similarly, those with one or more children under age 13 and one or more age 13-19 were more likely than others (57%) to say some member of their household participated in some activity sponsored by local government recreation and park services.

Table 23 outlines the activities chosen by the respondents and members of their household. By far the two most popular classes of activity, for both individual respondents and household members, are team sports and cultural activities, ranking numbers one and two (Appendix H provides a complete listing of the activities in each class of activities). For our individual respondents, classes, sponsored activities, outdoor/nature activities and volunteer activities completed the six most popular activities. Activities for household members differed, with swimming, sponsored activities, outdoor /nature and classes completing the top six. While there is some difference in order, with the notable exception of team sports playing a larger role in household members activities and cultural activities slightly less, there is little difference between the preferences of our individual respondents and household members.

The only additional notes among the activities chosen is the prominence of swimming (ranked 3rd) among household member's activities and the lower ranking of classes (ranked 6th). This is logical since respondents were all over the age of 15 and 54% of them said there was one or more members in their household under the age of 20 -- a younger household member is more likely to swim.

Table 23: Parks and Recreation Activities Participated In By Individual Respondents And Household Members.

Activities	Individual		Household	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Classes	50	8.6	23	3.8
Culture	135	23.2	75	12.5
Exercise	11	1.9	19	3.2
Clubs	11	1.9	10	1.7
Sponsored Activities	41	7.0	37	6.2
Seniors	4	.7	1	.2
Skiing	3	.5	5	.8
Special Population	2	.3	1	.2
Spectator	5	.9	1	.2
Team Sports	188	32.3	262	43.7
Hunting-Fishing	8	1.4	10	1.7
Golf	15	2.6	7	1.2
Volunteer Activities	19	3.3	7	1.2
Outdoor Nature	21	3.6	25	4.2
Swimming	17	2.9	46	7.7
Tennis	10	1.7	5	.8
Table Games	2	.3	2	.3
Individual Sports	11	1.9	15	2.5
Water Sports	1	.2	2	.3
Kids Programs	7	1.2	20	3.3
Animal Related	1	.2		
Facility Use	8	1.4	12	2.0
Miscellaneous	12	2.1	15	2.5
Total Responses	582	100	600	100

Patterns of Park Use and Participation in Recreation and Park Programs

By combining responses to the use of parks question with the participation in activities sponsored by local recreation and park departments question, it was possible to identify the percentage of the population who makes any direct use of such services. Nearly four-fifths of the American Public made some use of such services during the last twelve months.

Table 24: Use of Parks and Local Recreation and Park Services

Type Of Use	Percent
Used Only Parks	49
Used Both Parks and Services	26
Used Only Recreation Services	4
No Use Made of Either	21

As may be seen, the greatest percentage of respondents, 49%, used only parks, while over one-quarter of the sample used both parks and participated in other activities sponsored by local government recreation and park services. Only 4% participated in such activities without using parks.

A final measure of use was obtained by considering households with more than one member and then determining if any member of that household used parks and/or local government park and recreation services during the last twelve months. When this was done, 88% of all households contained someone who had used parks or recreation services during the last twelve months.

Non-Use of Recreation and Park Services

Those who had not participated in such services during the last twelve months were asked about reasons they did not do so. Table 25 shows the percentage of those who did not participate who agreed with the following reasons for non-participation.

Table 25: Reasons For Non-Use of Local Recreation and Park Services During Last 12 Months

Reasons For Non-Participation	Percent
Not Interested In Parks & Recreation Services	14
Don't Have Enough Information	33
Local Parks and Recreation Services Aren't Planned For People Like Me	23
Not Enough Time To Participate	52
Local Parks and Recreation Services Are Too Expensive	6
There Aren't Other People For Me To Participate With	15

Of those who never participated, only 14% said they were not interested in such services. About one-third said they did not have enough information about such services. Almost one in four, 23%, said that such services "were not planned for people like me." Over one-half, 52%, said their non-participation was due to lack of time. About 15% of those who didn't participate said they didn't due to lack of someone to participate with.

Non-participants differed from participants in that they were more likely to live in households with one or two people. Additionally they tended to have lower educational achievement. Another area of difference is in household income; non-participants are more likely to have household incomes of \$20,000 or less. Age is also a distinguishing factor, with non-participants more likely to be over the age of 56 years. Thus the profile of a non-participant in contrast to a participant is that of an older individual living alone or with a single companion and earning in the lower income range.

As may be seen, lack of time was, by far, the most frequently cited reason for non-use. While fees and charges do not appear to be a big issue in terms of non-use, lack of information about such services was cited by nearly one-third of all non-users.

Next, users and non-users were asked about benefits of local recreation and park services. Non-users were asked "Even though you haven't participated directly in any services of your local recreation and parks department during the last year, do you think you receive any benefit from the fact that your own municipality has such services?" A surprising 77% said they do. This response would be consistent with earlier responses to similar items if we expected that the essentially benefitless "a grass field" type of recreation parks. It reinforces the idea that use and benefit are not necessarily linked.

Non-participants were also asked to name the most important benefit they received from such services. The benefit categories which were most mentioned were, in order of frequency: Social benefits (45%), Personal benefits (19%), Economic benefits (17%), Health/Activity (12%), and Environmental (7%).

In more specific terms, non-users identified 924 specific benefits resulting from the fact that their municipality had such services (See Appendix G for a Complete List of Specific Non-User Benefits). The most prevalent specific benefits mentioned by non-users have to do with health (Table 70). Five out of the top ten benefits involved accident. It is interesting that this study found that those aged 65-74 were a major user group of local parks but the elderly were not mentioned once as a specific group benefiting from local parks and recreation services.

BENEFITS OF LOCAL RECREATION AND PARK SERVICES

Both users and non-users were asked about benefits of local recreation and park services. Non-users were asked "Even though you haven't participated directly in any services of your local recreation and parks department during the last year, do you think you receive any benefit from the fact that your community has such services?" A surprising 71% said they did. This response seems consistent with earlier responses in which over six of ten responded that the community benefitted "a great deal" from having local parks. It reinforces the idea that use and benefit are not necessarily linked.

Non-participants were also asked to name the most important benefit they received from such services. The benefit categories which non-users mentioned were, in order of frequency: Social benefits (45%), Personal benefits (19%), Economic benefits (18%), Facility/activity (12%), and Environmental (7%).

In more specific terms, non-users identified 924 specific benefits resulting from the fact that their community had such services (See Appendix G For a Complete List of Specific Non-User Benefits). The most prevalent specific reasons mentioned by non-users have to do with kids (Table 26). Five out of the top ten benefits involved children. It is interesting that this study found that those aged 65-74 were a major user group of local parks but the elderly were not mentioned once as a specific group benefitting from local parks and recreation services.

Table 26: Most Frequently Mentioned Specific Non-User Benefits For Local Parks and Recreation Services

Benefits	Count	Percent
Availability	113	12.2
Keep Kids Off Street	66	7.1
Kids Keep Busy Occupied	50	5.4
Community Awareness	49	5.3
Kids Place to Go	47	5.1
Feel Good Because There	44	4.8
Exercise Fitness Conditioning	42	4.5
Kids Good For Them	39	4.2
Kids Get Pleasure	22	2.4
Place to Go	20	2.2

Among those who had used local recreation and park services during the last twelve months, a series of questions was asked concerning the most important benefit and other benefits they received from their participation. Respondents were also asked whether or not other household members participated in any such activities and, if they did, the types of benefits they received from each of those activities. Finally, they were asked the most important benefit and any other benefits they thought their community received from such services. Results of this line of questioning are shown in Table 27. As may be seen, the most important benefits associated with the use of local recreation and park services are most likely to be personal and social. Less than 10% of the public associates environmental benefits with such services at any benefit level. Economic benefits are generally not associated with such services.

Table 27: Most Important Individual, Household and Community Benefits From Local Parks And Recreation Services(Percent)

	Personal	Environmental	Social	Economic	Facility
Individual	43.5	7.0	33.8	4.1	11.6
Household	40.5	3.2	39.0	4.2	13.1
Community	19.3	5.9	48.9	8.9	17.0

Respondents who had used local recreation and park services during the past year were asked to name the activities in which they had participated. For each activity the respondent mentioned, they were then asked: "You mentioned _____. What is the most important benefit you feel you received from participating in _____. Any other benefits?" These benefits were then coded into the previously mentioned categories. Table 28 provides a summary of responses by each benefit type for all activities respondents participated in.

Table 28: Frequency and Percentage of Benefit Type From Recreation Activities Sponsored by Local Recreation and Parks Departments

Benefit Type	Percent	Count
Personal	42	665
Social	38	592
Facility/Activity	12	182
Environmental	6	100
Economic	2	35

As may be seen, personal and social reasons are again the most prominent, accounting for 80 percent of all responses. Thus, there is similarity in the way respondents answered when asked in a generic sense about the types of benefits they received at an individual, household and community level and the specific benefits they identified from participating in specific activities.

When specific benefits of local parks and recreation services were examined the **Personal** benefits category was seen to be composed of the following major benefits : exercise-fitness and conditioning (134); fun and entertainment (86); learning and education (28); relaxation (25); and health (24). **Environmental** benefits were reported as follows: fresh air (12); nature (9); and, a place to be outdoors (7). The **social** benefit category, had the following major components: getting to know people (34); group participation (23); interaction of adults and kids (23); community awareness (22); and team spirit (20). The

major economic benefit that was associated with local parks and recreation services was that of affordability (12). The responses that identified the benefits that were associated with the physical facilities included: having instructional classes (10); the joy of playing (8); place to go (8); place for recreation (7); exposure to arts (7) and crafts (8); and watching organized sports (7).

By examining benefit type in relation to the types of sponsored activities in which people participated, it is possible to better understand the relationship between specific activity forms and benefits (Table 29)

Several things are apparent from this table. First, when our respondents, in their own words, identified activities they participated in sponsored by local government recreation and park services and then identified the benefits they derive from such activities, personal benefits were mentioned more than any other, constituting 42% of all identified benefits. Social benefits were mentioned second most frequently and represent 38% of all benefits. Benefits associated with the facility or activity itself represent 12% of all benefits while environmental benefits are 6% of the total and economic benefits represent only 2% of the total.

When asked about the benefits obtained by other household members who participated in local parks and recreation services the responses were similar to those reported by the individual participant (Table 30). Personal benefits were again the most prominent (41%) followed by social benefits (38%), facility related benefits (13%), economic (4%), and environmental (3%).

Table 29 and 30 present the first data from a national sample concerning what types of activities the public associates with benefits derived from local government recreation and park services. Several generalizations are apparent. First is the sheer breadth of recreation and leisure activities for which benefits are perceived. They range from sport to culture to activities for special groups such as seniors and special populations to outdoor activities.

Table 29: Type of Benefit Received From Activities Sponsored by Local Government Recreation and Park Services by Type Of Activity Participated In by Respondent

Programs	Personal	Environ mental	Social	Economic	Facility	Row Totals
Classes	73	4	34	0	21	132
Culture	142	35	139	22	39	377
Exercise	17	3	8	0	2	30
Clubs	15	2	18	2	0	37
Sponsored Activities	36	4	61	2	15	118
Seniors	4	4	8	2	6	24
Skiing	4	1	2	0	0	7
Special Population	1	0	3	0	0	4
Spectator	4	0	5	0	4	13
Team Sports	230	12	181	1	41	465
Hunting and Fishing	7	1	10	0	2	20
Golf	16	8	14	0	8	46
Volunteers	16	1	33	0	9	59
Outdoor Nature	33	19	11	0	6	69
Swimming	19	2	11	0	8	40
Tennis	8	0	7	0	4	19
Table Games	0	0	3	0	2	5
Individual Sports	14	0	12	1	7	34
Water Sports Events	2	0	0	0	0	2
Kids Programs	3	1	10	1	3	18
Animal Related	0	0	1	0	0	1
Facility Use	7	2	10	2	3	24
Miscellaneous	14	1	11	2	2	30
Total	665	100	592	35	182	1574

The majority of all benefits derived are clearly from sport and exercise, particularly through team sports. They account for more than one-third of all benefits identified by respondents. Perhaps of equal importance, however, is the extent to which cultural and educational activities are associated with the benefits our sample identified from participating in activities sponsored by local government recreation and park services. Cultural activities were the second most frequently mentioned source of benefits and classes were mentioned fifth most frequently for respondents and 6th most often for household members.

In terms of services to specific populations, however, such as "senior citizens" and special populations, our sample attributed a relatively smaller number of total benefits. With regard to the elderly, as we have previously seen, this does not mean such services don't reach the elderly, since those 65 to 74 are more likely to use local parks frequently than any other age group represented in the sample (15 and over). Rather it means that age-segregated programs, such as senior citizen centers, are not as significant a source of benefits. This should not be surprising since, according to Kelly (1992), such centers serve only about one out of ten of those 65 and over.

Table 30: Type of Benefit Received From Activities Sponsored by Local Government Recreation and Park Services by Type Of Activity Participated In by Other Household Members

Programs	Personal	Environ mental	Social	Economic	Facility	Row Totals
Classes	15	0	11	3	7	36
Culture	39	3	30	6	18	96
Exercise	15	0	7	3	7	32
Clubs	5	0	5	0	1	11
Sponsored Activities	25	6	8	7	5	51
Seniors	0	0	1	1	0	2
Skiing	5	0	0	0	1	6
Special Population	0	0	1	0	0	1
Spectator	0	0	1	0	1	2
Team Sports	190	6	225	8	64	493
Hunting and Fishing	6	0	8	0	7	21
Golf	5	0	1	3	0	9
Volunteers	2	0	3	1	0	6
Outdoor Nature	12	6	10	0	2	30
Swimming	38	5	32	5	8	88
Tennis	5	1	2	0	0	8
Table Games	3	1	2	0	0	6
Individual Sports	10	0	6	0	5	21
Water Sports Events	2	0	0	0	0	2
Kids Programs	12	6	17	1	3	39
Facility Use	5	0	2	0	2	9
Miscellaneous	13	0	10	0	2	25
Total	407	34	382	38	133	994

EVALUATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES.

Respondents were asked to rate a variety of local government services. The results may be seen in the following table.

Table 31: Respondent's Evaluation of Local Services

Service	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good
Police Protection	3	5	24	43	25
Fire Protection	1	1	11	48	40
Street Maintenance	6	14	30	35	16
Parks & Open Space	1	3	16	47	32
Indoor Recreation Facilities	6	11	24	39	20
Recreation Programs	2	6	21	50	21

Table 31 shows that parks and open space was ranked very high among local government services, with almost four out of five respondents rating them good or very good. There was considerably more dissatisfaction with indoor recreation facilities, which were ranked very poor or poor by slightly over 17% of all respondents. Recreation programs were rated comparatively highly, with over 71% rating them as good or very good.

In terms of rating local parks and open space, there were statistically significant relationships to marital status, education level, ethnic status and income (Table 32). In terms of marital status, married respondents were more likely to give positive ratings to parks and open space compared to single respondents. Those with higher levels of education rated local parks and open space significantly higher than those with lower levels. The same was true of those with higher incomes. While 81% of whites rated parks and open space in their community as good or very good, only 65% of Hispanics and 58% of blacks did so, a difference which could not have occurred by chance.

Table 32: Respondent Demographic Characteristics By Rating Of Local Recreation and Park Services

	Perceived Quality of Services		
	Poor/Very Poor	Fair	Good/Very Good
Parks and Open Space			
Level of Education			
High school or less	6	21	73
Some college to college grad	4	13	83
More than 4 years of college	4	12	84
Income			
Less than \$20,000	7	23	70
\$20,000 to \$60,000	3	13	74
More than \$60,000	5	13	78
Marital Status			
Single/Divorced/Widowed	4	19	76
Married	5	14	81
Race			
White	5	14	81
Black	8	34	58
Hispanic	5	30	65
Other	0	22	78
Indoor Recreation Facilities			
Size of Community			
Rural area/village under 10,000	26	24	50
Town of 10,000 to 50,000	16	23	62
City of 50,000 to 100,000	11	19	70
Metropolitan area (over 100,000)	10	28	62
Recreation Programs			
Size of Community			
Rural area/village under 10,000	4	19	77
Town of 10,000 to 50,000	4	21	75
City of 50,000 to 100,000	4	17	79
Metropolitan area (over 100,000)	4	27	69
Race			
White	8	19	73
Black	6	33	62
Hispanic	12	36	52
Other	5	37	58

Relative to the rating of indoor recreation facilities, community size was the only demographic variable that was significantly related (Table 32). Those who lived in communities of 50,000 to 100,000 were most likely to rate indoor recreation facilities good or very good (70%) while those living in rural areas and villages of under 10,000 were most likely to rate them poor or very poor (26%).

Our sample's rating of recreation programs was statistically related to community size and ethnic status. Those in communities from 50,000 to 100,000 were most likely to rate recreation programs good or very good (79%). In terms of ethnic status, whites were more likely to rate recreation programs good or very good (73%) than blacks (62%) or Hispanics (52%).

Table 33: Value of Parks and Recreation Services Per Individual Household Member

Value of Parks and Recreation Services per Individual Household Member	Percentage of Households
\$0 per \$25	16
\$25	5
\$45	31
\$75	23
\$100 per \$125	25

Respondents' judgments of the value of their local recreation and park services were significantly related to numerous other variables (Table 34). Those who estimate their services value worth more than \$45 per individual per year in their household were more likely to have visited a new recreation activity (24%) than overall. Those who judge the value worth only \$15, however, were 50% more likely (24% vs. average 20%) to have visited a new activity.

VALUE OF LOCAL RECREATION AND PARK SERVICES

When respondents were asked if they thought their own local recreation and park services were worth the amount of money per year which reflects the national average expenditure for such services, \$45 per household resident per year (U.S. Bureau Of The Census, City Government Finance, 1988-89, 1991), the results were extremely supportive. Over three-fourths of the entire sample thought that their own local park and recreation services were worth at least \$45 per person per year. Only 16.3 percent thought they were worth \$25 per year per person or less. Conversely, more than 20 percent thought they were worth from \$60 to \$150 per person per year.

Table 33: Value of Parks and Recreation Services Per Individual Household Member

Value of Parks And Recreation Services per Individual Household Member	Percentage of Respondents
\$0 thru \$25	16
\$35	8
\$45	31
\$55	25
\$60 thru \$150	20

Respondents' judgements of the value of their local recreation and park services were statistically related to numerous other variables (Table 34). Those who thought such services were worth more than \$55 per individual per year in their household were more likely to have started a new recreation activity (29%) than others. Those who thought they were worth only \$35, however, were also more likely (26%) than average (22%) to have started a new activity.

Table 34. Leisure Participation Patterns by Perceived Value of Local Recreation and Park Services

	Value of Recreation/Park Services				
	\$25 or Less	\$35	\$45	\$55	More than \$55
Started New Activity in Past Year					
No	84%	74%	82%	76%	71%
Yes	16	26	18	24	29
Park Within Walking Distance					
No	42	28	31	26	19
Yes	58	72	69	74	81
Personal Use of Parks					
Not at all	42	31	25	21	18
Occasionally	44	44	55	55	46
Frequently	14	25	20	24	36
Personal Benefits From Parks					
Not at all	38	18	17	10	5
Somewhat	46	54	56	46	36
A Great Deal	16	28	27	44	59
Household Use of Parks					
Not at all	37	30	27	23	18
Occasionally	45	40	50	54	50
Frequently	18	30	23	23	32
Household Benefits of Parks					
Not at all	35	19	23	17	11
Somewhat	48	49	50	50	43
A Great Deal	17	31	27	33	46
Community Benefits of Parks					
Not at all	14	5	6	2	3
Somewhat	50	38	32	29	27
A Great Deal	36	56	62	69	70
Personal Participation in Recreation Programs					
No	81	70	76	67	56
Yes	19	30	24	33	44
Household Participation in Recreation Programs					
No	77	67	69	62	45
Yes	23	33	31	38	55
Rating of Parks and Open Space					
Poor/Very Poor	10	9	4	3	4
Fair	31	23	16	12	9
Good/Very Good	59	68	81	85	87
Rating of Indoor Recreation Facilities					
Poor/Very Poor	25	18	14	18	16
Fair	33	25	22	19	29
Good/Very Good	42	57	64	62	54
Rating of Recreation Programs					
Poor/Very Poor	18	6	7	7	4
Fair	34	33	20	14	20
Good/Very Good	48	61	73	79	76

With regard to having a park or playground within walking distance, the same pattern was found as above. That is, those who said such services were worth more than \$55 per person were more likely to have a park or playground within walking distance (81%) than any other group. Those who thought they were only worth \$35, however, were also more likely (72%) than average (71%) to have such amenities.

The above pattern was repeated with regard to personal use of parks. Those who thought such services were worth more than \$55 per person were more likely to be frequent users of parks (36%) than others, compared to only 14% of those who thought they were worth only \$25 or less. In terms of non-use, the relation was progressive. That is, the less the respondent thought local park and recreation services were worth, the more likely they were to make no personal use of the park.

Those who thought such services were worth more than \$55 per person were far more likely (59%) than average (36%) to say they derived a great deal of benefit from such services. Those who said they were worth \$25 or less per person were far more likely (38%) to say they received no benefit from such services than average (16%).

In terms of household use of local parks and playgrounds, there was a relationship between use and perceived worth such that those who said local parks were worth more than \$55 per person per year were most likely to be frequent users (32%) than any other group. Those who said they were worth more than \$35 were second most likely to be frequent users (30%). Those who said such services were worth less than \$25 were more likely to have no household members use parks (37%) than any other group.

Those who said local parks and playgrounds provided a great deal of benefit to their household were most likely to report that such services were worth more than \$55 per person per year (46% of this group said they derived a great deal of household benefit.)

Benefit to the community and valuing local recreation and park services were related such that the higher a respondent rated the economic worth of such services, the more likely they were to say the community received a great deal of benefit from such services. While

only 36% of those who said such services were worth \$25 or less thought the community received a great deal of benefit from such services, 70% of those who said they were worth more than \$55 thought so.

Personal participation in activities sponsored by local recreation and park services was related to how much respondents thought they were worth. Generally, those who participated during the past year thought they were worth more. For example, among those who thought they were worth more than \$55 per person per year, 44% participated in sponsored activities, versus 19% of those who felt they were worth \$25 or less. Household participation followed a fairly similar pattern.

In evaluating local services, as the amount of money a respondent thought local park and recreation services were worth increased, so did their rating of local parks and open space. In terms of indoor recreation facilities, however, those most likely to rate them as good or very good (64%) thought local recreation and park services were worth \$45 per year. Finally, those most likely to rate local recreation programs as good (79%) thought that local recreation and park services were worth \$55 per person per year.

Method Of Financing Local Recreation and Park Services

When asked how local recreation and park services should be funded, respondents were given the option of choosing mainly through taxes, mainly through user fees and equally through taxes and user fees. The vast majority, 69%, said such support should come equally from taxes and user fees, 20% said mainly through taxes and 10% said mainly through user fees.

The method of financing local park and recreation services was related statistically to type of residence, community size, and income (Table 35). In terms of type of residence, those who lived in apartments and "other" residence types were more likely than others to say that such services should be funded mainly through taxes while those who lived in single family houses

Table 35: Respondent Demographic Characteristics By Opinions About How Public Parks And Recreation Services Should Be Supported

	How Public Parks/Recreation Programs Should be Supported		
	Mainly Through Taxes	Mainly Through User Fees	Equal Combination of Taxes and User Fees
Income			
Less than \$20,000	24	15	61
\$20,000 to \$60,000	18	8	74
More than \$60,000	21	9	70
Type of Residence			
Single family home	19	9	72
Town house/Condominium	24	12	64
Apartment	28	10	62
Mobile home	22	24	54
Other	32	9	59
Size of Community			
Rural area/village under 10,000	17	13	70
Town of 10,000 to 50,000	23	10	67
City of 50,000 to 100,000	18	5	77
Metropolitan area (over 100,000)	25	8	68
Value of Recreation/Park Services			
\$25 or less	19	27	54
\$35	18	15	67
\$45	22	9	69
\$55	19	3	78
More than \$55	26	6	69

were least likely to. Those who lived in mobile homes were most likely to say such services should be funded mainly through user fees

In terms of community size, those who resided in cities of over 100,000 were most likely to support funding such programs mainly through taxes (25%) while rural and village residents under 10,000 were most likely to favor supporting such services mainly through user fees (13%). Those with lower incomes were somewhat more likely to favor financing mainly through taxes (24%), but surprisingly this group also was most likely to support funding mainly through user fees (15%).

In terms of how local recreation and parks should be paid for, there was no statistical relation between desired method of payment and other demographic variables, although race ($p = .10$) and political affiliation ($p = .09$) approached statistical significance. Republicans were slightly more likely (11%) to say that such services should be funded mainly through user fees than Democrats (8%). Democrats, conversely, were more likely to say that such services should be funded mainly through taxes (23%) than Republicans (17%). All non-white respondents were somewhat more likely to respond that such services should be paid for mainly through taxes.

Those who thought local recreation and park services were worth more than \$55 per year were the most likely to say they should be paid for primarily through taxes (26%). Only 19% of those who thought they were worth \$25 or less thought so. Those who were most likely to think they should be paid for primarily through user fees (27%) were those who said such services were worth \$25 or less per person.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The following represent the major conclusions of this study:

1. Local recreation and park services are used by the vast majority of the American Public. While park and playground use is more prevalent than other forms of use, the notion that local recreation and park services serve only a narrow segment of the public appears to be simply incorrect.
2. Use of such services continues across the life cycle. While participation in activities sponsored by local recreation and park services generally declines somewhat with age, use of parks generally does not. Those between the ages of 65 and 74, for example, are more likely to use local parks frequently than any age group from age 15 and older.
3. While the benefits received from such services are to some extent a function of the degree of use of those services, the majority of those who do not use parks and recreation services still perceive substantial benefit from them.
4. While considerable benefits are perceived at the individual, household and community level, over six out of ten respondents, perceive "a great deal" of community benefit from such services and less than five percent of the respondents do not attribute any community benefit to such services.
5. Benefits cover a broad spectrum, but benefits to the individual and to society constitute the majority of perceived benefits. In particular, few individuals associated local recreation and park services with economic benefits. In terms of specific individual benefits, exercise and health related benefits were most frequently mentioned. While various benefits to youth are frequently recognized as household and community benefits, almost no benefits were associated with the elderly.

6. While the highest level of benefits the public associates with local government recreation and park services are at the community level, there is virtually no identification of such services as serving the needs of the disadvantaged, ethnic minorities, the poor or serving as a "supplier of last resort" in regard to leisure opportunity. This may reflect the fact that use of such services, as with almost all forms of leisure expression, increases with higher education and income levels. Perhaps it may be concluded that while the public values such services highly, and sees them as enhancing the community, they do not associate them with a unique mission to serve the disadvantaged.
7. Ethnic status and gender are minimally related to local recreation and park use. Females were as likely to use both local parks and to participate in activities sponsored by local recreation and park services as were males. Non-whites were as likely to participate in activities sponsored by local recreation and park services as were whites. While blacks were slightly less likely than whites to make any use of local parks, Hispanics and other ethnic minorities were more likely than whites to make some use of them. In terms of benefits, race and gender are not related to the degree of personal benefit received from local parks but females perceive higher levels of household and community benefits than do males.
8. The vast majority of respondents believe that local recreation and park services are worth as much or more than the average they pay for them. Seventy-five percent of the respondents said that "local recreation and park services are worth \$45.00 or more per member of their household last year".

These conclusions imply much about local recreation and parks and how they are perceived by the public. Such services are overwhelmingly thought to be a worthwhile economic investment by a broad cross-section of the American public. Support for such

services cuts across ethnic, gender, age and other demographic lines. In spite of this, there is little support for all of the funding for such services coming from taxes.

While there is no previous study to serve as a real basis for comparison, it appears that local park and recreation services directly touch the lives of the vast majority of the public, who have directly used them. While such use is somewhat concentrated among families, use of such services continues throughout the life cycle. In particular, park use rates by the elderly remain quite high.

The public, while it perceives a huge range of benefits from such services, does not associate them with older citizens but primarily with "kids." In particular, non-users associate the benefits of such services with youth. Additionally, in the mind of the public, there is no association of such services with the poor, ethnic minorities or the disadvantaged. Nor is there much with the disabled. Additionally, these services are generally not viewed in terms of economic benefits. In sum, there may be a gap between what the practitioner views as the benefits of such services and what the public thinks. This is particularly evident from the Canadian study cited in the introduction where experts viewed services to poor citizens as the number one benefit of such services while not one of 1305 respondents mentioned it in our survey. The strong level of endorsement for community benefits, would seem to indicate that the public definitely perceives such services as providing benefits to many others in the community.

In terms of types of benefits, exercise and health related benefits are overwhelmingly first. In addition many other benefit categories which were prominent in the public's mind, such as socialization with one's family, relaxation, and contact with the natural environment, may contribute to health benefits. While local park and recreation agencies are sometimes only beginning to think of themselves as health and wellness organizations, perhaps the public already does.

It is evident from our research that local recreation and park services provide places where people go *as* recreation in addition to going *for* recreation. In other words, the act of

being in a park or other local recreation setting, in and of itself, is consistently viewed as a benefit. It provides a meeting place for the public, a place for families, and a place for kids to go. Similarly, many non-users perceive a benefit from such services and areas just because they are there. The high level of benefits perceived by non-users may imply that attendance itself is an irrelevant measure for documenting such benefits.

Finally, the results of this study must be interpreted within the context of changing residential patterns in the United States. Today, nearly one half the country's population lives in suburbs, up from about one-quarter in 1950 and one-third in 1960. By 1990, the urban population had declined to 31 percent and the rural population was down to less than one-quarter. Suburban life is characterized by concerns for both economic and physical security and by a "privatization" of life and culture (Schneider, 1992). Suburbanites are far more likely to be homeowners than others with attendant responsibilities for property taxes. Use of leisure is also privatized by home entertainment centers and use of backyards. Suburban life is characterized by anti-government sentiment that manifests itself in resistance to taxes. Programs aimed at social change are highly suspect. Special purpose taxes are the suburban ideal (Schneider, 1992). While polls show suburbanites want government to do more about education, health, the environment and other issues, they are less willing to pay for it and more cynical about government's ability to take effective action.

Against these changes, the results of this study are particularly noteworthy. Against the backdrop of the increasing privatization of American life, this study found that local parks and recreation are associated with a sense of community and that community level benefits are thought to be more important than either individual or household level benefits. This sentiment is also echoed in the high level of perceived community benefits among the minority of the public who don't use such services. Perhaps in an era of the privatization of American life, local parks and recreation services are valued in that they provide an exception or alternative to this trend.

It is particularly noteworthy that in an era of great anti-tax sentiment and suspicion of government, three of four respondents reported the belief that their local recreation and park services are worth \$45 per person per year or more (\$45 being the national per person average for such services). The fact that the preferred way to fund such agencies was an equal mix of taxes and fees and charges reflects, in effect, the desire for a "special purpose tax" on users in the form of fees and charges as well as a "general tax" from the community to support such services. As suburbanization continues in the next century, methods of funding for such services may continue in a state of flux.

The health consciousness of Americans and their longing for more sense of community may mean that support for local recreation and park services will continue or increase since health and exercise benefits as well as community benefits are associated with such services. In a society which is rapidly aging, however, the fact that many of the benefits of local recreation and park services are associated with youth and are not specifically associated with those in later life may mean that support for such services will decrease unless there is a broadening in the age groups with whom such benefits are associated.

The public views local parks and recreation benefits, primarily, to be "people" benefits. These people benefits occur at the individual, household and community level. To a surprising extent, the perception of such benefits transcends age, race, gender and political affiliation. In this lies the strength of local government recreation and park services in the future.

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Perceived Benefits Questionnaire

Section One: Introduction and Purpose of Project

Hello. I'm calling from Database in State College Pennsylvania. We are conducting a survey for a major university about the recreation habits of American households. Could I take a few minutes of your time to ask you some questions about your household's recreation patterns over the past year?

(If respondent hesitates or says no): If now is not a convenient time, may I make an appointment to call back to complete the interview some other time?

(If respondent still hesitates or says no): This survey is part of a research project conducted by Penn State University and sponsored by the National Recreation and Park Association. Your answers are very important because your household was one of approximately 1,000 randomly selected households throughout the United States who will be asked to participate in the study. Your responses will be strictly confidential and will only be used for statistical purposes.

(If respondent still refuses): Thank you for your time. Goodbye.

Section Two: Recreation Participation Patterns

First, I'd like to ask you some general questions about your recreation activities.

1. Compared to five years ago, would you say you have

22% more time for recreation and leisure
31% about the same amount of time, or
47% less time for recreation and leisure?

2. Have you begun any new recreation activities during the past twelve months?

78% No 22% Yes (If yes): what activity have you begun? Any others?

3. In general, how do you feel about your time--would you say you

34% always feel rushed even to do things you have to do
48% only sometimes feel rushed, or
18% almost never feel rushed?

4. What is more important to you,

36% your work, or
26% your leisure?

38% both are equally important (volunteered answer)

Section Three: Local Park Use and Benefits

5. Is there a park, playground, or open space within walking distance of your home? 28% No 72% Yes

6. How often do you personally use your local park areas for any purpose? These areas would include any public parks, playgrounds, and other open space in your community.

25% not at all 51% occasionally 24% frequently

7. Now please think about the benefits of public parks. By benefit we mean anything good that happens because public parks are there. To what degree do you feel you personally benefit from your local park areas? (add *even if you don't use them*, if answer to # 6 is *not at all*). (If further clarification is needed, say that a benefit is either an improved condition or the prevention of a worse condition).

16% not at all 47% somewhat 37% a great deal

(If somewhat or a great deal): what is the most important benefit you feel you receive from your local parks?

Any other benefits?

Any other benefits?

8. Now I would like you to think about other members of your household; this would include a spouse, children, relatives, friends or anyone else who lives with you. How often do other members of your household use your local park areas?

26% not at all 49% occasionally 25% frequently ___no other household members (skip to #10)

9. To what degree do you feel the members of your household benefit from your local park areas?

21% not at all 48% somewhat 31% a great deal

(If somewhat or a great deal): what do you think is the most important benefit other members of your household receive from your local parks? This may be different from your personal benefits or it may be the same. Please don't feel restricted in mentioning any that come to mind.

Any other benefits?

Any other benefits?

10. Now I would like you to think of your community as a whole; that is, the village, town or city where you live. To what degree do you feel your community as a whole benefits from your local park areas?

6% not at all 33% somewhat 61% a great deal

(If somewhat or a great deal): what do you think is the most important benefit your community as a whole receives from having local parks?

Any other benefits?

Any other benefits?

Section Four: Use/Benefits of Local Recreation and Park Services

11. Next, we'd like to know about your participation in any recreation activities organized by your local government's recreation and parks department. This would include such things as sports leagues, educational or instructional classes, and special artistic or cultural events in your community. During the past 12 months, have you participated in any recreation or leisure activity that was sponsored by or took place on areas or facilities managed by your local government's recreation and parks department?

30% Yes

70% No

If yes, go to
question # 12

(If no): have you ever participated in any recreation activities organized by your local recreation and parks department?

65% No

35% Yes (If Yes): what were these activities or events?

Are there any particular reasons why you have not participated during the past 12 months?

Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

a. I'm not interested in local recreation and park services. 14% Agree 86% Disagree

(If agree): tell me more about that.

b. I don't participate in local recreation and park services because I don't have enough information about them. 33% Agree 67% Disagree

(If agree): tell me more about that.

c. Park and recreation services aren't planned for people like me. 23% Agree 77% Disagree

(If agree): tell me more about that.

d. I don't have enough time to participate. 52% Agree 48% Disagree

(If agree): tell me more about that.

e. Local recreation and park services are too expensive. 6% Agree 94% Disagree

(If agree): tell me more about that.

f. There aren't other people for me to participate with. 15% Agree 85% Disagree

(If agree): tell me more about that.

i. Even though you haven't participated directly in any services of your local recreation and parks department during the past year, do you think you receive any benefit from the fact that your community has such services?

29% No

71% Yes

If yes, what is the most important benefit you receive from these services?
Any others? Any others?

(Skip to question #14)

12. What activities did you participate in? Any others? Any others?

(Repeat the following for each activity mentioned)

You mentioned _____. What is the most important benefit you feel you received from participating in _____?

Any other benefits?

You mentioned _____. What is the most important benefit you feel you received from participating in _____?

Any other benefits?

You mentioned _____. What is the most important benefit you feel you received from participating in _____?

Any other benefits?

13. All in all, what would you say is the most important benefit you receive from participating in activities which were sponsored by or took place on areas or facilities managed by your local recreation and parks department.

(Skip 14 and 15 if single member household)

14. Did any other members of your household participate in any recreation or leisure activity during the past 12 months that was sponsored by or took place on areas or facilities managed by your local recreation and parks department?

63% No 37% Yes

(If yes): what activities did they participate in?

15. What do you feel is the most important benefit other members of your household gain from having local recreation services?

a. Any other benefits to your household?

16. What do you feel is the most important benefit your community as a whole gains from having local recreation services?

a. Any other benefits to your community?

Section Five: Evaluation of Local Services

The next questions ask about your perceptions of your local government services, such as fire and police protection, street maintenance and so forth.

17. How would you rate the quality of your local:

police protection	<u>3%</u> Very poor	<u>5%</u> Poor	<u>24%</u> Fair	<u>43%</u> Good	<u>25%</u> Very good
fire protection	<u>1%</u> Very poor	<u>1%</u> Poor	<u>11%</u> Fair	<u>48%</u> Good	<u>40%</u> Very good
street maintenance	<u>6%</u> Very poor	<u>14%</u> Poor	<u>30%</u> Fair	<u>35%</u> Good	<u>16%</u> Very good
parks and open space	<u>2%</u> Very poor	<u>3%</u> Poor	<u>16%</u> Fair	<u>47%</u> Good	<u>32%</u> Very good
indoor recreation facilities	<u>6%</u> Very poor	<u>11%</u> Poor	<u>24%</u> Fair	<u>39%</u> Good	<u>20%</u> Very good
recreation programs	<u>2%</u> Very poor	<u>6%</u> Poor	<u>21%</u> Fair	<u>50%</u> Good	<u>21%</u> Very good

Section Six: Willingness to Pay for Recreation Benefits

18. The next questions deal with funding sources for local recreation and park services? On the average, people in the United States pay about \$45.00 per person per year in local taxes for recreation and park services. The amount you actually pay may be more or less, but \$45.00 is the national average. Do you feel that your local recreation and park services are worth \$45.00 per member of your household each year.

Yes

No

(If yes): Do you feel these services are worth \$55.00 per household member every year?

(If no): why do you feel these services are not worth \$45.00 annually.

Yes No

(If yes) Are they worth \$65.00 per year?

Do you feel these services are worth \$35.00 per household member?

Yes No

Yes No

(If yes): How much are these services worth per household member per year

(If no): Are they worth \$25.00 per year?

Yes No

(If no): how much are these services worth to you?

In your opinion, should public parks and recreation services be supported

- 21% mainly through taxes,
- 10% mainly through fees for users, or
- 69% through an equal combination of taxes and user fees

Section Seven: Demographics

Finally, we would like to ask you a few questions about yourself to help us interpret the information for our study. Please remember that your responses will be held confidential and used only for statistical purposes.

19. What kind of residence do you live in?

73% Single family home

7% Town house or condominium

13% Apartment building

4% Mobile home

4% Other _____

20. Which of the following best describes the area where you live?

21% Rural area

16% Village or town under 10,000 people

16% Town of 10,000 to 20,000 people

15% City of 20,000 to 50,000 people

11% City of 50,000 to 100,000 people

9% Urban area (100,000 to 250,000 people)

14% Metropolitan area (over 250,000 people)

21. How many years have you lived in your present location _____

22. How many people live in your household? _____

a. How many of these are:

12 years old or younger	_____
13 to 19 years old	_____
65 years old or older	_____

23. In general, compared to other persons your age would you say your health is

26% excellent 34% very good 28% good 11% fair 2% poor

24. In general, would you say you're

39% very happy 57% pretty happy 4% not too happy

25. What is your current marital status?

27% single (never married) 57% married 9% divorced/separated 7% widow or widower

26. What is the highest level of formal education you have completed?

1% sixth grade or less
12% less than 12 years
29% high school graduate
25% some college
4% technical or vocational school
19% college graduate
3% more than 4 years of college but no graduate degree
8% graduate degree

27. In what year were you born? _____

28. Which of the following categories apply to you? Are you (Check all that apply)

52% employed fulltime
13% employed parttime
6% unemployed
14% retired
8% a student
8% a homemaker

29. What is your race or ethnic status?

1% American Indian or Alaskan native
1% Asian or Pacific Islander
8% Black (not of Hispanic origin)
3% Hispanic
85% White (not of Hispanic origin)
2% Other (specify _____)

30. Do you have a disability or handicap? 92% No 8% Yes

If yes, are you:

- 7% hearing impaired
- 5% visually impaired
- 34% mobility impaired
- 3% mentally or learning impaired
- 51% other (specify _____)

31. Would you describe yourself as a

- 33% Republican
- 29% Democrat
- 25% Independent
- 13% Other (specify _____)

32. Which of the following best describes your total household income during 1991?

- 9% under \$10,000
- 17% \$10,000 to \$20,000
- 35% \$20,000 to \$40,000
- 21% \$40,000 to \$60,000
- 10% \$60,000 to \$80,000
- 9% over \$80,000

Section Eight: Name and Address for Follow-up Survey

Thank you very much for your help.. We won't take any more of your time now but we will be sending a brief follow-up survey with some further questions to selected individuals. This questionnaire will take only a few minutes to complete and will include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for easy return. Can I include you in this special sample?

(If respondent says yes): Thank you very much. May I have your name and address so that we may send you a questionnaire in the next week or two?

(If respondent refuses or hesitates): Are you sure. The results will be very valuable and your answers will be completely confidential and will represent thousands of Americans who will not participate in the study.

(If respondent still refuses): Thank you anyway.

(Otherwise record address and say:) Thank you. You will receive a survey in the mail within a week or two and we appreciate your taking the time to return it to us. Thank you again and goodbye.

Mailing Address: _____

Appendix B

Copy of Mail Questionnaire with Responses

The following questions concern your recreational and leisure activities and interests. They are designed to help us better understand the leisure and recreation needs of your community. Your answers will help us plan better programs.

Directions: Indicate the best answer for each item. There may be more than one correct answer. Please check all that apply.

- 241 - Gardening
- 242 - Club membership
- 243 - Fishing
- 244 - Auto driving
- 245 - No mail

When you go to work or school, are you:

- 246 - Usually accompanied by others
- 247 - Usually alone
- 248 - No mail

In the space below, please list the activities and leisure interests which you enjoy doing as a regular or frequent leisure activity. These might include watching TV, playing cards, reading, fishing, hiking, visiting with friends, etc. List the frequency of each activity. A benefit or interest would be noted in your records of participation. Specify the other leisure interests.

ACTIVITY	FREQUENCY	BENEFIT/INTEREST	IMPORTANT

How many hours each week do you spend on your leisure activities?

The following questions concern your recreation and leisure activities as well as questions about your health and wellness. They are designed to help us better interpret the information from the telephone survey in which you recently participated. These questions will take only a few minutes to answer.

First, we'd like to ask a few questions about your recreation or leisure activity. That is, things you like to do away from work and other obligations.

1. On average, during the last twelve months, how many times have you gotten together with friends to visit in each other's homes or go out together? (Please check correct response)

<u>34.1</u>	Once a week or more
<u>37.9</u>	One to three times a month
<u>24.8</u>	One to six times a year
<u>1.6</u>	Less than once a year
<u>1.6</u>	Not at all

2. When you participate in recreation and leisure activities, are you:

<u>63.5</u>	Usually accompanied by others
<u>7.6</u>	Usually alone
<u>28.9</u>	No usual pattern

3. In the space below, please list six recreation and leisure activities which you enjoy doing on a regular or frequent basis. These may include anything from watching TV, playing sports, visiting friends, hobbies, visiting bars or nightclubs, attending concerts or museums, taking classes or other uses of your leisure. Next, list the major benefit you receive from each activity. A benefit is anything good which happens to you as a result of participation. Finally, list other benefits you receive.

	ACTIVITY	BENEFITS (MOST IMPORTANT FIRST)
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____

4. How many social, civic, and voluntary organizations do you actively participate in now? _____

5. Next, please indicate how you feel about yourself by placing a check mark under the appropriate response.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	<u>27</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>
At times I think I am no good at all	<u>2</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>41</u>
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	<u>38</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
I wish I could have more respect for myself	<u>6</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>24</u>
I am able to do things as well as most people	<u>27</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>
I certainly feel useless at times	<u>4</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>35</u>
I feel that I'm a person of worth, on an equal plane with others	<u>34</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>
I feel I do not have much to be proud of	<u>4</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>50</u>
I take a positive attitude toward myself	<u>30</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>63</u>

Finally, we'd like to ask you a few questions about your health and wellness.

6. Would you describe your life as:

12 Very Stressful 51.7 Fairly Stressful 28.5 Not Very Stressful 7.8 Not Stressful

7. Do you feel you get as much exercise as you need or less than you need? Exercise includes vigorous activities such as calisthenics, jogging, racquet sports, team sports, dance classes, or brisk walks.

26.8 As much as needed 73.2 Less than needed

8. How many times per week do you exercise for at least fifteen minutes?

10.3 Never
19.6 Less than once a week
23.1 1-2 times a week
23.9 3-4 times a week
10.1 5-6 times a week
13.0 Daily
 Don't know

9. At the present time, do you smoke cigarettes?

21.4 Yes 78.6 No

10. Looking back over the last 7 days, on how many of these days did you have any alcoholic drinks?

- (a) _____ (If none, go to Question 11)
- (b) _____ On how many of these days did you have 2 or more drinks?
(If none, go to Question 11)
- (c) _____ On how many of these days did you have 4 or more drinks?
(If none, go to Question 11)
- (d) _____ On how many of these days did you have 8 or more drinks?
(If none, go to Question 11)
- (e) _____ On how many of these days did you have 12 or more drinks?
(If none, go to Question 11)

11. Do you plan to undertake any activity during the next twelve months to improve your health?

82 Yes 18 No

12. Does your spouse do any of the following? (If not married, to to Question 13)

<u>53.5</u> Yes	<u>46.5</u> No	Exercise regularly
<u>20</u> Yes	<u>80</u> No	Smoke cigarettes
<u>5.4</u> Yes	<u>94.6</u> No	Drink too much
<u>21.8</u> Yes	<u>78.2</u> No	Overeat
<u>1.6</u> Yes	<u>98.4</u> No	Use tranquilizers such as valium
<u>2.6</u> Yes	<u>97.4</u> No	Smoke marijuana

13. What is the most important thing you think you should do? (Check one response only)

<u>41.6</u>	Exercise more
<u>21.6</u>	Improve eating habits
<u>16.2</u>	Lose weight
<u>10.7</u>	Stop smoking
<u>.8</u>	Reduce drug use/medications
<u>1.0</u>	Cut down on drinking
<u>8.1</u>	Other (Specify)

14. As far as you know, is your blood pressure high?

<u>10.2</u>	Yes
<u>83</u>	No
<u>6.8</u>	Don't know

15. Compared to people your own age, would you say you are:

33 Fitter than most 57.1 About as Fit as Others 9.9 Less Fit

16. Please rate yourself on the following questions:

	YES	SOMETIMES	NO
I get adequate rest and sleep	<u>40.4</u>	<u>54.6</u>	<u>5</u>
I get regular exercise	<u>42.5</u>	<u>32.6</u>	<u>24.9</u>
I eat the right things, good diet	<u>51.6</u>	<u>34.3</u>	<u>14.1</u>
I try to manage stress	<u>36.1</u>	<u>59.5</u>	<u>4.4</u>
I get good medical care from doctors	<u>21.4</u>	<u>69.4</u>	<u>9.3</u>
I work in a smoke free environment	<u>12.3</u>	<u>61.8</u>	<u>25.4</u>
I live in a smoke free environment	<u>6.5</u>	<u>68.5</u>	<u>25.0</u>
I am moderate in my use of alcohol	<u>9.7</u>	<u>85.5</u>	<u>4.8</u>
I maintain proper weight	<u>24.2</u>	<u>51.3</u>	<u>24.4</u>
I wear a seatbelt when I am in a car	<u>18.0</u>	<u>72.1</u>	<u>9.8</u>

17. What is your height? _____ Feet _____ Inches

18. What is your weight? _____ Pounds

Thank you for your help! Your participation in this survey will help provide important answers concerning the management of local recreation and park services. Please return this questionnaire promptly in the enclosed, stamped envelope.

Appendix C

Characteristics of Respondents

Like most telephone surveys, respondents were slightly higher on some socio-economic status indicators than average. On other variables, however, they mirrored the population at large.

Type of Residence. Seventy-three percent of respondents lived in a single family home, slightly higher than the U.S. average. An additional 7% lived in a townhouse while 12% lived in apartments, 4% lived in mobile homes and 4% listed other types of residences.

Place of residence. The distribution of respondents by place of residence shows great variation. In total, 20% of respondents resided in rural areas which, by definition, have no municipal government. Hence, such respondents, while they may have used the recreation and park services of a municipal government, had none of their own. An additional 15% of the sample reside in villages and small towns under 10,000 residents. Again, such respondents are highly unlikely to have municipal recreation and park services. Twenty-two percent of the total sample resided in cities of 100,000 or over.

Length of Residence. In terms of length of residence, three out of four sample members had lived in their community for at least five years and about half had lived there for twelve years or more.

Household Size. In terms of household size, our sample lived in households which were slightly larger than average. While the mean household size of the U.S. is 2.4, our sample's mean household size is 2.9. While 20 to 25 percent of the U.S. public lives by themselves, in our sample 16% lived alone. Another 30% of our sample lived in a two

resident household and 39% lived in a three or four resident household. 14% of our sample had five or more residents in the household.

Age of Respondent. The age distribution of respondents was as follows:

Age Group	Percent
15-20	6.9
21-25	9.5
26-30	11.8
31-35	13.7
36-40	12.4
41-45	8.8
46-50	6.9
51-55	6.1
56-60	5.5
61-65	5.6
66-70	5.0
71-75	3.6
76-80	1.8
81-85	1.4
86-90	.8
91-95	.3
Total	100

Youth in Household. While 54% of sampled households had no one under the age of twenty, 23% had one or more children age 12 or under, 13% had one or more teen-ager, and 10% had at least one child age 12 and under as well as at least one teen-ager.

Gender. Just over half (55.8%) of our sample were women and 44.2% were men. Thus, women were slightly over-represented, as usually happens in telephone surveys.

Personal health. In terms of personal health, our sample rated themselves as follows: 26% said their personal health was excellent, 34% said it was very good, 28% said it was good, 11% said it was fair and only 2% said it was poor.

Life Satisfaction. Over one third of our sample, 39%, responded to a question about life satisfaction by saying they were very happy. Another 57% said they were pretty happy and only 4% said they were "not too happy."

Marital Status. Over one-half, 57% of the sample were married while 27% were single. Divorced or separated respondents accounted for 9% of the total sample while widows and widowers represented 7%.

Level of Formal Education. Most of our sample, were at least high school graduates. Over three out of ten were college graduates or had done graduate work. Only 12% had less than a high school education.

Employment Status. About one-half of our sample were employed full-time and 6% were unemployed. Thus, our sample slightly under-represented the unemployed, who may constitute 7 percent of the population. Homemakers accounted for 8% of the sample while retirees were 14%.

Disabilities. Approximately one in twelve of our sample said they suffered from a disability. Of those disabilities which were specifically identified, about one-third, 34%, were mobility disabilities.

APPENDIX D

DESCRIPTION OF RURAL RESPONDENTS

Because approximately 20 percent of all respondents were from rural areas, comparisons were made to determine if such respondents were systematically different from others in the sample who lived within an area which had a municipal government. It was assumed that those who lived outside of municipalities might have less access to local recreation and park services since they would, in effect, have to travel further to such services, in some cases pay higher user fees and often have less information about the availability of such services. In effect, our interview asked them questions about services which they don't possess.

Generally, there was few differences between the responses of those who resided in rural areas and those who resided in an area which possesses a municipal government. As might be expected, rural residents had less access to parks and playgrounds within walking distance of their home. Between 69% and 84% of those who resided in different size municipalities said they had such facilities in walking distance compared to only 56% of those who resided in rural areas.

Rural residents were no different from those residing in municipalities, however, concerning whether or not they had used local parks, how much they thought local recreation and park services were worth, and how such services should be funded. Rural residents also perceived less personal benefits (Table 12) and community benefits (Table 14) from parks.

APPENDIX E

DESCRIPTION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES.

As in most telephone surveys, ethnic minorities were underrepresented among respondents. While African-Americans represent about 12% of the U.S. population and 11% of the labor force, they represented 8% of our study. While Hispanics may represent as much as 9% of the population and 8% of the labor force, they were only 3% of our study sample. One reason for this may have been the lack of bilingual administration of the telephone survey. Whites represented 85% of our respondents, while American Indian or Alaskan natives, Asian or Pacific Islanders and other ethnic statuses represented 4%.

It should be noted that, since our study sample dealt only with those age 15 and over, the amount of underrepresentation is not as great as for total population figures. Blacks, for instance, while 12% of the population, are less than 11% of the 15 and older population. Nevertheless, because Blacks and Hispanics were underrepresented, a decision had to be made concerning whether to report study findings with or without "weighting" the responses of minority group members in such a way that their portion of responses equalled their portion of the population. A key question in such decisions is the extent to which underrepresented sub-groups are similar to the rest of the sample in terms of their responses. Generally, the more that the under-represented sub-group responds in similar ways to the rest of the population, the less the need for such a procedure. Statistical tests undertaken to determine if significant differences existed between blacks, Hispanics and whites generally found few differences in responses greater than could have occurred by chance, so the decision was made not to weight the study results.

Specifically, there was no statistically significant difference between these three groups in terms of several key variables such as the existence of a park or playground within walking distance, extent of use of parks, level of individual benefit from parks, household use of parks,

household benefit from parks, community benefit from parks, types of benefits identified, and participation in activities organized by local recreation and park services.

There were, however, some statistically significant difference based upon ethnic status. Blacks and Hispanics, for instance, generally rated local government services lower than did whites. In terms of local park and recreation services, there was no statistically significant differences among these three groups in their ratings of indoor recreation facilities but there was such a difference in regard to parks and open space and recreation programs. (Table 32).

Blacks and Hispanics were also more likely than whites to say that local recreation and park services should be supported primarily through taxes.

Appendix F
Summary of Statistically Significant Relationships Between Study Variables

Question	Variable	Relationship	Significance
Q1
Q2
Q3
Q4
Q5
Q6
Q7
Q8
Q9
Q10
Q11
Q12
Q13
Q14
Q15
Q16
Q17
Q18
Q19
Q20
Q21
Q22
Q23
Q24
Q25
Q26
Q27
Q28
Q29
Q30
Q31
Q32
Q33
Q34
Q35
Q36
Q37
Q38
Q39
Q40
Q41
Q42
Q43
Q44
Q45
Q46
Q47
Q48
Q49
Q50

Questions											
* = .05; ** = .01; *** = .001	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11
Q19 Residence	*	**			**					*	
Q20 Community				**	***		**			***	
Q22 People in Residence	***		***			***	***	***	***		***
Q25 Marital Status		**	**					***	***		
Q26 Education	**	**	*		***	***	***	*	***	**	***
Q 29 Race		*		**							
Q30 Disability	***		***		*	***					
Q31 Political	*	**			*			**			
Q32 Income		***	***		**	**		***	**	*	***
Gender					**			**	***	*	
Life Cycle (Age)	***	***	***	**	***	***	***	***	***	*	***
Esteem											
m1 together w friends		**									**
m2 how participate				*		*		*			
m3 num organizations						**	**				***
m9 how stressful	***		***	**				*	*		
m10 how much exercise	**		**			**					
m11 times exercise		*						*			
m12 smoke											
m18 plan for health							*				
m25 most important											
m26 blood pressure		*	*								
m27 how fit-others lifestyle											
spouse health style											
Q23 How Rate Health		**	*	*		***					
Q24 How Happy		**	*	**		***	**			***	**
Obesity			**				**				
Q22a Youth In House	***		***			***	***	***	***		***
Q18 Worth		**			***	***	***	***	***	***	***

Questions								
* = .05: ** = .01: *** = .001								
	Q14	Q17A	Q17B	Q17C	Q17D	Q17E	Q17F	Q18X
Q19 Residence			**					**
Q20 Community		***	***	***		***	***	**
Q22 People in Residence	***			*				
Q25 Marital Status	*				*			
Q26 Education	***	**		**	***		**	
Q 29 Race		***	**		***		**	
Q30 Disability								
Q31 Political	***	**	**					
Q32 Income	***				***			***
Gender			*					
Life Cycle (Age)	***	***		***		*		
Esteem					*			
m1 together w friends							**	*
m2 how participate						*		
m3 num organizations	***							
m9 how stressful	*							
m10 how much exercise							*	
m11 times exercise			*					
m12 smoke				*				
m18 plan for health				*				
m25 most important								
m26 blood pressure			***	*				
m27 how fit-others		*						
lifestyle				***				
spouse health style								
Q23 How Rate Health		*			*			
Q24 How Happy		***			***			**
Obesity			*					
Q22a Youth in House	***	**	*	***				
Q18 Worth	***	***		***	***	***	***	***

Appendix G
Benefit Codes and Frequency of Responses

Benefits of Local Parks	Individual	Household	Community
Personal Benefits			
Enjoy Being Outdoors/Natural resources	52	25	32
Escape	24	8	12
Exercise-Fitness & Conditioning	236	144	136
Feel Good Because they (parks) are there	31	7	10
Freedom	14	5	6
Fun/Entertainment	56	53	68
Getting out of the house	28	16	9
Health	19	10	13
Involvement -getting more involved	1	3	0
Keeping mind occupied	2	1	0
Learning-education	8	9	11
Mental benefits	14	3	3
Passing the time-providing something to do	10	2	15
Peace and quiet	39	9	12
Pursuit of happiness	6	1	7
Relaxation -place to relax	125	58	54
Rest	14	4	8
Safety -feel safe-secure environment	23	15	29
Stress Release	10	11	7
Time alone/place to be alone	18	5	5
Environmental Benefits			
Aesthetics	48	11	35
Fresh Air	48	16	23
Green area	32	4	35
Land preservation	14	3	13
Nature	63	22	31
No buildings	10	2	6
Open Space	88	26	52
Out of City	14	4	11
Place for Kids that isn't asphalt	6	7	11
Place to be outdoors	33	16	23
Scenery	34	10	13
Wildlife-habitat-place for wildlife	17	7	8
Wildlife-place for seeing	6	6	6
Social Benefits			
Competition	5	4	13
Cooperation	2	1	3
Community awareness/sense of community	17	6	79
Cultural awareness-heritage	3	3	9
Exposure to role-models	4	1	1
Family time-togetherness	57	32	66
Fellowship	11	7	11

Benefits of Local Parks	Individual	Household	Community
Personal Benefits			
Gathering Place- hang out with friends	33	21	87
Getting to know people	17	12	24
Group Participation	5	4	22
Helping	1	1	0
Keeping in touch with friends	6	10	3
Kids-get pleasure from it	33	19	41
Kids-good for them	41	23	65
Kids-keep busy-occupied	33	27	53
Kids-keep off street	26	14	61
Kids-keep out of house	13	7	8
Kids-place to go	67	46	132
Interaction-kids and adults	28	13	21
Learning discipline/following instructions	2	5	4
Place for elderly to socialize	3	2	18
Place to meet people	15	7	26
Place to take children	31	12	29
Place to take grandchildren	19	5	0
Respect for others	0	0	1
See Others enjoy themselves	8	2	2
Team spirit-being on a team	4	8	11
Economic Benefits			
Availability	43	21	47
Affordable-inexpensive-low cost	11	6	13
Bring dollars into the community	0	1	29
Convenience	10	4	6
Influence property values	1	1	7
Facility-Activity Oriented Benefits			
Activities	44	23	79
Arts	6	2	16
Exposure to different crafts	1		5
Facilities-play area for children	34	33	46
Instructional classes	1	3	1
Joy of playing	4	3	0
New forms of activities	6	2	4
New sports	5	1	11
Place for picnics	43	20	57
Place for recreation	51	20	75
Place to exercise pets	18	6	1
Place to go	51	16	63
Planned activities	5	7	18
Play-Place to play	39	41	52
Play organized sports	34	23	63
Provide activities not otherwise available	6	5	16
Special events	8	6	22
Watch organized sports	9	6	14
Total Responses	2057	1065	2139

Benefits of Parks and Recreation Services	Individual	Household	Community	NonUser
Personal Benefits				
Enjoy Being Outdoors/Natural resources	11	7	6	7
Escape	6	4	6	4
Exercise-Fitness & Conditioning	134	110	80	42
Feel Good Because they (parks) are there	1	1	16	44
Freedom	3	1	3	1
Fun/Entertainment	86	42	45	11
Getting out of the house	10	5	20	9
Health	24	15	22	6
Involvement -getting more involved	8	8	6	4
Keeping mind occupied	2	2	3	0
Learning-education	28	15	13	4
Mental benefits	11	7	9	4
Passing the time-providing something to do	6	3	27	5
Peace and quiet	1	0	3	5
Pursuit of happiness	6	2	6	5
Relaxation -place to relax	25	13	15	10
Rest	2	0	1	4
Safety -feel safe-secure environment	1	1	15	5
Stress Release	10	7	11	3
Time alone/place to be alone	4	1	1	1
Environmental Benefits				
Aesthetics	1	1	12	11
Fresh Air	12	3	14	8
Green area	1	1	4	4
Land preservation	1	1	5	2
Nature	9	4	11	8
No buildings	0	0	2	2
Open Space	4	3	13	7
Out of City	2	0	1	4
Place for Kids that isn't asphalt	2	0	14	2
Place to be outdoors	7	2	6	7
Scenery	2	1	5	4
Wildlife-habitat-place for wildlife	3	2	0	3
Wildlife-place for seeing	2	1	7	1
Social Benefits				
Competition	15	18	13	1
Cooperation	3	9	16	1
Community awareness/sense of community	22	14	125	49
Cultural awareness-heritage	18	6	16	3
Exposure to role-models	3	2	5	0
Family time-togetherness	14	11	48	19
Fellowship	19	5	30	6
Gathering Place- hang out with friends	19	13	53	19
Getting to know people	34	13	49	13
Group Participation	23	13	35	9
Helping	7	2	3	2
Keeping in touch with friends	12	9	3	1

Benefits of Parks and Recreation Services	Individual	Household	Community	NonUser
Personal Benefits				
Kids-get pleasure from it	8	6	22	22
Kids-good for them	7	11	48	39
Kids-keep busy-occupied	1	18	73	50
Kids-keep off street	5	7	76	66
Kids-keep out of house	2	3	7	4
Kids-place to go	3	6	62	47
Interaction-kids and adults	23	8	22	16
Learning discipline/following instructions	8	16	9	4
Place for elderly to socialize	2	1	20	5
Place to meet people	19	6	16	5
Place to take children	4	2	12	9
Place to take grandchildren	0	0	4	7
Respect for others	1	2	3	1
See Others enjoy themselves	14	3	3	17
Team spirit-being on a team	20	31	8	3
Economic Benefits				
Availability	4	9	67	113
Affordable-inexpensive-low cost	12	8	34	5
Bring dollars into the community	2	1	24	17
Convenience	0	7	7	8
Influence property values	0		11	19
Facility-Activity Oriented Benefits				
Activities	6	13	39	11
Arts	9	1	1	3
Exposure to different crafts	8	3	3	1
Facilities-play area for children	1	5	15	8
Instructional classes	10	3	3	1
Joy of playing	8	6	1	1
New forms of activities	4	0	8	3
New sports	3	3	6	3
Place for picnics	2	2	15	6
Place for recreation	7	4	18	9
Place to exercise pets	0	1	2	1
Place to go	8	7	51	20
Planned activities	2	5	18	3
Play-Place to play	2	4	13	7
Play organized sports	6	18	36	12
Provide activities not otherwise available	5	2	17	7
Special events	5	0	17	5
Watch organized sports	7	2	9	6
Total Responses	842	602	1598	924

Appendix H
Activity Codes and Frequency of Responses

Classes	Culture
hobby - arts and crafts	concert - choral
classes - dancing - tap or ballet	concerts - outdoor
classes - adult education	cultural -exhibits
classes - baton	cultural -plays
classes - calligraphy	dancing
classes - communication	dancing - square dancing
classes - cpr	dancing - two step
classes - diving	festival - 4th july
classes - drama	festival - arts
classes - exercise	festival - ethnic
classes - fishing educations	festival - hot air ballooning
classes - geological	festival - indian roots
classes - hunting safety	festival - jazz
classes - instructional	festival - labour day
classes - interior design	festival - picnic
classes - jazzercise	festival - seafood and wine
classes - karate	festival - shrimp
classes - kayak	festival - steam engine
classes - language	festival - fairs
classes - prenatal	festival - fireworks
classes - quitting smoking etc.	festival - holiday (Lincoln)
classes - strip and refinish furniture	festival - religious holidays
classes - tennis	festival - winter carnivals
classes - tutor	festival - maple syrup
classes - women	fireworks
classes -ceramic	music appreciation
classes -crafts	music in park
classes -martial arts .	music - play in band
classes -exercise	singing
dog obedience	theatre
sports - kindo classes	symphony
classes - nature	dancing - square dancing
classes - red cross lifesavers	culture - shows
classes - spanish lessons	movies
classes - art	museum
	outdoor trails
	hobby - painting

Exercise	Sponsored Activities
acrobats	community clean up parks
aerobics	community days
body building	easter egg hunt
exercise - rowing	family day
exercise	parades
exercise - at home	memorial services
exercise - heart conditioning	marathon
exercise - join health club	sponsor frog race
exercise - jump rope	sponsor - bazaar
exercise - nautilus	sponsor - easter egg hunt
exercise - nordic track	sponsor - muppet show
exercise - stationary bike	sponsored community event
exercise - treadmill	sponsored - bikeathon
exercise - work out at club	sponsored - chili cook off
exercise - workouts	sponsored - games day
sports - gymnastics	sponsored - trips
Exercise	sponsored - walkathon
sports - jogging	Seniors
splitting wood	senior citizens centre
weight training	senior citizens - quilting
exercise - work out	senior group - exercise
yoga	senior trips
Hobbies	seniors - monthly dinner
hobby - brewing beer	Skiing
hobby - airplane building	skiing
hobby - bare back riding in rodeo	skiing - cross country
hobby - basket making	skiing - snow
hobby - bottle collecting	skiing - water
hobby - collecting baseball cards	skiing - x country
hobby - geneology	skiing -water
hobby - needlework	
hobby -saltwater fish	
hobby - Mechanical Work	
hobby - Art Auctioning	
hobby -oil painting	

Clubs	Special Population Programs
club	special olympics
club - ecology	special population activities
club - sports	special programmes - disabled skip rope
historical society	Spectator
Club 4H or Farm related skills	spectator at sport events
Club - Drama	spectator - children
sierra club	spectator - hockey
sports - running club	Outdoor Non-Consumptive (Nature)
Team Sports	back packing trip
sports	bicycling
sports league	biking
sports - high school	boat tours
police league	boating
sports - lacrosse	camping
sports - soccer	sports - hiking
sports - softball	horseback riding
sports - rugby	play - lake
sports - hockey	hobby - mountain biking
sports -hockey - youth	sports - mountain climbing
sports - football	river system
sports - volleyball	sledding
sports - volleyball - sand	snowmobiling
sports - t-ball	hobby - trail riding
sports - baseball	walking
sports - basketball	walking tours
sports - field hockey	wildlife sanctuary
Hunting and Fishing	wildlife walks
sports -hunting	Swimming
sports - hunting - bow	swimming
sports - hunting - duck	swimming - arthritic group
fishing derby	
fishing derby for kids	
fly fishing	

Golf	Tennis
game - golf	sports - tennis
classes - golf	classes - tennis - lessons
game - golf driving range	Table Games
Volunteers	game - table billiards
volunteer at events	game - table pool
volunteer - make toys for hospital	game - table tennis
volunteer - campground	cards
volunteer - coaching or teach team-class	game - chess
Individual Sports	computer
flying	computer - nintendo
sports - Boxing	House Related Activities
sports - wrestling	yardwork
tumbling	hobby - woodworking
sports - trap shooting	house work
sports - track	hobby - gardening
sports - ice skating	Facility Related Use
Sports - archery	meeting for groups - YMCA
game - bowling	meetings for groups - scouts
game - bowling on green	facilities -sportsplex used by individual
diving	driving school
motorcycle events	flea market
hobby - motorcycling	homeless extension group
sports - judo	photo lab
game - raquetball	play at beach
hobby - rifle shooting	play in facilities
Water Sports & Events	playing with grandchildren
hobby -sailing	Miscellaneous
hobby - scuba diving	ymca corp challenge
canoeing	travelling
Childrens Programs	hobby - motorhome
camp for kids	library
child care	horseshoes
childrens programs	music - guitar playing
day care	frisbee
trips - science centre etc.	cheerleading
zoo education	game - bingo
zoo - visiting	baseball sponsor
Animal Related	band
dog show	hobby - antiquing
pet show	reading
hobby - raising animals	game - roller blading

Mail Survey Additional Leisure Activities	
Media - TV	Hobby - Writing
Media - Radio	Hobby - Baseball Cards
Media - Tapes, Records, CD's	Hobby - Antiquing
Media - Cinema, Films Video	Hobby - sewing
Media - Other	Hobby - singing
Media - Other	Hobby - Cooking
	Hobby - Drawing
Social - Visiting	Hobby - Designing Houses
Social - Clubs, Entertainments	Hobby - Photography
Social - Theatre, Concerts, Performance	Hobby - Auto Racing
Social - Coffee and Chat	Hobby - Trampoline
Social - Other	Hobby - Other
Social - Other	Hobby - Other
	Hobby - Other
Travelling - Foreign	Hobby - Other
Travelling - Domestic	Hobby - Other
Travelling - Relaxation, Cottage, Driving	
Travelling - Sightseeing	Exercise - Walking, Mall Walking
Travelling - Other	Exercise - Running
	Exercise - Other
Reading - Books	Exercise - Other
Reading - Newspapers	Exercise - Other
Reading - Comics	Exercise - Other
Reading - Other	Exercise - Other
Reading - Other	Exercise - Other
Alone - Thinking, Relaxing	Play - Beach
Alone - Writing Letters	Shopping, Malls
Alone - Other	Automobile - Joy Riding
	Sports - Scuba Diving
Religion - Church	game - Gambling
Religion - Bible Study	Club - Chess
Religion - Contemplation	Part-time Business
Religion - Other	Clubs - Sorierty and Fraternities
Religion - Other	Music - play instrument

Activities and Frequency of Response

Activity	New	Past	Current
aerobics	17	6	8
Hobby - antiquing	1		
Sports - archery	1		
Hobby - arts and crafts	1	7	13
back packing trip			1
band			3
Sports - baseball	6	52	30
baseball sponsor			2
Sports - basketball	9	20	22
bicycling	6		
biking	7	2	1
game - bingo	4		1
boat tours		1	
boating	5		4
body building			1
game - bowling	9	3	1
game - bowling on green		1	
camp for kids		1	
camping	4	3	4
canoeing	7		
cards	3		1
cheerleading		1	1
game - chess	1		
child care			
childrens programs		7	5
classes - dancing - tap or ballet	1	1	
classes - adult education		3	7
classes - baton			
classes - calligraphy		1	
classes - communication			4
classes - cpr			2
classes - diving		1	
classes - drama			
classes - exercise	1		1
classes - fishing educations		1	
classes - geological			1
classes - hunting safety		1	1
classes - instructional			2
classes - interior design			1
classes - jazzercise		1	
classes - karate			1
classes - kayak			1
classes - language		1	
classes - prenatal			1
classes - quitting smoking etc.			
classes - strip and refinish furniture		1	
classes - tennis			
classes - tutor		2	
classes - women		1	
classes -ceramic		1	1
classes -crafts		3	4
classes -martial arts			1
classes -exercise		6	1
club		2	2
club - ecology		1	
club - sports			1

Activity	New	Past	Current
community clean up parks			2
community days		1	2
computer	2		
computer - nintendo	2		
concert - choral			1
concerts - outdoor	1	14	20
cultural -exhibits		2	7
cultural -plays		4	5
dancing	2	1	7
dancing - square dancing	1		
dancing - two step	2		
day care		2	1
diving			1
dog obedience		1	1
dog show		1	1
driving school			1
easter egg hunt			
exercise - rowing			
exercise	14		
exercise - at home	3		
exercise - heart conditioning		1	
exercise - join health club			
exercise - jump rope	2		
exercise - nautilus	1		
exercise - nordic track	1		
exercise - stationary bike	2		
exercise - treadmill	2		
exercise - work out at club	12		
exercise - workouts			1
facilities -sportsplex used by individual	7		
family day		1	1
festival - 4th july		2	9
festival - arts		2	15
festival - ethnic			1
festival - hot air ballooning		1	4
festival - indian roots			1
festival - jazz			2
festival - labour day			3
festival - picnic		7	8
festival - seafood and wine			2
festival - shrimp			1
festival - steam engine			1
festival - fairs		6	9
festival - fireworks		1	
festival - holiday (Lincoln)		3	8
festival - religious holidays		3	2
festival - winter carnivals		1	1
festival - maple syrup		1	1
sports - field hockey		1	
fireworks		1	5
fishing derby	3	1	5
fishing derby for kids			1
flea market			2
fly fishing	1		
sports - football	2	19	17
frisbee			1
hobby - gardening	2		

Activity	New	Past	Current
game - golf	10	2	12
classes - golf		1	3
game - golf driving range			
music - guitar playing	1		
sports - gymnastics		1	1
sports - hiking	7	3	5
historical society			1
hobby - brewing beer	1		
hobby - airplane building	1		
hobby - bare back riding in rodeo			
hobby - basket making	1		
hobby - bottle collecting	1		
hobby - collecting baseball cards	1		
hobby - geneology	1		
hobby - needlework	2		
hobby - saltwater fish	1		
sports - hockey	1	2	1
sports - hockey - youth			1
homeless extension group			1
horseback riding	4		
horseshoes		2	
house work	1		
sports - hunting		1	2
sports - hunting - bow	1		
sports - hunting - duck			
sports - ice skating	3	3	3
sports - jogging	10		
sports - judo	1	1	
sports - kindo classes			1
sports - lacrosse			
play - lake			1
library			2
marathon			1
meeting for groups - YMCA			
meetings for groups - scouts			
memorial services			1
motorcycle events			1
hobby - motorcycling	1		
hobby - motorhome	1		
hobby - mountain biking	1		
sports - mountain climbing	1		
movies			2
museum			2
music appreciation	1		1
music in park		1	5
music - play in band	2		1
classes - nature		2	4
hobby - oil painting	1		
outdoor trails			3
hobby - painting			1
parades		2	9
pet show		1	
photo lab	1		1
play at beach			
play in facilities			2
playing with grandchildren	1		1
police league			1

Activity	New	Past	Current
hobby - raising animals	1		
game - raquetball	7	2	
reading	2		
classes - red cross lifesavers			1
hobby - rifle shooting	2		
river system			1
game - roller blading	4		1
sports - rugby			2
sports - running club	4	2	6
hobby -sailing	1		1
hobby - scuba diving	3		
senior citizens centre		2	1
senior citizens - quilting		1	
senior group - exercise	1		
senior trips			2
seniors - monthly dinner			1
culture - shows		1	1
sierra club			1
singing			1
skiing	8	3	2
skiing - cross country	1		1
skiing - snow	2		
skiing - water	2		
skiing - x country		1	
skiing -water			
sledding		1	
snowmobiling	1		
sports - soccer	2	15	21
sports - softball	2	60	61
classes - spanish lessons	1		
special olympics		2	1
special population activities			1
special programmes - disabled skip rope		1	
spectator at sport events		3	4
spectator - children			1
spectator - hockey	1		
splitting wood	1		
sponsor frog race			
sponsor - bazaar		4	
sponsor - easter egg hunt		2	1
sponsor - muppet show		1	
sponsored community event		8	19
sponsored - bikeathon		1	
sponsored - chili cook off		1	
sponsored - games day		1	
sponsored - trips		2	1
sponsored - walkathon		6	4
sports	7	13	7
sports league			
sports - high school			
dancing - square dancing			1
swimming	13	22	17
swimming - arthritic group	1	1	
symphony			1
game - table billiards			
game - table pool	1	1	
game - table tennis			1

Activity	New	Past	Current
sports - tennis	8	16	7
classes - tennis - lessons		2	3
theatre			3
sports - track	1	1	2
hobby - trail riding			1
sports - trap shooting	1		
travelling	2		
trips - science centre etc.		2	
tumbling			
sports - t-ball		1	
sports - volleyball	4	14	24
sports - volleyball - sand			1
volunteer at events		4	3
volunteer - make toys for hospital	1		
volunteer - campground		1	
volunteer - coaching or teach team-class	5	6	16
walking	25	3	1
walking tours		2	2
weight training	16		
wildlife sanctuary			
wildlife walks			
hobby - woodworking	1		
exercise - work out			
sports - wrestling		1	3
yardwork	1		
ymca corp challenge		1	1
yoga	2		
zoo education			1
zoo - visiting	1	2	
Club 4H or Farm related skills		3	
Classes - Art		1	1
Flying	1		
Sports - Boxing	1		
Club - Drama	1		
Hobby - Mechanical Work	3		
Hobby - Art Auctioning	1		
Total	346	447	582

APPENDIX I

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HEALTH AND WELLNESS AND BENEFITS OF LOCAL RECREATION AND PARK SERVICES

As mentioned previously, several questions asked in the telephone interview and in the follow-up mail questionnaire dealt with various aspects of health and wellness. In this section, relationships between health and wellness variables and various study questions are discussed.

State Of Health

Respondents to the telephone interview were asked: "In general, compared to other persons your age would you say your health is excellent, very good, good, fair or poor." It was found that perceived state of health was statistically related to several questions. There was a statistically significant relation between use of parks and perceived state of health. Those who used local parks frequently were more likely to report good health than those who did not. Among those who used parks frequently, for instance, 33% reported their health as excellent while only 20% of those who didn't use parks at all did so. Those who didn't use local parks at all were also more likely to report fair or poor health.

Disabilities

About 8 percent of the sample reported they had some type of disability. Those with a disability were much more likely than those without to believe they had more free time compared to five years ago - 36% versus 21%. Similarly, those with a disability were far less likely to feel rushed than those without. While only 16% without a disability never felt rushed, 43% of those with a disability never did. Finally, those with a disability were less likely to have a park within walking distance (63%) compared to those without a disability (72%), were less likely to use a park frequently (17%) than were those without (25%), and

were less likely to report use of local parks by other household members than those without disabilities.

Happiness

Thirty-nine percent of the sample reported in the telephone survey that they were very happy, 57% said pretty happy and 4% said they were not too happy. There was a statistically significant negative relation between always feeling rushed and one's estimated happiness. Those who always feel rushed are less likely to be very happy than others.

There was a statistically significant relation between perceived level of benefits from local parks and happiness. Those who said they received a great deal of benefit from local parks were more likely to say they were very happy than others.

There was also a statistically significant relation between a person beginning a new recreation activity and how happy they rated themselves. Those who began a new recreation activity were significantly more likely to say they were very happy (44%) than those who didn't (37%) and were less likely to say they were not too happy (2%) than those who didn't begin an activity (5%).

The use of parks was also found to be related to personal happiness, with frequent park users more likely to report that they were "very happy" and those who never used parks more likely to report that they were "not too happy."

Self Esteem

Our sample was also questioned about their self-esteem using the Rosenberg Self-Concept Scale. The following table shows the responses given to the self-esteem scale.

Scale Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
On the whole I am Satisfied with myself	27	67	6	0
At times I think I am no good at all.	2	18	38	41
I feel that I have a number of good qualities	38	61	1	1
I wish that I could have more respect for myself	6	24	47	24
I am able to do things as well as most people	27	66	6	1
I certainly feel useless at times	4	22	40	35
I feel that I'm a person of worth on an equal plane with others	34	60	5	1
I feel I do not have much to be proud of	4	7	40	50
I take a positive attitude toward myself	30	61	8	1
All in all, I am inclined to feel I am a failure	1	4	32	63

Generally, self-esteem was not related to responses to the telephone interview. Two exceptions to this were that those with low self-esteem rated parks and open space and indoor recreation facilities significantly lower than those with higher self esteem. Additionally, low self-esteem individuals were more likely than those with higher self-esteem to favor funding local parks and recreation services mainly through user fees.

Socializing With Friends

Respondents were first asked how often they had gotten together with friends to visit in each others homes or to go out together during the last twelve months. About one-third (35%) said they did so once a week or more. Another 37% said they did so 1-3 times a month. About a fourth, said they did such socializing 1-6 times a year while the remaining 3% did so less than once a year or not at all.

Not surprisingly, those who socialized with friends most frequently (once a week or more) were more likely to have begun a new leisure activity during the last twelve months than others. Those who were most likely to perceive a great deal of community benefit from local recreation and parks, however, socialized 1-3 times per month.

Those who socialized most frequently were least likely to rate recreation programs as poor. Finally, those who socialized with friends less frequently (1-6 times per year) were most likely to favor supporting local recreation and park services mainly through taxes.

Participating in Recreation Activities Alone or With Others

Next, our sample was asked if they usually participated in leisure activities accompanied by others, if they were usually alone or if there was no usual pattern. Almost two-thirds (64%) said they were usually accompanied by others. Only 8% said they were usually alone while the remaining 29% said there was no usual pattern.

Whether an individual usually participated in recreation activities alone or with others was related to whether work or leisure was more important to them. Those who participated alone were more likely to say that leisure was more important (37%) than those who usually participated with others (31%) or had no usual pattern (20%). Additionally, those who usually participated alone were almost twice as likely to make no personal use of parks (37%) and their households were almost twice as likely to make no use of local parks (29%). Finally, those who usually participated in leisure activities alone rated indoor recreation facilities significantly lower than did others.

Number of Organizations

In terms of social, civic and voluntary organizations that respondents participated in, 42% participated in none while another 22% said they participated in one. Another 17% participated in two while the remainder were involved in more than two such organizations.

The number of organizations a respondent belonged to was statistically related to personal use of parks. Those who belonged to four or more organizations were almost twice as likely to use local parks frequently (44%) as were others. This is in keeping with the notion of time deepening (Robinson and Godbey, 1992) which assumes that people have different rates of "doing." Some people, for example, rather than participate in numerous organizations or use local parks frequently will do both while others will do neither. Those who belonged to four or more organizations were also more likely than could have occurred by chance to say they got a great deal of benefit from local parks (53%).

Similarly, those who belonged to four or more organizations were much more likely to participate in activities sponsored by local recreation and park services (62%) than those who belonged to 1-3 organizations (50%) or those who belonged to no organizations (20%). This same trend was found in regard to use of such services by other members of their households. Other household members of those who belonged to many organizations were far more likely to use local parks than others.

Level of Stress

When asked how stressful their lives were, the majority (53%) described themselves as fairly stressful while 12% described their lives as very stressful, 28% as not very stressful and the remaining 8% as not stressful.

Not surprisingly, those who described their lives as very stressful were far more likely to say they had less time for leisure compared to five years ago than others, as shown in the following table.

	More Time	About The Same	Less Time
Very Stressful	13	18	68
Fairly Stressful	22	26	52
Not Very Stressful	35	38	28
Not Stressful	39	23	39

Similarly, those who felt their lives were very stressful were more than twice as likely to always feel rushed (67%) than those whose lives were not very stressful (28%). Those whose lives were very stressful were no less likely to use local parks frequently (20%) but were far more likely than average to make no use of local parks (30%). High stress level respondents were more likely than others to say their household received no benefits from local parks (27%) than the average (16%).

Other members in the households of high stress level individuals, however, were more likely to participate in activities sponsored by local government recreation and park services (53%) than those with fairly stressful (44%), not very stressful (32%) or not stressful (30%) lives.

Amount of Exercise

In responding to two questions about personal exercise, only about one-quarter (27%) said they got as much exercise as needed. When asked how many times per week they exercised for at least fifteen minutes, 10% said never, 19% replied less than once a week, 23% said once or twice a week, 24% said 3-4 times per week, 10% said 5-6 times per week and 13% replied daily. Those who thought they got enough exercise were more likely to think they had more time for leisure compared to five years ago, to never feel rushed, and to frequently use local parks. Finally, those who said they get enough exercise rated local recreation programs more highly than those who didn't.

The number of times per week they exercised was positively related to beginning new recreation activities. It was negatively related to how often other members of the household

used local parks. That is, those who exercised daily were most likely to say that other members of their household never used local parks (32%) while those who exercised once or twice a week or never were most likely to say that other members of their household used such parks frequently.

Smoking

Respondents were asked if they smoked; about 22 percent reported they did.

Plans to Improve Health

Respondents were asked if they had any plans to improve their health. Those who said they did were more likely to say they received a great deal of benefit from local parks (42%) than those who didn't (28%).

Blood Pressure

When asked if their blood pressure was high, 10% said yes, 7% didn't know and the remaining 83% said no.

Those with high blood pressure were less likely to have started a new recreation activity (20%) than those without high blood pressure (24%). They were also more likely to always feel rushed.

Fitness Compared to Others

Respondents were asked how fit they were compared to others. Our sample rated their own fitness compared to other people as follows: 33% said they were fitter than most, 57% said they were about as fit as most and 10% said they were less fit.

There was no statistical relation of their responses with other variables under discussion.

Lifestyle

Our sample was also asked to rate themselves on numerous statements related to health. Their responses were as follows:

Health Practice	Yes	Sometimes	No
I Get Adequate Rest and Sleep	55	40	5
I Get Regular Exercise	33	42	25
I Eat the Right Things	34	52	14
I Try to Manage Stress	59	36	4
I Get Good Medical Care From Doctors	69	21	9
I Work in A Smoke Free Environment	62	13	26
I Live in A Smoke Free Environment	69	6	25
I am Moderate in my use of Alcohol	86	10	5
I Maintain Proper Weight	51	24	25
I Wear a Seatbelt When I am in A Car	72	18	10

There was no statistical relation of their responses as measured by a composite scale to any of the variables under consideration.

Spouse Health Practices

When asked about behaviors of their spouse, respondents replied as follows:

Spouses' Health Habits	Yes	No
Exercise Regularly	47	53
Smoke Cigarettes	20	80
Drink Too Much	6	95
Overeat	22	78
Use Tranquilizers	2	98
Smoke Marijuana	3	97

Our sample was also asked what was the most important thing they should do regarding their health. More exercise was by far the most frequently listed response. Their responses were as follows:

Activity	Percentage
Exercise More	42
Improve Eating Habits	22
Lose Weight	16
Stop Smoking	11
Reduce drug use/medications	1
Cut Down on Drinking	1
Other	8

Finally, respondents were asked to record their current height and weight. From this data a measure of obesity was devised. Using a formula (Jequier, 1987) that calculated a ratio of height and weight, five categories of obesity were devised. Our sample is rated as follows: 1) below normal (12.3%) 2) acceptable (44.4%) 3) Obese I (31.1%) 4) Obese II (11.2%) 5) Obese III (1.0%). The relationship between obesity and the variables under study were generally not significant except for how respondents viewed their time. In general, respondents who were rated as being obese were less likely to report they were sometimes or always rushed than those who were rated as being acceptable or below the normal obesity rating. The exception was those rated as Obese 3, who were more likely to report being Always or Sometimes rushed.

	Always Rushed	Sometimes Rushed	Never Rushed
Below Normal	33	57	10
Acceptable	39	52	10
Obese 1	27	48	25
Obese 2	31	49	20
Obese 3	40	60	0

An analysis of other variables in the study revealed a statistically significant relationship between obesity and the following: self-esteem; self-rating of exercise participation; number of time undertaking exercise; most important health related activity to improve health; self-rating of blood pressure; self-comparison fitness in relation to others; composite lifestyle scale; presence of a disability; marital status; gender; and age. Detailed analysis of these factors and the interrelationships that exist are, however, beyond the scope of this report.

Obesity Level	Always/Regularly	Never/Infrequently
Obese 3	10	0
Obese 2	31	0
Obese 1	27	0
At Risk	30	0
Below Normal	13	0



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