

**A STUDY OF THE BLACKSBURG PARKS AND RECREATION
DEPARTMENT
OUTDOOR FACILITIES**

by

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Introduction

This project deals with a topic not only of interest to myself, but to a growing number of Americans. Recreation is becoming an increasingly popular field in the United States. More and more Americans are realizing the benefits of good health and exercise and are participating in recreational activities. As there is an increasing need for recreation, there is an increasing demand for trained recreation personnel to provide such services. A growing number of communities and local governments are being pushed to provide recreational activities to fill the gap in the need for recreation and the existing opportunities. This chapter serves as an introduction to the project involving recreation in the Blacksburg area.

Purpose

The purpose of this project was to examine the outdoor recreation opportunities offered by a local community recreational program - the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department. The Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department is managed by the Town of Blacksburg. The author compares the number of outdoor facilities available to the public to the number of facilities the Commission of Outdoor Recreation has projected that the area needs. This comparison should help determine the strengths and weaknesses of the local recreation department. A

discussion section follows the comparison to help determine the reasons for the shortages of facilities in certain areas.

Definitions

For the purpose of this paper, outdoor recreation is defined as those activities which take place outside as opposed to within the confines of a building. This activity may include anything from tennis to biking to picnicking.

The recreation demand is the participation rate of the local citizens with each facility. The recreation supply is the number of facilities available for the public's use. The recreation need is a comparison of the demand and the supply. The need is the number of facilities that are lacking in order to meet the recreational demand of the people.

Delimitations

For the purposes of this paper, the author has limited the study to only outdoor recreation. None of the indoor facilities of the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department will be included in the study. This paper will only analyze the outdoor facilities and not the programs and day camps that utilize these facilities.

The author has limited the study to only the outdoor recreation facilities managed by the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department. There are numerous other facilities in Blacksburg, such as those at Virginia Tech and at various apartment complexes, which may be referred to in the paper but will not be included in the study.

Procedure

The needs of the community based on demographic data must first be determined. McDonald and Cordell (1988) define a medium community as an area with a population between twenty-five thousand and one-hundred thousand. Blacksburg is considered to be a medium-sized community since its population is estimated at approximately thirty-four thousand (Blacksburg Chamber of Commerce). However, Blacksburg is also home of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University which has a growing enrollment of approximately twenty-three thousand. The number of facilities and programs offered by the Blacksburg department is compared with existing demographic figures to determine if the recreational need in the area is being met.

Justification

The results of this study may provide the management of Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department pertinent information about the quantity of their services as compared to norms generated by a statewide study by the Commission of Outdoor Recreation. This information should help the recreation employees understand the program's strengths and weaknesses and enable them to better serve the people of the community.

Summary

This chapter begins this project which deals with the topic of recreation in the Blacksburg area. This paper will study the growing

recreational needs in the area of Blacksburg, and determine if the local recreation department is fulfilling the citizens' needs.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Introduction

A great deal of research has been conducted and a large body of literature written about the field of recreation. Since recreation has been a rapidly changing field, there is constantly new literature and studies being published about the industry. The following is a review of the literature dealing with recreation on national, state, and local levels.

History

The recreation industry can be traced through three historical movements since its foundation in the nineteenth century. The Conservation Movement was the first period of recreation ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan," 1979). This movement was based on the principle of developing a wise and balanced use of our natural resources. The federal government played a key role in the conservation of land and began the park and forest services. During this period, our first national park, Yosemite Valley National Park, was established in 1864.

The next recognized historical era in recreation is often called the Urban Parks era ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan," 1979). This movement resulted from the effects of industrialization and immigration. The municipal governments of urban areas provided land

to establish parks within cities. The first such park was New York's Central Park which is still a popular recreation spot in downtown New York ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan,"1979).

The current historical period is commonly referred to as the Recreation Movement ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan," 1979). This movement was initially aimed at producing social reforms. Play programs were begun to provide organized recreation for children. Boston was one of the first cities that organized these programs. Local governments began providing these organized programs across the nation ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979).

Recreation has become an increasingly popular field in the United States since the first metropolitan park system was established in Boston in 1892. By the year 1906, there were 41 cities in the United States that were sponsoring public recreation programs. This figure had grown to 465 cities by the year 1920 (Kraus, 1984).

Along with this rapid growth of the recreation field, came the foundation of various organizations involved with the management and promotion of the field. The first of these organizations, the Playground Association of America, was founded in 1906. In 1919, the National Park Service began operation (Kraus, 1984). This organization enlarged the role of federal and state governments in the organization and management of recreational areas.

In 1926 the National Recreation Association was created to better organize the country's recreational growth and development. United States President Calvin Coolidge called for a National Conference on Outdoor Recreation in 1924 (Kraus, 1984). He was the first of many presidents to become involved in the recreation movement.

As interest in recreation continued to grow, the need for training of employees and recreation staff members evolved. The National Recreation School was begun in 1926 as a graduate school to educate and train those people interested in recreation (Kraus, 1984). Today, this trend has continued. More and more colleges and universities are implementing undergraduate and graduate programs focusing on the study of recreation and related fields. An example of this is the development of the Sport Management program at Virginia Tech.

The recreation industry increased dramatically after World War I due to the country's more affluent economy, the migration of citizens to urban communities and the decreasing work week. In 1910, the average American work week was 51.3 hours per week. By 1975, this average had dropped to 36.1 hours per week (Kleindienst & Weston, 1978). These factors created more spare time for people to engage in recreational activities.

Two decades of steady growth in the recreation industry followed World War II due to the population growth, larger incomes and new housing developments. In the late 1950's the existing recreational programs could not satisfy the increased demand. In the 1960's there

was a growth in both the protection of natural resources and the development of recreation services ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979).

The 1962 Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission was an outgrowth of this postwar emphasis on recreation which followed World War II. The 1962 Review Commission recommended the following:

1. a national outdoor recreation policy
2. guidelines for management of outdoor recreation resources
3. expansion of programs to meet recreation needs
4. establishment of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
5. federal legislation to enact a grant-in-aid program for recreation (Kraus, 1984, p. 117).

These suggestions were made to further enhance and meet the growing recreational needs of the citizens of this country.

In the early 1970's, recreation expenditures increased at all levels of government. However, this growth was stalled in the late 1970's and early 1980's due to increased inflation and a recession. In the early 1980's, under the Reagan administration, the level of federal support for parks and recreation was cut back drastically (Kraus, 1984).

These severe budget cuts turned the functioning of recreational areas back to the state governments. States are given the power to provide recreation to citizens by the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution which states that powers which are not delegated to the

United States by the Constitution nor prohibited by it, are reserved to the States or the people (Kraus, 1984, p. 151).

Each state has the responsibility of promoting the local recreation agencies throughout the state. North Carolina was the first state to establish a state recreation commission in 1945 (Kleindienst & Weston, 1978). Now each state government operates a network of parks and other outdoor recreation resources. There were 2,000 state parks in 1960 that accounted for 3 million acres of land (Butler, 1967). In the early 1970's, before poor economic conditions forced government cut-backs on recreation spending, the states managed 42 million acres of parks and recreational areas (Kraus, 1984).

The past few decades have produced a drastic increase in the recreation field due to the trend toward fitness and good health. More and more Americans are realizing the physical, mental and social benefits of exercise and therefore are participating in more recreational programs and activities. In 1981, U.S. News and World Report estimated that total leisure spending in the United States to be \$244 billion - a 321% increase from 1965 (Gratton & Taylor, 1985). The increased acres of recreational areas and increased recreational spending by Americans are proof of the drastic growth in the recreation industry.

Business and industry are becoming more involved with recreation because a healthy employee is a better investment for the company. A healthy employee not only takes fewer sick leave days, but

is also a happier and a better worker. For example, commercial recreation is a growing industry among businesses attempting to provide recreational opportunities for their employees. In 1974, the American Association of Fitness Directors in Business and Industry was established as a governing body for this growing area of recreation (Gratton & Taylor, 1985). The President's Council of Physical Fitness and Sports estimates that 50,000 business organizations in the United States have organized recreation programs for their employees (Gratton & Taylor, 1985).

It is important to study the demographics of a particular region or community before attempting to fulfill the citizens' recreational needs. It is also important to understand the demographic trends of the country as well. Some of the recent demographic shifts in the United States are as follows:

1. Females are becoming more active in recreation and are becoming significant market segments. Between 1961 and 1975 there was a 57% increase in time allocation to sports by females as compared to only a 28% increase by males.
2. Family activity is important during certain life cycles.
3. Health, fitness and appearance concerns are well established - older people are becoming more active.
4. Climate is important for many activities as off-season alternatives. There is a current 'flight to the sunbelt' as people move South.

5. Changes are being made in the working conditions. Shift work and flexible hours are allowing for recreation at various times during the day. There is increasing female employment (Kelly, 1987, p. 138).

Recreation and Government

All levels of government - federal, state and local - are involved in recreation in various ways. When starting a public program, each community must grant legal authorization through an ordinance or amendment to the local charter. A recreation and parks department receives its mandate from the government of a community in the form of this enabling act. Generally, the department is administered by a commission or policy-making board appointed by a mayor with approval of city council (Kleindienst & Weston, 1978).

Prior to the latest growth in the recreation industry, the parks departments and the recreation departments were separate. The parks department was responsible for the preservation and maintenance of land and facilities. The recreation department was in charge of the programs and dealing with the people the department served. Today, most organizations are combined into parks and recreation departments. Such is the case with Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) is the major professional organization for such departments (Kleindienst & Weston, 1978).

Community recreation has expanded into the schools facilities in most areas of the country. School systems and recreation departments have begun to combine forces to get optimum usage of available facilities. A recent study showed that 83% of parks and recreation departments use local school facilities for some of their programs. The same study also showed that 90% of schools have use of parks and recreation's facilities for school activities or athletic practices (McDonald & Cordell, 1988). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was passed in 1965 to give financial support to recreation sports programs and community recreation (Kleindienst & Weston, 1978).

The previously mentioned Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission led to the Nationwide Outdoor Recreation Plan (NORC). Public Law 88-29 required that this recreation plan be prepared every five years and presented to Congress ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979). The NORC devised a list of the important elements of recreation in America:

1. providing a link with our natural and cultural environment,
2. contributing to American's physical and mental health,
3. generating economic growth through an estimated \$180 billion of annual personal expenditures, and
4. providing an important public service on which Federal, State and local public agencies expend over \$5 billion each year ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979).

Recreation in the United States

A 1978 Gallup poll indicated that 47% of all Americans engage in some form of regular exercise, twice the percentage of people that exercised according to a 1961 poll ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979). Today the percentage of people exercising on a regular basis is continuing to increase. In 1975, the number of American deaths due to cardiovascular disease fell below one million for the first time since such data has been recorded ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979). The decreased heart disease is due in part to the increase in exercise habits according to heart specialists.

Recreation has positive effects on society as well as on individuals. Recreational activity provides a stress release for a lot of people. This is not only healthy for the individual, but also good for social relations. Recreation has been proven to increase worker productivity on the job. Activity not only allows them to release their stress from work, but also improves their health which decreases absenteeism ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan," 1979).

Another benefit of recreation that has been discussed in recent literature is family solidarity or togetherness. More and more families are using recreational activities as a way of spending valuable time together as a family. There are many recreational opportunities where the whole family can be involved and have fun together ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan," 1979).

There have also been increases in economic activity in the field of recreation. People have more money to spend on leisure-time activities and each year the amount of money spent on recreational equipment and activities is increasing. More recreational facilities are being built and more jobs in the recreation field are becoming available("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979).

As is the case with any field or industry, there are also problems or obstacles that must be faced. One of these problems is the trend toward population growth and overcrowding of some areas. There simply is not enough space in some cities to provide adequate recreational facilities to meet the needs of the many people in that area. Another concern is trying to meet the ever-changing public recreation demand. Recreational needs and trends in activities are constantly changing and it is important for recreation personnel to stay current with the latest trends to meet their clientele's needs (Kelly, 1987).

Some other obstacles that recreation personnel must face, but do not have much control over, are the energy crisis, degradation of fragile natural resources and fiscal constraints and persistent inflation ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979). Special efforts need to be taken in order to preserve some of the natural resources utilized for recreational pursuits. Money problems are evident in the recreation industry more so than in other industries. When the government is forced to make cutbacks, recreation is one of the first areas that is hit by the shortage of funds (Gratton & Taylor, 1985).

Recreation is financed through various avenues such as taxes, bond issues, user fees, grants and private donations. Private donations and user fees are becoming more and more important to the success of a recreation department, especially during times of government funding cutbacks. User fees are often used to offset more than 10% of the operation and maintenance costs ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979). These operation and maintenance costs are higher at the local level than in a larger organization. The three major areas that funds are spent on are the acquiring of land, developing new facilities, maintaining the existing facilities ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979).

Local governments also benefit from the State which provides supplemental financing for the community recreation programs. The monies are raised through a State bond issue. The States use funds allocated by Federal grant programs for recreation projects. The local government pays for recreation through general appropriations, allocated revenues, special taxes and user fees ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979).

Currently in the United States, the Northeast and Northwest regions lead the nation in recreation participation. However there is an increasing trend of migration from the northern areas to the Sun Belt states of the south. ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979) There is also a pattern of migration from the metropolitan areas to the more rural areas. Recreation personnel need to realize

these trends and be prepared to fit the needs of this changing geographic distribution.

The age group that is the most active in the United States is the range of 12-24 years old. ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979, and "The 1989 Virginia outdoors plan", 1989). Older Americans are beginning to get more active and involved with recreational programs. There are several reasons for the increasing number of active elderly Americans:

- * More recreational opportunities are being made available for older Americans. Senior centers are offering activities and recreation departments are sponsoring programs such as Golden Olympics.

- * Most workers are covered by retirement plans that provide for adequate income after they stop working.

- * Elderly workers are beginning to retire at an earlier age when they are still physically able to participate in recreational activities.

- * There is an increasing number of couples that are retiring together and they are able to spend time together traveling or enjoying other recreational opportunities ("The third nationwide outdoor plan," 1979).

There is also an increase in the number of women and handicapped that are participating in recreational activities. A major factor in this trend was the passage of Title IX in 1972 which provided

equal recreational opportunity for women and handicapped ("The third nationwide outdoor recreation plan", 1979). Special organizations, such as National Association for Girls and Women in Sport (NAGWS), that are devoted to the promotion of women's athletics and recreation have been in existence since the 1950's.. Special Olympics is the most popular group associated with recreational competition for the handicapped. but there is also a growing number of competitions for handicapped, such as marathons, basketball tournaments and tennis matches.

Recreation in Virginia

In 1970, the State of Virginia adopted Article XI, Section 1 of the Virginia Constitution which states:

"To the end that the people have clean air, pure water, and the use and enjoyment for recreation of adequate public lands, waters, and other natural resources, it shall be the policy of the Commonwealth to conserve, develop, and utilize its natural resources, its public lands, and its historical sites and buildings. Further, it shall be the Commonwealth's policy to protect its atmosphere, lands and water from pollution, impairment, or destruction, for the benefit, enjoyment, and general welfare of the people of the Commonwealth" ("The 1984 Virginia outdoors plan," 1984). This was Virginia's first official statement about conservation and recreational opportunities.

Since the adoption of Article XI, Section 1, the Commonwealth has developed a set of goals in order to help the State provide adequate

recreation for her citizens. The goals as printed in the 1984 Virginia Outdoors Plan are:

- * to provide for needed development and material progress without the needless sacrifice of natural, open space, or recreational resources.
- * to identify those resources which have special recreational, historical, natural, and scientific significance and take necessary steps to protect and conserve them.
- * to insure, for this and future generations of Virginians, the provision of an adequate supply of outdoor recreation opportunities.
- * to create a widespread understanding and appreciation of the value of our natural and recreation resources.
- * to promote the coordination of effort between the providers of outdoor recreation opportunities, both public and private, meeting the recreation needs of all Virginians ("The 1984 Virginia outdoors plan," 1984, p. 7).

In 1966 the Virginia Outdoors Foundation was established in order to promote the preservation of lands in the state. The Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission was also begun in this year. There were 950 individual properties listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and 70 State Historic Districts listed ("The 1984 Virginia outdoors plan," 1984).

An amendment was written to the Appalachian Trail Protection Act in 1972 which provided for a statewide trail system. By the year

1982, there were more than 3,100 miles of hiking trails throughout the State of Virginia ("The 1984 Virginia Outdoors Plan", 1984).

The General Assembly of Virginia merged the Commission of Outdoor Recreation with the Division of Parks, establishing the Division of Parks and Recreation ("The 1984 Virginia outdoors plan," 1984). The Commonwealth was following a nation-wide trend of combining parks departments with recreation departments. Following the merger, previously appointed members of the Commission of Outdoor Recreation became members of a Recreation Advisory Committee.

The previous paragraphs demonstrate the increasing involvement and interest by the Commonwealth of Virginia in the recreational opportunities made available to the residents of Virginia. As the citizens of Virginia become more involved in recreational pursuits, so must the state's government.

The Virginia is divided into 11 recreation planning regions based on location, urban/rural demographics, and physiographic divisions. Within these regions are 22 planning districts. Southwest Virginia is within Region 5. The New River Valley area, including the counties of Floyd, Giles, Montgomery, Pulaski and the City of Radford are within Planning District 4 ("The 1984 Virginia outdoors plan", 1984).

Recreation in the New River Valley

The New River Valley Planning District was established in 1972. The New River Valley has offered outdoor recreational opportunities since the early 1800's with the area's abundant natural resources.

Montgomery County alone has 19,142 acres of the Jefferson National Forest and seven state waysides which have a total of 16 acres ("Open space and recreational plan", 1972).

The New River Valley Planning District Committee developed a set of key factors necessary to provide quality recreation in the area:

1. reduce conflicts between competing uses
2. reduce the destructiveness of people
3. increase the durability of areas
4. provide increased recreation opportunities ("Open space and recreational plan", 1972).

The NRV committee members believe these four basic factors to be important in reaching optimal recreation potential.

In 1982, the average Virginian engaged in about 86 days of outdoor recreation ("The 1989 Virginia outdoors plan," 1989, p. 29). Eighty-eight percent of Virginians rated outdoor recreation as either important or very important on a scale as compared to their other activities or interests ("The 1989 Virginia outdoors plan," 1989).

According to a study completed by the Virginia Outdoors Plan, in 1982 there were 5,600 recreational sites in the Commonwealth of Virginia. These sites included 2,752,202 acres of land and 1,306,820 acres of water. The federal government owns and manages the largest portion of this land with 78%. Only 11% is owned and managed by the State and just 4% by local governments ("The 1984 Virginia outdoors plan", 1984).

The State's responsibilities involving recreation include the planning and coordination of programs, the protecting and/or developing a system of outdoor recreation resources, provide assistance to localities in areas dealing with recreation. It is also important that the Commonwealth encouraged donations of private funds for recreational uses such as park development and maintenance.

The responsibilities of the local governments is to "provide its citizenry with adequate close-to-home park, recreation and open space resources" ("The 1984 Virginia outdoors plan", 1984, p. 22). The development of a comprehensive recreation plan must reflect the needs of the community and meet daily recreational needs of citizens. Recreational facilities such as playgrounds, ball fields, recreation center, parks and trails should be provided.

Recreation in Blacksburg

The Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department was created by ordinance on August 5, 1969. A need for increased recreational opportunities had been expressed by the people of Blacksburg. The Municipal Park was acquired from the Blacksburg Jaycees and other civic groups. Part of the money used for this purchase came from donations made by private citizens. The Recreation Advisory Board was organized and a director and one staff member were hired ("A calendar of development of the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department," 1991).

In 1970 the golf course and swimming pool were purchased, and in 1973 the first two tennis courts were built at the Municipal Park. Two additional tennis courts and a lighted athletic field were built the following year. In the next five year period, various Tot Lot children facilities were built as well as additional tennis courts and athletic fields ("A calendar of development of the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department," 1991).

The community center opened in 1981 and a full-time building supervisor was added to the staff. In the late-1980's Tom's Creek Park and Nellie's Cave Park were opened for public recreational use. The latest development of the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department began in the winter of 1991 with the construction of the Aquatics Center which is scheduled to open in September 1992. Since the department's beginnings in 1969, there have been constant additions to the facilities to try to meet the recreational needs of the people of Blacksburg ("A calendar of development of the department of parks and recreation," 1991).

Summary

Recreation has been a constantly changing field over the past decade. There are constantly new developments in this ever growing field. There are changes in recreation at the national, state and local levels. Recreation personnel are constantly faced with meeting the growing demand of recreational activities. This literature review

demonstrates the rapid growth in the recreation field and emphasizes how recreation has become an important part of the American lifestyle.

CHAPTER 3

Methods

Introduction

The material presented in this chapter deals with the format and context of this project. The purpose of the study will be stated as well as an explanation of the design of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine in what areas Blacksburg Parks and Recreation are meeting the recreational needs of the people that live in the area, and what recreational aspects need improvement in Blacksburg. The study attempted to answer the question - Are the facilities provided by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation providing the local citizens with adequate recreational opportunities? The information produced by this study should help the staff at the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department better serve the local citizens.

Design

The facilities offered by the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department are compared with data that projects the demand for recreational opportunities in the area. The demand, supply and need for recreational opportunities has been assessed by the Commission of Outdoor Recreation and the Virginia Commonwealth University's Center for Public Affairs. The demand, supply and need for future years has

also been projected by these organizations. These data is presented later in the study. Some areas of outdoor recreation that were studied include athletic fields, tennis courts, golf courses, swimming pools, basketball courts, hiking and bicycling trails and picnicking areas.

A survey and study was done collectively by the Commission of Outdoor Recreation and the Virginia Commonwealth University's Center for Public Affairs to obtain data on recreational areas throughout the State of Virginia. The survey contained questions concerning participation in 26 recreational activities as well as questions dealing with public attitudes and opinions concerning recreation.

The participation rates for each activity were computed and applied to population figures for each recreational area. The participation rates and the measures for the demand and need are based on the busiest time when the most activity occurs. The supply of the outdoor recreation facilities was calculated through an inventory process. The need for recreational opportunities in this study was determined through a comparison of demand and supply. The author of the Commission of Outdoor Recreation Study points out that apartment complex swimming pools and tennis courts were not inventoried even though they may meet some of the demand. Since such facilities are not open for public use, they are considered to have little impact on the local recreational demand.

After reviewing the data from the Commission of Outdoor Recreation's study, similar information about the facilities and

programs offered by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation was gathered. With help from the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation staff, an inventory was conducted of the facilities and equipment that Blacksburg Parks and Recreation offers the local citizens.

A comparison of the two sets of data (the recreational need as determined by the Commission of Outdoor Recreation and the recreational facilities offered by BPRD) was charted to determine how effectively the area's recreational need is being met. It is important to note that only the outdoor facilities managed by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation were included and not all of the facilities in the town of Blacksburg.

If the existing recreational facilities exceed the recreational demand, then the recreational need is being met. However, if the recreational demand exceeds the existing facilities, the recreational need is not being satisfied. For example, if the study determined that the area of Blacksburg needs six tennis courts and Blacksburg Parks and Recreation has eight courts, that area of recreation is being fulfilled.

This study is designed to determine if the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department is meeting the recreational needs of the area based on figures obtained by the Commission of Outdoor Recreation's study. The data supporting this determination is presented in a chart diagram. An analysis of the areas in which Blacksburg Parks and Recreation is meeting the current need has been completed as well as an analysis of the areas in which the recreational need is not being

met. These areas will be presented to Dr. William Winfrey, director of Blacksburg Parks and Recreation, to determine the reasons for the shortages or excesses of facilities.

Summary

The material presented in this chapter explains how this study is to be completed. A comparison study seems to be the best way to examine the data collected from the inventory of Blacksburg Parks and Recreation's facilities. However, this is a study of outdoor recreational facilities and does not include any of Blacksburg Parks and Recreation's indoor facilities.

CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

Introduction

This material presented in this chapter presents the findings of this study. The findings of the study are analyzed and discussed to better explain the figures and their meaning.

Results

The results of the study are presented in a chart diagram found in Figure 1. A similar chart in Figure 2 compares the number of outdoor facilities managed by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department to the national average for each facility within a medium-sized community as defined by McDonald and Cordell (1988).

Discussion

This section of the paper analyzes the results of this study. The author has discussed the findings of the study with Dr. William E. Winfrey, director of the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation. His input will be included in this section. Each outdoor facility will be discussed individually, as well as an overall review of the facilities as a whole.

Athletic Fields. According to the study completed by the Commission of Outdoor Recreation, the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department is only one athletic field shy of meeting the recreational need for that facility. Blacksburg currently has 10 athletic fields, and the Commission of Outdoor Recreation study shows the area needing 11 fields.

Recreational Facility	Recreational Need*	Recreational Supply#
athletic fields	11	10
tennis courts	16	12
basketball goals	33	3
golf courses	1	1
swimming pools	6	1
bicycling/jogging trails (miles)	15	7
picnicking (tables)	167	52

*"Demand, supply and need for outdoor recreational facilities in Virginia."

#Facilities maintained by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation

Figure 1

Comparison of Blacksburg's Recreational Need and Supply

However, Dr. Winfrey stated that three of four more fields are needed in order to meet the demand of practice time for the various little league and adult league teams that share the fields. The ten fields are adequate for handling scheduling of games, but teams do not receive enough practice time (W.E. Winfrey, personal communication, April 21, 1992).

The Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department's fields are located at various spots throughout town, which is more convenient for the citizens of Blacksburg than having them all at one location. There are two fields at Nellie's Cave Park, one each at Shenandoah Park and Trail, Primrose Drive Park, Gilbert Linkous Elementary School, Margaret Beeks Elementary School, and the Middle School. There is a lighted athletic field at Tom's Creek Park. The Municipal Park has one lighted field and one unlighted athletic field.

Tennis Courts. Blacksburg Park and Recreation's tennis courts are just four short of the number the Commission of Outdoor Recreation found necessary to meet the recreational need for tennis in Blacksburg. The Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department has 12 courts at three different locations in town. The largest tennis facility is located at the Municipal Park where there are eight courts. There are three courts located at the Middle School and one court at the Westover Hills Park.

Dr. Winfrey indicated that there are enough tennis courts in Blacksburg to meet the recreational need (W.E. Winfrey, personal

communication, April 21, 1992). There are numerous other tennis courts located throughout town besides the courts managed by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation. Many of the large apartment complexes, such as Foxridge, Terrace View and College Park, have tennis courts available for the use of their tenants. While these tennis courts may not be available for public use, they meet the recreational need for a percentage of the population of Blacksburg.

There are also 36 outdoor courts and six indoor courts located on the campus of Virginia Tech. Once again, everyone may not have access to these courts, but they meet the recreational need of a large portion of Blacksburg's population.

So even though the study shows Blacksburg being a little behind in the tennis department, they are far from lacking in tennis courts. This is one area where the study may be deceptive if you do not recognize the fact that there are numerous other facilities in Blacksburg besides the ones managed by the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department.

Basketball goals. This is one of the areas that is showing the largest margin of deficit in the study. According to the Commission of Outdoor Recreation's study, Blacksburg is lacking 30 basketball goals. However, it must be taken into account that there are basketball goals located throughout town at the various apartment complexes.

Dr. Winfrey has indicated there is not a need for more outdoor goals in Blacksburg (W.E. Winfrey, personal communication, April 21,

1992). He stated the biggest problem is the lack of indoor goals. However, this is not relevant to this study. Blacksburg Parks and Recreation's outdoor goals are located at Shenandoah Park and Trail and Westover Hills Park.

Golf Courses. Blacksburg Parks and Recreation manages one golf course which is exactly the number the Commission of Outdoor Recreation's study found this area to need. Dr. Winfrey stated the department is doing a good job of meeting the need of golf in the area (W.E. Winfrey, personal communication, April 21, 1992). He also notes that many of the golf course's customers come from surrounding counties to play. He attributes this partly to the fact that other areas may not be adequately meeting the recreational need for golf, and part due to lower prices at the Blacksburg Municipal Golf Course.

There are also two other golf courses in Blacksburg - the Blacksburg Country Club course, and the Virginia Tech Golf Course. These courses meet a great deal of the population's recreational need for golf.

Swimming Pools. According to the Commission of Outdoor Recreation study, Blacksburg is deficient in the area of swimming pools. The Town of Blacksburg manages one outdoor pool, the municipal pool located at the municipal golf course. However, the Commission of Outdoor Recreation's study suggests that the area should have six swimming pools.

This facility is a similar situation to the tennis courts previously discussed. Even though the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation only operates one swimming pool, there are sixteen pools across town. Several of the apartment complexes have at least one pool available for use by its tenants. Even though those pools are not open for public use, they still meet the recreational need of a percentage of the population of Blacksburg.

There are also private clubs that have swimming pools such as the Blacksburg Country Club and the Shawnee Swim Club. These pools also meet the recreational need for this type of facility for some of the Blacksburg citizens. Dr. Winfrey agrees that there are adequate swimming facilities in Blacksburg (W.E. Winfrey, personal communication, April 21, 1992). (Blacksburg Parks and Recreation is currently building an indoor aquatic facility, but it is not included in this project since it is not an outdoor facility.)

Bicycling/Jogging Trails. The Commission of Outdoor Recreation's study projects that Blacksburg should have fifteen miles of trails to be used for bicyclists and joggers. The Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department manages seven miles of such trails.

Various trails are located at the Shenandoah Park and Trail, from Miller Street to Country Club Drive, and from the Virginia Tech duck pond to the Hethwood pond. These are all off-road bike trails. There are on-road bike ways marked on Price's Fork Road, Tom's Creek Road, Harding Avenue and Patrick Henry Drive.

Even though Blacksburg is lacking in this area according to the study, Dr. Winfrey indicated this is one category the recreation department is strong (W.E. Winfrey, personal communication, April 21, 1992). The reason for this is the fact that there are other trails in Blacksburg other than the ones managed by the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department.

Virginia Tech manages trails for bicyclists and joggers, and is currently constructing new trails. The newest such trail was recently paved along the golf course on the Virginia Tech campus.

Picnic Tables. While picnicking is not an active form of recreation, it is a leisure time activity enjoyed by many during the warm weather months. The Commission of Outdoor Recreation's study estimated that the town of Blacksburg needs 167 picnic tables to meet the need for this facility. Blacksburg Parks and Recreation has 52 tables at various facilities across town.

There are 28 picnic tables located in five picnic shelters at Municipal Park on Patrick Henry Drive in Blacksburg. This is the largest and most used picnic facility operated by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation. Another picnic shelter located at Nellie's Cave Park houses 18 picnic tables.

The picnic shelter at Tom's Creek Park contains four picnic shelters. There is also a picnic table at Westover Hills Park and at Primrose Drive Park.

Even though there is a large deficit in the need and the supply of picnic tables, Dr. Winfrey stated that no more tables are needed (W.E. Winfrey, personal communication, April 21, 1992). He says there are very few times when more picnic tables are needed.

As is the case with most of the facilities discussed in this project, there are other picnic facilities in Blacksburg. One of the most popular picnic areas that is not managed by Blacksburg Parks and Recreation is the facilities at the Virginia Tech duck pond.

Summary

This chapter discusses the information presented in the chart in Figure 1. The difference in the need and the supply is discussed by the author as well as input from Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Director William E. Winfrey. The quantity of each facility as well as the various locations of the facilities are stated in order to give a better understanding to the data in Figure 1.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

The text of this chapter serves to draw conclusions for this project and states the author's recommendations. The information presented in this paper should help the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation staff members better understand how their department compares to state norms and the national average for a similar size community. No other similar studies about Blacksburg Parks and Recreation could be found to compare with this study.

Discussion

The data in Figure 1 and the discussion of that chart in Chapter 4 illustrates the comparison between the recreational need and the recreational supply. The comparison shows Blacksburg to be short of facilities in almost all of the areas examined.

Even though the comparison chart show Blacksburg's recreation department to be lacking in facilities, Dr. Winfrey does not view his department to be in a desperate position to add facilities. For one reason, the data in the charts is somewhat misleading since the column for Blacksburg's facilities include only the outdoor facilities managed by the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department and not all of the outdoor facilities within the Town of Blacksburg.

Overall, the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department seems to be adequately meeting the outdoor recreational needs of the local

citizens. All of the facilities are frequently used, but there does not seem to be such a large demand that some people are never able to use the equipment.

Recommendations

The author recommends the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department build outdoor basketball facilities near the Community Center on Patrick Henry Drive. There are currently no outdoor basketball goals located at the Community Center. However, there is a definite interest in basketball at the Community Center as the indoor courts are always crowded. Outdoor basketball goals is one of the area's of biggest deficit in the comparison chart.

While Dr. Winfrey does not see the immediate need for additional facilities to be built in a certain area of outdoor recreation, he does indicate Blacksburg could use a large park to include all of the various outdoor facilities mentioned in this project. However, Blacksburg Parks and Recreation's biggest current problem is the need for additional indoor facilities. The indoor problems will be the focus of additional facilities until that problem is remedied.

If this study were to be done again, the author recommends that all outdoor facilities in the town of Blacksburg are included in the study instead of just the facilities operated by the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department. A more realistic comparison can be made by including the facilities located at Virginia Tech and various apartment complexes.

Summary

This chapter concludes this project on the recreational needs of Blacksburg. Hopefully this study will help the recreation staff and local citizens better understand how the available facilities rank against other standards. The study should help Blacksburg Parks and Recreation visualize how they stand now with outdoor facilities and where they need to be in order to fulfill the recreational needs of the area. It is important to understand in what areas the recreation department needs improvement before changes can be made. However, there are not many areas of outdoor recreation that the Blacksburg Parks and Recreation Department needs vast improvement.

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