PROGRESS DRAFT

HUNTERDON COUNTY STRATEGIC PARK, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN

Prepared for The Hunterdon County Department of Planning, Economic Development and Land Use
Hunterdon County Division of Planning Services
And the Division of Parks and Recreation

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Last Landscape

Today, Hunterdon County residents enjoy a rural landscape, consisting of a mosaic of farms, parks, protected forests, wooded stream corridors and wetlands. This rural character is threatened by a slow accretion of low-density suburban development that fragments forest habitats, brings residents in conflict with farming and closes off the views of open vistas from public roads. Proof of this gradual erosion is the change Hunterdon County experienced between 1972 and 1995 in the loss of its natural communities and habitats; over 11,075 acres of grassland/cultivated land (9.1% loss), 23,567 acres of upland forest cover (20% loss), and 14,418 acres of wetlands (60% loss). In the past decade, the pace of development has slowed significantly, but our perspective must take a longer view and set out now to preserve the essential elements of the County's open space landscape assuring it remains for future generations.

The Hunterdon County Strategic Park Recreation and Open Space Plan (hereinafter County Park Plan) proposes a future County Park system as one of the main components of achieving the primary vision of the Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan: Protection of Hunterdon County's extensive network of natural resources and maintenance of its rural or scenic-rural landscape.

The County Park Plan proposes a future County Park system that complements the other contributors to the County's open space character: State, municipal, preserved farmland, conservation areas and environmental corridors. These different approaches to open space preservation and the corrective tissues of environmental corridors together can form the future open space landscape of the County.

Besides, identifying the County Park system role in natural resource protection, the County Park Plan proposes an ultimate County Park system made up of sites and facilities for active and passive outdoor recreation activities available for the public. The County Park Plan recommends how agricultural land, municipal parkland and smart growth local development tools also can be used to create local and tourist experiences contributing to the County's economic well-being.

The Current Hunterdon County Park System

The County Park System has expanded at a continuous rate since it acquired its first park, the Wescott Nature Preserve, in 1966. Over the past 50 years, the County Park System has added 24 separate park areas. Since the year 2000, the County system has significantly expanded from 5,217 acres to 8,423 acres in 2016, largely due to County Open Space Trust Fund.[1]

The Hunterdon County Park System has a park classification system for all County Parks, defining the levels of public use sought and the management responsibilities needed. This classification system, shown in Figure 1, highlights the dual role of the Hunterdon County Park Department as both a resource management agency and a provider of recreation opportunities. This classification system is a flexible tool which recognizes that some County parks will vary over time from partially to totally developed, calling for a mix of management approaches. Table 1 presents all the Hunterdon County Parks with their individual acreage and improvements organized according to each park's classification designation.

[1] 8,423 acres is the figure used in Hunterdon County Park and Recreation Areas and Facilities Index; it includes acreage acquired in partnership with the New Jersey Water Supply Authority. For the purpose of analyses in the plan, the total amount of County Park Acreage will be 7814 acres based on the County's GIS data of acreage solely owned by the Hunterdon County Park System.

Based on this classification system, the County Park System currently consists predominately of largely undeveloped natural areas suited to trails for hiking and horseback riding and nature watching.

- 15 percent of 1,303 acres of the County parkland consists of areas in their natural state with little or no parking offering a variety of designated trails.
- The largest amount of County Park land consists of improved natural areas found in 15 parks amounting to 4,644 acres of 55% of the County's total parkland. These parks offer scenic vistas and slightly more improvements in the form of signage and parking, as well as a variety of trails.
- Linked greenways amounting to 1,564 acres (9.5%) make up the four major County owned or maintained trail systems: The Columbia Trial, The Landsdown Trail, The South Branch Trail segments and the Charlestown Greenway Section.

Figure 1
HUNTERDON COUNTY PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

<u>Unimproved Natural Area (UNA)</u>
General Definition: An area in its natural state with no improvements and no off-street parking.

Prescribed Use: For use by individuals and hunting permitted in certain areas.
Maintenance: Limited natural undeveloped areas, isolated maintenance around remaining residences, seasonal mowing, farming by agricultural agreement, post and clear boundaries.
Administrative Responsibility: Limited number of signs, wildlife management, patrols by Rangers.

Example: Charlestown Reservation.

<u>Improved Natural Area (INA)</u>
General Definition: An area with natural features available for public use in a controlled manner. Limited development to accommodate visitors such as off-street parking areas, trails, rest rooms, camping areas, and picnic facilities.

Prescribed Use: For use by individuals or supervised groups.

Maintenance: Periodic inspections with on-site maintenance tasks completed as needed. Routine maintenance plans in effect, post and clear boundaries.

Administrative Responsibility: Appropriate signs, patrols by Rangers, wildlife management.
Example: Teetertown Ravine Nature Preserve.

<u>Linked/Greenway Area (LGA)</u>
General Definition: A corridor area with natural features along a river/stream or abandoned railroad which is part of a linked open space system featuring trails and limited development available to the public in a controlled manner such as maps and printed material and limited off-street parking.

Prescribed Use: For use by individuals or supervised groups.

Maintenance: Periodic inspections with on-site maintenance tasks completed as needed . Routine maintenance plans in effect.

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Administrative Responsibility: Appropriate signs, patrols by Rangers, wildlife management.

Example: South Branch River Reservation.

General Use Area (GUA)
General Definition: An area that is developed and made available to the general public for a wide range of passive and active recreational opportunities and special events.

Prescribed Use: For use by individuals and groups. Regulated uses are permitted as scheduled in areas designated by the County Recreation Commission.

Maintenance: A regularly scheduled, comprehensive maintenance program. Ideally, the maintenance operation would be housed on-site, or within five miles of the park. Clear and post boundaries.

Administrative responsibility: Daily patrols by Rangers. Comprehensive sign system. Permit system for groups, regulated uses and special events, wildlife management, specialized employees.

Example: Deer Path Park.

Special Use Area (SUA)
General Definition: An area developed for one or several unique uses, which requires special care and is made available for public use in a controlled manner.

Prescribed Use: Use by the general public, specialized activities in a controlled manner.

Maintenance: Regular program designed to meet the unique needs of the area. Maintenance operations housed on-site.

Administrative Responsibility: Daily patrols by Rangers. Appropriate sign system. Permit / reservation / registration systems, wildlife management, specialized employees.

Example: Arboretum.

Each County park site along with other types of preserved open space and parks in Hunterdon County is identified Map 1, titled Existing Parks and Open Space. Maps 2-5 present Existing Parks and Open Space in each of the four planning regions of the County.

Only 11.2 percent of County parkland consisting of 912 acres is improved for active recreation uses:

- There is only one General Use Area, Deer Path Park, 104 acre park, devoted to group activities such as picnic sites, gazebo, sports fields supported by parking and served by a variety of trails including a fitness trial.
- There are five Special Use Areas totaling 808 acres. One Special Use Area has been developed for golfing, the 241 acre Heron Glen Golf Course. The other five Special Use Areas serve the needs of both individuals and groups seeking to participate in organized activities or casual relaxed outdoor experiences. The 90 acre Echo Hill Park provides campsites and indoor

facilities. The 135 acre Hunterdon County Arboretum offers gardens, picnic sites and gazebo. The 252 acre South County Park with its 89 acre fairgrounds section hosts the annual Hunterdon County 4-H Fair and the one acre Court Street Park serves County employees, visitors and residents adjacent to the County Governmental and Court complex in Flemington.

Table 1 Existing Hunterdon County Parks

Unimproved Natural Area	Acreage	Meeting Room	Mountain Biking	Campsites	Canoe Access	X-Country Skiing	Fishing	Fitness Trail	Gardens	Golf Course	Hiking/Nature Trails	Horseshoe Court	Horse Trails	Hunting	Information Boards	Nature Study	Picnic Pavilions	Picnic Sites	Playground	Restrooms	Scenic Vista	Sledding Area	Soccer, Softball Fields	Visitor Center	Gazebo	Parking
Clover Hill Park, Clover Hill Road, Readington Township	116		x			x	x				x		x	x		x										x
Charlestown Reserve, Charlestown Road, Bethlehem Township and Hampton Borough	269		x								x			x		x										x
Crystal Springs Preserve, Pleasant Grove Road, Lebanon Township	232		x			x	x				x		x	x		x		x								x
Hilltop Reserve, Sand Hill Road, Raritan Township	59																									
Landsdown Meadow, Route 617, Franklin Township	174					x	x				x			x		x										x
Laport Reserve - Mountain Road, East Amwell Township	49										x					x										
Miquin Woods Preserve, Newport Road, Lebanon Township	302		x			x	x				x			x	x	x										x
Musconetcong Mountain Preserve, Ellis Road, Holland Township	102													x												
Total Acres Unimproved Natural Area	**1303**																									
Improved Natural Area																										
Cold Brook Park, Route 517, Tewksbury Township	180		x			x					x		x	x	x	x					x					x
Cushetunk Mountain Preserve, Old Mountain Road, Clinton and Readington Townships	380	x									x			x	x	x					x					x
Round Mountain Section,West Woodschurch and Foothill Roads, Readington Township	253		x								x		x	x	x	x					x					x
Hoffman Park, Baptist Church Road, Union Township	354		x			x	x				x		x	x	x	x			x			x	x			x
Jugtown Mountain Preserve, Mine Road, Bethlehem Township	262										x			x	x	x		x			x					x
Musconetcong Gorge Preserve, Route 519 and Dennis Road, Holland Township	501										x			x	x	x					x					x
Point Mountain Reservation, Penwell and Point Mountain Roads, Lebanon Township	1139		x		x	x	x				x		x	x	x	x		x		x		x				x
Schick Reserve, Hickory Corner and Schick Roads, Alexandria Township	311		x			x					x		x	x	x	x										x
Sourland Mountain Preserve, Rileysville Road, East Amwell Township	364		x			x					x			x	x	x										x
Teetertown Preserve, Pleasant Grove Road and Hollow Brook Road, Lebanon Township	305		x			x	x				x		x	x	x	x					x					
Tower Hill Reserve, Mountainview and Mine Roads, Bethlehem Township	158					x					x			x		x										x
Van Leight Management Area, Mine Road, Bethlehem Township	55													x												
Union Furnace Preserve, Van Syckles Corner Road, Union Township	100						x				x			x		x										x
Uplands Reserve, Barton Hollow and Altamont Roads, Raritan Township	100										x			x		x										x
Wescott Preserve, Raven Rock-Rosemont Road, Delaware Township	182					x	x				x		x	x	x	x					x					x
Total Acres Improved Natural Area	4644																									
Linked Greenway Area																										
Columbia Trail, Califon and High Bridge Boros, Clinton, Lebanon and Tewksbury Townships	108		x			x	x				x		x		x	x					x					x
LandsdownTrail, Lower Landsdown Rd., Franklin Township, Main Street, Clinton Township	18		x			x	x				x					x										x
South Branch Wildlife Management Area, Hillsbourgh road, Hillsborough Township	437		x			x					x		x	x		x										x
South Branch Reservation																										
Arches Section, 513 and Arch Street, High Bridge Borough	3						x								x			x								x
Assiscong Marsh Section, River Road, Raritan Township	43														x	x										x
Melick's Bridge Section, Hamden Road,Clinton and Franklin Townships	92		x		x		x				x		x	x		x					x					
Pine Hill Section, Pine Hill Road, Franklin Township	26		x		x		x				x		x	x		x					x					x
Riverfield Section, Route 31 NorthClinton Township	25		x				x				x			x		x										x
Stanton Station Section, Stanton Station Road, Raritan Township	152		x		x		x				x			x	x	x					x					x
Sunnyside Picnic Area, Kiceniuk Road, Clinton Township	66		x		x	x	x				x		x		x	x		x								x
Valinsky's Section, River Road, Clinton and Franklin Townships	65				x		x							x												x
Wings Section, Deer Path Road, Readington Township	90		x				x				x		x	x		x										x
Additional Sections, Califon, Clinton, Raritan, Readington Townships	381													x												
Charlestown Greenway Section, Mine Road, Bethlehem Township	58													x												
Total Acres Linked Greenway Area	**1564**																									
General Use Area																										
Deer Path Park, West Woodschurch Road, Readington Township	104		x			x	x	x	x		x	x	x		x	x		x					x		x	
Total Acres General Use Area	**104**																									
Special Use Area																										
Hunterdon County Arboretum, Route 31, Clinton Township	135					x					x			x	x	x		x							x	
Court Street Park, Park Avenue and Court Street, Flemington Borough	1								x																x	x
Echo Hill Park, Lilac Drive, Clinton Township	90		x	x		x	x				x			x	x	x										
Heron Glen Golf Course, Route 202/31, Raritan Township	241									x					x						x					
South County Park	252													x												x
Fairground Section, Routes 179 and 202, East and West Amwell Townships	89																									
Total Acres Special Use Area	**808**																									
Total Acres	**8423**																									

Preserved Open Space In Hunterdon County

Hunterdon County has 80,717 acres set aside as protected or preserved open space.[2] This open space amounts to 28.8 percent of the County's total land area of 279,961 acres. This open space falls under the following eight categories is depicted in Table 2: Preserved farmland including farmland easements and NJSADC preserved farmland; State Parks and Preserved Open Space; Municipal Parks and Open Space; County Parks and Open Space; Non-Profit Conservation Lands; Private Open Space; Board of Education and Common-Owned Open Space. Map 1 presents all preserved types of Open Space in Hunterdon County.

Table 2 Existing Open Space by Region/Municipality

OSP Region	MUNICIPALITY	Municipal Parks and Open Space	County Parks and Open Space	County Park / State Owned Land	State Parks and Preserved Open Space	Board of Education	Private Open Space	Common-Owned Open Space	Non-Profit Conservation Lands	Farmland Preservation	TOTAL EXISTING OPEN SPACE
East	Clinton Town	63.98	17.03	0.00	143.22	9.14	22.52	0.87	8.60	0.00	265.35
East	Clinton Township	1,329.43	765.65	0.00	4,414.49	158.97	249.58	379.63	121.81	824.39	8,243.96
East	Flemington Borough	20.47	2.35	0.00	0.00	15.26	0.44	0.00	0.00	0.00	38.52
East	High Bridge Borough	354.40	13.47	0.00	201.60	25.54	0.31	44.05	0.00	0.00	639.36
East	Lebanon Borough	12.47	0.00	0.00	8.34	1.92	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.71	48.45
East	Raritan Township	798.80	816.38	298.91	0.53	233.74	22.27	3.98	161.73	1,394.31	3,730.64
East	Readington Township	2,393.73	785.19	9.40	814.98	228.83	184.73	11.64	35.84	4,825.43	9,289.78
East	Union Township	324.60	446.71	0.00	3,638.61	39.16	62.10	144.48	16.04	977.23	5,648.94
East	*Hillsborough Township	0.00	0.00	176.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	176.76
East Total		**5,297.88**	**2,846.78**	**485.07**	**9,221.77**	**712.56**	**541.94**	**584.65**	**344.03**	**8,047.08**	**28,081.75**
North	Bethlehem Township	461.94	743.58	0.00	1,000.73	35.14	15.02	356.62	312.38	1,584.30	4,509.72
North	Bloomsbury Borough	33.84	2.55	0.00	103.72	1.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	141.17
North	Califon Borough	32.87	27.30	0.00	15.70	3.96	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.80	87.62
North	Glen Gardner Borough	50.63	26.63	0.00	36.64	0.00	0.00	19.47	0.00	0.00	133.38
North	Hampton Borough	18.79	20.84	0.00	2.45	6.43	0.00	5.31	0.00	0.00	53.82
North	Holland Township	327.58	483.33	0.00	977.91	33.11	51.75	0.00	169.74	2,638.86	4,682.28
North	Lebanon Township	315.46	1,717.95	0.00	1,816.13	101.49	247.42	0.00	298.84	1,402.26	5,899.55
North	Milford Borough	96.33	0.00	0.00	46.84	3.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	146.70
North	Tewksbury Township	1,042.84	296.54	0.00	32.17	29.80	42.04	103.22	1,013.58	1,784.73	4,344.91
North	*Washington Township	0.00	65.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	65.24
North Total		**2,380.28**	**3,383.96**	**0.00**	**4,032.30**	**214.51**	**356.22**	**484.63**	**1,794.54**	**7,417.95**	**20,064.38**
South	East Amwell Township	322.72	532.73	0.00	870.90	21.81	0.00	0.00	836.41	4,976.07	7,560.65
South	Lambertville	31.76	0.00	0.00	46.20	2.34	0.00	53.99	0.00	0.00	134.29
South	West Amwell Township	332.94	250.75	0.00	1,661.04	74.05	482.66	0.00	182.28	1,915.30	4,899.01
South Total		**687.42**	**783.48**	**0.00**	**2,578.14**	**98.20**	**482.66**	**53.99**	**1,018.69**	**6,891.37**	**12,593.95**
West	Alexandria Township	116.37	312.81	0.00	603.78	167.02	488.00	182.66	38.43	2,545.02	4,454.09
West	Delaware Township	116.75	356.23	0.00	1,165.18	23.88	0.00	0.00	667.81	5,038.52	7,368.37
West	Franklin Township	207.04	131.47	0.00	96.60	396.52	0.00	0.00	167.11	2,726.24	3,724.98
West	Frenchtown Borough	32.12	0.00	0.00	180.28	2.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	215.19
West	Kingwood Township	49.88	0.00	0.00	1,376.70	27.43	80.95	0.00	196.32	2,328.07	4,059.37
West	Stockton Borough	5.90	0.00	0.00	121.25	0.27	0.00	0.00	5.46	22.19	155.07
West Total		**528.07**	**800.51**	**0.00**	**3,543.79**	**617.90**	**568.95**	**182.66**	**1,075.12**	**12,660.06**	**19,977.06**
TOTAL	**TOTAL**	**8,893.64**	**7,814.73**	**485.07**	**19,376.00**	**1,643.16**	**1,949.78**	**1,305.92**	**4,232.38**	**35,016.45**	**80,717.14**

* Parkland outside of Hunterdon County but Managed by HCDP&R

Table 3 provides a ranking of the types of open space in Hunterdon County indicating that preserved farmland comprises 43 percent of the County's total protected open space.

[2] Preserved Open Space data was obtained from County Planning Department GIS data files, Open Space Maps and data verified by municipal staff; Open Space data obtained from New Jersey Water Supply Authority; and inquiries by the Consultant.

TABLE 3 Ranking of the Existing Types of Open Space in Hunterdon County	
Type of Open Space	**Acres**
1. Preserved Farmland	35,016.45
2. State Parks and Preserved Open Space	19,376.00
3. County Parks and Open Space (including jointly owned with State)	8,230.88
4. Municipal Parks and Open Space	8,893.00
5. Non-profit Conservation Lands	4,232.38
6. Board of Education	1643.16
7. Private Open Space	1949.78
8. Common Owned Open Space	1305.92

Distribution of Open Space Types by Region

Tables 4 - 10 present a breakdown of the four major categories of preserved open space in the four planning regions of the County used in this report for analysis and graphic display purposes. Table 4 indicates the East Region is the leading area in total amount of preserved open space with 28,022 acres. Both the North Region with 20,064 acres and the West Region with 19,977 acres are closely ranked as the regions with the second and third highest total of preserved open space. The South Region comes in fourth with 11,377.97 open space acres. This South Region is the smallest of the planning areas comprised of only three municipalities. However, when its amount of open space is compared in Table 5 to the region's current population on a per capita basis, the South Region has a comparatively favorable balance of 1.17 acres of open space per the region's current population of 10,761 persons. The West Region with a population of 18,897 persons also enjoys a comparatively favorable .98 acres open space per person.

The East Region , traversed by three major highways, Interstate 78, State Routes 22-173 and 31, is the most populated section of the County with 70,003 persons. While the East Region possesses the most amount of preserved open space, and provides .385 acres of open space per person.

When it comes to open space available to the public, the open space picture changes dramatically. The amount of preserved County/Municipal parks and open space in the West and South Regions in Table 6 indicates a lack of close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities.

Table 7 shows only 7 percent of the West Region's total open space consists of County/Municipal parkland. Similarly, the South Region has only 8 percent of its total open spae in County/Municipal parkland. The East Region has 51 percent of its total open space in County and Municipal park and open space. The North Region has 34 percent of its open space in County and Municipal parkland. It should be noted that the East and North Region together contain 76 percent of the County's total population.

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TABLE 4
Existing Open Space Distribution by Region

Region	Acres
1. East	28,022
2. North	20,064.38
3. West	19,977.06
4. South	12,593.95

TABLE 5
Existing Total Open Space Per Capita Ranked by Region

Region	Acres/Per Person
1. South	1.17
2. West	1.08
3. North	.71
4. East	.385

TABLE 6
Existing County and Municipal Parkland Ranked by Region

Region	Acres
1. East	8,511.89 (51%)
2. North	5,764.24 (34%)
3. South	1,470.90 (8%)
4. West	1,328.58 (7%)

TABLE 7
Existing County and Municipal Parkland Per Capita Ranked by Region

Region	Acres/Person
1. North	.20 acres/person
2. South	.136 acres/person
3. East	.12 acres/person
4. West	.072 acres/person

TABLE 8
Existing Preserved Agriculture Ranked by Region

Region	Acres
1. East	8,047
2. North	7,417
3. West	12,660
4. South	6,891.37

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TABLE 9
Existing Preserved Agriculture as a Percent of Region Total Open Space Acreage

Region	Percent
1. West	63%
2. South	54%
3. North	37%
4. East	28.7%

TABLE 10
Existing State Park Acreage and Percent of Total Region Open Space Ranked by Region

Region	Acres	Percent
1. East	9,221.77	32.9%
2. North	4,032.30	20%
3. West	3,543.79	17.7%
4. South	2,578	20%

TABLE 11
State Park/Open Space

Municipality	Acres	Region
1. Clinton	4,414.49	East
2. Union	3,638.61	East
3. Lebanon Twp.	1,816.13	North
4. West Amwell	1,661.04	South
5. Kingwood	1,376.70	West

12,906.97 acres or 66.6 percent of total State Parks/Open Space is located in five municipalities

TABLE 12
Farmland Preservation

Municipality	Acres	Region
1. Delaware	5,038.52	West
2. East Amwell	4,976.07	South
3. Readington	4,825.43	East
4. Franklin	2,726.24	West
5. Holland	2,638.86	North

20,205.12 acres or 57.7 percent of total Farmland Preservation is located in five municipalities

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TABLE 13 Existing Open Space in Top Five Municipalities			
Municipality	**Acres**	**Region**	**Comment**
1. Readington	9,289.78	East	52% of open space in preserved agriculture
2. East Amwell	7,560.65	South	66% of open space in preserved agriculture
3. Delaware	7,368.37	West	68% of open space in preserved agriculture
4. Lebanon	5,899.55	North	60% of open space in State and County Parks 24% of open space in preserved agriculture
5. Union Twp.	5,648.94	East	64% of open space in State Park/Open Space

35,767.29 acres or 44 percent of total of all preserved Open Space in Hunterdon County is located in five municipalities.

TABLE 14 Existing Open Space by Type in Top Five Municipalities		
County Parks		
Municipality	**Acres**	**Region**
1. Lebanon	1,717.95	North
2. Readington	785.19	East
3. Clinton Twp.	765.65	East
4. Raritan Twp.	757.46	East
5. Bethlehem	743.58	North

5,302.56 acres or 64.8 percent of total County Park acreage is located in five municipalities.

TABLE 15 Existing Open Space by Type in Top Five Municipalities		
Municipal Parks/Open Space		
Municipality	**Acres**	**Region**
1. Readington	2,393.73	East
2. Clinton Twp.	1,329.43	East
3. Tewksbury	1,042.84	North
4. Raritan Twp.	798.80	East
5. Bethlehem	461.94	North

6,026.74 acres or 67.7 percent of total Municipal Park/Open Space is located in five municipalities.

TABLE 16 Ten Municipalities with Least Amount of Total Open Space		
Municipal Parks/Open Space		
Municipality	**Acres**	**Region**
1. Flemington	38.52	East
2. Lebanon	48.45	East
3. Hampton	53.82	North
4. Califon	87.62	North
5. Glen Gardner	133.38	North
6. Lambertville	134.29	South
7. Bloomsbury	141.17	North
8. Milford Borough	146.70	North
9. Stockton	155.07	West
10. Frenchtown	215.19	West

1,154.21 acres or only 1.4 percent of total open space of 80,658 acres in Hunterdon County is located in 10 of the County's 26 municipalities.

TABLE 17 Ten Municipalities with Least Amount of Municipal Open Space		
Municipal Parks/Open Space		
Municipality	**Acres**	**Region**
1. Stockton	5.90	West
2. Lebanon	12.47	East
3. Hampton	18.79	North
4. Flemington	20.47	East
5. Lambertville	31.76	South
6. Frenchtown	32.12	West
7. Califon	32.87	North
8. Bloomsbury	33.84	North
9. Glen Gardner	50.63	North
10. Kingwood	49.88	West

288.73 acres or only 3.25 percent of the total municipal open space of 8,893 acres is located in nine boroughs and one township (Kingwood).

TABLE 18
Ten Municipalities with Least Amount of County Parkland

Municipal Parks/Open Space		
Municipality	**Acres**	**Region**
1. Lebanon	0	East
2. Milford	0	North
3. Frenchtown	0	West
4. Lambertville	0	South
5. Stockton	0	West
6. Kingwood	0	West
7. Flemington	2.35	East
8. Bloomsbury	2.5	North
9. High Bridge	13.47	East
10. Clinton Town	17.03	East

County Park total acres in ten municipalities of 35.35 acre amounts to 004.5 percent of all County parkland in Hunterdon County.

TABLE 19
Ten Municipalities with Least Amount of Municipal and County Park and Open Space
Municipal Parks/Open Space

Municipality	Acres	Region	Acres/Person
1. Stockton	5.90	West	.011 acres/person (4)
2. Lebanon	12.47	East	.009 acres/person (3)
3. Flemington	20.47	East	.0045 acres/person (1)
4. Lambertville	31.76	South	.0081 acres/person (2)
5. Frenchtown	32.12	West	.023 acres/person (6)
6. Bloomsbury	33.84	North	.039 acres/person (9)
7. Hampton	39.63	North	.028 acres/person (8)
8. Kingwood	49.88	West	.013 acres/person (5)
9. Clinton Town	63.69	East	.024 acres/person (7)
10. Glen Gardner	77.26	North	.045 acres/person (10)

Nine of the ten municipalities in Hunterdon County with the least amount of combined Municipal and County parkland within their jurisdiction consist of small boroughs and only one township. Half of these underserved municipalities border the Delaware River. One of the difficulties in providing additional open space and parkland within the County's small boroughs and towns is they may lack available open land. To elevate this problem, County planning policy could be acquisition of County park open space near these boroughs or provision of trust funds for making facility improvements that would expand recreational experiences at existing municipal parks.

Vision Of The Hunterdon County Strategic Park Recreation And Open Space Plan

The Hunterdon County Strategic Park Recreation and Open Space Plan (hereinafter County Park Plan) proposes a future County Park system as one of the main components of achieving the primary vision of the Hunterdon County Growth Management Plan: Protection of Hunterdon County's extensive network of natural resources and maintenance of its rural or scenic-rural landscape.

The County Park Plan proposes a future County Park system that complements the other contributors to the County's open space character: State, municipal, preserved farmland, conservation areas and environmental corridors. These different approaches to open space preservation and the connective tissues of environmental corridors together can form the future open space landscape of the County.

The County, Municipal and State park systems are the leading custodians in Hunterdon County of both natural resource protection and the provider of open space and outdoor recreational facilities accessible to the public. The other approaches to natural resource protection can also supply their own inimitable kinds of recreation experiences for residents and tourists.

The County Open Space Trust Fund can be one of the effective means to implement this vision and its policies.

Planning For The Ultimate Hunterdon County Park System

County and municipal parks are the only parts of Hunterdon County open space network dedicated and accessible to its local residents. Other types of open space, while they contribute to the County's scenic landscape and protect its natural environmental functions, are either privately held or subject to access restrictions. The County's two largest active recreation parks, Spruce Run and Round Valley, are shared with all State residents and not always available to local residents due to crowded conditions in the peak summer season. In deciding on the allocation of County Open Space Trust Funds, the Strategic Plan needs to address how much total acreage should be set aside for the ultimate County Park System.

Park and Open Space Acquisition Planning Guidelines

The State has provided in the New Jersey Open Space and Recreation Plan guidelines for planning and evaluating municipal and County Park and Open Space acquisition goals.

There are two methods that can be used to determine the amount of open space that should be acquired by the County. One is the acres per population method, and the other is the Balanced Land Use Method both of which were used in the New Jersey Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan (2008-2012). The acres per population method generates higher acreage requirements as population increases and land becomes more scarce.

The Balanced Land Use Method recognizes land as an exhaustible resource that is being consumed over time by development. Consequently, the Balanced Land Use Method establishes a long-range goal by establishing a minimum amount of acreage that should be reserved for open space by all jurisdictions based on the amount of developed and developable land in the County or municipality. To establish the long-range goal, the Balanced Land Use Method is the preferred method.

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Acres Per Population Method
The National Park and Recreation Association uses a guideline for the number of acres that should be in active recreation use of 8 acres per 1,000 persons for municipal land and 12 acres per 1,000 persons for County land.

Based on the acres per population method, there should be 1,623 acres to provide for a projected population of 135,300 persons in 2032. Hunterdon County with a current park system of 7,814 acres would have a surplus of 6,191 acres to meet this guideline's goal for a 2032 population. However, the County falls short considering only 912 acres of County parkland are improved for active recreation use.

In total park acreage the municipalities in Hunterdon County measures up very well under this planning guideline calling for 1026 municipal park acres today and 1080 acres in 2032. With an existing amount of 8,893 total acres set aside for municipal park and open space, there would be a surplus of 7,867 acres, when measured against a projected year 2032 population of 135,000 persons. Only Flemington Borough with an existing population of 4,581 persons and 20.47 acres of municipal parkland fall short today under the acres per population planning guideline.

Balanced Land Use Method
The New Jersey State Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan of 2008-2013 (SCORP) recommends using the balanced land use method to establish long-range open space acquisition goals. The SCORP states that 3 percent of the developable and developed land area in a municipality should be the goal of the amount of municipal open space, and 7 percent of the developable and developed land area should be set aside for County parkland. 80,717 acres in total preserved open space amounts to 28.8 percent of the County's land area. SCORP states that in Hunterdon County 26.1 percent or 73,049 acres are developed land.[3]

According to SCORP, 135,456 acres of Hunterdon County acres consist of undeveloped land.[4] Combining that figure with the 73,049 acres of developed land amount to 208,505 total acres as the basis for calculating municipal and County open space acquisition goals under the Balanced Land Use Method.

Using this guideline, there should be 6,255 acres of municipal land in Hunterdon County. Currently, the total amount of open space under municipal jurisdiction is 8,893.64 acres. This means there is an existing open space surplus of 2,638 total acres at the municipal level.

As for the County, the County should have 14,595 acres of open space/parkland set aside using the Balanced Land Use Method. Based on this calculation, there would be long term shortfall of 6,781 parkland acreage under the County's jurisdiction.

1. **Public Demands for Recreation Activities**
   The County Open Space and Park Plan will have to translate the type of recreation activities demanded by the public obtained from surveys, focal groups, etc. and experienced by the County Park staff into County Park acreage and facilities.

[3] P 14, SCORP, Table 4, County Acreage Percentage Preserved Developed and Available.
[4] SCORP'S estimate of available undeveloped land includes all vacant and non-preserved farmland and exclude preserved open spaces, steep slopes over 12% and regulated critical environmental areas such as wetlands.

2. **Economic Role of the Ultimate County Park System**
   Green Play has provided insight into of the type of County Park facilities and their acreage requirements that can generate economic and tourist activity based on information in County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, and analysis of Demographic and Recreation Trends, and tourism synergy that could occur with trails linked to vineyards, riding academies and downtowns.

3. **Green Play Experiences with Other Similar County or Regional Park Systems**

4. **Environmental Criteria**
   The function of a County Park System is both provision of land for public recreation and preservation of key natural environmental features. The Statewide Acquisition Priority Point System criteria listed below could be used to prioritize potential County Park acquisition sites.[5]

Statewide Local Acquisition Priority Point System

	Criteria	Points
a.	Wellhead Protection Area Water Supply	2
b.	Groundwater Recharge Area	5
c.	Aquifer Productivity Ranking	3
d.	Public Surface Water Supply Watersheds (intakes)	3
e.	Watershed Curb Draining to Special Surface Water Resources	4
f.	Flood Prone Areas	10
g.	Wetlands	5
h.	Forests	5
i.	Unique Resources	5
j.	Priority Threatened and Endangered Species Sites	10
k.	Nation Heritage Priority Sites	10
l.	Rare Plant or Ecological Community	10
m.	Significant Historic or Cultural Features	10
n.	Open space trails continuity such as greenway linkages (See Garden State Greenways, NJ Conservation Foundation (2003)	10
	1. Recreational Benefit (Urbanization, density, access, potential wide variety)	14
	2. Development threat	10
	3. Size of property	
	100 acres +	4
	50 acres	3
	25 acres	1
	4. Planning consistency with other plans (State Plan, Land Preservation Plan, Highlands, Garden State Greenways)	7

[5] Pages 65-80, 2013-2017 New Jersey Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (11/19/2013)

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The Planning Process

The preparation of the County Strategic Park and Open Space Plan included the following basic activities:

1. Review of past Hunterdon County Park and planning documents such as the past County Park Master Plans, the County Growth Management Plan, the Hunterdon County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and County Open Space, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund Plan.

2. Meeting with the staffs of County Park and County Planning Board.

3. Focal group sessions with interested residents and meetings with stakeholders involved with open space acquisition and public recreation and conservation.

4. Public sessions to gather information and commentary and to present findings of surveys and studies including a visioning session to obtain a consensus of County Park Plan priorities.

5. A statistical valid survey of County residents to elicit views on County park and recreation sites, programs, staff operations and an open information or non-statistical valued survey offering another forum for opinions and commentary by County residents.

6. Compilation and mapping of all sources of protected open space at all levels of government, preserved farmland and non-profit environmental groups. A list showing all of the existing open space parcels was sent to all 26 municipalities to review for accuracy and updated information.

7. Identification and mapping of the remaining vacant and non-preserved farmland in the county which should be considered in future County park site and acquisition planning. For the purposes of selecting potential County park and greenway properties, the amount of potential available land chosen from was 104,955.56 acres consisting of 8,907.57 acres of vacant land, 2,759.90 acres of non-ROSI public land and 93,288.09 acres of non-preserved farm qualified land.

   Table 20 and Map 2 present the potential vacant or underdeveloped properties available in each municipality used in the evaluation in the selection of future County park property acquisitions.[6]

8. Analysis of basic demographics and trends in park and recreation activities relevant to a Hunterdon County Park system.

9. Public hearings before the County Planning Board and the Chosen Freeholders to review, refine and adopt the County Park Plan.

[6] The New Jersey Open Space and Outdoor Recreation Plan stated a higher estimate of 134,500 acres of land in Hunterdon County was available for selecting open space property acquisitions. The State plan did not identify the details of this estimate.

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TABLE 20

Potential Land Available for Open Space Acquisition

OSP Region	MUNICIPALITY	Vacant	Public Land	Farm Qualified	Total
East	Clinton	53.92	11.33	96.58	161.83
East	Clinton Township	356.42	636.36	4,522.10	5,514.87
East	Flemington Borough	21.94	16.06	-	38.00
East	High Bridge Borough	33.35	23.03	50.81	107.20
East	Lebanon Borough	24.09	7.01	46.09	77.19
East	Raritan Township	1,869.74	541.99	5,759.19	8,170.93
East	Readington Township	857.54	70.38	7,361.19	8,289.12
East	Union Township	419.80	323.06	2,806.36	3,549.22
East Total		**3,636.81**	**1,629.22**	**20,642.32**	**25,908.34**
North	Bethlehem Township	528.15	32.01	3,719.94	4,280.10
North	Bloomsbury Borough	14.98	0.04	176.36	191.37
North	Califon Borough	31.97	0.88	107.89	140.74
North	Glen Gardner Borough	51.10	29.21	107.83	188.14
North	Hampton Borough	53.93	12.27	409.54	475.73
North	Holland Township	733.39	86.75	4,656.32	5,476.46
North	Lebanon Township	563.73	360.43	6,096.28	7,020.44
North	Milford Borough	77.65	11.88	113.21	202.74
North	Tewksbury Township	391.05	94.87	8,659.60	9,145.51
North Total		**2,445.95**	**628.33**	**24,046.95**	**27,121.24**
South	East Amwell Township	570.74	19.74	6,074.22	6,664.70
South	Lambertville	61.63	6.06	34.54	102.23
South	West Amwell Township	338.29	27.78	5,699.83	6,065.89
South Total		**970.66**	**53.58**	**11,808.59**	**12,832.82**
West	Alexandria Township	417.67	20.47	7,361.71	7,799.85
West	Delaware Township	293.95	167.79	10,432.22	10,893.96
West	Franklin Township	234.45	130.98	6,691.43	7,056.85
West	Frenchtown Borough	39.27	5.68	121.29	166.24
West	Kingwood Township	864.90	120.77	12,147.44	13,133.11
West	Stockton Borough	3.91	3.09	36.13	43.14
West Total		**1,854.15**	**448.78**	**36,790.23**	**39,093.16**
Grand TOTAL		**8,907.57**	**2,759.90**	**93,288.09**	**104,955.56**

Goals and Policies:

Goal 1 - Acquire and preserve the major physical features of Hunterdon County for public use and enjoyment of the rivers, the mountains and major scenic vistas.

Policy
County park sites offering high scenic imageability, resource protection value and recreation development capability should merit high priority for early acquisition.

The Outdoor Recreation Resources Commission and the National Association of Counties suggest the prime responsibility for the County with regard to open space should be to "protect the scenic outdoor recreation values of the total environment of the County and acquire and develop for public use portions of the landscape of highest value for outdoor recreation".

In broadest terms, the most significant natural features of Hunterdon County are the Musconetcong Mountains and the Delaware River and Raritan River and its main tributaries - the South Branch, the Lamington and the Neshanic River.

Open space affording the public vistas or access to these features would satisfy a multitude of recreational needs and offer the basic ingredients for the aesthetic experience people seek from a County park. The County should preserve lands offering the most interest and character by evaluating the scenic or image quality of specific sites possessing different types of landscape features and where there is a change in the physical character of its land forms.

Goal 2 - Provide developed, active park and recreation opportunities near the County's population concentrations.

Policies
a) Plan for County General Use Park in each region.
b) Support Trust Fund use at the municipal level for development of prior acquisitions and active recreation facilities, particularly those municipalities which have a low ratio of parks per person.
c) Give County Trust Funding priority to joint park projects involving municipalities or the County and one or more municipalities.

Goal 3 – Preserve open space to preserve environmental resources and protect natural resources.

Policy
Open Space should be acquired to protect critical environmental resources in Hunterdon County. Critical environmental resources comprise a variety of land and water resources: flood plains, stream corridors, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitats, mature woodlands, steep slopes, and surface and groundwater public water supplies (watersheds, headwaters, aquifer recharge areas and wellheads). Ultimately, all critical environmental areas in the County focus on water and form an integrated open space network based on the County's hydrological regime. The County is the regional agency which can pull together State policies and diverse local activities affecting water quality and quantity. One of the County's overall open space goals should be the permanent preservation of the open space pattern which will do the most to protect the County's hydrological system, both from a water quantity and quality standpoint.

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To fulfill its regional role, the County does not have to acquire or own all critical environmental lands to provide for an integrated and protected open space system. Some lands, such as wetlands, will be protected through environmental regulations; others can be preserved by non-profit conservation groups or through cluster development design with common open space land owned by homeowners associations. The County should acquire key critical environmental resources only where necessary. The County should place a high priority on the acquisition or acceptance of lands which will stimulate preservation of other segments of a connected system of critical environmental features. It should not be the County's role to maintain small, isolated open space parcels. Incentives should be made for to municipal and conservation group initiatives creating greenways which link up with County parkland.

The 2000 draft Hunterdon County Master Plan proposed a goal of preserving a representative habitat in each of the biogeographic areas of the County. This continues to be an important County open space goal. Substantial regulatory changes since 2000 should however change how the County implements this goal. The majority of Hunterdon County (15 of its 26 municipalities) now fall under the jurisdiction of the Highlands Regional Council and its Master Plan policies. This should result in less reliance on the County to acquire environmentally critical lands. Also, the ability of the County Park System to maintain large expanses of more undisturbed open space conflicts with County desire to minimize the size of the County park staff.

Therefore, the County Park Open Space and Park Plan recommends giving greater priority to using County trust funds to allow non-profit conservation groups to preserve critical habitat sites. This recommendation does not mean that the County Park System should no longer acquire important habitat sites. This is demonstrated by the priority given in the plan expanding existing forest patches and protecting flood plain and steep slopes from disturbance. The County Park System should also continue its policy of jointly sharing the cost with the State Water Resource Authority in acquiring and maintaining undisturbed watershed lands.

Incentives can range from planning grants to stimulate the identification of greenways and open space corridors and County policy of acceptance of the donation of completed greenways. County trust funding priority should be given to municipalities which have Master Plans and Zoning Ordinances directing development design to preserve stream corridors, aquifer recharge, wellhead areas and open space connectivity.

Goal 4 – Create a County Park system that contributes to resident's quality of life and economic well-being.

<u>Policies</u>

a) Put a priority on acquiring and developing County parks near the County's small boroughs and towns with limited property tax resources in order to generate tourism opportunities and enhance local housing values.
b) Design future County general use parks with innovative features and facilities attractive to both residents and tourist by partnering with private and non-profit entities.
c) Prepare a scenic road action plan to enhance the vistas from County roads recognizing that driving for pleasure is American's number one recreation activity according to the Outdoor Recreation Resource Council (ORRC) preserving historic structures and significant examples of agricultural buildings.

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d) County Freeholders should adopt policies and financial incentives for preserved agricultural lands which create or facilitate outdoor recreation opportunities for County residents and tourists and generate economic benefits. The County Freeholders should provide for the necessary legal framework and administrative framework to promote an active agri-tourism program in Hunterdon County.

Parks, preserved farms and conservation lands can together promote smart growth economic development in and near mixed use live, work and play villages that could attract the businesses of the future and the talent that will operate them. Preserved farms can work in a synergetic way with County parks to offer a fuller recreation experience in Hunterdon County. A variety of agri-tourism activities can supplement the parks and private recreation activities to strengthen Hunterdon County's attractiveness to regional tourists. Farmland activities in Hunterdon County have evolved over the decades and an era of new economic opportunities are emerging. New forms of food related and non-crop products will respond to future market opportunities. Agricultural lands in Hunterdon County could form the basis for a major economic industry; prompted by food security concerns and the desire of the public to know where and how their food is produced and the emergence of high tech-driven non-crop products like biopharmaceuticals and a host of other non-food uses for plants. A critical mass of preserved farms could provide the basis of agri-tourism with attractive bed and breakfasts, spas, vineyards (like Beneduce Vineyard in Pittstown) and other heretofore unimagined activities resulting from the emerging liberalizing view of the agricultural and development policies by SADC.

Preserved agriculture should play a role in providing outdoor recreation experiences along with its contribution to Hunterdon County's quality of life and future economic sustainability. Agriculture in Hunterdon County, like the rest of the New Jersey farming industry, faces decreasing profitability because of a number of agricultural challenges such as market competition, rising land and input costs, encroachment from sprawl, and a complex regulatory environment. In order to stay in business, farmers, operating small and mid-sized farms have had to look for ways to add value to their products. Agricultural census data shows New Jersey ranks first nationally in the percentage of farm revenue earned from agritourism. The future sustainability of many farm operations is linked to the ability of farmers to generate supplemental income from existing farm resources. Agritourism is a strategy to promote agricultural economic development in New Jersey. Municipalities in Hunterdon County should adjust their land development regulations to permit by right appropriate agritourism activities that would add outdoor recreation activities available in the County and economic support to farmers and non-farm businesses that feed off of tourists.

Agritourism is generally understood to be a business model that links agricultural production/processing with tourism in order to attract visitors onto a farm and generate revenue support. Common examples include:

- Pumpkin picking;
- Corn mazes/crop art;
- Educational and demonstrative tours;
- Walking and bicycling tours and trails;
- U-pick operations;
- Petting and feeding zoos;
- Hay rides;

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- Cut-your-own Christmas tree farms;
- Agricultural museums;
- Picnic grounds;
- Outdoor or barn wedding receptions.

Rutgers Study (2007) of the Economic Impact of Agritourism in New Jersey made the following findings that are relevant to agritourism relationship to agricultural preservation in Hunterdon County:

- State level farm policy has evolved from a primary focus on preservation of the land base to a broader view of preservation of agricultural businesses. (p.21)
- 2/3 of farmers reported earning 50% or more of their farm income from Agritourism activities. (p.27)
- 90% of farmers believed Agritourism is very important to the economic viability of NJ farms. (p.32)
- 92% of Agritourism farmers stated that increased revenue opportunities were "very important" in their decision to develop Agritourism activities. The revenue impacts of Agritourism among farmers participating in this study are substantial, (p. 36)
- A shared sentiment among many farmers is that their townships will become more restrictive in the future as Agritourism operators establish new and creative activities that do not conform with municipalities' views of "acceptable" agricultural activities. (p.73)
- Of farmers doing Agritourism, 94% considered themselves full-time farmers. Conversely, only 52% of all NJ farm operators reported farming as primary occupation. (p. 13)

Besides being a major component of the County's rural landscape, and a supplemental supplier of recreation experiences, preserved farmland could be the foundation of Hunterdon County's future economy. Today, agriculture provides only 658 jobs or 1.2 percent of the County's total jobs. Farmland in coming decades could be the new "factory floor". Demands for organically grown food and a bio-tech revolution generating non-crop products from plants could make Hunterdon County the focus of agricultural-related businesses. By preserving a critical mass of farmland the County should benefit economically given its ideal location in one of the world's largest and most innovative megapolitan regions near university research centers. Hunterdon's average farm size of 72 acres would not constrain future agricultural-based business. The future business model of innovative agricultural-based economy would likely begin small-in-scale like the early computer startups in California which grew in a few decades from garage operations to become Silicon Valley.

The likely business model would also be labor intensive involving research, trial and error experiments, pilot efforts and specialty production before economic activity is scaled up. Besides work in the fields, agri-business will require administrative, technical and support services. These jobs would most appropriately locate in mixed use centers and expanded towns and villages along with residential dwelling for this future workforce. The availability of high quality park and recreation experiences would be part of the draw for the talent who would operate these businesses of the future.

Goal 5 – Create a connected network of greenways and trails linking together an open space system throughout Hunterdon County.

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Policies

a) County funding priority should be given to acquiring the potential greenway or trail connections that still exist in Hunterdon County before they are lost to development. These connections can consist of preserves or larger natural habitats, public parks and trails or environmental corridors connecting preserves and parks.
b) Review every municipal Master Plan to evaluate opportunities to preserve or extend open space linkages to existing or planned County open space.
c) Preserved farmland properties should be encouraged to permit defensible trail linkages for connected regional trails under County Parks jurisdiction.

Goal 6 – Seek new funding opportunities in light of the County's fiscal constraints and the public demand for greater active recreation and tourism experiences.

Policies

a) Actively pursue public/private partnerships that would create and maintain or sponsor recreation opportunities on County parkland.
b) Seek new sources of funding using the County's existing statutory authority or through new enabling legislation. Examples could include a tax on water use to be used to acquire critical watershed lands or stream corridors contributing to water quality and supply.

Goal 7 – Recognize and treat the County Park System as a public asset and provide the necessary resources to create a quality park system.

Policies

a) Improve management operations to facilitate County Park maintenance, stewardship and park design and development.
b) Design comprehensive system that openly and actively alerts the public through all its communications, signage and branded material informing the public of where its funds for County Parks is being spent.

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Table 21 Existing and Proposed Open Space

OSP Region	MUNICIPALITY	Municipal Parks and Open Space	County Parks and Open Space	County Park / State Owned Land	State Parks and Preserved Open Space	Board of Education	Private Open Space	Common-Owned Open Space	Non-Profit Conservation Lands	Farmland Preservation	TOTAL EXISTING OPEN SPACE	PROPOSED OPEN SPACE	TOTAL EXISTING + PROPOSED OSP
East	Clinton Town	63.98	17.03	0.00	143.22	9.14	22.52	0.87	8.60	0.00	265.35	89.66	355.01
East	Clinton Township	1,329.43	765.65	0.00	4,414.49	158.97	249.58	379.63	121.81	824.39	8,243.96	183.18	8,427.14
East	Flemington Borough	20.47	2.35	0.00	0.00	15.26	0.44	0.00	0.00	0.00	38.52	0.00	38.52
East	High Bridge Borough	354.40	13.47	0.00	201.60	25.54	0.31	44.05	0.00	0.00	639.36	0.00	639.36
East	Lebanon Borough	12.47	0.00	0.00	8.34	1.92	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.71	48.45	0.00	48.45
East	Raritan Township	798.80	816.38	298.91	0.53	233.74	22.27	3.98	161.73	1,394.31	3,730.64	408.12	4,138.76
East	Readington Township	2,393.73	785.19	9.40	814.98	228.83	184.73	11.64	35.84	4,825.43	9,289.78	499.10	9,788.88
East	Union Township	324.60	446.71	0.00	3,638.61	39.16	62.10	144.48	16.04	977.23	5,648.94	1,331.85	6,980.78
East	*Hillsborough Township	0.00	0.00	176.76	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	176.76	0.00	176.76
East Total		**5,297.88**	**2,846.78**	**485.07**	**9,221.77**	**712.56**	**541.94**	**584.65**	**344.03**	**8,047.08**	**28,081.75**	**2,511.90**	**30,593.65**
North	Bethlehem Township	461.94	743.58	0.00	1,000.73	35.14	15.02	356.62	312.38	1,584.30	4,509.72	2,005.47	6,515.19
North	Bloomsbury Borough	33.84	2.55	0.00	103.72	1.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	141.17	69.55	210.72
North	Califon Borough	32.87	27.30	0.00	15.70	3.96	0.00	0.00	0.00	7.80	87.62	43.99	131.62
North	Glen Gardner Borough	50.63	26.63	0.00	36.64	0.00	0.00	19.47	0.00	0.00	133.38	0.00	133.38
North	Hampton Borough	18.79	20.84	0.00	2.45	6.43	0.00	5.31	0.00	0.00	53.82	76.42	130.24
North	Holland Township	327.58	483.33	0.00	977.91	33.11	51.75	0.00	169.74	2,638.86	4,682.28	1,448.39	6,130.67
North	Lebanon Township	315.46	1,717.95	0.00	1,816.13	101.49	247.42	0.00	298.84	1,402.26	5,899.55	1,886.78	7,786.33
North	Milford Borough	96.33	0.00	0.00	46.84	3.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	146.70	54.82	201.52
North	Tewksbury Township	1,042.84	296.54	0.00	32.17	29.80	42.04	103.22	1,013.58	1,784.73	4,344.91	337.01	4,681.91
North	*Washington Township	0.00	65.24	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	65.24	0.00	65.24
North Total		**2,380.28**	**3,383.96**	**0.00**	**4,032.30**	**214.51**	**356.22**	**484.63**	**1,794.54**	**7,417.95**	**20,064.38**	**5,922.44**	**25,986.82**
South	East Amwell Township	322.72	532.73	0.00	870.90	21.81	0.00	0.00	836.41	4,976.07	7,560.65	711.57	8,272.22
South	Lambertville	31.76	0.00	0.00	46.20	2.34	0.00	53.99	0.00	0.00	134.29	0.00	134.29
South	West Amwell Township	332.94	250.75	0.00	1,661.04	74.05	482.66	0.00	182.28	1,915.30	4,899.01	1,344.84	6,243.85
South Total		**687.42**	**783.48**	**0.00**	**2,578.14**	**98.20**	**482.66**	**53.99**	**1,018.69**	**6,891.37**	**12,593.95**	**2,056.41**	**14,650.36**
West	Alexandria Township	116.37	312.81	0.00	603.78	167.02	488.00	182.66	38.43	2,545.02	4,454.09	601.26	5,055.35
West	Delaware Township	116.75	356.23	0.00	1,165.18	23.88	0.00	0.00	667.81	5,038.52	7,368.37	757.67	8,126.04
West	Franklin Township	207.04	131.47	0.00	96.60	396.52	0.00	0.00	167.11	2,726.24	3,724.98	812.91	4,537.89
West	Frenchtown Borough	32.12	0.00	0.00	180.28	2.78	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	215.19	0.00	215.19
West	Kingwood Township	49.88	0.00	0.00	1,376.70	27.43	80.95	0.00	196.32	2,328.07	4,059.37	1,002.09	5,061.46
West	Stockton Borough	5.90	0.00	0.00	121.25	0.27	0.00	0.00	5.46	22.19	155.07	0.00	155.07
West Total		**528.07**	**800.51**	**0.00**	**3,543.79**	**617.90**	**568.95**	**182.66**	**1,075.12**	**12,660.06**	**19,977.06**	**3,173.92**	**23,150.98**
TOTAL	**TOTAL**	**8,893.64**	**7,814.73**	**485.07**	**19,376.00**	**1,643.16**	**1,949.78**	**1,305.92**	**4,232.38**	**35,016.45**	**80,717.14**	**13,664.68**	**94,381.82**

* Parkland outside of Hunterdon County but Managed by HCDP&R

County Park Plan Recreation And Open Space Vision

The vision for the County Park and Open Space Plan foresees the potential to acquire 13,664 open space acres adding them to the existing County Park System of 7,814 acres to form the ultimate park system of 21,478 acres under County ownership. Competition from development or the lack of availability due to property owners desire not to sell and the County reluctance to condemn sites for parkland will mean that not all of this proposed acreage can be acquired. The Vision Plan does set forth a minimum of 10,450 acres in the form of new or expanded park sites and trails that should receive the following top priority in decisions about future County Park acquisitions. Table 21 and Map 3 presents proposed County Park sites (indicated in purple) along with existing County Parks and other existing preserved open space by jurisdiction.

1. **First priority of the County Park and Open Space Plan is given to acquiring, for public access and use, the remaining vacant and underdeveloped properties with frontage on the Delaware River and promontory sites offering views of the County's most scenic resource.** The Plan proposes that 1887 acres be acquired along the Delaware River corridor for the enjoyment of both residents and tourists. Added public access to the Delaware River could host opportunities for a wide variety of water-based recreation, be it individual fishing or canoeing or group tubing adventures. Proposed Delaware River site acquisitions could supplement existing recreation resources like the 28 mile

Delaware and Raritan Canal towpath trail and increase the availability of parkland for local residents in this relatively underserved section of the County.

2. **Second priority of the County Park and Open Space Plan is completion of a continuous greenway along the Musconetcong Mountains, the prominent landscape feature framing the County's northern border.** The permanent preservation of the Musconetcong Mountains in their existing upland forested state is essential to maintain water quality and quantity, stormwater management and natural habitat protection. Increased public accessibility will serve the County Park System's long-standing popular nature-based recreation activities of hiking, biking and horseback riding, nature watching and photography. The Musconetcong Mountains offer striking vistas of the patchwork of farmscapes and highland villages.

   The first natural resources goal of the Highlands Regional Plan Area, which encompasses 24 percent of Hunterdon County is "protection of large areas of contiguous forested lands"[7]. Besides its critical role in protecting the County's hydrological regiment, contiguous forests enhance wildlife and flora habitat healthy and biological diversity.

   The reason for placing a high priority on acquiring the Musconetcong Mountain forests is the threat of fragmentation, the cumulative process of forest break up into smaller, more isolated fragments, due to suburban development even at low densities. The smaller the forest patch and the lack of forest connections, the greater the loss of ecological health and reduced water quality.

   The County Park Plan proposes acquisition of 4,791 additional acres in the Musconetcong Mountains. Adding a contiguous greenway to existing protected open space would enlarge the size of forested parches. The Highlands Ecosystem Management Technical Report (p.39) observes "the spatial pattern of forest patches plays an important role in maintaining connectivity across a watershed and facilitating ecological processes such as species dispersal." Smaller and isolated forest fragments inhibit the ability of a species to migrate, propagate, pollinate, breed or disperse seeds. The end result is decreased biological health and diversity and eventual species decline.

3. **The third priority of the County Park Plan is to provide County park open space and parkland within or near the population concentrations in Hunterdon County.** Much of the underserved park and outdoor recreation need occurs in the County's boroughs and small towns. These municipalities are, for the most part, the location of residences of low and moderate income households, disabled persons, persons over 65 years or under 16 years of age. These demographic groups lack the economic wherewithal to travel for recreation and need close-to-home recreation opportunities.

   In many instances, open space within a borough is not available or coveted for its potential property tax revenue. In those situations, the solution may be acquisition and development of greenways, trails or even sidewalks to connect people with a County park. County parkland should be connected seamlessly by a tree lined path from a municipality's sidewalk network. General guidelines for siting a County park to achieve this priority should be park for walking distance of 1,500 feet; a suitable guideline for bicycling would be time of 30 minutes or two miles which is the distance the average cyclist can travel. For all other County park visits, a four to six mile vehicle driving distance is reasonable.

[7] Highlands Regional Master Plan p. 138

The County Park Plan proposes acquisition of 2,566 acres of additional parkland within 1,500 feet of the County's underserved boroughs and 1,420 acres within two miles or less.

4. **The fourth priority of the County Park and Open Space Plan is acquisition of trail linkages connecting all existing trails in Hunterdon County.** The Plan proposes adding 63 miles of connecting trail sections including existing trails including two new acquisition trails connecting Point Mountain to the Columbia Trail (7.14 miles) and the Musconetcong Mountain (16.59 miles) to the Capalong Trail. The reason for this high priority is the necessity of preserving vulnerable potential linkages and extended trail continuity before they are both no longer available or feasible to acquire.

   One unique feature of the County Trail Plan is a proposed rail-and-trail cross-county connection of the South Branch Trail to the Delaware and Raritan Canal Trail using the renovated Black and Western Railroad and Bel Del Railroad

   The County Trail Plan also proposes acquisition of a continuous off-road trail for the New York/New Jersey Highlands Trail across Bethlehem and Holland Township replacing the current use of on-road travel between trail segments.

   Finally, the County Trail Plan proposes that where off-road trail connections cannot be acquired roads used to accommodate trail connections should be widened to create a safe dedicated hiking and bike shoulder. In some cases, the construction of a sidewalk or hardened path could serve as an adequate off-road substitute.

5. **The fifth priority of the County Park and Open Space Plan is the acquisition and development of seven General Use Parks appropriately distributed across the County.** A General Use Park is an open space site developed and made available to the public for a wide variety of passive and active recreation and special events. The Ultimate County Park system consisting of existing and future sites improved as General Use Parks would be 1,205 acres under this plan. This would amount to about 5.6 percent of a total future County Park system of 21,478 acres.

   These General Use Parks would include four existing County park sites including Hoffman, Deer Path, South County and Tettertown Preserve and two sites proposed for future County acquisition.

   Deer Path Park, the County Arboretum and Echo Hill Park are all located close to one another in the East Planning Region and lie at the centroid of the County as determined by its population densities. The Plan proposes 2,418 additional County Park acres be acquired in the East Region. This would still leave the East Region, the County's most densely populated section, in the future with 2.5 to 4 times less proposed County Park acreage per person than the other three planning regions.

   To rectify this condition, the Plan proposes that Hoffman Park, located in Union Township in the East Region, be the highest priority for the next fully improved General Use Park in the Hunterdon County Park system. Hoffman Park is conveniently located one mile from Exit 11 off Interstate 78 and close to residents in both the North and West Planning Regions.

   The other existing General Use Parks (besides Deer Park (104 acres) and Hoffman Park (354 acres)) proposed for future improvements include:

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- Tettertown Preserve (305 acres) – North Region
- South County Park (252 acres)– South Region

The two new General Use Parks proposed for acquisition and improvement include:

- The Curtis Paper Mill/Vantage Landfill in Milford Borough – (89.70 acres) West Region
- A 100 – 150 acre portion of the 1,000 acre Merck Corporate Campus in Readington Township (East Region).

The two future County Park proposals are speculative; the Plan does propose alternative General Use Parks for consideration in event these properties are not available.

6. **Sixth Priority is to make the County Park System part of an enhanced tourism program by designing imaginative General Use County Park features and enlisting the private sector to create recreational facilities such as a county-wide rail-and-trail system.** The Hunterdon County Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report recommends the establishment of an enhanced tourism program to foster economic development. One of the ways to generate tourism interest the CEDS points to is capitalizing on the County's existing assets which includes its agricultural and recreational offerings. The County Park System can be an essential part of this tourism effort by creating attractions satisfying the desires of both residents and visitors.

   County Park systems in New Jersey have built and operated well known attendance magnets that have drawn in people who then often purchase local goods and services. Two of the best known County park attractions in New Jersey are the Turtle Back Zoo in Essex County and the Cape May County Zoo.

   These tourist-type facilities require considerable capital outlays and operating costs in the form of specialized staffing, support personnel and intensive maintenance. The Hunterdon County Park System has traditionally operated with a lean staff. An alternative development strategy more appropriate to Hunterdon County would be to design General Use Parks offering imaginative park features that individuals and groups can enjoy without the needs for intensive hands-on staff participation. Another way of expanding the drawing power of a General Use Park would be to enlist the private sector in providing facilities and their operation as part of a public/private service agreement.

   Some of the ways a County Park can become a tourist draw is the design and construction of physical features of varied land forms and landscape arrangements such as a trail planted with living sculptures, fly casting pools, lily ponds and meadows that support bees and butterflies. Permit free use of indoor barn space for rehearsal and performance in exchange for low cost productions for the public.

   The County could engage in public partnership with the private and non-profit sector to offer public facilities paid for and maintained by private and non-profit entities seeking to promote their services and products, generate goodwill and enhance their brand. Examples of such private facilities could be:

   - Licensing of food trucks to service picnic pavilions or events.

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- Construction of an innovative fitness trail or specially designed trail for the physically challenged sponsored by a medical facility.
- Meadows and gardens planted and maintained by local landscape contractors.
- Medicinal plant gardens provided by a pharmaceutical company.
- Restoration of park structures by vocational students or local buildings.
- Naming of a section of a County Park for an individual or group funding a recreational or park feature.

One of the elements of integrating public/private partnership already exists in Hunterdon County in the form of a potential rail-and-trail network that could offer residents and tourists a family-fun activity and economic catalyst for seven of the County's smallest boroughs.

This cross county rail-and-trail "greenway" envisions making full use of the Black and Western Railroad and the Bel Del Railroads and their existing and potential trail connections. Currently these railroads provide recreational excursions in Hunterdon and Warren County, mainly on the weekends, embarking from Flemington and Phillipsburg. The potential exists to expand this railroad further into Hunterdon, Warren and Somerset Counties

These rail systems need to be improved by restoring track right-of-way to meet passenger rail standards. At the present time very slow progress is being made to restore tracks from Ringoes to Lambertville and Carpentsville to Milford on their respective rail lines. Both Hunterdon and Warren County officials can assist these railroads in obtaining greater financial support. Fortunately, there are Federal grants available to make these rail improvements, particularly if they generate regional economic benefits.

The recreation/tourism concept of this unique regional opportunity envisions tourists embarking on the railroad from either Three Bridges or further east in Somerset County where one could load their bikes on a rail car equipped to carry bikes. A person or family could also rent a bike at a future bike-share station by inserting a credit card for hourly or monthly increments. Bikes could be returned at bike-share stations along this rail-and-trail network.

The Black and Western Train would make stops in Flemington, Ringoes and Lambertville. There, people can chose to shop or eat in a local store or hike or bike ride on the Delaware and Raritan Canal Towpath trail or elsewhere in the County. The Lambertville stop would allow people to hike or bike 28 miles with stops in Stockton, Frenchtown and Milford. At Milford, one can connect with the Bel Del excursion railroad at its future expansion terminus. The scenic trail ride along the Delaware River would take passengers to Riegelsville, Finesville, Carpentsville and Phillipsburg in Warren County.

The proposed rail-and-trail network offers people either a day or long weekend experience. By creating facilities that expand the time tourist stays, more money is spent locally. Flemington and the small towns and villages along the Delaware River could capture economic benefits by offering tourists bed and breakfast and restaurants, spas, canoe and tubing rentals, products for bikers and hikers and specialty shops.

7. **The Seventh Priority is recognition of the potential of preserving a "farm belt" across the center and southern section of Hunterdon County where there is an existing concentration of both preserved farms and active agriculture under farmland assessment.** Farmland Protection should

be viewed as visual and functional components making up the County's rural landscape. Parkland along cannot achieve the vision of Hunterdon County as a rural open space enclave in the most densely populated State in the Nation. As discussed elsewhere in this Plan, preserved farmland can contribute recreation, tourism and economic benefits to Hunterdon County. Competition for parkland with agricultural preservation efforts should be minimized in this farmlbelt except where a municipality seeks open space for a local park.

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Hunterdon County, New Jersey Park and Recreation Influencing Trends

The provision of public parks and recreation services can be influenced by a wide variety of trends, including the desires of different age groups within the population, community values, and popularity of a variety of recreational activities and amenities. Within this section of the Plan, a number of local and national trends are reviewed that should be considered by the County when determining where to allocate resources toward the provision of parks, recreational facilities, and recreational programming to its residents and visitors.

Local Participation in Recreation Activities and Associated Spending

According to Esri Business Analyst, Hunterdon County residents participate in a number of recreation, sports and leisure activities. Esri also measured the market potential index (MPI) of the adults or households in the County to exhibit certain consumer behavior, or purchasing patterns, compared to the general U.S. consumer market. An MPI of 100 represents the U.S. average. An MPI greater than 100 represents a greater likelihood that local residents may be willing to spend money on that activity, and a lower figure indicates a lesser likelihood of spending on that activity, when compared to the national average likelihood of spending on a given activity[8]. The following ***Tables 1 through 4*** represent Esri's estimates.

Table 1: Hunterdon County Residents Outdoor Activity Participation in the Last 12 Months

Activity	% Resident Participation	MPI
Archery	2.1	78
Backpacking	3.9	132
Bicycling (mountain)	5.8	143
Bicycling (road)	13.7	140
Birdwatching	5.9	123
Boating (motor boat)	7.1	133
Canoeing/Kayaking	6.8	126
Fishing (freshwater)	10.9	88
Fishing (saltwater)	4.5	111
Frisbee	5.2	114
Golf	13.1	138
Hiking	14.3	143
Horseback Riding	2.8	116
Hunting (rifle)	3.0	65
Hunting (shotgun)	2.8	69
Jogging/Running	16.8	132
Skiing (downhill)	5.0	173

[8] Esri Methodology Statement: 2014 Esri US Market Potential Database: https://www.esri.com/library/whitepapers/pdfs/esri-data-market-potential.pdf

Swimming	20.5	129
Target Shooting	4.2	92
Tennis	5.6	132
Volleyball	3.6	102
Walking for Exercise	35.0	125
Went to the Beach	33.6	142
Went on Overnight Camping Trip	13.6	107

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Sports and Leisure Market Potential

According to Esri, approximately 1/3 of County residents walked for exercise, and made trips to a beach in the last year. Additionally over 10% of residents participated in swimming, jogging/running, hiking, bicycling (road), overnight camping trips, golf, and freshwater fishing.

Table 2: Hunterdon County Residents Gym/Field Sports Participation in the Past 12 Months

Gym/Field Sport	**% Resident Participation**	**MPI**
Aerobics	11.6	129
Baseball	4.7	105
Basketball	7.9	95
Football	4.4	89
Ice Skating	3.7	145
Pilates	3.7	134
Soccer	4.3	114
Softball	3.6	107
Tennis	5.6	132
Weightlifting	14.5	137
Yoga	9.9	138

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Sports and Leisure Market Potential

Based on Esri's estimates, it appears that generally a higher percentage of residents participated in individual fitness activities, most notably weightlifting, aerobics and yoga, when compared to participation in team sports, such as baseball.

Table 3: Hunterdon County Residents Attendance at Live Sporting Events in the Past 12 Months

Live Sporting Event	**% Resident Participation**	**MPI**
Attend Sports Events (generally)	30.8	131
Attended Auto Racing (NASCAR)	1.7	85
Attend MLB Baseball Game	15.3	159
Attend College Basketball Game	3.5	120
Attend NBA Basketball Game	3.9	123

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Attend College Football Game	6.8	120
Attend NFL Football Game	10.1	279
Attend High School Sports Event	4.8	104
Attend NHL Ice Hockey Game	4.7	167

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Sports and Leisure Market Potential

Approximately 31% of County residents attended live sports events in the past year, with Major League Baseball games, and National Football League games being the most popular to attend. Far fewer residents attended basketball games (college or NBA), and NASCAR auto racing events. Given the generally high MPI of County residents for attending professional sports events (NFL, NHL, MLB and NHL), the County may want to investigate how it may be able to cater to this set of residents wants, such as by offering discounted tickets or group trips to attend games of the Jets, Giants, Rangers, Islanders, Yankees and/or Mets.

Table 4: Hunterdon County Residents Attendance at Cultural/Community Events in the Past 12 Months

Cultural Event/Feature	**% Resident Participation**	**MPI**
Attended Classical/Opera Performance	5.7	148
Attended Country Music Performance	6.2	112
Attended Rock Music Performance	13.5	138
Attended Live Theater	18.0	144
Attended Adult Education Course	8.2	125
Went Dancing	8.9	103
Went to a Museum	19.8	153
Went to a Zoo	13.8	117

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Sports and Leisure Market Potential

Not only do the residents of Hunterdon County participate in a variety of recreation and leisure activities, they spend nearly $82.7 million annually doing so. ***Figure 1*** illustrates that most of this estimated spending is on fees for entertainment and recreation. ***Table 5*** provides a detailed breakdown of this average annual spending per County resident, as well as estimated totals spent annually by all County residents in each category.

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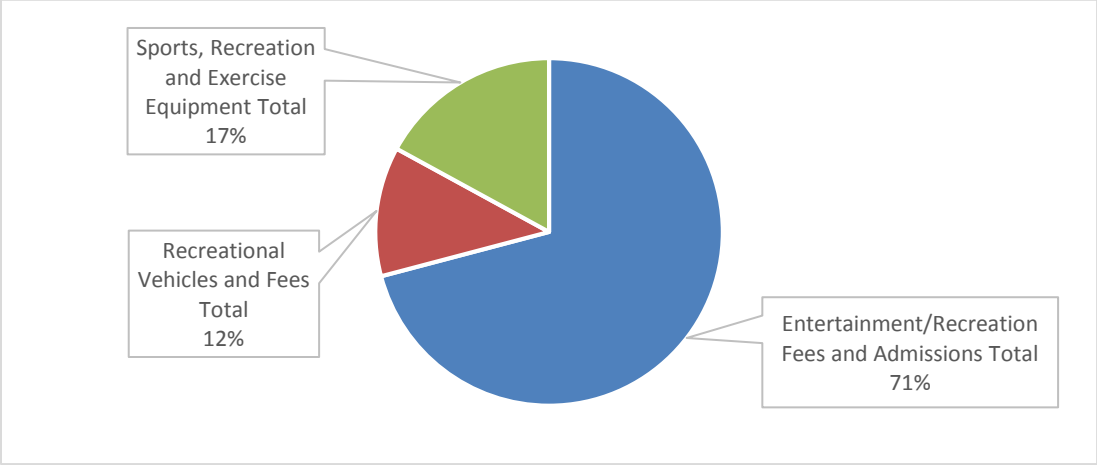
Figure 1: General Recreational Spending Breakdown



Source: Esri Business Analyst, Recreation Expenditures

Table 5: County Residents Spending on Recreational Equipment and Activities

Item Purchased	Avg. Annual Per Person Spending	Total Annual Spending
Fees for Entertainment and Recreation		
Tickets to Theatre/Operas/Concerts	$115	$5,496,518
Tickets to Movies/Museums/Parks	$123	$5,890,199
Admission to Sporting Events (excluding trips)	$110	$5,248,287
Fees for Participant Sports (excluding trips)	$185	$8,834,773
Fees for Recreational Lessons	$277	$13,250,399
Membership Fees for Social/Recreation/Civic Clubs	$416	$19,893,949
Entertainment/Recreation Fees and Admissions Total	**$1,227**	**$58,614,126**
Recreational Vehicles Ownership and Fees		
Docking and Landing Fees for Boats and Planes	$16	$749,904
Camp Fees	$79	$3,786,387
Payments on Boats/Trailers/Campers/RVs	$83	$3,945,475
Rental of RVs or Boats	$31	$1,490,327
Recreational Vehicles and Fees Total	**$209**	**$9,972,093**
Sports, Recreation and Exercise Equipment		
Exercise Equipment and Gear, Game Tables	$100	$4,784,957
Bicycles	$47	$2,235,082
Camping Equipment	$26	$1,219,509
Hunting and Fishing Equipment	$78	$3,725,156
Winter Sports Equipment	$11	$521,876
Water Sports Equipment	$11	$543,083
Other Sports Equipment	$16	$747,667

Rental/Repair of Sports Equipment	$7	$316,782
Sports, Recreation and Exercise Equipment Total	**$295**	**$14,094,114**

Source: Esri Business Analyst, Recreation Expenditures

Demographic Trends in Recreation

Three major age groups, the Baby Boomers, Millennial Generation, and Generation Z, are having significant impacts in the planning and provision of parks and recreation services nationwide. In 2015 approximately 85% of the residents of Hunterdon County fell into one of these age groupings. Roughly 42% of the population were Baby Boomers, 19% Millennials, and 24% Generation Z.

Adults – Baby Boomers

Baby boomers are defined as individuals born between 1946 and 1964, as stated in "Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers"[9]. They are a generation that consists of nearly 76 million Americans, and comprised nearly half (42%) of Hunterdon County's population in 2015. In 2011, this influential population began their transition out of the workforce. Emilyn Sheffield, Professor of Recreation and Parks Management at the California State University, at Chico, in the NPRA July 2012 *Parks and Recreation* magazine article titled "Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today," indicated that Baby Boomers are driving the aging of America, with boomers and seniors over 65 composing about 39 % of the nation's population[10]. As baby boomers enter retirement, they will be looking for opportunities in fitness, sports, outdoors, arts and cultural events, and other activities that suit their lifestyles. With their varied life experiences, values, and expectations, baby boomers are predicted to redefine the meaning of recreation and leisure programming for mature adults.

In the leisure profession, this generation's devotion to exercise and fitness is an example of its influence on society. When boomers entered elementary school, President Kennedy initiated the President's Council on Physical Fitness; making physical education a key component of public education. As boomers matured and moved into the workplace, they took their desire for exercise and fitness with them. Now as the oldest boomers are nearing 65, park and recreation professionals are faced with new approaches to provide both passive and active programming for older adults. Boomers are second only to Gen Y/Millennials (born between 1980 and 1999) in participation in fitness and outdoor sports.[11]

Jeffrey Ziegler, a past president of the Arizona Parks and Recreation Association identified "Boomer Basics" in his article, "Recreating Retirement: How Will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in their 60s?"[12] Highlights are summarized below.

- *Boomers are known to work hard, play hard, and spend hard.* They have always been fixated with all things youthful. Boomers typically respond that they feel 10 years younger than their actual age. Their nostalgic mindset keeps boomers returning to the sights and sounds of their 1960s youth culture. Swimming pools have become less of a social setting and much more of an

[9] Linda Cochran, Anne Roshschadl, and Jodi Rudick, "Leisure Programming For Baby Boomers," *Human Kinetics*, 2009.
[10] Emilyn Sheffield, "Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today," *Parks and Recreation*, July 2012, p. 16-17.
[11] Physical Activity Council, 2012 Participation Report, 2012.
[12] Jeffry Ziegler, "Recreating Retirement: How Will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in Their 60s?" *Parks and Recreation*, October 2002.

extension of boomers' health and wellness program. Because boomers have, in general, a high education level they'll likely continue to pursue education as adults and into retirement.

- *Boomers will look to park and recreation professionals to provide opportunities to enjoy many life-long hobbies and sports.* When programming for this age group, a customized experience to cater to the need for self-fulfillment, healthy pleasure, nostalgic youthfulness, and individual escapes will be important. Recreation trends will shift from games and activities that boomers associate with senior citizens. Ziegler suggests that activities such as bingo, bridge, and shuffleboard will likely be avoided because boomers relate these activities with old age.

- *Boomers will reinvent what being a 65-year-old means.* Parks and recreation agencies that don't plan for boomers carrying on in retirement with the same hectic pace they've lived during their years in employment will be left behind. Things to consider when planning for the demographic shift:

    - Boomer characteristics
    - What drives Boomers?
    - Marketing to Boomers
    - Arts and entertainment
    - Passive and active fitness trends
    - Outdoor recreation/adventure programs
    - Travel programs

Adult – The Millennial Generation

The Millennial Generation are generally considered those born between about 1980 and 1999, and in April 2016, the Pew Research Center reported that this generation had surpassed the Baby Boomers as the nation's most populous age group[13]. Millennials comprised 19% of the County's 2015 total population. This group is anticipated to slowly increase to 20% of the County's population by 2020. Although not the largest age cohort in Hunterdon, Millennials are influential, and having an understanding of some of their general characteristics can help guide decision making in the provision of parks and recreation services to this significant segment of the local population.

In their book, Millennials Rising, the Next Great Generation, authors William Strauss and Neil Howe identify the following seven characteristics of the Millennials[14]:

1. Special: Used to receiving rewards just for participating, Millennials are raised to feel special.
2. Sheltered: Millennials lead structured lives filled with rules and regulations. Less accustomed to unstructured play than previous generations and apprehensive of the outdoors, they spend most of their time indoors, leaving home primarily to socialize with friends and families.
3. Team Oriented: This group has a "powerful instinct for community" and "places a high value on teamwork and belonging".

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[13] Richard Fry, "Millennials overtake Baby Boomers as America's Largest Generation", *Pew Research Center Fact Tank,* April 25,2 016, http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/25/millennials-overtake-baby-boomers/, accessed May 2015

[14] William Strauss and Neil Howe, Millennials Rising, the Next Great Generation, Vintage: New York, New York, 2000.

4. Technically savvy: Upbeat and with a can-do attitude, this generation is “more optimistic and tech-savvy than their elders”.
5. Pressured: Millennials feel “pressured to achieve and pressured to behave”. They have been “pushed to study hard and avoid personal risk”.
6. Achieving: This generation is expected to do great things, and they may be the next “great” generation.
7. Conventional (and diverse): Millennials are respectful of authority and civic minded. Respectful of cultural differences because they are ethnically diverse, they also value good conduct and tend to have a “standardized appearance”.

In a 2011 study of the Millennial Generation[15], Barkley Advertising Agency made the following observations about Millennials and health/fitness:

- Sixty percent of Millennials say they try to work out on a regular basis. Twenty-six percent consider themselves health fanatics.
- Much of this focus on health is really due to vanity and/or the desire to impress others — 73% exercise to enhance their physical appearance.
- Millennials are also fans of relaxation and rejuvenation, as 54% regularly treat themselves to spa services.
- Despite their commitment to health, Millennials stray from their healthy diets on weekends. There’s a noticeable difference between their intent to work out regularly and the amount of exercise that they actually accomplish

Table 1 illustrates contrasts between Millennials and Non-Millennials regarding a number of health and fitness topics[16].

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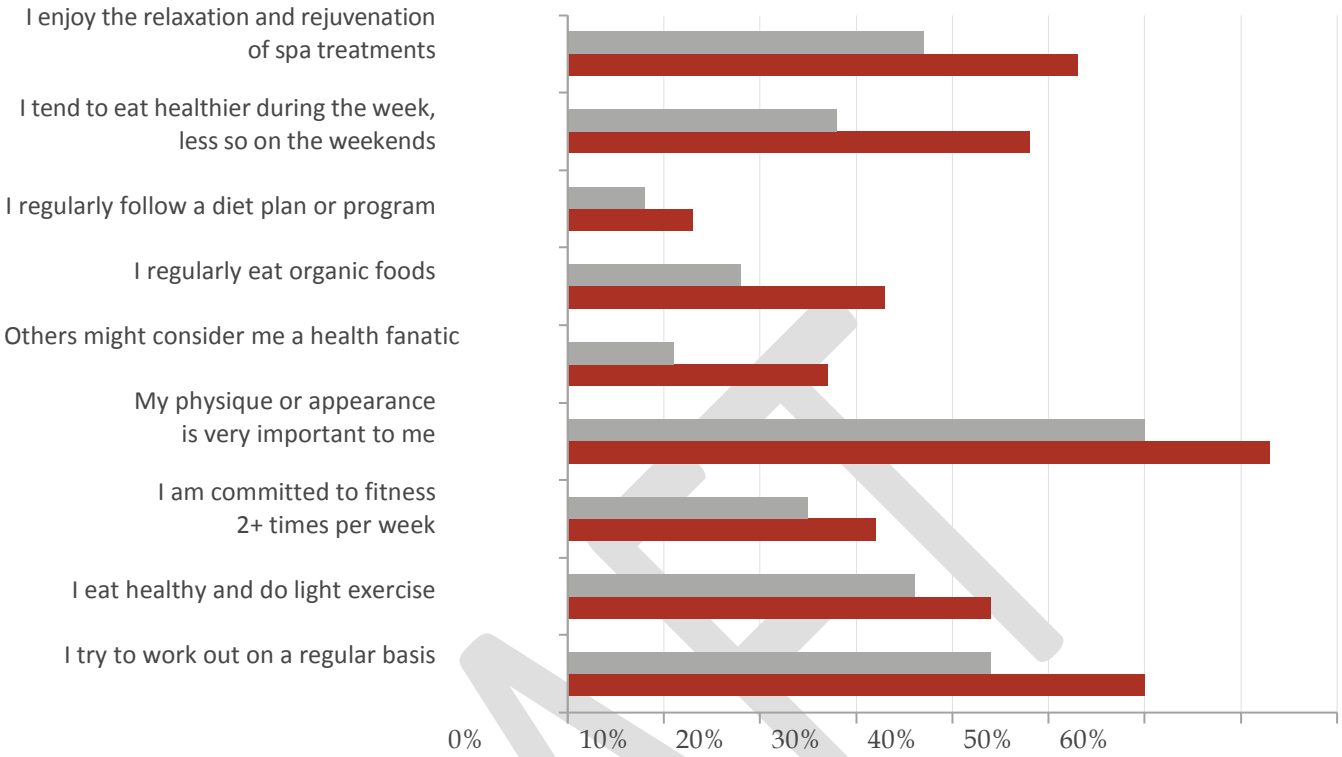
[15] American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation, https://www.barkleyus.com/AmericanMillennials.pdf, accessed May 2015
[16] American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation, https://www.barkleyus.com/AmericanMillennials.pdf, accessed May 2015

Table 1: Millennials (red) Vs. Non-Millennials (grey) on Health and Fitness



Source: American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation

As Millennials tend to be more tech-savvy, socially conscious, achievement-driven age group with more flexible ideas about balancing wealth, work and play. They generally prefer different park amenities, and recreational programs, than their counterparts in the Baby Boomer generation. Engagement with this generation should be considered in parks and recreation planning. In an April 2015 posting to the National Parks and Recreation Association's official blog, *Open Space*, Scott Hornick, CEO of Adventure Solutions suggests the following 7 things to consider to make your parks millennial friendly[17]:

1. Group activities are appealing.
2. Wireless internet/Wi-Fi access is a must – being connected digitally is a millennial status-quo, and sharing experiences in real time is something millennials enjoying doing.
3. Having many different experiences is important – millennials tend to participate in a broad range of activities.
4. Convenience and comfort are sought out.
5. Competition is important, and millennials enjoy winning, recognition, and earning rewards.
6. Facilities that promote physical activity, such as trails and sports fields, and activities like adventure races are appealing.
7. Many millennials own dogs, and want places they can recreate with them.

[17] Scott Hornick, "7 Ways to Make Your Park More Millennial Friendly", *Parks and Recreation Open Space Blog*, August 19, 2015, http://www.nrpa.org/blog/7-ways-to-make-your-parks-millennial-friendly, accessed May 2016

In addition to being health conscious, Millennials often look for local and relatively inexpensive ways to experience the outdoors close to home; on trails, bike paths, and in community parks[18]. They, along with the baby boomer generation, highly value walkability, and in a 2014 study by the American Planning Association, two-thirds noted that improving walkability in a community is directly related to strengthening the local economy. The study also noted that 46% of millennials, and baby boomers, place a high priority on having sidewalks, hiking trails, bike paths and fitness choices available to them in their community. In fact, these community features were viewed by study respondents to be of higher preference than a great school system, vibrant centers of entertainment and culture, and affordable and convenient transportation choices.[19]

Youth – Generation Z

Emilyn Sheffield also identified as one of the five trends shaping tomorrow today that the proportion of youth is smaller than in the past, but still essential to our future. As of the 2010 Census, the age group under age 18 forms about a quarter of the U.S. population. Nationwide, nearly half of the youth population is ethnically diverse and 25% is Hispanic. In Hunterdon County, about 24% of the population was under the age of 19 in 2015.

Characteristics cited for Generation Z, the youth of today, include[20]:

- The most obvious characteristic for Generation Z is the pervasive use of technology.
- Generation Z members live their lives online and they love sharing both the intimate and mundane details of life.
- They tend to be acutely aware that they live in a pluralistic society and tend to embrace diversity.
- Generation Z'ers tend to be independent. They don't wait for their parents to teach them things or tell them how to make decisions.

With regard to physical activity, a 2013 article published by academics at Georgia Southern University noted that the prevalence of obesity in Generation Z (which they describe as individuals born since the year 2000) is triple that of Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1981). It suggests that due to increased use of technology, Generation Z spends more time indoors, is less physically active, and more obese compared to previous generations. The researchers noted that Generation Z seeks social support from peers more so than any previous generation. This is the most competent generation from a technological standpoint, but Generation Z'ers tend to fear, and often struggle with, some basic physical activities and sports.

Multiculturalism

The United States is becoming increasingly racially and ethnically diverse. In May 2012, the U.S. Census Bureau announced that non-white babies now account for the majority of births in the United States.

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[18] "Sneakernomics: How The 'Outdoor' Industry Became The 'Outside' Industry", *Forbes,* September 21, 2015, http://www.forbes.com/sites/mattpowell/2015/09/21/sneakernomics-how-the-outdoor-industry-became-the-outside-industry/2/#50958385e34d, accessed May 2016

[19] American Planning Association, "Investing in Place: Two generation's view on the future of communities: millennials, boomers, and new directions for planning and economic development", https://www.planning.org/policy/polls/investing, accessed May 2015

[20] Alexandra Levit, "Make Way for Generation Z", *New York Times*, March 28, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/29/jobs/make-way-for-generation-z.html, accessed May 2016

"This is an important tipping point," noted William H. Frey[21], senior demographer at the Brookings Institution, describing the shift as a "transformation from a mostly white baby boomer culture to the more globalized multi-ethnic country that we are becoming." Cultural and ethnic diversity adds unique character to communities expressed through distinct neighborhoods, multicultural learning environments, and restaurants, places of worship, museums, and nightlife. [22]

As the recreation agencies continue to provide services within a more diverse society, race and ethnicity in the County will become increasingly more important factors in determining programming needs, and means of service delivery. More than ever, recreation professionals will be expected to work with, and have significant knowledge and understanding of individuals from many cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.

Hunterdon County's population in 2015 was predominantly Caucasian (90%), 6.6% Hispanic (irrespective of race), 3.8% Asian, and 3.1% African American. Population projections for 2020 include a 1.6% decrease in the number of Caucasian residents, a 1.6% increase in number of Hispanic residents (irrespective of race), a 0.6% increase in Asian residents, and a 0.3% increase in the African American population. Between 2010 and 2020, the clear trends that appears are a slow decrease of the Caucasian population and slow increase in other racial and ethnic groups.

- **Outdoor recreation participation varies by ethnicity**: Participation in outdoor activities is generally higher among Caucasians than any other ethnicity, and lowest among African Americans in nearly all age groups.
- **Lack of interest is a major reason for lack of participation in recreational activities:** When asked why they did not participate in outdoor activities more often, the number one reason given by people of all ethnicities and races was because they were not interested.
- **Most popular outdoor activities:** Walking, biking, running, fishing, and camping were the most popular outdoor activities for all Americans, with each ethnic/racial group participating to varying degrees.

Recreational Preferences among Ethnic/Racial Groups (Self-Identifying):
Nationwide participation in outdoor sports by youths and young adults, ages 6 – 24, was highest among Caucasians in all age groups and lowest among Asian and Pacific Islanders, according to the *2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report*[23.] The Report found that within this age range, 71% of Caucasians, 12% of Hispanics, 8% of African Americans, 7% of Asians/Pacific Islanders, and 2% of those identifying their race as "other", participated in some form of outdoor recreation in 2014. The earlier *2014 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report* included a robust study of recreational preference among ethnic populations. Information from the 2014 Report, as well as the updated 2016 Report, are referenced throughout this section.

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[21]Adam Serwer, "The End of White America," *Mother Jones,* http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2012/05/end-white-america, May 17, 2012.
[22] Baldwin Ellis, "The Effects of Culture & Diversity on America", http://www.ehow.com/facts_5512569_effects-culture-diversity-america.html, accessed on Sept. 20, 2012.
[23] Outdoor Foundation, *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2016,* http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/pdf/ResearchParticipation2016Topline.pdf, accessed May 2016

African Americans

Approximately 8% of African Americans between the ages of 6-24 participated in outdoor recreational activities in the past year nationwide.[24] Youth ages 6–12 (52% participation) are the only age group in the African American demographic to participate in outdoor recreation at a rate of more than 50%. By comparison, Caucasians in four of the five age groupings participated in outdoor sports at rates of 60 % or more, with only those ages 45+ (40% participation) participating at under 50%. According to the 2014 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report, the most popular outdoor activities among African Americans are running/jogging and trail running (18%); fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (11%); road and mountain biking and BMX (11%); birdwatching/wildlife viewing (4%); and camping (car, backyard, backpacking, and RV) (4%).

Asian Americans

Research about outdoor recreation among Asian Americans in the San Francisco Bay Area (Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino) found significant differences among the four groups concerning the degree of linguistic acculturation (preferred language spoken in various communication media)[25]. The research suggests that communications related to recreation and natural resource management should appear in ethnic media, but the results also suggest that Asian Americans should not be viewed as homogeneous with regard to recreation-related issues. Another study[26] found that technology use for finding outdoor recreation opportunities is highest among Asian/Pacific Islander populations. Over 60 % of these populations use stationary or mobile technology in making decisions regarding outdoor recreation. According to the 2015 Outdoor Recreation Participation Report, nationally, only 7% of Americans identifying as Asian/Pacific Islander, ages 6-24, participated in outdoor recreational activities in 2014.

Caucasians

According to the *2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report*, nearly 60% of youth and young adults, ages 6-24, participated in outdoor recreation in 2015. According to the 2014 Report, the most popular outdoor activities among Caucasians were running/ jogging and trail running (19%); fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (18%); road and mountain biking and BMX (17%); camping (car, backyard, backpacking, and RV) (16%); and hiking (14%).

Hispanics (irrespective of race)

The population of Hispanic origin can be viewed as the heritage, nationality, lineage, or country of birth of the person or the person's parents or ancestors before arriving in the United States. In the U.S. census, people who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be any race and are included in all of the race categories. In the United States, the Hispanic population increased by 43% over the last decade, compared to 5% for the non-Hispanic population, and accounted for more than half of all the population growth. According to Emilyn Sheffield, the growing racial and ethnic diversity is particularly important to

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[24] Outdoor Foundation, *Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2014,* http://www.outdoorfoundation.org/research.participation.2014.topline.html, accessed May 2016

[25] P.L. Winter, W.C. Jeong, G.C. Godbey, "Outdoor Recreation among Asian Americans: A Case Study of San Francisco Bay Area Residents," *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 2004.

[26] Jacqueline Woerner, "The 7 Social Media Trends Dominating 2015," Emarsys Blog, http://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/the-7-social-media-trends-dominating-2015/, accessed February 26, 2015

recreation and leisure service providers, as family and individual recreation patterns and preferences are strongly shaped by cultural influences.[27]

Participation in outdoor sports among youth and young adults (ages 6-24) who identify as Hispanic was at 10% nationwide in 2013, according to the *2014 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report*.[28] Those who do get outdoors, however, participate more frequently than other outdoor participants, with an average of 47 outings per year. Hispanic youth between ages13 and 17 are the most likely age group to participate in outdoor recreation, in the Hispanic demographic, followed closely by those in the 25-44 age range. The most popular outdoor activities among Hispanics are: running and jogging (24%); road and mountain biking and BMX (15%); fishing (freshwater, saltwater and fly) (14%); Camping (car, backyard and RV) (13%); and, hiking (9%).

Multiculturalism and Marketing

Today the marketplace for consumers has dramatically evolved in the United States from a largely Anglo demographic, to the reality that the United States has shifted to a large minority consumer base known as the "new majority."

The San Jose Group, a consortium of marketing communications companies specializing in reaching Hispanic and non-Hispanic markets of the United States, suggests that today's multicultural population of the United States, or the "new majority," is 107.6 million, which translates to about 35.1% of the country's total population. The United States' multicultural population alone could essentially be the twelfth largest country in the world[29]. Parks and recreation trends in marketing leisure services continue to emerge and should be taken into consideration in all planning efforts, as different cultures respond differently to marketing techniques. Engaging the Hispanic community will require parks and recreation professionals to go into the community and interact with faith-based organizations, sports clubs and social clubs.

Facilities

According to *Recreation Management's* 2015 State of the Industry Report[30], national trends show an increased user-base of recreation facilities (private and public). Additionally, parks and recreation providers indicated that the average age of their community recreation facilities is 26.4 years. To meet the growing demand for recreational facilities, a majority of the parks and recreation providers who responded to the survey (72.6%) reported that they plan to build new facilities or renovate and/or expand existing facilities over the next three years. Additionally, the 2015 State of the Industry Report notes that the average planned capital improvement budget for parks and recreation departments increased slightly from an average of $3,795,000 in 2014 to an average of $3,880,000 in 2015. The Report further indicated that the top 10 park features planned for construction in the near future were likely to include:

1. Splash play areas
2. Playgrounds

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[27] Emilyn Sheffield, "Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today," *Parks and Recreation*, July 2012, p. 16-17.
[28] Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2014
[29] San Jose Group, "SJG Multicultural Facts & Trends", http://blog.thesanjosegroup.com/?p=275, posted October 25, 2010.
[30] Emily Tipping, "2015 State of the Industry Report, State of the Managed Recreation Industry," *Recreation Management*, June 2015.

3. Dog parks
4. Fitness trails and outdoor fitness equipment
5. Hiking and walking trails
6. Bike trails
7. Park restroom structures
8. Park structures such as shelters and gazebos
9. Synthetic turf sports fields
10. Wi-Fi services

An additional national trend of note is toward the construction of "one-stop" indoor recreation facilities to serve all age groups. These facilities are typically large, multipurpose regional centers that have been observed to help increase operational cost recovery, promote user retention, and encourage cross-use. Parks and recreation agencies across the United States are generally working toward increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Providing multiuse space and flexibility in facilities versus single, specialized spaces is a trend, offering programming opportunities as well as free-play opportunities. "One-stop" facilities often attract young families, teens, and adults of all ages.

Aquatics/Water Recreation Trends

According to the National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA), swimming ranked third nationwide among recreational activities in terms of participation in 2014.[31] Nationally, there is an increasing trend towards indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Swimming for fitness is the top aspirational activity for inactive individuals in all age groups, according to the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) 2016 *Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report*, representing a significant opportunity to engage inactive populations.

Aquatic amenities such as splash pads, shallow spray pools, and interactive fountains are becoming increasingly popular attractions in the summer months, and if designed for such, can be converted into ice rinks for the winter months. These features can also be designed to be ADA-compliant, and are often cheaper alternatives to build and maintain than community swimming pools. Trends in the architectural design for splash parks can be found in *Recreation Management* articles in 2014 and 2015[32].

The Outdoor Foundation's *2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report* provided nationwide trends for various outdoor activities, including a number of water-based recreational activities noted below in ***Table 2***. Among water recreation activities, stand-up paddling had the largest increase in participation (25.7%), followed by several varieties of the kayaking experience: kayak fishing (17.4% increase), and whitewater kayaking (10.3% increase). Fly fishing participation went up while other fishing activities went down in the same time period. Participation in surfing declined slightly in 2015, down by 2.2% overall. Sailing participation increased somewhat, while rafting and wakeboarding participation went down.[33]

[31] National Sporting Goods Association, "2014 Participation – Ranked by Total,"
[32] Dawn Klingensmith "Make a splash: Spraygrounds Get (Even More) Creative", *Recreation Management*, April 2014 (and April 2015 updates), http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201404fe01
[33] Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2016

Table 2: Water Recreation Participation by Activity (in thousands) (6 years of age or older)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	3 Year Average Change
Boardsailing/windsurfing	1,151	1,593	1,324	1,562	1,766	4.7%
Canoeing	9,787	9,839	10,153	10,044	10,236	1.3%
Fishing (fly)	5,683	6,012	5,878	5,842	6,089	0.5%
Fishing (freshwater/ other)	38,868	39,135	37,796	37,821	37,682	-1.2%
Fishing (Saltwater)	11,983	12,017	11,790	11,817	11,975	-0.1%
Kayak fishing	1,201	1,409	1,798	2,074	2,265	17.4%
Kayaking (recreational)	8,229	8,144	8,716	8,855	9,499	5.3%
Kayaking (sea touring)	2,029	2,499	2,694	2,912	3,079	8.0%
Kayaking (white water)	1,546	1,878	2,146	2,351	2,518	10.3%
Rafting	3,821	3,690	3,836	3,781	3,883	1.7%
Sailing	3,725	3,958	3,915	3,924	4,099	1.2%
Stand up paddling	1,242	1,542	1,993	2,751	3,020	25.7%
Surfing	2,195	2,895	2,658	2,721	2,701	-2.2%
Wakeboarding	3,389	3,348	3,316	3,125	3,226	-1.2%

Source: Outdoor Foundation 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Dog Parks

Dog parks are increasingly popular community amenities and have remained among the top planned addition to parks and recreational facilities over the past three years. In fact, the 10 largest cities in the U.S. increased the number of dog parks in their parks system by 34% between 2005 and 2010. Dog parks not only provide safe spaces for animals to socialize and exercise; they are also places where dog owners socialize and enjoy the outdoors. They help build a sense of community and can draw potential new community members and tourists traveling with pets.[34]

In 2014 the National Dog Park Association was established and focused their mission on providing informational resources for establishing and maintaining dog parks. *Recreation Magazine*[35] suggested that dog parks can serve as a relatively low-cost way to provide an oft-visited a popular community amenity. Dog parks can be as simple as a gated area, or more elaborate with "designed-for-dogs" amenities such as water fountains, agility equipment, and pet wash stations. Even splash pads are being designed for dog parks.

Well-designed dog parks cater to users with design features for their comfort and pleasure. Some parks agencies even also offer creative programming at some dog parks for owners and their dogs.[36] Amenities in a well-designed dog park might include the following:

- Benches, shade and water – for dogs and people

[34] Joe Bush, "Tour-Legged-Friendly Parks", *Recreation Management*, February 2, 2016.
[35] Emily Tipping, "2014 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation," *Recreation Management*, June 2014.
[36] Dawn Klingensmith "Gone to the Dogs: Design and Manage an Effective Off-Leash Area", *Recreation Management*, March 2014, http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201403fe02

- At least one acre of fenced-in space with adequate drainage
- Double gated entry
- Ample waste stations well-stocked with bags
- Sandy beaches/sand bunker digging areas
- Custom designed splash pads or water-play feature for dogs
- People-pleasing amenities such as walking trails, water fountains, restroom facilities, picnic tables, and dog wash stations.

Programming

Current National Trends in Public Parks and Recreational Programming

According to *Recreation Management*'s 2015 State of the Industry Report,[37] the most common programs offered by parks and recreation survey respondents included: holiday events and other special events (79.6%); youth sports teams (68.9%); day camps and summer camps (64.2%); educational programs (63.8%); adult sports teams (63.4%); arts and crafts (61.6%); programs for active older adults (56.2%); fitness programs (55%); sports tournaments and races (55%); and sport training such as golf or tennis instruction (53.8%).

About one-third (35.7%) of parks and recreation respondents indicated that they are planning to add programs at their facilities over the next three years. Per *Recreation Management's* 2015 State of the Industry Report, the 10 most common types of additional programming planned for 2015/2016 included:

1. Environmental education programs
2. Mind-body/balance programs such as yoga and tai chi
3. Fitness programs
4. Educational programs
5. Programs for active older adults
6. Teen programming
7. Holidays and special events
8. Day camps and summer camps
9. Adult sports teams
10. Water sports such as canoeing and kayaking

Festivals and Special Events

Festivals and other special events are often popular activities in communities that not only entertain, generate economic activity, and serve to celebrate community identity, they are also fantastic means of introducing people the community's public parks and recreation system. Public parks and recreation agencies play a major role in planning, managing, and hosting festivals and other community programs that often serve to draw new users into their facilities. Attendants to events hosted in parks, or recreation centers, who enjoy their experience may want to return for another event or program, or simply to enjoy the park or recreation facility. Participants in these special programs can become interested in visiting other parks, recreation facilities or participating in programs.

In 2014, festivals grew in popularity as economic drivers and urban brand builders. Chad Kaydo describes the phenomenon in the January 2014 issue of *Governing Magazine*: "Municipal officials and

[37] Emily Tipping, "2015 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation," *Recreation Management*, June 2015.

entrepreneurs see the power of cultural festivals, innovation-focused business conferences and the like as a way to spur short-term tourism while shaping an image of the host County as a cool, dynamic location where companies and citizens in modern, creative industries can thrive."[38] Examples of successful large-scale festivals include:

- South by Southwest (SXSW) – This annual music, film, and digital conference and festival in Austin, Texas, is a leading example. Launched in 1987, the festival's economic impact has grown steadily over recent years. In 2007, it netted $95 million for Austin's economy. In 2013, the event topped $218 million.
- Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival in California – This two-week cultural event draws big-name bands, music fans, and marketers, attracting 80,000 people per day.
- First County Festival in Monterey, California – Private producer, Goldenvoice, launched this smaller music event in August 2013 with marketing support from the Monterey County Convention and Visitors Bureau, drawing on the County's history as host of the Monterey Jazz Festival. Adding carnival rides and local art, furniture and clothing vendors to the live music performances, the event drew 11,000 attendees each of its two days.

The success rate for festivals should not be evaluated solely on the basis of profit (sales), prestige (media profile), and size (numbers of events). Research by the European Festival Research Project (EFRP) indicates there is evidence of local and county government supporting and even instigating and managing particular festivals themselves to achieve local or regional economic objectives, often defined very narrowly (sales, jobs, and tourism) [39]. There are also a growing number of smaller, more local, community-based festivals and events in communities, most often supported by local councils that have been spawned partly as a reaction to larger festivals that have become prime economic-drivers. These community-based festivals often will re-claim cultural ground based on their social, educational, and participative value. For more information on the values of festivals and events, see the CRC Sustainable Tourism research guide[40] on this topic.

Fitness Programming

Fitness programming, and popularity of various activities has significantly evolved over the past fifteen years. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) *Health and Fitness Journal* has conducted annual surveys since 2007 to gauge trends that would help inform the creation of standards for health and fitness programming. ***Table 3*** illustrates survey results that focus on trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical, and community health and fitness industry in 2015. Some trends first identified in 2007 have remained popular year after year while other activities and associated programs were widely popular for short durations. For example, Zumba was a top 10 fitness trend/activity in 2012 but quickly declined in popularity. Two years later, in 2014, it failed to register in the top 20 fitness trends/activities.

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[38] Chad Kaydo, "Cities Create Music, Cultural Festivals to Make Money," *Governing*, January 2014, http://www.governing.com/topics/finance/gov-cities-create-mucis-festivals.html.

[39] European Festival Research Group, http://www.efa-aef.eu/en/activities/efrp/, accessed October 2012.

[40] Ben Janeczko, Trevor Mules, Brent Ritchie, "Estimating the Economic Impacts of Festivals and Events: A Research Guide," Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable Tourism, 2002, http://www.sustainabletourismonline.com/destinations-and-communities/implementation/destination-development/destination-products-and-experiences/events-festivals, accessed October 2012.

Body weight training appeared and high-intensity interval training are currently highly popular. Fitness programs for older adults have remained highly desirable activities for nearly a decade[41].

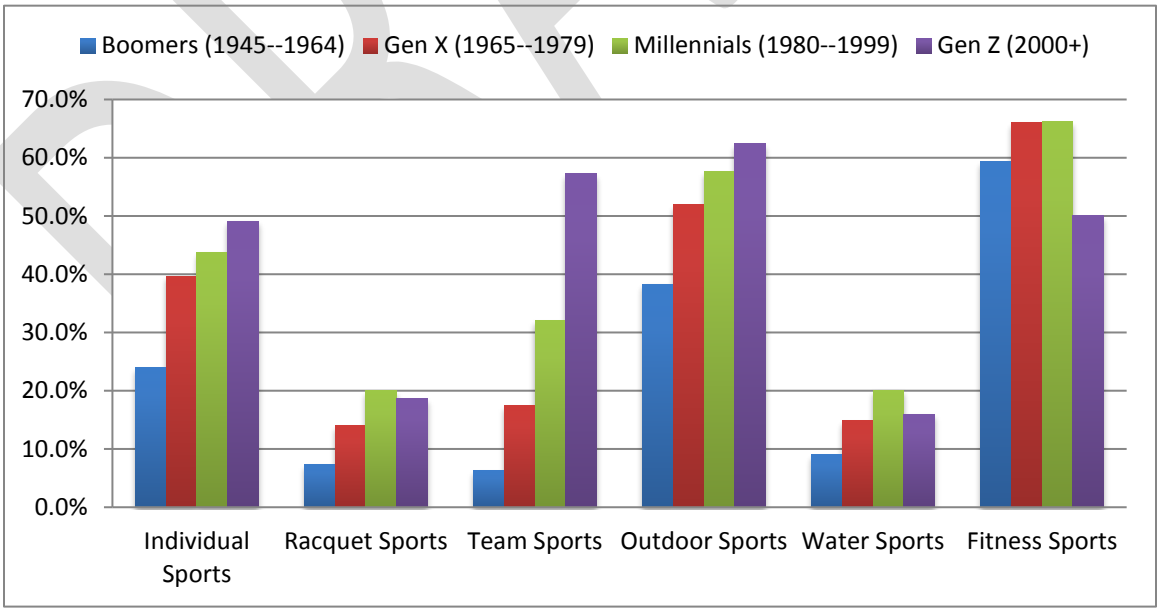
Table 3: Top 10 National Fitness Trends for 2015 Compared to 2007

2007	Trends for 2015
1.Children and obesity	1. Body weight training
2.Fitness programs for older adults	2. High-intensity interval training
3.Educated and experienced fitness professionals	3. Educated and experienced fitness professionals
4. Functional fitness	4. Strength training
5. Core training	5 Personal training
6. Strength training	6. Exercise and weight loss
7. Personal training	7. Yoga
8. Mind/body exercise	8. Fitness programs for older adults
9. Exercise and weight loss	9. Functional fitness
10. Outcome measurements	10. Group personal training

Source: American College of Sports Medicine

According to the *2015 Participation Report* by the Physical Activity Council, over half of each generation participates in fitness sports. Team sports are generally popular with the younger, Generation Z age demographic, while water and racquet sports were popular with Millennials. Outdoor and individual sports tend to have younger participants with participation decreasing with age. ***Table 4*** illustrates participation rates by generation[42].

Table 4: A Breakdown of Fitness Sports Participation Rates by Generation



Source: 2015 Participation Report, Physical Activity Council

[41] Walter R. Thompson, "Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2012," *Health & Fitness Journal,* American College of Sports Medicine, 2011.
[42] 2015 Participation Report", Physical Activity Council, 2015.

Older Adults and Senior Programming

Many older adults and seniors are choosing to maintain active lifestyles and recognize the health benefits of regular physical activities. With the large number of adults in these age cohorts, many communities have found a need to offer more programming, activities and facilities that support the active lifestyle this generation desire. Public parks and recreation agencies are increasingly expected to be significant providers of such services and facilities. The American Academy of Sports Medicine issues a yearly survey of the top 20 fitness trends.[43] It ranks senior fitness programs eighth among most popular fitness trends for 2015. Whether it's Silver Sneakers, a freestyle low-impact cardio class, or water aerobics, more Americans are realizing the many benefits of staying active throughout life. According to the National Sporting Goods Association, popular senior programming trends include hiking, birding, and swimming.

Healthy Lifestyle Trends and Active Living

Active Transportation – Bicycling and Walking

In many surveys and studies on participation in recreational activities, walking, running, jogging and cycling are nearly universally rated as the most popular activities among youths and adults. Walking, jogging and running are often the most highly participated in recreational activity and cycling often ranks as the second or third most popular activity. These activities are attractive as they require little equipment, or financial investment, to get started, and are open to participation to nearly all segments of the population. For these reasons, participation in these activities are often promoted as a means of spurring physical activity, and increasing public health. The design of a community's infrastructure is directly linked to physical activity – where environments are built with bicyclists and pedestrians in mind, more people bike and walk. Higher levels of bicycling and walking also coincide with increased bicycle and pedestrian safety and higher levels of physical activity. Increasing bicycling and walking in a community can have a major impact on improving public health and life expectancy. The following trends as well as health and economic indicators are pulled from the Alliance for Biking and Walking's 2012 and 2014 Benchmarking Reports:

<u>Public health trends related to bicycling and walking include:</u>

- Quantified health benefits of active transportation can outweigh any risks associated with the activities by as much as 77 to 1, and add more years to our lives than are lost from inhaled air pollution and traffic injuries.
- Between 1966 and 2009, the number of children who bicycled or walked to school fell 75%, while the percentage of obese children rose 276%.
- Bicycling to work significantly reduces absenteeism due to illness. Regular bicyclists took 7.4 sick days per year, while non-bicyclists took 8.7 sick days per year.

<u>Economic benefits of bicycling and walking include</u>:

- Bicycling and walking projects create 8–12 jobs per $1 million spent, compared to just 7 jobs created per $1 million spent on highway projects.
- Cost benefit analyses show that up to $11.80 in benefits can be gained for every $1 invested in bicycling and walking.

[43] American College of Sports Medicine, "Survey Predicts Top 20 Fitness Trends for 2015", http://www.acsm.org/about-acsm/media-room/news-releases/2014/10/24/survey-predicts-top-20-fitness-trends-for-2015, accessed January 2015.

National bicycling trends:

- There has been a gradual trend of increasing bicycling and walking to work since 2005.
- Infrastructure to support biking communities is becoming more commonly funded in communities.
- Bike share systems, making bicycles available to the public for low-cost, short-term use, have been sweeping the nation since 2010. Twenty of the most populous U.S. cities have a functional bike share system.

Bicycle-friendly communities have been emerging over the last 10 years. In addition to being a popular recreational activity, cycling has become a desirable, regular mode of transportation as people consider the costs and challenges of commuting by car or public transportation, their desire for better health, and concern for the environment.

The Alliance for Biking and Walking published its Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2014 Benchmarking Report,[44] updating its 2012 Benchmarking Report. The Report shows that increasing bicycling and walking are goals that are clearly in the public interest. Where bicycling and walking levels are higher, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes levels are lower.

The Institute for Transportation & Development Policy published an updated Standard for Transportation Oriented Design in March 2014, with accessible performance objectives and metrics, to help municipalities, developers and local residents design land use and built environment "to support, facilitate and prioritize not only the use of public transport, but the most basic modes of transport, walking and cycling." The TOD Standard, along with its performance objectives and scoring metrics, can be found at https://www.itdp.org/tod-standard/.[45]

Health and Obesity

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), obesity continues to be a serious issue in America, growing at an epidemic rate—almost tripling since 1990. Overall, more than one-third (35.7%) of adults and 17% of children in the United States are obese.[46] These statistics illustrate the importance of intervention and curbing of the epidemic in youth. As obesity in the United States continues to be a topic of interest for legislators and our government, there continues to be research suggesting that activity levels are stagnant among all age groups. For example, the CDC has reported that:

- Only 25% of adults and 27% of youth (grades 9-12) engage in recommended levels of physical activity.
- 59% of American adults are sedentary.
- Children nationally spend 4.5 - 8 hours daily (30-56 hours per week) in front of a screen (television, computer, or other electronic device).

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[44] Alliance for Biking and Walking, *2014 Benchmarking Report*, http://www.bikewalkalliance.org/download-the-2014-benchmarking-report, accessed January 2015

[45] Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, "TOD Standard, Version 2.1", March 2014, https://www.itdp.org/tod-standard/

[46] Center for Disease Control and Prevention, "Obesity and Overweight – Facts", http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/facts.html, accessed on October 3, 2012.

Trails and Health

Trails can provide a wide variety of opportunities for being physically active, such as walking/running/hiking, rollerblading, wheelchair recreation, bicycling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, fishing, hunting, and horseback riding. Trails and community pathways are a significant recreational and alternative transportation infrastructure, but are most effective in increasing public health when they are part of a system. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Trails for Health Initiative[47] concluded that a connected system of trails increases the level of physical activity in a community. Several groups, including American Trails have created resources explaining the many benefits of trails: http://www.americantrails.org/resources/benefits.

The health benefits are equally as high for trails in urban neighborhoods as for those in state or national parks. A trail in the neighborhood, creating a 'linear park', makes it easier for people to incorporate exercise into their daily routines, whether for recreation or non-motorized transportation. Urban trails need to connect people to places they want to go, such as schools, transit centers, businesses, and neighborhoods.[48]

Walk with a Doc

Also popping up in parks around the country are "Walk with a Doc" programs. These programs encourage people to join others in a public park to learn about an important health topic, get a health assessment, e.g. blood pressure and to take a healthy walk along a scenic trail, led by a physician, cardiologist or pediatrician. This is a great way to make the important connection between people, parks and physical and mental health. Cardiologist Dr. David Sabgir created this doctor-patient interactive program in 2004. With physicians 'walking the talk', the programs are getting people out in the parks, engaging in healthy physical activity, and reversing the consequences of a sedentary lifestyle "in order to improve the health and well-being of the country."[49]

Shade Structures – Solar Relief

Communities around the country are considering adding shade structures as well as shade trees to their parks, playgrounds and pools, as "a weapon against cancer and against childhood obesity"[50]; both to reduce future cancer risk and promote exercise among children. A 2005 study found that melanoma rates in people under 20 rose three percent a year between 1973 and 2001, possibly due to a thinning of the ozone layer in the atmosphere. It is recommended that children seek shade between 10am and 4pm, but with so little shade available, kids have nowhere to go. Additionally, without adequate shade, many play areas are simply too hot to be inviting to children. On sunny days, the playground equipment is hot enough to scald the hands of would-be users.

Trees would help provide protection, as tree leaves absorb about 95 percent of ultraviolet radiation, but they take a decade or more to grow large enough to make a difference. So, many communities are

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[47] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Guide to Community Preventive Services," http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html

[48] National Trails Training Partnership, "Health Community: What you should know about trail building,", http://www.americantrails.org/resources/health/healthcombuild.html, accessed May 2016

[49] "Does your Doctor Walk the Walk," http://flowalking.com/2012/01/does-your-doctor-walk-the-walk/; http://www.walkwithadoc.org/who-we-are/walk-information/, accessed September 13, 2012.

[50] Liz Szabo, "Shade: A weapon against skin cancer, childhood obesity", *USA Today*, June 30, 2011, www.usatoday.30.usatoday.com/news/health/wellness/story/2011/06/Shade-serves-as-a –weapon-against-skin-cancer-childhood-obesity/48965070/1, accessed May 2015

building shade structures instead. The non-profit Shade Foundation of American is a good resource for information about shade and shade structures, www.shadefoundation.org.

State Health Ranking

The United Health Foundation's America's Health Rankings gauges the overall health of the U.S. population. The 2015 Rankings list New Jersey as the 11th healthiest state in county, based on a review of several dozen public health factors including general healthy and unhealthy behaviors, environmental factors such as pollution, and social factors including economic issues, and access to health care. Highlights from the Rankings include:

- New Jersey ranked 10th among all U.S. states for lowest adult (age 18+) self-reported obesity rates.
- From 2014 to 2015 adult physical inactivity decreased from 26.8% in 2014 to 23.3% in 2015, and the State's corresponding ranking improved from37st in 2013, to 31st in 2014, to 27th in 2015. Although there has been an increase in physical activity in the past several years, physical inactivity remains a substantial challenge in the State.
- Funding for public health initiatives has decreased from $63/person in 2013, to $61/person in 2014, to $57/person in 2015.

<u>Natural Environments and Open Space</u>

Conservation

Parks and public lands are critical to the quality of life for all Americans, and that quality of life, for everyone, in any community, is improved by clean, green, and accessible parks and open space. Parks and open spaces serve an essential role in preserving natural resources and wildlife habitat, protecting clean water and clean air, and providing open space for current and future generations. Parks also provide an essential connection for Americans of all ages and abilities to the life-enhancing benefits of nature and the outdoors[51]. In 2013 the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) further emphasized the critical role parks and recreation agencies play in conserving open spaces and natural resources when it included "conservation" as one of its "three pillars" or guiding themes (social equity, health and wellness, and conservation). The three pillars were created as a means encapsulating all of the areas where parks and recreation professionals make an impact into six words[52].

In addition to being stewards of public open spaces and natural resources, parks and recreation agencies are extremely well positioned within communities to engage people of all ages with nature, educate the public about the outdoors and environmental issues, coordinate stewardship projects with public, non-profit and private entities, and lead by example in land and resource conservation efforts. In defining its position on the role of parks and recreation agencies in conservation, NRPA noted the following benefits of conservation and environmental stewardship:

- Providing carbon-reducing sustainable landscapes that cleanse air and water, replenish aquifers, reduce storm water runoff, and protect wildlife habitat.

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[51] National Parks and Recreation Association, "Role of Parks and Recreation in Conservation", http://www.nrpa.org/About-NRPA/Position-Statements/Role-of-Parks-and-Recreation-in-Conservation, accessed May 2016

[52] Elizabeth Beard, "Pillars of Our Community", *Parks and Recreation*, April 1, 2016, http://www.parksandrecreation.org/2013/April/Pillars-of-Our-Communities, accessed May 2016

- Offering the public access to safe, affordable, and healthy ways to experience and appreciate nature.
- Contributing significantly to the economic well-being of communities through energy and resources conservation and providing many economic benefits to communities derived from outdoor recreation.

Additional, NRPA noted the following points, and examples, to support its position that parks and recreation agencies play a major role in land and natural resource conservation:

- Outdoor recreation was estimated to have generated $646 billion in consumer spending in 2012, according to the Outdoor Industry Association, and in 2016 the American Recreation Coalition estimated outdoor recreation will generate more than $650 billion in consumer spending.
- The return on investment from protecting open space for public benefit from ecosystem services of water filtration, climate change protection, and other aspects of conserving public open space is estimated to be 100 to 1, according to a study by the Gund Institute for Ecological Economies at the University of Vermont.
- The number of Denver residents in 1980 who said they would pay more to live near a greenbelt or park: 16 percent. The number in 1990: 48 percent.
- The estimated gross increase in residential property value resulting from proximity to San Francisco's Golden Gate Park is $500 million to $1 billion.
- In Pima County, Arizona, wildlife viewing in one year amounted to an estimated $173.5 million in direct spending; $90.7 million in salaries and wages associated with 3,196 jobs; and about $9.9 million in state sales and fuel tax revenue, according to the Arizona Department of Fish and Game.
- Public support for land conservation and open space protection ballot measures has remained above 70 percent passage over the past decade, even during times of economic downturns and recessions.

Economic and Health Benefits of Parks

There are numerous economic and health benefits of parks, including the following:

- In 2012 in New Jersey alone, outdoor recreation generated $17.8 billion in annual consumer spending, and $1.3 billion in state and local tax revenue. Outdoor recreation was also estimated to have generated 158,000 jobs in the State and an estimated $6.1 billion in wages and salaries.[53]
- Trails, parks, and playgrounds are among the five most important community amenities considered when selecting a home.
- Research from the University of Illinois shows that trees, parks, and green spaces have a profound impact on people's health and mental outlook.[54]
- U.S. Forest Service research indicates that when the economic benefits produced by trees are assessed, the total value can be two to six times the cost for tree planting and care.[55]

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[53] Outdoor Industry Association, The Outdoor Recreation Economy, https://outdoorindustry.org/images/researchfiles/OIA_OutdoorRecEconomyReport2012.pdf; accessed May 2016

[54] F.E. Kuo, "Environment and Crime in the Inner County: Does Vegetation Reduce Crime?" *Environment and Behavior*, Volume 33, p. 343-367

- Nearly half of active Americans regard outdoor activities as their main source of exercise.[56]

The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More County Parks and Open Space, a report from the Trust for Public Land, makes the following observations about the health, economic, environmental, and social benefits of parks and open space[57]:

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with access to parks.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and physiological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality and act as natural air conditioners.
- Trees assist with storm water control and erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong communities are created.

Researchers have long touted the benefits of outdoor exercise. According to a study published in the *Journal of Environmental Science and Technology* by the University of Essex in the United Kingdom, "as little as five minutes of green exercise improves both mood and self-esteem."[58] A new trend started in China as they prepared to host the 2008 Summer Olympics. Their aim was to promote a society that promotes physical fitness and reaps the benefits of outdoor exercise by working out on outdoor fitness equipment.

The United States is now catching up on this trend, as parks and recreation departments have begun installing "outdoor gyms." Equipment that can be found in these outdoor gyms is comparable to what would be found in an indoor workout facility, such as leg and chest presses, elliptical trainers, pull down trainers, etc. With no additional equipment such as weights and resistance bands, the equipment is fairly easy to install. Outdoor fitness equipment provides a new opportunity for parks and recreation departments to increase the health of their communities, while offering them the opportunity to exercise outdoors. Such equipment can increase the usage of parks, trails, and other outdoor amenities while helping to fight the obesity epidemic and increase the community's interaction with nature.

The services afforded by natural lands also translate into economic benefits. A report by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) quantified the economic value of natural goods and services from different ecosystems, examining the direct and indirect (i.e. tourism) benefits (New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, 2007). This report estimated the total value of New Jersey's ecoservices at anywhere from $288 billion to $660 billion. The annual per acre value of natural goods

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[55] Nowak, David J., "Benefits of Community Trees," Brooklyn Trees, USDA Forest Service General Technical Report

[56] *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2016*

[57] Paul M. Sherer, "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More County Parks and Open Space," The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco, CA, 2006

[58] Sally Russell, "Nature Break: Five Minutes of Green Nurture," *Green Nurture* Blog, http://blog.greennurture.com/tag/journal-of-environmental-science-and-technology, accessed November 14, 2012.

and services from freshwater wetlands is $11,802. A 2009 study by The Trust for Public Land found that every $1 invested in state land preservation programs returns $10 in economic value through nature's services, such as flood control and filtering air and water of pollutants (The Trust for Public Land, 2009).

Nature Programming

Noted as early as 2003 in *Recreation Management* Magazine, parks agencies have been seeing an increase in interest in environmental-oriented "back to nature" programs. In 2007, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) sent out a survey to member agencies in order to learn more about the programs and facilities that public parks and recreation agencies provide to connect children and their families with nature.[59] A summary of the results follow:

- 68% of public parks and recreation agencies offer nature-based programming and 61% have nature-based facilities.
- The most common programs include nature hikes, nature-oriented arts and crafts, fishing-related events, and nature-based education in cooperation with local schools.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful programs, agencies listed staff training as most important followed by program content and number of staff/staff training.
- When asked what resources would be needed most to expand programming, additional staff was most important followed by funding.
- Of the agencies that do not currently offer nature-based programming, 90% indicated that they want to in the future. Additional staff and funding were again the most important resources these agencies would need going forward.
- The most common facilities include: nature parks/preserves, self-guided nature trails, outdoor classrooms, and nature centers.
- When asked to describe the elements that directly contribute to their most successful facilities, agencies listed funding as most important followed by presence of wildlife and community support.

Figures from the Association for Interpretative Naturalists, a national group of nature professionals, demonstrate that nature-based programs are on the rise. According to Tim Merriman, the association's executive director, the group was founded in 1954 with 40 members. It now boasts 4,800 members, with research indicating that about 20,000 paid interpreters are working nationally, along with more than 500,000 unpaid volunteers staffing nature programs at parks, zoos, and museums. The growth of these programs is thought to come from replacing grandparents as the teacher about the "great outdoors." It is also speculated that a return to natural roots and renewed interest in life's basic elements was spurred as a response to the events of September 11, 2001. [60]

[59] National Recreation and Parks Association, "NRPA Completes Agency Survey Regarding Children and Nature," http://www.narrp.org/assets/Library/Children_in_Nature/ nrpa_survey_regarding_children_and_nature_2007.pdf

[60] Margaret Ahrweiler, "Call of the Wild – From Beautiful Blossoms to Bugs and Guts, Nature Programs Are Growing as People Return to Their Roots," *Recreation Management,* http://recmanagement.com/200310fe04.php, October 2003

In his book, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder[61], Richard Louv introduced the concept of the restorative qualities of being out in nature, for both children and adults. This concept, and research in support of it, has led to a growing movement promoting connections with nature in daily life. One manifestation of this is the development of Nature Explore Classrooms in parks. Nature Explore[62] is a collaborative program of the Arbor Day Foundation and the non-profit organization Dimensions Educational Research Foundation, with a mission of helping children and families develop a profound engagement with the natural world, where nature is an integral, joyful part of children's daily learning. Nature Explore works to support efforts to connect children with nature. More recently, Scott Sampson advanced the cause in a book entitled, How to Raise a Wild Child: The Art and Science of Falling in Love with Nature[63]. Citing research supporting his case that connecting with nature is vital to the healthy development of individuals, communities, and the world, Sampson offers practical and helpful advice to parents, educators, and any other would-be nature mentors to kids.

Sports and Recreation Trends

General Sports and Recreation Trends

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) statistical survey on sports participation in the United States 2015 edition tracked participation in 54 different sports and activities for 2014. A summary of the survey results are noted in Table 5, with several highlights noted below[64]:

- Participation increased in 33 sports and activities in 2014 over the previous year. Roughly half that number (17) of sports and activities saw increases in 2013 compared to 2012.
- Open water sports saw the highest percentage increase (2.7%) in terms of number of participants. The increase is attributed to growth in popularity of boating (motor/power boat), canoeing and kayaking.
- Individual sports and activities experienced the highest decrease in participation, falling 2.6% in 2014 compared to the previous year. The decrease is attributed to declining participation in bowling, golf and tennis.

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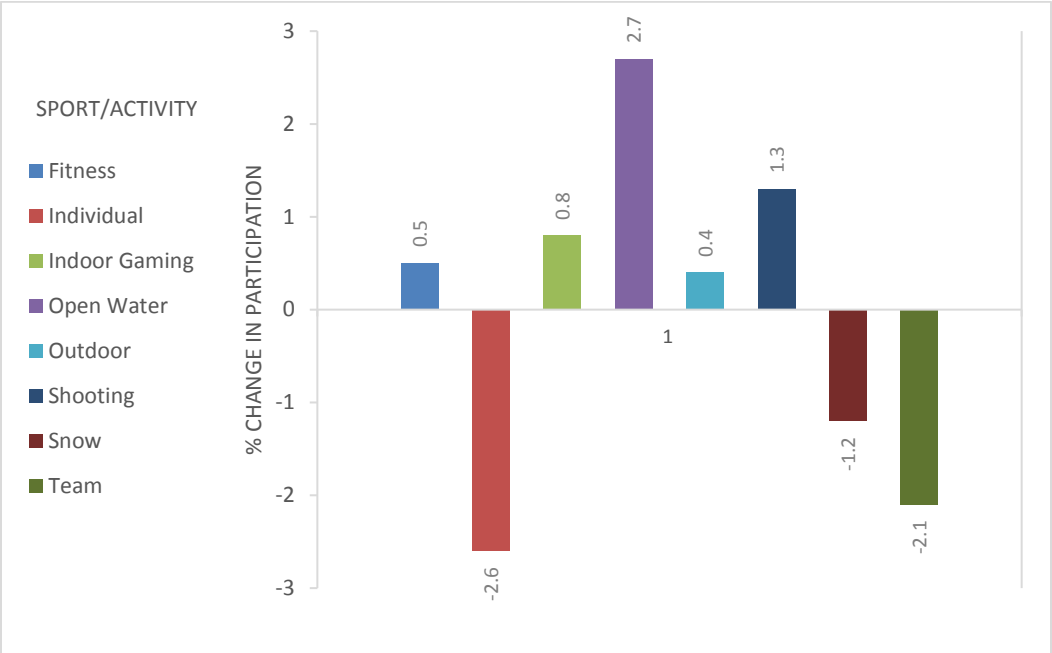
[61] Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2005
[62] National Arbor Day Foundation, "What is the Nature Explore Program," http://www.arborday.org/explore/documents/NE_FAQ_002.pdf, accessed August 2012
[63] Scott D. Simpson, How to Raise a Wild Child: The Art and Science of Falling in Love with Nature, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, New York, N.Y., 2015.
[64] National Sporting Goods Association, "2015 Sport/Recreation Activity Participation Report", http://www.nsga.org, accessed May 2016

Table 5: Changes in Sport Activity Participation 2013 to 2014



Source: National Sporting Goods Association, Sports participation in the United States 2015 Survey Report

Longer term data from National Sporting Goods Association show that despite a recent downturn in the participation in the past year, over the past decade, participation in individual sports has increased, especially in aerobic exercising, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, hiking, kayaking, running/jogging, and yoga. *Error! Reference source not found.**6*** illustrates a ten year change in participation for selected activities including both team sports and individual sports[65].

Table 6: Ten-Year History of Sports Participation (in millions) 2005-2014

Sport	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2014
Aerobic Exercising	33.7	34.8	33.2	42.0	44.1	44.2
Backpack/Wilderness Camping	13.3	13.0	12.3	11.6	12.2	12.0
Baseball	14.6	14.0	11.5	12.3	11.7	11.3
Basketball	29.9	24.1	24.4	26.1	25.5	23.7
Bicycle Riding	43.1	37.4	38.1	39.1	35.6	35.6
Camping (Vacation/Overnight)	46.0	47.5	50.9	42.8	39.3	39.5
Canoeing	NA	NA	NA	NA	6.7	7.3
Exercise Walking	86.0	89.8	93.4	97.1	96.3	104.3
Exercising with Equipment	54.2	52.9	57.2	55.5	53.1	55.1
Fishing (Salt Water)	10.0	10.4	8.2	9.7	9.5	9.4
Football (Flag)	NA	NA	NA	NA	6.8	6.3
Football (Tackle)	9.9	9.2	8.9	9.0	7.5	7.5
Football (Touch)	NA	NA	NA	NA	8.8	8.9
Golf	24.7	22.7	22.3	20.9	18.9	18.4
Gymnastics	NA	NA	3.9	5.1	5.1	5.4
Hiking	29.8	28.6	34.0	39.1	39.4	41.1

[65] National Sporting Goods Association, "Historical Sports Participation 2015 Report, https://www.nsga.org/research/nsga-research-offerings/sports-participation-historical-file-2015, accessed April 2016

Kayaking	NA	5.9	4.9	7.1	8.1	9.0
Lacrosse	NA	1.2	NA	2.7	2.8	2.8
Mountain Biking (off road)	9.2	9.3	8.4	6.0	5.2	5.4
Running/Jogging	29.2	30.4	32.2	38.7	42.0	43.0
Scuba Diving (Open Water)	NA	2.4	NA	NA	2.7	2.4
Skateboarding	12.0	10.1	8.4	6.6	5.0	5.4
Soccer	14.1	13.8	13.6	13.9	12.8	13.4
Softball	14.1	12.4	11.8	10.4	10.0	9.5
Swimming	58.0	52.3	50.2	46.0	45.5	45.9
Tennis	11.1	12.3	10.8	13.1	12.6	12.4
Volleyball	13.2	12.0	10.7	10.1	10.1	10.2
Weight Lifting	35.5	33.2	34.5	29.1	31.3	34.0
Work-Out at Club/Gym/Fitness Studio	34.7	36.8	38.3	34.5	34.1	35.9
Wrestling	NA	2.1	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.9
Yoga	NA	10.7	15.7	21.6	25.9	29.2

Source: National Sporting Goods Association

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) produces a yearly report on sports, fitness and leisure activities in the United States. The following findings were highlighted in the 2016 report[66]:

- Overall participation in sports, fitness, and related physical activities has fluctuated in recent years with an increase in team, winter, water, and fitness sports participation. Racquet and outdoor sport participation remained flat in 2015, while individual sports declined slightly.
- Team sports experienced the largest increase in participation, including at least a 4% increase in baseball, cheerleading, ice hockey, lacrosse, rugby, indoor soccer, team swimming and flag and tackle football.
- 43% of parents reported an increase in spending on team sports at school in 2015.
- 28% of all Americans are inactive while 31% are active to a healthy level.

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[66] Sports and Fitness Industry Association, *2016 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report*

Trends in Adult and Youth Recreation

Adult Recreation: Pickleball

No adult recreational sport is taking off faster than pickleball[67]. Pickleball is a racquet sport played on a badminton court with a lowered net, perforated plastic ball and wood paddles. While it originated in the Pacific Northwest in the 1960's, it has grown exponentially since 2000. The USA Pickle ball Association (USAPA) estimates that there were about 500 pickleball players in 2000, with that number growing to 125,000 in 2013. It's especially popular with the 50+ crowd because it is low impact but gets the heart rate pumping.[68] Pickle ball is an attractive programming option for recreation managers because it is adaptable to a variety of existing facilities – four pickleball courts fit in one tennis court.

Adult Sport Teams In and After the Work Place

Adult sports teams of all sorts, from competitive volleyball to local flag football teams to casual kickball, are becoming more and more popular around the country, especially among millennials (young adults from around 18 to early 30s) who grew up with a full extra-curricular schedule of team sports. While adult team sport participation is not limited to the millennial generation by any means, a recent survey conducted on behalf of the Sports Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) found that millennials are twice as likely as Generation Xers (born between 1965 and 1979) to participate in team sports as adults.[69]

Adult team sports are attractive as ways to be social, get exercise, or just for something to do after work. Instead of the bar scene, this provides a more comfortable form of interaction for many.[70]

Sports teams in the work place are also a growing trend in the United States as companies look for new ways to keep their employees healthy and happy. The United States Tennis Association (USTA) promotes tennis in the work place, citing the following benefits:

- Developing team-building
- Creating leadership opportunities
- Increasing employee morale and overall health

A recent story on National Public Radio examined sports participation among adults in Finland[71]. Finland consistently makes the top-five list of "most physically active European countries" according to European Commission studies. There is a strong tradition of employers encouraging sports participation among their employees, which started about a century ago with the forest industry. These days, about 90 percent of employers provide some kind of support for their employee's physical activity. Finns say it's understood that healthy employees do better work.

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[67] Chris Gelbach, "Never Stop Playing: Trends in Adult Recreational Sports" *Recreation Management*, September 2013, http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201309fe02, accessed January 2015

[68] David Crumpler, "Pickleball a fast-growing sport, especially for the 50 and older crowd", *Florida Times Union*, January 26, 2015, http://jacksonville.com/prime-time/2015-01-26/story/pickleball-fast-growing-sport-especially-50-and-older-crowd, accessed January 2015

[69] Sarah M. Wojcik, "Millennials Fuel Rise of For-profit Recreation Leagues", *The Morning Call*, http://www.mcall.com/news/local/mc-millennials-adult-sports-leagues-20190727-story.html, July 27, 2015, accessed July, 2015

[70] Liz Butterfield, "Adult Sport Leagues: The New After Work Social Scene", *RVA News*, http://rvanews.com/sports/adult-sport-leagues-the-new-after-work-social-scene/100639, August 8, 2013, accessed July, 2015

[71] Rae Ellen Bichell, "How Finns Make Sports Part of Everyday Life", *National Public Radio Morning Addition*, July 28, 2015, http://www.npr.org/sections/healthshots/2015/07/28/426748088

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Youth Sports

The Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) produces a yearly report on sports, fitness and leisure activities in the United States. The following findings regarding youth and sports were highlighted in the 2016 report[72]: In 2015 youth aged 6–16 (Generation Z) participation was highest for outdoor (62%), team (59%), and fitness sports (51%). Camping was a top interest for youth across the age spectrum, age 6 - 24.

In 2009, an article in *The Wall Street Journal* observed that in recent years lacrosse has become one of the country's fastest growing team sports. Participation in high-school lacrosse has almost doubled in the first decade of the century. An estimated 1.2 million Americans over age 7 played lacrosse in 2009.[73] A 2011 report, U.S. Trends in Team Sports, finds that lacrosse and other niche team sports and volleyball are continuing to experience strong growth for youth and adults.[74]

Golf

The National Golf Foundation keeps records of golf trends in the United States. Golf participation is a factor of the economy and the weather. Participation has been on a downward trend since 2000, but golf participation remained relatively stable from 2012 to 2014. A 4.9% drop in rounds of golf played in 2013 (a year of poor weather) reveals that the golf economy is recovering at a slower pace than the overall U.S economy. [75] Nevertheless, golf trend analysts point to the following factors as indicators that participation in golf is stabilizing, and that there is the potential for increased participation in the sport[76]:

1. Despite the fact that participation has remained relatively flat the past several years, the average number of rounds played per golfer continued to increase in 2014.
2. Latent demand (number of non-golfers interested in playing) has grown steadily since 2011.
3. Millennials and Baby Boomers remain active players with Millennials and Boomers each representing about 25% of the golfer population. History indicates that golfers reaching retirement age play twice as much as before retirement.
4. The number of first time players being introduced to the sport has remained steady in recent years, and in 2014 the number of beginners in the game rose above the historic average of newcomers to the game.

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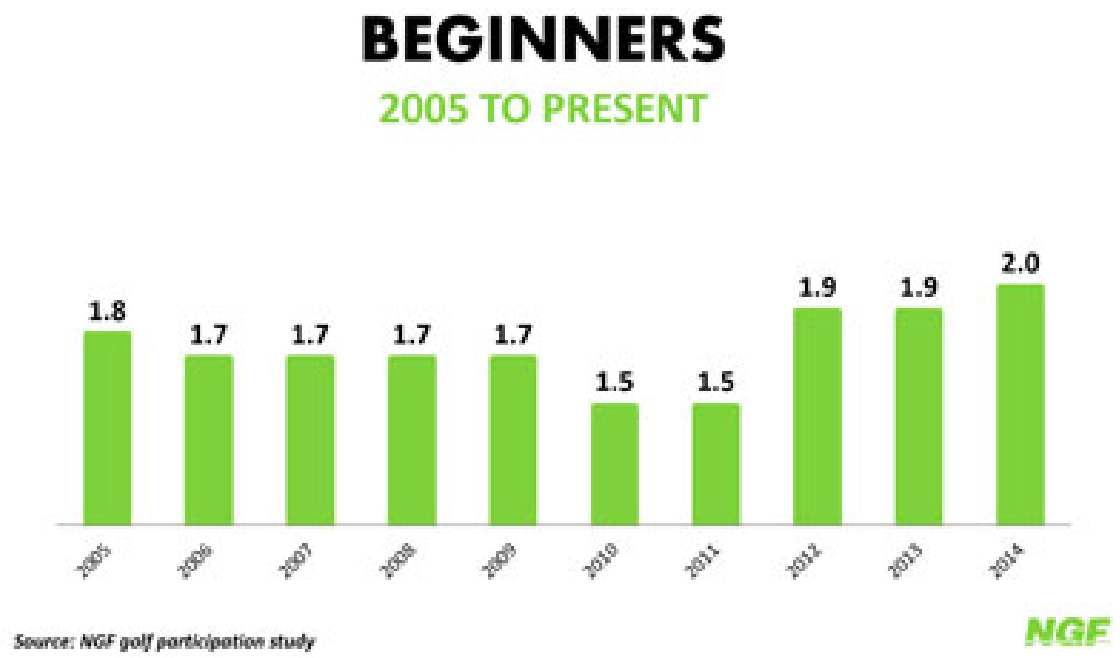
[72] Sports and Fitness Industry Association, *2016 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report*, http://www.sfia.org/reports/all/.

[73] Evans and Trachtenberg, "Lacrosse Muscles Its Way West," *The Wall Street Journal*, May, 2009.

[74] SMGA, "2011 Preview: U.S. Trends in Team Sports," Fall 2011,"

[75] "Golf Industry Overview – 2013 Rounds Played Summary", National Golf Foundation February 2014 Newsletter, http://ngfdashboard.clubnewsmaker.org/Newsletter/1xsy3ctzasr?a=1&p=2266785&t=392795, accessed April 2014 (citing the NGF *Golf Industry Overview: 2014 Edition*).

[76] "2015 Golf Participation in the U.S. Update: Participation Remains Steady; Interest Rises." National Golf Foundation April 2015 Newsletter, http://ngfdashboard.clubnewsmaker.org/Newsletter/zdj0ha442l7?a=5&p=2367515&t=410871, accessed January 2016.



Source: National Golf Foundation

Lacrosse

In 2009, an article in *The Wall Street Journal* observed that in recent years lacrosse has become one of the country's fastest growing team sports. Participation in high-school lacrosse has almost doubled in the first decade of the century. An estimated 1.2 million Americans over age 7 played lacrosse in 2009.[77] A 2011 report, U.S. Trends in Team Sports, finds that lacrosse and other niche team sports and volleyball are continuing to experience strong growth for youth and adults.[78]

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation trends are also a recurring topic of study by the United States Forest Service through the Internet Research Information Series (IRIS). An IRIS report dated January 2012[79] provides the following recent nature-based outdoor recreation trends: Participation in walking for pleasure and family gatherings outdoors were the two most popular activities for the U.S. population as a whole. These outdoor activities were followed closely in popularity by viewing/ photographing wildlife, boating, fishing, snow/ice activities, and swimming. There has been a growing momentum in participation in sightseeing, birding and wildlife watching in recent years.

The Outdoor Foundation releases a *Participation in Outdoor Recreation Report* annually. According to the 2016 Topline Report[80], nearly half (48.4%) of Americans participated in outdoor recreation activities in 2015. This figure remained static from 2015, but dropped slightly (less than 1%) from 2013, with extreme weather and an unusually cold winter likely contributed to the decline. Increased participation

[77] Evans and Trachtenberg, "Lacrosse Muscles Its Way West," *The Wall Street Journal*, May, 2009.
[78] "2011 Preview: U.S. Trends in Team Sports," Fall 2011," SMGA, 2011.
[79] USDA Forest Service, "Recent Outdoor Recreation Trends," *Internet Research Information Series (IRIS) Research Brief*, January 2012, http://warnell.forestry.uga.edu/nrrt/nsre/IRISRec/ IRISRec23rpt.pdf, accessed August, 2012.
[80] *Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2016*

in outdoor recreation activities were strong in paddle sports, with stand up paddle boarding remaining the top outdoor activity for growth, with participation growing by 26% from 2014 to 2015.

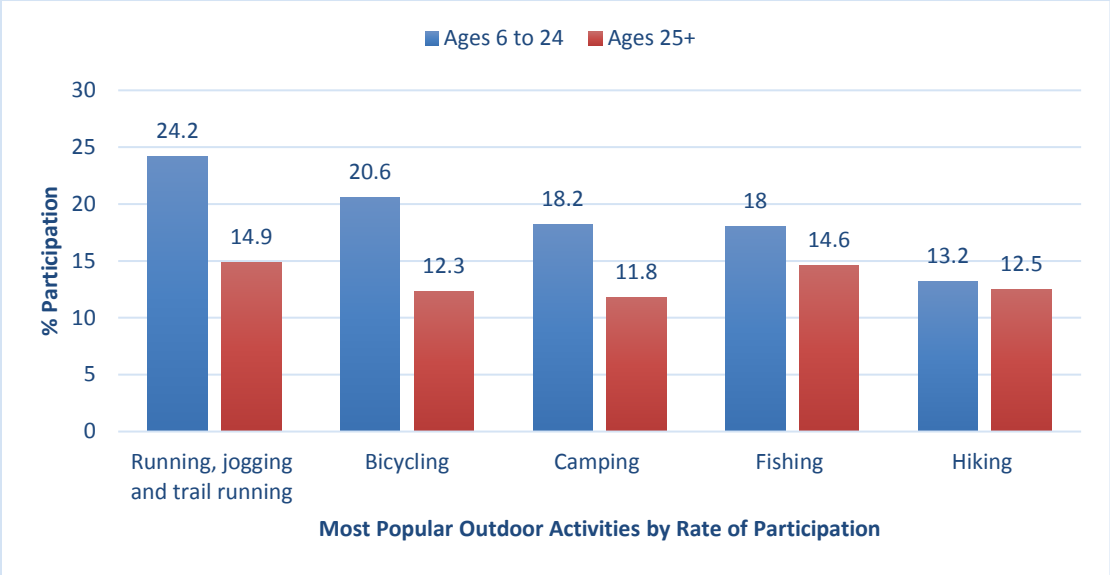
Additional key findings from the Outdoor Foundation's *2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report* include:

Participation in Outdoor Recreation

- In 2015, 48.4% of Americans ages 6 and older participated in at least one outdoor activity. This equated to 142. 4 million Americans who went on a collective 11.7 billion outdoor recreation outings.
- In the past three years the activities with the highest percentage increase in participation were in stand up paddling, triathlon (traditional/road), kayak fishing, triathlon(non-traditional/off-road), and trail running.
- Participation among youths ages 6 to 12 was at 63%, ages 13 to 17 was at 59%, and ages 18 to 24 was at 57%.
- Participation among adults ages 25 to 44 was at 56%, and 37% among adults ages 45 and older.

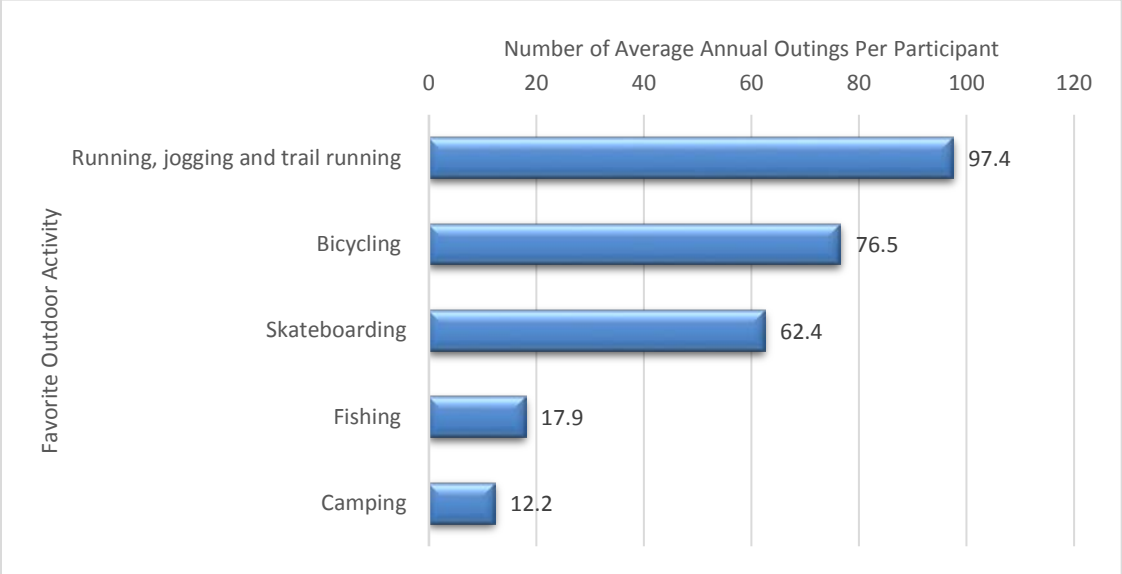
The *2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report* also lists the most popular (by participation rate) and favorite (by frequency of participation) outdoor activities for youth and young adults ages 6—24, and adults over the age of 25 nationwide:

Most Popular Outdoor Activities by Rate of Participation



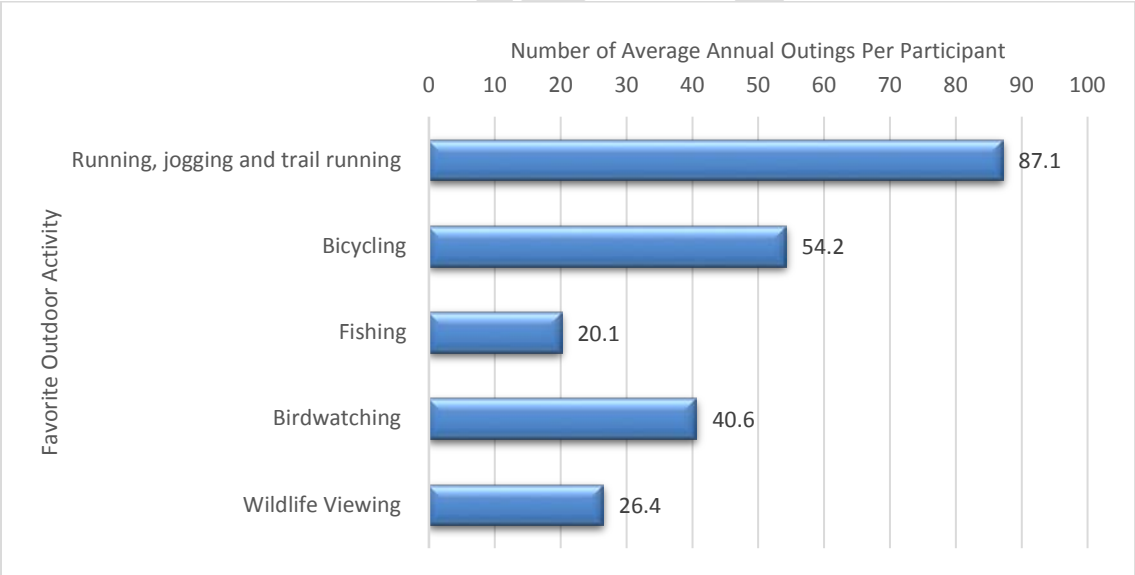
Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Favorite Outdoor Activities by Frequency of Participation among Youths and Young Adults (Ages 6 to 24):



Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Favorite Outdoor Activities by Frequency of Participation among Adults (Age 25+)



Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Adventure Sports and Zip lines

Adventure sports of various kinds have increased in popularity since the 1970. These sports include a spectrum of sports labeled "alternative", Extreme", "X", "gravity", "lifestyle" and "action sports". As explained by Gunnar Breivik[81] from the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences, the adventure sports concept contains elements of challenge, excitement, and usually risk. They are individualistic pursuits that take place in demanding environments and tend to represent a freedom from a dominant sport culture. Three distinct alternative "types" of adventure sports participants are prevalent:

[81] Gunnar Breivik, "Trends in Adventure Sports in a Post-Modern Society", *ResearchGate*, March 2010.

- Loose groups of alternative lifestyle people (sea kayaking, back-mountain skiing)
- Those involved in formal sports settings with competitions/associations (snowboard, climbing)
- Those involved with media, sponsors, entrepreneurs, making spectacular films with extreme stunts (extreme skiing, surfing)

In 2015, the following sports were listed as the "Top 10 Adventure Sports You Must Try Before You Die"[82]:

10. **Paragliding** -- free flying, light weight glider aircraft launched by foot with flights that can last 1 to 2 hours.
9. **Bungee Jumping** -- elastic rope suspended around a person with a body harness who then jumps from a very high platform with a free fall of several meters.
8. **Whitewater Kayaking --** boat is taken through extreme currents in rivers, weirs, and waterfalls.
7. **Glacier Climbing** -- an exciting and challengingly dangerous sport that requires you to be fit and aware with basic nuances of ice axes, harnesses and safety ropes.
6. **Dirt Biking** -- dirt bikes are rugged, lightweight, and powerful with suspension that absorbs impact from obstructions and large jumps, permitting travel through muddy trails, rock terrains and mountain regions.
5. **Skiing** -- a world championship event sport with fixed-heel bindings or free-heel bindings.
4. **Kite Wing --** a wind-shaped sail designed to use wind poser, lifts riders off varying surfaces such as ice, water, snow, asphalt and packed sand. A kite winger can reach speeds of up to 55 mph.
3. **Bobsledding** -- sport of sliding down an ice covered incline that's replete with curves on a four runner sled that has no functional controls,
2. **Scuba Diving** -- Deep water diving (with a mandatory course) with self-contained underwater breathing apparatus and fins to propel movement, that allows you to experience the world of the sea.
1. **Zorbing** -- Zorbing offers the experience of rolling downhill inside an inflatable ball made of shock absorbent material that protects you while enjoying an amazing ride, varying in time and intensity.

According to a story by National Public Radio on August 28, 2012, zip line tours and aerial adventure parks are booming in the Northwest United States.[83] At least a dozen commercial zip line attractions have opened in Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, plus an equal number in Alaska and British Columbia. While there have been some grumblings about bringing in private business to public parks, zip line purveyors point out that they're fun, not too expensive to make, and safe.

Tacoma, Washington's public park district, Tacoma Metro Park, recently opened a publicly- run zip line at its Northwest Trek Wildlife Park, looking to set itself apart from other local recreational opportunities and seeking to attract a different demographic. Municipal park departments around the country are looking at this booming trend and the potential revenue stream it can bring and are adding zip line attractions and aerial adventure parks to their public park offerings. Examples to consider are Coconino County's Tree Top Adventure Course, "Flagstaff Extreme Adventure Course", in Arizona:

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[82] Chandrima, "Top 10 Adventure Sports You Must Try Before You Die", *List Dose*, January 2015, http://listdose.ccom/top-10-adventure-sports-you-must-try-before-you-die/, accessed January 2016.
[83]Tom Banse, "Getting High in the Northwest…On Zip Lines", *National Public Radio* Story, August 2012, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=160244351&ft=3&f=160244351

http://www.flagstaffextreme.com; the "Red Ore Zip Tour" at Red Mountain Park in Birmingham, Alabama: http://www.redmountain
park.org/zip-line-trips; and, "The Beanstalk Journey Zip Line and Canopy Tour" at Catawba Meadows Park in Morganton, North Carolina: http://www.redmountainpark.org/zip-line-trips.

Trail Recreation and Cycling Trends

For trail-related recreation activities such as hiking, bicycling, and running, the *2016 Outdoor Recreation Topline Report* indicates a positive three-year trend for trail running, running/jogging, hiking, mountain biking and BMX biking, as shown on ***Table 8***. Additionally, participation in trail running and BMX biking is up significantly over the recent three-year period.

Table 7: Cycling and Trail Recreation Participation by Activity (Ages 6+)

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	3 Year Average Change
BMX Bicycling	2,369	1,547	2,175	2,168	2,350	2,690	7.5%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	7,161	6,816	7,714	8,542	8,044	8,316	2.8%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	39,320	40,349	39,232	40,888	39,725	38,280	-0.8%
Hiking (Day)	32,496	34,491	34,545	34,378	36,222	37,232	2.6%
Running/Jogging	50,713	52,187	54,188	51,127	49,408	48,496	-2.3%
Trail Running	5,136	5,610	6,003	6,792	7,531	8,139	10.7%

Source: 2016 Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report

Other Cycling Trends

- Bicycle touring is becoming a fast-growing trend around the world, including the United States and Canada. "Travelers are seeking out bike tours to stay active, minimize environmental impact, and experience diverse landscapes and Countyscapes at a closer level."[84]
- Urban bike tours, popular in cycle-friendly cities in Europe, are taking hold in the United States as well. Bikes and Hikes LA, an eco-friendly bike and hike sightseeing company founded last September, offers visitors the opportunity to "see the County's great outdoors while getting a good workout." In New York, a hotel and a bike store are partnering to offer guests cruisers to explore the County during the summer of 2014.[85]
- One of the newest trends in adventure cycling is "fat bike," multiple speed bikes that are made to ride where other bikes can't be ridden, with tires that are up to 5 inches wide run at low pressure for extra traction. Most fat bikes are used to ride on snow but they are also very effective for riding on any loose surface like sand or mud. They also work well on most rough

[84] Hope Nardini, "Bike Tourism a Rising Trend," *Ethic Traveler*, http://www.ethicaltraveler.org/2012/08/bike-tourism-a-rising-trend/, accessed March 2014
[85] Michelle Baran, "New Trend: Urban Bike Tours in Los Angeles and New York," *Budget Travel Blog*, http://www.budgettravel.com/blog/new-trend-urban-bike-tours-in-los-angeles-and-new-york,11772/, accessed March 2014

terrain or just riding through the woods. This bike offers unique opportunities to experience nature in ways that wouldn't be possible otherwise.[86]

Therapeutic Recreation

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) established that persons with disabilities have the right to the same access to parks and recreation facilities and programming as those without disabilities. In 2004, The National Council on Disability (NCD) issued a comprehensive report, *Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities*[87]. This report identified six elements for improving the quality of life for all citizens, including children, youth, and adults with disabilities. The six elements are:

1. Provide affordable, appropriate, accessible housing
2. Ensure accessible, affordable, reliable, safe transportation
3. Adjust the physical environment for inclusiveness and accessibility
4. Provide work, volunteer, and education opportunities
5. Ensure access to key health and support services
6. Encourage participation in civic, cultural, social, and recreational activities

Therapeutic Services bring two forms of services for persons with disabilities into play, specific programing and inclusion services. Individuals with disabilities need not only functional skills but to have physical and social environments in the community that are receptive to them and accommodating individual needs. Inclusion allows individuals to determine their own interests and follow them.

Many park and recreation departments around the country are offering specific programming for people with disabilities, but not as many offer inclusion services. In "Play for All–Therapeutic Recreation Embraces All Abilities", an article in *Recreation Management* Magazine[88], Dana Carman described resources for communities looking to expand their therapeutic recreation services.

Therapeutic recreation includes a renewed focus on serving people with the social/emotional challenges associated with "invisible disabilities" such as ADHD, bipolar disorders, spectrum disorders and sensory integration disorders. A growing number of park and recreation departments are making services for those with invisible disabilities a successful part of their programming as well. When well done, these same strategies improve the recreation experience for everyone.[89]

Role and Response of Local Government

Collectively, these trends have created profound implications for the way local governments conduct business. Some local governments are now accepting the role of providing preventative health care through parks and recreation services. The following concepts are from the International County/County Management Association[90].

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[86] Steven Pease, "Fat Bikes, How to Get the Most Out of Winter Cycling," *Minnesota Cycling Examiner*, http://www.examiner.com/article/fat-bikes-the-latest-trend-adventure-cycling, February 1, 2014.
[87] National Council on Disability, *Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities*, December 2004, http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2004/12022004.
[88] Dana Carmen, "Play for All", *Recreation Management*, February 2007, http://recmanagement.com/200710fe03.php, accessed May 2016
[89] Kelli Anderson, "A Welcome Inclusion", *Recreation Management*, October 2010, http://recmanagement.com/201010fe03.php, accessed February 2015
[90] International County Management Association, www.ICMA.org, accessed June 2012.

- Parks and recreation departments should take the lead in developing communities conducive to active living.
- There is growing support for recreation programs that encourage active living within their community.
- One of the highest priorities is a cohesive system of parks and trails and accessible neighborhood parks.

In summary, the United States, its states, and its communities share the enormous task of reducing the health and economic burden of obesity. While numerous programs, policies, and products have been designed to address the problem, there is no magic bullet to make it go away. The role of public parks and recreation as a health promotion and prevention agency has come of age. What matters is refocusing its efforts to insure the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of communities and citizens.

Administration Trends for Recreation and Parks

Municipal parks and recreation structures and delivery systems have changed, and more alternative methods of delivering services are emerging. Certain services are being contracted out and cooperative agreements with non-profit groups and other public institutions are being developed. Newer partners include the health system, social services, justice system, education, the corporate sector, and community service agencies. These partnerships reflect both a broader interpretation of the mandate of parks and recreation agencies and the increased willingness of other sectors to work together to address community issues. The relationship with health agencies is vital in promoting wellness.

The traditional relationship with education and the sharing of facilities through joint-use agreements is evolving into cooperative planning and programming aimed at addressing youth inactivity levels and community needs.

Listed below are additional administrative national trends:

- Level of subsidy for programs is lessening and more “enterprise” activities are being developed, thereby allowing subsidy to be used where deemed appropriate.
- Information technology allows for better tracking and reporting.
- Pricing is often determined by peak, off-peak, and off-season rates.
- More agencies are partnering with private, public, and non-profit groups.

Agency Accreditation

Parks and recreation agencies are affirming their competencies and value through accreditation. This is achieved by an agency’s commitment to 150 standards. Accreditation is a distinguished mark of excellence that affords external recognition of an organization’s commitment to quality and improvement.

The National Recreation and Parks Association administratively sponsors two distinct accreditation programs: The Council on Accreditation of Parks, Recreation, Tourism and Related Professions (COAPRT) approves academic institutions and the Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) approves agencies. It is the only national accreditation of parks and recreation agencies, and is

a valuable measure of an agency's overall quality of operation, management, and service to the community.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance

On September 14, 2010 the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) issued an amended regulation implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA 2010 Standards)[91] and, for the first time, the regulations were expanded to include recreation environment design requirements. Covered entities were to be compliant with design and construction requirements and the development of three-year transition plan by March 15, 2012. The deadline for implementation of the three-year transition plan was March 15, 2015.

Funding

According to *Recreation Management* Magazine's 2015 State of the Industry Report, survey respondents from parks and recreation departments/districts reporting about their revenues from 2012 through 2014 indicated a continued recovery from the impact of the recession of 2008. From 2013 to 2014, 44.1% of respondents reported that their revenues had either had increased and another 44.1% reported revenues staying steady. About 48.7% of respondents said they expected revenues to continue to increase in 2015, while 44% expected no change.

Trends in Marketing by Parks and Recreation Providers

Active Network offers expertise in activity and participation management. Their mission is to make the world a more active place. In their blog, they offered the following marketing mix ideas which came out of a meeting with park and recreational professionals in the Chicago area.[92].

- Updated booths and community event presence—Utilization of a tablet or laptop to show programs you offer and provide event participants the opportunity to register on the spot.
- Facebook redirect app—This application redirects people automatically to the link you provide. Add it to your Facebook page.
- Instagram challenge—Think about how you can use mobile and social tools at your next event. It could be an Instagram contest during an event set up as a scavenger hunt with participants taking pictures of clues and posting them on Instagram.
- Social media coupons—Research indicates that the top reason people follow an organization on a social network is to receive discounts or coupons. Consider posting an event discount on your social networks redeemable by accessing on phone or printing out.

Mobile marketing is a growing trend. Social websites and apps are among the most used features on mobile phones. Popular social marketing electronic tools include Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram and LinkedIn. Private messaging apps such as Snapchat and WhatsApp are being used more and more for live media coverage.[93]

Ninety-one percent of Americans own a cell phone and most use the devices for much more than phone calls. Young adults engage in mobile data applications at much higher rates than adults ages 30 and

[91] U.S. Department of Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA Home Page, http://www.ada.gov/, accessed November 15, 2012.
[92] Active Network, http://www.activenetwork.com, accessed May 2014
[93] Jacqueline Woerner, "The 7 Social Media Trends Dominating 2015," Emarsys Blog, http://www.emarsys.com/en/resources/blog/the-7-social-media-trends-dominating-2015/, accessed February 26, 2015.

older. Usage rates trends indicate that Millennials tend to get information most frequently using mobile devices such as smartphones. For example, 97% of cell phone owners ages 18–29 send and receive text messages, compared to 94% of ages 30–49, 75% of ages 50–64, and 35% of those 65 and older. In 2016, the vast majority of the population in the United States has access to a smartphone, computer or other device, and is nearly always "connected".

Recreation Trends and the Future of Hunterdon County's Park and Recreation System

This analysis of local and national trends, preferences, and participation in recreation and outdoor activities shows that Hunterdon County residents enjoy a variety of recreational activities, most notably outdoor and fitness activities. Hunterdon County's park system can and should accommodate a majority of the most popular outdoor and fitness activities- bicycling, hiking, jogging, running and walking, all types of boating, fishing, outdoor fitness, day camping and outdoor cultural arts activities. The County's park system should continue to focus on providing residents with natural resource based recreational opportunities.

Other popular recreational activities such as field sports, and facilities such as playgrounds and splash play areas, especially those located within convenient walking or biking distance to more densely populated areas, would more appropriately provided at the municipal level. The local-level focus on these types of public recreation amenities, and County's provision of outdoor recreation opportunities, appears to be a long standing arrangement which works to provide a diversity of recreational opportunities to residents across the County. Some other recreation and leisure activities that require specialized facilities, such as indoor swimming or golf, are more likely best satisfied by private clubs and businesses that specialize in these services, which are likely affordable for the majority of County residents.

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APPENDIX

Maps:

Existing Parks and Open Space
Proposed Parks and Open Space
Proposed County Park and Trail System

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