

# City of Manassas

## Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Needs

### Appendix D. Influencing Trends



Prepared by:  
*GreenPlay, LLC.*



# Appendix D – Parks and Recreation

## Influencing Trends

The following information highlights relevant regional and national outdoor recreation trends from various sources that may influence recreation planning for Manassas over the next several years.

### Demographic Trends in Recreation

The highest-ranking age cohort in Manassas in 2015 was the 25-34 cohort (at 16.5%), followed by the 35-44 cohort (at 14.2%), and 45-54 cohort (at 13%). In 2015, an estimated 30% of the population was in the Millennial Generation (currently age 17-36, a nearly 20 year span). About 19% of the population was in the Baby Boomer age range in 2015 (currently age 52-70; again, a nearly 20 year span).

#### Adult – The Millennial Generation

The Millennial Generation, generally considered to represent those born between about 1980 and 1999, represented about 30% of the Manassas population in 2015. In their book, Millennials Rising, the Next Great Generation, authors William Strauss and Neil Howe identify seven Millennials characteristics.<sup>1</sup> These characteristics were discussed in a 2010 California State Parks article entitled “Here come the ‘Millennials’: What You Need to Know to Connect with this New Generation”:

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.”
4. Technically savvy: Upbeat and with a can-do attitude, this generation is “more optimistic and tech-savvy than its 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.”

The California State Parks article provides a broad range of ideas for engaging Millennials in parks and recreation.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Neil Howe and William Strauss, Millennials Rising, the Next Great Generation, Vintage: New York, New York, 2000.

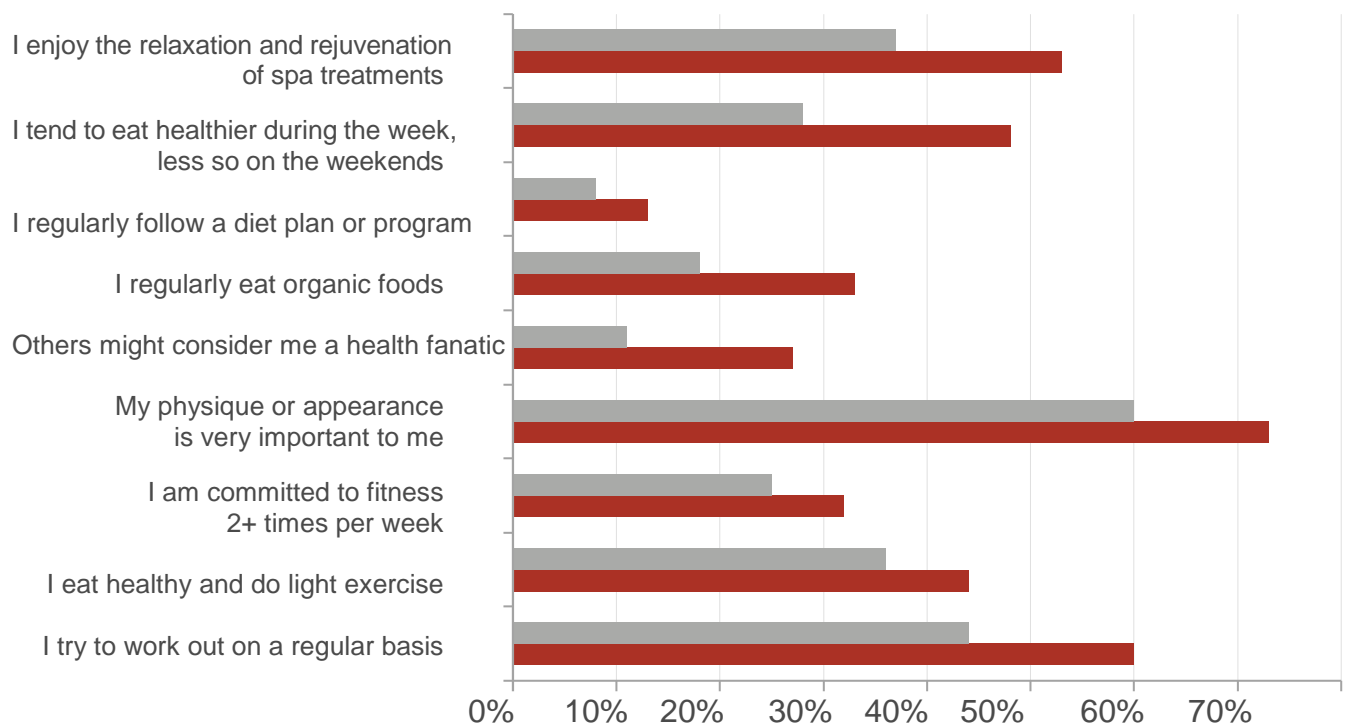
<sup>2</sup> California State Parks, “Here come the ‘Millennials’: What You Need to Know to Connect with this New Generation,” *Recreation Opportunities*. (2010), p. 4-6, [http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/millennials%20final\\_03\\_08\\_10.pdf](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/millennials%20final_03_08_10.pdf), accessed January 12, 2015.

In a 2011 study of the Millennial Generation,<sup>3</sup> Barkley Advertising Agency made the following observations about Millennials and health/fitness:

- Sixty percent (60%) 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

**Figure 1** illustrates contrasts between Millennials and Non-Millennials regarding a number of health and fitness topics.<sup>4</sup>

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



Source: *Barkley's Report on Millennials*.

<sup>3</sup> American Millennials: Deciphering the Enigma Generation, <https://www.barkleyus.com/AmericanMillennials.pdf>, accessed May 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Barkley report.

## Adults – Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers are defined as individuals born between 1946 and 1964, as stated in “Leisure Programming for Baby Boomers.”<sup>5</sup> They are a generation that consists of nearly 76 million Americans. In 2011, this influential population began its transition out of the workforce. In the July 2012 issue of *Parks and Recreation* magazine, published by NRPA, Emilyn Sheffield, Professor of Recreation and Parks Management at the California State University, at Chico, wrote an article titled, “Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today.” In it, she indicated that Baby Boomers are driving the aging of America, with boomers and seniors over 65 composing about 39% of the nation’s population.<sup>6</sup> 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.

The demographic profile for Manassas, Virginia, indicates that about 19% of the current population falls within the Baby Boomer age range (ages 52–70).

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 John Kennedy initiated the President’s Council on Physical Fitness; physical education and recreation became 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.<sup>7</sup>

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?”<sup>8</sup> 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 chronological 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 extension of Boomers’ health and wellness program. Because Boomers in general have a high education level, they will likely continue to pursue education as adults and into retirement.

*Boomers will look to park and recreation professionals to give them 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, as Ziegler suggests that activities such as bingo, bridge, and shuffleboard will likely be avoided because Boomers relate these activities to being old.

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

- Boomer characteristics
- What drives Boomers?

<sup>5</sup> Linda Cochran, Anne Roshschadl, and Jodi Rudick, “Leisure Programming For Baby Boomers,” Human Kinetics, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> Emilyn Sheffield, “Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today,” *Parks and Recreation*, July 2012, p. 16-17.

<sup>7</sup> 2012 Participation Report, Physical Activity Council, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey Ziegler, “Recreating Retirement: How Will Baby Boomers Reshape Leisure in Their 60s?,” *Parks and Recreation*, October 2002.

- Marketing to Boomers
- Arts and entertainment
- Passive and active fitness trends
- Outdoor recreation/adventure programs
- Travel programs

## Youth – Generation Z

In her article, Emily Sheffield also identified 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 Manassas, about 30% of the population is 19 and under.

Characteristics cited for Generation Z, the youth of today,<sup>9</sup> include:

- The most obvious characteristic for Generation Z is the pervasive use of technology.<sup>10</sup>
- 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 Zers tend to be independent. They do not wait for their parents to teach them things or tell them how to make decisions.<sup>11</sup>

With regard to physical activity, a 2013 article published by academics at Georgia Southern University<sup>12</sup> notes 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 1979). 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 is a generation that seeks social support from peers more so than any previous generation. This is the most competent generation from a technological standpoint but Generation Zers tend to struggle in and fear some basic activities such as physical activity and sports.

## Multiculturalism

Our country 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. "This is an important tipping point," said William H. Frey,<sup>13</sup> the 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

The 2015 demographic profile for Manassas, Virginia, indicates that 57.3% of the population was Caucasian and that the next largest single-race demographic was African American at 14.9% followed closely by the Asian demographic at 5.7%. Additionally, 34.5% of the population self-designated as being of Hispanic origin (irrespective of race).

<sup>9</sup> Note: There does not appear to be a general consensus about the transition from Millennials to Generation Z. The range cited in various articles puts the transition year anywhere from about 1994 to 2000.

<sup>10</sup> La Monica Everett-Haynes, "Trending Now: Generation Z," Arizona University UA News Blog, <http://uanews.org/blog/trending-now-generation-z>, accessed July 30, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> Alexander Levit, "Make Way for Generation Z," *The New York Times*, March 28, 2015, [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/29/jobs/make-way-for-generation-z.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/29/jobs/make-way-for-generation-z.html?_r=0).

<sup>12</sup> David D. Biber, Daniel R. Czech, Brandon S. Harris, and Bridget F. Melton, "Attraction to physical activity of generation Z: A mixed methodological approach," *Open Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Vol.3, No.3., 310 – 319 (2013), <http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ojpm.2013.33042>.

<sup>13</sup> Adam Serwer, "The End of White America," *Mother Jones*, <http://www.motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2012/05/end-white-america>, May 17, 2012.

diversity adds a unique flavor to communities expressed through distinct neighborhoods, multicultural learning environments, restaurants, places of worship, museums, and nightlife.<sup>14</sup>

As the recreation field continues to function within a more diverse society, race and ethnicity will become increasingly important in every aspect of the profession. 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.

- **Outdoor participation varies by ethnicity:** Participation in outdoor activities is higher among Caucasians than any other ethnicity and lowest among African Americans in nearly all age groups.
- **Lack of interest reason for not participating:** 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:** Biking, running, fishing, and camping were the most popular outdoor activities for all Americans, with each ethnic/racial group participating in each in varying degrees.

### **Recreational Preferences among Ethnic/Racial Groups (Self-Identifying):**

Nationwide participation in outdoor sports was highest among Caucasians in all age groups and lowest among African Americans, according to the 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report”.<sup>15</sup> The biggest difference in participation rates was between Caucasian and African American adolescents, with 65% of Caucasians ages 13–17 participating and 42% of African Americans in this age range participating.

#### African Americans

African American 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 Report,” the most popular outdoor activities among African Americans are running/jogging and trail running (18%); fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (11%); road, mountain, and BMX biking (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)<sup>16</sup> found significant differences among the four groups concerning the degree of linguistic acculturation (preferred language spoken in various communication media). 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<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> Baldwin Ellis, “The Effects of Culture & Diversity on America,” [http://www.ehow.com/facts\\_5512569\\_effects-culture-diversity-america.html](http://www.ehow.com/facts_5512569_effects-culture-diversity-america.html), accessed on Sept. 20, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2014*, Outdoor Foundation, 2014.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> Harry Zinne and Alan Graefe, “Emerging Adults and the Future of Wild Nature,” *International Journal of Wilderness*, December 2007.



According to the 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report,” the most popular outdoor activities among Asian/Pacific Islanders are running/jogging and trail running (24%); hiking (15%); road, mountain, and BMX biking (14%); camping (car, backyard, backpacking, and RV) (11%); and fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (10%).

#### Caucasians

According to the 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report,” the most popular outdoor activities among Caucasians are running/ jogging and trail running (19%); fishing (freshwater, saltwater, and fly) (18%); road, mountain, and BMX biking (17%); camping (car, backyard, backpacking, and RV) (16%); and hiking (14%).

#### Hispanics

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 recreation and leisure service providers, as family and individual recreation patterns and preferences are strongly shaped by cultural influences.<sup>18</sup>

Participation in outdoor sports among those who identify as Hispanic is at 8% nationwide, according to the 2014 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report.”<sup>19</sup> Those who do get outdoors, however, participate more frequently than other outdoor participants, with an average of 47 outings per year. Hispanic youth between ages 13 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, mountain, and BMX biking (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 “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.<sup>20</sup> 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.

### **Facilities**

According to *Recreation Management* magazine’s 2015 State of the Industry Report,<sup>21</sup> national trends show an increased user-base of recreation facilities (private and public). Additionally, parks and recreation providers responding to the survey indicated an average age of 26.4 years for their community recreation facilities. To meet that growing need, a majority of the parks and recreation survey respondents (72.6%) reported that they have plans to build new facilities or make additions or

<sup>18</sup> Emilyn Sheffield, “Five Trends Shaping Tomorrow Today,” *Parks and Recreation*, July 2012, p. 16-17.

<sup>19</sup> “Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2014,” Outdoor Foundation, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> “SJG Multicultural Facts & Trends,” San Jose Group, <http://blog.thesanjosegroup.com/?p=275>, posted October 25, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Emily Tipping, “2015 State of the Industry Report, State of the Managed Recreation Industry,” *Recreation Management*, June 2015.



renovations to their existing facilities over the next three years. Nearly one-third (32.4%) of parks respondents said they have plans to build new facilities, and 29.9% said they plan to add to their existing facilities. More than half (53.1%) are planning renovations to existing facilities.

Also according to the 2015 “State of the Industry Report,” the average amount planned for parks and recreation department construction in the 2015 budgets saw an increase from an average of \$3,795,000 in the previous year's survey to an average of \$3,880,000 for 2015. Currently the most likely features included in park facilities are playgrounds, park shelters, restroom structures, walking and hiking trails, open spaces – gardens and natural areas, bleachers and seating, outdoor sports courts, natural turf sports fields, concession areas, and classrooms/meeting rooms. The top 10 planned features to be constructed for all facility types are:

1. Splash play areas (planned by 23.4% of parks respondents who will be adding features)
2. Playgrounds (22.4%)
3. Dog parks (22%)
4. Fitness trails and outdoor fitness equipment (21.5%)
5. Hiking and walking trails (20.3%)
6. Bike trails (20.1%)
7. Park restroom structures (19.5%)
8. Park structures such as shelters and gazebos (17.7%)
9. Synthetic turf sports fields (16.1%)
10. Wi-Fi services (14.4%)

The current national trend is toward “one-stop” indoor recreation facilities to serve all ages. Large, multipurpose regional centers help increase cost recovery, promote retention, and encourage cross-use. Agencies across the United States are increasing revenue production and cost recovery. Providing multiuse and flexibility in facilities versus specialized space is a trend, offering programming opportunities as well as free-play opportunities. “One-stop” facilities 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 in terms of participation in 2014.<sup>22</sup> Nationally, there is an increasing trend towards indoor leisure and therapeutic pools. Swimming for fitness is the top aspirational activity for “inactives” 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.

Additional indoor and outdoor amenities like “spray pads” are becoming increasingly popular as well. In some cities and counties, spray pools are popular in the summer, and if needed and cost effective, they are converted into ice rinks in the winter. In this maturing market, communities are looking for atmosphere, an extension of surroundings either natural or built. Communities are also concerned about water quality and well as conservation. Interactive fountains are a popular alternative, ADA-compliant and low maintenance. Trends in architectural design for splash parks can be found in *Recreation Management* magazine articles in 2014 and 2015.<sup>23</sup>

The Outdoor Foundation’s 2015 “Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report” provided nationwide trends for various outdoor activities, including the following water recreation activities: board sailing/windsurfing, canoeing, fishing, kayaking, rafting, sailing, stand-up paddle boarding, and

<sup>22</sup> “2014 Participation – Ranked by Total,” National Sporting Goods Association, 2015.

<sup>23</sup> 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](http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201404fe01)).

wakeboarding (**Table 1**). Among water recreation activities, stand-up paddling had the largest increase in participation from 2012 to 2014 (30.5% increase) followed by several varieties of the kayaking experience: kayak fishing (20.1% increase), and whitewater kayaking (15.1% increase). Fly fishing participation went up while other fishing activities went down in the same time period. Sailing participation increased somewhat, while rafting and wakeboarding participation went down.<sup>24</sup>

**Table 1: Water Recreation Participation by Activity (in thousands) (6 years of age or older)**

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	3 Year Avg. Change
Boardsailing/windsurfing	1,617	1,151	1,593	1,324	1,562	13.2%
Canoeing	10,553	9,787	9,839	10,153	10,044	0.9%
Fishing (fly)	5,478	5,683	6,012	5,878	5,842	1.0%
Fishing (freshwater/ other)	38,860	38,868	39,135	37,796	37,821	-0.9%
Fishing (Saltwater)	11,809	11,983	12,017	11,790	11,817	-0.5%
Kayak fishing	1,044	1,201	1,409	1,798	2,074	20.1%
Kayaking (recreational)	6,465	8,229	8,144	8,716	8,855	2.5%
Kayaking (sea touring)	2,144	2,029	2,499	2,694	2,912	12.9%
Kayaking (white water)	1,842	1,546	1,878	2,146	2,351	15.1%
Rafting	4,460	3,821	3,690	3,836	3,781	-0.3%
Sailing	3,869	3,725	3,958	3,915	3,924	1.8%
Stand up paddle boarding	1,050	1,242	1,542	1,993	2,751	30.5%
Wakeboarding	3,645	3,389	3,348	3,316	3,125	-2.6%

Source: Outdoor Foundation 2015 (numbers in thousands).

## Dog Parks

Dog parks continue to see high popularity and have remained among the top planned addition to parks and recreational facilities over the past three years. There was a 34% increase in dog parks between 2005 and 2010 in the 10 largest U.S. Cities. They help build a sense of community and can draw potential new community members and tourists traveling with pets.<sup>25</sup>

In 2014, a new association was formed dedicated to providing informational resources for starting and maintaining dog parks, the National Dog Park Association. *Recreation Management* magazine<sup>26</sup> suggests that dog parks can represent 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 like water fountains, agility equipment, and pet wash stations, to name a few. Even “spraygrounds” are being designed just for dogs. Dog parks are also places for people to meet new friends and enjoy the outdoors.

The best dog parks cater to people with design features for their comfort and pleasure, but also with creative programming.<sup>27</sup> Amenities in an ideal dog park might include the following:

- Benches, shade and water – for dogs and people
- At least one acre of space with adequate drainage
- Double gated entry
- Ample waste stations well-stocked with bags

<sup>24</sup> *Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2015*, Outdoor Foundation, 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Joe Bush, “Tour-Legged-Friendly Parks,” *Recreation Management*, February 2, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> Emily Tipping, “2014 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation,” *Recreation Management*, June 2014.

<sup>27</sup> 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](http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201403fe02)).

- Sandy beaches/sand bunker digging areas
- Custom designed splashpads for large and small dogs
- People-pleasing amenities such as walking trails, water fountains, restroom facilities, picnic tables, and dog wash stations.

## Programming

### Fitness Programming

There have been many changes in fitness programs in the last fifteen years. What clients wanted in 2000 is not necessarily what they want today. The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) *Health and Fitness Journal*<sup>28</sup> has conducted a survey annually since 2007 to determine trends that would help create a standard for health and fitness programming. **Table 2** shows survey results that focus on trends in the commercial, corporate, clinical, and community health and fitness industry. Some trends first identified in 2007 have stayed near the top of the list year after year while others came and went in popularity. Zumba made a brief appearance on the top 10 in 2012 but fell off the list of top 20 in 2014. Body weight training appeared as a developing trend in 2014 and was projected to stay strong in 2015 as was high-intensity interval training. Yoga is regaining popularity after falling out of the top 20 in 2009 and staying out of the top 10 until 2014. Fitness programs for older adults remained strong in 2015.

**Table 2: Top 10 Worldwide Fitness Trends for 2015 Compared to 2007**

2007	Trends for 2015
1.Children and obesity	1. Body weight training
2.Special 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

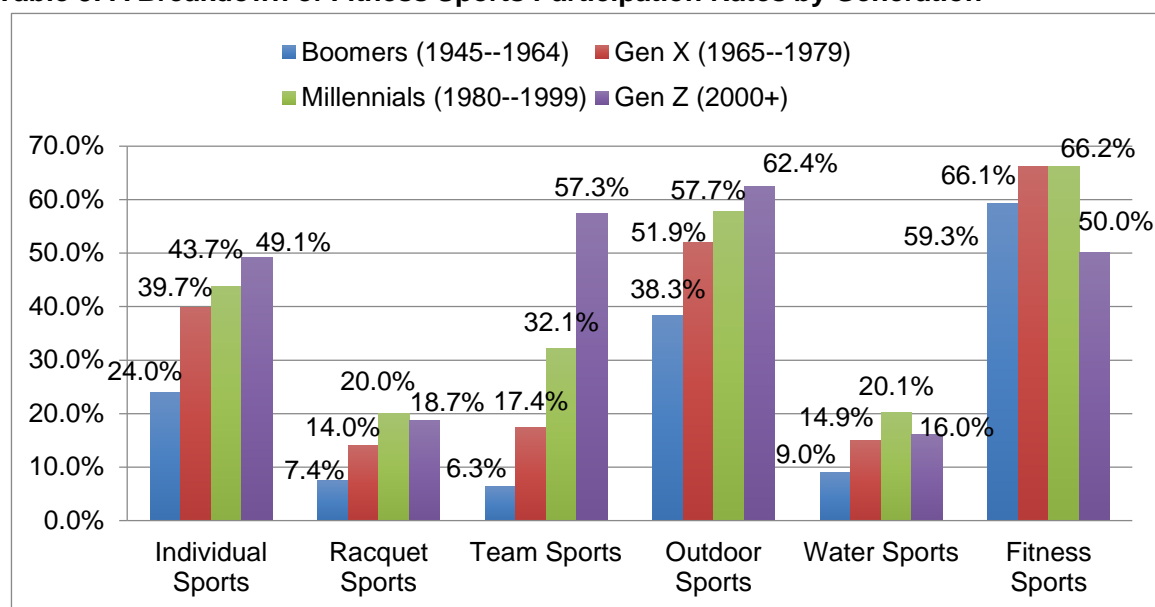
Source: American College of Sports Medicine

According to the 2015 “Participation Report by the Physical Activity Council,”<sup>29</sup> over half of each generation participates in fitness sports and that team sports are more of a Generation Z activity while water and racquet sports are dominated by Millennials. Outdoor and individual sports tend to have younger participants with participation decreasing with age. **Table 3** illustrates participation rates by generation.

<sup>28</sup> Walter R. Thompson, “Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2012,” *Health & Fitness Journal*, American College of Sports Medicine, 2011.

<sup>29</sup> 2015 Participation Report,” Physical Activity Council, 2015.

**Table 3: A Breakdown of Fitness Sports Participation Rates by Generation**



Source: 2015 Participation Report, Physical Activity Council.

## General Programming

One of the most common concerns in the recreation industry is creating innovative programming to draw participants into facilities and services. Once in, participants recognize that the benefits are endless. According to *Recreation Management* magazine's 2015 State of the Industry Report,<sup>30</sup> the most common programs offered by parks and recreation survey respondents include: 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. The 10 most common types of additional programming planned for 2015 included:

1. Environmental education programs (up from No. 7)
2. Mind-body/balance programs such as yoga and tai chi (up from No. 6)
3. Fitness programs (down from No. 2)
4. Educational programs (up from No. 8)
5. Programs for active older adults (down from No. 1)
6. Teen programming (down from No. 3)
7. Holidays and special events (down from No. 5)
8. Day camps and summer camps (did not appear in 2014)
9. Adult sports teams (down from No. 4)
10. Water sports such as canoeing and kayaking (did not appear in 2014)

<sup>30</sup> Emily Tipping, "2015 State of the Industry Report, Trends in Parks and Recreation," *Recreation Management*, June 2015.

## Older Adults and Senior Programming

The American Academy of Sports Medicine issues a yearly survey of the top 20 fitness trends.<sup>31</sup> It ranks senior fitness programs eighth among most popular fitness trends for 2015. Whether it is SilverSneakers, a freestyle low-impact cardio class, or water aerobics, more and more people 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.

## Festivals and Events

In the context of urban development, from the early 1980s, there has been a process that can be characterized as “festivalization,” which has been linked to the economic restructuring of towns and cities, and the drive to develop communities as large-scale platforms for the creation and consumption of “cultural experience.”

The success rate for festivals should not be evaluated simplistically solely on the basis of profit (sales), prestige (media profile), size (numbers of events). Research by the European Festival Research Project (EFRP)<sup>32</sup> indicates there is evidence of local and city government supporting and even instigating and managing particular festivals themselves to achieve local or regional economic objectives, often defined very narrowly (sales, jobs, and tourists). 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<sup>33</sup> on this topic.

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 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 city as a cool, dynamic location where companies and citizens in modern, creative industries can thrive.”<sup>34</sup>

Examples of successful 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 City 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 city’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.

<sup>31</sup> “Survey Predicts Top 20 Fitness Trends for 2015,” American College of Sports Medicine, <http://www.acsm.org/about-acsm/media-room/news-releases/2014/10/24/survey-predicts-top-20-fitness-trends-for-2015>, accessed January 2015.

<sup>32</sup> EFRP is an international consortium seeking to understand the current explosion of festivals and its implications and perspective. <http://www.efa-aef.eu/en/activities/efrp/>, accessed October 2012.

<sup>33</sup> 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.sustainabletourisonline.com/1005/events/estimating-the-economic-impacts-of-festivals-and-events-a-research-guide>, accessed October 2012.

<sup>34</sup> 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>.

## Healthy Lifestyle Trends and Active Living

### Active Transportation – Bicycling and Walking

Bicycle-friendly cities have been emerging over the last 10 years. Cycling has become a popular mode of transportation as people consider the rising cost of fuel, desire for better health, and concern for the environment. Some people also use cycling as a mode of transportation just for the fun of it.

The Alliance for Biking and Walking published its Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2014 Benchmarking Report,<sup>35</sup> 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.

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 make a big impact on improving public health and life expectancy. The following trends as well as health and economic indicators are pulled from the 2012 and 2014 Benchmarking Reports:

#### Public health trends related to bicycling and walking include:

- 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.

#### The economic benefits of bicycling and walking include:

- 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.

#### 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.

---

<sup>35</sup> 2014 Benchmarking Report, Alliance for Biking and Walking, <http://www.bikewalkalliance.org/download-the-2014-benchmarking-report>, accessed January 23, 2015.



In November 2013, the Institute for Transportation & Development Policy published a Standard for Transportation Oriented Design, 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 transportation, walking and cycling.” The TOD Standard, along with its performance objectives and scoring metrics, can be found at [www.itdp.org/documents/TOD\\_v2\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.itdp.org/documents/TOD_v2_FINAL.pdf).<sup>36</sup>

## Health and Obesity

According to the **Centers 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.<sup>37</sup> These statistics illustrates the importance of intercepting 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. The following are statistics that support this concern.

- Only 25 percent of adults and 27 percent of youth (grades 9–12) engage in recommended levels of physical activity.
- Fifty-nine percent (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 and/or computer).

## Shade Structures

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”,<sup>38</sup> 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. Therefore, many communities are 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](http://www.shadefoundation.org).

## 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<sup>39</sup> concluded that a connected system of trails increases the

<sup>36</sup>“TOD Standard, Version 2.0,” Institute for Transportation & Development Policy, November 2013, [http://www.itdp.org/documents/TOD\\_v2\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.itdp.org/documents/TOD_v2_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>37</sup> “Obesity and Overweight - Facts,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/facts.html>, accessed on October 3, 2012.

<sup>38</sup>Liz Szabo, “Shade: A weapon against skin cancer, childhood obesity,” *USA Today*, June 30, 2011, [usatoday.30.usatoday.com/news/health/wellness/story/2011/06/Shade-serves-as-a-weapon-against-skin-cancer-childhood-obesity/48965070/1](http://usatoday.30.usatoday.com/news/health/wellness/story/2011/06/Shade-serves-as-a-weapon-against-skin-cancer-childhood-obesity/48965070/1), accessed 5/23/2013.

<sup>39</sup> “Guide to Community Preventive Services,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/index.html>



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.<sup>40</sup>

### 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."<sup>41</sup>

## Natural Environments and Open Space

### Conservation

The top ten recommendations of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Conservation Task Force were published in the November 2011 issue of *Parks and Recreation* magazine.<sup>42</sup> These recommendations are a compilation of best practices used by trendsetting agencies.

- 1) Take a leadership role in the community to promote conservation. Park and recreation agencies have a unique opportunity to bring governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, community leaders, and the public together for the cause of working together on community wide conservation objectives – clean water, wildlife habitat preservation, reducing energy use and improving environmental quality. Park and recreation agencies must lead the way in promoting conservation to diverse and underserved audiences.
- 2) Lead by example in employing best management conservation practices in parks. Park and recreation agencies should become the catalyst in the community for conservation by showing how best practices can be adopted – not mowing what you don't need to mow; stopping wasteful energy consumption; and reducing pesticide use for example. Show the public how conservation practices can benefit everyone.
- 3) Engage volunteers in conservation and stewardship. Create a sense of belonging and stewardship for parks by creating a personal sense of ownership and value. Enable people to identify with their parks and natural resources, and to care about their future. Sustain stewardship by creating meaningful public participation in implementation of conservation principles and practices.

---

<sup>40</sup> "Health Community: What you should know about trail building," National Trails Training Partnership: Health and Fitness, <http://www.americantrails.org/resources/health/healthcombuild.html>, accessed on May 24, 2013.

<sup>41</sup> "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.

<sup>42</sup> "Conservation Leaders in our Communities," National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), *Parks and Recreation Magazine*, November 2011, p. 85-101, <http://ezine.parksandrecreation.org/HTML5/NRPA-Parks-Recreation-Magazine-November-2011>.

- 4) Establish a strategic land acquisition strategy based on knowledge and awareness of significant natural and cultural resources (watershed protection, unique ecological characteristics, and sensitive natural areas deserving protection). As the largest owners of public land within most communities, park and recreation agencies should lead the way in developing a strategic vision for preserving open space and conserving important landscapes and natural features.
- 5) Engage youth in conservation. Get kids and teens outdoors and enjoying their parks. The experience of nature is inherently rewarding for youth. Set as a goal to connect kids in the community to nature and the outdoors. Children and youth will be fascinated by nature and will develop a lifelong affinity as well as a conservation ethic if they have early opportunities to enjoy nature and recreate outdoors in a safe, rewarding way.
- 6) Conserve energy in all ways. Park and recreation agencies must lead by example, showing the public how and why they should adopt practices that they can see demonstrated in parks and recreation facilities. Park and recreation agencies should adopt energy conservation measures that make sense and save public taxpayer funds.
- 7) Protect natural resources in parks and in the community. A core mission of public parks is to protect land and water resources and to be stewards of natural resources. This means committing personnel and resources to protect natural and cultural resources and creating sustainable long-term methods of funding this conservation mission. Parks and recreation agencies are entrusted with some of the most important public assets of a community and the conservation and long-term protection of this public trust is and should be a core component of every parks and recreation agency's mission.
- 8) Create sustainable landscapes that demonstrate principles of conservation. Utilize sustainable landscape practices to save taxpayer funds, to measurably improve conservation benefits, and to educate the public about conservation. For example, agencies can reduce turf grass and mowing frequency; replace turf with native plants; manage floodplains for multiple uses including conservation and public recreation; enhance wetlands for water filtration and groundwater recharge; plant model landscapes of drought tolerant native plants adapted to climate and culture; and promote parks as food sources through edible landscapes and community gardens.
- 9) Forge partnerships that foster the mission of conservation. The greatest and most beneficial conservation successes most often occur as a result of collaboration. Park and recreation agencies should partner with non-profit and community service organizations, universities and colleges, school systems, other governmental agencies, and non-traditional partners for conservation outcomes. Promote health, education, and other goals while working toward a common mission of conservation.
- 10) Utilize technology to promote conservation. Park and recreation agencies need to embrace technology to promote conservation. This is not only in applications such as GIS [geographic information systems], but in utilizing social media to engage the public, especially youth. Technology is not to be feared as something that detracts from the conservation mission of parks agencies, but rather it is to be accepted as a means of sharing knowledge and connecting people to conservation and stewardship.

### **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.<sup>43</sup> A summary of the results follow:

- Sixty-eight percent (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 an army of 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.<sup>44</sup>

In his book, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder,<sup>45</sup> 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<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup> Citing research supporting his case that connecting with nature is vital to the healthy development of individuals, communities, and the world,

---

<sup>43</sup> "NRPA Completes Agency Survey Regarding Children and Nature," National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), [http://www.narrp.org/assets/Library/Children\\_in\\_Nature/nrpa\\_survey\\_regarding\\_children\\_and\\_nature\\_2007.pdf](http://www.narrp.org/assets/Library/Children_in_Nature/nrpa_survey_regarding_children_and_nature_2007.pdf), April 2007.

<sup>44</sup> 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.

<sup>45</sup> Richard Louv, Last Child in the Woods: Saving Children from Nature Deficit Disorder, Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 2005.

<sup>46</sup> "What is the Nature Explore Program," [http://www.arborday.org/explore/documents/NE\\_FAQ\\_002.pdf](http://www.arborday.org/explore/documents/NE_FAQ_002.pdf), accessed August 12, 2012.

<sup>47</sup> 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.

Sampson offers practical and helpful advice to parents, educators, and any other would-be nature mentors to kids.

### **Riparian and Watershed Best Practices**

The ability to detect trends and monitor attributes in watershed and/or riparian areas allows planners opportunities to evaluate the effectiveness of their management plan. By monitoring their own trends, Planners can also identify changes in resource conditions that are the result of pressures beyond their control. Trend detection requires a commitment to long-term monitoring of riparian areas and vegetation attributes.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) suggests the following steps to building an effective watershed management plan. See [water.epa.gov](http://water.epa.gov)<sup>48</sup> for more information from the EPA.

- Build partnerships
- Characterize the watershed
- Set goals and identify solutions
- Design and implementation program
- Implement the watershed plan
- Measure progress and make adjustments

---

<sup>48</sup>“Implement the Watershed Plan – Implement Management Strategies,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, <http://water.epa.gov/type/watersheds/datait/watershedcentral/plan2.cfm>

## Economic and Health Benefits of Parks

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

- 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.<sup>49</sup>
- 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.<sup>50</sup>
- Fifty percent of Americans regard outdoor activities as their main source of exercise.<sup>51</sup>

"The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City 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:<sup>52</sup>

- 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."<sup>53</sup> 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.

---

<sup>49</sup> F.E. Kuo, "Environment and Crime in the Inner City: Does Vegetation Reduce Crime?" *Environment and Behavior*, Volume 33, p. 343-367.

<sup>50</sup> Nowak, David J., "Benefits of Community Trees," (Brooklyn Trees, USDA Forest Service General Technical Report, in review).

<sup>51</sup> *Outdoor Recreation Participation Report 2010*, Outdoor Foundation, 2010.

<sup>52</sup> Paul M. Sherer, "The Benefits of Parks: Why America Needs More City Parks and Open Space," The Trust for Public Land, San Francisco, CA, 2006.

<sup>53</sup> Cited in: 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.

## Sports and Recreation Trends

### General Sports and Recreation Trends

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) survey on sports participation<sup>54</sup> found that, in 2014, the top five athletic activities ranked by total participation included exercise walking, exercising with equipment, swimming, aerobic exercising, and running/jogging. Additionally, the following active, organized, or skill development activities remain popular: hiking, bicycle riding, basketball, golf, and soccer. . Yoga saw the highest percentage increase in participation over 2013 (12.9%).

The sports segment that saw the highest percentage increase was the open water segment with a 2.7% increase. This increase was driven significantly by boating (motor/power), canoeing, and kayaking activities. The individual sports/activity segment experiences the highest decrease (2.6%) driven by a decrease in bowling, golf and tennis. **Table 4** outlines the top 20 sports ranked by total participation in 2014.

**Table 4: Top 20 Sports Ranked by Total Participation (in millions) in 2014**

Sport	Total
1. Exercise walking	104.3
2. Exercising with equipment	55.1
3. Swimming	45.9
4. Aerobic exercising	44.2
5. Running/jogging	43.0
6. Hiking	41.1
7. Camping (vacation/overnight)	39.5
8. Workout at club/gym/fitness studio	35.9
9. Bicycle riding	35.6
10. Bowling	34.4
11. Weightlifting	34.0
12. Fishing (freshwater)	29.4
13. Yoga	29.2
14. Basketball	23.7
15. Billiards/pool	20.8
16. Target shooting (live ammunition)	20.4
17. Golf	18.4
18. Hunting with firearms	17.5
19. Boating, motor/power	14.1
20. Soccer	13.4

Source: NSGA 2015

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:<sup>55</sup>

- 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.

<sup>54</sup> "2014 Sport/Recreation Activity Participation," National Sporting Goods Association, 2015. <http://www.nsga.org>.

<sup>55</sup> 2013 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, Sports and Fitness Industry Association), <http://www.sfia.org/reports/all/>.



- Forty-three percent (43%) of parents reported an increase in spending on team sports at school in 2015.
- Twenty-eight percent (28%) of all Americans are inactive, while 31% are active to a healthy level (engaged in high-calorie-level sport/fitness activities in a frequent basis).

The National Sporting Goods Association (NSGA) provides information about national trends in a broad variety of sporting activities since 1984. Overall participation trends indicate a general decrease for most team sports from 2005 to 2014 with soccer recovering by 4.9% from a participation dip in 2013. Lacrosse, football (tackle and touch), volleyball, and swimming also had an increase in participation in 2014 over 2013. Over the decade, individual sports show a dramatic increase in aerobic exercising, exercise walking, exercising with equipment, hiking, kayaking, running/jogging, and yoga. **Table 5** illustrates a ten-year change in participation for selected activities including both team sports and individual sports.<sup>56</sup>

**Table 5: 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
Archery (Target)	6.8	6.6	7.1	6.3	8.3	8.3
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
Canoeing	NA	NA	NA	NA	6.7	7.3
Cheerleading	3.3	NA	NA	3.1	3.5	3.6
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
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
Hockey (Ice)	2.4	2.1	3.1	3.0	3.5	3.4
Ice/Figure Skating	NA	NA	NA	NA	7.2	7.3
Kayaking	NA	5.9	4.9	7.1	8.1	9.0
Lacrosse	NA	1.2	NA	2.7	2.8	2.8
Martial Arts/MMA/Tae Kwon Do	NA	NA	NA	NA	6.4	6.3
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
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
Wrestling	NA	2.1	3.0	3.2	3.1	2.9
Yoga	NA	10.7	15.7	21.6	25.9	29.2

Note: Participated more than once (in millions), seven (7) years of age and older.

Source: NSGA 2015

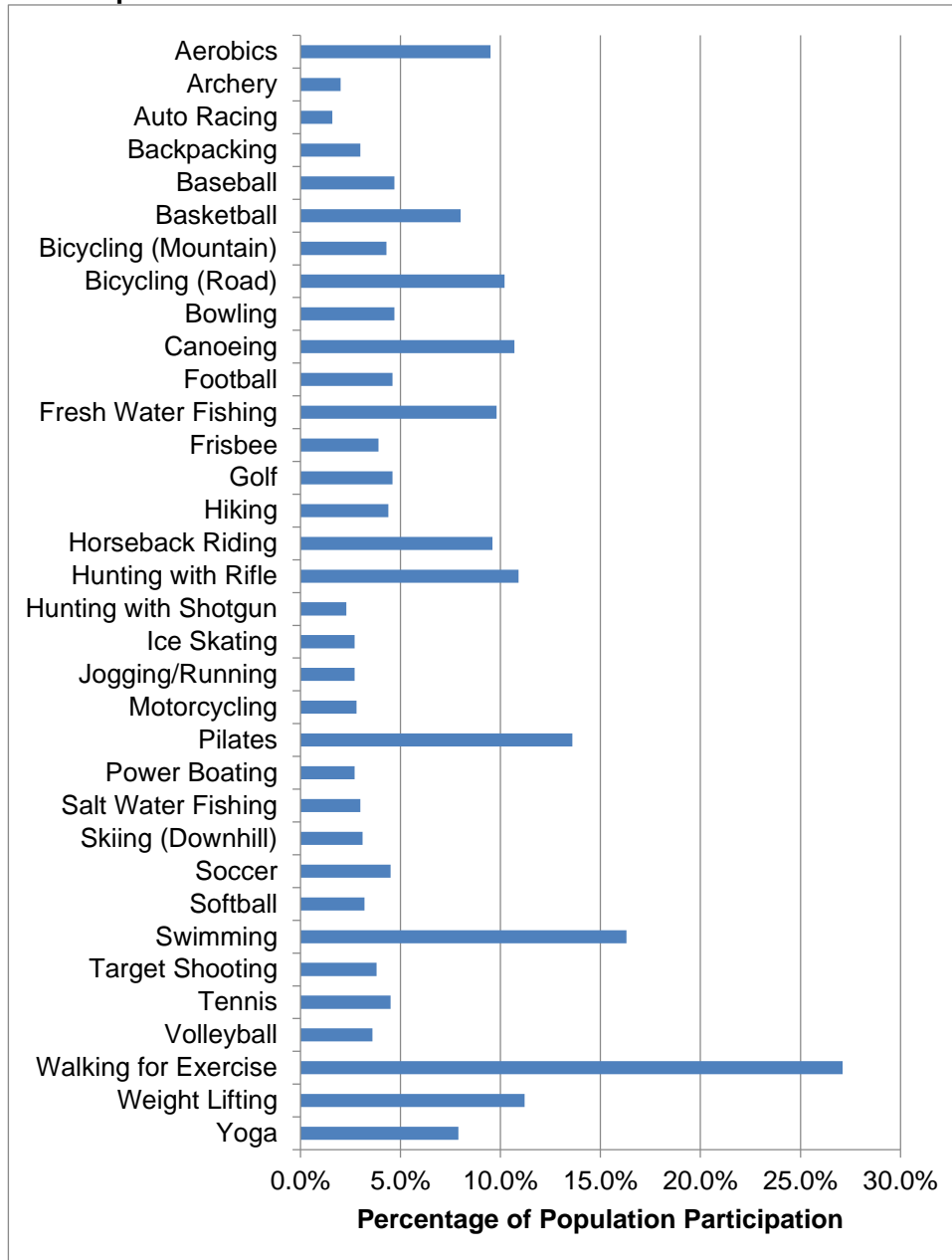
<sup>56</sup> This data was pulled from the NSGA's "Historical Sports Participation" 2015 Report, <https://www.nsga.org/research/nsga-research-offerings/sports-participation-historical-file-2015/>.



## Sports and Leisure in Manassas

Residents of Manassas participate in a wide variety of outdoor recreation and sports, as seen in **Table 6**. In 2015, however, the most widely participated sport was walking for exercise (27.1%), followed by swimming (16.3%), Pilates (13.6%), and weight lifting (11.2%). The least popular activities for Manassas in 2015 were auto racing, archery, and hunting with a shotgun.

**Table 6: Sports and Leisure Market Behavior in Past 12 months in Manassas, Virginia (2015)**



Source: GfK MRI, 2015 Forecast by Esri Business Information Solutions.

## Adult Recreation: Pickleball

No adult recreational sport is taking off faster than pickleball.<sup>57</sup> 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 plus crowd because it is low impact but gets the heart rate pumping.<sup>58</sup> 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 Sports 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.<sup>59</sup>

*"I can very easily talk myself out of going to the gym. But if I know that people are going to count on me to be there, I want to make sure to follow through on that. This will be an easy way to kick-start my routine and get me back in shape."*

*26 year old, Allentown, PA.*

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.<sup>60</sup>

Sports teams in the work place sports is 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:<sup>61</sup>

- 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.<sup>62</sup> Finland consistently makes the top-five list of "most physically active European countries" according

<sup>57</sup> Chris Gelbach, "Never Stop Playing: Trends in Adult Recreational Sports" *Recreation Management*, September 2013, [http://recmanagement.com/feature\\_print.php?fid=201309fe02](http://recmanagement.com/feature_print.php?fid=201309fe02), Accessed January 2015.

<sup>58</sup> 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.

<sup>59</sup> 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.

<sup>60</sup> Liz Butterfield, "Adult Sport Leagues: The New After Work Social Scene," *RVANews*, <http://rvanews.com/sports/adult-sport-leagues-the-new-after-work-social-scene/100639>, August 8, 2013, accessed July, 2015.

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.kentuckytennis.com/adult/recreational.htm>, accessed July 2015.

<sup>62</sup> Rae Ellen Bichell, "How Finns Make Sports Part of Everyday Life," NPR, Morning Addition, July 28, 2015, [http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/07/28/426748088/how-finns-make-sports-part-of-everyday-life?utm\\_source=npr\\_newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=20150728&utm\\_campaign=npr\\_email\\_a\\_friend&utm\\_term=storyshare](http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/07/28/426748088/how-finns-make-sports-part-of-everyday-life?utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20150728&utm_campaign=npr_email_a_friend&utm_term=storyshare).

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 is understood that healthy employees do better work.

## Youth Sports

The Sports and 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:<sup>63</sup> 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.

## 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<sup>64</sup> 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 2015 Topline Report,<sup>65</sup> both the total number of outdoor outings and number of participants dropped in 2014, with extreme weather and an unusually cold winter likely contributing to the decline. Bright spots in outdoor participation include paddle sports, with stand up paddling remaining the top outdoor activity for growth, with participation growing by 38% from 2013 to 2014. Participation in snow sports, including telemarking, snowshoeing, freestyle skiing, and cross-country skiing, grew significantly as well.

The foundation reports that the top outdoor activities for adults in 2014 were running, fishing, bicycling, hiking, and camping. Birdwatching and wildlife viewing are also among the favorite adult outdoor activities by frequency of participation. The Outdoor Foundation's research brought the following key findings for the 2014 Outdoor Recreation Report.

## Participation in Outdoor Recreation

- Return to nature: Nearly 50% of Americans ages 6 and older participated in outdoor recreation in 2013. That equates to a total of 143 million.
- Top five participation percentage increase in outdoor activities in the past three years (2014 Topline Report): Adventure racing, triathlon (off-road), stand-up paddling, kayak fishing, recreational kayaking.
- Recreation for exercise: More than 70% of outdoor participants were motivated to recreate outdoors as a way of getting exercise.

<sup>63</sup> 2016 Sports, Fitness and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report, Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association (now Sports and Fitness Industry Association), <http://www.sfia.org/reports/all/>.

<sup>64</sup> "Recent Outdoor Recreation Trends," USDA Forest Service Internet Research Information Series (IRIS) Research Brief, January 2012, <http://warnell.forestry.uga.edu/nrrt/nsre/IRISRec/IRISRec23rpt.pdf>, accessed August, 2012.

<sup>65</sup> Outdoor Recreation Participation Topline Report 2015, Outdoor Foundation, 2015.

## Youth Participation in Outdoor Recreation

- Good news about outdoor participation rates of female youth: Participation rates among girls and young women increased by two percentage points – bringing young women's participation to the highest since 2006.
- **The influence of family:** Most youth are introduced to outdoor activities by parents, friends, family, and relatives.
- Physical education in schools: The importance cannot be understated. Among adults ages 18 and older who are current outdoor participants, 74% say they had PE in school between the ages of 6 and 12.

The Outdoor Foundation's 2015 "Topline Outdoor Recreation Participation Report" lists the most popular (by participation rate) and favorite (by frequency of participation) outdoor activities for youth ages 6-17.

### Most Popular Outdoor Activities (ages 6-17)

1. Road, mountain and BMX biking (27% of American youth participating)
2. Running, jogging and trail running (24%)
3. Freshwater, saltwater and fly fishing (21%)
4. Car, backyard, backpacking and RV camping (20%)
5. Hiking (12%)

### Favorite Outdoor Activities (ages 6-17)

1. Running, jogging and trail running (77 average outings per runner)
2. Road, mountain and BMX biking (65 average outings per cyclist)
3. Skateboarding (53 average outings per skateboarder)
4. Freshwater, saltwater, and fly fishing (15 average outings per fishing participant)
5. Car, backyard, backpacking, and RV camping (15 average outings per camper)

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.<sup>66</sup> 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.<sup>67</sup>

## 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<sup>68</sup> 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:

- 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)

<sup>66</sup> Evans and Trachtenberg, "Lacrosse Muscles Its Way West," *The Wall Street Journal*, May, 2009.

<sup>67</sup> "2011 Preview: U.S. Trends in Team Sports," Fall 2011," SMGA, 2011.

<sup>68</sup> Gunnar Breivik, "Trends in Adventure Sports in a Post-Modern Society," ResearchGate, March 2010.

In 2015, the following sports were listed as the “Top 10 Adventure Sports You Must Try Before You Die”.<sup>69</sup>

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 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 posers, 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.<sup>70</sup> 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 are 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: <http://www.flagstaffextreme.com>; the “Red Ore Zip Tour” at Red Mountain Park in Birmingham, Alabama: <http://www.redmountainpark.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 2015 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 7**. Additionally, participation in trail running and BMX biking is up significantly over the recent three-year period.

<sup>69</sup> 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 on January 22, 2016.

<sup>70</sup> Tom Banse, “Getting High in the Northwest...On Zip Lines,” National Public Radio Story, August 28, 2012, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=160244351&ft=3&f=160244351>

**Table 7: Trail Recreation Participation by Activity (in thousands) (6 years of age or older)**

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	3 Year Average Change
BMX Bicycling	1,811	2,369	1,547	2,175	2,168	2,350	16.2%
Bicycling (Mountain/Non-Paved Surface)	7,142	7,161	6,816	7,714	8,542	8,044	6.0%
Bicycling (Road/Paved Surface)	40,140	39,320	40,349	39,232	40,888	39,725	-0.5%
Hiking (Day)	32,572	32,496	34,491	34,545	34,378	36,222	1.7%
Running/Jogging	49,408	50,713	52,187	54,188	51,127	49,408	0.4%
Trail Running	4,833	5,136	5,610	6,003	6,792	7,531	10.3%

Source: Outdoor Foundation 2015.

### 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 cityscapes at a closer level.”<sup>71</sup>
- 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 city’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 city during the summer of 2014.<sup>72</sup>
- One of the newest trends in adventure cycling is “fat bike,” multiple speed bikes that are made to ride where other bikes cannot 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 terrain or just riding through the woods. This bike offers unique opportunities to experience nature in ways that would not be possible otherwise.<sup>73</sup>

### 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*.<sup>74</sup> 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

<sup>71</sup> Hope Nardini, “Bike Tourism a Rising Trend,” *Ethic Traveler*, <http://www.ethicaltraveler.org/2012/08/bike-tourism-a-rising-trend/>, accessed March 24, 2014.

<sup>72</sup> 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 24, 2014.

<sup>73</sup> 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.

<sup>74</sup> National Council on Disability, *Livable Communities for Adults with Disabilities*, December 2004, <http://www.ncd.gov/publications/2004/12022004>.



Therapeutic Services bring two forms of services for persons with disabilities into play, specific programming 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*,<sup>75</sup> 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.<sup>76</sup>

## 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.<sup>77</sup>

- 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.

---

<sup>75</sup> *Recreation Management*, February 2007, <http://recmanagement.com/200710fe03.php>, accessed on February 25, 2015.

<sup>76</sup> Kelli Anderson, “A Welcome Inclusion,” *Recreation Management*, October 2010, <http://recmanagement.com/201010fe03.php>, accessed on February 26, 2015.

<sup>77</sup> www.ICMA.org, accessed in 2012.



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.

There are currently over 130 agencies around the nation that have received the **CAPRA accreditation**.

Additional benefits of CAPRA accreditation include:

- Boosts staff morale
- Encourages collaboration
- Improves program outcomes
- Identifies agency and cost efficiencies
- Builds high level of trust with the public
- Demonstrates promise of quality
- Identifies best management practices

### **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)<sup>78</sup> 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.

---

<sup>78</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA Home Page, <http://www.ada.gov/>, accessed November 15, 2012.

## 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 percent 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.<sup>79</sup>

- Updated booths and community event presence – Bring 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, Tagged, and LinkedIn. Private messaging apps such as Snapchat and WhatsApp are being used more and more for live media coverage.<sup>80</sup>

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 in age brackets 30 and older. Usage rates of mobile applications demonstrate that chronologically across four major age cohorts, Millennials tend to get information more 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.

Minority Americans are significantly more likely to own a cell phone than are their white counterparts (87% of African Americans and 87% of Hispanics own a cell phone, compared with 80% of whites). Minority Americans also lead the way when it comes to mobile Internet access. Two-thirds of African Americans (72%) and Hispanics (67%) access the Internet in their cell phones, compared to Non-

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.activenetwork.com/blog/17-marketing-campaigns-parks-and-recreation-marketing/>, May 2013, accessed February 26, 2015.

<sup>80</sup> 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.

Hispanic Whites (56%).<sup>81</sup> By 2015, mobile Internet penetration is expected to have grown to 71.1% for Hispanics compared to 58.8% for whites.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>81</sup> Maeve Duggan, "Cell Phone Activities 2013," Pew Internet and American Life Project, Pew Research Center, September 16, 2013, [http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP\\_Cell%20Phone%20Activities%20May%202013.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/files/old-media/Files/Reports/2013/PIP_Cell%20Phone%20Activities%20May%202013.pdf), accessed November 15, 2012.

<sup>82</sup> Erik Sass, "Minority Groups Heaviest Users of Mobile Net," *Media Daily News*, Nov. 18, 2011, <http://www.mediapost.com/publications/article/162699/minority-groups-heaviest-users-of-mobile-net.html#axzz2CK9zYGFw>, accessed November 15, 2012.