

CHAPTER 13

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF RECREATION AND LEISURE



Definition of Future: The future has always had a very special place in philosophy and, in general, in the human mind. This is true largely because human beings often want a forecast of events that will occur. It is perhaps possible to argue that the evolution of the human brain is in great part an evolution in cognitive abilities necessary to forecast the future, i.e., abstract imagination, logic, and induction. Imagination permits us to “see” (i.e., predict) a plausible model of a given situation without observing it, therefore mitigating risks. Logical reasoning allows one to predict inevitable consequences of actions and situations and therefore gives useful information about future events. Induction permits the association of a cause with consequences, a fundamental notion for every forecast of future time.¹



INTRODUCTION

The remarkable growth of organized recreation, parks, and leisure services is documented throughout this text. Despite the impressive history of this social movement and field of professional activity, a number of continuing and emerging issues and concerns affect the regard for the role of recreation, parks, and leisure in personal, community, and national life.

The new century, now more than 10 years old, is already experiencing new challenges, opportunities, and approaches to the leisure mosaic. Former traditional models of leisure are changing in many communities; traditional approaches to the provision of recreation services are changing; opportunities for leisure are more abundant than at any time in recorded history; governments and people are rethinking the role of parks, recreation, and leisure in the national fabric; and nonprofits are expanding services while commercial enterprises are engaging in new leisure opportunities. As the United States and

the world experiences its most serious economic decline in 70 years, following almost 30 years of sustained economic growth, decisions about what government can do, should do, and what citizens are willing to pay for are in the forefront of discussions.

The notion of parks, recreation, and leisure as a social welfare model remains viable, especially in consideration of those who are underprivileged; but for many others, the social welfare model has become outdated and the public, politicians, and leisure practitioners are looking for new models. How do public parks, recreation, and leisure provide effective recreation services in an era of economic uncertainty? What is the appropriate role and responsibility of urban, suburban, and rural recreation agencies and of nonprofit organizations? This chapter discusses issues, challenges, and changes in the American fabric that affect parks, recreation, and leisure.



Technology has changed the use of inner-city playgrounds.

How should the major priorities of organized recreation service in the United States be determined? In what ways can or should government provide more effective and efficient services in this field? What are the special responsibilities of organized recreation toward

people with physical and mental disabilities, toward the new aging, or toward those who may have had inadequate opportunities in the past because of their gender or other demographic factors?

How has technology affected the planning, delivery, operation, and marketing of parks and recreation—in the public, nonprofit, and commercial sectors? Social media, smart phones, netbooks, and a whole host of hardware supported by rapidly emerging software has changed the way people look at, use, and embrace technology. Long-held assumptions about how information is shared and exchanged are no longer valid. How will leisure-service professionals respond and anticipate such changes in the years ahead?

How will the changing social and economic conditions in the coming decades affect the public's leisure values and patterns of participation, and how can recreation, park, and leisure-service professionals and organizations respond effectively to the challenges of the future?

KEY RATIONALE GUIDING LEISURE-SERVICE DELIVERY TODAY

For recreation, parks, and leisure-service practitioners, it is possible to identify a number of key principles that should be used to guide their professional operations today. First, it is assumed that such individuals—no matter what their fields of specialization—regard recreation and leisure as important to human growth and community development. A contemporary philosophy of organized recreation service therefore should deal with such important issues as the place of recreation and leisure in modern life, the role of government, the development of programming based on significant social needs, and the place of leisure education.

Place of Recreation in the Modern Community

In U.S. society, our view of recreation as a social phenomenon and area of community involvement is influenced by our governmental systems. In our Constitution and in court decisions that have influenced government policy through the years, we have accepted the view that, on various levels, government has the responsibility for providing certain major services to citizens. These include functions related to safety and protection, education, health, and other services that contribute to maintaining the quality of life of all citizens.

Linked to this system of governmental responsibility is our general acceptance of the Judeo-Christian concepts of the worth and dignity of all human beings and the need to help each person become the most fully realized individual that he or she is capable of being. Through government and through many voluntary community associations, we have accepted the responsibility for providing needed services and opportunities for people at each stage of life and for those who because of disability have been deprived in significant ways.

Needs of Individual Citizens

Recreation and leisure are important aspects of personal experience in modern life for the physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual benefits they provide. Positive leisure experiences enhance the quality of a person's life and help each person develop to the fullest potential. To make this possible, government and other responsible social agencies should provide recreation resources, programs, and, where appropriate, leisure education to help people understand the value of free time when constructively and creatively used.

Government's Responsibility

In addition to providing personal benefits, recreation helps a community to meet health needs, gain economic benefits, and maintain community morale. On each level (local, state, and federal), appropriate government agencies should therefore be assigned the responsibility for maintaining a network of physical resources for leisure participation, including parks, playgrounds, centers, sport facilities, and other special recreation facilities. Government should be responsible for planning, organizing, and carrying out programs, under proper leadership, for all age levels.

Government cannot and should not seek to meet all of the leisure needs of the community. It must recognize that other types of community organizations—including voluntary, private, commercial, therapeutic, industrial, and educational groups—sponsor effective recreation programs, which are often designed to meet specialized needs or more advanced interests. Therefore, its unique role should be to provide a basic floor of recreational opportunity, to fill the gaps that are not covered by other organizations, and to provide coordination and overall direction to community leisure-service programs.

There has been a growing body of opinion that local government recreation and park agencies should take less responsibility for the direct provision of program activities, particularly when limited by fiscal constraints, and should move instead into the role of serving as an advocate for recreation and leisure in community life and providing coordinating or facilitating assistance to other agencies.

A major concern should be to ensure an equitable distribution of recreational opportunities for the public at large. This would not guarantee that all residents have totally equal programs and services, but would represent a pledge that, within the realities of community needs and economic capabilities, facilities and programs will be distributed so as to bring about a reasonable balance of such opportunities for different neighborhoods and community groups.

Influence of the Nonprofit Sector

The nonprofit sector has accepted an increasingly larger role in the provision of recreation and leisure-based social services. An important part of the effort has focused on youth-serving agencies in at-risk neighborhoods. There are several reasons why nonprofits have taken an increasing role. First, this is not a new model for nonprofits to assume, but rather a continuation and expansion of services when local members of the community realize that the government cannot provide needed services. Second, more individuals are willing to give to nonprofits, are able to give substantial sums of money, and are willing to give to their community. Nonprofits are frequently seen as a more desirable and effective organization to address social ills than is government. Finally, government has recognized its inability to meet all of the needs of a community and either encourages nonprofits and/or works jointly with them.

FACING THE CHALLENGE OF THE FUTURE

Those who read this book—primarily college and university students in recreation, park, tourism, sport, and leisure-studies curricula—are looking ahead to careers in the future. What will the twenty-first century bring in terms of demographic, social, and economic changes that can radically affect our uses of leisure?

Traditional forms of leisure are growing, but at a slower rate than the population. The change from a Republican to a Democratic majority in Congress and a Democratic president has already resulted in major shifts in philosophical orientation for the federal government. New diverse forms of leisure, often individual or Internet based, are growing outside of traditional program areas. Academic programs and curricula based on a twentieth-century model will not prepare students and professionals for the challenges of the twenty-first century. Recognition of a social responsibility ethic grounded in community engagement structured in the context of a do-more-with-less government reality is what students and professionals are already dealing with. The awareness of environmental and social justice in society and how public park and recreation will address these issues are paramount to the profession's future.

Many contemporary authorities in the leisure-service field emphasize that bringing about needed changes will require a new wave of entrepreneurship. Recreation and park professionals in all spheres of service need to think more imaginatively and innovatively, need to be content experts in leisure, politically astute in government, and able to build coalitions among support and disparate groups. They need to cultivate an organizational and professional climate that is interactive, community focused, and politically and socially responsible.

EFFORTS TO PREDICT THE FUTURE

Ten years into the twenty-first century there remains much discussion about the parks and recreation impact. Whatever discussions were held in the early part of this first decade, the recession in the latter quarter of the decade changed the ability of government to deliver parks, recreation, and leisure services, programs, and facilities. Nonprofits and commercial enterprises were equally challenged by the economic decline.

The business-as-usual model that dominated the early part of the century has been challenged in ways not anticipated. The impact on public parks' and recreation's ability to provide services and facilities is the most significant in 70 years.

Agendas in the Twenty-First Century

There has been no single national effort by park and recreation organizations to address the twenty-first century's impact on parks and recreation; individual organizations have focused on trends that affect themselves.

The broader societal impact has been left for others to deal with. The U.S. Forest Service operates a trends center; states generate 5-year state comprehensive outdoor recreation plans that are of varying quality with some to significant trend analysis. Many municipalities have master plans for development and some have strategic plans. In both instances, trend analysis may be a small or significant part of the plan. Some state park and recreation associations, especially California, make efforts to keep their members abreast of trends. The

problem facing trend analysis in parks and recreation is the diversity of the profession itself. Some trends cross boundaries between urban recreation, outdoor recreation, city parks and recreation departments, state park systems, national parks, and nonprofits, but there are many other trends that do not. National trends paint a broad picture, whereas regional and local trends may be significantly different. Making assumptions that trends will occur as predicted is equally dangerous. In 1999, the economy looked as if it would continue to be positive. First the economy began to falter, and then on September 11, 2001, the economy, society, and trends were thoroughly disrupted by the great tragedy of that day.

How then do park and recreation organizations focus on trends that have some basis of validity? There are those who are considered as futurists and have a track record of success. Trends, at their best, are educated guesses about the future. They are influenced by those who are suggesting them—their knowledge, biases, and creative ability to anticipate change.

The trends have led to conclusions about the future of parks and recreation, and especially about public and nonprofit agencies that requires a response. Some of these trends emerged at conferences and workshops held in the mid- to late-1990s and remain current.



Master planning for community parks and recreation involves many different groups.

Others were gleaned from a variety of sources including futurist literature. Key conclusions include the following:

- Park and recreation professionals must embrace societal change because it is the only way to serve the public and ensure the future of their organization.
- The trend toward greater public participation in decision making is a reality, and public agencies must ensure that employees are trained to facilitate and respond to public input.
- Wellness will continue to be a major issue. Obesity is the most immediate issue facing public park and recreation agencies. Major efforts are required involving partnerships to address this growing issue.
- Public agencies will continue to receive less of the public dollar for operations, maintenance, and repairs. The public will continue to support and fund land acquisitions through bond referenda and other sources, but the agencies will have to learn entrepreneurship to maintain operations.
- Success will continue to depend on an organization's ability to build cooperative relationships and establish networks and coalitions with other organizations.
- Federal leadership in the recreation and parks movement will wane as the challenges of an aging society, globalization, international commitments, and other unforeseen circumstances reduce the ability to support traditional services.
- Park and recreation agencies need to embrace the new generations and use their technological competence to introduce them to the outdoors, fitness, and expanded leisure opportunities.
- Demographic complexity, expressed as age complexity, income complexity, gender complexity, and life stage complexity, provides indications of social shifts in society that require park and recreation agencies to rethink for whom, what, and how they offer programs.
- An understanding of current users, nonusers, potential users, and their motivations is the foundation for creating change and meeting the needs of the current and future generations.
- Public agencies must provide environmental leadership on a local and global perspective. For too long, the parks and recreation profession has been quiet on this front.
- There is a mandate to embrace tourism, the world's largest economy, on a local, regional, and national level in ways that have not been done before. Partnerships are only a part of the role to be taken; there is a need to think like a tourist destination.
- Agencies must rethink the recreation experience in light of increased technology impacting leisure activities, segmentation and specialization of participation, individualized personal recreation, time deepening, time shifting, and activity stacking.

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

Demographic Shifts

A population shift is occurring in the United States. Beginning in the 1950s, it continues and in some ways has intensified in the twenty-first century. The shift from a rural to urban society and from northern states to southern and western states is well represented in the

literature. However, these changes are more than just geographic. Examples of some key population shifts, both geographic and generational, include the following:

- More than 59% of all Americans live in the South and West.
- More than 53% of Americans live within 50 miles of an ocean.
- Hispanics are the fastest growing minority in the United States and are projected to make up 30% of the total population by 2050.
- Baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) were the largest birth generation, until the new-boomers (1983–2001) came along. This latter group added a larger share of immigrants than any other generation did.
- The United States has moved from a rural to a metropolitan nation, with four of five Americans now living in metropolitan areas.
- Youth “are making key personal ‘choices’ regarding resource and energy consumption *and* family size, taking into consideration climate change impacts and overall ‘environmental sustainability.’”²
- Between 2000 and 2050, Hispanics and blacks will represent 40% of the working-age population (25 to 64 years) and account for almost 90% of the growth in that age group during the same period.³

Shifts are cultural, geographic, demographic, and environmental. The shifts have important impacts on the delivery of parks, recreation, and leisure services. In the early stages of migration from the urban core to the suburbs, loss of free time was measured in commuting time. It was assumed most commuting was done from the suburbs to the urban core. More recently, the commute has stretched both ways, with increasing numbers of people choosing to live in the urban core and work in the suburbs. Beyond the urban core, the exurbs have become the new growth area, outpacing growth within cities. Land in this area has been developed twice as fast as in the urban and suburban cores. In addition, developed land occupies 20% more space than it did just 20 years ago. It is the twenty-first century version of sprawl.⁴

In 1915, the population reached 100 million people. Fifty-two years later in 1967, it reached 200 million people, and 39 years later, it reached 300 million. Foreign-born residents represented 15% of the U.S. population in 1915, 8% in 1967, and 12% of the population in 2006. In 1915 and 1967, the largest percentage of the foreign-born population came from Europe; today it is Mexico.⁵ As shown in **Figure 13.1**, the immigrant population held relatively steady at 8–12% of the total population from 1860 to 2000, but between 2000 and 2050 it is projected that the major growth in population will come from immigrants. The United States is the third most populous nation in the world behind China and India. The steady growth in population and diversity has increasing impacts on recreation demand, participation, and types of programs.

The Generations America is a land of generations. In recent years, the terms *baby boomer*, *Gen X*, *Gen Y*, and *Net Generation* have garnered in much public press. Only more recently has the term *generations* taken on a marketing connotation. Terminology for the generations is inconsistent. The following case study addresses one organization’s perception of the generations of the twentieth century. Other authors have adjusted the names to fit marketing terminology. For example, the Pew Internet Project classifies six generations between 1936 and 1990 (**Table 13.1**).

What matters in understanding generations is defining how they are different from each other. Every generation has been different from the generations preceding it. Gen

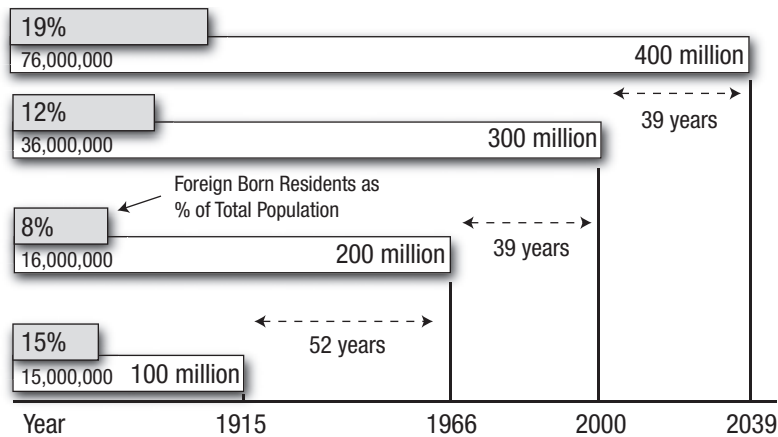


FIGURE 13.1 Population Growth, Timeline, and Foreign-Born Residents as a Percentage of the Total Population.
Data from J. S. Passel and D. Cohen, Pew Research Center, “U.S. Population Projections: 2005–2050.” Available at: <http://pewsocialtrends.org/pubs/703/population-projections-united-states>. Accessed December 9, 2010.

TABLE 13.1

GENERATIONS OF AMERICANS

Generation Name	Birth Years, Ages in 2009	Percentage of Total Adult Population
Gen Y (Millennials)	Born 1977–1990, Ages 18–32	26
Gen X	Born 1965–1976, Ages 33–44	20
Younger Boomers	Born 1955–1964, Ages 45–54	20
Older Boomers	Born 1946–1954, Ages 55–63	13
Silent Generation	Born 1937–1945, Ages 64–72	9
G.I. Generation	Born 1936, Ages 73+	9

Modified from Jones, S. and Fox, S. Generations Online in 2009. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Pew Research Center. Available <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/Generations-Online-in-2009.aspx>. Accessed September 30, 2010.

X and Gen Y are the first generations to have broad access to computer technology and to fully embrace it as a part of their lives. The influence of technology is discussed in more detail later in this chapter. A study of generations is a study of American history and how culture, war, poverty, technology, social movements, education, and other influences affect individuals within generations, their attitudes, expectations, and leisure participation.

A similar perspective of generations can be applied to the history, challenges, influences, and actions within parks, recreation, and leisure. Comparing the concept of generations to the discussion in Chapter 4, “Recreation and Leisure in the Modern Era,” can enhance one’s understanding of how the profession has grown and matured.



The Generations of the Twentieth Century

1. The Good Warriors (born from 1909 through 1928, median member born in 1918) were called the Greatest Generation by Tom Brokaw in 1998. They fought in World War II and led all other generations in blue-collar jobs and union membership. They and the Lucky Few were the most native-born generations in U.S. history.
2. The Lucky Few (born from 1929 through 1945, median member born in 1937) had the smallest share of immigrants of any generation in the century and was the first generation in U.S. history with fewer people than the preceding generation. Many educated Lucky Few men skipped blue-collar jobs for white-collar careers. Their military service came mostly during peacetime rather than wartime. Lucky Few women married earlier than any other generation in U.S. history.
3. The Baby Boomers (born from 1946 through 1964, median member born in 1955) nearly doubled the number of people in the Lucky Few to become the largest generation of the century. While baby boomer men had problems finding jobs, women in this generation nearly matched men in education and made great strides in the career world.
4. Generation X (born from 1965 through 1982, median member born in 1974) marks the first generation with a greater share of women than men graduating from college. Generation X once again includes many foreign-born immigrants. They delayed marriage and parenthood more than any other generation before them in the century. Men continued to struggle with jobs while women moved forward in careers as well as education.
5. The New Boomers (born from 1983 through 2001, median member born in 1992) include almost as many births as the original baby boom and will add a larger share of new immigrants in adulthood than any generation since the New Worlders. They will become the largest generation of any living during the century. Most of their lives will take place in the twenty-first century, however, so we only get a few hints about them here.⁶

Challenges Linked to Population Diversity

Age Diversity Generations are represented by age diversity. The baby boomers generation, as a percentage of the total population, is staggering in its size and impact. In addition, the population distribution has changed dramatically over the last 50 years with its influence on society and government already significant. Births are declining while immigration and births among first- and second-generation Hispanics are higher than the national average for all other ethnic groups.

In 1967, the median age in the United States was 29.5 years. In 2006, the median age increased to 36.2 years. America is an aging society and it suggests that we are moving from an economy where there are more workers than retirees to a society where there are insufficient workers to maintain retirees. The wider the band, the greater the population. Note how the boomers affect the age span of Americans. The senior or boomer population will

continue to be a significant part of the total population, dwarfing newer generations. The first boomers were born in 1946 and are now retiring. The later boomers were born in 1960 to 1964 and are past their child-bearing years and have made their contributions to society's population growth. The 36- to 54-year-old age groups (45 to 63 in 2009) include the boomers and represent 28% of the total U.S. population.



More and more adults are celebrating the “new old,” which is a new generation of seniors who are aging on their own terms.

Aging Society The United States has an aging society. For the first time in history, Americans are reaping the benefits of advances in science, technology, health care, nutrition, and affluence. The life expectancy of Americans has nearly doubled in the past century; in 1900, the life expectancy was 47 years, and in 2000, it had risen to 77. Individuals living into their late 80s and mid-90s is no longer uncommon. This population represents the most financially independent aging group in history. The 55-plus age group controls more than 75% of the country's wealth.

By 2025, there will be twice as many people more than 65 as there will be teenagers. By one estimate, the United States will need 31,000 geriatricians, compared to the 1000 in 2004.⁷ It is suggested that 20% of the workforce could focus on providing services to and caring for aging boomers. In some states, particularly in the Midwest and Northeast, health care is already the largest industry.

Yet, can we expect the boomers, as they enter retirement, to do the same as earlier seniors? The answer is no. They will make their own mark on society and do it their way, which is a continuation of their lifelong contributions to change society. The early assumption was that boomers would go into full retirement as so many other generations have. Changes in the economy, retirement benefits, concerns about Social Security and Medicare, healthcare costs, longevity, and overall health have changed perceptions about retirement. In a report by Merrill Lynch, they found only 17% of boomers surveyed said they would never work again, and this 17% was the least financially prepared for retirement.⁸ By contrast, 76% of those surveyed plan to work during stages of retirement. When asked why they will continue to work, 34% said it was important to earn money and 67% wanted the continuing mental stimulation and challenge to motivate them. The end of mandatory retirement in 1986 allowed many older adults to continue to work and contribute to the workforce. Simultaneous with the end of mandatory retirement, the Social Security system retirement ages were raised to 66 and 67. Between 1994 and 2005, there was a 17% increase in the number of men working between ages 62 and 64, a traditional retirement period. Overall, the workforce of men and women ages 60 to 64 grew from 52.8 million to 58 million.⁹ Boomers do not see retirement as a period of relaxation and reduced lifestyle, but rather a continuation of challenges and personal growth—but on their own terms. The decision to retire is based more on the ability to do what they want and having the resources to do it than it is on the need to retire in a more traditional sense.

CASE STUDY: Serious Leisure Contributes to Successful Aging

Serious leisure is a concept first proposed by sociologist Robert Stebbens in 1982, contending that “serious leisure is the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity that people find so substantial, interesting and fulfilling that . . . they launch themselves on a (leisure) career centered on acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience.”^a In the context of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, serious leisure fulfills multiple need and growth roles for individuals, ranging from belonging to creativity. Stebbens sees serious leisure as a substitution for work for those who may have left the workforce, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, yet he says serious leisure is not a livelihood and one should not get caught up in seeing serious leisure as a substitute for work. Serious leisure carries with it “numerous pleasant expectations and memories, doing so to a degree only rarely found in work.”^b

As part of his description of serious leisure, Stebbens identified six qualities, or descriptors, that are present. In some ways, they are similar to life challenges and do not always represent positive emotions, but do represent challenges individuals must face in the pursuit of serious leisure. There are linkages to Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs at the creativity level as well as Csikszentmihalyi’s flow theory. The six qualities are as follows:

- The occasional need to persevere to overcome difficulties
- The presence of a career that involves achievement, occurring through stages of development and involvement
- A significant personal effort focusing on unique acquired knowledge, skill, or training
- Eight durable benefits including social interaction and belongingness, self-expression, self-enrichment, enhancement of self-image, feelings of accomplishment, lasting physical products, self actualization, and renewal
- A strong identity formed among participants in their chosen pursuits
- A unique ethos formed related to the activity resulting in a special social world^c

Today’s aging population, as reported earlier in this text, no longer conforms to the concept of a slow downward spiral or the notion that involvement, physical activity, and learning are not part of acceptable retirement activities. Rather, as the baby boomer population ages, this group is challenging all of the notions of what is appropriate for an aging population. Involvement, engagement, physical activity, and extended work or work-related activities are becoming the norm. As part of this change in the approach to and views of aging, serious leisure is receiving more attention from researchers. Linked with predictors of successful aging, serious leisure is showing promise as a way to enrich successful aging. Rowe and Kahn identify three factors crucial to successful aging: “the absence of disease and disability; maintaining mental and physical



Serious leisure activities help seniors maintain successful aging.

functioning; and continuing engagement with life.”^d Brown and colleagues studied older adults involved in a dance program and identified six themes related to the qualities of serious leisure.^d They found *perseverance* among the participants as they learned how to dance. The perseverance was manifest among the participants in attitude and behaviors as they attempted to master basic and advanced dancing steps. Second, the notion of a *leisure career* included achievement or involvement among the participants. For those so engaged, “the concept of a leisure career reflects the successful aging components of learning, involvement, and keeping active.”^e The third quality and theme involved *considerable personal effort* to acquire specific knowledge of the leisure activity. The characteristic of a *unique ethos* reflects directly upon the development of new and specialized social world resulting in a strong social network, both of which are recognized components of successful aging. The *benefits of involvement* in serious leisure as they relate to this study involved self-actualization, self-enrichment, self-expression, feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, regeneration of self, self-gratification, lasting physical products, and social interaction and belongingness. The benefits of involvement may have the most long-lasting impact on the participants and successful aging.

Identity formulation, another quality, comes from the other five characteristics and the researchers found the participants formed a strong identity with their pursuits. More important, it suggests the power of serious leisure as a contributor to successful aging.

Questions to Consider

1. Explain how you participate in serious leisure.
2. Do you have a grandparent who is actively engaged in serious leisure?
3. Explain why serious leisure is important to successful aging.

Sources

- a. R. Stebbens, *Serious Leisure*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2007): 5.
- b. R. Stebbens, “Serious Leisure,” *Society* (Vol. 38, No. 4, 2001), 55.
- c. C. A. Brown, F. A. McGuire, and J. Voelkl, “The Link Between Successful Aging and Serious Leisure,” *International Journal of Aging and Human Development* (Vol. 66, No. 1, 2008), 73–95.
- d. Ibid, 74.
- e. Ibid, 82.

This picture is incomplete without a better understanding of the composition and well-being of the over-65 population. Eighty-two percent of this group are white, 8% black, 3% Asian, 6% Hispanic, and 1% mixed race. The percentage of white will decline by 2050 with Hispanics becoming the largest over-65 minority, followed by African Americans. This age group is overwhelmingly married (79% for the 65–74 age group). Nineteen percent of men live alone while 40% of women do. Poverty is an issue among the over-65 group with 9.8% reportedly living at the poverty level or below in 2004. Although this is a continuing concern, the numbers have declined steadily from 1959 when the poverty rate was 35.2%.¹⁰ Another issue that may delay retirement is the rising cost of health care and the abandonment of postretirement employer-supported health plans. Large corporations have discovered they cannot compete in today’s marketplace

and provide long-term commitments to former employees. More than one-third of eligible retirees have chosen to remain in the workforce primarily to retain existing health benefits.

What does all of this mean? First, the 72-and-out rule is gone. It has been assumed for generations that most people would die by the age of 72. That has not been true for decades, but never more so than with boomers. There are 75 million over-50s in the United States and they hold approximately 90% of America's \$44 trillion in liquid assets. The wealth is not evenly spread across this population. An amazing 42% of all boomers plan to move in retirement. Boomers are moving south and west to warmer climates. Boomer men are planning to retire late, transition from work to retirement, work less, spend more time with their spouses, and relax more. Women see retirement as an opportunity for career development, community involvement, and continued personal growth. Demands for recreation and leisure will increase, but not necessarily for traditional services. The boomers will be better able to pay for services and activities and will be more demanding of creative and nontraditional services.

The aging of Americans has significant implications for recreation participation and delivery. Park and recreation professionals will be challenged to determine how to serve boomers. The new aging population cannot be considered older adults in the traditional sense. The days of senior centers, bingo, cards, Friday afternoon movies, and bus tours will not be over but will fail to attract the large number of older adults who see themselves as independent. They are already more active, have a more mobile lifestyle, are healthier, have a longer life expectancy, and use technology as a compensation for particular deficiencies, and will do so even more in the future. They are as diverse as any group in society and are changing the way recreation is considered for an aging population. Cities are establishing separate senior service departments or integrating them into existing government organizations. There will be a need to continue to provide traditional services to those older adults who desire them, but many will seek new experiences and greater challenges. This group utilizes their financial resources to remain involved; to engage in travel, sport, and active leisure; and to continue their involvement in family and society.

Recent research holds promise for improving recreation programming for boomers and other older adults. Some research suggests that older adults will focus on more meaningful relationships at the expense of less important relationships. Fitness programs are growing and being adapted to the needs of older adults' health, mobility, and strength levels. Healthy older adults may benefit from activities that focus on goal selection and optimization. Older adults with more limited health should benefit from adapted and facilitated activities.¹¹ Regardless of the approach taken, public park and recreation agencies need to understand that older adults are more diverse and have higher expectations than any previous generation.

Ethnic and Racial Diversity As previously shared, the United States is becoming more diverse. The immigration of Europeans has lessened dramatically, replaced by rapid integration of Hispanics, and lesser of Asian, Middle Eastern, and African populations. The 2000 census showed a growing diversity. Hispanics were the fastest growing minority in the United States as depicted. The decline in the African American percentage is almost wholly explained by the ability of individuals to declare two or more races and was initiated by the 2000 Census.

Research into the influence of race and ethnicity has been slow in developing. Most important, it has shown that ethnicity is a factor in levels of recreation participation, types of activities engaged in, and comfort levels with the natural environment. Some early research set the stage for a better understanding of why there are differences. A study by Virden and Walker reports that Caucasians found a forest environment more pleasing and safer than did African Americans and Hispanics.¹² Hibbler and Shinew identified four factors that explain the differences in leisure patterns. The four reasons are

- (1) the limited socio-economic resources of many African Americans; (2) a historical pattern of oppression and racial discrimination towards African Americans; (3) distinct cultural differences between African Americans and European Americans; and (4) feelings of discomfort and constraint by African Americans in public leisure settings.¹³

There is a growing realization that assimilation of immigrants is a complex issue. They are more ethnically diverse, may have complex intergenerational changes, and are growing rapidly in number. For example, Mexican immigrant women have seen it as their responsibility to maintain their culture. Beyond immigrant and generational issues, different ethnic groups view leisure at once similarly and differently. African Americans prefer shopping, going to church, and open spaces that serve active recreation-related function. Caucasians show a greater preference for open space for land; wildlife; passive-, individual-, or family-based recreation; and conservation. Hispanics and Asians tend to come to outdoor areas in larger family groups for social purposes. African Americans, Caucasians, and Hispanics all shared similar views toward social-setting attributes such as sharing experiences, being by oneself, and so forth. Research has made progress in explaining differences in race and ethnic decisions and preferences for leisure, but the field is still not well understood.^{14,15}



New immigrants bring with them their own culture and customs. Integration into American society is often difficult.

The Changing Family Over the last 30 years, families have changed more than in the previous 200 years. The era of the stay-at-home mother, the single income source, three or more children, family dinners, church on Sunday, and marriage as a lifetime commitment is disappearing. The nuclear family is becoming as uncommon in today's society as the transistor radio is. World War II changed the United States as a society. Women experienced a freedom; soldiers coming home from the war had the GI Bill and gained more education than any generation before them. The 1960s and 1970s saw a change in societal mores, traditional family values, and perceptions. The notion of a traditional family changed with society. Politicians and the conservative religious movements have focused on the decay of the nuclear family, yet the facts show that the nuclear family has been in decline for more than 40 years. As early as 1960, the traditional nuclear family comprised

only 45% of American households. The 2000 U.S. Census reported for the first time that less than one-quarter (23.5%) of American households consisted of a married man and woman and one or more of their children.¹⁶

Today's families are characterized in a variety of ways. It may be as a traditional nuclear, an adoption with no marriage, a wedding after the baby, single mom, two dads, two moms, or a single dad. David Elkind calls these *permeable families*: "The permeable family is more fluid, more flexible, and more obviously vulnerable to pressures from outside itself."¹⁷

A major concern of social service organizations is children growing up in single-parent homes. They frequently have less opportunities and financial resources than do children growing up in two-parent homes, even if both parents are in the workforce. The Annie E. Casey Foundation reported in 2006 that 22 million children are in single-parent homes, but the disparity of opportunities, based on ethnicity and race, is dramatic. **Figure 13.2** depicts the differentiation of single-parent families by race and Hispanic origin. The presence of high levels of single-parent homes among ethnic groups, other than non-Hispanic whites, mirrors poverty rates and suggests the importance of providing recreation programs, after-school programs, and other social support services to these children.

Today, less than 25% of American households are composed of a single wage earner, meaning 75% of households are dependent on two or more wage earners. This places greater stresses on families, parents, and children. The notion of the mother as the primary caregiver has changed. Fathers are becoming more involved in the lives of their children—from changing diapers to taking time off for sick children. The roles of fathers are in transition as larger numbers of men are indicating a desire to be more nurturing with their children. Mothers traditionally assumed the extra burden of the home, work, and child rearing and now are more frequently sharing these duties with others.

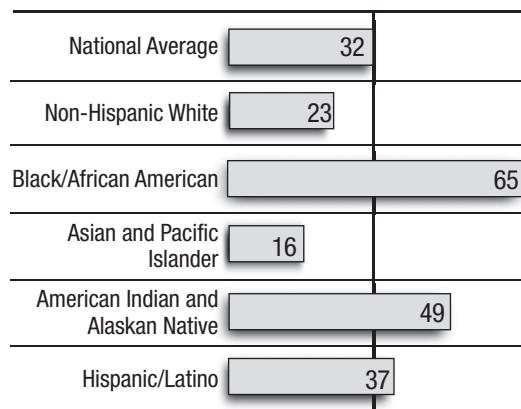


FIGURE 13.2 Percentage of Children in Single-Parent Families by Race and Origin. *Note:* Data for Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives include those who are also Hispanic/Latino. Data for Non-Hispanic Whites, Blacks/African Americans, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives are for persons who selected only one race. All data is from the 2008 American Community Survey.

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Social service organizations offer support to homeless families.

The challenge for recreation and family service agencies is to determine how to serve the new permeable family. Traditional after-school programs may no longer work when mothers expect to pick children up later in the day. Many agencies have gone to extended after-school programs, frequently partnering with schools to mix education, tutoring, and leisure.

Children Between 1950 and 2008, Americans experienced the most sustained economic growth of any time in history. For the most part, U.S. children are growing up in relative luxury compared to their grandparents, who

grew up in relative luxury compared to their grandparents. There are also greater challenges facing today's youth than at any time in history. Numerous groups are investigating children and issues they face. Three such organizations are at the forefront:

- Childstats.gov (www.childstats.gov), a federal interagency forum focusing on collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on issues related to children and families.
- Child Trends (www.childtrends.org), a nonprofit organization focusing on trends affecting children and providing research, a databank of trends and indicators, and best practices.
- Kids Count (www.kidscount.org), a major initiative of the Annie E. Casey Foundation that tracks the status of children on a state-by-state basis. It measures the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children and reports them in a variety of research publications. It also has funded projects in many states.

Child well-being has become a major topic of governments, nonprofits, and recreation and leisure agencies. These groups frequently work together to improve child well-being.

Globalization is contributing to major societal change with particular impact on children. This era of globalization is evidenced by advances in investment, technology, manufacturing, and mobility coinciding with dramatically increased prosperity. Although corporate decision making may be influenced by globalization, it is the social frameworks that are frequently being negatively affected. It has created a scale of migration from Mexico and Central America previously unseen. As previously discussed, Hispanic populations represent the fastest growing immigrant group over the last 20 years. Youth from developing countries are less likely to be academically, socially, economically, physically, and emotionally prepared to enter the U.S. social fabric and lead full and productive lives. Already the Hispanic population has the highest high school dropout rate in the United States.

The youth population has been declining as a percentage of the total population for several decades: 26% in 2000 to a projected 24% in 2010. In 1964, the end of the baby boomer generation, youth represented 36% of the population. Youth population, since 2000, is not declining as a total number, but only as a percentage of the total U.S. population. The U.S. Census Bureau reported 73.9 million youth in 2007, 1.5 million more than in 2000.

CASE STUDY: Childrens' Well-Being as a Measure of Happiness

The well-being of children in the United States has become a topic of considerable concern. Well-being is a measure of happiness. Measuring well-being of children, as presented in this case



Measuring the well-being of children assists organizations in better serving this important future resource.

study, utilizes statistical analysis to provide a quantitative measure of the status of children. Expanding beyond traditional psychological measures, statistical data are gathered from a variety of sources to predict levels of well-being. The purpose of the data gathering and reporting is a desire to ensure that children have full and rich life opportunities as they grow and mature. Second, assumptions are made that children cannot, of themselves, make assessments about their well-being. Finally, demographic data provide a rich source of information about the social, economic, educational, and other opportunities and achievements of children. Taken as a

whole, organizations gathering and reporting the data are using the information to inform the general public and to influence decision making in legislative bodies at the city, state, and federal levels.

Well-being is not a new concept, but one that recreation organizations have traditionally associated with as they strive to enhance the well-being of their constituents. High on that list of constituents are children. Carruthers and Hood suggest, "There is a breadth and depth of literature supporting the importance and centrality of well-being in people's conception of a meaningful, purposeful life." They go on to say, "Well-being has been defined... as being action oriented as well as feeling oriented. Thus well-being is concerned with pleasant feelings and experiences, as well as the way in which people make choices and live their lives."^a

Nonprofit and government agencies are the major players addressing well-being of children in the United States. The two key providers of information are the Annie E. Casey Foundation, sponsor of the annual *Kids Count Data Book (KCD)*, and the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, which annually produces the *America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being (CIB)*. Each organization looks at well-being from a different perspective, but together the reports provide meaningful and relevant data to parks, recreation, and leisure-service providers.

The CIB identifies seven domains that "characterize the well-being of a child and that influence the likelihood that a child will grow to be a well-educated, economically secure, productive, and healthy adult."^b The CIB report is divided into seven sections: family and social environment, economic circumstances, health care, physical environment and safety, behavior, education, and health and reports on 40 indicators. The KCD, in contrast, provides 10 key indicators that include percentage of low-birthweight babies; infant mortality rate (deaths per 1000 live births); child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1–14 years); teen death rate (deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15–19 years); teen birth rate (births per 1000 females ages 15–19); percentage of teens who are high school dropouts (ages 16–19); percentage of teens not attending school and not

working (ages 16–19); percentage of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment; percentage of children in poverty (income below \$21,027 for a family of two adults and two children in 2007); and percentage of children in single-parent families.

The two reports, while similar, approach collecting and reporting the data in different ways. The CIB collects data from federal agencies, providing a national perspective using multiple indicators within each of the seven categories. In addition, the report identifies indicators that still need to be developed. By contrast, the KCD restricts itself to 10 indicators, and then ranks states within each indicator by comparing it to other states. “These indicators possess three important attributes: (1) They reflect a wide range of factors affecting the well-being of children, such as health, adequacy of income, and educational attainment. (2) They reflect experiences across a range of developmental stages—from birth through early adulthood. (3) They permit legitimate comparisons because they are consistent across states and over time.”^c KCD also produces supplemental reports, such as one titled *Reducing the Number of Disconnected Youth*, and recommends strategies for engaging youth. In the previously mentioned report, six strategies are suggested:

- Re-engage disconnected youth and young adults in education
- Provide workforce development programs geared to the needs of disconnected youth and young adults
- Include disconnected youth in economic recovery investment and planning
- Address impediments to employment
- Create developmental opportunities that recognize the importance of social networks
- Aim for comprehensive reform, with a focus on cross-system collaboration”^d

The data from the reports are used by many social service and government organizations to identify ways to improve child well-being and to make decisions related to allocating financial and physical resources to organizations that serve youth. The two reports, as the primary sources of data about child well-being, receive considerable attention. The data can be used by local recreation and leisure organizations to identify areas of need, to improve their services, and to identify potential partners in efforts to enhance child well-being. The reports focus heavily on the potential of children at risk. They highlight the need and, at least in the case of KCD, argue for change and improvement.

Parks, recreation, and sport professionals view these data as highly instructive. Nonprofit youth-serving organizations are at the forefront of addressing the well-being needs of youth. Public park and recreation agencies have long been invested in enhancing youth opportunities for growth and sport is frequently seen as a tool to assist in the process. For each of these types of agencies, the awareness must be present that parks, recreation, and sport are only a few of multiple constituencies committed to improving the quality of children’s well-being.

Questions to Consider

1. Why is gathering data about children important?
2. How can public park and recreation agencies use the data from these reports to improve delivery of services to children?
3. If you were involved in a youth sport program, what kind of information from these data sources would be of value to you as you began to determine where you were going to recruit youth from?

Sources

- a. C. Carruthers and C. Hood. "Building a Life of Meaning Through Therapeutic Recreation: The Leisure and Well-Being Model, Part 1," *Therapeutic Recreation Journal* (Vol. 41, 2007): 277.
- b. ChildStats.gov, *America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*. <http://childstats.gov/americaschildren/>.
- c. Annie E. Casey Foundation, *KIDS COUNT Indicator Brief: Reducing the Number of Disconnected Youth* (July 2009): 32. www.aecf.org/~media/Pubs/Initiatives/KIDS%20COUNT/K/KIDSCOUNTIndicatorBriefReducingtheNumberofDis/Disconnected%20youth.pdf.
- d. Ibid, 2.

The shift to an urban society continued to increase with more than 80% of children living in urban areas, including the suburbs and exurbs. Generations of contact and grounding with a rural environment have been replaced by city parks, community recreation centers, YMCAs, YWCAs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Camp Fire USA, and other organizations. In many cases, these organizations changed their orientation from a rural to an urban perspective. Today's camps are less likely to be overnights away from home than they are to be day camps in parks or on nonprofit-owned properties usually in or near the neighborhood where the children live. State park organizations nationwide have reported decreases in the number of children participating in outdoor recreation-based activities and attending parks and recreation areas in rural areas.

A major area of concern of public and private agencies is youth well-being. Child well-being has been variously described as those conditions affecting children in the United States. ChildStats.gov includes indicators from "three demographic background measures and 40 selected indicators [that] describe the population of children and depict child well-being in the areas of family and social environment, economic circumstances, health care, physical environment and safety, behavior, education, and health."¹⁸ The Annie E. Casey Foundation sponsors the Kids Count report on the well-being of America's youth, which is updated every other year. It measures items such as children's access to health care, environmental conditions, economic growth of families, education, and the education of young children.

Table 13.2 depicts selected data focusing on youth well-being gathered in 1999, 2001, and 2008. The snapshot captures multiple areas of concern. A review of the table suggests areas of social concern, such as tobacco use, lack of child-care services, illicit drug use, violent crime, and the like. The United States is better able today to quantify social issues and the status of youth than at any time in history. Conversely, this ability creates greater demands on public agencies, including nonprofits and park and recreation programs, to address these areas of concern.

Leisure professionals have a direct concern for child well-being. Youth cannot grow and progress unless their basic needs are met. It remains that minority youth have significant issues of well-being, and in a society of wealth, many find such inequities unacceptable. The public parks and recreation movement is grounded as a social services movement

TABLE 13.2**AMERICA'S CHILDREN AT A GLANCE**

Characteristic	1999/2001 ^a	2009
Children ages 0–17 in the United States	7.04	74.5 million
Children ages 0–17 as a proportion of the population		24.3%
Children ages 0–17 by race and ethnic group ^b		
White		75.6%
White, non-Hispanic	64.0%	55.3%
Black	15.0%	15.1%
Asian	4.0%	4.4%
All other races	1.0%	4.9%
Hispanic (of any race)	16.0%	22.5%
Children 0–17 living with two married parents	69.0%	67.0%
Children 0–6, not in kindergarten, who received some form of nonparental child care on a regular basis	60.0%	61.0%
Children 0–4 with employed mothers, whose primary child care arrangement is with a relative	50.0%	48.0%
Children ages 0–17 in poverty	16.0%	19.0%
Children 0–17 in households classified by USDA as “food insecure”	4.0%	22.0%
Children 0–17 covered by health insurance	85.0%	90.0%
Children 5–17 with activity limitations resulting from one or more chronic health conditions	8.0%	9.0%
Children 6–17 who are obese		19.0%
12th graders reporting regular cigarette smoking	22.0%	11.0%
12th graders reporting having five or more alcoholic beverages	32.0%	25.0%
12th graders reported using illicit drugs over the past 30 days	26.0%	23.0%
Youth offenders ages 12–17 involved in serious violent crimes		14 per 1000
Young adults ages 18–24 who have completed high school	86.0%	90.0%

^aTwo reports are combined to secure data. Data collected and reported has changed since the inception of the report in 1997.

^bChildren percentages by race and ethnic group has changed due to refined definitions by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Federal Interagency Forum on Children and Family Statistics. *America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2010*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Available at: <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/glance.asp>. Accessed December 8, 2010.

that needs to frequently reinvent itself. Poverty is the most pervasive and abusive condition affecting children in the United States. UNICEF, in a 2004 report, said,

“Children living in poverty experience deprivation of the material, spiritual, and emotional resources needed to survive, develop and thrive, leaving them unable to enjoy their rights, to achieve their full potential or to participate as full and equal members of society.”¹⁹

The child poverty rate in 2007 was 18% for children between 0 and 17 years of age. The number is likely to rise with current economic conditions, yet numbers are just

beginning to emerge to indicate increase in child homelessness and poverty levels. A recent report indicates the economic recession has had a significant impact on families as unemployment grew to more than 10% nationally, and more than 13% in some regions, suggesting that the number of children living in extreme poverty (half the poverty level) would climb to between 4.5 and 6.3 million. This is up from 2.5 million in 2008.

Although workforce employment in 2006 was at 78%, it did not necessarily translate into reduction of child poverty. The problem arises from disparity within the workforce. Skilled and professional employees have seen continued growth in income while those without skills have seen a rise in less-secure forms of employment that frequently provide minimal or no health care. Lack of regular health care affects 6% of children, and 19.5% of children were not immunized in 2007 despite efforts at the state and local levels.²⁰

Leisure is a commodity in the lives of children that is essential and developmental. Government and nonprofit agencies are joining to serve urban at-risk youth to provide services and opportunities. The challenges are significant and agencies are attempting to balance needs and simultaneously serve more affluent populations of taxpayers who demand services and who are frequently willing to pay for them. Urban park and recreation agencies are expanding their partnerships to work with social service organizations in ways that meet the needs of disadvantaged youth and families. It can include joint programming, provision of facilities, redirecting individuals to the social service agency, or expanding existing services.

Teens and Tweeners: Movers of Change Any discussion of children is incomplete without a discussion of teens and tweeners. The Harris Poll regularly tracks trends among teens and has become an important source for information about this age group. Many other organizations watch trends in teens for various reasons, including market forces, college directions, family issues, social stresses, and so forth. The Partnership for a Drug-Free America identified five teen trends: (1) they are stressed; (2) they are hypersexualized; (3) friends are the new family; (4) the traditional family has been redefined; and (5) diversity isn't something they are taught—they live with it.²¹

Today's researchers have discovered that any study of teens must also include tweens, that age group from 8 to 12 years of age. Tweens are between being children and teens and the 5-year time frame represents a period of dramatic physical, emotional, and social growth. For example, 61% of tweens said their mother understands them best, but only 20% of teens said the same thing.²² These groups are different and create sometimes challenging dynamics in family lifestyles. Activities families do most often together include eating dinner at home, watching television, going out to eat together, food and grocery shopping, watching rented movies, and visiting relatives.²³ In a recent study, youth ages 13 to 17 years are three times more likely to prefer spending time with their friends, than with their family. Tweeners, by contrast, remain strongly linked to their family.²⁴

Teens' interaction patterns change between 12 and 18 years. They begin to rely more heavily on their peers, are trend conscious, and react to peer pressure. The Harris Poll and Pew Internet Initiative found teens to be major users of the Internet and have become the innovators in social networking. Social networking is a growing source of



Social networking and cell phone use are up for teens.

finding new friends. Facebook.com, MySpace.com, Friendster.com, and Xanga.com are contemporary examples of how teens connect on the Internet. Social networking sites have become increasingly important communication sources for teens. They are putting more and more of their lives online for others to see, comment on, and to expand their network of relationships. Visiting a social network is the second most common online activity of teens, just behind texting. The Pew Internet and American Life Project tracks teen activities online. **Table 13.3** illustrates what teens report as being their online activities as measured in 2007 and 2008.

Twittering, a social networking use of a tool that did not exist 5 years ago, is a contemporary social networking mechanism that has individuals, organizations, and groups involved. Forty-nine percent of 12- to 15-year-olds report making friends via the Internet.²⁵ Mobile phones provide opportunities for talking, texting, e-mailing, and, more important, teens see them as a primary tool for staying connected to their friends. Mobile phones give teens a freedom previous generations did not have and move parents out of the controlling communications mode.

Tweeners and teens are more likely to volunteer in their community than their parents are. Fifty-five percent of this group volunteered an average of 29 hours a years. By contrast, only 29% of adults volunteer. The youth are most engaged with organizations focusing on

TABLE 13.3

TEEN (12–17 YEARS) REPORTED USE OF THE INTERNET

Rank	Activity	Percentage Using	Average Percentage of All Online Adults
1	Play games online	78	35
2	Use e-mail	73	91
3	Send instant messages	68	38
4	Use social networking sites	65	35
5	Get news	63	70
6	Download music	59	67
7	Watch videos online	57	52
8	Create an SNS profile	55	29
9	Read blogs	49	32
10	Buy something online	49	32

Data from Pew Internet Infographics, “Generational Differences in Online Activities.” January 28, 2009. Available at: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Infographics/Generational-differences-in-online-activities.aspx>. Accessed November 11, 2010.

youth involvement (67%) followed by civic or community organizations (54%) and religious-based groups (49%). Political organizations tend to be least attractive to youth volunteers (13%).²⁶

Engaging youth in parks and recreation is challenging, at best, and daunting if they are not involved in the planning. Too many organizations continue to provide traditional activities for youth, and although beneficial, this fails to draw and provide the services needed. These youth now see the cell phone as an entertainment device, not just a communication device. They expect to be able to communicate with their current friends, make new friends, and engage in social groups, all online. Organizations that capture the desire for community engagement and strengthen opportunities for social inclusion will find greater involvement by youth and simultaneously meet some of their needs.

Where People Live: Urban, Suburb, Exurb History has recorded the decline of rural populations, the growth of cities, industrialization, postindustrialization, the growth of suburbs and exurbs, the decline of the inner city, and the simultaneous revitalization of cities and urban areas. In the 1950s, people began to commute into the city. In the twenty-first century, commuting has become a norm for millions of people, but urbanites are as likely to commute to the suburbs to work as suburbanites are to commute to cities' business centers. The average commuter spends 100 hours a year commuting to and from work. That is an

CASE STUDY: Generation Next: 25 Random Things About You (That Are Changing the World)

Recreation, leisure, and sport reflect culture, population, and shifting trends and mores in society. Since the 1960s, change has come more and more rapidly. Beginning with the angry counterculture 1960s, through the civil rights movement of the turbulent 1970s and on to today, one thing has remained constant: change. It affects people, culture, and organizations and causes the continual rethinking of how each new generation sees the world. Recreation, leisure, and sport organizations are often in the forefront of these changes and at other times they are bystanders. However, knowing and responding to change are essential activities in any organization and especially those serving the public.

The following commencement speech presented at Long Island University in May 2009 was abstracted to illustrate how the current college generation is portrayed by social researchers.^a Lee Rainie, director of the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project, the leading research on the Internet in the world, delivered the address. These 25 random ideas are highly reflective of youth culture and instructive for leisure and sport professionals as they adapt services, programs, and facilities.

- Your generation is bigger and . . . more racially and ethnically diverse than any generation in American history.
- You are the most aggressive and eager social networkers in history.
- You are the most racially and socially tolerant cohort in history.
- Your generation is more achievement-oriented, grade-conscious, and rule-observing than your parents' or grandparents' generation.

- You already get extra credit for having gotten into less trouble with the law than your predecessors and having experienced fewer social and emotional problems.
- There are a lot more of you entering and graduating from college than was the case when your elders were your age.
- You are more likely than your elders to say your parents, a teacher, or a mentor is your role model.
- You serve your “weak ties” by performing volunteer activities at staggering rates.
- You were the first generation to have “community service” requirements imposed on you by most of your school districts.
- You have taken the call to civic engagement seriously and last year translated it into record-shattering voting numbers in the election.
- Your disproportionate support for Barack Obama created the largest disparity in voting between young voters and others in the history of modern polling.
- You and your peers are much more likely than your elders to:
 - Own gaming consoles and play video games
 - Text message
 - Have an MP3 player like an iPod and download music
 - Use instant messaging
 - Create an avatar and interact with others in virtual worlds
 - Upload pictures and videos to the Internet
 - Blog
 - Participate in online social networks.
- You are record-breaking multitaskers as you toggle back and forth between all the screens in your life.
- You are giving birth to a new kind of culture that is more vibrant because it has led to
 - An explosion of new voices
 - Fresh forms of music
 - Novel kinds of language
 - Varied pathways to community-building
 - Different kinds of ethics and etiquette
 - And . . . far-out—sometimes pretty twisted—forms of humor

Questions to Consider

1. How do these descriptions relate to you and your leisure time?
2. How are you different from your parents in regard to how you spend leisure time? How are you similar?
3. Describe how the influences mentioned in this case study have affected you and your family.

Source

- a. L. Rainie, *25 Random Things About You*, Pew Internet and American Life Project. www.pewinternet.org/Presentations/2009/14—25-Random-Things-About-You—Commencement.aspx.

average of 49 minutes a day. However, New York and Maryland each averaged 60 minutes or more commuting each day and three counties in metropolitan New York averaged more than 80 minutes daily in commutes.

Beyond the suburbs are the exurbs, difficult to define, but an easy area to describe. They exist beyond the suburbs in traditionally rural areas, that are now dotted with individual homes on acreage, subdivisions, and may include cities of 50,000 or more people. They are adjacent to large metropolitan areas and their distinctive feature is the residents' choice of place over people, where the primary commonality is the need to commute to work. The exurbs are growing population areas because individuals are more willing to increase travel time for a perceived improved quality of life.

Influence of Technology on Leisure

Technology affects the way people live and the way they experience leisure. For example, California State Parks in 2005 issued a trend report including a discussion about technology. Some of its conclusions are provided here:

- Americans *love* their toys and baby boomers expect “amenity-rich” experiences.
- Technology will continue to affect how we work and how we play.
- Each generation [is] better educated, more adept with, and more dependent on, technology than the previous generations.
- Technological advances affect the affordability, accessibility, and required skill level of many recreation activities.
- Technology allows “mass customization.”
- New activities will be developed around innovative devices and products.
- Technology creates entirely new recreation uses.
- People tend to self-define and organize around their chosen form of recreation.
- Each group tends to want (demand) their own exclusive allocation of resources.²⁸

These findings only tell part of the story. The current college-age generation is the first generation to grow up with computers. They are called *digital natives*. The Pew Internet and American Life project defines digital natives as having been born in 1985 or later and having been exposed to computers and the Internet. **Table 13.4** depicts key events in their lives connected to the Internet. Parents and other individuals born before 1985 are considered to be *digital immigrants* or those who have had to adapt to technology rather than having grown up with it. It is a little like being an immigrant and having to learn a whole new language and culture.

Technology has changed the way we communicate. As little as 30 years ago, mail was the most common communications method. There was only one long-distance telephone company. Long-distance telephone calls were expensive and usually reserved for special occasions or for business enterprises. Most families subscribed to a morning newspaper and watched the network news on one of three commercial channels. They listened to one or two local stations and only in larger markets was there a variety of music available on the radio.

Today Americans, on average, spend more waking time communicating and using media devices such as the television, radio, MP3 devices, and smart phones, than any other activity. The cell phone is an example of how technology has affected individuals, families, work, and communities. Even the older adults use their cell phones to make contact while traveling, even if most of the time the phone sits turned off while at home. As late as 2002

TABLE 13.4

KEY EVENTS IN THE LIVES OF THE FIRST GENERATION OF DIGITAL NATIVES	
Date/Age	Technology Event
Birth—1985	Personal computers 10 years old
Kindergarten—1990	World Wide Web program written
Middle School—1996	PalmPilot goes on market
High School—1999	Sean Fanning creates Napster
Graduate High School—1999	iPod
Late Teens—Early 20s—1997	Blogs
Late Teens—Early 20s—2001	Wikipedia
Late Teens—Early 20s—2003	Del.icio.us
Late Teens—Early 20s—2003	Skype
Late Teens—Early 20s—2004	Podcasts
Late Teens—Early 20s—2005	YouTube, Facebook

Data from Lee Raine. “Digital Natives: How Today’s Youth Are Different from Their ‘Digital Immigrant’ Elders and What That Means for Libraries.” Metro–New York Library Council, Brooklyn Museum of Art. (Presentation). Pew Research Center: Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2006: 1.

a cell phone was primarily a phone. People carried cell phones and digital handheld devices for scheduling, note taking, and the like. Today’s smart phones have replaced these two devices and expanded their level of services. Smart phones dominate the market. Many continue to use a cell phone primarily as a phone, but many more use it as an e-mail client; note taker; camera (still and movie); calendar; a link to online services such as Twitter, Flickr, Facebook, the global positioning system (GPS); game console; newsreader; address finder with map; and much more. Apple iPhone users spend more time using their mobile devices as an Internet access tool than as a telephone.

We are becoming a mobile generation. “Cast a glance at any coffee shop, train station, or airport boarding gate, and it is easy to see that mobile access to the Internet is taking root in our society. Open laptops or furrowed brows staring at palm-sized screens are evidence of how routinely information is exchanged on wireless networks.”²⁹ The Pew Internet and American Life project states that mobility changes the way people interact with each other and the ways they use their computer. We have reached a level where businesses and others expect to have broadband always on or be always connected. Questions remain unanswered about the impact of continual information exchange on individuals. For example, does it stress social norms, or cause continuous partial attention? In Pew’s typology, the sophisticated user of technology has mobile access and becomes an elite, replacing home access as an elite status. Many of today’s teens and young adults see always-connected as a necessity and a right.

Citizens can attend town meetings, business meetings, and the like without leaving their home or office. They can attend these meetings from anywhere with their mobile devices. Skype became the first free or low-cost Internet-based international telephone service. It has had a major impact on the developing world. The Internet has even had a sig-

nificant influence on how people deal with illness. One study reported 54% of the adults responding saying the Internet played a major role as they helped another person cope with a major illness. The number who said the Internet played a role as they coped with a major illness increased 40% over a 2-year period.³⁰ Nina Tote, cofounder of TypePad, reported at the 2006 TED conference on a woman who shared the last months of her life through a blog talking about life and the progress of her cancer. Everyone knew she had died when

CASE STUDY: How Napster and the iPod Changed the Way We Purchase and Listen to Music

Recognizing the Power of the Internet

At the end of the twentieth century and into the first few years of the twenty-first century, a college student and Apple's Steve Jobs changed the way people acquired and listened to music. Napster, a people-to-people (P2P) file-sharing utility, first appeared in summer 1999, and the iPod 2 years later in 2001. Each dramatically reshaped the landscape of music, initially in the United States and later worldwide.

At the start of 1999, the music and recording industry was the dominant force in music sharing. If you wanted to listen to music, you could listen to it on the radio where someone else selected what was broadcast, or you could purchase a compact disc (CD) from a retailer and play it in your Sony Walkman. The retail music industry generated in excess of \$700 billion annually, just in the United States.

Napster was introduced on the Internet in June 1999 and provided the first music exchange service in a P2P format. Others followed quickly, but Napster captured the market and was free. The process of file sharing was not legal, at least in the eyes of the music recording industry. However, the floodgate of music sharing was open, and despite the efforts of music companies, it would never close. Suddenly, individuals could share their entire music collection and secure other individuals' collections. By 2001, when the Pew Internet project gathered its first data on music file sharing, it estimated 25% of Internet users were downloading music files and most of them were using Napster.

The story since then has been mixed for the music recording industry, as well as for P2P sharing. Some large lawsuits were filed against Napster, other P2P services, as well as individuals, many of which were dropped. The industry finally saw the damage it was doing to itself. One legal expert recently stated, "The lawsuits had little effect, as unlawful downloading continues."^a Further, the *Boston Globe* suggested the industry misread the impact of the technology of downloading music and should have purchased Napster rather than fighting it.^b



An iPod allows you to listen to music whenever and wherever you want, even while exercising outdoors.

Napster has been forced to reinvent itself many times and today is a shadow of what it was, still struggling to determine how to exist in the changing marketplace. For the music industry, however, album and CD sales have fallen at a steady rate since 1999, and the industry suggests that between 2004 and 2008 album sales fell by \$3.8 billion.^c

Apple Sees an Opportunity

Steve Jobs, always the entrepreneur, looked at the music industry and saw a giant opportunity for Apple. Beginning in 1999, Apple started working on what has become the iPod. In 1999, the Sony Walkman was the premiere portable device for listening to music, but it had limitations. It required that users purchase and carry the CD with them. Further, even if listeners liked only one or two songs, they had to listen to all songs or frequently change CDs. Yet, it was the only alternative in the marketplace. In October 2001, Jobs announced what is now called the first-generation iPod. It was a radical, and not inexpensive, departure. The first iPod cost \$400 and held 1000 songs. Criticisms were many, but it sold, and within 3 years the iPod had more than 80% of the digital music player market share.

More important, Jobs had looked at the music industry, saw it was in disarray, and reinvented the way people select, purchase, and listen to music. As innovative as the iPod was for listening to music, iTunes was revolutionary for purchasing music. Suddenly, individuals could purchase a single song, an album, or several albums, all without ever leaving their computer. They then plugged their iPod into their computer and it synched with iTunes. White earbuds became all the rage. Even look-alike MP3 players began to sport white earbuds. The music industry also saw it as a way to improve its lagging sales, even if record labels weren't happy with the idea of selling single songs. By 2009, Apple had sold more than 1 billion songs on iTunes and had expanded to music videos, movies, podcasts (a market that did not exist in 2001), audio books, and more. In addition, a whole secondary marketplace grew up around the iPod and has become a multi-billion-dollar industry. Today's automobiles frequently include music jacks for the iPod or similar players or they have a dock in which to place the iPod.

Listening Online

The iPod, by some accounts, peaked in sales in 2005 and in 2009 still holds 70–80% of the music download market.^d Several forecasters see a decline in traditional iPod sales over the next 5 years. Listening online has become the new wave. Music providers such as Pandora.com or Last.fm are growing in subscribership and are generating most of their revenues from online ads flashed in the Web browser. The growth of wireless has allowed connections to be made to mobile devices, including cell phones. Pandora has apps (applications) for the iPhone, Blackberry, Palm, Windows Mobile, and the Android. Where Internet listening was once restricted to the computer, it is now available to many with smart phones.

What People Want

The Pew Internet and American Life project has identified five kinds of “free” selling points for digital music consumers that are driving the music industry and its future. These include (1) *cost* at zero or approaching zero; (2) *portability* to any device; (3) *mobility* via wireless access to music; (4) *choice*, providing access to any song ever recorded; and (5) *remixability*, allowing the freedom to remix and mashup music.^e

Questions to Consider

1. How long do you listen to music each day? During which parts of the day do you listen to music?
2. Where do you get your music?
3. What type of device do you use to listen to your music? How has that changed since you were a middle school student?
4. How is what you use to listen to music different from what your parents used?

Sources

- a. Alan J. Hartnick, "Has the Recording Industry Really Abandoned Unlawful Downloaders?" *New York Law Journal* (9 April 2009), as reported in M. Madden, *The State of Music Online: Ten Years after Napster* (Washington, DC: Pew Internet and American Life Project, 2009): 10. <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/9-The-State-of-Music-Online-Ten-Years-After-Napster.aspx>.
- b. M. Madden, *State of Music Online*, 10.
- c. Ibid., 6.
- d. C. Arthur, "Twilight of the iPods," *Guardian.co.uk* (9 September 2009). www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2009/sep/09/apple-ipod-digital-music-sales.
- e. Madden, *State of Music Online*, 4.

the final blog was written by her sister who reported the personal power the blog provided her sister of being able to share with others during the final months of her life.

By 2009, 69% of Americans, or 88% of Internet users, were using the Internet to deal with the recession. The Internet is a tool people can turn to when times are challenging. It has immediate information about jobs, allows people to shop for bargains, provides information on government benefits, offers information about how to upgrade skills, and allows people to look for housing options. The Internet provides a quick and relatively easy way to investigate options and opportunities, conduct research about alternatives, and search out the best sources of information. The Internet was frequently reported as the most-used source for gathering information, ahead of television and radio, financial professionals, friends, family, newspapers, magazines, and books.³¹

A number of implications result from technology that park and recreation professionals need to consider. They include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Teens are less engaged in traditional recreation activities than their predecessors. They are more engaged in technology-based activities such as creating Web pages, posting photos and videos on social network sites, modifying music, sharing music, and being involved with their peers through the Internet and instant messaging.
- There is greater competition for an individual's time. The notion of "free time" is almost a lost term. Technology has made this generation the most connected in history.
- Community members want active involvement, even if it is through the Internet. They do not want to be talked to, but talked with. The same is true for participating in programs offered by public and nonprofit agencies.
- Communicating images, program information, and building brands is far more difficult because of the plurality of communications alternatives. Sending home flyers through the public schools, sending brochures out in the mail, and advertising on traditional

television stations will no longer reach the desired public. Knowledge about how different groups communicate, where they get their information, and how that information is determined to be important becomes essential for public agencies attempting to reach community members.

- Understanding the old “word-of-mouth” model is magnified a hundred- or even thousandfold is essential. Administrators used to believe that one person could influence five to eight people he or she came in contact with. Today that one person can influence thousands and even hundreds of thousands without ever making physical contact with people. Images of organizations and their public goodwill can be positively or negatively influenced by minor as well as major events.
- Public park and recreation agencies must learn to think and act in a digital age. Members must embrace technology as an important part of their operation, but more important, they must understand how their community members have embraced technology, whether they be 92 or 2. This suggests professionals need to be flexible and able to transition between digital natives, digital immigrants, and digital refusers.

Technology is influencing recreation and leisure in ways that were never imagined. As park and recreation professionals embrace technology, they do so from multiple perspectives: Professionals need to ask, (1) “How can technology help me?”; (2) “How can I use technology to help our community, residents, and program participants?”; (3) “How do I reach those who we are not reaching or those who chose not to take advantage of our services?”; and (4) “How do we position ourselves to make the most of technology today and in the future?”

Environmental Challenges

Americans have and continue to struggle to think beyond their borders. As a group, they, for the most part, fail to see a global picture as it relates to the environment. Americans are not alone in this narrow view of the world, yet they seem to epitomize a lack of concern for the environment. Whether it be a loss of open space, the continued purchasing of gas-guzzling vehicles, or a supersized approach to living and buying, it seems our indifference amid our wealth is considered by some of the world community as selfish and inexcusable.

Environmental Concerns

Outdoor recreation activities such as camping, biking, backpacking, boating, hunting, fishing, skiing, and mountain climbing depend heavily on parks, forests, and water areas operated chiefly by public recreation and park agencies. The concern of many people regarding the health of the nation’s outdoor resources stems from more than the need for outdoor recreation spaces. LaPage and Ranney point out that one of the most powerful sources of America’s essential cultural fiber and spirit is the land itself: “The roots of this new nation and its people became the forests and rivers, the deserts and mountains, and the challenges and inspirations they presented, not the ruins of ancient civilizations most other cultures look to for ancestral continuity. Thus, America developed a different attitude and identity.”³²

For such reasons, the environmental movement receives strong support from many recreation advocates and organizations. At the same time, it is recognized that such activi-

ties as fishing and hunting are part of a bigger scene requiring clean—and safe—air and water and wise use of the land.

Growing national concern about the need to protect the environment was buttressed by the 1962 report of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission. During the following two decades, there was a wave of federal and state legislative action and funding support in the United States that was designed to acquire open space; to protect imperiled forests, wetlands, and scenic areas; to help endangered species flourish; and to reclaim the nation's wild rivers and trails. This movement was threatened during the early 1980s, when a new administration sought to reduce park and open space funding, eliminate conservation programs and environmental regulations, and subject the outdoors to renewed economic exploitation. In the mid-1990s, and again under the second Bush administration in the early- and mid-2000s, the effort to open protected wilderness areas to increased oil drilling, cattle grazing, lumbering, and other commercial uses gained strong political support. The election of Barack Obama and the ascendance of the Democratic party is changing the recent neglect of the environment to one of support and action. Federal agencies are already responding to recognition that climate change is a real issue. For example, the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have developed action plans for climate change.

Organizations such as the nonpartisan League of Conservation Voters, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, Wilderness Society, Sierra Club, and Nature Conservancy have been in the forefront of the continuing battle to protect the nation's natural resources. Numerous outdoor recreation organizations have joined with such groups, and the struggle will clearly continue to be an important political issue in the years ahead.

As the world celebrated Earth Day 2000, 30 years after the first Earth Day in 1970, it was clear that North American air was cleaner and its water purer than it had been for many past decades. There was more protected open space in national parks, wildlife refuges, and wilderness areas yet there is still cause for concern. Americans are purchasing large inefficient vehicles at a faster rate than ever before. It has only been with the sharp increase in gasoline prices that went above \$5.00 per gallon and the recession beginning in 2009 that Americans finally began to turn away from expensive and gas-guzzling motorhomes and large automobiles. Government, at all levels, has embraced the presence of global warming and is joining the international community in efforts to reduce impacts on the environment. Yet, Americans are growing away from their traditional environment ethic. Attendance, over a period of 5 years, is down at state and national parks, children are not exposed to the natural environment, and campers who do stay in the parks in their motorhomes demand electricity, water, sewer, and cable and broadband hookups. Going outdoors is no longer fashionable. America's appreciation of the outdoors and the environment is clearly in jeopardy. Yet, organizations, individuals, researchers, and governments are finding ways to make people aware of the importance of the outdoors in their lives. Governments and schools are creating campaigns and educational requirements introducing and encouraging families and youth to return to the natural environment.

Environment and Population The United States represents just 5% of the world's population and consumes almost 25% of every natural resource—more than any other nation in the world.³³ Americans have the largest “ecological footprint” of any country in the world.³⁴ Beyond this, the United States is the only industrial country still experiencing

rapid growth and projections are that this will not end soon. “These include U.S. demographic factors—relatively high population numbers and rapid growth; high and increasing density in coastal and metropolitan areas; an increase in energy-consuming households, and a large ‘Baby Boomer’ population—coupled with high per-capita energy use, fossil fuel burning, land and vehicle use.”³⁵

Population growth at current levels has the potential to negate efforts to reduce impact on the climate. Even as federal, state, and local governments move forward with plans to reduce greenhouse emissions, the continued rapid growth of population in high-density population centers and centers of ecological vulnerability may offset gains in addressing climate change. **Figure 13.3** illustrates the impact of population on energy consumption and greenhouse gases. Compared to the world and developing countries our contributions to global warming, on a per-capita basis, are staggering. The United States accounts for almost half (46%) of the annual carbon dioxide emitted into the environment and represents the primary cause of global warming. Americans produce 5 pounds of garbage per day; five times the average amount in developing countries.³⁶

The Center for Environment and Population suggests that the United States is now a metro nation, a “lifestyle [that] differs from urban-centered lifestyles in that it requires extensive use of motor vehicles and rapid, extensive land development.”³⁷ The McDonalds influence on U.S. culture to supersize everything has moved from french fries to houses, shopping centers, recreation centers, and land and resource consumption. The Center goes on to report, “the ‘supersized’ lifestyles of so many people affect the quality of everyday life causing, among other things, more frequent, worse traffic jams, and expenditure of more money and effort to heat and keep-up more and/or larger homes.”³⁸ The impact on recreation is not lost. Demand for recreation facilities, park areas, and access to these is growing in metropolitan and adjacent areas. Congestion in this country’s premiere natural resources

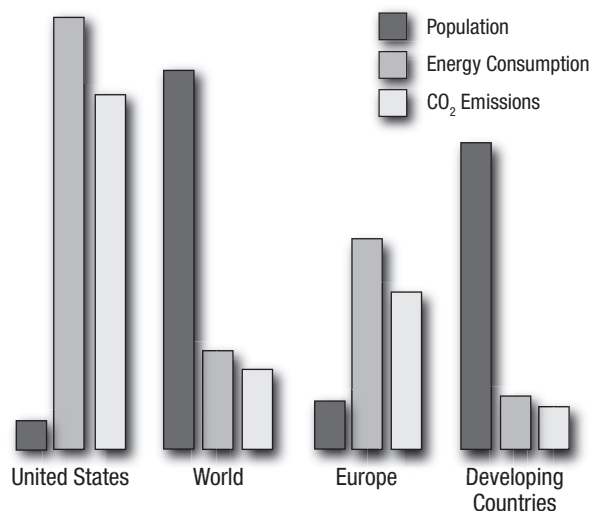


FIGURE 13.3 U.S.–World Population and Climate Change. Data from U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Energy Information Administration, World Resources Institute, 2008.

has been well documented by the National Park Service and similar patterns are occurring at the state and community levels.



A Metropolitan Nation

The United States has become a metropolitan nation, or a MetroNation, characterized by 100 metropolitan areas ranging in size from New York City at 12 million people to places like Lansing, Michigan, with a population of 500,000. Every state has at least one metropolitan area. That is a staggering thought when one thinks of the Intermountain West and the Great Plains where you can still drive for hours between major cities. The Brookings Institution states that metropolitan areas account for two-thirds of America's jobs (75% of the U.S. output). Sixty-five percent of the population lives in the top 100 metropolitan areas, which includes 85% of the immigrants and 77% of the minorities.³⁹

CASE STUDY: City Parks' Grand Rebirth: St. Louis

City sponsors were so nervous about the unveiling of their new downtown park this summer that they arranged for an ice cream truck to park at the site on opening day, just to attract passerbys. They needn't have bothered. Citygarden, just west of the famed Gateway Arch on the Mississippi River, has drawn crowds of people—a cross-section of the city and region's population—from its opening hour onward.

The attractions include a cornucopia of trees, contemporary sculpture, an 180-foot rectangular basin with a six-foot waterfall, a state-of-the-art "spray plaza," a state-of-the-art LED video wall displaying art and movies, plus a high-quality cafe overlooking the combined attractions.

What this new park doesn't have are any formal entrances or barriers to separate its manicured paths and quiet spaces from the surrounding city streets. Richard C.D. Fleming, president of the St. Louis Regional Chamber and Growth Association, suggests it's an "intimate version of Millennium Park," the Chicago lakeside extravaganza opened in 2004.

For St. Louis, for years so forsaken its downtown had the feel of a big and mostly empty living room, the public's warm embrace of Citygarden caps a remarkable comeback decade, which has seen the center city draw 5000 residents and more than \$4 billion in new investment.



The city of St. Louis was revitalized with a new downtown park.

But there's no single formula for new parks. Just climb up a short flight of stairs to the newly-opened "High Line" park on Manhattan's West Side. You'll find clusters of families and couples strolling, chatting, sipping lemonade, and nibbling on waffles or sandwiches along what for years constituted a desolate and weed-choked stretch of abandoned elevated freight railroad track.

Now, from the meandering concrete walkways of this sliver of protected park space in the sky, the visitor catches stunning views of the Hudson, the Statue of Liberty, Midtown and Wall Street skyscrapers, plus amazingly intimate glimpses into the forbidden interiors of nearby apartments, stately townhouses, and offices.

Or check auto-happy, sprawling Houston. Two-term Mayor Bill White has made parks a top priority. Lead example: Discovery Green, 12 once-industrial acres on the east side of downtown. Among Discovery Green's features: a shaded walkway featuring 100-year-old oak trees, thematic gardens with native Texas plants, birds and butterflies, fountains and spacious green lawns, a model boat basin, a children's stage, WiFi everywhere, and two restaurants. Plus lots of people watching.

Indeed, if there were ever a bonanza decade for America's parks, this is surely it. Add stunning new parks in Boston, Atlanta, Cincinnati, Denver and Santa Fe, plus the success of conservancies in revamping great old parks in such cities as Pittsburgh, Brooklyn, and San Francisco.

And by good fortune, there's a skilled chronicler tracking and analyzing the wave—Peter Harnik, parks expert for the Trust for Public Land and author of a soon-to-be published Island Press book on today's parks phenomenon.

For almost a half century, Harnik notes, the reigning American park model was Disneyland—"corporate, programmed, extravagant, rural, flawless and electrifying." City parks "began grinding down relentlessly everywhere" as people realized "the park experience could be sanitized, social classes could be segregated."

So why the big turnaround now? Partly it's the "wow" in the new city parks—fascinating gardens, theaters, concerts, fountains, and ice skating. That's why, says Harnik, the 2004 opening of the Millennium Park in Chicago had the biggest impact on the American parkland scene since New York's great Central Park opened in 1873.

But Harnik insists there's more to the revival—that we're seeing a revival of factors "ignored in the din of massive suburbanization and sprawl—human scale, walkability, efficiency, and respect for ecological principles and democratic ideals." Or put another way, we're reawakening to parks' ultimate value: "an interplay—a conversation—between people and nature."

And as if that's not enough, new and revived parks bring massive associated benefits. The parks embellish cities' reputations and become "must see" destinations for tourists. And they turn into meeting places not just for city residents, but magnets for visitors from across their metro areas.

It's true, new parks can be tremendously expensive. Millennium Park's pricetag—borne jointly by the city of Chicago and private donors—was close to a half billion dollars.

But, insists Harnik, parks make huge financial sense. Property values close to new park locations rise vigorously—a development recognized soon after Central Park's opening in the 19th century and now an established factor of urban economics.

But there's more. Citizens get free recreation and services. Tourism booms. And government gains by parks' stormwater management, air pollution control, cooling of the urban "heat island" effect, and contributions by volunteers. Harnik added all those up for Philadelphia's park system, ranging from the city's massive Fairmount Park and Independence National Historical Park to

neighborhood gardens. The total, he calculated: \$1.9 billion a year. Mayor Michael Nutter concurred: "A well-run, properly funded and focused park system is priceless."^a

Questions to Consider

1. How do well-designed urban park systems contribute to community well-being?
2. Are urban parks important to a community? Why? Why not?
3. Describe a park you have been to as a child or recently and how it influenced you.

Source

- a. Neal Peirce, "City Parks' Grand Rebirth," Citiwire.net (6 September 2009). <http://citiwire.net/post/1293/>.



Wal-Mart Challenges the Way Americans Light Their Homes

In late 2006, Wal-Mart made a decision to change Americans' buying habits for lightbulbs. For more than 100 years, Americans have purchased the traditional lightbulbs even though for more than 10 years CFL or energy-saver fluorescent bulbs have been available. A CFL uses 75% less electricity, lasts 10 times longer, produces 450 pounds fewer greenhouse gases from power plants, and saves consumers \$30 over the life of each bulb, but they don't produce the same level of light or as strong a light as traditional lightbulbs. Wal-Mart took it upon itself to sell 100 million bulbs by 2008. Efforts such as this by major retailers can help to overcome some of the negative aspects of global warming. Success of the venture would save Americans \$3 billion in electricity costs and avoid the need to build additional power plants for 450,000 new homes.

Open Space Loss and the Environment The environment is coming under increasingly difficult challenges, both as a part of national policy, and among Americans as a whole. In Iowa, the state government gives new homeowners a five-year tax relief if they purchase a new home on previous open space or farmland. Between 1992 and 1997, the United States paved over more than six million acres of farmland, an area approximately the size of Maryland. Americans experience a daily loss of 3000 acres (1214 hectares) of farmland over the last decade. Land converted for development occurs at twice the rate of population growth. We have become a nation of sprawl represented by low-density development in the suburbs and exurbs. The exurbs are growing at a rate almost three times that of urban areas.

Youth prefer computers to the outdoors. Parents are afraid to send their children outdoors because they too have lost their outdoor ethic. As a society, Americans have almost fully transitioned from a generation raised on or near farms to a generation raised in an urban environment. Like a zoo or museum, the outdoors is a place to visit and see, but not to partake of. Scares such as polluted beaches, Lyme disease, wasting disease in elk, and others have encouraged parents already unfamiliar with the outdoors to keep their children



Urban sprawl consumes 6000 acres of land daily.

home. Attendance at national parks, national forests, state parks, and other rural recreation and preservation areas has been on decline at a time when the population is increasing (see **Table 13.5**). The influx of immigrants without an outdoor ethic has affected the response to wilderness, outdoors, and preservation. This has been reflected in Congress as it has become more difficult to secure funds for park and recreation lands. For example, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is continuously under attack by politicians and oil interests in an effort to open the area to increased oil production.

Former Vice President Al Gore has become a leading spokesperson for the environment and climate change. His comments have helped focus much debate and most importantly have, for the moment, recharged some of America’s concern about the environment. Although Al Gore is the most visible person to address environmental concerns, he is not alone. Many national associations focusing on the environment are encouraging individuals to express concern and demand action. Often this action is local and even bounded by the property owned. The National Wildlife Federation encourages individuals to certify their backyards for wildlife. The Audubon Society encourages individuals to take the healthy yard pledge by reducing pesticides, conserving water,

TABLE 13.5

**CHANGES IN ATTENDANCE AT STATE AND NATIONAL PARKS
COMPARED TO TOTAL POPULATION GROWTH**

Year	State Parks	National Parks	Population	Percent Change in Relation to Total Population	
				State Park	National
2007	730,067,000	275,600,000	300,913,000	−1.16%	−1.04%
2005	725,361,000	273,500,000	295,507,000	−9.92%	−6.94%
2000	766,842,123	279,900,000	281,424,602	−3.45%	−1.66%
1995	752,266,297	269,600,000	266,557,000	−5.76%	−2.76%
1990	744,812,234	256,700,000	248,718,302	13.04%	−5.83%
1985	631,746,699	263,400,000	238,466,000		

Data from the National Association of State Park. Available at: <http://www.naspd.org>; National Park Service. Available at: <http://www.nps.gov>; and U.S. Census Bureau. Available at: <http://www.census.gov>. Accessed November 11, 2010.

planting native species, protecting water quality, and supporting birds and other wildlife.

Many of the same organizations that are promoting local environmental awareness and action are also active at the national and international levels.

Loss of Environmental Ethic Discussed elsewhere in this book, the loss of the environmental ethic by Americans is very real. A 2005 Harris Poll indicates that 74% of Americans agreed that “protecting the environment is so important that requirements and standards cannot be too high, and continuing environmental improvements must be made regardless of cost.”⁴⁰

At the same time, Americans appear to be participating at a lower rate in traditional visits to state and national parks. Table 13.5 shows a mixed picture of attendance with a decline between 2000 and 2005 for state and national parks. The right-hand columns compare park attendance to the reported U.S. population. The comparison shows that the percentage of Americans visiting state and national parks is in decline. It would appear that visiting these areas is becoming either less important to or out of the reach of Americans. The numbers remain large, but the vast majority of state and national parks are in remote areas, not close to urban populations. Some data suggest as much as 50% of visits to some national parks are international tourists, and repeat visits by individuals counts for another large portion of the data. The current recession may cause some change in those behaviors.

The data are incomplete for 2009, but during the recession from 2008 to 2010 some federal agencies, including the National Park Service (NPS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) declared select days as *free admission* days and simultaneously reported increases in attendance. Some state park systems are also reporting increased attendance. Florida and Kentucky were two states reporting increases in state park attendance, citing the recession as partially contributing to the increase. In Florida, from July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009, attendance was up 3.5%, or 700,000, over the previous year.



The number of visitors to national parks is down.

The issue is less clear than it might at first appear. Attendance may be down for state and national parks, yet the willingness of Americans to vote for funding for parks and open space remains high. From 2000 through 2009, Americans voted \$95.9 billion in 1540 local and state elections, 74% which were successful, providing funding for parks and open space acquisition, maintenance, and operation. **Table 13.6** shows the number of referenda voted on between 2000 and 2009. The amount of funding approved in almost 50 states is staggering. In years when large amounts have been approved by voters, it frequently involved a statewide initiative and ballot supporting conservation funding. The difference between total funding and conservation funding, as described by the Trust for Public Lands, is

TABLE 13.6**SUMMARY OF MEASURES BY YEAR**

Year	Number of Measures	Number of Measures Passed	Total Funds Approved	Conservation Funds Approved
2000	209	171	\$11,240,270,431	\$4,993,222,298
2001	198	138	\$1,802,683,640	\$1,369,510,437
2002	192	142	\$8,573,159,162	\$5,486,074,357
2003	133	99	\$1,771,740,328	\$1,255,696,985
2004	218	163	\$26,107,658,413	\$3,972,214,265
2005	141	111	\$2,618,811,630	\$1,598,003,889
2006	183	136	\$29,081,167,202	\$6,705,777,535
2007	99	65	\$2,244,755,926	\$1,951,415,707
2008	128	91	\$11,102,766,340	\$8,047,714,140
2009	39	24	\$1,059,164,056	\$607,668,083
2010	13	11	\$208,501,068	\$66,495,084
Total	1553	1151	\$95,810,678,196	\$36,053,792,780

Data from Trust for Public Lands, "Access TPL Land Vote Database." Available at: http://www.tpl.org/tier2_kad.cfm?folder_id=2386. Accessed November 11, 2010.

important to understand. The total funds include support for "parks and playgrounds, farmland preservation, watershed protection, trails and greenways, forests, and wildlife habitat" as primary examples. Conservation funding is more narrowly focused, looking at, "measures that preserve natural lands, create parks, and protect farmland."⁴¹ These are state, county, and local endeavors where voters choose to tax themselves to provide open spaces and parks. The vast majority of the funds were for acquisition of lands. The money has not been equally distributed across the United States. The Northeast, the largest center of population in the United States, has voted for considerably more measures than any other region. Does this mean local spaces are more important than national or state places? Probably not, but there are clearly shifts in preferences and only part of those shifts can be attributed to ethnic and cultural influences.⁴²

In addition to federal, state, and local agencies providing recreation and park opportunities and places, there are many watchdogs of government agencies. The federal government's handling of environmental issues that affect national parks and wilderness areas has been a particular area of criticism. The National Environmental Trust has pointed to air quality significantly diminishing the quality of individual experiences of visitors. They point to a 27-year-old requirement administered by the Environmental Protection Agency that has not been enforced. The Natural Resources Defense Council points to the impact of climate change on western U.S. national parks stating,

Many scientists think the American West will experience the effects of climate change sooner and more intensely than most other regions. The West is warming faster than the East, and that warming is already profoundly affecting the scarce snow and water of

the West. In the arid and semi-arid West, the changes that have already occurred and the greater changes projected for the future would fundamentally disrupt ecosystems. The region's national parks, representing the best examples of the West's spectacular resources, are among the places where the changes in the natural environment will be most evident. As a result, a disrupted climate is the single greatest threat to ever face western national parks.⁴³

Climate Change as an Archetype of Global Environmental Issues Humans have affected the environment as never before. The 1997 Kyoto Protocol named after an international conference convened in Kyoto, Japan, is often credited as the most significant environmentally based international agreement of the twentieth century. The essence of the agreement was for developed nations to reduce their greenhouse gases (CO₂ emissions) to 5% below their 1990 levels and for less-developed countries to be allowed to make a lesser contribution to reductions. Of the 166 countries that signed the protocol, only the United States and Australia refused to ratify it. Other countries including India and China and other smaller developing countries were exempt from the protocols because most greenhouse gases are coming from developed countries.

There are various agreements and discussions occurring regarding the environment on an international scale. The Kyoto Protocol and global warming are an archetype of issues facing the world today and into the twenty-first and twenty-second centuries. A longer list of environmental issues includes loss of diversity (biodiversity), ocean and fresh water pollution, clean air issues, the impact of urban environments, the loss of forests and most especially tropical rainforests, and the impact of megadisasters such as the tsunami impacting the coasts of Indonesia, India, and other countries in 2004, or Hurricane Katrina's devastation along the Gulf Coast of the United States.

The Obama administration initiated a major change in the United States involvement in the global climate change debate. It has moved the country from an almost nonparticipant to a major stakeholder and player in efforts to address and manage global warming. The federal government has created a Global Change Research Program (www.globalchange.gov) composed of 13 departments and agencies. The agency existed under another name from 2002 through 2008 and reports directly to the president. Its function is to coordinate and integrate federal research on changes in the global environment with potential implications for society. The United States, over the last 20 years, has not ignored global climate change but has quietly made the "world's largest scientific investment in the areas of climate change and global change research."⁴⁴

In June 2009, the agency issued its *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States* report. It suggests:

Climate-related changes have already been observed globally and in the United States. These include increases in air and water temperatures, reduced frost days,



Climate change impacts our daily lives, including rush hour traffic in crowded areas.

increased frequency and intensity of heavy downpours, a rise in sea level, and reduced snow cover, glaciers, permafrost, and sea ice. A longer ice-free period on lakes and rivers, lengthening of the growing season, and increased water vapor in the atmosphere also have been observed. Over the past 30 years, temperatures have risen faster in winter than in any other season, with average winter temperatures in the Midwest and northern Great Plains increasing more than 7°F. Some of the changes have been faster than previous assessments had suggested.”⁴⁵



Key Findings of Climate Change Impacts on the United States

The *Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States* report provides 10 key findings that are already present and will potentially intensify in the future.

- Global warming is unequivocal and primarily human-induced.
- Climate changes are under way in the United States and are projected to grow.
- Widespread climate-related impacts are occurring now and are expected to increase.
- Climate change will stress water resources.
- Crop and livestock production will be increasingly challenged.
- Coastal areas are at increasing risk from sea-level rise and storm surge.
- Threats to human health will increase.
- Climate change will interact with many social and environmental stresses.
- Thresholds will be crossed, leading to large changes in climate and ecosystems.
- Future climate change and its impacts depend on choices made today.⁴⁶

Impact of Nature on People's Lives: Issues of Wellness, Well-Being, and Human Development

The environmental concerns discussed earlier go beyond issues associated only with the environment. It has become personal for many who have recognized the absence of involvement with nature negatively affects human growth and development, especially among children. Numerous researchers have begun to link environmental and ecological issues to health and well-being outcomes for individuals and society as a whole.

Richard Louv, with the publication of *No Child Left in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* became the spokesperson for a growing movement to reconnect children with nature. The term *nature-deficit disorder* captured the imagination and has become a rallying cry to address the issues of children, and adults, who are becoming more separated from nature with every generation. Daily contact with nature has become the exception rather than the norm. There are a number of reasons for the decline in contact with nature, including the loss of natural areas in and near urban areas, the absence of



Climate Change and Recreation: Consequences and Costs

Americans who like to play outdoors may soon find that climate change–induced warming trends around the nation will put some of their favorite recreational retreats in jeopardy—from trout streams to waterfowl preserves, from ski areas to mountain biking trails, and from beaches to forested parkland. “Climate impacts on natural resources are pervasive,” write Daniel Morris and Margaret Walls in a background paper titled, “Climate Change and Outdoor Recreation Resources.” Their paper highlights the stresses climate change will put on water resources, which could result in reduced mountain snowpack levels; increased drought conditions across public lands; decreased waterflows into streams, reservoirs, and wetlands; and forests weakened against fire and insect infestations.

Walls, a senior fellow at Resources for the Future (RFF), and Morris, an RFF research assistant, included a number of possible scenarios, among them:

Snowpack: Extended warm seasons may result in more rainfall than snow, which would reduce skiing and snowboarding opportunities, particularly in comparatively warmer areas in California, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico.

Fresh waterways: Reduced snowpack and more rain in winter months would mean earlier spring runoff into streams and reservoirs. That could mean less fresh water flowing in the summer months, when sport fishing and boating are most popular. Fishing depends on water temperature, streamflow levels, and ecological quality, while boating is more sensitive to lake, reservoir, and stream levels.

Noncoastal wetlands: Stretching across 216 million acres of the northern plains and Canada, these wetlands are rich sources of many species of ducks and other waterfowl. By one estimate, lower water levels caused by climate change in the Upper Great Lakes could reduce regional duck populations by nearly 40% in the area.

Beaches: Rising sea levels over time could reduce the size of beachfront recreation areas, national seashores, and coastal waterways, the authors find. A full 85% of tourism-related revenues in the United States are generated by coastal states.

Forests and parks: Tree cover, particularly in the western United States, is already feeling the impact of climate change, particularly as a result of drought. Insects have decimated millions of acres of evergreens in the Rocky Mountain region, and dryness has fueled damaging wildfires. Tree dieoffs also resulted in closures of campgrounds, trails, and picnic areas in public parks.

What is clear, the authors conclude, is that impacts from climate change will vary among such leisure pursuits as skiing, camping, boating, fishing and hunting, outdoor sports such as golf, and wildlife viewing. That prospect may require more assertive efforts by public officials to adapt policies that will help preserve outdoor recreation areas.

“Longer and warmer summers are expected to increase the demand for outdoor recreation, from hiking, fishing, hunting, and camping to simple beach visits,” the authors write. “This makes it all the more important that government policy at all levels develop climate adaptation programs and funding.”⁴⁷

parks close to where people live, the over-scheduling of children, safety concerns, more homework, and fear of stranger-danger.⁴⁸

Louv suggests several factors influencing the amount of time children spend in nature including the following:

- The explosive growth of electronic media, later identified as videophilia⁴⁸
- The increasingly litigious nature of American society creating risk-averse managers and citizens who prevent or limit various nature experiences (e.g., climbing trees, building tree forts)
- The prevalence of neighborhood covenants that place severe limitations on what, where, and when children can play outdoors
- The climate of fear generated by intense media attention of child abduction cases
- The longer work and commuting hours of parents and increased amount of scheduled activities for children that create time constraints
- The explosive rate of land development in the past two decades and the corresponding lack of nearby nature (i.e., vegetation and open space with natural features in close proximity to urban residents) in the developed areas



Children need to experience the outdoors, not be protected from it.

The loss of contact with nature results in additional health and wellness issues for children. Some of the results include increasing levels of obesity in children and adults; a decline in physical, social, and mental well-being; issues of psychological well-being; linkages to attention deficit disorder in children and adults; increasing levels of stress; and lowered immunity to illness. Some argue that this may be because of the pace of life throughout the world, but the literature on nature, wellness, and well-being increasingly confirms the need for contact with nature, even if it is just a small green space.⁴⁹

The correlation of the absence of nature in our lives with the developmental growth of children has raised a concern among public health officials, child development specialists, urban environmentalists, and park and recreation practitioners. As stated in a report titled *Healthy Parks, Healthy People*, “An ecological theory of public health recognises that not only is health itself holistic and multidisciplinary, but also that a holistic or multidisciplinary approach is needed to promote and manage health successfully.”⁵⁰

Nearby nature refers to the presence or absence of nature in close proximity to an individual. Parks and natural areas in urban environments are seen as important contributors to the opportunity of individuals, and especially youth, to experience nature. The backyard, neighborhood, and areas where individuals, work, play, and go to school are also important. Research is beginning to show that the presence of nearby nature has an impact on individual wellness and well-being.⁵¹ The ideal situation is for individuals to have regular contact with natural areas, but, in the absence of those opportunities, nearby nature in urban environments can have positive mediating effects on individuals.

Childhood Experiences with Nature and Its Influence on Adult Behavior and Attitudes

There are indicators that adults who had positive childhood experiences with wild nature have a more positive attitude about the environment than those who had experiences with domesticated nature. Wild nature involves being in an outdoor setting where hiking, camping, hunting, and related activities can occur and these are usually away from urban areas. Domestic nature is more reflective



A family camping trip allows family members to benefit from their connections to the wilderness.



Why Are There So Many Different Terms, and Why Can't Researchers Agree?

Students, practitioners, and the public often ask why researchers cannot agree upon a common terminology when talking about the same issue. It would seem logical to have one set of terms that convey the same meanings. The challenge comes, in part, from the discipline a researcher comes from. For example, when you listen to a police broadcast, you likely not understand the whole conversation. If a police officer communicates with an air traffic controller and each uses his own terminology, neither will gain a full understanding of what the other is saying.

The same is true in the study of nature. It would seem that nature is self-explanatory, and yet it appears to not be. Individual researchers bring different views, academic backgrounds, and experiences to their study of nature. They also may feel that another definition of nature do not adequately describe what they are seeing or researching. For example, Kellert defines experiences in nature. The terms *direct*, *indirect*, and *vicarious* fit his research agenda, one he has written about for over 30 years. Wells, by contrast, comes from a different perspective, and her wild and domestic nature describes a setting as well as an opportunity for experience.

Even within a discipline there are different terms for different types of areas. For example the National Association of State Park Directors defines 15 types of outdoor recreation areas. None of the 50 state park systems have adopted the same classification system. Their classification systems are the product of historical development, legislative mandate, influence from other sources, and individual influences and perceptions.

How does one know which terminology to use and which to disregard. Most often researchers will adopt the terminology of their discipline, mix terminologies between disciplines, or, if they feel their area is unique, create their own terminology. Even with this latter approach there is a foundation for the new terminology within the research literature. As a reader of research you need to recognize that there are differences and you need to discern those differences in our reading and come to understandings of how the researcher intended the terms use.

of nearby nature in that it is at or close to home and may involve flowers, planting trees, shrubs, a garden, or caring for indoor plants. The frequency of involvement in such activities is also important. A single camping experience has little long-term impact, whereas repeat camping experiences influence future environmental attitudes and visits.⁵² However, although it would be expected that frequent visits to wild nature as a child would carry over to adult behaviors. That is not necessarily the case. Visits to wild nature as a child are not a good predictor that such activities will continue into adulthood. However, lack of visits to wild nature as a child is a predictor that as adults they are less likely to visit wild nature. The research suggests that adults who continue to visit wild nature do so for opportunities for physical activity and emotional and spiritual renewal.⁵³

The connotation from this research strongly suggests the importance of wild nature experiences among youth. Further, such experiences are strengthened when youth are with their parents. Sending children to a regimented camp has a lesser impact on youth and their future perspectives of the environment. In camp settings, natural experiences are lessened and group experiences are strengthened, which may or may not be related to the camp setting. Kellert’s work regarding nature and childhood development is groundbreaking. His identification of direct, indirect and vicarious experiences with nature frame much of the research currently conducted. Where the previous paragraphs discussed wild nature and domestic nature, Kellert frames the same descriptions as direct, indirect, and vicarious contact with nature. **Table 13.7** describes each of the types of contact with nature with examples. Similar to other research, he finds that direct contact as having the most significant impact on individuals, regardless of age; indirect contact has a lesser impact, but is still positive; and vicarious contact has an influence, but one considerably less than direct or indirect contact.⁵⁴

The importance of childhood experiences with nature is more evident and cannot long be ignored. As others have suggested, the absence of experiences with nature, at any level, causes potential health, wellness, and well-being issues for children and adults, but especially

TABLE 13.7

TYPES OF CONTACT WITH NATURE

Type of Contact	Description	Examples
Direct	Interaction with large self-sustaining features and processes in the natural environment	Relatively unmanaged areas such as forests, creeks, sometimes a backyard or park
Indirect	Involves actual contact with nature occurring in highly controlled environments dependent on ongoing human management and intervention	Highly structured, organized and planned occurring in zoos, botanical gardens, nature centers, museums, parks
Vicarious	Symbolic experiences of nature not involving contact with actual living organisms or environments, but rather with the image, representation, or metaphorical expression of nature	A teddy bear, various cartoon and book characters, Mickey Mouse, <i>Lassie</i> , films focusing on nature, television programs such as on the Discovery Channel

Adapted from S. R. Kellert. *Building for Life: Designing and Understanding the Human–Nature Connection*. (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2007).

for children. In 2008, politicians reacted to the need to provide children with nature experiences when the U.S. House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee voted in June to send the *No Child Left Inside Act* (HR 3036) on to the House floor for a full vote. The legislation was unsuccessful, but the message was clear.

Benefits and Outcomes of Contact with Nature Our understanding of the benefits and outcomes of contact with nature is growing as additional research is conducted. Forty years ago, few people outside of leisure scientists and landscape architects explored the importance of outdoor recreation. Today, the list of those researching this area includes experts in public health, early childhood education, child psychology, urban planning, medicine, psychology, and sociology, among others. A number of authors discuss the benefits and outcomes of participation in natural settings. **Table 13.8** depicts what Maller calls contributions of parks to human health and well-being. The categories expressed in Table 13.7 are generally agreed upon by researchers, even if different terms are used.

Park and recreation agencies have the opportunity to take the lead in providing direct and indirect contact with nature for individuals. The approach demands creativity and a willingness to challenge the norm. Godbey provides a list of policy recommendations for enhancing direct and indirect contact with nature including planning for outdoor recreation

TABLE 13.8

A SUMMARY OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PARKS
TO HUMAN HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Component of Health	Contribution of Parks
Physical	Provide a variety of settings and infrastructure for various levels of formal and informal sport and recreation, for all skill levels and abilities, e.g., picnicking, walking, dog training, running, cycling, ball games, sailing, surfing, photography, birdwatching, bushwalking, rock climbing, camping
Mental	Make nature available for restoration from mental fatigue; solitude and quiet; artistic inspiration and expression; educational development (e.g., natural and cultural history)
Spiritual	Preserve the natural environment for contemplation, reflection, and inspiration; invoke a sense of place; facilitate feeling a connection to something beyond human concerns
Social	Provide settings for people to enhance their social networks and personal relationships from couples and families, to social clubs and organizations of all sizes, from casual picnicking to events days and festivals
Environmental	Preserve ecosystems and biodiversity, provide clean air and water, maintain ecosystem function, and foster human involvement in the natural environment (Friends of Parks group, etc.)

C. Maller, C. Henderson-Wilson, A. Pryor, L. Prossor, and M. Moore. *Healthy Parks Healthy People: The Health Benefits of Contact with Nature in a Park Context: A Review of Relevant Literature*. 2nd Edition. Burwood, Melbourne. Deakin University and Parks Victoria. Reprinted with permission.

in urban areas involving schools and recreation and park departments, public health, transportation, public utilities, hospitals, and nonprofit environmental organizations.⁵⁵ Maller states, “Parks, in fact, are an ideal catalyst for the integration of environment, society, and health (which have been demonstrated to be inextricably linked) by promoting an ecological approach to human health and well-being based on contact with nature.”⁵⁶

Public park and recreation organizations, environmental- and outdoor-based nonprofits, and federal land management and protection agencies traditionally have been proponents of protection and rationality. The organizations sometimes have been at odds, especially at the national level when the executive branch of government has been perceived as unfriendly to the environment. Local government has a mixed response to environmental issues and city, county, and state agencies have not provided the level of leadership that once was common. Park and recreation agencies can provide leadership by example in their communities in the twenty-first century.

Globalization of Leisure Globalization has been equally called a blessing and a curse, sometimes by the same person. In the context of change, globalization is a relative newcomer. Economists first used the term in the early 1980s. Globalization is frequently referred to as the Americanization of the world. However, another more popular view sees globalization as the integration of economic, political, cultural, and environmental systems and structures worldwide. From a leisure perspective, cultural and environmental influences have the greatest potential for current and future impacts.

Environmental globalization viewed from a protected-areas perspective provides a good example of globalization impacts. In the United States, we call protected areas parks, wilderness areas, national parks, state parks, national forests, and the like. Internationally, they are called protected areas. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (www.iucn.org) defines a *protected area* as “an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed through legal or other effective means.”⁵⁷ The impetus for protected areas originated with the United States National Park Service, which early on was, and continues to be, a leading proponent of creating protected areas. Early models tended to follow a national parks format. Environmentalism is not independent of its social context and is linked with other social and economic issues, politics, and competitions. The globalization of protected areas was initially Americanization based, but the movement matured and the American model is but a single model that has been shared globally. Other models have evolved that fit the cultural, economic, and environmental issues of host countries. The IUCN developed a list of types of protected areas that applies to most areas internationally. The six types of areas are listed in **Table 13.9**. In some instances, protected areas have been created and indigenous populations continued to live on and utilize the lands as they have done for generations. In other instances, transnational boundaries have been crossed where two or more countries joined together to create a larger protected area. The globalization of environmentalism as related to protected areas has benefited from the ability to share models, lessons learned, adaptation to local settings, and the greater awareness a global perspective brings to resource managers.

Tourism provides the most easily identifiable impact of globalization. Some have even suggested that globalization is replacing sustainability as an organizing concept for tourism. According to Reiser, tourism and globalization have numerous examples of

TABLE 13.9**PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT CATEGORIES**

CATEGORY Ia Definition	Strict Nature Reserve: protected area managed mainly for science Area of land and/or sea possessing some outstanding or representative ecosystems, geological or physiological features and/or species, available primarily for scientific research and/or environmental monitoring.
CATEGORY Ib Definition	Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection Large area of unmodified or slightly modified land, and/or sea, retaining its natural character and influence, without permanent or significant habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural condition.
CATEGORY II Definition	National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation Natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area and (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible.
CATEGORY III Definition	Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features Area containing one, or more, specific natural or natural/cultural feature which is of outstanding or unique value because of its inherent rarity, representative or aesthetic qualities or cultural significance.
CATEGORY IV Definition	Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention Area of land and/or sea subject to active intervention for management purposes so as to ensure the maintenance of habitats and/or to meet the requirement of specific species.
CATEGORY V Definition	Protected Landscape/Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation Area of land, with coast and sea as appropriate, where the interaction of people and nature over time has produced an area of distinct character with significant aesthetic, ecological and/or cultural value, and often with high biological diversity. Safeguarding the integrity of this traditional interaction is vital to the protection, maintenance and evolution of such an area.
CATEGORY VI Definition	Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems Area containing predominantly unmodified natural systems, managed to ensure long term protection and maintenance of biological diversity, while providing at the same time a sustainable flow of natural products and services to meet community needs.

Dudley, N. (Editor) (2006). *Guidelines for Applying Protected Area Management Categories*. Gland, Switzerland. IUCN. x + 86 pp. Available at: <http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/PAPS-016.pdf>. Accessed December 2, 2010.



World Heritage Places

Heritage is the legacy of the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. Places as unique and diverse as the wilds of East Africa's Serengeti, the Pyramids of Egypt, the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, and the Baroque cathedrals of Latin America make up the world's heritage. Eighty-one countries have designated World Heritage Site in them.

What makes the concept of world heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located. How can a World Heritage site in Egypt "belong" equally to Egyptians and to the peoples of Indonesia and Argentina?

The answer is to be found in the 1972 convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage, by which countries recognize that the sites located on their national territory, and which have been inscribed on the World Heritage List, without prejudice to national sovereignty or ownership, constitute a world heritage "for whose protection it is the duty of the international community as a whole to cooperate."

Without the support of other countries, some of the world's outstanding cultural and natural sites would deteriorate or, worse, disappear, often through lack of funding to preserve them. The convention is thus an agreement, ratified almost universally, that aims to secure the necessary financial and intellectual resources to protect World Heritage sites.

How does a World Heritage site differ from a national heritage site? The key lies in the words *outstanding universal value*. All countries have sites of local or national interest, which are quite justifiably a source of national pride, and the Convention encourages them to identify and protect their heritage whether or not it is placed on the World Heritage List. Sites selected for World Heritage listing are inscribed on the basis of their merits as the best possible examples of the cultural and natural heritage.

The list of United States World Heritage sites is reflective of the country's national treasures and includes the Grand Canyon, Everglades, Hawaii Volcanoes, Mammoth Cave, Yellowstone, and Great Smokey Mountains National Parks. It also includes national monuments such as the Statue of Liberty, Monticello and the University of Virginia, and Independence Hall. The United States ranks fourth internationally in the number of acres designated as World Heritage Sites, behind Australia, the Russian Federation, and Canada.⁵⁸

connections (see **Table 13.10**) and include "the movement of people, the movement of ideas and the movement of capital across borderlines."⁵⁹ Tourists, or visitors, come with a set of expectations and are frequently challenged by the experiences. Visitors to Guatemala's Mayan cultural sites are often surprised by the tourist maps overlaid with transnational corporation logos. It moves the perception of a colonial site to a transnational site, potentially affecting the visitor's experience. In heritage tourism, the plazas and barrios of Central America are the traditional gathering spots of local residents. His-

TABLE 13.10**TOURISM AND GLOBALIZATION: EXAMPLES OF CONNECTIONS**

Tourism	Globalization
Movement of people (tourists, workers in tourism industry)	Movement of people (immigrants and their cultures)
Movement of ideas (new cultural values with tourists; ways of doing business in tourism industry)	Movement of ideas (new technologies across the globe)
Movement of capital (tourism industry investment; foreign exchange earnings through tourism)	Movement of capital (instant movement of capital across borderlines)
Needs new technology to expand (wide-bodied jets)	Spread of new technology around the globe
Started at the latest in ancient Greece (limited to particular groups in society)	Started with first movement of humans (from Africa to Indonesia in 17,000 years using some of their original tools, maybe domesticated animals, etc.)
Enormous growth in the last 100 years	Time-spaced compression, in particular in the last 30 years
Toward traveling as a right for everyone; development of a world tourism culture?	World tourism culture?
Tourism needs local culture, or at least the image of it (differentiation between destinations)	Toward a world culture

Source: D. R. Williams. "Leisure Identities, Globalization, and the Politics of Place," *Journal of Leisure Research* (Vol. 34, No. 4, 2002): 351–367.

toric sites are residential areas, or as one described these areas, the communal urban "front porches" that globalization is changing.

The impact of globalization on culture is significant and challenges long-held traditions, mores, and customs. It has been suggested that globalization is a time–space compression, emphasizing the way modernity restructures time–space relations and uproots social meanings and identities.⁶⁰ Globalization is changing the way we view, interact, and respond to the world. It has forced individuals and organizations to rethink their role in the homes, communities, and society. Williams argues that, "by recognizing modernity's fragmenting and disorienting qualities we can begin to focus on the strategies people have available and draw onto assemble a coherent narrative of self."⁶⁰

Time, Economy, and Leisure

The Changing Nature of Time The growth of individual discretionary time, sometimes referred to as free time or time without obligation, has long been considered a major influence

in the increased participation in recreation activities. Between 1900 and 1995, the growth in leisure time was steady, if not spectacular. Freedom from an agrarian economy, increased holidays, paid vacations, and shorter workweeks combined to give people more opportunities for participation in recreation than at any time in history. A debate about the actual availability of free time began in the early 1980s and continues. Today the 40-hour work-



With a lack of leisure time, Americans feel the need to multitask.

week is nonexistent for many. Manufacturing firms frequently mandate 20 or more hours of overtime for their employees. Corporate executives, midlevel managers, supervisors, and service employees experience a 24/7 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) work life. The digital age has made everyone more accessible. The introduction of electronic communications exemplified by the iPhone has made the Internet available anywhere and any time. Smart phones now provide continuous connectivity. Business travelers use their smart phones until flight attendants ask everyone to turn off their electronic devices, and then they turn off the cell phone function and use the device to take notes, work offline, watch videos, read books, and listen to music. Vacations no longer provide time away from work, just time away from the office.

The availability of discretionary time is based on age, education, gender, and the presence or absence of a disability. Children, those who are unemployed, and retirees have considerably more discretionary time than do individuals who are in the workforce. Children have less discretion about what they might participate in and older adults' physical, mental, or economic condition may limit their ability to participate in some recreation activities. Professionals and those with a college education typically work fewer hours than those in nonprofessional jobs, such as in the service industry, manufacturing, construction, and the like. Many individuals with severe disabilities

have limited opportunities to explore a range of recreation activities but have long enforced hours of free time.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics maintains annual data on how people use their time. The American Time Use Survey (ATUS) is released annually and measures the average amount of time per day that individuals worked, did household activities, cared for household children, participated in educational activities, and engaged in leisure and sports activities. Personal care, including sleep, is the largest consumer of individual time. During the weekdays, work is the largest waking time-consumer, with leisure and sports a close second. On weekends, leisure and sports are the largest activity time is spent on, although about half of this time is spent watching television. (See **Table 13.11**.)

Several issues related to the perception of time have become more apparent in recent years. *Time deepening*, *time compression*, and *time famine* have entered the vocabulary of researchers, leisure providers, and the general public. Time deepening suggests more efficient use of the time available by engaging in several activities simultaneously, such as driving and talking on the cell phone, or watching a television show and knitting at the same time. Time compression is a perspective that relates to acceleration of time and making experiences seem shorter. It is related to technology and by some, it is suggested as the

TABLE 13.11**DISTRIBUTION OF HOW PEOPLE USE THEIR TIME, 2008 AVERAGES**

Activity	Weekday	Percentage	Weekend	Percentage
Personal care	9.10	38.59	10.17	42.98
Eating and drinking	1.18	5.00	1.35	5.71
Household activities	1.57	6.66	2.08	8.79
Purchasing goods and services	0.71	3.01	0.91	3.85
Caring for and helping household members	0.57	2.42	0.44	1.86
Working and work-related activities	4.74	20.10	1.38	5.83
Educational activities	0.61	2.59	0.14	0.59
Organizational, civic, and religious activities	0.25	1.06	0.53	2.24
Leisure and sports	4.62	19.59	6.48	27.39
Telephone calls, mail, and e-mail	0.23	0.98	0.18	0.76
Total	23.58		23.66	

Data as of November 20, 2009, from Bureau of Labor Statistics, "American Time Use Survey." Available at: <http://www.bls.gov/tus>. Accessed December 1, 2010.

driver of lifestyle changes. Going on a picnic with the family used to be an all-day activity where the focus was on the family. Today mom and dad bring their cell phones, talk to other people, make plans, respond to e-mail, and so forth, while children play with their hand-held game devices. At the end of the day, the family feels they have had little time together. Time famine is present when an individual has insufficient time to accomplish all of the tasks required for work and living. Time famine is particularly prevalent among people in jobs demanding large amounts of a person's available time.

Layered on top of time compression, time famine, and time deepening is technology and how it has changed people's lifestyles. Social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, blogging, and the ability for smart phones to "push" e-mail and other information to consumers means that people no longer have empty free time. In a sense, free time, or time with no obligation, has ceased to exist for some people. With the implementation of these mobile technologies, people attempt to maximize the content available in every minute, increasing the pace of their lives. The inability to keep up with all of the available information results in increased anxiety, stress, and feelings of time famine.

The feelings of time compression and time famine lead many to believe that they have less time available than preceding generations did. With the exception of a small percentage of people, most people have more discretionary time available today than at any time in history. The term *real time* is one reflection of today's perception of time. Real time "applies not to any device but to the technologically transformed context of everything we do. Real time is characterized by the shortest possible lapse between idea and action, between initiation and result."⁶¹

National Affluence—and Decline! The dramatic growth of the gross national product (GNP) and personal income between 1990 and 2004 had a significant impact on consumer spending on recreation. The gross national product more than doubled; personal consumption expenditures almost tripled. During this same period, poverty fluctuated between 12.1% and 15% of the total U.S. population.

Recreation expenditures, as shown in **Table 13.12**, have continued to grow. Data for late 2008 and 2009 are not available, but it is expected that all sectors of spending within the economy have slowed or declined. Three areas have shown strong growth and are related to technology (computers, music, video devices), spectator experiences, and amusement parks or other commercial amusement experiences. Expenditures as a part of total personal consumption (all dollars spent for personal use) represented 6.6% of all expenditures in 1985, and in 2006 grew to 11%. When one recognizes that the Commerce Department's figures do not include hundreds of billions of dollars spent on travel and tourism,

TABLE 13.12**ANNUAL PERSONAL SPENDING ON RECREATION, 1985–2005**

Type of Product or Service	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006
Total Recreation Expenditures (billions of dollars)	116.3	290.2	418.1	585.7	746.9	791.1
Percentage of total personal consumption	6.6%	7.6%	8.4%	8.7%	8.6%	8.6%
Books and maps	6.5	16.2	23.2	33.7	41.8	43.4
Magazines, newspapers, and sheet music	12	21.6	27.5	35	42.1	45.0
Nondurable toys and sport supplies	14.6	32.8	44.4	56.6	66.5	71.4
Wheel goods, sports and photographic equipment	15.6	29.7	39.7	57.6	76.2	78.9
Video and audio products, computer equipment and musical instruments	19.9	53	81.5	116.6	142.3	151.5
Video and audio goods, including musical instruments	n/a	44.1	57.2	72.8	85.8	90.1
Computers, peripherals, and software	n/a	8.9	24.3	43.8	56.5	61.4
Flowers, seeds, and potted plants	4.7	10.9	14	18	19.2	19.9
Admissions to specified spectator amusements	6.7	14.8	19.2	27.3	38.7	39.9
Motion picture theaters	2.6	5.1	5.5	8.1	9.5	9.3
Legitimate theater and opera and entertainments of nonprofit institutions	1.8	5.2	7.6	9.8	13.2	13.4
Spectator sports	2.3	4.5	6.1	9.3	16.0	17.2
Clubs and fraternal organizations, except insurance	3.1	13.5	17.4	19	23.7	23.9
Commercial participant amusements	9.1	25.2	48.8	75.8	106.8	115.3
Parimutuel net receipts	2.3	3.5	3.7	5	6.2	6.6
Other (includes lottery receipts, pets, cable television, film processing, sports camps, video rentals)	19.4	65.4	93.4	133.9	178.7	190.0

All numbers, except for the second, are in billions of dollars. Hence, 116.3 represents \$116,300,000,000.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2009," Table 1193. Available at: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/09Statab/arts.pdf>. Accessed December 6, 2010.

gambling, liquor, and less easily measured forms of amusement or the operational expenses of thousands of public, nonprofit, and private leisure-service agencies, it is apparent that total leisure spending is substantially higher than the amounts shown in the table. Table 13.12 shows the distribution of expenditures for personal consumption in 2006. Recreation represents the largest expenditure of the perceived disposable income and reflects a continuing growth over a 20-year period.

The recession of 2008–2010 brought the U.S. economy to the brink of financial disaster. The billions of dollars put into the economy by the federal government prevented greater suffering and financial loss. Retail sales showed lackluster performance through the early summer of 2009. Sales tax growth, a primary source of income for state and local governments, has been in decline since 2006 and is not projected to show a recovery for 2 to 3 more years. The National League of Cities (NLC) reported that 9 of 10 cities are challenged in meeting their 2009 needs and expect it to continue through 2010. In February 2009, those 83% responding to an NLC survey indicated a need to cut expenditures. In another report, 84% of cities reported they are less able to meet financial needs, the highest percentage so reporting in the 20-year history of the report. Parks and recreation, along with libraries and events, ranked fourth nationally among services to be cut or curtailed.⁶²

In a time of economic crisis, the question sometimes asked is, “Can we afford parks and recreation?” The answer is yes. This book is a validation of the importance of leisure in the lives of individuals, families, communities, states, and the nation. The question is not, “Can we afford parks and recreation?” but rather, “In this time of economic uncertainty, how can parks and recreation help heal the fabric of the community?”

Growth of Special Interest Groups: Influences of the Internet

Throughout this chapter discusses influences of the Internet, media, and social networking on leisure and recreation. As these influences have affected how leisure and recreation services are delivered, they have also affected how people interact and react to the debate about services, needs, and future directions. Previously, the Long Tail phenomenon was discussed and applied to recreation participation. The same principle applies to efforts to support, influence, and change the recreation experience, services, and programs. Social networking, for example, has allowed individuals and small organizations to influence policy, decision making, and planning. Before the Internet, special interest groups were not always well organized and struggled to make their voices heard at local and national levels. That has changed considerably as small, local, and traditional groups, such as the Sierra Club, National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Environmental Defense Fund, have embraced the use of the Internet as a social networking tool. At their web sites one can join; sign up for a newsletter; download specialized information; discover what is going on in the community; find information for special events, trips, and activities; be alerted to proposed local, state, and federal changes in laws and rules; and provide financial support. Where an organization previously would send out letters or make phone calls, both time consuming, it can now send e-mail and tweets alerting interested parties.

The explosion of involvement by special interest groups is having a profound impact on how public agencies, at all levels, look at their delivery of services. For the most part, special interest groups have a positive impact on recreation and leisure. Organizations

can more effectively coordinate with the groups, track involvement, and draw upon their interests. **Figure 13.4** is a mind map depicting types of social interest groups that might affect recreation, leisure, and parks. Each of the trunks branching off from the center identifies a major type of special interest group. Twenty years ago, this same mind map might have had only two or, at most, three trunks. Special interest groups are challenging recreation and leisure organizations to rethink and expand their view of services and programs. In the 1990s, when the benefits of the parks and recreation movement was emerging, the number of researchers was small. Today, expanding on the notion of benefits, there are literally hundreds of organizations involved in addressing, researching, and applying the benefits message. The term *benefits*, however, is less prominent as groups external to the recreation and leisure profession have addressed these topics from their own academic discipline. For example, positive psychology (in the process of being renamed positive science) draws heavily on leisure research literature. Yet discussions of the use of positive psychology are all but absent from the mainline recreation and park literature. At a recent conference involving hundreds of people from across the world, fewer than five leisure researchers were present.

Other groups are having an equivalent influence, or lack of, on the leisure and recreation profession. The Active Living Research initiative directs research toward the elimination of childhood obesity in low-income and high-risk racial/ethnic communities. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, sponsor of the program, has focused its funding efforts on directing research on these topics.

Leisure Delivery in the Twenty-First Century

The beginnings of the twenty-first century held little indication of how the latter part of the first decade would bring changes that may have long-term influences on the profession. At the community level, public parks and recreation programs are being challenged to survive in many communities. As the economy shows signs of recovery, local and state governments have yet to feel the elusive benefits of economic growth. What defined

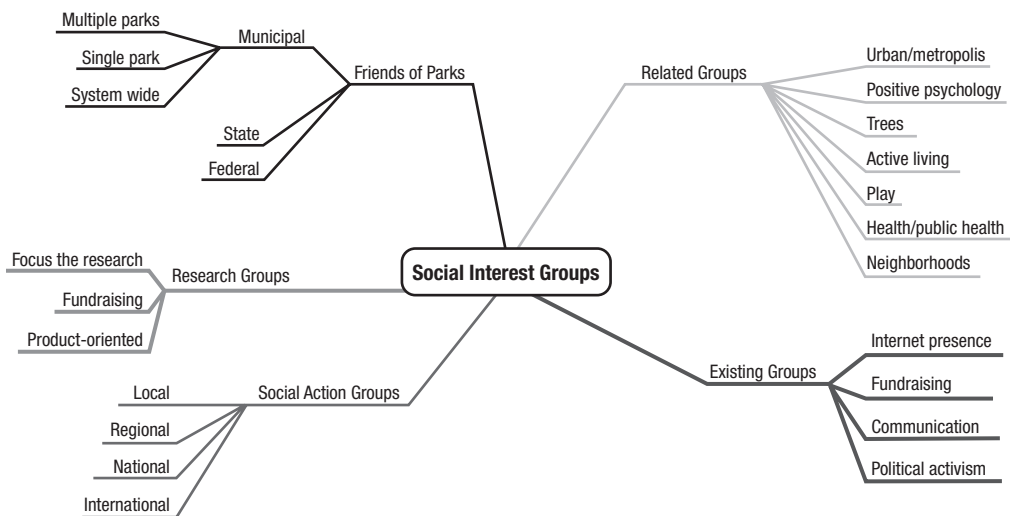


FIGURE 13.4 Mind Map Illustrating Special Interest Groups

economic growth at the start of the decade does not define economic growth at the beginning of the second decade of this century. Reduction of services, closing of facilities and parks, furloughs, and elimination of staff are becoming accepted tools to deal with the economic decline. Nonprofits are finding ways to secure funding particularly challenging while simultaneously attempting to provide desperately needed services to a growing number of unemployed and underemployed. As real unemployment topped 17%, nonprofits became even more critical to individual survival. Commercial enterprises have not been immune to the changing economic climate. Many have closed their doors, other have looked for alternative income opportunities, either by expanding their services or looking in new markets.

The unanswered question facing the leisure-services profession is what the future will look like. However, by looking at the past we can glean some ideas for the future. The recent recession may be the worst since the Depression of the 1930s, but there are parallels in the 1960s and 1970s that we can draw on. Organizations will recover, tax income will increase, staff will be expanded, new facilities and services will be designed, built, and operated. It has happened before and it will happen again. That is the one constant that economists agree on. However, how governments, nonprofits, and commercial enterprises structure and deliver their services most assuredly will change from what has been done in the past. New models are already emerging, partnerships are becoming more common, and new sources of revenue generation will be created.

In the 1930s, leisure and recreation were seen as critical to the success of the New Deal and to society. Whether that will be the same today is unknown, but early trends suggest it is unlikely. Public safety continues to receive the majority of available tax dollars. People want to feel safe. Recreation and leisure, essential elements of quality of life, fall much lower on individual taxpayers' perception of need. After almost 100 years, one might expect that the profession would have done a better job of positioning itself. The conclusion to that statement remains to be seen.



The recession of 2009 impacts current recreation opportunities.

Commodification of Leisure The contrast in leisure opportunity among the rich, the middle class, and the poor is heightened by what has been termed the “commodification” of leisure. Increasingly, varied forms of play today are developed in complex, expensive forms by profit-seeking businesses. More and more, giant conglomerates such as Time Warner, Disney, and Viacom have taken control of huge corporations that run music, television, and movie businesses. These conglomerates also own sports stadiums, professional sports teams, cruise ships, theme parks, and other leisure enterprises.

Many elaborate new facilities offering varied forms of recreation are being developed as part of the trend toward commodification. In cities throughout the United States, huge public fitness centers that include aquatic areas, aerobics and dance rooms, and facilities for family play and a host of other activities are being built—often with

charges for membership that cost several hundred dollars a year. Glenview, Illinois, operates a 100,000-square-foot community recreation center. The Plainfield, Indiana, Parks and Recreation Department constructed a \$25 million indoor community center with fitness area, family aquatic center (indoor and outdoor), meeting rooms, and much more. Many other recreation centers or programs operated by public recreation and park agencies today require the payment of substantial fees that exclude the poor from participation.

Lippke shares concerns about the effects of commercialization of leisure on individuals and society.⁶³ He suggests individuals “are subtly and not so subtly encouraged to indulge themselves in a consumption binge that, temporarily at least, distracts them from the cares and concerns of everyday life.” The problem lies not with the distraction, but with the use of such leisure-time activities to replace what leisure theorists have called personal development, creativity, and flow. Lippke suggests that the commercialization of leisure promotes a lack of self-development, an increase in the inability of persons to direct their own lives as they become dependent on external stimulators. Third, the effects on social life are that people focus on shallow relationships such as are promoted on today’s reality-based television shows including *American Idol*, *Fear Factor*, and *Survivor*. The Harris Interactive Poll reports that teens particularly find reality television a common ground for discussions with other teens. In 2006, 70% of surveyed teens watched *Fear Factor*, 67% watched *American Idol*, and other reality shows fared well.⁶⁴ Commercialization of recreation has created a competition for everyone to have the same things, or what one author calls, “sneer group pressure.” The cell phone marketplace is an example. The ever-increasing “all-in-one” cell phone has captured the market as youth in particular desire the newest and coolest. Finally, there is confusion about values and what is important. Advertisers and sellers of commercialization create expectations among potential buyers that life should be “filled with glamorous, exciting, or dramatic moments.”⁶⁵

Recreation’s Integration into the Health, Fitness, and Well-Being Movements A key trend continuing in U.S. society is public interest in well-being, exercise, and physical fitness programs. Well-being, discussed previously, is being embraced by the leisure profession in recognition of the need for and importance of individuals improving their lives beyond just the physical. Well-being embraces the physical, emotion, and psychological domains with a holistic approach. Well-being has been defined from an ecosystem perspective as follows: “Human well-being has several key components: the basic material needs for a good life, freedom and choice, health, good social relations, and personal security.”⁶⁵ Research on well-being is increasing, and not just in the leisure field. Such diverse fields as psychology, medicine, environmental studies, and sociology have linked well-being to leisure and recreation and park places.

Realizing that modern life is frequently inactive, sedentary, beset by tensions, and subject to a host of unhealthy habits such as overeating, smoking, and drinking, popular concern developed about improving one’s health, vitality, and appearance through diet and exercise. Participation in such activities as walking, aerobics, swimming, running and jogging, racket sports, and similar vigorous pursuits has more than physiologic effects. It also has psychological value: Those who exercise regularly look and feel better. Experts conclude that fitness is not a passing trend; the public’s desire to be healthy and physically attractive is supported by continuing publicity, social values, personal vanity, and solid business sense.

Research shows that the most successful fitness programs are likely to be those that provide an ingredient of recreational interest and satisfaction. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recognizes the value of fitness and health and sponsors local involvement in Step Up to Health: Start in the Parks, a nationwide fitness program delivered by local park and recreation agencies. Each agency is to develop fitness programs that encourage employee and community participation. Sandy, Utah, held a sprint triathlon that included a 400-yard swim, a 9-mile bike ride, and a 5-kilometer run. Columbus, Georgia, sponsors two annual festivals, one in the spring and one in the fall, to encourage fitness in the parks. The Decatur, Illinois, Park District hosted a teen fitness summit. NRPA provides more than 60 examples of programs on its Web site.

Certain recreational sports, such as youth soccer, volleyball, and ice hockey, have grown in popularity. Among high school boys, football remains the most popular sport, with more than 1 million participants in more than 13,000 high schools. Among girls, basketball is the most popular sport, with more than 450,000 participants in more than 17,000 schools. Sport participation in organized high school athletic programs is at an all-time high for girls and boys. Participation levels have grown at a steady rate for more than 30 years. At the same time, a growing number of state school systems have reduced or eliminated physical education requirements, which means that organized recreation programs represent an even more important means of promoting physical in children and youth.

Maturation of an Organized Leisure-Services Field The nature of municipal, state, and federal governments has changed dramatically in the nearly 140 years of organized recreation in the United States. Today's city government is markedly different from that of previous generations. Government is more dependent on alternative income sources and less reliant on taxes. Public park and recreation agencies have, of necessity, become entrepreneurial. Where few fees once existed, now public agencies are dependent on fees and charges to make up as much as 90% of their operating budgets. Parks and recreation agencies are hard pressed to serve all of those who either desire or have a need for services. Nonprofit and commercial agencies fill the gap in many instances. In today's environment of rapidly changing demand for different types of leisure activities, public, commercial, and nonprofit organizations strive to respond, but often public and nonprofits do not have the resources, financial capital, or ability to respond. Commercial enterprises typically respond more quickly to what initially may appear as fringe activities such as paintball, skateboarding, laser tag, and the like.

Maturation does not suggest the organized leisure-services field is not changing, but rather that growth in the public and nonprofit sector is constrained by available funds, politics, public interest, and the perceived opportunity for growth. Public and nonprofit agencies have developed an infrastructure of parks, recreation centers, sports fields, cultural centers, and more that becomes a burden to the agencies preventing them from rapidly changing. The traditional programming of public and nonprofit agencies remains in place, although there is less of it, and more of the emerging programs, but change is coming slowly. Where communities once built a 50-meter swimming pool, today they build a small to medium waterpark, except when politicians or other influential groups intervene and demand a traditional or old-fashioned approach. The leadership is changing and new, younger leaders are emerging. Values are being reassessed, commitments rethought,

demands evaluated, and expectations challenged. Ten major categories of service providers make up the mature leisure-service delivery system:

1. *Public agencies*: Federal, state, and local departments of recreation and parks provide leisure services as a primary function, as well as hundreds of other agencies (such as those concerned with social service, education, special populations, and the armed forces) offer or assist recreation programs as a secondary responsibility.
2. *Nonprofit organizations*: Nongovernmental, nonprofit agencies, both sectarian and nonsectarian, serve the public at large or selected elements of it with multiservice programs that often include a substantial element of recreational opportunity. Such organizations include national youth programs such as the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and the YMCA, YWCA, and YM-YWHA (Young Men's–Young Women's Hebrew Association).
3. *Private-membership organizations*: Golf, tennis, yacht, athletic, and country clubs, along with a wide range of service clubs and fraternal bodies, provide recreational and social activities for their own members and in some cases assist community recreation needs as well. Under this heading are the recreation sponsors connected to residence, as in the case of swimming pools, sport or fitness complexes, or clubs attached to leisure villages, apartment or condominium units, or retirement communities.
4. *Commercial recreation enterprises*: A great variety of privately owned, for-profit businesses, such as ski centers, bowling alleys, laser tag centers, Internet cafés, nightclubs, movie houses or theaters, health spas or fitness centers, dance schools, amusement or theme parks, and other enterprises, provide leisure services.
5. *Employee recreation programs*: These programs serve those who work for given companies or other employers by providing recreation, often as part of a total personnel benefits package linked to other services concerned with employee health and fitness.
6. *Armed forces recreation*: Although it is obviously a form of government-sponsored activity, armed forces recreation is unique in its setting and purpose. Each of the major branches of the armed forces tends to operate an extensive network of recreation facilities and programs worldwide. In times of national emergency, the demand for these services is even greater.
7. *Campus recreation*: Campus recreation includes intramural athletics or sports clubs, social activities, trip-and-travel programs, performing arts groups, entertainment, lounges, film series, and numerous other forms of recreation on college and university campuses.
8. *Therapeutic recreation services*: Therapeutic recreation is any type of program or service designed to meet the needs of persons with physical or mental disabilities, individuals with poor health, dependent aging persons, socially deviant persons in correctional facilities or other treatment settings, and similar special groups.
9. *Sport management*: Sport management services encompass professional sports, collegiate sports, public parks and recreation, private sport enterprises, youth sports, sports for individuals with disabilities, and the many other forms of sport.
10. *Tourism and hospitality management*: All of the travel and tourism industry, such as airlines, cruise ships, destination resorts, conference and resort centers, amusement parks, festivals, and the like, comprise this category.

CASE STUDY: Contemporary Issues Facing Public Parks and Recreation

Recently, at a national think tank, various authors were asked to address what they saw as the key issues facing public parks and recreation over the next 10 years. One respondent's perceptions are provided here.

1. *What is the most significant driver affecting how and why we provide parks, recreation and leisure services now, and how has it changed since you entered the field?*

I entered the parks and recreation field in the summer of 1965 as a playground crafts specialist and later as a playground leader. Those three summers in a California community introduced me to the whole idea of providing public service programming for community members. By 1983, two degrees and three positions later I was director of a separate recreation department in a community of 100,000. The lessons of my first position, my study, the observation of the field were not lost. We had moved from a almost fully tax-funded profession to one that was dependent upon entrepreneurship, creativity, strategic partnering, and other tools designed to increase revenue. We were still mandated to provide a certain level of services free to the public, but targets for revenue generation were common and frequently challenging. Today I live in a large western metropolitan area dotted with neighborhood recreation centers where programmers are striving to provide services, where budgets still drive the ability of departments and centers to provide services, where revenue generation, grant writing, and fundraising are paramount. While we have entered a new era of public parks and recreation, I find as I view public agencies that there is a great diversity of how departments operate, determine accountability, deal with politics, and are funded. There remains much to learn.

The recreation profession is as diverse today as any multinational corporation and in the interim we have begun to lose our foundation. Gray and Greben said in 1974, "The accounting mind reaches decisions by a method in which short range fiscal consequences are the only criteria of value. Recreation and park services will not survive in that kind of environment."^a Agencies are surviving, but original identities and purposes are becoming more challenging to maintain as we embrace the post-accounting era.

2. *What are the top three industry challenges for the next 10 years?*

Identifying three industry challenges over a 10-year period suggests a level of stability and normality that has not existed for the last 30 plus years. However, there are some broader issues that need and must be addressed by all agencies during that period. They are sustainability, legitimacy, and connectivity to the customer.

We live in a period when the operative commitment of many politicians is to reduce taxes, reduce government involvement in citizen's lives, and strengthen private enterprise simultaneously while citizens expect and demand greater levels of services from government. The legitimacy of the parks and recreation profession is relatively questioned by government. The ability and willingness for government to pay for it, however, is questionable. Few public agencies today can say they have sufficient funds to operate. At the same time competition for the leisure dollar is growing—whether it be from commercial enterprises, nonprofit organizations, or parent-based sport and other groups. Legitimacy is the ability to be defended with logic or justification of the existence and viability of public parks and recreation. Some agencies are doing this well, but from a macro perspective, too many public agencies struggle with the ability to justify their current position and are not building constituencies that can give them the political and economic capacity to flourish in the future.

Sustainability is, from a narrow perspective, about financial, resource, people, and programs. For public park and recreation agencies sustainability must include environmental concerns and the profession must be at the forefront. The greater issue, however, is the social

and economic sustainability essential for long-term operations. After observing public agencies at the local and state level, I've come to believe that new models of financial sustainability must be created and adapted to fit the needs of the many types of agencies providing parks and recreation.

Connectivity to the customer is an emerging issue. The parks and recreation profession must fully embrace the experience economy, what marketers call managing the total customer experience. The concept of the experience economy will allow public agencies to look at the leisure experience from a new and creative perspective. It will change customer service, program delivery, front office operations, and the whole notion of dealing with the public. It is an essential and necessary change.

3. *What are the top three industry opportunities for the next 10 years and why?*

The top three industry opportunities for the next 10 years—let's say 5 since that is a more realistic and achievable window of opportunity—are (1) expansion of the concept of the leisure experience, (2) integration of well-being (authentic happiness) into recreation programming, and (3) creating opportunities for authenticity by visitors to parks, participants in recreation programs, and drop-ins to community centers.

Questions to Consider

1. How would you justify the presence of public parks and recreation to your community?
2. What do you think are the greatest challenges facing the leisure industry? Why?
3. What do you think are the most significant opportunities available to the leisure industry? Why?

Source

- a. D. E. Gray and S. Greben, "Future Perspectives," *Parks and Recreation* (Vol. 9, No. 6, 1974): 26–33, 47–56.

SUMMARY

This chapter moves from the past and the present to focus on contemporary issues, challenges, and the future of leisure and recreation. It begins by focusing on agendas for recreation and leisure in the twenty-first century. Emerging issues related to population include gender, ethnic, racial, and age diversity; demographic shifts; the impact of an aging society; and the changing nature of the family, including children, tweens, and teens. The discussion moves from demographic issues to other agendas such as where people live and the influence of location on the delivery of recreation and leisure services. Technology has become a major influence on how people use their free time and engage in leisure activities.

The environment, environmental concerns, global climate change, and nature-deficit disorder are all emerging and potentially society-changing challenges. The linking of these issues to nature and well-being is one of the fastest growing areas of concern, especially among urban dwellers and providers of natural areas and environmental experiences.

Other issues that were presented in the chapter focus on globalization of leisure, economic issues, how discretionary time has changed, the growth of special interest groups, and the changing nature of the leisure-service delivery system. All of these issues are cause for concern or opportunity for the leisure profession.

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION OR ESSAY EXAMINATION

1. Key conclusions of the future of parks and recreation can be viewed as challenges. Select two of these challenges and prepare a report that discusses how society and government have changed and affected parks and recreation. Further, discuss viable alternatives that parks and recreation might utilize to respond to the change.
2. Children, families, and child well-being are contemporary issues being measured by several different organization and a topic of concern among many organizations. How does the presence of these issues affect what recreation organizations should or should not be doing? Research public and nonprofit agencies to determine what they are doing to strengthen families, support children, and enhance child well-being and prepare a report depicting exemplary practices.
3. This chapter presents issues related to environmental change, challenges to the environment, nature-deficit disorder, and an American loss of an individual environmental ethic. Select one of these and do additional library research validating or refuting the claims in this chapter.
4. The Internet has had a tremendous impact on U.S. society and on leisure lifestyles in particular. What are some of its major effects, both positive and negative?
5. The chapter presents a number of predictions for the future with respect to demographic, social, economic, and other challenges. Which of these do you believe presents the most important challenge for the recreation, park, and leisure-service field? In what ways should leisure-service professionals seek to meet them constructively in the twenty-first century?

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