Unit 5 Section 1: Social Functions of Community Recreation

UNIT OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW

This unit covers the following objectives:

1. Discuss the factors that provoked a new emphasis on community benefits.
2. Identify and discuss each of the ten functions listed below including:

   Function 1—Enriching the Quality of Life
   Function 2—Contributing to Personal Development
   Function 3—Making the Community a More Attractive Place to Live
   Function 4—Preventing Antisocial Uses of Free Time
   Function 5—Improving Inter-group and Intergenerational Relations
   Function 6—Strengthening Neighborhood and Community Ties
   Function 7—Meeting the Needs of Special Populations
   Function 8—Maintaining Economic Health and Community Stability
   Function 9—Enriching Community Cultural Life
   Function 10—Promoting Health and Safety

The unit is divided into two sections (sections 1 and 2). Each section contains online lectures and assignments to go with each lecture.

Overview

Contemporary recreation can no longer be concerned exclusively with the intrinsic benefits of recreation, but must now dedicate equal energy to providing goal-oriented, constructive outcomes for both the individual participants and the community as a whole.

Section 1 of Unit 5 outlines the community benefits that can be realized through organized recreation and makes a case for recreation as an essential community function. Ten specific functions are highlighted and discussed, encompassing all aspects of recreation services from the individual to society at large.
Part 1: New Emphasis on Community Benefits

Earlier definitions of recreation suggested that it served to restore participants’ energy for renewed work but did not seek to achieve other extrinsic purposes. Today, the benefits of parks and recreation seem to pervade practically every domain of human behavior and performance, including the following:

- mental and physical health and wellness
- family and community relations
- increased pride on one’s community and nation
- maintenance of ethnic identities
- formation of social networks and systems of social support
- spiritual renewal
- enhanced environmental stewardship
- provision of assistance to at-risk youth
- national, regional, and local economic development, growth, and stability

Contemporary recreation programs and services are goal-oriented and intended to achieve constructive outcomes for both participants and the community at large. Thus far in the course, we have looked at recreation and leisure from the perspective of participant outcomes. Now it is important to examine their contribution to community well-being on a broader scale.

The term community as it is used here means a significant clustering of people who have a common bond, such as the residents of a city, town, or neighborhood. It may also refer to other aggregations of people, such as the employees of a company. Various major reports have been developed that demonstrate the benefits of organized recreation, including personal or individual benefits, social or community benefits, economic benefits, and environmental benefits. Given this understanding, 10 major areas of recreation’s contribution to community life are examined with evidence supporting their benefits.
Part 2: Major Areas of Recreation’s Contribution to Community Life

As mentioned earlier, 10 major functions have been identified that highlight the benefits of recreation to community life, including

- Enriching the Quality of Life
- Contributing to Personal Development
- Making the Community a More Attractive Place to Live
- Preventing Antisocial Uses of Free Time
- Improving Inter-group and Intergenerational Relations
- Strengthening Neighborhood and Community Ties
- Meeting the Needs of Special Populations
- Maintaining Economic Health and Community Stability
- Enriching Community Cultural Life
- Promoting Health and Safety.
Function 1: Enriching the Quality of Life

The purpose of this function is to enrich the quality of life in the community setting by providing pleasurable and constructive leisure opportunities for residents of all ages, backgrounds, and socioeconomic classes.

Quality of life is directly linked to individuals’ level of happiness. Recreation, parks, and leisure services have made important contributions to the quality of life of citizens in communities. Consider various forms of recreation provided in communities by recreation professionals that enhance the quality of life for people of all ages and backgrounds, including parks and other outdoor recreational facilities, swimming pools, zoos, playgrounds, nature centers, sport facilities, and so much more.
Function 2: Contributing to Personal Development

The purpose of this function is to contribute to a person’s healthy physical, social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual development, as well as to family cohesion and well-being.

Recreation not only provides fun and pleasure for participants, but it also contributes to individuals’ growth and development during each stage of life. Various types of community-sponsored recreation programs provide a rich setting where children and youth are able to explore and confirm their personal values, experience positive peer relationships, discover their talents, and achieve other important personal benefits. For example, the Girl Scouts of America provides programs and activities to promote self-knowledge, creative thinking and problem-solving, self-esteem, skills in relating to others, and many other areas of personal growth. The link to the Girl Scouts of America official website listed below provides general information regarding the overall purpose and mission of the Girl Scouts which is congruent with this function.

http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/
Function 3: Making the Community a More Attractive Place to Live

The purpose of this function is to improve the physical environment and make the community a more attractive place to live by providing a network of parks and open spaces, incorporating leisure attractions in the redesign and rehabilitation of run-down urban areas, and fostering positive environmental attitudes and policies.

This function is closely related to the management of parks and other open spaces, historical sites, and cultural facilities. Together, they help to make cities and towns more physically appealing as places to live. In many American cities, once-abandoned freight yards, waterfront ports, or junk-filled streams have been dramatically transformed into new, attractive open plazas and park settings. Examples of attractive leisure environments in our communities include restaurants, art galleries, up-scale shopping centers, marinas for boating, and outdoor amphitheaters, to name a few.
Function 4: Preventing Antisocial Uses of Free Time

The purpose of this function is to prevent or reduce antisocial or destructive uses of free time, such as delinquency or substance abuse, by providing challenging programs that offer young people constructive and enjoyable recreational opportunities linked to other needed services.

As we learned earlier from Unit 2 when we discussed the history of recreation, one of the major objectives of the recreation movement in the United States and Canada was to help prevent or reduce juvenile delinquency. It has become widely accepted that vigorous group activities are helpful in burning up the excess energy of youth, diverting their aggressive or antisocial drives, and “keeping them off the streets” and sheltered from exposure to criminal influences. For example, a number of cities and professional recreation and park societies have taken action to overcome the influence of gangs, which have been a leading factor underlying juvenile delinquency.

WEBLINKS: Follow the links below to learn more about community programs designed to combat juvenile delinquency. The Department of Parks and Recreation in Columbus, Georgia has initiated a Midnight Basketball League designed to service youth by providing league play during the hours of the night when more criminal activity takes place. Additionally, wilderness therapy programs have been designed to provide outdoor recreation opportunities for youth with psychological, emotional, behavioral, learning or substance abuse problems.

http://www.columbusga.org/parks/rec_mid_basketball.htm

**Function 5: Improving Intergroup and Intergenerational Relations**

The purpose of this function is to help improve intergroup relations among community residents of different racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds, and among different generational groups, through shared recreational and cultural experiences.

Based on what we learned during the last unit, racial and ethnic identity play an important role in shaping the leisure-related values and behavior patterns of community residents throughout the U.S. and Canada. Thus, recreation and park professionals are faced with the challenge of providing programs suited to the needs, interests, and traditions of different racial and ethnic groups, while at the same time maintaining care of shared values and interests. Consider, for example, how recreation has been used as a means of educating the community about different cultures. For example, the arts provide an excellent opportunity for sharing cultural traditions and increasing self-knowledge and pride of different racial and ethnic groups.

**WEBLINK:** The Skokie Festival of Cultures features foods, music, merchandise, and activities representing many of the 80 languages spoken in Skokie. See their website from the link listed below. Additionally, the National Recreation and Park Association promotes the social benefits of being active participants in parks and recreation through intergenerational activities

Function 6: Strengthening Neighborhood and Community Ties

The purpose of this function is to strengthen neighborhood and community life by involving residents in volunteer projects or service programs and events to enhance civic pride and morale.

Volunteerism and taking part in neighborhood efforts to improve the community environment, assistance programs for children or people with disabilities, and similar involvements help to build civic togetherness. Recreational projects related to sports, the environment, the arts, people with disabilities, and similar concerns serve to promote civic pride and neighborhood cooperation. Some recreation and park departments have used community volunteers to provide emergency relief and survival assistance at times of disaster, such as hurricane or tornado situations.
Function 7: Meeting the Needs of Special Populations

The purpose of this function is to serve special populations such as those with physical or mental disabilities, both through therapeutic recreation service in treatment settings and through community-based programs serving individuals with a broad range of disabilities.

In both treatment settings and in the community at large, therapeutic recreation service (we will discuss this leisure service delivery system in a later unit) promotes inclusion and independence for persons with physical, mental, or social disabilities. Individuals with disabilities need diversified recreational opportunities just as people without disabilities do.
Function 8: Maintaining Economic Health and Community Stability

The purpose of this function is to maintain the economic health and stability of communities by acting as a catalyst for business development and a source of community or regional income and employment and by keeping neighborhoods desirable places to live.

As a growing form of business enterprise, recreation employs millions of people today. By helping to attract tourists, industries that are relocating, or new residents, it also provides income and promotes community stability. It is estimated that leisure is a $400 billion dollar industry annually; it is the nation’s third largest retail industry, and the second largest employer behind the health industry. Economic benefits may arise through taxes, such as bed taxes at hotels, the gas tax, or taxes from the lottery that go to support parts and recreation. Furthermore, recreation increases property values, such as for homes on lakes, by parks, or on golf courses.
Function 9: Enriching Community Cultural Life

The purpose of this function is to enrich cultural life by promoting fine and performing arts, special events, and cultural programs and by supporting historic sites, folk heritage customs, and community arts institutions.

Many public and nonprofit leisure-service agencies today assist or sponsor programming in the various artistic and cultural fields, strengthening this important dimension of community life. Community agencies, both public and nonprofit, play a strong role in presenting programs in the arts that provide an opportunity for direct personal expression through music, dance, theater, and arts and crafts.
Function 10: Promoting Health and Safety

The purpose of this function is to promote community health and safety by offering needed services and programs, including leadership training and certification courses and supervision or regulation of high-risk activities.

Increasingly, recreation is recognized as a health-related discipline by helping people maintain sound lifestyles and by helping to promote safety in outdoor recreation and other risk-related leisure pursuits. As discussed in Unit 3, community recreation has implemented programs of sports and other physical activities to promote fitness. For example, NRPA’s ACHIEVE (Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and EnVironmental changE) is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Healthy Communities Program. ACHIEVE seeks to empower local communities to promote policies, systems, and environmental change strategies—focusing on issues such as physical fitness and obesity, nutrition, and tobacco cessation—to advance the nation’s efforts to prevent chronic diseases and related risk factors. Since 2009, NRPA has awarded 30 grants to communities to work on decreasing chronic disease, increasing physical activity, and improving access to healthy food. ACHIEVE has generated a number of best practices, including improvements to school wellness policies to make healthy foods available in schools; adoption of worksite wellness policies that promotes wellness to staff and the community; establishing smoke-free environments in parks; establishing farmer’s market sites for communities; creating community gardens; and establishing policies that create more walkable and/or bikeable communities that promote physical activity and access to nutritious foods.

WEBLINK: For more information, please follow the link below: http://www.nrpa.org/achieve/
Unit 5 Section 2: The Leisure-Service System

UNIT OBJECTIVES AND OVERVIEW

This unit covers the following objectives:

1. Identify the key elements in the leisure-service system.
2. Discuss the various roles the federal government agencies play in the provision of recreation and leisure.
3. Identify and discuss the role of state governments in the provision of recreation and leisure.
4. Identify and discuss the role of county, local, and municipal recreation and park departments in the provision of recreation and leisure.
5. Discuss recreation administration in Canada and compare its structure with that of the United States.
6. Define nonprofit organizations, including their mission, goals, and service areas, specifically addressing the roles they play in the provision of recreation and leisure programming.
7. Identify several types of nonprofit youth-serving agencies.
8. Discuss the significance of nonprofit organizations in America.
9. Discuss the role and impact of commercial recreation on the recreation and leisure service field.
10. Identify the benefits and risks of increasing commercial recreation programs and companies.
11. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of forming partnerships among major leisure-service agencies.

Overview:

Unit 5 Section 2 provides a detailed explanation of the overall leisure-service system in the US and Canada. Three major types of recreation are discussed: (1) governmental agencies, (2) non-profit community organizations, and (3) commercial recreation businesses.

Each type of service is explained in detail including background, mission, and the primary program elements employed by each group. Examples are provided for each of the areas of service, and comparisons are drawn throughout. Discussion of the benefits and risks of commercial recreation is also provided, along with further discussion on the benefits and risks of establishing partnerships among these various types of service.
groups.
Part 1: Key Elements in the Leisure-Service System

There are 10 different types of leisure-service organizations in modern society as shown in Table 8.1 Three of the major types that meet a broad range of public needs are described in this unit, and the other seven will be discussed in the next unit (Unit 6).

Government Recreation, Park, and Leisure Services

In the United States and Canada, government leisure-service agencies have the following characteristics:

1. They were the first type of agency to be formally recognized as responsible for serving the public’s recreation needs and, as such, have constituted the core of the recreation movement.

2. The primary means of support for most government recreation and park agencies has been tax funding, although in recent years other revenue sources have begun to be used more fully.

3. Government agencies have a major responsibility for the management of natural resources.

4. They are obligated to serve the public at large with socially useful or constructive programs because of their tax-supported status.

Role of the Federal Government

Government’s role with respect to organized leisure services is a diversified one. On the federal level, government is concerned with the management of outdoor recreation resources, either as a primary function or within a multiple-use concept, through such agencies as the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Tennessee Valley Authority. The government also assists the states and local political units through funding and technical assistance for programs serving children and youth, those with disabilities, the elderly, and similar groups. The following list examines the responsibilities and roles of the federal government.

- Direct management of outdoor recreation resources such as parks, forests, lakes reservoirs, seashores, and other facilities used extensively for outdoor recreation.

- Conservation and resource reclamation of natural resources that have been destroyed, damaged, or threatened and in promoting programs related to conservation, wildlife, and antipollution.

- Assistance to open space and park development programs has been provided by the federal government to promote open space development.
• Direct programs of recreation participation in Veterans Administration hospitals and other federal institutions and in the armed forces on bases throughout the world.

• Advisory and financial assistance to states, localities, and other public and voluntary community agencies.

• Aid to professional education through training grants in colleges and universities throughout the U.S.

• Promotion of recreation as an economic function by providing aid to rural residents in developing recreation enterprises and assisting Native American tribes in establishing recreation and tourist facilities on their reservations.

• Research and technical assistance to support a broad spectrum of research on topics ranging from outdoor recreation trends and needs to specific studies on wildlife conservation, etc.

• Regulation and standards related to policies for pollution control, watershed production, and environmental quality.

There are major federal agencies that are either service unit or bureaus with the responsibilities to carry out the functions listed above:

• National Park Service
• U.S. Forest Service
• Bureau of Land Management
• Bureau of Reclamation
• U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
• Tennessee Valley Authority
• U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

Part 2 will highlight each of these agencies.
Part 2: The Major Federal Government Agencies

As noted in Part 1, the major federal agencies with responsibilities for managing parks and recreation in the U.S. include the National Park Service, the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

The National Park Service

The National Park Service, the leading federal agency with respect to outdoor recreation, is a unit of the U.S. Dept. of the Interior. It was established in 1916 to protect and preserve the nation’s natural, historical, and cultural resources while providing opportunities for recreation.

They hold nearly 80 million acres of land and manage more than 370 national parks, battlefields, seashores, monuments, and historic sites in the U.S. Examples include Yosemite National Park, Yellowstone National Park, and the Grand Canyon National Park. They offer camping facilities, modifications for people with disabilities, food, supplies, interpretive classes, etc.

WEBLINK: The following weblink will take you to the home page of the National Park Service website.

http://www.nps.gov/

U.S. Forest Service

The Forest Service is a unit of the Department of the Agriculture that administers wilderness preserves for public recreation use. The Forest Service manages national monuments, historical or geological treasures, and huge areas of national forests and grasslands, by conducting forestry research and by cooperating with forest managers on state and private lands. The Forest Service offers outdoor recreation opportunities on over 191 million acres of forests and grasslands.

WEBLINK: The following weblink will take you to the home page of the U.S. Forest Service website.

http://www.fs.fed.us/

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

The Bureau of Land Management is a unit of the Dept. of the Interior that oversees the nation’s largest federal land mass and offers unlimited outdoor recreation opportunities, such as camping, hiking, biking, mountain climbing fishing, hunting, boating, off road vehicles, as well as mining, grazing, and lumbering activities.

WEBLINK: The following weblink will take you to the home page of the Bureau of Land Management website.
Bureau of Reclamation (BuRec)

The federal Bureau of Reclamation is a unit of the Dept. of the Interior that is responsible for managing, developing and protecting water and related resources in the interest of the American public. The BuRec builds large storage reservoirs, canals and hydro electric power plants to provide water and energy supplies where natural lakes are scarce.

**WEBLINK:** The following weblink will take you to the home page of the Bureau of Reclamation website.

http://www.usbr.gov/

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service originally consisted of two federal bureaus, one dealing with commercial fisheries and the other dealing with sport fisheries and wildlife. Its functions include restoring the nation’s fisheries, enforcing laws, managing wildlife populations, conducting research, and operating the National Wildlife Refuge System. It is also active in helping to ensure the survival of endangered species, conserving migratory birds, and administering federal aid programs that assist state wildlife programs.

**WEBLINK:** The following weblink will take you to the home page of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website.

http://www.fws.gov/

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)

The Tennessee Valley Authority is an independent multi-use agency of the federal government that was established in 1933 to be responsible for flood control, navigation, and electric power generation in the Tennessee Valley, which includes all or part of North Carolina, Tennessee, and other southern or border states. The TVA does not manage recreation facilities itself, but makes land available to other public agencies or private groups for development.

**WEBLINK:** The following weblink will take you to the home page of the Tennessee Valley Authority website.

http://www.tva.gov/

U.S. Army Corp of Engineers

The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers is a unit of the Dept. of Defense that is responsible for the improvement and maintenance of rivers and other waterways to facilitate navigation
and flood control. It constructs reservoirs, protects and improves beaches and harbors, and administers over 11 million acres of federally owned land and water impoundments.

**WEBLINK:** The following weblink will take you to the home page of the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers website.

http://www.usace.army.mil/Pages/default.aspx

**Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)**

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, a unit of the Dept. of the Interior, is responsible for providing service to Native American tribes such as health, education, economic development, and land management. Their main goal is to support tribes’ efforts to govern their own reservation communities by providing programs, services, and technical assistance through area offices.

**WEBLINK:** The following weblink will take you to the home page of the Bureau of Indian Affairs website.

http://www.bia.gov/

**Other Federal Organizations**

The federal government also assists the states and local political units through funding and technical assistance for programs serving children and youth, those with disabilities, the elderly, and similar groups. Such units include, but are not limited to:

- Administration on Aging
- Children’s Bureau
- Public Health Service
- Rehabilitation Services Administration
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- The National Endowment for the Arts
- President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports.
Part 3: Recreation-Related Functions of State Governments

In accordance with the 10th Amendment to the Constitution, each state provides recreation facilities and services by authorizing the establishment of local services and by rendering statewide services as necessary and appropriate.

Most states specify the means by which counties and municipalities may conduct activities such as:

- operate programs
- provide services to communities through state offices and staffs
- protect natural resources, enforce safety standards, issue permits and licenses
- establish research and educational facilities
- promote tourism within and outside the U.S.

Outdoor Recreation Resources and Programs

Each state government today operates a network of parks and other outdoor recreation resources. The National Association of State Park Directors has developed categories of facilities and areas, including the following:

- State park areas
- State recreation areas
- State natural areas
- State historic areas
- State environmental education sites
- State scientific areas
- State trails

WEBLINK: Click here to learn about North Carolina state parks:
http://ils.unc.edu/parkproject/ncparks.html

Other State Functions

- To assist and work with local governments in environmental efforts.
- To sponsor arts councils that distribute funds to nonprofit organizations and performing groups or institutions in various areas of recreative and cultural activity.
- To provide direct recreation services within the institutions or agencies it sponsors, such as mental hospitals or mental health centers, special schools for people with mental retardation, and penal or correctional facilities. We will discuss therapeutic recreation services in a later unit.
- To promote professional advancement through professional preparation of recreation practitioners in state colleges and universities.
• To develop and enforce standards such as screening personnel by establishing standards and hiring procedures, or by requiring Civil Service examinations, certification, or personnel registration programs in recreation and parks. Standards are also developed related to health and safety practices in camping and similar settings.
Part 4: The Role of County and Local Governments

While federal and state governments provide major forms of recreation service in the U.S., the responsibility for meeting year-round day-to-day leisure needs belongs to agencies of local government. These range from counties, special park districts, and townships to cities, villages, and other political subdivisions. More than 3,000 counties and 18,000 municipal governments provide parks, playgrounds, and recreation activities of all types to their citizens. Local recreation and park departments may team up with community agencies to offer activities, such as Little League baseball and youth soccer.

Each local entity needs state enabling laws to raise funds to provide needed services; sources include local taxes, bond issues, donations, grants, assessments, and special events.

County and Special Park District Programs

County or special district park and recreation units provide large parks and other outdoor recreation resources as a primary function. They may also sponsor services for older adults or individuals with disabilities as well as services for all residents of the county.

Regional and Special Park Districts

Several states, including California, Illinois, Oregon, and North Dakota, have enabling legislation that permits the establishment of special park and recreation districts. Many special recreation and park districts are in heavily populated areas.

Municipal Recreation and Park Departments

*Municipal government* is a term generally used to describe the local political unit of government, such as the village, town, or city that is responsible for providing the bulk of direct community services such as street maintenance, police and fire protection, and education. Most areas depend on municipal government to provide many important recreation and park facilities and program opportunities, in addition to those provided by voluntary, private, and commercial agencies.
Part 5: Municipal Recreation and Park Departments

*Municipal government* is a term generally used to describe the local political unit of government, such as the village, town, or city that is responsible for providing the bulk of direct community service such as street maintenance, police and fire protection, and education. Most areas depend on the municipal government to provide many important recreation and park facilities and program opportunities, in addition to those provided by voluntary, private, and commercial agencies.

**Functions and Structure of Municipal Agencies**

Prior to World War II, many American communities had two or more leisure-service agencies existing side by side, such as a separate park department managing parks and other physical resources for outdoor recreation and a recreation department responsible for playgrounds and varied year-round programs. In the 1950s and 1960s, most such departments merged into single administrative entities, and new departments formed in other cities were usually structured as joint recreation and parks agencies.

Other municipal agencies may also sponsor special leisure services that are linked to their own missions, such as the following:

1. police departments, which often operate youth service centers or leagues
2. welfare departments or social service agencies which may operate day care centers or senior centers
3. youth boards, which tend to focus on out-of-school youth or teen gangs
4. health and hospital agencies, which sometimes operate community mental health centers
5. public housing departments, which sometimes have recreation centers in their projects
6. cultural departments or boards, which frequently sponsor performing arts programs or civic celebrations
7. school systems and local community colleges

**Programs of Municipal Agencies**

Municipal recreation and parks departments operate programs within several categories of activity:

- games and sports
- aquatics
- outdoor and nature-oriented programs
- arts and crafts
• performing arts
• special services
• social programs
• hobby groups
• other playground and community center activities

They also sponsor large-scale special events such as holiday celebrations, festival programs, art and hobby shows, and sports tournaments.

**Varied Program Emphases**

Many cities have common and unique emphases in their recreation and park operations. Omaha, Nebraska, for example, has an established department that operates a major auditorium and stadium complex, extensive boating facilities, and other physical facilities, including an indoor tennis complex and a trap and skeet shooting facility.

**WEBLINK:** See the following weblink to learn more about their department.

http://www.ci.omaha.ne.us/parks/

*Fitness Programming*

Many cities have undertaken special programs to promote health, fitness, and sport. The Hearts N’ Parks program that we talked about in an earlier unit is an example of one such program. There has also been a trend recently by many city and county recreation departments to build new aquatic facilities that include exercise and sport components.

**WEBLINK:** See the following weblink to learn more about the Chinn Aquatics and Fitness Center located in Prince William County, Virginia.

http://www.pwcparks.org/chinn/

*Human Service Functions*

Many local recreation and park agencies have moved vigorously into the area of programming to meet human and social service needs. One such example is the Recreation and Human Services Department within the City of Gardena, California.

**WEBLINK:** See the weblink below for more information on the many services they offer, including youth services, individual, family, and group counseling, tutoring workshops, and more.

http://www.ci.gardena.ca.us/departments/recreation/rechome.html

**Fee-Based Programs**

Fee-based programs have gained popularity with recreation and park departments. Those who favor the trend toward imposing substantial fees for many program elements or
facilities membership in public recreation and parks argue that it provides a logical means of developing rich programs and services. However, some critics argue that fee-based programs discriminate against children and youth, people who are elderly, people with disabilities, and the poor who cannot afford to pay these fees to participate in recreation programs. In some cases, cities and other public recreation and park agencies have provided fee discounts, “scholarships,” or variable pricing policies to enable poorer families to participate.
Part 6: Nonprofit Organizations: The Voluntary Sector

While government recreation and park agencies are responsible for providing a variety of basic leisure services for the public throughout the United States and Canada, a major segment of recreational opportunities is sponsored by nonprofit organizations, often called voluntary agencies. These consist of several different types of youth-serving, special-interest, and charitable organizations.

Organizations in this category may be completely independent or may be part of national or regional federations. They are often described as “quasi-public” or “public/private.” In some cases they must meet government-imposed standards as charitable organizations to retain tax-exempt status. They tend to share the following characteristics:

- They are voluntary in origin. Are usually established to meet significant needs through organized citizen cooperation, and represent the voluntary wishes and expressed needs of neighborhood citizens.

- Governing boards of directors or trustees are usually public-spirited citizens. Thus, membership and administrative control are voluntary.

- Voluntary agencies usually rely on public contributions, either directly to the agency itself or to Community Chest, United Way, Red Feather Campaign, or similar shared fundraising efforts.

- Leadership of voluntary agencies is partly professional and partly voluntary. Management is usually by directors and supervisors professionally trained in social work, recreation, education, etc. At other levels, leadership is by non-professionals, part-time or seasonal personnel, and volunteers.

- In some cases, nonprofit organizations in the overall leisure-service system do not sponsor recreation activities directly, but represent organizations that do or that manufacture equipment and provide services, often on a for-profit basis.

Nonprofit but Fee Charging

Many voluntary organizations may charge substantial fees. For example, YMCAs or YWCAs in suburban areas are likely to have fees that are as high as several hundred dollars per year for full family memberships and charge impressive sums for various program activities. However, such fees are intended simply to help the organization maintain financial stability, without making a profit, and are frequently used to subsidize other services to marginalized populations who cannot afford to pay fees for membership or participation.

Types of Nonprofit Youth-Service Agencies

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While voluntary nonprofit organizations fit under many headings—including the arts, education, health, and social service—the largest segment of such groups with strong recreation components is generally youth-oriented. Included in this segment are

- Nonsectarian youth-serving organizations
- Religiously affiliated youth-serving or social agencies
- Special interest organizations in such fields as sports, outdoor recreation, and travel
- Conservation and outdoor recreation
- Organizations promoting youth sports and games
- Arts councils and cultural organizations
- Service and federal clubs
- Promotional and coordinating bodies
Part 7: Non-Profit Nonsectarian Youth-Serving Organizations

Nonsectarian youth-serving organizations are nationally structured organizations that function directly through local branches that have broad goals related to social development and good citizenship and operate extensive programs of recreational activity. There are hundreds of these types of organizations. Several examples include the following:

**Boy Scouts of America.** This program emphasizes mental and physical fitness, vocational and social development, and the enrichment of youth hobbies and prevocational interests, relying heavily on adventure and scouting skills and service activities.

**WEBLINK:** Below is the weblink to the Boy Scouts’ website.


**Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.** The largest voluntary organization serving girls in the world, the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. is open to girls ages 6-17 who subscribe to its ideas. It provides a sequential program of activities centered around the arts, the home, and the outdoors, with emphasis on character and citizenship development, community service, international understanding, and health and safety.

**WEBLINK:** Below is the weblink to the Girl Scouts’ website.


**Boys and Girls Clubs of America.** Programs are geared to serving disadvantaged and at-risk youth and include sports and games, arts and crafts, social activities, and camping, as well as remedial education, work training, and job placement and counseling. The national goals include citizenship education and leadership development, health, fitness, and preparation for leisure, educational vocational motivation, intergroup understanding and value development, and enrichment of both family and community life.

**WEBLINK:** Below is the weblink to the Boys and Girls Clubs’ website.


**Police Athletic Leagues.** Law enforcement agencies sponsor Police Athletic Leagues (PAL) in hundreds of communities today to promote favorable relationships between youth and the police. The league programs rely on civilian staffing and voluntary contributions for support, and typically provide extensive recreation programming, indoor centers, and summer play streets, with strong emphasis on sports and games, creative arts, drum and bugle corps, and remedial education. They also maintain placement, counseling, and job training programs to assist youth who have dropped out of school.
WEBLINK: Below is the weblink for the National PAL organization’s website.

http://www.nationalpal.org/

Camp Fire USA. It was founded under the name Camp Fire Girls and has been concerned with character building through a program of outdoor recreation, community service, and educational activities. Due to a decline in membership during the early 1980s, the organization changed its name and embraced a coeducational membership diverse in racial, ethnic, religious, and economic terms. The organization serves as a strong advocate for youth in areas such as juvenile justice, child abuse, AIDS, and teen suicide.

WEBLINK: Below is the weblink to the Camp Fire USA’s website.

http://www.campfireusa.org/
Part 8: Non-Profit Religiously Affiliated Youth-Serving or Social Agencies

Many religious organizations sponsor youth programs with recreational components today, including activities sponsored by local churches or synagogues and activities sponsored by national federations that are affiliated with a particular denomination. Typical activities include day camps, summer Bible schools, picnics, bazaars, covered dish suppers, fellowship programs, senior citizens clubs, sports activities, etc.

**YMCA and YWCA.** The Ys are devoted to the promotion of religious ideals of living. The Ys offer facilities and leadership for indoor aquatics, sports and games, physical fitness, social and cultural programs, and family-centered programs. They receive funding from varied sources, such as membership fees, corporate and private contributions through the United Way, fundraising drives, and government and foundation grants.

**WEBLINK:** The weblink listed below will take you to the Hayes Taylor YMCA here in Greensboro. Check it out and see what programs are available for members.

http://www.hayestaylorymca.org/

**Catholic Youth Organization.** The leading Catholic organization concerned with providing spiritual, social, and recreational services for young people in the U.S. is the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO).

**WEBLINK:** The weblink below will take you to the CYO website which provides readers with a view of different programs available through their organization.

http://www.cyo.on.ca/

**Young Men’s and Young Women’s Hebrew Association (YM-YWHA).** Like the YMCA and YWCAs, the Jewish Ys do not regard themselves primarily as recreation agencies, but rather as community organizations devoted to social service and having a strong Jewish cultural component. Their goals are to meet the leisure-time social, cultural, and recreational needs of its members, to stimulate individual growth and personality development, to teach leadership responsibility, and to encourage citizenship education and responsibility.

**WEBLINK:** The following weblink will take you to the 92nd Street Y Center in New York to learn more about various programs offered there.

http://www.92y.org/
Part 9: Other Non-Profit Organizations

Special Interest Organizations

Conservation and Outdoor Recreation. These are designed to educate the public and influence governmental policies in the areas of conservation and outdoor recreation. They sometime lobby, conduct research, and sponsor conferences and publications. Examples of special interest organizations include the Sierra Club, Appalachian Club, and the National Outdoor Leadership School.

Organizations Promoting Youth Sports and Games. There are numerous national, regional, and local organizations that promote and regulate all types of sports. Examples of organizations that promote youth sports and games include the Little League, the National Youth Sports Coaches Association, the National Association of Youth Leagues, the National Clearinghouse of Youth Sports Information, Youth Basketball of America, the Young American Bowling Alliance, and the U.S. Tennis Association.

Arts Councils and Cultural Organizations. There are thousands of civic organizations that sponsor or present performing arts, including symphony orchestras, bands of various types, choral societies, opera or operetta companies, ballet and modern dance companies, etc.

Service and Fraternal Clubs

Another category of nonprofit organizations that provide recreation for their own membership and sponsor programs for other population groups is community service clubs and fraternal organizations, such the Kiwanis, Lions, or Rotary clubs, which represent the business and professional groups in the community and which have as their purpose the improvement of the business environment and contributing to social well-being. A number of these organizations have been established specifically for women, such as the Association of Junior Leagues, the Business and Professional Women’s Clubs, etc. The goals of these groups include publicizing environmental concerns or issues, promoting the arts and other cultural activities, helping disadvantaged children and youth, and providing programs to individuals with disabilities.

Promotional and Coordinating Bodies

The category of nonprofit organizations in the recreation, parks, and leisure-service field consists of associations that serve to promote, publicize, or coordinate activities within a given recreational field, such as the American Bowling Congress, the Outdoor Amusement Business Association, and the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions.
Part 10: Commercial Recreation

Commercial recreation businesses offer an immense amount of public recreational opportunities today in such areas as travel and tourism, outdoor recreation, sports, popular entertainment, and the mass media, hobbies, and crafts and toys. The primary goal of commercial recreation businesses is to make a consistent profit. Such organizations might include large-scale networks of health and fitness clubs, theme parks, hotels, and casino businesses; manufacturers of games, toys, and hobby equipment; and various other entertainment ventures. Commercial recreation sponsors provide by far the greatest range of recreational services and opportunities today, and they represent a steadily growing sphere of organized leisure programming.

Categories of Service

Commercial recreation services may be classified under several major headings, including the following:

- Admission to facilities
- Organized instruction in individual leisure activities
- Membership in commercially-operated clubs
- Provision of hospitality or social contacts, such as hotels, resorts, bars, singles clubs, dating services, etc.
- Arranged tours or cruises, domestic or foreign
- Commercial manufacture, sale, and service of recreation-related equipment, such as sports supplies, electronic projects, boats, etc.
- Entertainment and special events, such as theater, rock concerts, circuses, rodeos, etc.

Outdoor Recreation

Outdoor recreation (leisure pursuits that depend on the outdoor environment for their special appeal or character) represents an important area of commercially-sponsored services. Commercial recreation in the outdoors takes many forms, including hunting preserves and guide services, charter fishing and other private fishing operations, marinas and other boating services, and the provision of ski centers and schools, paintball centers, and numerous other pursuits. Pocono Whitewater Adventures in Pennsylvania offers different types of adventure activities, such as river rafting, family biking excursions, or paintball.

WEBLINK: See their website by following the weblink listed below.

http://whitewater-rafting.gordonsguide.com/poconowhitewateradventures/index.cfm
Health Spas and Fitness Clubs

Through the 1980s and 1990s, commercial fitness centers and health clubs constituted a major source of leisure spending in the U.S. and Canada. Health spas and fitness clubs offer a variety of programs, including aquatics, exercise equipment rooms, aerobics and Jazzercise classes, yoga, etc.

The “Learning Studio” Approach

A trend over the past few decades has involved businesses that offer a range of short-term learning exercises for adults dealing with varied personal concerns such as home buying, investment strategies, career development, health and wellness, computer skills, cooking, creative writing, stress management, etc.

Family Fun Centers

Another recently evolved for-profit recreation enterprise includes family fun centers that combine children’s play activities and equipment, video games, and other computerized activities with refreshments. Chuck E. Cheese Entertainment, Inc. is one such example that offers family-slanted recreational pursuits.

WEBLINK: See their weblink listed below for more information about Chuck E. Cheese.

http://www.chuckecheese.com/

Other For-Profit Ventures

Commercial recreation today includes a host of other kinds of social and hobby activities and amusement or entertainment ventures. Examples include private golf or tennis clubs, bowling alleys and billiard parlors, contract bridge or chess clubs, night clubs and dance halls, professional spectator sports, and even dating services and gambling casinos. Also consider movies, television, video games, CDs, and other aspects of popular cultural that represent forms of commercialized leisure.