



HIGHLIGHTS OF RESULTS

2004 ALBERTA RECREATION SURVEY

In May 2004, 10,000 randomly selected Alberta households received a copy of the Alberta Recreation Survey. It is the seventh such survey since 1981. The information we gathered is helping us to determine participation patterns of Albertans and the factors influencing their recreation choices.

The survey was divided into several sections. The first dealt with respondent and household participation in a number of social, creative, cultural, outdoor and sports activities. The second part asked about the respondent's favourite activities, any activity they would like to start, and if they were involved in volunteer work. Section three asked the respondent's opinions on a number of topics such as the benefits of recreation and parks while the final section requested information about the respondents and their household.

The information was collected by mail during May and June 2004. Returns were received from 3,217 individuals or 32.2 percent of the sample.

The 2004 Alberta Recreation Survey is a cooperative effort between Alberta Community Development and the Cities of Calgary, Edmonton, and Lethbridge. The following are a few major findings from those results.

Household Participation

The first section asked about the recreation activities of the household. The ten activities most frequently mentioned were:

1. walking for pleasure
2. gardening
3. doing a craft or hobby
4. attending sports events
5. attending a fair or festival
6. bicycling
7. swimming (in pools)
8. playing video, computer or electronic games
9. attending live theatre
10. visiting a museum, art gallery

Favourite Activities

The survey then focussed on the respondent. We asked about their three favourite leisure or recreational activities. The responses varied, with the following ten being most frequently mentioned:

1. walking
2. golf
3. camping
4. bicycling
5. swimming
6. jogging/running
7. gardening
8. reading
9. fishing
10. ice hockey

People have many reasons for taking part in leisure activities. The following five reasons were stated to be most important:

1. for physical health or exercise
2. for pleasure
3. to enjoy nature
4. to relax
5. to be with family

Desired Activity

About 51 per cent of respondents indicated that they had no desire to take up a new activity at this time, while 41 per cent expressed such a wish. (8 per cent did not answer this question.) The ten most desired activities mentioned were:

1. gym/aerobics/fitness/aquasize
2. swimming
3. golf
4. bicycling
5. yoga
6. canoeing/kayaking
7. dancing
8. hiking
9. running/jogging
10. downhill skiing

An important concern today is why people do not take part in recreation or leisure activities. We asked why respondents have not started the recreation activity they desire. The five reasons mentioned most often were:

1. admission fees/charges for facilities or programs
2. the cost of buying or renting equipment or supplies
3. too busy with work commitments
4. too busy with family commitments
5. facilities overcrowded

Volunteer Work

The survey results indicated that 41 per cent of respondents have done volunteer work connected with culture, recreation, sports or parks in the past 12 months. The majority of volunteers spent, on the average, one to five hours per week volunteering.

Benefits of Recreation and Parks

We asked for respondents' opinion about the importance of eight benefits of recreation and parks. The majority of those responding rated the following benefits as very important:

1. Parks and open spaces preserve Alberta's landscapes, plants and animals.
2. Recreation provides opportunities for children and youth to take part in a variety of activities.
3. Recreation provides opportunities for families to spend time together.
4. Recreation and parks facilities and services improve quality of life.

Municipal Parks and Recreation Areas

We asked respondents about the provision of activities and services in municipal parks and recreation areas. A majority of respondents (93.3%) indicated picnic areas be allowed in municipal parks and recreation areas. Approximately three quarters of respondents said cross-country ski areas (75.0%), playing fields (79.4%) courts (78.8%) and restaurants or snack bars (70.3%) be allowed. Approximately two-thirds of respondents said tents and campgrounds (68.3%) and mountain biking (64.1%) be allowed. Just over one-third of respondents indicated hostels (35.3%) be allowed. Over half of the respondents

indicated golf courses (57.0%), downhill ski areas (54.3%) and horse rentals (56.3%) be allowed. Less than a quarter of the respondents indicated snowmobiling (22.3%) and motorized off-road vehicles (17.3%) be allowed.

Who responded to the survey?

There was almost an equal representation of male (49 percent) and females (47 percent) respondents. A majority of the respondents (55 percent) were between 36 and 45 years of age, with 19 percent between 18 and 35 years of age and 18 percent over 66 years. One-third of the respondents were in a household comprised of a couple with no children and another third were a couple with children. Just over 50 percent of the respondents had post-secondary education. When asked about their household financial situation, 66 percent of the respondents considered themselves living reasonably comfortable. Respondents were from all over the province but a majority of the respondents were from Calgary, Edmonton and Lethbridge.

Where to from here?

As stated above, these are only a few of the highlights from the 2004 Alberta Recreation Survey. We hope that you find this material interesting. It is helping us to identify recreation trends and preferences, forecast future demands, and assist in providing better programs and services to Albertans. We will continue to review the results of the survey in detail, and will share the information with those involved with recreation and sport programs.

If you would like more information visit our website at www.cd.gov.ab.ca or please contact:

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