

# A Look at Leisure

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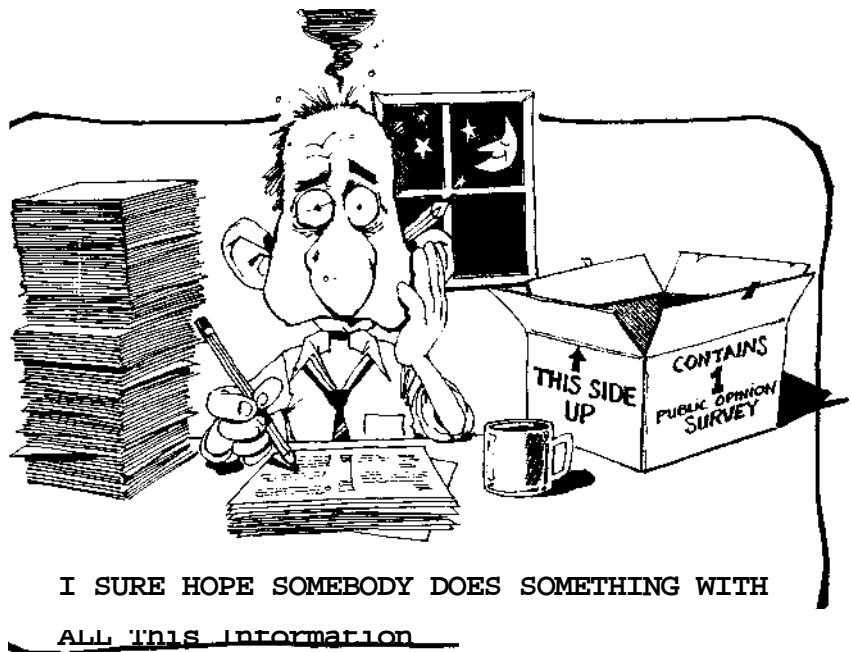
Results of the 1981 Public Opinion Survey on Recreation conducted by Alberta Recreation and Parks

No. 1

## A LOOK AT LEISURE?

People often consider themselves experts on leisure. They choose what they do in their spare time. Recreation practitioners are like everyone else. They choose their own leisure pursuits but have an added responsibility. They have accepted the challenge to assist the public in satisfying its leisure needs.

As recreation practitioners we must offer the public quality service, particularly by giving all individuals the greatest opportunity to engage in the pursuits of their choice. Striving to accomplish this, we struggle with the difficulty of providing quality recreation service at low cost. To do this we must juggle such things as municipal cutbacks, rising energy costs, changing consumer preferences, lack of instructors, overworked volunteers, and political issues.



# Alberta

RECREATION AND PARKS

Community and individual lives are also constantly changing in the face of economic developments, social patterns and increasing urbanization. As the speed and direction of change intensify, recreation practitioners will need to have a clearer view of the communities citizens and why they participate in recreation. Stop-gap measures in management and planning will not adequately work and will lead to inferior service.

Knowing what Albertans think and do during their leisure time on a broad provincial scale can help community practitioners make better decisions regarding the recreation they're responsible for. Results of general participation and user satisfaction can bring to light problems and gaps in local delivery systems.

#### THE SERIES

To assist municipal recreation departments and other groups involved in the delivery of recreation, Alberta Recreation and Parks has initiated a new information series with this bulletin. The series will use responses gathered from Albertans in the 1981 Public Opinion Survey on Recreation. Each issue will attempt to describe and interpret the results of one part of the survey. The topic discussed will include the specific survey questions relating to it.

The emphasis in every issue will be on the interpretation of the data, not on the presentation of statistics.

#### THE SURVEY

The 1981 Public Opinion Survey on Recreation was the third study conducted by the department to look at different aspects of recreation and parks and to aid in the development of policy. The 1981 survey gathered information and the opinions of Albertans on participation in recreation. In 1979, a survey investigated Albertans' opinions and behaviour patterns in outdoor recreation. The first survey, in 1978, looked at the attitudes of Albertans towards fishing, hunting and wildlife.

The 1981 Public Opinion Survey on Recreation consisted of four sections. The first section dealt with the participation of households in 40 leisure pursuits. In the second part, respondents were asked for their views on a number of recreational issues. The third section asked the respondents to identify who provided the major portions of recreation service in their communities and who the households patronized.



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The final section of the survey gathered demographic information such as age and occupation from the respondents and their households. This data will be used in relation to other sections during the analyses.

HOW WAS THE STUDY DONE? Designed by the staff of Alberta Recreation and Parks, the survey was checked with outside experts and practitioners to produce the best possible final draft. All the usual reviews and pre-test measures were employed. In February 1981, the survey was sent to 4,700 randomly selected Albertans.

A total of 2,425 individuals responded, representing slightly more than 50 percent of the original sample reached. The first copy of the survey and its postcard reminder drew 1,087 responses. About two weeks after the first mailing, a second survey was mailed to those who had not yet responded. A few days later, a second postcard reminder was sent. This second mailing yielded 578 responses. Forty responses could not be attributed to either mailing.

There was a good return from most of Alberta and the responses were representative of the population distribution.

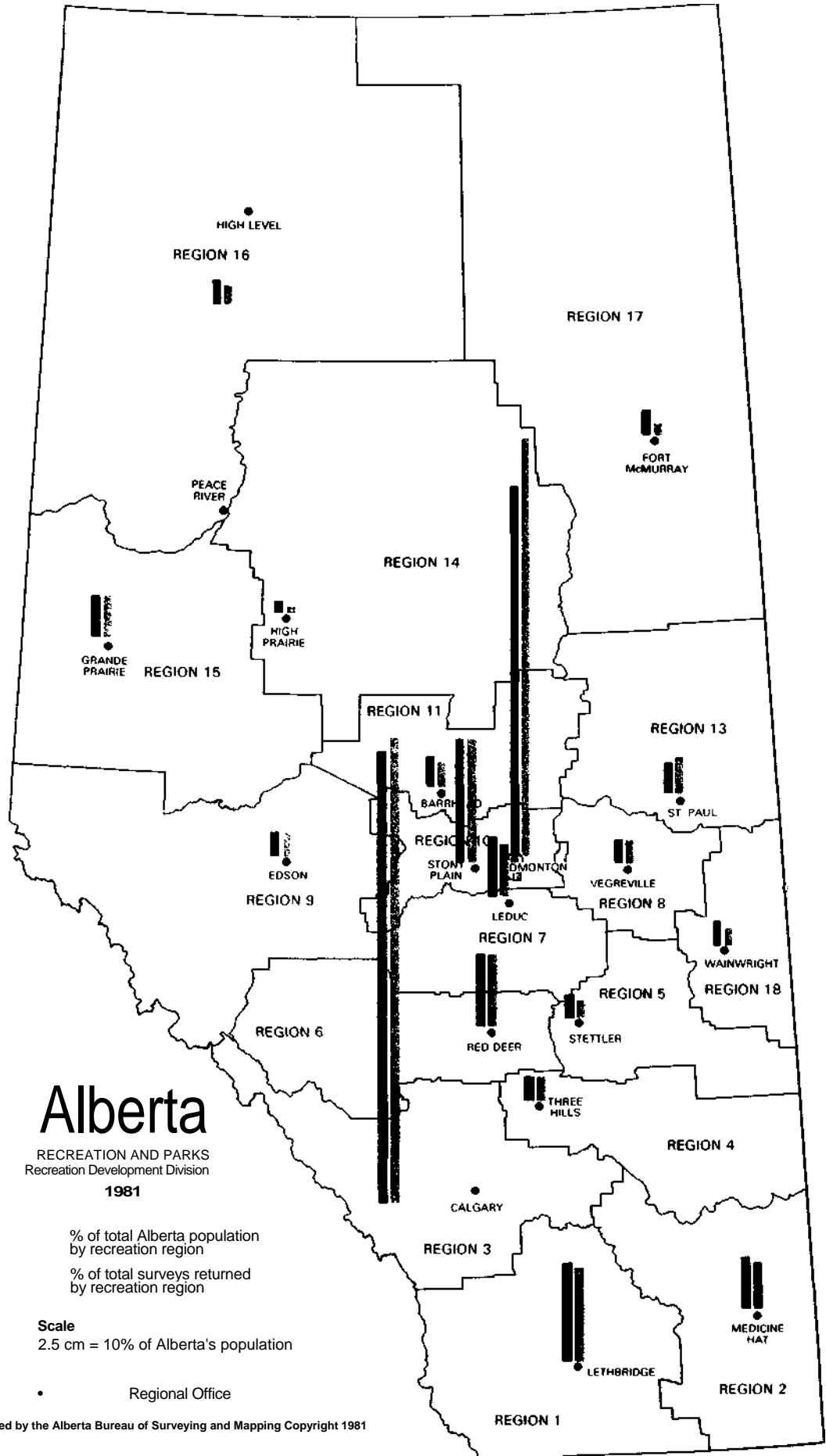
#### LIMITATIONS

As in all survey research there are certain limitations inherent in the results. All surveys have a few general problems such as response bias (which is the tendency for people who returned the questionnaires in a mail survey to provide different answers from those who did not return the questionnaire).

Each question also carries its own biases and variables. Because of this, limitations will be dealt with in individual bulletins. Each bulletin will focus on a different topic and the limitations to the data in that issue will be included there. Data will always be presented in the most easily understood and meaningful manner possible.



# A Comparison of Regional Returns with Regional Population



## WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN FUTURE ISSUES

This bulletin is part of a series interpreting the 1981 Public Opinion Survey on Recreation. Each bulletin will focus on different issues in recreation. Some future topics include:

- PARTICIPATION. Who? When? In what?
  
- FAVORITE ACTIVITIES of respondents. Why they participate and how various demographic factors influence these.
  
- Level of SATISFACTION FROM PARTICIPATION. How well do people satisfy their needs through recreational pursuits?
  
- EXPENDITURE PATTERNS. How much do people spend on recreation? How is this influenced by factors such as income, family size, etc.?
  
- BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION. Why don't people take part?



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# PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON RECREATION



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