

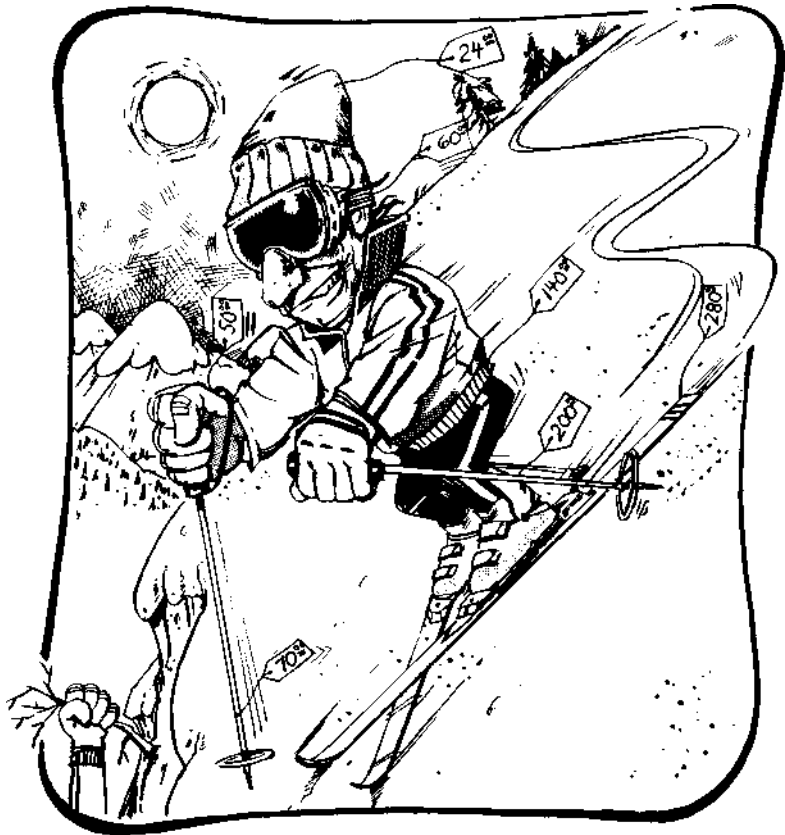
# A Look at Leisure

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

No. 4

## A LOOK AT EXPENDITURES

This is the fourth in a series published by Alberta Recreation and Parks that looks at the leisure of Albertans. The focus of this bulletin is a look at personal expenditures on favorite leisure activities. An analysis of the results should provide some direction to recreation practitioners for future program planning and service delivery.



How much do I spend on my favorite activity?

# Alberta

RECREATION AND PARKS



*Appropriate Use of Documents: Documents may be downloaded or printed (single copy only). You are free to edit the documents you download and use them for your own projects, but you should show your appreciation by providing credit to the originator of the document. You must not sell the document or make a profit from reproducing it. You must not copy, extract, summarize or distribute downloaded documents outside of your own organization in a manner which competes with or substitutes for the distribution of the database by the Leisure Information Network (LIN). <http://www.lin.ca>*

The first section will compare overall expenditures while the second will analyze expenditure breakdowns. The last section will then look at some factors that affect expenditures. Analysis is based upon the following questions.

**SECTION 2**  
**ABOUT YOU PERSONALLY**

Please answer the following questions about your own recreational activities and your personal views on recreation.

1. (a) Please rank your three favorite recreational activities and indicate how many times you participated in each activity during the past 12 months.

	NUMBER OF TIMES YOU PARTICIPATED IN THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS			
	1 to 10 times	11 to 30 times	31 to 50 times	51 or more times
Favorite .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2nd Favorite .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3rd Favorite .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(d) Approximately how much money did you spend on participating in your favorite recreational activity within the past 12 months? (Check one box for each category).

	\$0	\$1 to \$49	\$50 to \$99	\$100 to \$249	\$250 to \$499	\$500 or over
Equipment costs — includes purchases, rentals, maintenance or repairs of equipment .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel costs — include cost of all transportation which you may use .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership dues or entrance fees — include pay-as-you-play .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other expenditures not included above; e.g. meals and accommodation, etc .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The system for classification of activities introduced in Volume 3 is used in this bulletin. The categories are presented in Figure 1 with appropriate activities listed for each category. By grouping the activities in such a way more meaningful results will be provided for the practitioner.

FIGURE 1

*Activity Group	ACTIVITY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM Examples of Activities in Group	"Expenditure Rank
1. Exercise Oriented	Archery, badminton, bicycling, bowling, calisthenics, figure skating.	11
2. Team Sports	Baseball, basketball, curling, field hockey, football, hockey.	8
3. Camping		1
4. Extractive	Fishing, hunting.	5
5. Outdoor (mechanized)	ATV use, ballooning, flying, boating, driving for pleasure.	4
6. Passive indoor	Movies, radio, records, reading, TV viewing.	10
7. Creative Cultural	Ballet, flower arranging, gardening, house maintenance, mechanics, model.	6
8. Golf		3
9. Social	Board games, cards, dancing, dining out, entertaining, pool, billiards.	9
10 Downhill Skiing		2
11 Outdoor (non-mechanized)	Backpacking, canoeing, kayaking, cross-country skiing, hang gliding.	7

Ranked in order of percent reporting as favorite activity.

Ranked by reported level of total expenditure on favorite activity.



*Appropriate Use of Documents: Documents may be downloaded or printed (single copy only). You are free to edit the documents you download and use them for your own projects, but you should show your appreciation by providing credit to the originator of the document. You must not sell the document or make a profit from reproducing it. You must not copy, extract, summarize or distribute downloaded documents outside of your own organization in a manner which competes with or substitutes for the distribution of the database by the Leisure Information Network (LIN). <http://www.lin.ca>*

Some of the major findings are:

- . the highest expenditures on favorite activities (as grouped) were for camping, downhill skiing, golf, mechanized outdoor and extractive activities (eg. hunting and fishing). These represent the favorite activity groups chosen by over one-third of the respondents.

- . expenditure breakdowns showed the percentage of average dollar spent on favorite activities was:

Travel	31%
Equipment	31%
Other (meals, accommodation, etc.)	23%
Fees	15%

- . income was a significant factor found to affect recreation expenditure. Age, sex, education, family size, community size, etc. were not found to influence leisure spending.

## AN OVERVIEW OF SPENDING

Recent publications (1,2) note the growth of the leisure industry, with billions spent on both direct program opportunities and on advertising campaigns in attempts to influence the leisure behavior of Canadians. We try to gain a better understanding of the economic implications through studying the spending patterns of individuals and asking who does what, where, when, how - and for how much.

A comparison of total annual expenditures between the eleven activity groups did not result in a clear pattern linking expenditures to preferred activities (Table 1a). The two favorite activity groups, exercise and team sports, had low total expenditures relative to other activity groupings, while camping, which ranked third in preference, had the highest. The results did not show any significant relationship between preference and expenditure.

In a review of personal and family leisure expenditure research, Vickerman (3) found that constraints on activity preference or choice included money as well as time, lack of opportunity and things like whether or not the family car is available.



*Appropriate Use of Documents: Documents may be downloaded or printed (single copy only). You are free to edit the documents you download and use them for your own projects, but you should show your appreciation by providing credit to the originator of the document. You must not sell the document or make a profit from reproducing it. You must not copy, extract, summarize or distribute downloaded documents outside of your own organization in a manner which competes with or substitutes for the distribution of the database by the Leisure Information Network (LIN). <http://www.lin.ca>*

TABLE Ia  
Total Annual Expenditures  
by 11 Activity Groupings  
Ranked in Order of  
Preference

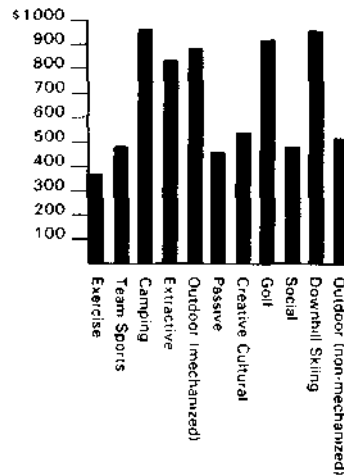


TABLE Ib  
Total Annual Expenditures  
on 11 Favorite Activity  
Groupings Ranked in Order  
of Expenditure Level

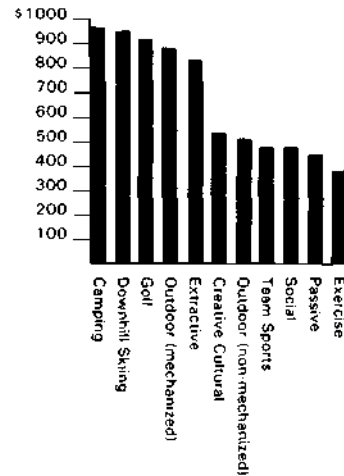


Table Ib shows total annual expenditures for activity groups ordered by expenditure level. The activity groups with the highest costs, hereafter referred to as Cluster A, were camping, downhill skiing, golf, mechanized outdoor and extractive. These groups tend to have several things in common. They are outdoor, resource-based, seasonal activities that "consume" large blocks of time, need expensive and/or extensive equipment and require considerable travel. The activity groups with lower costs, hereafter referred to as Cluster B, were creative cultural, non-mechanized outdoor, team sport, social, passive, and exercise. These groups likewise have similar elements. They are activities that can generally be done indoors, year-round and require smaller amounts of time, equipment and travel. The non-mechanized outdoor group has the Cluster B characteristics with the exception that it is outdoor and tends to be seasonal.

## TYPES OF SPENDING

An analysis of expenditure breakdowns within each activity grouping is shown in Table II. Expenditure information was collected in four areas: travel (ie. transportation), equipment, other (ie. accommodation and meals) and fees or membership. Total expenditures were calculated as the sum of these four.

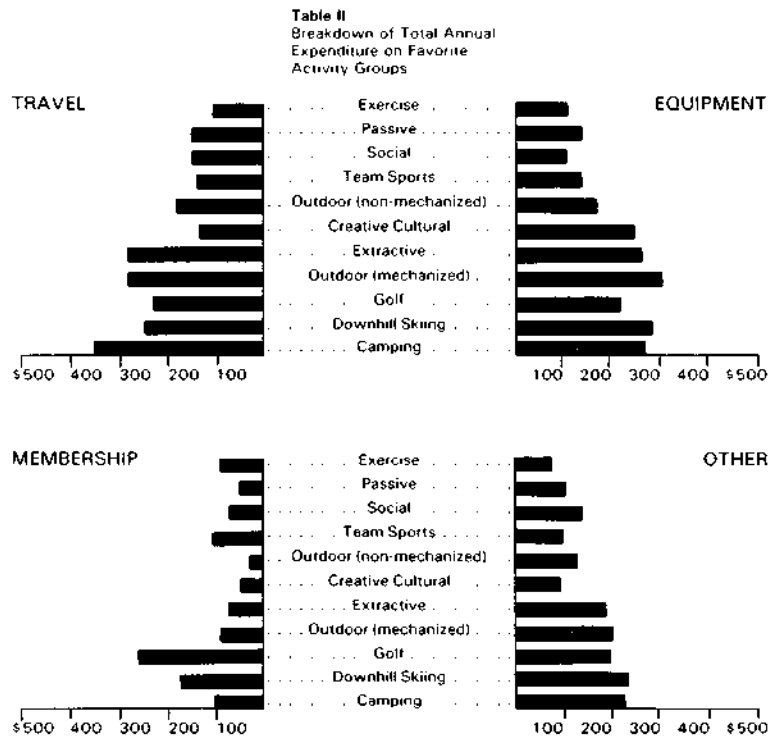
On average, travel expenditures accounted for 31% of the total expenditures on favorite leisure activity participation. Spending on travel was highest for Cluster A activity groups. In order of expenditure level they were camping, extractive, mechanized



outdoor, downhill skiing and golf. Increased fuel costs may affect participation in these activities in the future. In a study to determine the influence of attitudes toward increasing gasoline prices on leisure participation O'Leary (4) found that people travel shorter distances but stay longer, and use recreation places that are closer to their home communities.

Average expenditures on equipment accounted for 31% of total expenditures on favorite activity. Also, equipment expenditures were highest for Cluster A activity groups, with the exception of the creative cultural group. In order of expenditure, they were mechanized outdoor, downhill skiing, camping, extractive, creative cultural and golf.

Expenditures on the 'other' category, (accommodation, meals, etc.), were generally less than expenditures on travel and equipment, accounting for an average of 23% of the total expenditure on favorite activities. As with the travel and equipment categories, expenditures on accommodation and meals were highest for Cluster A activity groups.



Fee or membership expenditures, with the exception of golf and downhill skiing, tended to be among the lowest relative to other expenditure areas. On the average, fee expenditures accounted for approximately 15% of the total expenditures on favorite leisure activity participation. The above pattern of highest costs for Cluster A activity groups does not show up for fees or memberships.

## FACTORS WHICH AFFECT SPENDING

Three general areas were examined as possible influences on recreation expenditures: economic (eg. household income), social (eg. age, sex, education, marital status, presence of children under six, etc.) and need satisfaction. Income was a significant factor found to affect recreation expenditure. No other variables were found to influence leisure spending. However, the results indicate that while the tendency for the better off to spend more on leisure exists, there is wide scope for other factors to influence individual expenditures on favorite activity.

Leisure research (6) has shown that many economic, demographic and social-psychological factors collectively influence an individual's activity, which in turn affects expenditures. Some of the leading factors noted in the literature are: income, education, age of the household head, available supply of resources, and the individual's internal decision-making system. It has also been found that urban households spend proportionately more on recreation than rural households.

In a literature review, Zuzanek (7) examined how expenditure for leisure goods and services was distributed across various socio-demographic and occupational groups. He found that:

- (i) the proportion of income spent on leisure was highest amongst married people with children and the younger groups (under age 35) while those over age 55 spent the smallest proportion of their income on leisure;
- (ii) leisure expenditure increases as disposable income increases up to a certain point, but then levels off in the highest socio-economic groups;
- (iii) family income, rather than education or occupation, seems to have the most direct effect on the size of leisure expenditures.

Due to the nature of the 1981 Public Opinion Survey on Recreation, analysis of complex models of consumer behavior was not possible. A full model of consumer choice in recreation should account for factors such as available and perceived supply, and participation and cost trade-offs. Such aspects may be considered for future surveys.



## IMPLICATIONS

It is apparent that the economic pattern of expenditures on favorite leisure pursuits has some implications for the practitioner. Survey results showed that Cluster A favorite activities resulted in the highest overall expenditures for each sub-category except for fees and membership. Income was a significant factor found to affect recreation expenditure. However, other research has shown that many factors combine to influence individual expenditures on favorite activities.

As a recreation practitioner you may want to think about the findings and trends in recreation in relation to changing economic conditions. For example, reductions in disposable incomes, combined with escalating food, housing and energy prices, may result in a decrease in the proportion of income spent on recreation. This may reinforce the trends to less or shorter travel, activities closer to home and specialization for target populations.

Take a look at the program offerings in your community. How can you help to pass on cost savings to your clients? Could equipment swap and sell meets be organized? Can you stimulate formation of clubs with equipment co-ops and car pools for travel? Can you offer program alternatives that will not, for example, 'consume large blocks of time and require high expenditures, and yet still satisfy a wide range of leisure needs? Would there be appeal in ballooning? windsurfing? cricket? New Games (co-operative and/or non-competitive games)?

You may want to do more in the field of leisure education by helping clients to identify their personal recreation needs and capabilities, as well as barriers to desired involvement. Are you prepared to assist clients in learning how to evaluate their own leisure needs, involvements and alternatives? In what ways could you provide them with information about the opportunities and options available to satisfy their needs? Can you or your staff become better leisure counsellors? Should you be? You may also want to consider new planning concepts in the preparation of future recreation plans. Could abandoned buildings be converted into multi-functional recreation facilities? Could recreational opportunities be combined with shopping centres or underground spaces such as malls? Can pathways or trails be developed for multi-recreation use? Would the provision of urban campgrounds be desirable or feasible? How are you going to respond to these challenges? Recreation Practitioners have a mandate few similar professions have faced: to cope with the present and invent the future in an era of limits (5).



## REFERENCES

1. Perspectives Canada III. Integration Statistics Canada. Ministry of Supply and Services, 1980.
2. Ornstein, E. and Nunn, C. The Marketing of Leisure. London: Associated Business Press, 1980.
3. Vickerman, R. W. Personal and Family Leisure Expenditure. London: Social Science Research Council, 1979.
4. O'Leary, Joseph T. The Influence of Leisure Participation Patterns in Attitudes Toward Gasoline Prices. New Orleans:NRPA, 1979.
5. Goodale T. and Witt P. Recreation and Leisure: State College, P.A. Issues in an Era of Change. Venture Publishing, 1980.
6. Dardis, R. "Cross Section Studies of Recreation Expenditures in the U.S." Journal of Leisure Research, 1981 (13), pp. 181-194.
7. Zuzanek, Jiri. "Social Differences in Leisure Behavior: Measurement and Interpretation". Leisure Sciences, 1981, Volume 1, No. 3, pp. 271-293.

## NEXT ISSUE

—BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION - Why don't people take part?

## INFORMATION

If you require further information or would like to change your mailing address please contact:

G. Burn Evans Research  
Coordinator Planning Support  
Branch Recreation Development  
Division Alberta Recreation and  
Parks Standard Life Centre 10405  
Jasper Avenue Edmonton, Alberta  
T5J 3N4

Telephone: 427-6775

We encourage your comments or responses on the series. Our goal is to provide the reader with useful information in an easy-to-read format. We appreciate any feedback on how well we achieve this goal, how we might improve, and any suggestions for themes or topics for future issues that may be of interest.

G. B. E.

