

Town of Dryden Residents' Views & Preferences: A Needs Assessment for the Dryden Recreation Commission

Preliminary Presentation to the Dryden Town Board

Based on a class project by the students of
REC 601/602: Recreation Research & Evaluation I & II

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Project Description

The purpose of this study is to assess the views of the residents of the Town of Dryden regarding the recreation, park, and leisure opportunities offered by the newly established Town of Dryden Recreation Commission.

- ⊙ Since programming for youth is relatively plentiful, the primary focus of this study will be to address **patterns of recreation participation by adults and older adults**. Identifying the **benefits of leisure** sought by these age groups will be ascertained, as well as potential **constraints to leisure**. This study will also focus on park and recreation **facilities used and desired** by participants. For comparison purposes, open space and recreation standards will be compiled, along with a review of at least three peer town recreation departments. Finally, **methods of communicating** program opportunities will be evaluated.

Methods

- 1) *Phone survey*
 - ◆ Target sample = 375 for a population of 13,532
 - ◆ Sampling frame = voter registration records
 - ◆ Method = stratified, systematic random sample
(every 6th phone number selected from voter registration records)
- 2) *Focus groups*
 - ◆ Older adults (6 attendees, Varna Community Center)
 - ◆ Young adults (2 attendees, TC3)

Results

- 1) *Response Rate for Phone Survey*
 - ◆ 1369 phone calls were attempted; 755 potential respondents were reached
 - ◆ 381 out of 755 completed surveys for a 50% response rate
 - ◆ All 11 voter districts were represented, producing a relatively representative sample (+/- 3.5%)

2) *Respondent Demographics*

♦ Residence

- Approximately 50% have lived in the Town of Dryden 15 years or less (avg. = 16.83)
- Approximately 80% own their place of residence
- Average number of people in the household = 2.7, with nearly 40% having children

♦ Gender

- 60% of the sample was female

♦ Age

- Normally distributed, ranging from 18 to 88
- Avg. = 46.4 years old

3) *Awareness of Recreation Department*

- ♦ 54% were aware that the Town of Dryden has its own community recreation department
- ♦ 9% were not sure
- ♦ 37% were not aware

4) *Recreation Patterns*

♦ Area Park Usage

- Approximately 50% had used the Dryden Lake Trail and Dryden Lake Park in the past, while 40% had used Montgomery Park
- Frequency of use = a few times per year, with the trail used slightly more often
- Top activities:
 - Dryden Lake Trail = walking/hiking, biking, x-country skiing, jogging, dog walking
 - Dryden Lake Park = picnicking/BBQ/grilling, fishing, boating, walking/hiking
 - Montgomery Park = Dairy Days, concerts, baseball/softball
- A third of the respondents used other parks/spaces in Town of Dryden for recreation (43 mentioned):
 - School playgrounds, fields, buildings
 - Hammond Hill State Forest
 - Yellow Barn State Forest
 - Ellis Hollow
- Nearly 70% used other parks/spaces outside Town of Dryden for recreation (68 mentioned):
 - Stewart Park
 - Taughannock Falls State Park
 - Robert Treman State Park
 - Buttermilk Falls State Park
 - Cass Park

♦ Facilities Desired

- Trails / open spaces
- Public pools
- Athletic complex / community center
- Town-owned athletic fields
- Ice rink
- Skate park
- Tennis courts

♦ Program Interests

- Highest degree of interest = educational and environmental programs
- Moderate interest = sports, music, arts & crafts, dance
- Lowest interest = drama

♦ Time of Day Program Preferences

- Weekdays = evenings (6pm or later)
- Saturdays = mornings or afternoons (6am to 6pm)
- Sundays = afternoons (12 to 6pm)

5) *Benefits of Recreation*

- ♦ All goals highly rated
 - Rank order:
 - To improve physical fitness
 - To spend time with friends and family
 - To enjoy nature
 - To reduce stress
 - To learn and develop skills
 - To contribute to the community
 - To improve self-confidence

6) *Leisure Constraints*

- ♦ Highest degree of constraint = family or work obligations,
lack of information about programs or facilities
- ♦ Moderate degree of constraint = lack of convenient facilities,
lack of motivation,
admission fees or charges,
having no one to do the activity with,
overcrowded conditions,
lack of skill or ability
- ♦ Lowest degree of constraint = transportation problems
- ♦ For those who had children, lack of childcare prevented participation in recreation for 30%

7) *Ways of Staying Informed about Recreation News and Events*

- ♦ Currently use:
 - Newspapers (*The Ithaca Journal, The Shopper, Ithaca Times*)
 - Word of mouth
 - School sources (*Bulletin, flyers from children*)
 - Radio (WHCU, Lite97, Q104, I100)
 - Internet
 - Flyers/bulletin boards (grocery store, post office, convenience store)
 - TV
- ♦ Preference:
 - Newspapers
 - Internet
 - Mail
 - Flyers/bulletin boards