

# **BENEFITS OF RECREATION**

## *MODEL PROJECTS FINAL REPORT*

**Prepared for:**

**Alberta Recreation and Parks Association**

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# BENEFITS OF RECREATION – MODEL PROJECTS REPORT

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## **BENEFITS OF RECREATION- MODEL PROJECTS REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Canadian Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector describes outcome measurement as both an accountability tool and a planning tool. The intent, it says, is to change the focus from measuring activities, inputs or outputs to examining results and outcomes, shifting the focus from how a program operates to the *good it accomplishes*.

Recreation can contribute significantly to individual and community good. Outcomes based processes help to identify priority outcomes (the good that a group wants to accomplish) so that services/strategies can then be developed to contribute to the desired outcome (good).

The Benefits of Recreation Model Projects initiative has provided staff support to five community projects to help groups/individuals more effectively solve issues and build positive outcomes. Benefits/outcomes based tools and processes have been used by trained coaches to help communities identify and achieve their outcomes (good).

Coaches involved with the model projects worked with community members, volunteers and a practitioners in 5 separate communities throughout Alberta. Awareness of the value of recreation was fairly high yet community members did not connect recreation with important social issues in their communities. Recreation practitioners were interested in outcomes-based processes but had not tried any of these processes in their work.

Project comments reinforce the value of an outcomes-based approach. The advantages cited include helping groups focus and stay on target, eliminating territoriality, using the strengths of each member and increased effectiveness. As well people felt their work had meaning which was motivating for staff and volunteers.

Feedback from coaches also identifies some of the constraints in making the shift to outcomes based practices. The constraints encountered in the project seem to be reflective of general constraints within the industry. They revolve around time and the length of time that it takes to facilitate change. Also there seems to be difficulty for some in grasping onto an approach that they feel is somewhat conceptual and intangible.

*“While the intuitive logic in this shift is appealing, its implementation is more complex, and has posed a considerable challenge to all human service providers.”* - (Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector)

Outcomes for this initiative include: on-site support to community groups, leadership opportunities for coaches, enhanced benefits leadership capacity and introduction of practitioners and community members to benefits processes and tools. There is now a set of coaches that are experienced and there are an increased number of practitioners and community members that are interested in and supportive of outcomes based processes.

*“I think that having ‘outcomes specialists’ available to members and their communities is a valuable and effective means to providing ‘hands on’ successes in using an outcomes approach.”*  
– Deb Comfort (Benefits Coach)

Vision 2015: Leisure, Wellness, Prosperity and Quality of Life Symposium input confirms that outcomes based service is the way of the future. Outcomes based evaluation projects are developing in a variety of fields. Initiatives seem to be discipline specific and not integrated across fields. This seems contrary to many grassroots projects that are integrated and interdisciplinary in nature. A coordinated 'outcomes approach' could increase effectiveness, make best use of resources and greatly benefit the community.

The recreation industry has a strong history in the development of outcomes-based tools, resources and processes. This work by the recreation field has been called "the Benefits Movement". The strength of the outcomes work done by the field lies in its solid research base (the catalogue), resource tools that support implementation, and projects like this that build leadership and experience. It is important to evaluate next steps in terms of continuing with a discipline specific strategy or supporting an integrated outcomes model/process.

ARPA has been proactive in developing a plan (A Learning and Development Plan to Facilitate Benefits-Driven Community Services, 1999) and creating opportunities for training (Leading the Way: Benefits into Action, 2000). This Model Projects initiative has provided an opportunity to apply benefits concepts and experiences and move one step closer to outcomes driven services in Alberta. The individual sites have achieved or moved toward their community outcomes and at the same time learnings help to advance the knowledge base and experience with outcomes based practice.

Although 'The Benefits of Recreation' was originally seen as merely justification of services, it has evolved to be about effectiveness, accountability and the provision of essential services. An outcomes approach is multifaceted with awareness of the value of recreation playing an important role. However, if we promote the value of recreation then we must assure that we provide quality services that deliver these promised outcomes.

If ARPA is to accomplish its vision, a continued leadership role with outcomes based practice is paramount. Professional development opportunities that enrich outcomes knowledge and applications should continue to be provided. Trained professionals such as the Model Project coaches must be available to support the transition. Outcomes based practice is evolving and this project has taken us one step closer.

*"A province, and communities within, that embrace and proactively use recreation and parks as essential means for enhancing individual well-being and community vitality, economic sustainability and natural resource protection and conservation."*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Model Projects Initiative

The 'Benefits of Recreation - Model Projects' initiative provides an opportunity for on-site learning and the application of benefits driven processes. The Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) provides trained 'benefits' coaches/facilitators to encourage and support the use of a 'benefits-based' (or outcomes-based) approach. The project is also intended to increase the awareness of the value of recreation and the roles that it can play in creating healthy communities. The projects and coaching involvement are flexible so that processes and outcomes are meaningful and valuable for those individuals and communities involved.

Benefits coaches/facilitators for this initiative received training at the "Leading the Way: Benefits into Action" session (April 2000, Regina). This training session also provided them with a 'tool kit' and an orientation to existing benefits resources. Individual expertise and passions of the coach has also contributed to the success of the projects they have been involved with.

The projects within this ARPA initiative were facilitated by coaches in their communities with the support of the Benefits of Recreation- Model Projects Coordinator. This report describes the findings from the projects conducted around the province and also melds the findings with benefits context to recommend further action.

For purposes of this initiative "Benefits-Driven Recreation' is defined as an approach that involves working with community stakeholders to determine priority targets or benefits/outcomes, then developing strategies, programs, and services to ensure their delivery. (*Leading the Way: Benefits into Action*, May 2000)

### 1.2 Background Information

The reality of community life in Canada today is that many are struggling to deal with rapid change and increasingly complex social issues (ie rising health care costs, cultural diversity, crime and vandalism, dysfunctional families, environmental protection etc). This has resulted in an increasing awareness of the need to re-think traditional approaches to the provision of community services.

The recreation profession has taken the opportunity to reflect on the role and position of recreation within our communities. In the late 1980's and through the 90's practitioners and agencies rediscovered the value (or potential value) of their services and started to reposition recreation as a major player in the prevention and/or resolution of important community issues. This work within the profession has generally been referred to as 'the benefits movement'.

Assessments have shown that recreation service delivery agencies have been slow in making this shift in the way services are provided and therefore supported. (A Learning and Development Plan to Facilitate Benefits-Driven Community Services). We must continue to find ways to educate and support people in moving towards a 'benefits-based' approach that delivers outcomes most valued by the community.

"A Learning and Development Plan to Facilitate Benefits-Driven Community Services" (ARPA, 1999, p 40) supports/highlights the need not only for the change to an outcomes or benefits approach but reinforces the need for experiential on-site supported learning opportunities. It shows that the on-site, supported format used in the Model Projects Initiative is an effective way to facilitate community change.

“As both an accountability tool and a planning tool for services and programs, outcome measurement in its various forms has become a preoccupation for private, public and voluntary organizations in recent years. The intent of outcome-based performance assessment is to change the focus of organizations from measuring their effectiveness through examination of activities and inputs or outputs to examining results and outcomes. It shifts the focus from how a program operates to the good it accomplishes. Outcomes are differentiated from program outputs, which are the number of clients served or number of units of service provided. While the intuitive logic in this shift is appealing, its implementation is more complex, and has posed a considerable challenge to all human service providers.” (Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector)

## **2.0 PROCESS**

### **2.1 Project Sites**

A variety of learning sites/opportunities were chosen for ‘benefits’ interventions. In some cases communities responded to a promotional strategy conducted by ARPA and other projects were initiated through coaches as they saw opportunities for change in their own communities.

The projects undertaken include a variety of community sizes, types of involvement by community and various aspects of community work including visioning, team building, programming, planning, education and issues resolution as outlined on the project list at the end of this section. An additional intervention (Delburne) took place prior to the start of this project and was used to evaluate training materials developed for ‘benefits’ coaches. This and a ‘benefits’ initiative from Grand Prairie have contributed to the learnings for this project therefore they are included in this report although not outlined on the project list.

### **2.2 Coaching and Facilitation**

Coaches/facilitators have ‘benefits’ training through the “Leading the Way: Benefits into Action” initiative (ARPA & SPRA; April 2000). In addition most have attended numerous workshops on the Benefits of Recreation. They all have extensive group facilitation and work experience in the field of recreation. Coaches represent most parts of the province and varied community sizes. All are passionate recreation leaders and committed to the use of recreation in helping people to help themselves!

Coaches also received the following types of support with their interventions.

- Orientation Session
- Individual Consultations with Model Projects Coordinator
- On-line Support
- Presentations and other resources
- Consultations re customizing processes and tools
- Access to new resources

Practitioners that provided coaching leadership for this project:

Diane Burt-Stuckey	Wendy Kinsman
Deb Comfort	Marleen Kankkunen
Heather Cowie	Joanne Paulenko
Kay Kenny	Carol Petersen

## 2.3 Guiding Principles

The 'benefits' coaches and project coordinator drafted the following principles for the project that reflect a Benefits-Based Approach.

- Know where you are going (target outcomes)
- Keep focused
- Involve people (benefits of the process)
- Advocate/educate re: the value of recreation
- The power (and information) is in the room
- Help bring voices into the room; honour them
- Be positive
- Think outside the box
- Tap into passions
- Keep it simple

## 2.4 Values

Coaches also brainstormed words that describe the values of the project, the approach and the recreation industry in general.

Health	Family	Community
Physical Activity	Diversity	Lifestyle
Congruence	Life	Relationships
Life-long Learning	Time	Planning

## 2.5 Target Outcomes

The coaches and project coordinator have reworked the outcomes outlined in the original ARPA project document. These target outcomes drove the interventions.

- Increased awareness of the role that recreation plays (or can play) in the pilot communities and knowledge of the tangible benefits it can provide pilot communities have the support of a coach/mentor
- Facilitators/coaches and local practitioners have applied learning opportunities to gain experience in benefits-driven processes
- Opportunity to test existing resources and assess need for new ones
- Creation of additional supporting resources. (i.e. success stories, tools)
- Provide the "industry" with an opportunity to document the value of a benefits-driven approach and to communicate this information to others
- Community participation/involvement
- Opportunity to positively impact communities and generate a variety of outcomes from pride to personal health that all contribute to healthy, vibrant communities

## 2.6 MODEL PROJECTS LIST

<b>PROJECT AND COMMUNITY</b>	<b>COACHES AND COMMUNITY CONTACT</b>	<b>AGENCIES and/or PARTNERS</b>	<b>BRIEF DESCRIPTION AND COMMENTS</b>
Edmonton <i>“Community Crime Prevention”</i>	Wendy Kinsman Marleen Kankkunen  <i>Community Members</i>	City of Edmonton Community Services  <i>Community Crime Council</i>	Intervention involving team building, issue definition and unique contributions to the broader outcomes of community crime prevention.
Pincher Creek <i>“Golf Club Assessment”</i>	Diane Burt-Stuckey  <i>Golf Club Board</i>	Community Services  <i>Golf Club</i>	Opportunity to be more focused, more effective and self-sufficient. Has lead to new visioning process and budget forecast exercise focused on outcomes
Calgary <i>“Youth Leisure Education”</i>	Heather Cowie  <i>Youth Partners</i>	City of Calgary Village Square Leisure Centre  <i>Alberta Mental Health</i>	Intervention with adolescent males to increase appreciation for recreation, awareness of the value of relationships and power over ones destiny. Programming and Leisure education application.
Edson <i>“Getting to Know Our Community”</i>	Carol Petersen  <i>Suzanne Samborski Mike Butler</i>	ARPA Model Projects  <i>Edson Community Services</i>	Opportunity to define a benefits approach in getting to know their community. This outcomes based process will feed into a broader planning process.
Calgary <i>“Douglasdale Community Association”</i>	Joanne Paulenko  <i>Consultant Community Members</i>	City of Calgary  <i>Douglasdale Community Association</i>	Developing outcomes/guiding principles upon which to form a business plan regarding services or facilities in their community.

### 3.0 PROJECT OVERVIEWS

#### 3.1 COMMUNITY CRIME COUNCIL MEETING

The first Model Project intervention was identified through Edmonton Community Services and was facilitated by Wendy Kinsman and Marleen Kankkunen. This intervention involved team building, issue definition and unique contributions to the broader outcomes of community crime prevention. The preparation for the “Community Crime Council Meeting” included:

- a. Research by coaches of the situation
- b. Research of possible processes and tools from the “Leading the Way: Benefits into Action” – tool kit
- c. Meeting of Model Projects Coordinator, the two benefits coaches and a Community Services staff member involved with the group to determine a general plan of action
- d. Meeting with key community players from the Crime Council to learn more about the current situation (issues, opportunities and challenges) and discuss desired outcomes for the intervention
- e. Meeting of Model Projects Coordinator and benefits coaches to determine process and tools to be used and discuss possible barriers.
- f. Coaches met to confirm agenda and arrange all details with the group.
- g. Intervention Meeting and Evaluation (AGENDA AND EVALUATION: APPENDIX #2)

This intervention was very successful. Two members of the Community Crime Council, Michelle Fillion and Constable Joe Dosramos wrote to management staff of Edmonton Community Services.

*“I am writing to inform you of the valuable service one of your employees has offered our organization. Marleen Kankkunen recently co-facilitated a meeting with our newly developed community crime council. She and Wendy Kinsman successfully moved a very large group of people from an unmanageable vision to a targeted plan of action. Her ability to conceptualize the priorities of our group, and her keen sensitivity to the need of the individuals around the table allowed us to proceed beyond a barrier that had many of us frustrated.”*

This intervention depended heavily upon the group facilitation experience that both Marleen and Wendy possess however Marleen felt that “it all came together because of the use of the ‘benefits’ principles and process”. The main principle was to focus on the target outcomes (benefits) for the intervention and for the overall community crime prevention initiative. This helped to keep the focus of the ‘consulting’ process and the meeting itself. It seems that the base has been created and the group can continue to use the outcomes as a ‘beacon’.

The following components were also instrumental in building successful outcomes for this intervention. (Benefits Based Recreation: Awareness into Action - Ferris Wheel Model p. 17)

- maintaining focus on desired outcomes (of the intervention and community initiative)
- building relationships (prior to and during the final meeting)
- knowing the community (the groups strengths, weaknesses community issues etc)
- seeing the opportunities (opportunities in the process and in the community)
- strategy development (started by the coaches and continued by group at later date)

Building relationships with the group members and getting to know more about their group and community helped Marleen and Wendy select activities that would contribute to the target outcomes. For example, since the group was diverse and had had earlier difficulties the coaches chose relationship-building exercises throughout the meeting to highlight the diverse yet very important contributions that each of the group members had to make. Maintaining focus on the desired outcomes/results of the intervention and focusing on how each individual could contribute to the outcome helped to highlight strengths of the group. Instead of arguing about specific actions they could focus on a common outcome for the meeting and for their eventual work together as a council.

We learned that to lead/facilitate benefits based processes a coach must have experience with facilitation, group process, community development etc. Each individual's success with facilitating benefits driven processes is dependant in part upon how they can integrate it with their own experience, skills and abilities to 'lead'. Above all it is fundamental that we practice what we preach. Everything that we do in demonstrating, applying and leading should use a benefits based process/style so that others can see and experience first hand the value of the process.

### 3.2 DOUGLASDALE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Joanne Paulenko had been working with a community group that she felt jumped too quickly to identifying a building as their outcome/output and had not talked about what they value in their community and what they wanted to contribute to the community. A consultant had been hired to do a business plan however the community group did not have any guiding principles, focus etc. Having knowledge of a benefits approach, Joanne thought this group could gain from coaching through ARPA Model Projects.

First Joanne provided information to the community group and consultant to show them the value of a benefits/outcomes based process. She built support for the process and included the consultant in the development of a one-day workshop. Information was presented to the whole group on benefits/outcomes approach and a facilitated values discussion provided content for the formation of guiding principles. These principles were used in making decisions throughout the day, were used in evaluating the business plan concepts brought forward and will continue to be a guiding/focus for the community process.

Participants evaluated the process and some of the comments include:

- Setting outcomes/principles/values up front allowed us to measure and check along the way; they kept the group on track and accountable
- I have a different view of recreation; it is more than a bike ride or a basketball game.
- I feel empowered; this is exciting
- It made us answer the question of what we are really there for.
- It helps to keep the group on track and accountable to a set of outcomes/guidelines.
- Recreation means to me the social needs of the community

This intervention utilized a benefits approach to facilitate the development of guiding principles that brought everyone to the same page, verified their reasons for being and helped people see the potential of their work in providing 'good' for their community.

### 3.3 PINCHER CREEK GOLF CLUB LONG RANGE PLAN

Pincher Creek has a very 'windy' 9 hole golf course with a large cedar-log clubhouse. The Town purchased additional land over twenty years ago for a possible 9-hole expansion however this has not taken place to date. The Golf Club manages to cover operating costs from year to year but equipment, irrigation system and clubhouse are in need of upgrading and improvement. As well, the Town is currently paying back on a debenture that was taken out in 1991 to upgrade the existing 9 holes and this will not be paid off until 2011.

When Diane Burt-Stuckey saw this group struggling with decisions and financial challenges she thought they might benefit from an opportunity to answer questions regarding their purpose (Benefits Check-Up, Awareness into Action, p. 25). Diane led discussions around "why do we operate a golf club" and "why is this important?" The group came to the realization that perhaps the development of an additional 9 holes was NOT the outcome they really had in mind. The approach and questions Diane used has lead to a number of new processes that will increase effectiveness of the Golf Club.

The first is a facilitated visioning exercise with the Club, Town and community to define the purpose of golfing in Pincher Creek and where they want to be in 10 and 20 years. The second is a long-term capital replacement plan for equipment and improvements. The third is the development of a business plan that will identify where the Club might go with the 9 holes and how this might be different if they had 18 holes. Last was a decision to draft a new lease agreement with the Town.

### 3.4 EDSON COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Edson Community Services Department received support in defining an outcomes approach to assessing needs and obtaining information about their community. This intervention provided an opportunity for key staff members to review benefits principles and develop the first steps of a benefits driven process. The eventual application was intended to be a Master Planning process however Mike Butler and Suzanne Samborski decided that they would start with one specific component. They were both new in their positions and they felt they would like to start with "Getting to Know the Community" (Benefits Based Recreation: Awareness into Action, Ferris Wheel Model – page 17). After a series of questions regarding why they wanted to undertake this process and why it was important, the following target outcomes were identified.

- Community Support for Department and its activities
- Community involvement, input and direction; its their community
- Community understanding of department priorities
- Ownership of the plan that we will develop (staff, partners and community in general)

Once the outcomes were developed there was discussion of how to get to achieve the outcomes. It would be important not only what information they collected but how they went about it that would be important. If they wanted outcomes of trust and ownership they would need to pay close attention to their process and values that would support their outcomes.

A Gap Analysis was suggested as on of the first steps in the process. Involving other staff, partners and community, the department planned to identify all the types of information they would need in getting to know the community. They then could inventory all of the information that they

have access to currently. The gap (what they need minus what they already have) will be what helps form an action plan to achieve their target outcomes. A number of assessment tools and processes were discussed.

The important learning was always to identify target outcomes by asking “why, why is that important?” Then always focus on and be driven by the target outcomes. Other learnings included:

- Changing their processes one step at a time
- Can start anywhere
- Can be at program level or broader
- Need to be reminded; need support
- Linkages to new tools that use an outcomes approach

Edson Community Services was looking at using a ‘benefits’ approach to team building, programming and planning. At the end of the model projects the department was going through staff changes but there is readiness to implement a benefits approach. This department is also involved with the provincial FCSS Outcomes Evaluation project so would be a good intervention regarding the melding of the recreation benefits and social service outcomes approaches.

### 3.5 VILLAGE SQUARE LEISURE CENTRE / ALBERTA MENTAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

This program intervention is a partnership between Alberta Mental Health and Village Square Leisure Centre. Adolescent males who have been in trouble with the law have opportunities to increase their appreciation for recreation, increase their awareness of the value of relationships and recognize power over ones destiny. The programming includes activities that contribute to these outcomes. Leisure education tools and resources are used to increase awareness of the value of recreation and provide hands-on learning and application by the youth and program partners. This process helps move the youth toward the target outcomes.

### 3.6 GRANDE PRAIRIE BENEFITS BASED REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Grande Prairie under the coaching of Kay Kenny, drafted a benefits based request for proposals (RFP) for the operation of a recreation facility. The RFP included was written with benefits based expectations for provision of programs and services to community residents.

The RFP included the following information:

#### Expected Benefits Outcomes

- Provision of increased opportunities for healthy, active living through effective management and operation of a high quality twin ice venue that is family oriented and customer driven.
- There are additional details/specifics requested for proof of these performance measures.

#### Evaluation Criteria:

In evaluating each proposal received, 25% of the assigned points value is based on the ability of the proponent to meet or exceed the expected benefits outcomes. They are also asked to provide their philosophy in the provision of community recreation services and what specific performance measures will be used to indicate success.

### 3.7 DELBURNE COMMUNITY PLANNING MEETING

The Purpose of the Delburne intervention was “to provide an opportunity for community groups/agencies to support a community vision and identify potential initiatives and/or collaboration between groups to make strides toward achieving that vision”.

Deb Comfort used this intervention to provide feedback to the consultants developing the “Leading the Way: Benefits into Action “ benefits training program. The workshop took place prior to the April 2000 training so that the tools and processes developed/gathered for the training could be evaluated. The findings are very relevant to the ARPA Model Projects initiative. A detailed agenda and evaluation report are available through Deb Comfort.

The assessment process created for the “Leading the Way: Benefits into Action” coaches includes the following steps that Deb used in Delburne.

- **START WHERE THEY ARE AT:**  
What does the client say the issue or problem is? What are you being asked to do?
- **ASK, LISTEN, SORT and SPECULATE:**  
How would you define the issue or problem?
- **CREATE A PICTURE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING:**  
Create the “picture” of what is happening and fill in key elements as follows:
- **GET CLEAR ON WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO.**  
Determine what the outcome is you are trying to achieve. It is likely that this intervention is part of a much larger process and context, and it is important to focus on the specific part of the issue in which you are playing a role. Focus on both the task and the relationship elements.
- **AS A FACILITATOR, CLARIFY YOUR ROLE!**
- **BASED ON THE ABOVE DETERMINE MOST EFFECTIVE APPROACH TO USE.**

The following anticipated outcomes of the session were identified and presented at the onset of the session.

- Have a greater awareness of the contribution Recreation can make to personal productivity, health, well-being and quality of life.
- Have an increased awareness of how the terms “Benefits of Recreation” and “Benefits Movement” are relevant to their community
- Celebrate the successes, resources and talents of the Community.
- Have clearly defined/redefined ‘community outcomes’ to focus efforts of community organizations and agencies.
- Clearly define barriers and/or challenges to the community’s vision.
- Identify organizational efforts that can contribute to common community issues and visions.
- Understand the benefits of utilizing partnership opportunities to resolve community issues.
- Meet people in the community with common interests and visions.
- Share & Have Fun!

The Delburne intervention was very successful and all of target outcomes were achieved. There was positive feedback from those in attendance. They enjoyed the workshop, felt positive ideas were generated and believe they could pursue some of the identified ‘success indicators’. The community was motivated to continue working in a ‘benefits approach’.

## 4.0 PROJECT FINDINGS

Information drawn from the model project experiences has been grouped into three categories representing levels of learning (adapted from a list outlined in the “Learning and Development Plan to Facilitate Benefits-Driven Community Services”). These learning stages suggest a hierarchy of complexity in role/involvement and therefore training.

- Foundational Level: Basic Concepts
- Operational Level: Application of Concepts
- Leadership Level: Community Facilitation of Outcomes/Benefits

Although this is only one benefits initiative, the importance of moving a variety of target groups to the next ‘learning level’ cannot be over stressed. We now have a set of coaches that are experienced and we have practitioners and community members that are ready to participate in a new way. The goal is to move more people to a higher level in order that we mobilize practitioners and community.

### 4.1 AWARENESS / BASIC CONCEPTS

Great progress has been made in Alberta regarding awareness of the value of recreation, sports, fitness, arts, culture and parks. ARPA has played a leadership role introducing the basic concepts of the Benefits of Recreation to practitioners, politicians, and community. Awareness initiatives must continue with the goal of reaching more people and encouraging their support and participation.

Some examples of awareness initiatives include: Parks and Recreation Month insert, introductory level conference sessions, brochures and promotional products

Awareness is just the beginning. The Benefits of Recreation has evolved to be more about effectiveness of service delivery and not just justification for existence. If we promote the value of recreation then we must assure that opportunities are available to achieve those benefits.

It is suggested through the recommendations in this project that the term “benefits” be used selectively. Coaches feel that it has been overused and therefore practitioners feel they know benefits and are doing it based on a narrow definition. To increase interest in outcomes based practices other descriptors such as impact, public good, return on investment and outcomes should be used.

### 4.2 APPLICATION OF CONCEPTS

*“Using a Benefits or Outcomes process to do the work we do everyday – doesn’t take longer or make the work harder...it is just a different focus that seems to bring the ‘feel good’ part of what we do back into the day to day.”* Deb Comfort-Benefits Coach

Many communities and/or practitioners have moved into a preliminary action phase where they have applied the benefits concepts to one or more of the activities that they are undertaking. It is rewarding to see movement from only the benefits committee undertaking ‘benefits’ initiatives to seeing municipal and provincial agencies integrating benefits into planning, capital developments, conferences and training.

Model projects experiences revealed that benefits processes and training should:

- Not be exclusively benefits sessions or labelled benefits
- Be kept simple and practical so it is not intimidating.
- Provide examples to demonstrate the application of benefits
- Teach whole process and individual parts
- Highlight both process outcomes and project outcomes
- Lead people through their own applications so they see the relevance and meaning and learn how to customize the process to their own needs/situation
- Connect with/build upon outcomes initiatives from other human service agencies (United Way- Community Impact Agenda, AFCSS Making a Difference etc)

*“I believe that the direction that ARPA should be going in regards to using a benefits approach throughout the industry is to establish the use of benefits/outcomes approaches as a cornerstone concept in all future professional development and training opportunities. (i.e. programmers workshops, managers sessions, conference sessions, special projects and studies.)” Deb Comfort – Benefits Coach*

Most of the application is piece-meal and is not consistent or strategic in contributing to broader outcomes. Very few (if any) appear to be using outcomes based processes such as benefits based programming, planning, etc although some functions and specific people are learning the value of benefits/outcomes based processes.

Model projects coaches have used benefits based processes in a number of different applications from visioning and planning to programs and meeting management. They observed that practitioners and community may have difficulty seeing how the ‘benefits’ relate to what they are doing. Following is a list that shows a few examples of how outcomes processes can be applied in the work place.

### ***BENEFITS BASED RECREATION APPLICATIONS***

The following is a list of some of the activities commonly carried out by Parks and Recreation Agencies. A short explanation has been provided as to how a benefits/outcomes approach might be applied.

#### **Benefits Based Evaluation:**

Pre and Post questions help to select target outcomes and measure. (ie ask what people want to get out of a specific class and then you can structure the class and evaluate it based on these outcomes. You will get more definite information if you give them a check list instead of asking an open-ended question) Outcomes are more qualitative in nature and more meaningful when they accompany quantitative data.

#### **Benefits Based Facility Operation:**

Facilities can be designed and operated around one or more target outcomes. If the target outcome for the facility is ‘healthier individuals’ then all components of operation from concession choices and cleaning product to programs should contribute to this ‘end/outcome’

. . . continued

## *BENEFITS BASED RECREATION APPLICATIONS (continued)*

### **Benefits Based Job Descriptions:**

Job descriptions and postings should not just list qualifications, functions and roles. Try including for what outcome(s) or 'good' this position exists. What do you want to result from this position?

### **Benefits Based Marketing, Promotions and Advertising**

Educate and inform people as to what they can benefit from specific programs, facilities, services and activities. Help inform them so that they can tell you what they want to get out of/benefit from services.

### **Benefits Based Meetings:**

Know what you want to have come out of the meeting in general and each specific agenda item. Evaluate the success of the items and overall meeting by evaluating whether those outcomes were achieved. Focusing on outcomes can keep meetings a reasonable length, make good use of peoples time and increase effectiveness.

### **Benefits Based Planning:**

State why at every stage/level. Vision should be a description of the end outcomes. Each action strategy, goal etc should also state an outcome and the link to the end outcome!!

### **Benefits Based Programming:**

Know what the community values and let that drive the target outcomes for department/agency programming in general. Also what are the outcomes (what do we want to have come out of) each specific program we offer? How do programs and services contribute to the department/agency target outcomes?

### **Benefits Based Park Operations and Maintenance:**

Go beyond 'what' we do and make sure everyone knows 'why' we do it. Outcomes (ie improved health through stress reduction) can help drive what time turf is cut, what kind of landscaping could be beneficial and what other activities to encourage in a park. Look beyond activities, to the reason that people use them and the 'good' they accomplish.

### **Benefits Based RFP's (Request for Proposals) and Terms of Reference:**

Don't tell professionals what the work is and how to do it (they may know how better than you). Tell them why do you need this work done. Define the outcomes you want and leave room for creative process and problem solving in terms of how!

### **Benefits Based Trails:**

Planning, construction, programming, maintenance and evaluation of trails can be made easier if you have determined for what end or outcome, you feel trails are needed. Defining the outcomes (ie increased local spending through link between residential and commercial districts or more active citizens through informal/no-fee exercise) will help with all decisions regarding locations, surfaces, sponsors etc.

### **Benefits Based Training:**

For what end or outcome are you taking or offering training? Is it for increased effectiveness with a specific operation? Improved health of employees? Make sure you know why you are taking /offering training and that target outcomes are met

Coaches/facilitators came to the project as interested and committed advocates of recreation. They were familiar with a benefits-driven approach but had little experience in applying the concepts. They needed to be able to try the process and value it in order to articulate the process and teach others. A big part of the success with this project has been the provision of supported learning opportunities for the coaches, They can now use their applications/experiences to guide others through similar questions and processes.

#### 4.3 LEADERSHIP / FACILITATION

*“I think that having ‘outcomes specialists’ available to members and their communities are a valuable and effective means to providing ‘hands on’ successes in using an outcomes approach. Deb Comfort – Benefits Coach*

It takes leadership to facilitate change. This initiative gave coaches hands-on leadership opportunities to support community change. Coaches have helped individuals and organizations start changing what they are doing now to get different results. Each of the coaches took a lead role in working with community to use benefits concepts and tools to help them achieve their target outcomes and change current attitudes, behaviours and practices. In all of the projects coaches helped make processes more effective through focus on target outcomes.

*“Valuable to have someone objective ask us questions so we could look at things in a bigger context.” – Community Member*

Community Development principles are key to ‘Benefits Driven Community Services’. In part, the success of model project interventions was due to an understanding of and appreciation for community development. To fully achieve the outcomes desired in this project, it was important to engage the community. The process was theirs and coaches helped support them in their communities. The quotations below demonstrate the value of a community development approach to the benefits process.

*“It really helped me to understand and facilitate Benefits Driven Processes once I understood that the answers lie within the group; the process brings the answers onto the table!” Joanne Paulenko – Benefits Coach*

*“Having people express their ideas, share their knowledge and resources was very valuable” - Community Member*

*“Using an outcomes approach for the participants in the community of Delburne was very effective because no matter what level of understanding, education or experience the participants brought to the table, they all felt that they could contribute in a valuable way.” Deb Comfort – Benefits Coach*

*“Whether people can articulate it or not they are looking for a process that helps them work together with allied fields and partners in the community” Carol Petersen – Model Projects Coordinator*

*“For the people that I was working with this was a good process because the lingo we use as a profession was kept to a minimum AND the group committed to a set of principles/values that were used as a check and balance at the end of the planning day .” Joanne Paulenko – Benefits Coach*

Benefits driven service is:

*knowing what the community/stakeholders want to benefit from the operation of a specific department/service and then structuring all processes and services to contribute in their own way to those outcomes. Then finally being able to measure, communicate and celebrate the accomplishment of those target objectives!*

In terms of community process and change, these interventions are only a start. To really demonstrate and start to make whole scale change in terms of delivery of service, target outcomes need to be developed regarding Benefits Based Practices and then actions built to achieve these outcomes. Recommendations for action are provided in section 8.0 of this report.

*“What amazes me, is each time I facilitate, plan or approach a project or group session, I start out feeling lost on how I can use a benefits approach, yet each time it is easier than the last and all the same concepts and messages fit.” Deb Comfort – Benefits Coach*

#### 4.4 Multi-level Learning Opportunity

Over the course of this initiative, it was found that the projects have provided learning opportunities for a variety of target groups from general public to practitioner and coach. Different techniques have been used to deliver the learning opportunities. The chart following outlines some of the ways we have provided learning opportunities and the variety of target groups that we have impacted (and can impact in the future) regarding the benefits of recreation.

The diagram also shows that teaching/facilitating as the coaches have done is one of the highest levels of learning. The goal, in mobilizing community and practitioners, should be to facilitate learning that moves people through awareness to operationalization and eventually facilitation if they have the desire and ability. This underscores the need for a variety of learning levels, styles and formats.

ARPA BENEFITS OF RECREATION MODEL PROJECTS: Multi-level Learning Opportunity

LEARNING LEVELS / ACTIVITIES	General Public	Recreation Practitioner	Facilitator / Coach	Coordinator /Industry	Level of Training
1 <sup>ST</sup> Level TELL Them (About the Benefits)	x	x			Foundational: Awareness of Basic Concepts
2 <sup>nd</sup> Level SHOW (Demonstrate the Value)	x	x			Foundational: Awareness of Basic Concepts
3 <sup>rd</sup> Level TRY (Experience benefits of recreation or outcomes based process)	x	x	x	x	Operational: Application of Concepts and Processes
4 <sup>th</sup> Level TEACH (Facilitate Benefits-Based Processes)			x	x	Operational and Leadership
5 <sup>th</sup> Level EVALUATE (Value of Benefits-Based Processes)			x	x	Leadership and Community Development

## 4.5 RESOURCES

Each coach has their own inventory of experiences and resources. As well Benefits Tool Kits were provided as part of the “Leading the Way: Benefits into Action” Training Program. The Model Projects initiative made available to the coaches a number of additional resources to supplement their kits.

Resources requested and made available to coaches through ARPA Model Projects include:

- Benefits Catalogues
- Crompton Resources
- Nova Scotia Promotional Materials
- Advisors Marketing Catalogue and Preview of products
- Power Point Presentations: Benefits, Community Development, Outcomes Measurement
- Un-edited Exercises Worksheets

Coaches involved with the model projects have had an opportunity to review and use existing benefits of recreation resources, adapt or create some of their own, and have identified the need for new and revised tools. The most detailed listing of resources used and created can be found in the Delburne Report Although many of the resources required were available through existing resources it was reinforced that at the leadership level resources normally need to be customized somewhat to help communities really see the fit to their situation.

“Benefits Based Recreation: Awareness into Action” (ARPA, 1996) is one of the resources used often by coaches and practitioners. The following were noted as helpful:

- Ferris Wheel to get an overall perspective; explain process and do assessments
- 5 Why’s type exercise to help define outcomes
- Benefits Service Check-up exercise (revised 2000)
- Values Exercise to get to know community OR simple visioning of community of the future, community now and then gap analysis

“Benefits-Driven Recreation: A Workshop for Community Leaders” (Alberta Community Development, 1998) was noted as particularly useful since all the overheads and worksheets are contained within.

“Leading the Way: Benefits into Action” (ARPA & SPRA, 2000) is also referenced especially:

- Broad philosophy and social change orientation are good
- Gap Analysis Concept (enhanced for benefits application)
  - Define what you want to have come out of your process. (outcomes)
  - Define what information you want/need in pursuing your outcomes
  - Define what information you have now
  - List the gaps between what you have and need and brainstorm methods to obtain this information.

Although many good resources are available, there are some gaps in resources that help practitioners move toward outcomes oriented documentation, measurement, interpretation and articulation of the significance of outcomes. Gaps identified by coaches include:

- Index of worksheets, exercises and tools: From all the resources (and past workshops) by topic, in separate sections of the Facilitator's Resource.
- Outcomes evaluation/measurement information and tools
- Assessment tools
- List of Potential Benefits Applications
- Generic Benefits Process Template
- Sample dialogue re coaching people to use a benefits approach
- Collection of edited or new tools developed by coaches and others

New resources should:

- state the target groups that they are intended for, ie benefits coach, practitioner – introductory level etc).
- be simple and minimize jargon
- use format that encourages the addition of samples to it
- be developed in conjunction with partners
- not be restricted to recreation applications
- not use only benefits terminology

## **5.0 ADVANTAGES OF BENEFITS/OUTCOMES DRIVEN PROCESS**

### 5.1 General Benefits of the Process

Benefits-Based Recreation can provide advantages for practitioners, organizations, partners, sponsors and communities (Benefits Based Recreation: Awareness into Action, pages 13-14). Some of these potential benefits include:

- Providing purpose and direction for employees or community
- Neutralizing self-interest by focusing on community outcomes
- Effective use of resources
- Focusing energy for greatest result
- Making a difference through one's work
- Enhancing people's quality of life

### 5.2 Project Feedback on Outcomes Based Processes

The feedback received from coaches and community supports outcomes based processes. Comments outlining some of the advantages they see in this type of process have been grouped loosely into the following categories.

#### Keeps Everyone Focused

Focus was the most often noted advantage of outcomes driven processes. Both community and practitioners found that developing target outcomes and using the process helped them to stay focused and on track. The value of this translates to saved time, achievement of outcomes and pride in meaningful impacts. People found that keeping focused on the target outcomes was fundamental to effective processes and successful end products.

*“Benefits/outcomes driven processes are valuable because they keep you focused on the intent of your project and help you reach a solution to a problem.” Joanne Paulenko – Benefits Coach*

*“I am inspired to use this concept/process in everything that I do, because it's easy, it keeps me focused on where I am going, which make the ‘how’ much easier”. Deb Comfort – Benefits Coach*

*“The process helped focus and narrow down what we were trying to achieve “- Community Member*

*“Using a Benefits or Outcomes approach to any type of planning process helps keep the bigger picture in focus at all times.” Deb Comfort – Benefits Coach*

*“Focusing on outcomes is becoming the way that I approach everything that I do.” Joanne Paulenko – Benefits Coach*

#### Reflects our values / Results are meaningful

The process and outcomes are built by the participants and reflect their values. The end product or outcomes are then more meaningful and ownership is enhanced.

*“It is very inclusive for any and all contributors to the process, and I know that whatever the result is – it can't be wrong.” Deb Comfort – Benefits Coach*

#### Shared Outcomes Build Cohesiveness

The process shows varied participants that we all can have the same broad outcomes (cohesiveness) even though we each may contribute in our own way (unique strengths) to the achievement of the outcomes.

*“I was really struggling with my summer job, my personal beliefs and philosophy seemed to be in direct conflict with the expectations of my employer. If I keep the big picture or outcomes of the Association in mind then I can see how my contributions to the programs are still contributing to their goals, without sacrificing my personal beliefs. Thank you” (Participant from a programming session at the Interpretation Canada Conference, Red Deer, AB 2002)*

#### Eliminates Territoriality / Competition

Because the outcomes are shared, the process can reduce competitiveness and personal agendas and focus energy on results. How we each can contribute becomes the focus as was discovered in the Edmonton Community Crime Prevention Project.

*“For the participants and colleagues that I have worked with using an Outcomes/ Benefits approach, the process seems to eliminate personality conflicts, and petty differences between groups and agencies and really allows everyone to contribute.” Deb Comfort – Benefits Coach*

*“For the people that I was working with this was a good process because the lingo we use as a profession was kept to a minimum AND the group committed to a set of principles/values that were used as a check and balance at the end of the planning day .” Joanne Paulenko – Benefits Coach*

### Creates Vision / Preferred Future

Process can take us out of the day to day and move us into the future; our desired outcomes.

*“If we only focus on trying to fix the problems in our community, we never move on to a ‘higher place’. Thinking about where we ALL want our community to be or what it should look like I think will help us address some of our challenges and move on to new ones!”  
(Participant from Delburne workshop)*

### Process can be used in whole or in part

*“I am inspired to use this process/tools because the process can be used in its entirety or parts of the process can be used solo to help move a group/individual forward.” Joanne Paulenko – Benefits Coach*

### Creative Problem Solving

Setting target outcomes and focusing on the broader outcome creates an open environment for problem solving. It takes us away from the specific issue or problem and helps us focus on how we want it to be different. Solutions become plentiful and they are owned by all.

*“The best part about using an Outcomes approach is that because you stay focused on the ‘big picture’ the options to address many of the ‘little hurdles’ in the project seem endless.”  
Deb Comfort – Benefits Coach*

### Shared Success

Together with partners that share the same desired outcomes we can make such a difference in the community. We did it together and we celebrate together.

## **6.0 MAKING THE SHIFT: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

It is difficult to get people’s attention and support for benefits/outcomes processes. The shift is very important but in their context not urgent. As introduced in Steven Covey’s quadrant model, we must demonstrate to people that if we don’t invest in this important work that there will be increased urgency with health care, crime and other social issues.

*“While the intuitive logic in this shift is appealing, its implementation is more complex, and has posed a considerable challenge to all human service providers.” - (Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector)*

Constraints have been gleaned from this project but seem to reflect general constraints in making the shift to outcomes driven practice.

- Limited number of coaches and their constraints including time, travel, information, funding, support
- No targets for change process (ie; % aware of basic concepts, % applying concepts and changing practices and % facilitating change and attempting comprehensive outcomes practice).
- Change takes time - attitudes and behaviours are entrenched; need to encourage new ways, reinforce them, celebrate them. Do it again, and again.

- Community Development processes take time
- Building leadership capacity is a long-term process. Using community development approach may take a while (but the benefits of the process are essential).
- Difficult to succinctly define 'benefits approach' – for this project we used definition in *“Leading the Way: Benefits into Action”* (Final Report, May 18<sup>th</sup>,2000 page 31)
- Benefits –Driven Service Delivery is hard for people to latch onto because it is so conceptual and they don't feel it is tangible
- Sharing of resources and success stories is not happening and this slows the learning processes. People are busy or feel that their products are not ready for others to see/evaluate.
- Need training, tools and examples that appeal to a variety of learning styles (ie conceptual and data thinkers)

*“It is important to have someone to challenge you to take the next step, to ask the questions and recommend tools and processes!!” Joanne Paulenko – Benefits Coach*

*“We have to encourage reflection. Our society in general and our field since is in so much of a hurry to do more; we fail to take time to reflect. This is an opportunity to do things different: Need to see what we are getting out of all our efforts and whether that's what we want/need to be getting out of it.” Carol Petersen – Model Projects Coordinator*

*“Its not just about the value of recreation and blowing our horns. It is about being more effective and feeling good about it!” Carol Petersen – Model Projects Coordinator*

## **7.0 PROJECT OUTCOMES**

Indicators and comments outlined in the charts below evidence contributions made to the fulfilment of all of the target outcomes. Quantitative (outputs) and qualitative (outcomes) information has been included in the chart that follows to try to demonstrate the impacts of the Model Projects initiative and model how we might work toward reporting back on outcomes. In some cases the outcomes will refer to the good that will come out of the community initiative (longer term or broader outcomes) but most will be specific outcomes of the intervention facilitated by ARPA coaches.

**SUMMARY: OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES: ARPA BENEFITS OF RECREATION MODEL PROJECTS**

<b>TARGET OUTCOMES</b>	<b>INDICATORS /OUTPUTS</b>	<b>PROJECT OUTCOMES and COMMENTS</b>
Increased awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role that recreation Plays (or can play)</li> <li>• Value of Recreation</li> </ul>	65 people more aware	-Participants have a different view of recreation; broader -Participants value recreation and recreation leadership -Coaches motivated (rediscover value of recreation)
Pilot Communities will have the support of a coach/mentor to help work through a community issue	7 communities had a coach to work through their issue	-Model project sites positive about benefits based process and outcomes -Seeds have been planted to support benefits-based services in a number of locations
Facilitators/coaches and local practitioners will have applied learning opportunities to gain experience in benefits processes	The following gained experience with benefits processes/tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 benefits coaches</li> <li>• 3 practitioners</li> <li>• 2 consultants</li> <li>• community leaders</li> </ul>	-Coaches demonstrate increased knowledge of outcomes based processes and tools -Positive project outcomes have increased skills and confidence of coaches -Coaches are more focused and inspired
Opportunity for ARPA to test existing benefits resources and assess the need for new ones	Comments from coaches on existing tools and need for new tools	-Comments on value of existing resources -Recommendations formed re existing and new resources -Generic process / template has been drafted based on project 'learnings'
Provide the 'industry' with Opportunities to document the value of a benefits driven approach and develop a tool to communicate this information to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 interventions used and evaluated a benefits approach</li> <li>• comments from coaches &amp; community are re advantages</li> </ul>	-Project feedback supports the outcomes process -Comments outline advantages of process -Coaches have become advocates for outcomes practice -Testimonials from coaches -Multi-level Learning Diagram

TARGET OUTCOMES	INDICATORS /OUTPUTS	PROJECT OUTCOMES and COMMENTS
Community Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over 65 individuals representing a variety of user groups/locations</li> <li>• New committees were formed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-People were involved and their input respected</li> <li>-Committees were so enthusiastic that they set up sub committee dates to proceed with the work</li> <li>-People felt empowered</li> <li>-People were excited about possibilities</li> </ul>
Opportunity to positively impact communities and generate a variety of outcomes from pride to personal health that all contribute to healthy vibrant communities.	All 7 interventions documented positive results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities challenged status quo</li> <li>• Harmony in group</li> <li>• Kept group on track</li> <li>• Created hope through possibilities</li> <li>• Celebration and pride</li> <li>• Positive attitudes toward participating in recreation</li> <li>• Healthier lifestyle choices</li> <li>• Best use of resources</li> </ul>

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations provide direction for ARPA regarding 'Benefits' and the goal of more effective service delivery through outcomes based processes.

They are grouped into three sections:

- Supporting the Change Process
- Leadership and Training
- Tools and Resources

These recommendations came out of work with the coaches and model projects however they require further review by the benefits committee/board/staff in terms of mandate, feasibility, priority and fit with strategic plan. The ARPA Benefits Committee is considering these recommendations in the development of their action plans for 2002-2005.

### **8.1 BENEFITS DRIVEN PRACTICE: SUPPORTING THE CHANGE PROCESS**

Shifting from traditional service delivery to outcomes driven practise is a change process that requires support and leadership. The following actions are recommended to continue the evolution of benefits/outcomes oriented services.

#### Recommendation #1: MODEL PROJECTS COACHING AND SUPPORT

Facilitate the continued availability of benefits coaching/support for a period of two years. Support should include liaison with project sites and coaches, follow-up and evaluation of interventions, coach consultations and facilitation of resource development. Support should be available for:

- Existing projects; build upon the base/ momentum that has been created
- Communities that expressed interest and did not receive coaching support
- New interventions with existing coaches
- New coaches/facilitators

Outcomes:

- Increased awareness of the value of recreation and the role it can play in community
- Increased number of practitioners/communities aware of outcomes based processes
- Benefits Coaches with greater experience with outcomes processes and practise
- More effective recreation services
- Communities gaining benefit from appropriate recreation opportunities/processes

Fits with recommendations #2 and #9

#### Recommendation #2: BENEFITS SUPPORT HOT-LINE

A 'benefits' question, answer and discussion hot-line available to support practitioners and/or community once they have an idea or are motivated to try a benefits approach.

Hot-line could:

- Answer general benefits questions
- Ask questions to help clarify and set direction
- Be a resource/referral point.
- Be an objective supporter

Outcomes:

- Practitioners applying benefits concepts
- Greater use of existing resources through referrals
- Continuous benefits learning; self-directed learning possible
- Individual learning appropriate to situation and learning needs
- Movement toward more effective, valued services

Fits with recommendations #1 and #4

### Recommendation #3: OUTCOMES TERMINOLOGY

Move away from the term 'benefits' and use other words/labels to inform/educate. The term 'benefits' may have been overused and people do not look past the label.

The goal is really to improve effectiveness of practices by moving toward outcomes oriented processes. The 'benefits' label will still be used but mostly in relation to the value of recreation and also the history of our industries involvement in outcomes based practice.

Outcomes:

- A broader group of people will be interested
- People understand that is more than justification of recreation
- Messages are clear as they actually describe the process
- Those that value outcomes work recognize this work as valuable
- Those that have started to ignore 'benefits' will reconsider

Fits with all other recommendations

### Recommendation #4: ONGOING BENEFITS EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION

Learning should be continuous and accessible. In addition to formal training, teachable moments will remind and motivate people to walk and talk benefits. Examples include:

- Newsletter benefits articles, tips, quotes, and stories
- E-mail/list serve could be used to promote educational and funding opportunities
- Web-site page with benefits/outcomes linkages

*"I believe that the direction that ARPA should be going in regards to using a benefits approach throughout the industry is to establish the use of benefits/outcomes approaches as a cornerstone concept in all future professional development and training opportunities. (i.e. programmers workshops, managers sessions, conference sessions, special projects and studies.)"* Deb Comfort – Benefits Coach

Outcomes:

- Increased learning through wider options and access
- Self directed learning possible through on-line referrals
- Diverse applications demonstrate that this should be a part of everything we do
- Something for everyone not just those who sign up

Fits with recommendations #3 and #11

## 8.2 LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING

To lead, facilitate and encourage the shift to outcomes driven practise there must be passionate people with a plan. ARPA members and advocates are these leaders.

### Recommendation #5: FORUMS FOR BENEFITS/OUTCOMES CHAMPIONS

Initiate forums for those who want to advocate, practice and model outcomes approaches. These forums would be semi-structured face-to-face sessions that would profile tools, products and processes.

The forums should be self-sustaining and use creative processes such as open space technology. Should be in co-operation with other organizations (ie AFCSS or CPRA)

Possible three Forums per year

- One in conjunction with fall conferences (ARPA, FCSS, others?)
- One in Feb/March
- One in summer (camp networking environment or in conjunction with CPRA)

Outcomes:

- Momentum and support of the evolution of the benefits movement
- Continual Learning and Professional Development
- Defining Concepts
- Exchange of Tools and Successes
- Creating, Using and Understanding Tools
- Maximizing different linkages and levels (government and organizations)
- Maximize/optimize resources through enhanced collaboration, sharing etc.
- 

### Recommendation #6: EXPLORE PARTNERSHIP WITH AFCSS OUTCOMES PROJECT

Explore a project partnership with AFCSS and Canadian Outcomes Institute to align/design 1) The Benefits Movement and 2) Making a Difference Outcomes Evaluation Project concepts/programs to compliment and support each other, not duplicate or compete. Look at shared resources, training and staff support.

Outcomes:

- Accountability
- Recognition of good work
- Support of both Recreation and Social Work professions for outcomes practise
- Less duplication for Communities and Practitioners
- Utilizes strengths of both concepts/projects
- Builds trust and acceptance
- Joint celebration

Fits with recommendations #7, #9 and #10

## Recommendation #7: PARTNERSHIP OUTCOME -BASED INITIATIVES

Continue to plan, link with and support other partners in the evolution and development of outcomes driven services and resources. Examples include: CPRA, NRPA, United Way, provincial, state and territorial partners, Not for Profit Agencies and other human service professions.

Suggested Actions include:

- Participation in CPRA's benefits initiative. Recent project document should be reviewed and considered in relation to current provincial strategies.
- Inquire/inventory recent provincial, state, national and related fields re outcomes based development initiatives and let them know what ARPA is doing.

Outcomes:

- Cooperation and Synergy
- Strengths of each organization utilized
- Most effective use of resources
- Greater progress with the evolution of outcomes based service delivery
- Demonstrates a willingness to share

Fits with recommendations #6, #9, #10 and possibly others

## Recommendation #8: SHARED LEADERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Create an initiative(s) with commercial partners to bring greater awareness for consultants in related fields to the outcomes approach, applications to the field and sensitivities in terms of values and outcomes.

Outcomes:

- Ability to educate/influence is increased
- Benefits to the consultants, commercial partners and communities
- Leading edge new processes re consulting practise and customer relationship

## Recommendation #9: TRAINED BENEFITS COACHES

Increase the number of trained benefits coaches.

Suggested strategies may include:

1) Offering training in Alberta every second year based on the Training package developed in 2000. Use the 2 weekend approach recommended in "Leading the Way: Benefits into Action" final report. Look to other provincial partners to provide training to compliment ARPA's training schedule.

2) Alternatively provide other training mechanisms to continue to increase the 'benefits' leadership capacity in Alberta and beyond. (Note: This could become a revenue generator)

### 8.3 TOOLS AND RESOURCES

#### Recommendation #10: OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT

Provide a learning opportunity for coaches, practitioners and community on “Measuring the Outcomes of our Programs and Services”. This was identified as a gap in the Learning and Development Plan and by coaches. This may include section on learning to write outcomes, identifying needs for tools and how this fits in the big evaluation picture.

Suggested Trainer: Brenda Herchmer – Niagara Centre for Community Leadership  
“Measuring the Outcomes of our Programs and Services: Are we making a difference?”

Outcomes:

- Better representation of the good that is being done; the impact
- People will understand how outcomes drive programs and broader services
- Increase in # of outcomes oriented processes because it makes sense
- Greater Accountability

Fits with all of the recommendations

#### Recommendation #11: OPTIMIZE USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES

There are valuable resources that exist and are not being used widely by practitioners. There may be a lack of awareness of what exists, where to find these resources or simply no demand for them because people do not see the need to change or the value of making the shift.

Suggested actions:

- Web page with main benefits resources and linkages should be developed as suggested in Recommendation #4.
- Promote “Awareness into Action” especially for awareness and application levels
- Learning and Development Plan: Use as a source document for all future planning and RFP’s related to Benefits Work.
- Benefits Committee orientation to resources (especially those developed by ARPA)

#### Recommendation #12: EDIT “BENEFITS BASED RECREATION: AWARENESS INTO ACTION”

Edit “Benefits-Based Recreation: Awareness into Action” Guidebook that was developed by ARPA in 1996. The ‘Benefits Movement’ has evolved and updates to content and format would enhance effectiveness and broaden the potential use.

Some suggestions include:

- Not as much Benefits terminology and more outcomes labels
- Not only recreation; perhaps broaden to community services
- Terminology and examples that ensure resource is not ‘Alberta Only’
- More emphasis on ‘benefits driven’ and target outcomes
- Ferris Wheel Centre (Target Benefit/Outcome)
- Consider making this available on-line
- Outcomes Measurement to be enhanced greatly

### Recommendation #13: AGENCY OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT TOOL

Development of an assessment tool to help organizations see how they are doing in terms of making the shift to outcomes driven service delivery. It should include what they are shooting for (the ideal), where they are now and what they need to do to close the gap. Various tools have been developed toward this end however a comprehensive tool supported by partners could be fundamental in helping organizations form action plans to move forward.

#### Resources;

The Benefits of Parks and Recreation In Action: CPRA (#1 and possible others)  
Benefits Based Recreation: Awareness into Action: ARPA (pages 25 & 26)  
An Initial Assessment – Is your agency ‘benefits driven’? – Rethink- Ken Balmer

#### Outcomes:

- Individuals and organizations will have targets set for them
- Organizations will initiate change themselves based on assessments

### Recommendation #14: LEADING THE WAY: FACILITATORS GUIDE

Edit/Print “Leading the Way: Benefits into Action Facilitator’s Guide” as a resource for coaches and to distribute at future training sessions; not a stand-alone document

Process:        See evaluative comments in Delburne Report  
                  Interview Coaches to get feedback (Alberta and Saskatchewan)  
                  Dialogue with original consultants  
                  Review CPRA process and document to see what might fit  
                  Discuss with potential partners need for /availability of this type of resource

#### Outcomes:

- Context/consistent terminology
- Base process
- Comprehensive resource re community animation/facilitation of benefits
- Tool to support coaches
- Helps tie pieces together

Fits with recommendations #9 and #11

### Recommendation #15: OUTCOMES PROCESS TEMPLATE

In consultation with partners, develop a generic process/template that combines and builds upon previous models and processes, provides more detail, and uses language agreed upon by major partners. This will help to build a context and process that can be used across sectors/partners. Suggest the use of an editor to achieve best product.

#### Resources:

- Ferris Wheel – Benefits Based Recreation: Awareness into Action
- Changing Model – Learning and Development Plan and Leading the Way
- 7 Steps -MARS Project

DRAFT Template (not schematic) attached: Appendix #1

Outcomes:

- Concrete process for those that need a prescription
- Common vocabulary /stages for working with others
- Base to build upon

#### Recommendation #16: OUTCOMES/ VALUES BASED ASSESMENT TOOLS

Encouraging the use of outcomes/benefits in all processes may need to start with assessment. In a linear world we start at the beginning with surveys, needs studies etc. We need some applications that demonstrate how values and outcomes can drive assessment processes.

Facilitate a diverse focus group to discuss current practise, knowledge of outcomes/values based tools, potential development of tools and constraints/barriers. Initiate a challenge re new best practise and how this could support the change and for what benefit.

Suggest involving Rod Keith from City of Edmonton and planning staff from City of Calgary that have been involved with 'benefits' as well as others that have not. Include other fields.

Outcomes:

- Good investment in terms of involvement and change
  - Greater credibility
  - Measurement based on community values
  - Obtaining this type of information opens the door for outcomes based services
-



### 9.3 ORGANIZATIONS / AGENCIES

ARPA:	11759 Groat Road Edmonton, AB T5M 3K6 (780) 415-1745 <a href="http://www.sport.ab.ca">www.sport.ab.ca</a>
Canadian Outcomes Institute:	Dr. Kelly Ernst (403) 238-6233 <a href="mailto:kernst@wrhull.com">kernst@wrhull.com</a> <a href="http://www.hmrp.net/canadianoutcomesinstitute/">www.hmrp.net/canadianoutcomesinstitute/</a>
CPRA;	404, 2197 Riverside Dr Ottawa, ON K1H 7X3 (613) 523-5315 <a href="http://www.cpra.ca">www.cpra.ca</a>
Human Kinetics:	1-800-465-7301 475 Devonshire Road, Unit 100 Windsor, ON. N8Y 2L5
NRPA:	Pacific Service Center Pam Earle – Director 1-800-796-NRPA <a href="mailto:nrpapac@aol.com">nrpapac@aol.com</a>
United Way:	<a href="http://national.unitedway.org">http://national.unitedway.org</a> - Community Impact Agenda

### 10.0 APPENDICES

#### APPENDIX #1 : DRAFT - Benefits Driven Process Template

Benefits Driven Services (*or whatever label we decide to use*) describes an approach that involves working with community stakeholders to determine priority targets (benefits/outcomes), then developing strategies, programs and services to ensure the outcomes are delivered.

Sample or draft process is outlined below:

- 1) Trust/rapport is fundamental. Develop this with stakeholders.
- 2) Start with a broad vision; this may be a given already established by a City, Department, or Organization.
- 3) Define (really define) the desired/target outcomes for the project or program so that you know and can articulate your unique contribution to the bigger outcomes. Helps define what is valued/important and outcomes are a statement of the desired result; more specifically it will be

the unique contribution to that broader outcome/vision. *(may want to include questions or exercise reference here to actually help them define their outcomes)* Note: The answers are in the room.

4) Define (as above) the target outcomes for this specific process/intervention

5) Who else might be interested in or gain from the project outcomes or the intervention outcomes?

- involve them
- nurture leadership
- nurture sponsorship

6) How will we get there?

Map out the intervention strategies/process and plan for the project delivery mechanisms. What will be used to achieve the outcomes?

- Programs?
- Facility?
- Activities?
- Strategy and Timelines?

7) Indicators or Guideposts

How do you know that this path is leading you to your destination or that it is contributing to the target outcomes? Have others help develop these. For example:

- What do you need to see?
- What can you count?
- What will people be saying?
- What are people be doing?

If the activities you have chosen are not contributing to the target/desired outcomes then you need to adjust your course and revamp your action plan.

Note: We must always stay focused on desired end result, outcome, destination!! Analogy to train trip or mountain hike.

8) Have you arrived at your destination?

Community may never arrive at their final destination since their desired outcome may be as broad as a vision statement. However there should always be specific pieces that can be achieved to measure/celebrate progress! In this way our unique contribution to the overall vision is defined and completed. There is accountability and satisfaction/pride in accomplishments. These steps along the way may be quantitative (outputs) or may be initial outcomes toward the broader eventual outcome.