Phase One and Two - Final Report

Alberta Recreation Industry
Labour Market Analysis

June 2003

ARPA

Recreation for Life

ARPA is a provincial charitable not-for profit organization with a voluntary board of directors dedicated to the promotion of recreation and parks and their benefits to the quality of life of all Albertans.

Our Vision…

"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."

Our mission…

ARPA strives to build healthy citizens, their communities and their environments throughout Alberta.

For more information on ARPA, our programs or services or the benefits of recreation and parks please visit our website at http://www.arpaonline.ca.

ARPA

11759 Groat Road
Edmonton, AB T5H 2X1
Canada

Toll Free: +1.877.544.1747
Phone: +1.780.415.1745
Fax: +1.780.451.7915

Table of Contents

Report Prepared By:

Tavis Consulting
Caminata Consulting
WillowBridge Consulting

Acknowledgments

This Report outlines the findings of the first Phase of a study of the Alberta Recreation Industry Labour Market, carried out jointly by Caminata Consulting and WillowBridge Consulting, and managed by TAVIS Consulting, on behalf of the ARPA.

The study was made possible by the financial support of three Alberta Provincial Government Departments - Alberta Community Development, Alberta Human Resources and Employment, and Alberta Economic Development. It was carried out with the assistance of an Advisory Committee made up of representatives of the three supporting Departments, Alberta municipalities, provincial recreation and sport organizations, the University of Alberta, and a private recreation business. This Advisory Committee met five times over a period of six months to provide advice and assistance in the ongoing development of the project and to review progress reports prepared by the consultants. The names and affiliations of the members of the Advisory Committee are to be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

The ARPA would like to thank the sponsoring departments and the members of the Advisory Committee for their outstanding commitment and dedication to the successful conclusion of the first Phase of the study. The Association believes that the results presented here provide an excellent foundation for the second Phase of the project, which will consist of a rigorous assessment of the industry’s labor market in Alberta - leading to the development of an integrated recreation industry education and training plan for the province.

Rick Curtis, Executive Director, ARPA

Highlights

The Growing Business of Recreation in Alberta

> "In sum, the recreation industry is an important and growing component of the provincial economy, in terms of both economic output and employment."

- The definition of recreation employed in this study is relatively narrow, encompassing: fitness and active living; amateur sport; outdoor recreation and parks; and community recreation.
- Specifically, not included in this definition are professional sports, arts and culture, gambling, alcohol consumption, tourism and hospitality, and home-based leisure activities such as watching television and playing computer games.
- Employing this definition, total spending on recreation in Alberta in 2001 was slightly more than $2.8 billion – an increase in real terms of 30.2% over 1997.
- This total spending represented about 2% of Alberta's Gross Domestic Product and 2.1% of provincial final demand for goods and services in 2001.
- The largest category of spending was by Alberta households: almost $2 billion in 2001 – an increase in real terms of 26% over 1997.
- Recreation spending by all levels of government was about $750 million in 2001 – an increase in real terms of 34% over 1997.
- In every year from 1997 through 2001 recreation spending by municipal governments exceeded spending by all other levels of government combined.
- Total primary employment in recreation was 21,534 in 2001 – an increase of 14.4% over 1996 and 30.1% over 1991.
- While not included in the spending and employment figures cited above, volunteering is important to recreation in Alberta. The equivalent wage value of volunteer contributions to recreation in 2000 amounted to about $287 million, or 8,572 person-years of work.
- After allowing for 'leakages' from the provincial economy, the overall impact of recreation on Alberta's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), not including volunteer contributions, was $2.2 billion in 2001, equivalent to 1.5% of provincial GDP.
- In sum, the recreation industry is an important and growing component of the provincial economy, in terms of both economic output and employment. A healthy recreation sector is a significant economic driver in the Alberta economy.

Perspectives on the Future

- An analysis of societal trends and their potential implications for the recreation industry during the next decade or so was carried out through a literature review and by convening two Focus Groups – in Calgary and Edmonton, respectively.
- Important anticipated demographic changes include the aging of Alberta's population, increasing international immigration into the province, and growing demands for accessibility to recreation from disadvantaged groups, while major health concerns include rapidly rising levels of youth obesity and escalating costs of maintaining the health care system. All of these provide significant problems, challenges, and opportunities for the recreation industry.
- A special concern for the recreation industry is a growing preoccupation with safety and security issues - notably accountability, liability, and risk management.

- The principal institutional change affecting the industry in recent years has been the devolution of many services from senior levels of government to the local level (in particular, from the provincial government to municipal governments) and the voluntary sector.

- Some important implications of these societal changes for the recreation industry are:

    - A need to strengthen the 'soft skills' of recreation industry personnel (in conflict management, problem analysis, communications, etc.).
    - A need to provide more effective applied learning and integrated training opportunities within post-secondary education programs in recreation.
    - A need to provide proper training in working with volunteers.
    - A need to promote the value of recreation as an important contributor to the resolution of social problems, including declining levels of personal and community health.
    - A need to resolve confusing (and, sometimes, conflicting) certification standards in the industry.
    - A continuing opportunity to develop partnerships between public, private, and not-for-profit organizations within the recreation industry.
    - An opportunity to develop joint degrees (and careers) in the industry, combining recreation with such fields as business, law, and engineering.

Chapter One: Background And Scope Of The Project

Tim Burton, TAVIS Consulting, Project Manager

Origins

The Alberta Recreation Industry Labour Market Analysis project has its origins in several themes and events over the past couple of decades, four of which are worthy of special recognition.

First, a broad-based shift in methods of delivering public services began in earnest in Alberta (and, indeed, throughout North America) during the 1980s - emphasizing enhanced accountability, greater focus on measurable outcomes of public service delivery, improved marketing of community services, and increased involvement of private and not-for-profit organizations in public service delivery through contracts and leases. Community recreation programs and services have been heavily engaged in this movement since its inception (Burton and Glover 1999; McCarville 1999).

Second, a period of fiscal restraint introduced by the Alberta government in 1993 resulted in significant reductions in transfers of monies from the provincial government to many municipal social and economic programs, including recreation. While this did not necessarily lead to reduced program offerings, it did reinforce the shift to contracting of services and led to a greater emphasis on 'user pay' approaches to the provision of public recreation (Clark 1999).

Together, the two previous developments have led to a 'blurring' of the distinction between the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors in the recreation field. The recreation industry is now a complex amalgam of all three sectors in which organizational structures, methods of program and service delivery, and operating procedures routinely cross sector boundaries in the quest to maintain and enhance 'the public good' (Slack 1999).

Most recently, both major post-secondary recreation education programs in Alberta - at the University of Alberta and Red Deer College - have come under close scrutiny and detailed review, in large part because of the previously noted changes in methods of service delivery and user pay philosophies. The central focus is upon the relevance and adequacy of the philosophical underpinnings of the programs and the sets of skills being taught to students.

> *"…an urgent need to re-consider how recreation professionals and associated staff are prepared for careers throughout the recreation industry-including the public, private and not-for-profit sectors."*

This last concern is not unique to Alberta. During the past two decades, there has been a growing realization throughout North America that recreation education programs reflecting the dominant pattern of the 1960s and 1970s – that is, direct delivery of public recreation programs and services by government agencies – provide an increasingly inadequate preparation for careers in the recreation field (Dustin and Goodale 1999).

Other themes have been at work, but these four have been the most significant. The outcome has been recognition of an urgent need to re-consider how recreation professionals and associated staff are prepared for careers throughout the recreation industry – including the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors.

While the developments noted above served to create a climate of concern about the future structure and make-up of the recreation industry labour market in Alberta and elsewhere in North America, the specific study reported here has its origins in the activities of the ARPA (ARPA) and, specifically, in its Vision 2015 Symposium on Leisure, Wellness, Prosperity and Quality of Life held in May 2002 and its project on Community Recreation Development and Delivery in 2001. Both of these drew attention to concerns about the preparation of professionals in the recreation field.

The primary focus of the Vision 2015 Symposium was on the creation of a vision for leisure, wellness, prosperity, and quality of life in Alberta society a dozen years into the future. In considering this, however, it generated interest in the numbers and kinds of professionals and other staff required in the recreation industry (and in associated fields) if this vision was to be pursued and, ultimately, achieved. The Community Recreation Development and Delivery study was more directly linked. Employing both an e-mail survey of ARPA members and in-depth interviews with leaders in the field, it identified considerable concern – and, even, alarm - about the adequacy of the education and training of recreation professionals, both for entry into the field and for ongoing professional development. In this context, ARPA set out to consider ways in which to investigate future labour market needs in the industry.

At the same time, there was considerable ongoing concern within several Provincial government departments – notably Alberta Human Resources and Employment and Alberta Economic Development – about the extent to which the labour force in many Alberta industries was appropriately prepared and trained to operate successfully in an ever more competitive global economy. There was a growing interest in assessing labour market needs in various sectors of the Alberta economy that were (and are) facing strong global competition: for example, hospitality, tourism, a variety of personal services industries, and more.

This commonality of interest generated discussions between the Executive Director of ARPA and staff of several Provincial government departments, leading to the development of parameters for the first phase of the present project, which then received the financial backing of three departments: Alberta Community Development; Alberta Human Resources and Employment; and Alberta Economic Development. At this time, a Project Advisory

Committee was also established to oversee the conduct of the project (see Appendix 2).

Objectives and Scope

"The Alberta Recreation Industry Labor Market Analysis project is intended, first, to provide a general assessment of the size and scope of Alberta's recreation industry; second, to prepare an analysis of the recreation industry's labour market; and, third, to identify education and training needs in the industry…"

The Alberta Recreation Industry Labour Market Analysis project is intended, first, to provide a general assessment of the size and scope of Alberta's recreation industry; second, to prepare an analysis of the recreation industry's labour market; and, third, to identify education and training needs in the industry for the immediate (five-year) and long-term future. It consists of two Phases, each with two distinct but related components.

The first Phase of the study, which is the subject of this report, was designed to address the first of these objectives: to set the scene for a subsequent detailed assessment of the recreation industry labour market. To this end, it was made up of two components, an analysis of the current economic significance of the recreation industry in Alberta, together with an examination of potential future social, economic, and institutional developments affecting the recreation field generally in the province, and, more specifically, the recreation industry. These two components have been identified as The Growing Business of Recreation in Alberta and Perspectives on the Future, respectively.

The purpose of The Growing Business of Recreation in Alberta component was to identify and analyze the scope of the recreation industry and its delivery sectors in the province, and to assess its overall impact on the Alberta economy. It consisted of a general assessment of the macroeconomics of leisure lifestyles and the associated growth and development of the recreation industry in the province. To achieve this, analyses have been undertaken of employment statistics, consumer expenditures, the scope and nature of public, private, and voluntary sector expenditures, and direct and indirect economic growth generators. In short, it has attempted to identify the economic significance of the industry to Alberta's economy – in monetary and employment terms.

The purpose of the Perspectives on the Future component was to investigate prospective macro socio-economic trends, issues, and opportunities in Alberta that are expected to have a substantial impact on the growth and development of the recreation industry in the province in the immediate and longer-term future and, more specifically, will likely affect the industry's labour market.

The second Phase of the project, yet to be undertaken, is intended to focus more directly on the labour market itself. It will address the second and third objectives of the overall project: the preparation of an analysis of the labour market and the development of a strategy for meeting the future education and training needs of the industry. Like Phase One, it will consist of two components.

The first component of Phase Two, A Recreation Industry Labour Market Analysis, is central to the entire project. It will consist of a rigorous assessment of the industry's labour market in Alberta: its historical evolution, present circumstances, future employment sectors and projections, job characteristics, and the like. The outcome of this component will include not just an assessment of the state and expectations of the industry, but also a description of the critical core competencies required of the various personnel sectors within it.

The second component of Phase Two, A Provincial Recreation Industry Education and Training Plan, will build on the labour market analysis to define, on an interagency basis, the strategic elements required for the education and training of recreation industry practitioners in Alberta. Not surprisingly, then, it is envisaged that this component will include a Post-Secondary Education Institutions Congress, intended to draw upon the perspectives and expertise of recreation industry educators in the province. What it is hoped will emerge is an integrated provincial recreation industry education and training plan.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations may be defined as **restrictions on the nature and scope of a project arising from circumstances largely beyond the control of those carrying it out**. Since the funds available for the conduct of Phase One of this project were relatively limited and the time available for its completion relatively short, it was impossible to carry out the first component (the Growing Business of Recreation in Alberta) through the collection of primary (or new) data. Instead, it was decided to use existing databases (secondary sources) to gather information about the significance of recreation to the provincial economy: employment statistics, consumer expenditure data, published (and available unpublished) tables of spending by public, private, and not-for-profit organizations, and so on. The problem with all databases employed in secondary analyses, however, is that they were originally prepared for other purposes, employing definitions suitable to those purposes. Such definitions are rarely coincident with the definitions and needs of secondary users. Typically, these data cannot be re-defined into different categories (except as part of a general process of aggregation). Secondary studies are inevitably limited to employing the definitions, types, and categories of data found in the original databases. Fortunately for us, the definitions and categories employed in the original data sources were not greatly different from the definitions and categories that we wished to employ. As a result, limitations caused by the need to employ secondary data sources did not substantially affect the scope and effectiveness of our study, although there were some minor difficulties: for example, estimates had to be made for the recreational component of public (K-12) education spending (see discussion on page 13) and for the proportion of federal government spending on recreation that occurred within the province of Alberta (see discussion on page 11).

In a similar manner, the limitations of time and resources restricted the amount of primary data that could be collected for the second component of the study, Perspectives on the Future. Information about potential macro socio-economic trends, issues, and opportunities likely to affect the provincial recreation industry was obtained from two sources: first, through an extensive literature review conducted primarily via the Internet; and, second, directly from a wide variety of individuals currently involved in the industry, by means of focus group sessions. Unfortunately, limited time and resources meant that only two focus groups could be convened - one in each of Edmonton and Calgary. And while some participants did attend these from other parts of the province, involvement could not be considered representative in any statistical sense. The intent was not to be representative of professional opinion within the industry but, rather, to cast as wide a net as possible in an effort to identify trends, issues, concerns and opportunities.

Delimitations, in contrast, are **restrictions imposed on a project as part of its design and conduct**. The most significant delimitation of the current project was the definition of the recreation industry employed. Any study of recreation and the recreation industry in Alberta must begin with a definition of what is meant by the terms recreation and recreation industry, since there is no universal agreement on just exactly what is encompassed by each. While there is substantial ongoing academic debate about the relationship between work and leisure, it is generally accepted in North America that recreation consists of avocational activities and pursuits: that is, they are not work-related or work-based in character. They are distinct from work and employment activities. Such a definition may be sufficient for many, but when attempting to define the recreation industry how do we account for one person's work that caters to another's recreation: athletes competing in spectator professional sports; professional artists and musicians engaged in concerts and plays presented for the recreation of others; outfitters and guides acting as leaders for wilderness recreation; and many more?

A Working Definition of the Recreation Industry

The recreation industry has been variously defined in the literature and in statistical databases of differing kinds. At its widest, the industry has been identified as including tourism and hospitality activities, entertainment producers and entertainers, leisure-oriented manufacturing, television and radio, home electronics, publishing, the production and sale of alcoholic beverages, gambling, and even the Internet – as well as local community recreation services, fitness and amateur sports, parks, outdoor urban and non-urban recreation activities and facilities, and community arts and culture. At its narrowest, it has been limited to public recreation and parks services. The intent here was to adopt neither extreme, but to develop a working definition reflecting two conditions.

First, it needed to take account of our specific interest in the labour needs of the industry. The ultimate goal of the overall project is to develop an education and training plan for the industry. Given this, it can be argued, for example, that the definition should exclude professionals in sport and culture, since the activities of such people are not recreational in character. On the other hand, it is important to recognize that professionals play multiple roles in the industry, some of which are broadly recreational: professional musicians, for example, teach individuals interested in playing music for their own recreation; professional athletes operate community sport camps; professional artists hold community workshops; and so on. Unfortunately, it is sometimes difficult to separate purely professional activities from those that have recreational characteristics. It was, in fact, easier to do this for sports than for the arts. **At the urging of arts and culture professionals, therefore, spending on arts and cultural activities and equipment has been excluded from the analysis**. In doing this, however, it must be recognized that the resulting definition will lead to a (relatively slight) under-estimate of the value of consumer spending in the recreation industry as a whole, since some arts and culture spending is clearly recreational in character.

Second, the definition needed to be practical: that is, it had to encompass things that can be measured discretely. It is difficult, for example, to separate out those components of the hospitality sector that are recreational from those that are business-related. The same is true of publishing: what aspects are strictly or largely recreational, and what are more vocational in character? Again, how much of Internet use is recreational and how much is for educational, business, media and communications purposes? And so on.

It is also important to recognize that attempts to define the recreation industry have been ongoing for a long time. There is a significant body of literature on the subject. Others have developed and employed various definitions. The project should not set out to re-invent the wheel!

Given these parameters, we were fortunate to be able to build upon an Australian definition developed specifically for labour market purposes (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2001). This identified five components, or sectors, of the recreation industry: fitness; sport; outdoor recreation; community recreation and government activities; and racing and gambling services. The last of these is not appropriate for Alberta, since racing and gambling activities are not easily separated from the hospitality and entertainment industries. However, with this as a starting point, and accepting that any working definition is always a work in progress, the definition shown in Table 1.1 (page 9) was adopted.

This sees the industry as consisting of four major components, or sectors: fitness and active living; amateur sport; outdoor recreation and parks; and community recreation. It is recognized that this excludes some things that are clearly recreational in character: attendance at professional sports and cultural events for recreation purposes; recreational travel; participation in various resort-based activities; and so on. On the other hand, it ensures that the measures of the industry that have been developed on the basis of this definition do not include substantial non-recreational components.

What this definition offers, then, is a minimum statement of what makes up the recreation industry. It is this conception that we have attempted to measure and analyze in the two components of the first Phase of the project: The Growing Business of Recreation in Alberta and Perspectives on the Future.

Table 1.1: A Working Definition of the Recreation Industry

Fitness and Active Living

- Health and fitness centers.
- Sport and recreation centers.
- Fitness and health programs in educational and health institutions.
- Corporate fitness services, facilities, and programs.
- Fitness/Recreation-related health and community service professions (e.g. camp counselors, recreation therapists, play leaders, sport medicine practitioners, etc.).
- Manufacturing, retail, and wholesale trade related to fitness and active living (e.g. swimming pools, home-based exercise equipment, etc.).

Amateur Sport

- Provincial sport organizations.
- Non-profit and user-pay organizations offering access to sport and physical recreation to the public (e.g., YMCA).
- Sport programming in educational institutions (primary, secondary, tertiary).
- Manufacturing, retail, and wholesale trade related to amateur sport (e.g. equipment manufacture, sales, rentals, etc.).

EXCLUDES: Professional sport teams with a primary interest in entertainment (e.g., Edmonton Oilers, Calgary Flames), individual professional athletes, etc.

INCLUDES: Professionals acting as instructors, coaches, etc.; recreational non-organized sport participation (e.g. golf, skiing); government support of amateur sport.

Outdoor Recreation and Parks

- Public, voluntary, and commercial parks, open spaces, and facilities for individual and group involvement in active and passive outdoor pursuits (e.g., picnics, hiking, camping, climbing, rafting, etc.).
- Guides and outfitters for parks use.
- Provincial Recreation Associations.
- Manufacturing, retail, and wholesale trade related to outdoor recreation and parks (e.g., camping equipment, recreational vehicle trade - snow-mobiles, RVs, etc.).

INCLUDES: Tourism-related expenditures in outdoor recreation; government support of outdoor recreation and parks, etc.

Community Recreation

- Public and community-based organizations, spaces, and centres that offer active and passive recreation opportunities at local and provincial levels (e.g., playgrounds, community centres, pools, arenas, etc.).
- Manufacturing, retail, and wholesale trade related to community recreation (e.g., suppliers of playground equipment, etc.).

References

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2002) *Sports Industries Australia*, 2000-01. Canberra: Catalogue #8686.0.

Burton, T.L. and T.D. Glover. (1999) Back to the future: Leisure services and the re-emergence of the enabling authority of the state. In E.L. Jackson & T.L. Burton. (Eds.) *Leisure studies: Prospects for the future.* State College, PA: Venture Publishing, pp.371-383.

Clark, B. (1999) Evolving municipal roles in the delivery and support of sport services. In *Re-shaping the public good*. Edmonton: City of Edmonton Community Services.

Dustin, D.L. and T.L. Goodale. (1999) Reflections on recreation, park, and leisure studies. In E.L. Jackson and T.L. Burton. (Eds.) *Leisure studies: Prospects for the future.* State College, PA: Venture Publishing, pp. 477-486.

McCarville, R. (1999) Marketing public leisure services. In E.L. Jackson and T.L. Burton. (eds.) *Leisure studies: Prospects for the future.* State College, PA: Venture Publishing, pp. 415-433.

Slack, T. (1999) Changing boundaries and new management implications for leisure organizations. In E.L. Jackson and T.L. Burton. (eds.) *Leisure studies: Prospects for the future.* State College, PA: Venture Publishing, pp. 399-413.

Chapter Two: The Growing Business Of Recreation In Alberta

Tim Berrett, Caminata Consulting

Introduction

Recreation is known to have a wide range of personal and social benefits for participants and our broader society. These include improved health and an enhanced sense of wellbeing for participants, and societal paybacks such as reduced levels of crime and decreases in the incidence of other social problems (Canadian Parks/Recreation Association 1997). However, the economic benefits and value of recreation are often overlooked and undervalued by governments and by the general population. The purpose of this report is to provide a measure of the significance that the recreation industry has to the economy and labour force of Alberta.

The approach taken in measuring the scope of the recreation sector draws on the experience of previous researchers who have attempted to evaluate the relative importance of sport or recreation in a country or region. It is important to note the relatively restrictive definition of recreation that has been used in assessing the scope of the industry in this study (Table 1.1, page 7). In other jurisdictions that have attempted to estimate the scope of the recreation sector, a much broader definition has often been employed. For example, in Australia, where a similar approach to measuring the industry has been used, gambling and racing are included and contribute a significant proportion of the total expenditures reported (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2002). These elements of the industry (along with the arts and culture sector) have not been included in the definition employed in this study. Therefore, the results presented here are not strictly comparable to those obtained from similar studies that have been conducted elsewhere.

It is also important that the difference between the macroeconomic significance and the economic impact of an activity is highlighted. The former attempts to evaluate the extent of economic activity that is generated by the sector under investigation (in this case, recreation). The latter aims to assess the level of economic activity that occurs in a given jurisdiction as a direct result of hosting an event (or series of events). This investigation falls into the former category in that it presents a picture of the share of recreation in the overall provincial economy as measured by the expenditure approach. The results do not purport to assess the net benefits associated with the recreation industry. In other words, it would be erroneous to interpret the results as illustrating what would happen if the recreation industry disappeared altogether from the provincial economy. Instead, the purpose is to provide an estimate of the changing ‘gross provincial recreation product’ between 1997 and 2001. Using the data obtained, an estimate is provided of the direct, indirect, and induced economic impacts on the provincial economy of these initial expenditures.

The remainder of this chapter first provides a review of the methods and data sources used in generating the estimates of the economic significance of recreation in Alberta. The resulting figures and estimates of initial expenditures, economic impacts, and employment patterns are then reported. This is followed by a concluding section in which the limitations of interpreting the results are outlined, together with some comments that place the results in the context of Alberta’s overall economy.

Methods and Data Sources

This section of the report outlines the elements of the recreation industry that were measured and the methods employed in these measurements. While it is somewhat technical in nature, efforts have been made to keep technical language and method to a minimum. The discussion here explains how the numbers outlined in Sections 3.1 through 3.6 were determined. As well, it describes the limitations of these numbers. It is, therefore, an important prerequisite to the actual numbers and values derived and presented in Sections 3.1 through 3.6.

Following a review of existing literature on the measurement of the recreation industry in other jurisdictions, it was concluded that the most appropriate means of determining the contribution of the recreation industry to the provincial economy in Alberta was via the expenditure approach (cf. Meyer & Ahlert 1998; Taks & Késenne 2000). In essence, this involves summing the following components of spending: private household consumption, public expenditure, private investment, and the balance of trade (Rigg & Lewney 1987).

The rationale for using this approach in the current investigation is twofold. First, it has been shown in previous studies of the contribution of recreation to an economy that household consumption and government spending tend to be the largest final expenditure categories (Andreff et al. 1997; Jones 1989). Second, a comprehensive data source for household spending in the province exists in the form of Statistics Canada's Household Expenditure Surveys. This precluded the need for primary data collection.

What is being measured?

The purpose of this element of the investigation into labour market issues for the provincial recreation industry is to generate as complete a picture as possible of expenditures related to recreation in the province of Alberta for the years 1997-2001.

The recreation industry is defined (for the purposes of this analysis) as being comprised of the four sectors outlined in Chapter One (Table 1.1). As noted in the discussion of this definition, it is a relatively restrictive one that excludes several recreational pursuits: arts and culture activities of a recreational character, professional sport, professional arts and culture, alcohol consumption, all forms of gambling, and passive in-home recreation (e.g., electronic gaming, television watching, etc.). Each has been excluded for one of two reasons: either they are not strictly recreational activities (e.g., professional sports and professional arts and culture activities); or there are insurmountable problems in determining reasonably accurate estimates of their value (e.g., in-home recreation activities). The resulting estimates of the scope and size of Alberta's recreation industry should be interpreted with this limited definition in mind.

The most recent year for which all appropriate data were available at the time of the study was 2001. Furthermore, data were available in a format consistent with the 2001 figures only as far back as 1997. In part, this was due to a change in the way in which the largest component of expenditures (household consumption) was reported prior to 1997. So, in order to assess the changing nature of the economic significance of recreation in Alberta over the past several years, the following components of expenditure that occurred in the years 1997-2001 were considered: private household consumption, government expenditures (capital and operating), and private investment. As well, a limitation of using secondary data for this study was that a suitable estimate of the balance of trade for the provincial recreation industry was not available. The data sources are outlined and discussed in more detail below.

Private Household Consumption

This includes spending by Alberta residents on goods and services that are related to recreation activities. These include:

- The purchase, rent and maintenance of sport equipment, playground equipment, camping and picnic supplies, and maps;
- Use of recreational facilities (including membership fees, one-time user-fees, campground costs, etc.);
- Other recreational services (for example, fishing and hunting licenses etc.);
- The purchase, rent, operation and maintenance of recreational vehicles (including snow-mobiles, campers, boats, bicycles);
- The purchase of collectors' items for recreation (e.g. coin and stamp collecting); and
- The purchase of sporting footwear for recreation.
- The source for these data (with the exception of footwear) is the annual Statistics Canada Surveys of Household Spending, 1997-2001 (CANSIM II – Table 203-0010): Household Spending on Recreation.

Limitations in the manner in which expenditures are reported in these surveys mean that the following expenditures have not been included in the estimate of recreation expenditures by households: recreation-related health-care costs (e.g., physiotherapy for recreational athletes), post-secondary education-related recreation costs (e.g., student activity fees at post-secondary institutions), and recreation-related clothing. As well, while Statistics Canada's Survey of Household Spending does not distinguish recreational (sporting) footwear from other forms of footwear expenditures, it has been possible to estimate the annual spending of Alberta households on these items through alternative means, as follows.

Estimates of the total Canadian market for sporting goods (including athletic clothing and footwear) were obtained from the Sporting Goods Manufacturers' Association (www.SGMA.com). The footwear component was estimated to be 25% of the overall market (as claimed by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers' Association). Industry sources in Alberta indicated that the provincial share of the Canadian market is between 12 and 15%. A conservative estimate of 12.5% was assumed as being Alberta's market share for sporting goods footwear in Canada.

The overall Alberta resident expenditure on recreation was estimated by multiplying the average household expenditure by the number of households in the province for each year, as reported by Statistics Canada.

Public Expenditure

This includes net spending made by all three levels of government (or their agencies) that occurred in Alberta in the relevant years (1997-2001). Another element of public spending on recreation, not accounted for by the direct spending of the three levels of government, is the public education system. An estimate of the recreation component of public and separate school board spending was also made, although it was not possible (from secondary data) to determine an accurate estimate of the contribution made by the post-secondary education system to the recreation economy in Alberta.

In order to avoid double counting, government expenditures were calculated by subtracting government revenues from recreation (primarily in the form of user-fees, which would have been accounted for in the estimate of household expenditures). Public investment expenditures in new capital projects were included as part of public spending in this analysis. The manner in which data were generated for each element of public spending is outlined in detail below.

<u>Federal Government Recreation Spending</u>

The Government of Canada provides support to recreation across the country. However, the use of secondary data for this study meant that the amount spent in Alberta could only be estimated. An assessment of available data provided this estimate of federal outlays to sport, recreation services and facilities, and parks in Alberta.

Figures for total federal expenditures on recreation across Canada are available (CANSIM II – Table 385-0002). These figures are broken down into spending on recreation (including parks, sport, etc.), culture, libraries, art galleries and museums, other culture, broadcasting, and 'other recreation & culture'. Those categories that clearly fell outside the definitional scope of this study were not considered (i.e., culture, libraries, art galleries and museums, other culture, and broadcasting). Of the remaining categories, all spending on 'recreation' was included, together with 50% of spending on 'other recreation and culture'. These figures were used to estimate federal spending on recreation in Alberta.

Unfortunately, the data are not disaggregated on a province-by-province basis, so a simplifying assumption was made that federal spending across the country is apportioned to provinces on a per-capita basis. For example, in 2001, Alberta's population represented 9.36% of Canada's population, so it is assumed that the same proportion (9.36%) of federal spending on recreation was directed to Alberta. A large component of federal recreation spending (as defined here) is on National Parks, and Alberta is host to five of Canada's forty National Parks (i.e., 12.5%). In addition, Alberta received special federal funding as host of the 2001 World Championships in Athletics (amounting to $40 million between 1999 and 2001). Therefore, federal spending on recreation in Alberta is likely to have been slightly undervalued here. Nevertheless, a similar approach to illustrating the scope of federal support for recreation in Alberta was taken in a study prepared for ARPA entitled The Public Financing of Recreation and Culture in Alberta: An Historical Review (ARPA 2002).

<u>Provincial Government Recreation Spending</u>

The Government of Alberta plays several roles in the delivery of recreation services and programs in the province on an annual basis. Following discussions with representatives of Alberta Community Development, the provincial government ministry responsible for recreation, the following elements of provincial government spending on recreation were identified.

- Alberta Community Development Departmental Spending (Sport and Recreation Branch, Volunteer Services Branch, Parks & Protected Areas Branch).

  Representatives of each Branch were contacted with a request to provide information regarding annual expenditures made for programming support for recreation (as defined in this study). This included staffing costs and programming directly related to recreation. Other indirect contributions made to the recreation sector by Alberta Community Development (for example, lottery funding made available through the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife [ASRPW] Foundation) were accounted for elsewhere in the analysis.

- Foundation Spending (Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation, Wild Rose Foundation, and special projects).

  In addition to direct departmental funding of recreation, the Alberta Government has established a number of foundations. The relevant ones that provide funding to recreation (as defined in this study) are the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation (ASRPW) and the Wild Rose Foundation.

  The ASRPW Foundation is non-profit Crown Corporation with a mandate to facilitate and enhance activities, lifestyles and legacies through the development of active partnerships in sport, recreation, parks and wildlife programs. The Foundation provides direct funding to a number of agencies (such as provincial sport and recreation associations) on an annual basis. The majority of expenditures made by the ASRPW Foundation fall within the scope of recreation as defined in this study. However, where such expenditures were outside the industry, they were excluded.

  The Wild Rose Foundation provides funding to volunteer, non-profit organizations in order to promote the use of volunteers, or to assist those who volunteer or use the services of volunteers in Alberta. Only that portion of its expenditures that were directed toward the recreation industry was included in the analysis.

  From time to time, additional funding is provided by the provincial government for ‘special projects’ such as hosting of the 2001 World Championships in Athletics, development of the Trans-Canada Trail, and hosting of the Arctic Winter Games. These expenditures have also been included in the analysis where they fall within the scope of the definition of recreation employed in this study.

- Alberta Gaming (Community Facilities Enhancement Program, Community Lottery Board, Community Initiatives Program, direct funding to recreation groups).

  In addition to Foundation funding of programs and other initiatives, various grants are funded by the Alberta Lottery Fund and made to recreation groups in the province. These include: the Community Facilities Enhancement Program (CFEP), the (now defunct) Community Lottery Board (CLB) grants program, and the Community Initiatives grant program that support community initiatives by addressing local and regional priorities, and direct funding of charitable recreation groups from casino, bingo, raffle and pull-tab operations.

  In the absence of available detailed figures, it was assumed that 67% of CFEP grants made to recreation, parks and culture programs were encompassed by the definition of recreation used in this study, while the remaining portion (33%) was directed to forms of recreation that fall outside the definition used here (e.g., arts, culture, and libraries).

  It was assumed that 25% of direct funding to charitable organizations via casinos, bingos, raffles and pull-tab operations went to recreation groups. This figure is based on the fact that revenues from these activities are directed to eligible charitable groups including religious, health and wellness, educational, cultural, and recreational organizations. For example, in 2000, 8.4% of the total provincial gaming funding in this category was directed to Edmonton-based amateur sport and active recreation groups. Assuming that a similar proportion was distributed to recreation groups in the remainder of the province in each year, based on population, yields the estimate of 25%.

<u>Municipal Government Recreation Spending</u>

Data on government spending on recreation at the municipal level in Alberta were generated from the Government of Alberta Department of Municipal Affairs’ Alberta Municipal Financial Information System (AMFIS). The total operating and capital expenditures on Recreation Boards, Parks and Recreation and ‘Other Recreation’ for each municipality were summed for each of the years under investigation. In order to avoid double counting of household expenditures directed toward user fees for facility use (which were accounted for elsewhere in the analysis), the total revenues received by municipalities for these categories were deducted so as to yield a net municipal recreation expenditure figure for each year.

<u>Public (Primary and Secondary) Education Recreation Spending</u>

The final element of ‘public’ spending on recreation considered in this study was that undertaken by the education system. Only figures for primary and secondary education were considered. The Alberta Teachers’ Association was contacted in order to generate an estimate of the education system’s contribution to the recreation economy. The estimated contribution was composed of salaries, other operating costs, and capital costs. Total expenditures for each of these components were derived from published sources http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/interprovincial/interp02.pdf, while the recreational component was estimated in the following fashion. For salaries, it was estimated that the proportion devoted to recreation education (including sport, physical and outdoor education, and other forms of recreation) amounted to 3.125%. This figure was determined as follows: it was estimated that 25% of staff are involved in recreation programs to some degree, with the extent of involvement estimated to be one hour per eight-hour day (i.e., 12.5% of each day). A similar proportion (3.125%) of expenditures on recreation in other operating costs was assumed. For capital expenditures, it was estimated that 3% is directed toward recreation facilities. In a study conducted in the United Kingdom, it was estimated that 5% of capital spending in schools is directed toward sport facilities (Henley Centre for Economic Forecasting 1986). The lower figure estimated for Alberta is to account for joint use of municipally owned facilities by some school boards.

Private Investment

The level of private investment in recreation in Alberta was estimated by considering the major investment projects that occurred in this sector between 1997 and 2001. Alberta Economic Development tracks ‘major’ investment projects across the province in a variety of sectors, including tourism/recreation. The criterion for inclusion in this database is that the project’s capital cost is at least $2 million. For projects whose construction schedule lasted more than one year, a simple average of investment per year was assumed with the relevant amount being included as part of a particular year’s figure for private

investment. Given that relatively small projects (i.e., those less than $2 million) are excluded, the resulting estimate for this component of the recreation industry in Alberta is likely to be conservative in nature. However, this element of the overall recreation economy is not likely to be substantial in comparison with government spending and household consumption. Only those projects that were of a ‘private’ (i.e., non-governmental) nature were included in assessing private investment since public (government) investment is accounted for elsewhere in the analysis. In order to provide a check on the private investment estimate, Statistics Canada data that outline investment expenditures were consulted (Catalogue 61-205-XIB) and yielded similar results. This approach was similar to that used in a 1993 study of the economic impact of recreation in Ontario (Ontario 1993).

Balance of Trade

The final element of expenditures that should be accounted for in assessing the contribution that an industry makes to the provincial economy involves a measure of ‘exports’ from the Alberta economy that were paid for by non-residents of the province, less ‘imports’ to Alberta that were paid for by residents of the province. Examples of ‘exports’ in the recreation industry include spending on recreation goods and services by visitors, or spending by non-Alberta residents who visited the province for the purpose of recreation (as defined previously). Examples of ‘imports’ include spending by Alberta residents on recreation-related goods and services purchased from outside the province and expenditures incurred by residents of Alberta while participating in recreation activities outside the province. Another element of imports is the value of wholesale goods and services imported into Alberta for final sale in the province’s economy.

Unfortunately, a suitable measure of the trade balance is not available from published secondary data sources. Although it is possible to estimate the direct expenditures made by visitors from outside the province on sport and recreation goods and services, this would only account for a portion of the overall trade balance. It would not consider the direct expenditures made by Alberta residents on recreation goods and services outside the province. Moreover, merely considering the ‘exports’ made to visitors would ignore imports made by Alberta firms who supply recreation goods and services to Alberta residents. As a result, the positive impact on the recreation economy could be grossly overstated.

Given this, a simplifying assumption has been made that exports of recreation goods and services balance out imports. There are some sectors of the recreation economy in which there is a positive trade balance (i.e., exports exceed imports). One such example is the manufacture of swimming pool chemicals. However, it is unlikely that the overall trade balance makes a significant contribution (either positive or negative) to the sum of all direct expenditures in the provincial recreation industry.

However, for some elements of initial spending made in Alberta, there could still be an import component (or leakage from the provincial economy). Although the economic base in Alberta is quite diverse, a number of goods that are sold by local merchants to local residents are not manufactured in the province. In order to account for leakages from the provincial economy (as well as provide estimates of GDP and other measures of the impact of the recreation industry), figures obtained from the remainder of the analysis were entered into an input-output model of the provincial economy, which was made available by Alberta Community Development and modified for use in this industry study. This model was developed to enable users to determine the projected impact of certain projects on economic activity in the province. By running the initial expenditure estimates outlined elsewhere through the model, it was possible to estimate the 'direct' GDP and labor income impacts of this spending on the provincial economy. Since the estimates of leakages are linked with the results of the input-output model, it is not possible to report these separately as 'imports'. However, by using this model, the GDP effect of initial recreation expenditures in the provincial economy can be estimated.

Direct, Indirect and Induced Impacts

The direct output of the recreation sector is one element of the value that the recreation industry provides to the provincial economy. The overall impact is comprised of a number of economic activities that are linked to the direct output, which are referred to as 'indirect' and 'induced' impacts.

In order to establish the effects of the initial direct expenditures on economic output in Alberta, it must be assumed that the spending made on recreation represents an autonomous injection into the economy. In other words, it must be assumed that these expenditures would not have been made in the province in the absence of a recreation sector in the economy. Clearly, this is a gross oversimplification of the actual situation in that many of the recreation expenditures would have been made in other sectors of the provincial economy in the absence of the segment under consideration. However, this assumption must be made in order to infer the indirect and induced effects of the initial expenditures.

The statement of overall economic impact reports the effect that the recreation sector had on Alberta's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2001. Although there is a broad industrial base in the province, it must be recognized that total initial expenditures made by Alberta residents, governments and private firms will not have an equal impact on the province's GDP. This is because a portion of those expenditures will 'leak' out of the economy to manufacturers of goods sold in Alberta who are based outside the province. Such spending on 'imports' (other than the margins that are retained by Alberta retailers, for example) has little impact on the well being of Alberta residents. The direct impact on Alberta's GDP of the initial expenditures on the recreation sector provides a measure of the effect that this spending had on the output of the provincial economy.

Somewhat offsetting these 'leakages' from the provincial economy are indirect and induced impacts. The former refers to impacts resulting from intermediate rounds of production in the supply of goods and services to industry sectors identified in the direct impact. In producing recreation goods and services, the recreation sector makes purchases from other segments of the provincial economy, and stimulates demand indirectly (for example, energy spending). Induced impact refers to the effects on the provincial economy that result from spending by employees and businesses that benefited from direct spending. The effect of indirect and induced impacts is often referred to as the 'multiplier'. The total economic impact of the recreation sector is the sum of direct, indirect, and induced phases of spending.

It is important to note that the actual effect on the size of the Alberta economy is the 'Gross Domestic Product' (GDP) impact of spending. Quite often in economic impact studies, the rather meaningless 'spending' impact is reported. This provides an estimate of the increased circulation of money in an economy, but does not indicate the extent to which the residents of the economy are actually better off as a result of the spending. In short, it is the contribution to Alberta's GDP that can be related to recreation that illustrates the extent to which the economy benefits from recreation activity. The economic model made available by Alberta Community Development was modified to provide estimates of the indirect, induced and GDP effects of initial spending in Alberta's economy.

Economic Significance of Alberta's Recreation Industry

$$C + G + I + (X - M) = GPRP$$

Where:

C = Household consumption on recreation;
G = Government spending on recreation;
I = Private investment on recreation;
X = Recreation exports;
M = Recreation imports; and
GPRP = Gross provincial recreation product.

Based on the data that have been collected, an estimate of the total significance of the recreation industry in Alberta's economy has been made. This figure is effectively the 'gross provincial recreation product', which is a measure of the actual initial spending contribution of recreation to Alberta's economy in a given year. The following equation summarizes the manner in which the economic significance of the provincial recreation sector is being determined:

As indicated left, it was not possible to determine the 'import' or leakage effect of initial spending in the provincial recreation industry without subjecting the raw data to the input-output model of Alberta's economy. However, the overall effect of leakages has been accounted for in considering the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of the initial expenditures.

Employment Patterns in Alberta's Recreation Industry

An assessment of employment patterns in Alberta's recreation industry was derived from published Census data from 1991, 1996 and 2001. From these data, it was only possible to assess the employment levels of those in 'primary' recreation industries, such as program leaders in recreation and sport, recreation and sport program and service directors, and coaches.

However, data were also collected for other components of the recreation industry described elsewhere in this report, including facility management, education, and retail sales. It was assumed that 10% of facility managers in Alberta are employed in recreation facilities. For educators, it was assumed that 3.125% are employed as recreation professionals. For the retail sales industry, the estimated number of Albertans employed in the recreation industry was based on Statistics Canada's Annual Estimates of Employment, Earnings and Hours (Catalogue # 72F0023XIB), which identifies employment in retail sporting goods and recreation stores.

Value of Volunteer Contributions to Alberta's Recreation Industry

An estimate of the value of volunteer work in the recreation industry has also been made in this study. Volunteer work is not normally included in evaluating the gross domestic product of a country, province, or industry, since it is considered to be a 'non-market activity'. However, such activity is estimated to have a significant value in the delivery of recreation programming in Alberta. *So, while it has been calculated and described in this report, it is important to note that the value of volunteer contributions is not included in the gross provincial recreation product or GDP impacts of recreation.*

In order to estimate the value of volunteers in Alberta's recreation economy, data were obtained from the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's 2000 *National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* (NSGVP) (www.nsgvp.org). The total number of hours volunteered by Albertans was obtained from the survey results. The proportion of these hours volunteered to arts, culture, and recreation in Alberta was also obtained. It is assumed that 50% of this figure is volunteered to *recreation* as defined here. Ross (1997) suggested that the appropriate rate of pay that should be applied to volunteer work is the average hourly wage in community, business and personal services in the province where the volunteering occurs. This imputed wage was derived from Statistics Canada's reported average weekly earnings figures for Alberta in 2000. The value of volunteer work in Alberta's recreation economy was estimated by multiplying this wage by the total number of hours of volunteering

Spending Patterns in Alberta's Recreation Economy (1997-2001)

This section outlines the economic importance of recreation in Alberta. These figures are based on the assumptions and methodology described above. The direct spending figures of households, governments, and private investment are outlined first. The impacts of the initial expenditures on the provincial GDP are then assessed.

Private Household Spending

In 2001, personal spending by residents of Alberta accounted for 52% of the final domestic demand of businesses, governments, and residents of the province. It is not surprising, therefore, that household consumption accounts for a significant proportion of recreation output in the province.

Table 2.1 below shows that Alberta households spent an estimated $1,989 million on recreation in 2001, representing an increase (in real terms) of approximately 26% over the inflation-adjusted $1,576 spent on recreation in 19971.

In each year, the largest item of spending was on recreational vehicles (including purchase, maintenance, and operation of bicycles, personal watercraft, boats, travel trailers, etc.). Expenditures on recreational facilities (including membership

[1] In all tables, expenditure figures from 1997-2001 have been reported in inflation-adjusted 2001 dollars. The deflator used was the Statistics Canada quarterly recreation price index (CANSIM II Series V735537)

fees, admission fees and children's camp fees) were the second largest contribution to Alberta's recreation economy, followed by spending on sport equipment.

Table 2.1: Alberta Household Recreation Expenditures, 1997-2001
($ Million – 2001 dollars)

Categories	***1997***	***1998***	***1999***	***2000***	***2001***
Recreational Vehicles	784.9	791.0	513.3	800.9	877.0
Recreational Facilities	277.3	310.9	322.1	308.2	516.0
Sport Equipment	206.2	214.7	218.0	227.1	237.4
Footwear	165.3	171.3	180.4	182.4	196.2
Camping & Picnic	50.2	47.6	49.4	51.2	52.0
Collectors' Items	25.1	30.7	39.7	52.3	24.9
Supplies/Parts	19.9	20.1	21.5	17.1	22.8
Playground Equipment	9.4	14.8	12.9	12.8	16.3
Maps & sheet music	11.5	12.7	12.9	9.6	11.9
Rent/Maintenance	6.3	10.6	8.6	9.6	10.8
Other Recreation Services	19.9	25.4	20.4	24.5	23.9
TOTAL	1,576.0	1,649.6	1,399.1	1,695.6	1,989.3

Sources: Statistics Canada; Caminata Consulting.

The largest increase in household recreation expenditures in Alberta between 1997 and 2001 was the 86% rise in recreational facility spending, followed by 73% increases in spending on both playground equipment and rent/maintenance of recreation equipment. The only spending category that displayed a decrease between 1997 and 2001 was the modest 1% decline in expenditures on collectors' items (from $25.1 million to $24.9 million).

Public Expenditures

Table 2.2: Public Expenditures on Recreation in Alberta, 1997-2001
($ Million – 2001 dollars)

Level of Government	***1997***	***1998***	***1999***	***2000***	***2001***
Federal	59.5	57.2	65.1	51.7	59.2
Provincial	108.9	119.7	153.3	161.0	158.0
Municipal	287.0	295.1	338.1	405.0	406.4
Educational (K-12)	104.7	109.9	115.7	116.8	125.4
TOTAL	560.1	581.9	672.2	734.6	749.1

Sources: Statistics Canada; Government of Alberta; Caminata Consulting.

Table 2.2 shows the estimated public expenditure contributions made by the three levels of government and the primary and secondary public education system to Alberta's recreation economy.

Overall real public expenditures on recreation in Alberta are estimated to have increased by 34% between 1997 and 2001. The largest public sector increase in expenditures is attributable to the provincial government (45%), followed by municipalities (42%). However, it should be noted that the provincial government expenditures for 1999-2001 were augmented by special project spending of approximately $40 million related to the hosting, in Edmonton, of the *2001 World Championships in Athletics*. This one-time spending clearly enhanced total provincial government spending for the five-year period. It is also worth noting that in every year municipal spending exceeded spending by all other levels of government combined.

Private Investment

Table 2.3 :Private Investment Expenditures on Recreation in Alberta, 1997-2001
($ Million – 2001 dollars)

	1997	***1998***	***1999***	***2000***	***2001***
Private Investment	28.7	136.6	145.7	75.0	79.1

Sources: Alberta Economic Development; Caminata Consulting.

Based on the inventory of major project investment in Alberta, estimates of private investment in the recreation sector for the years 1997 to 2001 are presented in Table 2.3. The relatively wide variation in investment from year to year should not come as a major surprise since, by its very nature, such spending is made on a project-by-project basis. As such, a single project could have a major impact on the total private recreation investment in any given year.

Balance of Trade

As previously noted, it has been assumed that the value of imports and exports of recreation goods and services to and from Alberta cancel one another out. However, an example is provided here of spending by outdoor recreation tourists travelling to Alberta (i.e., 'exports'). For the year 2000, the *Canadian Travel Survey* indicates a total expenditure in Alberta by non-Alberta residents of Canada in these categories of approximately $467 million. Since this figure includes all expenditures on overnight visits to the province for outdoor activities (transportation, accommodation, recreation/entertainment, food/beverages, and retail/other), it would be erroneous to attribute all of these expenditures to the recreation industry. Also, as explained earlier, expenditures by Alberta residents in other provinces have not been accounted for.

Total Direct Expenditures

The total direct expenditures on recreation in Alberta between 1997 and 2001 are summarized in Table 2.4**. In 2001, total expenditures amounted to $2,818 million** (rounded to the nearest million). The largest share of this (70.6%) can be attributed to the household sector, with the government sector contributing approximately 26.6%. The growth of direct expenditures between 1997 and 2001 was 30.2% in real terms.

Table 2.4: Direct Expenditures in Alberta's Recreation Economy, 1997-2001
($ Million – 2001 dollars)

Category	***1997***	***1998***	***1999***	***2000***	***2001***
Households	1,576.0	1,649.6	1,399.1	1,695.6	1,989.3
Government	560.1	581.9	672.2	734.6	749.1
Private Investment	28.7	136.6	145.7	75.0	79.1
TOTAL (Gross Provincial Recreation Product)	2,164.7	2,368.1	2,217.0	2,505.2	2,817.5

Source: Caminata Consulting.

As indicated in Table 2.5 below, direct expenditures on recreation in Alberta accounted for approximately 1.9% of provincial GDP and 2.1% of Final Domestic Demand in 2001. (Final Domestic Demand consists of GDP minus the sum of trade balance and inventories.) This estimate is based on the simplifying assumption that Alberta's recreation economy is 'closed' (i.e., that there is no trade with other provinces or countries in recreation goods and services). The relative contribution of the recreation industry to Alberta's GDP and Final Domestic Demand remained fairly constant between 1997 and 2001: the GDP contribution ranged from a low of 1.7% in 2000 to a high of 2.1% in 1998, while the final domestic demand contribution ranged from 1.9% in 1999 to 2.1% in both 1998 and 2001.

Table 2.5: Relative Contribution of Direct Recreation Expenditures to Alberta's GDP and Final Domestic Demand, 1997-2001
(2001 dollars)

	1997	***1998***	***1999***	***2000***	***2001***
Recreation ($ million)	2,165	2,368	2,217	2,505	2,818
Final Domestic Demand ($ million)	103,694	110,032	112,704	122,945	131,248
Recreation as % of Final Domestic Demand	*2.0*	*2.1*	*1.9*	*2.0*	*2.1*
GDP ($ million)	112,728	111,307	119,691	145,940	151,319
Recreation as % of GDP	*1.8*	*2.1*	*1.8*	*1.7*	*1.9*

Note: *GDP proportion assumes that Alberta's recreation economy is 'closed'.*
Sources: Statistics Canada; Caminata Consulting.

Total Economic Impact

In order to account for leakages and the effects of indirect and induced impacts of the expenditure components identified in Table 2.4, the 2001 direct recreation expenditure figures outlined above were entered into an input-output model of the provincial economy. The impact statement provided here is based on the data and assumptions outlined earlier (Sections 2.2 and 2.3). Table 2.6 below presents a summary of the impacts on GDP and labour income that are estimated to have resulted from the initial recreation expenditures in Alberta in 2001.

Table 2.6: Total Impact of Recreation on Alberta's Economy, 2001

Impact	**Direct**	**Indirect**	**Induced**	**Total**
GDP ($ million)	831	709	699	2,239
Labour Income ($ million)	594	347	74	1,015
Employment (FTE)	22,054	9,664	2,306	34,025

Source: Caminata Consulting.

Thus, in 2001, Alberta's recreation sector is estimated to have generated $1,015 million in labour income and $2,239 million in GDP. The latter figure represents approximately 1.5% of total GDP. This estimate of recreation's contribution to provincial GDP accounts for leakages from the economy that were not assumed to have existed in the figures presented in Table 3.5, hence the lower relative figure in Table 3.6. The estimated direct employment impact of 22,054 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs represents approximately 1.4% of Alberta's employed labour force, while the overall estimated employment impact of 34,025 represents approximately 2.1% of the provincial total.

"…in 2001, Alberta's recreation sector is estimated to have generated $1,015 million in labour income and $2,239 million in GDP. The latter figure represents approximately 1.5% of total GDP…the estimated direct employment impact of 22,054 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs represents approximately 1.4% of Alberta's labour force."

Employment Patterns

The economic contribution of Alberta's recreation sector relies to a large degree on the industry's skilled labour force. In the previous section, it was estimated that approximately 1.4% of Alberta's workers are employed in the recreation industry. A more detailed picture of the changing composition of this labour force is presented in this section of the report. The fact that the estimates of direct employment in 2001 that are presented in Tables 2.6 and 2.7 differ slightly is due to their being derived using very different approaches. However, considering that a number of simplifying assumptions had to be made in order to reach these estimates, the figures are remarkably similar. This serves to provide the estimates with some degree of legitimacy.

"The overall size of the recreation labour force grew by approximately 30% between 1991 and 2001."

Table 2.7 illustrates the growth of Alberta's recreation industry labour market in the decade from 1991-2001. The three largest occupational groups in the provincial recreation labour force throughout the decade were retail sales personnel, program leaders and instructors, and attendants. The first two of these groupings experienced growth in excess of 30%, while employment in the latter grouping only rose by about 5.3%. The overall size of the recreation labour force grew by approximately 30% between 1991 and 2001. The largest occupational increase was the 270% growth in sports officials and referees, although these occupations only represented a small fraction of the overall recreational labour force. None of the occupational groups showed employment declines between 1991 and 2001, though two categories - facility operation and maintenance managers, and recreation and sport program and service directors - showed declines in the shorter time-period from 1991 to 1996, which includes the period from 1993 through 1996 when deep cuts were made to provincial government spending on recreation as well as other social and human services.

Table 2.7: Recreation Employment in Alberta by Occupational Group, 1991, 1996 and 2001

Occupational Group	1991	1996	2001
Retail sales persons & sales clerks (est.)	4,800	5,300	6,500
Program leaders and instructors in recreation & sport	3,875	4,680	5,220
Attendants in amusement, recreation and sport	2,545	3,025	2,680
Recreation & sports program supervisors & consultants	1,245	1,305	1,380
Secondary & elementary school teachers & counselors*	1,075	1,103	1,208
Recreation and sport program and service directors	970	740	1,125
Coaches	555	695	935
Tour and travel guides	715	820	755
Facility operation and maintenance managers*	448	300	661
Sports officials and referees	150	485	555
Outdoor sport and recreational guides	180	370	515
TOTAL	16,558	18,823	21,534

Notes: **Proportion of total estimated.*
#Estimate.
Sources: Statistics Canada; Caminata Consulting.

Value of Volunteer Contributions

As is well known by those in the recreation sector, the contribution of volunteers is significant. In fact, without considerable donations of time and effort by volunteers, the sector would be very different. Based on the assumptions outlined earlier (Section 2.5), Table 2.8 shows that the estimated number of volunteer hours devoted to recreation changed little between 1997 and 2000. Approximately 17.1 million hours of volunteer time were given to recreation in Alberta in 2000. Based on an imputed wage of $16.63 per hour, the value of this contribution (in 2000 dollars) was $285.1 million. (For comparison with other figures reported here, this represents $287.6 million in 2001 dollars). This represents a 1.9% increase in the value of volunteering in recreation in Alberta between 1997 and 2000, although the actual number of hours decreased slightly. Assuming an annual working year of 1,920 hours (40 hours x 48 weeks), the 17.1 million volunteer hours in 2000 would be the equivalent of 8,572 person years of employment.

Table 2.8: Value of Volunteer Contributions to Alberta's Recreation Sector, 1997 and 2000

	1997	2000
Total Hours ('000)	128,000	127,000
Recreation Hours ('000)	17,280	17,145
Wage per Hour ($)	15.51	16.63
Volunteer Value ($ million current)	268.0	285.1
Volunteer Value ($ million in 2001 dollars)	282.2	287.6

Sources: National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating; Caminata Consulting.

Although it represents a large contribution to economic wellbeing, the value of volunteer work is not normally included in defining the GDP of a country or region, as it is considered to be a 'non-market' activity. For this reason, the value of volunteer contributions has been reported separately here. It should also be noted that the estimated value of volunteer contributions to Alberta's recreation economy has not been included in the overall assessment of the economic significance of recreation reported elsewhere.

Conclusion

Summary of Principal Findings

The results of this analysis provide an assessment of the economic contribution made by the recreation industry to Alberta's provincial economy. The report provides a snapshot of the direct, indirect, and induced impacts of the recreation industry on the provincial GDP, labour income, and employment in 2001. In addition, the findings presented here also show that the recreation sector has experienced considerable growth since 1997.

The major conclusions of the study are as follows:

- Total direct recreation sector expenditures grew from $2,165 million to $2,817 million from 1997-2001, representing a 30.2% increase in real terms.
- Recreation expenditures contributed approximately 2.1% to provincial final demand for goods and services in 2001, a modest increase over the 2.0% contribution in 1997.
- Household expenditures on recreation rose from $1,576 million in 1997 to $1,989 million in 2001. This represents a 26.2% increase in real terms.
- Government expenditure on recreation rose from $560 million in 1997 to $749 million in 2001. This represents a 33.7% increase in real terms.
- Occupational data provide an estimate of total primary recreation employment in Alberta of 21,534 in 2001. The comparable figures in 1996 and 1991 were 18,823 and 16,558 respectively. This represents a 14.4% increase over 5 years (1996-2001), and a 30.1% rise over 10 years (1991-2001).
- Volunteers play a significant role in the recreation sector of Alberta's economy. Although not accounted for in the other figures noted here, it is estimated that the value of volunteer contributions in 2000 amounted to $287.1 million (in 2001 dollars), equivalent to 8,572 person-years of employment.
- After allowance for 'leakages' from the Provincial economy, the overall provincial GDP impact of the recreation sector in Alberta in 2001 was $2,239 million – about 1.5% of provincial GDP.

Comment

While considerable care and attention has been given to ensuring the accuracy of the data and methods used in determining the results presented here, these estimates of the economic significance and importance of Alberta's recreation sector should be considered as conservative in nature. In part, this is because it was not possible to derive the extent of some initial expenditure (such as post-secondary educational spending) from secondary data sources. In addition, the definition of recreation used throughout the study is a narrow one. It does not, for example, include the recreational aspects of arts and culture that are carried out in the province. Neither are other components of recreational activity included (such as professional sport and the arts, gambling, or passive home-based recreational activities such as gardening, television watching or home-computing).

In addition to the economic and employment benefits attributed to this narrowly defined recreation industry in Alberta, numerous other paybacks could be tied to the industry. These benefits include: improved health and well-being of participants, which increases their productivity in other sectors of the economy, and reduces health care costs; reduced social costs associated with individuals pursuing recreation activities (as defined in this study) as opposed to less socially desirable forms of leisure; and community and cultural development; and land use and environmental protection; all of which result from a vibrant recreation sector. While many of these benefits have economic consequences, they have not been taken into account in this analysis.

In interpreting the results presented in this report, several limitations of the study should be noted. For example, given that the majority of data used to determine initial recreation expenditures were of a secondary nature, one must assume that these data have been accurately collected and reported. In addition, the results of the impact assessment rely on an economic model that assumes various interactions between different elements and sectors of the provincial economy. In interpreting the results, some allowance for margin of error should be incorporated to reflect the likelihood that actual interactions between sectors may differ slightly from those assumed. For this reason, although the results are reported in terms of figures to the nearest $0.1 million, they should be interpreted only as providing a reasonable indication of the size of the recreation sector in Alberta.

Nevertheless, a healthy recreation sector is shown to be an economic driver in the Alberta economy. The recreation industry is an important and growing component of the provincial economy, both in terms of economic output and employment effects.

"…a healthy recreation sector is shown to be an economic driver in the Alberta economy. The recreation industry is an important and growing component of the provincial economy, both in terms of economic output and employment effects."

References and Data Sources

Alberta Community Development. *Annual Reports*, 1997-1998 to 2001-2002.

Alberta Economic Development (1997-2002). *Inventory of Major Alberta Projects.*

Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission. *Annual Report,* 2001-2002.

ARPA. (2002). *The Public Financing of Recreation and Culture in Alberta: An Historical Review*. Report prepared for ARPA by Nichols Applied Management.

Andreff, W., Bourg, J.F., Halba, B., & Nys, J.F. (1995). *Les enjeux economiques du sport en Europe: Financement et impact economique [Economic factors of sport in Europe: Financing and economic impact].* Paris: Dalloz

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2002). *Sports Industries Australia*, 2000-01. Catalogue #8686.0.

Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. (1997). *The Benefits Catalogue: Summarizing why recreation, sports, fitness, arts, culture, and parks are essential to personal, social, economic, and environmental well-being.*

Edmonton Sport Council. (2001). *The Economic Significance of Amateur Sport and Active Recreation in Edmonton in 2000.* Report prepared by Caminata Consulting.

Henley Centre for Economic Forecasting. (1986). *The Economic Impact and Importance of Sport in the United Kingdom*. Henley: Sports Council.

Jones, H.G. (ed.) (1989). *The Economic Impact and Importance of Sport: a European Study.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Kessenne, S. (1999). *Miscalculations and misinterpretations in economic impact analysis*. In C. Jeanrenaud (ed.). The economic impact of sport events. Neuchatel: Editions CIES, 29-39.

Meyer, B. & Ahlert, G. (1998). *Die okonomische Bedeuting des Sports in Deutschland: Prognosen und Simulationsrechnungen mit einem disaggergierten Modell. [The economic significance of sport in Germany: prognoses and simulations with a disaggregate economic model].* Osnabruck: Universitat Osnabruck.

Ontario (1993). *Economic Impact of Recreation: Part 2. Sport and Recreation Research*. Communiqués (no. 7). Government of Ontario.

Rigg, J. & Lewney, R. (1987). *The economic impact and importance of sport in the U.K.* International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 22, 149-170.

Ross, D. (1997). *How to Estimate the Economic Contribution of Volunteer Work.* Ottawa: Heritage Canada.

Statistics Canada. *Annual Estimates of Employment, Earnings and Hours*. Catalogue 72F0023XIB.

Statistics Canada. *Canadian Travel Survey, Domestic Travel, by Province and Census Metropolitan Areas*. Annual. CANSIM II - Table 426-0001.

Statistics Canada. 2001 Census. *Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Divisions and Census Subdivisions*. 95F0490XCB01001.

Statistics Canada. *2001 Census. Industry - 1997 North American Industry Classification System (23), Occupation - 2001 National Occupational Classification for Statistics (60), Class of Worker (12) and Sex (3) for Labour Force 15 Years and Over.*

Statistics Canada. *Federal Spending on Recreation*. CANSIM II – Table 385-0002.

Statistics Canada. *Private and Public Investments in Canada – Revised Intentions, 2002*. Catalogue 61-205-XIB.

Statistics Canada. *Provincial Economic Accounts, 2001 Estimates*. Catalogue 13-213.

Statistics Canada. *Quarterly Recreation Price Index* (CANSIM II Series V735537)

Statistics Canada. (1997-2001). *Survey of Household Spending - Household spending on recreation, by province and territory.* Annual. CANSIM II – Table 203-0010.

Taks, M. & Késenne, S. (2000). *The economic significance of sport in Flanders*. Journal of Sport Management, 14, 4, 342-365.

Web Sites

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/schools/interprovincial/interp02.pdf. Inter-Provincial Education Statistics Project.

http://www.sgma.com/reports/2002/report1025120075-14873.html. Canadian Sporting Goods Market Study, 2002.

http://www.nsgvp.org. National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating.

http://www3.gov.ab.ca/ma/ms/mfistable/mfis_table.cfm. Alberta Municipal Affairs - Alberta Municipal Financial Information System

http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/asrpwf/programs/funding/index.asp. Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation

Chapter Three: Perspectives On The Future

Lynne Dale, WillowBridge Consulting

Introduction

The purpose of this component of the overall project was to investigate how macro socio-economic trends, issues, and opportunities appear to be affecting the recreation industry in Alberta and, further, to begin to identify labour market needs in the industry arising from these trends, issues and opportunities.

The primary vehicle for obtaining original information presented for this purpose was through the creation of two Focus Groups of people actively involved in the recreation industry, one in Edmonton and the other in Calgary. These Focus Groups were composed of people involved in community recreation, amateur sport, fitness and active living, outdoor recreation and parks, and community arts, culture and heritage. The affiliations of these participants are listed in Appendix 2. Each group met for half a day to identify significant trends, to analyze how these trends appear to be affecting the recreation industry, and to offer their thoughts on labor needs in the recreation industry, based on the nature of the trends and their perceived impacts on the industry.

The trends discussed in this report are limited to those identified by the Focus Groups. Once identified by the groups, however, trends were further reviewed through an internet search to provide greater specificity – for example, through identification of related statistics and other commentaries. In other words, the facts and figures quoted from internet sources are intended to reinforce or qualify the opinions expressed by the Focus Group participants. The implications of these trends for the recreation industry that are discussed here come from a combination of focus group work and internet research. In addition, a review was made of the Proceedings of the ARPA's Vision 2015 Symposium of May 2002 to determine which trends also appeared at that provincial symposium.

In contrast to the trends analysis, the findings under the heading of labor needs come exclusively from the Focus Groups. They represent the opinions of focus group members about the ways in which these trends can be expected to affect both the industry itself and labour needs within it.

In addition, there is a brief final section that outlines some trends not identified through the Focus Groups, and explores the author's thoughts about possible implications of these for the provincial recreation industry.

Societal Trends and Their Implications for the Recreation Industry

There are several societal trends that will likely affect Alberta's recreation industry in significant ways in the coming decades. The most significant of these may be considered under the following broad headings: demographic characteristics; health; behavioral patterns; institutional change; and other factors.

Demographic Characteristics

Three important demographic changes were identified during the Focus Group discussions and further examined during the Internet search: an aging population; immigration; and accessibility.

An Aging Population

Much has been written about the Baby Boomers, those born between about 1947 and the mid-1960s. Today, there are approximately 85 million baby boomers in North America. The oldest of them are now reaching their mid-fifties.

In Boom, Bust, Echo, Foot (1996) makes the assumption that demographics is the key to successful economic forecasting. He notes that: "A person's age is generally regarded as the single major predictor of participation in recreation activity". As the boom population ages, Foot predicts activities such as golf, curling, and gardening will increase, while structured individual and team sports will decrease. But even 10 years ago, the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation questioned this: "But what if the initial assumption does not hold? The emphasis on physical fitness is a fairly recent phenomenon, and the current sport/fitness industry is a response to the demands of the large generation of baby boomers. Perhaps these people will, in fact, maintain their interest towards rigorous physical activity and will not migrate to less physically active pursuits as have earlier generations. If so, the leisure industry will be challenged to provide services for both the traditionally active younger generation as well as a new physically active older one." (Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation 1993).

Others have suggested it is unfair to classify baby boomers into a single huge group (Illinois Parks and Recreation 1993). The boomers were born over a period of almost two decades, which, in itself, creates diversity. Furthermore, looking at the boomers today, it can be seen that they have a wide range of lifestyles, including:

- Married couples, as "empty nesters";
- Single, divorced parents with children;
- Single, divorced parents whose children have left home;
- Married couples, in their late thirties, with younger children at home;
- Married couples, in their fifties, with teenagers at home;
- Single baby boomers, living by themselves or with other boomers;
- Married baby boomer couples that have never had children.
- Baby boomer couples with "blended households".
- This list demonstrates a remarkably diverse range of family types and structures!

In contrast to Foot, others have argued that household status is the leading predictor of lifestyle (Illinois Parks and Recreation 1993). With the variety of household types listed above, it is obvious that there is a multitude of possible lifestyle choices, each of which has different implications for the recreation industry. These lifestyles (which are likely not a complete list), and the fact that there are millions of people in the boomer age bracket, emphasize that one should not classify this generation through stereotypes.

There is, however, one commonly held assumption regarding the baby boomers and how they will age that seems to garner considerable support: they are unlikely to reflect the patterns of past generations. Woodruff (1997) has suggested they have a variety of characteristics not found – or not found as frequently – in previous generations. Some of these are:

- Wealthier and healthier;
- Risk takers;
- Doers, not sitters;
- Less fearful of change;
- Strong individuals, but, with age, increasingly interested with the "we" in society;
- Place high priority on experiences over possessions;
- Value fun over duty;
- Independent and self-sufficient;
- Seek social and spiritual connectedness, personal growth, and revitalization;
- Want a balance in life;
- Value education and the "finer" things; and
- Feel a growing need to preserve the community, nature, and society.

Today's baby boomers are then likely to become – indeed, some already are – the wealthiest, healthiest, best educated and most active retirees in history.

Implications for the Recreation Industry

These characteristics, combined with their numbers and diversity, are likely to have huge implications for the recreation industry – although these same factors (varied characteristics, large numbers, and great diversity) also make it difficult to predict precise implications. The following have all been suggested by various writers and commentators (Foot 1996; Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation 1993; Illinois Parks and Recreation 1993; Woodruff 1997; Recreation Vehicle Industry Association 2002). In some cases, these suggestions are even contradictory to, or incongruent with, each other. Nevertheless, they are worth considering here. They are:

- Activities such as golf, birdwatching, curling, hiking/walking, hunting, boating, and gardening will increase;
- Activities such as downhill skiing, football, and physical team sports will decline;
- Volunteering, churchgoing, and symphony attendance will increase;
- Sports attendance and participation will decrease;
- ‘Unstructured’ activities will increase in popularity, while ‘structured’ activities will decrease;
- Higher levels of disposable income will be spent on travel, recreation vehicles, and high quality, packaged tours;
- Stereotypes and myths about retirement and aging will be totally shattered by the baby boomers, as they will continue to be physically active and are even likely to take up new activities as they age;
- With increasing discretionary time as they retire, or go into part-time work, baby boomers are beginning to use recreational facilities in what were formerly seen as off-peak hours;
- While participation in strenuous outdoor activities may be expected to decline, this may be compensated for by increasing boomer activity in observing nature, and in hiking, walking, and eco-tourism;
- As they seek self-fulfillment and strive to examine their self-potential, boomers are likely to combine activities and interests in their holidays – e.g., culture, activity, and education;
- Aging baby boomers are driving sales of recreation vehicles to new levels;
- Boomers will stay active longer than previous generations;
- Active boomers will want the individual attention of personal trainers (indeed, they themselves may wish to become personal trainers);
- Boomers will likely choose activities that are less damaging to the bones and joints – for example, walking, swimming, and bicycling;
- Recreation clubs and organizations are increasingly likely to be sources for social, as well as physical benefits, as single boomers become empty nesters and seek companionship;
- The 55+ generation, as it goes into retirement or semi-retirement, offers a huge potential for volunteerism;
- Many boomers have the money to spend on high quality, unique experiences and holidays.

Not surprisingly, such varying - and, even, contradictory - suggestions complicate immensely the task of predicting just what really is likely to happen to the recreation activities and behavior of baby boomers in the immediate and longer-term future.

International Immigration

While Alberta has been a magnet for in-migration from other Canadian provinces for several decades, it has recently become increasingly significant as a destination for international migrants to Canada. Between 1990 and 1999, 2.2 million immigrants arrived in Canada (Government of Alberta, 2003). Immigration reached a high figure of 256,728 in 1993, declined to 174,172 in 1998, and then rose again in 1999, to 189,919. In 1990, Alberta received about 9% of these immigrants, but, by the late 1990’s, Alberta’s share appeared to have stabilized at about 6% of the Canadian total. In actual numbers, Alberta recorded just over 19,000 international immigrants in 1990, a figure that declined to just over 12,000 in 1999. In the last couple of years, immigration figures for both Canada and Alberta have continued to grow. In

2001, Canada welcomed almost 250,000 immigrants, 16,290 of whom came to Alberta. The Province's share has therefore increased slightly, to about 6.5 %.

International immigrants to Alberta in recent years have come from many different countries. In 2001, China accounted for the highest share of Alberta's international immigrants at 12%, followed closely by the Philippines (10%) and India (9%). Other countries from which significant numbers arrived include Korea, Pakistan, England, the United States, South Africa, Vietnam, and Afghanistan. So, not only has Alberta received significant levels of international immigration in recent years, these immigrants have come from a variety of countries reflecting a diversity of cultures.

Implications for the Recreation Industry

There are many implications for the recreation industry arising from the growth of international immigration into the province. Some of the most evident of these were identified during the Focus Group sessions. They include:

- An increase in the numbers of immigrant and ethno-based community and recreation associations;
- A growing need for assistance to these groups in funding, language training, management, and linking with other parts of society;
- A growth in the numbers of special cultural festivals and events, celebrating both the diversity of cultures and individual countries of origin;
- Increased demands for recreation courses and activities that reflect diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds;
- A rise in the numbers of organizations and agencies offering such diverse programs and activities;
- Competition among these agencies for both funding support and clientele;
- A lack of networking among these agencies, leading to a poor understanding of the demand for and supply of programs, facilities and services; and
- A feeling by established organizations that they need to offer greater diversity in programs and activities so as to ensure inclusion of all groups in society.

Accessibility

Members of the Focus Groups in both Edmonton and Calgary expressed support for the recreation industry's attempts to ensure accessibility to programs and activities for everyone in society. International immigrants, discussed above, must be included in that initiative. However, other groups demand inclusion, as well. The Focus Groups were particularly concerned about the *working poor*, the gap between the *haves* and the *have-nots* (in particular, the ability of the latter to participate in recreational opportunities), senior citizens, and the disabled. As user fees rise in response to revenue losses from government and other sources, the less fortunate and the disadvantaged risk the possibility of being further segregated instead of being included.

Implications for the Recreation Industry

The heightened awareness of a need for greater accessibility led the members of the Focus Groups to identify three important consequences for the recreation industry. First, there will be a growing requirement that programs and activities are physically accessible to the disabled. Second, there will be an increased need to assist the poor and the socially disadvantaged to gain access to programs and activities. Third, as a specific aspect of the second consequence, the industry will need to design fee structures that permit participation by those who cannot readily afford it.

Health

Two important health concerns were identified as significant issues for the recreation industry: youth obesity and changing characteristics of the health care system.

Youth Obesity

The incidence of obesity around the world has increased dramatically over the last two decades, especially among children. In the summer of 2002, the Surgeon General of the United States declared youth obesity 'an epidemic' (ABC

News, June 15, 2002). The statistics speak for themselves. About 13 percent, or one out of every eight children in the United States, is overweight - more than double the figure of thirty years ago. A Canadian study reported in November 2000 that, between 1981 and 1996, the proportion of *overweight* boys increased from 15% to 35.4%, while, for girls, it rose from 15% to 29.2% (Canadian Medical Association Journal, November 2000-January 2001).

Nor is society unaware of these trends. An Environics poll in March 2002 found that 78% of Canadians believe children and teenagers spend too much time on non-physical activities like watching television and computer use. Sixty-three percent feel that the young are not sufficiently active physically. Few Canadians (about 14%) blame a lack of financial resources as a barrier to increased physical activity; only about 13% were unaware of the importance of physical activity for the young (Canadian Paediatrics Society 2002).

Youth obesity increases risks for heart disease, stroke, arthritis, hypertension, and even certain kinds of cancer. Type 2 diabetes, previously almost unheard of in children, is becoming one of the earliest recognized diseases in overweight and obese children (ABC News, June 15, 2002).

Implications for the Recreation Industry

Public health experts around the world have increasingly recognized that physical activity is the key to good health for people of all ages, especially children. In April 2002, the Canadian Minister of Health launched Canada's Physical Activity Guides for Children and Youth, the first time ever that such a program has been developed for that age group (Health Canada, April 2002). These guidelines could have significant implications for the recreation industry, if opportunities are pursued. The guidelines propose the following:

- Encourage children to walk or ride bicycles to school;
- Provide children with regular opportunities to participate in a variety of activities – swimming, soccer, baseball, martial arts, hiking, cycling, tennis, etc.;
- Ensure opportunities for unstructured and informal activities;
- Plan opportunities for family-focused physical activities; and
- Limit "non-active" time that children spend sitting in front of the television, playing video games, and surfing the Internet.

Essentially, increasing concerns about youth obesity and recognition that physical activity is one of the ingredients in overcoming this growing problem open up major opportunities for the recreation industry. According to members of the Focus Groups, such opportunities include creating partnerships with organizations in the health sector to promote physical activity among youth, being more creative in luring children away from computer and television use, working with schools to promote active lifestyles, and developing, marketing, and promoting viable programs and activities aimed specifically at youth.

The Changing Health Care System

Canadians have become accustomed to hearing about two dominant issues facing the health care system over the past few years: the soaring costs of health care services, and declining standards of service provision.

In 2002, the Romanow Commission noted that the health industry is now a $100 billion enterprise within the Canadian economy (Romanov 2002). Health system costs have been escalating over the last few years primarily due to increased expectations of society, an aging population demanding more services, and the costs of new medical technologies and prescription drugs.

In the context of recreation, a report entitled Effective Active Living Interventions, delivered to Health Canada in 2001, noted that "…physical inactivity is associated with chronic diseases (e.g., colon cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease) that are part of the economic burden on the health-care system. Physically active adults are more likely to experience a higher quality of life and less functional decline in old age than inactive adults, reducing the burden on the health-care system" (Canadian Consortium on Health Promotion Research 2001). Estimates from the National Population Health Survey in 1998-99 indicate that a majority (55%) of Canadians is physically inactive (Coalition for Active Living 2001). In 1999, the direct health-care costs to Canada of physical inactivity were estimated to be $2.1 billion annually (Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks, and Wildlife Foundation and Alberta Community Development 2001).

What is more disturbing is that activity generally decreases with age. Notwithstanding earlier comments about the unique nature of the baby boom generation, fears abound regarding the possibility of millions of baby boomers entering their senior years and becoming inactive. If habits and attitudes do not change, the burden on the health system will likely become insupportable.

Implications for the Recreation Industry

In his address to the ARPA Symposium entitled Vision 2015: Leisure, Wellness, Prosperity and Quality of Life, Doug Mitchell, Co-Chair of Alberta's Futures Summit 2002 and Chair of the Alberta Economic Development Authority, reported strong government support for wellness initiatives (ARPA, 2002). He stated that getting Albertans healthy and keeping them healthy has become a major target for the Government of Alberta. Increased investment in wellness initiatives, the promotion of health, and the prevention of disease are emerging as public policy priorities. Given this, members of the Focus Groups identified an urgent need for the recreation industry to work with health care organizations and professions in an effort to design wellness initiatives and to promote the advantages of physical activity. They recognized a need for the recreation industry to develop a higher profile as an instrument capable of having a positive influence on the structure and operations of the provincial health care system. They also noted the need to develop, market, and promote physical activity as a major component of healthy living, an opportunity for the industry to become involved with both the Province of Alberta and Health Canada in building a wellness-based prevention model of health, and, finally, a chance for recreation organizations and businesses to create a popular link between levels of physical activity and overall lower health care costs for society.

Behavioural Patterns

While there are many behavioural patterns that may influence the development of the recreation industry in the immediate future, the Focus Groups directed their attention to two related topics that they believe are of paramount importance: safety and security, and attendant concerns about accountability, liability, and risk management.

Safety, Security, Liability and Risk Management

Safety and security have become central issues for many societies around the world. Safety concerns cover a very wide spectrum, including, at least, the following:

- Occupational health and safety;
- Food and drinking water;
- Airline travel and airport security;
- Road and highway safety, including concerns about drinking and driving;
- School behaviours, such as bullying;
- Ergonomics in computer furniture;
- Asbestos insulation;
- Farm safety;
- Dental fillings;
- Sports equipment, extreme sports activities, and outdoor recreation experiences;
- Emergency services;
- Oil storage and transportation;
- Biological and chemical warfare.

Institutions and organizations dealing with these (and similar) issues have become increasingly concerned about the need to operate in a safety-focused manner. In many instances, they have faced soaring insurance costs as a result of accident settlements. In an effort to control rising costs of insurance, organizations have begun to grapple with ways of preventing accidents in the first place. In addition, as societal fears have grown, so have expectations that institutions and organizations serving the public will adopt viable accident prevention strategies through risk management programs.

Implications for the Recreation Industry

Increased public concerns about safety and security have several important implications for the recreation industry. Members of the Focus Groups seemed to give greatest attention to those most likely to constrain the industry's activities, for example:

- Increased costs of risk management;
- Increased costs of building safe and secure facilities;
- Increased costs of maintenance – for both human and technical resources;
- Increased equipment costs;
- Increased costs from enhanced safety education and training for staff; and
- Increased insurance costs.

As well, they cited concerns about higher public expectations for safety in recreation facilities and for enhanced volunteer training and competence. And running through all the discussion was a deep concern about a perceived increase in the incidence of litigation against facility and program operators.

Responsibility, Accountability, and Stewardship

No matter the job, people are increasingly expected to be accountable for their responsibilities and performance. Related to this is a growing public awareness of both community and individual responsibility (and accountability) for personal and social behaviour. This includes responsibility for self, for others, for scarce resources, and for the environment. It also implies accepting liability and employing risk management strategies in work and recreation. All have implications for the recreation industry.

In environmental matters, demands are increasingly being made to document and mitigate potential environmental impacts from recreation development and activity: construction of recreation facilities and buildings; development of resorts and outdoor theme parks; use of unique natural areas; and more. Environmental responsibility and accountability is often referred to as 'environmental stewardship' – a reference to the need for present generations to consider future generations as they use the environment.

Responsibility also brings with it the notion that the recreation programs and services must benefit as many groups in society as possible. It implies inclusivity, the need for diversity, and a reminder of the gap between the haves and the have-nots. And it requires adoption of risk management strategies in recreation organizations.

Implications for the Recreation Industry

Members of the Focus Groups perceived several implications for the recreation industry arising from demands for greater social and environmental responsibility and accountability. They concentrated, first, on ways in which the industry would be likely be constrained by such demands: increased capital costs for environmentally efficient facilities; increased costs to document and mitigate environmental problems arising from recreation activities; greater demands for proof of social and environmental returns from recreation investments; public expectations for improved standards of customer service; and fear of liability issues if accountability is questioned.

But the Focus Groups also discussed some of the opportunities that the industry will have as a result of enhanced demands for accountability: increased public interest in environmentally sensitive eco-tourism initiatives; opportunities to improve communications with various public constituencies to explain recreation benefits and accountability issues; a chance to participate in defining the industry's social and environmental responsibilities; the prospect of working with participant groups to ensure that recreation activities are carried out in ways that are not harmful to the environment; and an opportunity to re-invent jobs and work responsibilities within the industry.

Institutional Change: Devolution of Government Services

The principal institutional change that has affected the recreation industry in recent years is likely the major devolution of services from senior levels of government to the local level – in particular, from provincial to municipal governments – that occurred during the 1990s. The intent of this devolution has been to reduce spiraling costs of service provision for senior governments. And while municipal governments have felt the full force of this devolution, they have not been alone: schools, colleges and universities, and health authorities have also been seriously affected, as has the voluntary sector. Indeed, voluntary organizations have taken on major responsibilities that have devolved not only from senior levels of government but also from municipalities.

How are affected municipal governments and local and regional authorities coping? Municipalities have responded by increasing property taxes, lowering service levels, increasing user fees, and delaying major capital spending. Partnering among private, public, and not-for-profit sector organizations has resulted in creative and successful solutions in spending the fewer dollars available. There has been increased competition for grants from both the Province and private sources. Volunteers have stepped in where once there were paid positions. Private entrepreneurs have moved into what used to be government areas of responsibility and have developed successful businesses as a result. This includes, for example, the sale of liquor, the operation of parks, the opening of chartered and private schools, issuing of licences and registrations, and the provision of private health services. On a negative note, municipal recreation infrastructure is aging, transit costs have increased substantially, and needed roads are sometimes not built. 'User pay' is becoming a common solution to many problems caused by service devolution.

<u>Implications for the Recreation Industry</u>

Members of the Focus Groups perceived the implications of service devolution for the recreation industry falling into eight major categories: funding; service competition; decreased ancillary services; availability and capability of volunteers; user fees; facility deterioration; partnerships; and advocacy.

Funding. With respect to funding issues, they saw an increased emphasis on the need for fundraising by public and not-for-profit recreation organizations, which has brought with it severe competition for the limited funds available. A consequence has been a greater emphasis on fundraising skills among recreation industry staff – sometimes, it is claimed, at the expense of a solid recreation background. In addition, small organizations within the industry sometimes have to compete for funding with large organizations that have sophisticated and high profile funding initiatives.

<u>Service Competition.</u> As governments have ceased to offer particular programs and services, opportunities have emerged for new and existing organizations in the private and not-for-profit sectors to develop and market the same or similar programs and activities. Unfortunately, the diversity of organizations offering very similar courses may confuse the public (Focus Groups). As well, courses may sometimes be offered without adequate research into sources of competition. On the other hand, competition has allowed private entrepreneurs to move into the marketplace, offering new and unique opportunities. Perhaps most disturbingly, customers who want specific training or skills in the recreation field may be confused by differing standards, diplomas, and certifications offered by the competing agencies: sometimes the recreation industry suffers from a lack of clear and accepted standards.

Ancillary Services. In the elementary and secondary education systems, extracurricular activities have often been some of the first activities eliminated, thereby reducing opportunities for lifestyle courses, often linked to the recreation industry. A reduction in extracurricular courses reduces children's exposure to potential areas of personal development and wellness. On the positive side, this provides an opportunity for the recreation industry to become involved in a new delivery model for recreational activities in the school system. Schools may not have the resources to emphasize health and wellness courses at a time when they are needed the most (given the previous concerns about childhood obesity), and so may consider partnering with recreation organizations. Some educators believe, however, that the watermark for accepted recreational programming in schools is being lowered due to lack of funding.

Volunteering. Volunteers, too, are affected by service downloading. Some recreation organizations are relying increasingly on volunteers, as their funding sources are reduced. Yet this puts greater stresses on a volunteer force that is already stretched thinly in the province.

User Fees. Perhaps the single most visible impact of service devolution has been the rise in both the numbers of recreation programs and services employing user fees and the levels at which these fees are set. The burden of much of the financial stress from service downloading is being put on the shoulders of users. This is in direct opposition to the ethos of the 'public service' sector in recreation, which has a history of provision for all and, in particular, for the working poor and those on welfare incomes who are unable to participate in commercial recreation. There is a sense among public recreation officials that fee assistance programs need to be developed alongside user pay offerings.

Facility Deterioration. User fees appear to be rising at a time when new public sector facilities are not being built and existing ones are inadequately maintained as a result of funding limitations. It would seem that participants are being asked to pay more for less.

Partnerships. On the positive side, stresses on facilities have enhanced the significance of partnership opportunities to build, operate, and maintain facilities, as well as to provide programs and activities.

Advocacy. Perhaps most important of all is the need for organizations within the public sector component of the recreation industry to develop the acumen and political savvy to promote themselves, to partner with private and not-for-profit organizations, and to compete effectively for limited senior government funds.

Other Selected Factors

Several other trends have implications for the recreation industry, but did not receive as much attention at the Focus Group meetings. These include the following themes.

Internet Learning. Increasing use of distance learning via the internet is opening up opportunities for life-long learning, both formal and informal, throughout the recreation industry.

Technological Advances in Recreation Equipment. Changing technology is continually improving equipment in many sports and recreation activities, helping participants enjoy them more and resulting in less injury. Technological advances are also largely responsible for allowing the development of many of what are now called ‘extreme sports’.

Balanced Lifestyle. A desire by increasing numbers of people to balance differing aspects of life – physical, mental, social, psychological, and spiritual – is producing opportunities for combined recreation and lifestyle programming. There is greater interest in generating a balance between work and home: a greater focus on non-work time activities could result in higher demands for leisure pursuits. Perks are sometimes factors that make a difference in recruiting staff – for example, membership at a fitness facility.

Customer Service. There is a perceived increase in demands for improved quality in levels of customer service that is affecting organizations in the recreation industry, especially the types of people the private sector hires and the services it provides. Companies are finding that sales people need to have detailed technical information about how products perform and function. Often people with a passion for a specific sport or activity can use this personal experience and expertise in sales. In short, salesmanship needs to be accompanied by technical knowledge.

Volunteers. The recruitment, training, and management of volunteers is becoming an increasingly complex matter, generating concerns about rewards, motives, skill sets, litigation, and the like. Generally, a small percentage of volunteers is responsible for the vast majority of volunteer time. As well, volunteers seem to be increasingly interested in participation in projects with finite lifespans, rather than demonstrating long-term commitment to a particular organization. In recent years, levels of volunteering have displayed wide variability within the industry, with decreases in some fields and organizations and increases in others. Volunteers also often act as staff – which sometimes creates staff-volunteer conflicts.

Energy Costs. Increased and highly volatile costs of electricity and gas are having major impacts on the operation and maintenance of recreational facilities.

Changing Family Composition. An increase in the numbers of single-parent families, blended families, and three-generation families pursuing recreational activities together is having impacts on the types of programs and activities offered.

Labour Needs in the Recreation Industry

Undoubtedly, there are additional factors affecting the ways in which organizations in the recreation industry have responded (and will respond) to change. Those described above were identified during the Focus Group meetings and later verified through a literature search. What follows next is a brief consideration of some of the implications of these changes for labour needs in the industry.

Introduction

The material presented here is the result of the two Focus Group meetings held in Calgary and Edmonton in March, 2003. The comments reflect the opinions of the participants. It bears repetition that while Focus Groups are a recognized method of inquiry, they do not necessarily generate representative opinions. However, because of the number of issues that were common to both groups, and because of the high profiles and levels of knowledge that participants in the focus group have, their comments offer a sound basis for future exploration of labour needs in the provincial recreation industry. A brief section at the end consists of comments from the author offering personal reflections about some issues that did not surface during the Focus Group meetings but should perhaps be explored.

Findings

Focus Group members' thoughts about implications of various trends for labour needs in the recreation industry can be presented in seven principal categories: soft skills; applied learning and integrated training; volunteerism; leadership; the perceived value of the recreation industry; certification; and students as consumers.

Soft Skills

The issue that received by far the most attention in both the Calgary and Edmonton meetings was the need to strengthen the soft skills of persons already in the recreation industry, as well as newcomers to it. These skills have been grouped under eight themes: conflict management; problem analysis; business skills; people skills; partnership skills; profile-building skills; attributes of the workplace culture; and multi-tasking. What follows is a verbatim listing of the topics identified within each theme. Essentially, each item recognizes a skill (or set of skills) that participants in the meetings believed must be taught to staff in the recreation industry. Not surprisingly, certain topics appear under more than one heading.

Conflict Management

- Facilitation
- Negotiation
- Mediation

Problem Analysis

- Creativity and thinking *outside the box*
- Critical and strategic thinking
- Problem solving
- Cost benefit analysis (e.g., of offering new programs)
- Research and development (e.g., of new products)
- Trends analysis (e.g., interpreting the implications of a potentially huge, financially secure, healthy population of aging boomers for the recreation industry and taking advantage of the opportunities presented).

Business Skills

- Management
- Marketing
- Team building
- Budgeting
- Goal setting
- Business plan preparation
- How to write proposals
- Customer service
- Entrepreneurial approach
- Building a "business case" for products, programs, and services
- Sales
- Data management
- Business "etiquette"

People Skills

- Interpersonal relations
- Communications
- Clear writing
- Teaching skills
- Customer service

Profile-Building Skills

- Political savvy and acumen
- Advocacy training

Attributes of the Workplace Culture

- Integrity
- Caring
- Ethics
- Loyalty
- Trust
- Punctuality
- Responsibility
- Attitude
- Striving for excellence
- Accountability
- Responsibility

Multi-Tasking

- The knowledge base and the skills to do a variety of jobs at the same time – serving customers, designing and marketing new programs, recruiting staff, budgeting, managing facilities, etc.

While there was little time in the Focus Group meetings to explore any of these suggested skills in depth, it is apparent that the members of the Focus Groups identified a very lengthy range of skills that they believe are currently either absent or under-emphasized within the recreation industry.

Applied Learning and Integrated Training

There were calls from the Focus Group members for more opportunities for real world applications of learning and the integration of industry training into educational programs. Comments included:

- Curriculums need to reflect what is happening in the market.
- Educational practicum programs need to work more closely with industry.
- Practicum opportunities should not just be at the end of the educational program, but throughout.
- There is need for more Co-operative (CO-OP) programs, perhaps even in high school.
- More mentoring and apprenticeship opportunities on job sites are vital.
- Businesses often like to hire people with field experience: education programs should recognize this and focus on providing the opportunity for that.
- Some businesses hire people because their passions and experiences give them the personal knowledge to sell and promote products and services.
- There is a need for more applied degrees – e.g., computing in small businesses.
- There is a need for the promotion of more life long learning: the ongoing training and development of people in the recreation industry needs to be recognized as a sound investment.
- Certification opportunities could be addressed as part of university and college courses, diplomas, and degrees, as an aspect of integrated training.
- Integrated training can also mean helping students to get involved in the recreation industry through networking opportunities as provided at conferences and through associations.

Again, while there was little opportunity to explore these ideas in depth at the Focus Group meetings, the list suggests a level of discomfort with what is currently happening in the recreation industry.

Volunteerism

The devolution of senior government responsibilities to local levels and to the voluntary sector generally, together with reductions in funding, have resulted in many organizations looking to volunteers to solve some of their operating dilemmas. The recreation industry needs to be aware of how to work successfully with volunteers (and voluntary organizations), and how best to take advantage of their skills, in order to make optimum use of volunteers. Working with volunteers requires knowledge of at least the following skills and techniques.

- Recruitment methods.
- Management principles and processes.
- Training methods and techniques.
- Volunteer retention skills.
- Reasons why volunteers become involved.
- Volunteers’ desired rewards.
- Relationships with staff.
- Incentives.

- The growing trend towards project-based volunteer involvement.
- Volunteer recognition.
- Levels of volunteers' skills (e.g., management or more mundane).
- Training and development requirements for volunteers.

In identifying these areas of concern, the Focus Group members demonstrated considerable awareness of the increasing complexity of volunteer use in the recreation industry, and the need for greater understanding of the processes of recruitment, placement, training and retention of volunteers.

Leadership

People in the recreation industry need to be trained to be successful leaders, by demonstrating a variety and multiplicity of skills, including the following:

- The ability to multi-task.
- A wide range of both technical and non-technical skills.
- The soft skills noted previously: e.g., people skills, conflict management, partnering, business acumen, political savvy, advocacy, etc.
- The ability to inspire clients, staff, and volunteers.
- Demonstration of high standards and values (e.g., integrity, ethics).
- The need to deal with large volumes of work
- The ability to balance the human dimension with the business angle.
- Find time for ongoing training and continuing education.

Leadership is central to many of the service aspects of the recreation industry. Focus Group members clearly understand the importance of nurturing and developing leadership skills among recreation industry personnel.

The Perceived Value of the Recreation Industry

Concerns were expressed in both Calgary and Edmonton that the recreation industry is not valued, often even by people within the industry itself. Salaries are comparatively low. The pyramid is flat: there are very few jobs at the top, whereas there are many at the bottom. Often students may not realize this before choosing recreation as an educational or career option.

The lack of career mobility will often mean that people leave the industry in pursuit of other careers that offer more monetary rewards and greater opportunities for career advancement. When people do this, however, their original passion and reason for being part of the recreation industry will often remain. It becomes part of their leisure time rather than work time. Or, sometimes, they pursue their passions and training as part-time jobs or supplements to other jobs. Some Focus Group members even raised the possibility that education in recreation should be seen as a personal development option rather than a career option.

The recreation industry has a huge opportunity at present. This involves being seen as (at least, part of) the solution to many health-related problems. It needs to promote the wellness model of health: prevention of many health problems and conditions through healthy living based on sound nutrition and an active lifestyle. Having society recognize this value could have a massive impact on the profile of the industry. If the value of the recreation industry were recognized more widely in society, this would likely be reflected in a more professional recognition of the industry, higher credibility, and, therefore, higher salaries.

In summary, the recreation industry needs to promote its own value through such actions as:

- Linking itself with a proactive wellness model of health.

- Advocating itself as an essential service.
- Promoting the profession as a major contributor to a healthy society.

The skills needed to do this include:

- Knowledge of societal trends, problems and concerns.
- Analysis of the impact of these trends on the recreation industry.
- Promotion of the industry as a key, proactive contributor to the solution of community and societal health issues.
- Political savvy and acumen.
- Partnering with health organizations and senior government authorities.
- Advocacy.

Certification

The Focus Group members recognized confusion regarding standards for certification in various recreation fields. While certification is becoming more expensive and time-consuming for people in the recreation industry, it is also becoming increasingly necessary due to liability concerns. One of the fields where this is particularly significant is outdoor recreation.

But many questions arise related to certification. What does ‘proper’ certification mean? Where does one acquire this?

Which organizations and authorities accept or reject the various types of certification? Should certification be developed alongside post-secondary courses, or is it a separate adjunct?

In summary, the recreation industry needs to work with universities, colleges, and certification authorities to reach consensus on standards for certification, and how (and if) certification should be linked with college and university programs.

Students as Consumers

As the costs of post-secondary education continue to rise, students are becoming more demanding about the appropriateness and relevance of the sets of courses they are taking. They are identifying more direct links between the competencies developed through their training and the costs of education. Students need to be seen as consumers of a product for which they are paying. As costs continue to increase, it can be anticipated that students will be ever more demanding about the relevance of the competencies that they are acquiring through education. They are likely to demand increased involvement in course content and design.

Further Thoughts

The following expresses some thoughts from the author that were not pursued by the Focus Groups, but: (1) resulted from further analysis of trends; or (2) emerged from following up other comments by the members of the Focus Groups; or (3) were evident from the internet literature search.

Partnering

One of the Focus Group participants suggested that perhaps there was a whole new career in partnering. Cross-sector partnerships appear to have increased substantially during the past decade – due, in large part, to reductions in government funding and the continued need to do more with less. Given that a substantial change in patterns of government funding is unlikely in the near future, perhaps the idea of partnering as a career is quite plausible. If so, it would require many of the skills listed earlier, including: negotiation skills; relationship building and maintenance; political savvy and acumen; advocacy skills; fundraising abilities; business planning knowledge; and goal setting capabilities. The idea deserves further exploration, not only from the perspective of the recreation industry, but also from the points of view of other professions.

Opportunities for Combined Degrees and Careers

Sometimes opportunities exist where only threats have been perceived. One issue that did not arise at the Focus Group meetings, but became evident through internet research, was the possibility of combining diplomas or degrees in recreation with qualifications in other fields. New career combinations might lead, for example, to the establishment or expansion of the following training and education programs:

- Risk management for a variety of sports and recreation activities.
- Emergency response protocols.
- Code/standards knowledge, application, and compliance.
- Aquatic safety signage and warnings.
- Product performance testing.
- Expert witness opportunities.
- Aquatic safety engineering.
- A combination of recreation-related degrees with law or engineering.
- Development of industry standards.
- Insurance areas of expertise related to recreation.
- Industry safety training.
- Development, marketing, and presentation of recreation safety education.
- Combining recreation with engineering to enhance facility design.
- Combining recreation with business to enhance management.
- Combining recreation with law to handle litigation issues.

Some of these career opportunities already exist in varying degrees, but are largely the result of individual initiatives rather than conscious program construction.

Technical Aspects of Post Secondary Training

There was no discussion in the Focus Groups about technical or factual types of courses being offered for the recreation industry at colleges or universities. There was no explicit criticism of courses presently being taught, nor fresh ideas about new ones that perhaps should be brought into curricula. Any further study should explore this to some extent to ensure that something is not being left out. Perhaps a specific question needs to be raised that will force discussion of present technically focused courses to attempt to determine their appropriateness.

Jobs Versus Skills

The discussions at both Focus Group meetings seemed to dwell on skills rather than jobs. Granted, a combination of skills generally defines jobs. However, it may be best to tackle this discussion from the other direction. It may be worthwhile to envisage some new types of jobs that are liable to arise in the near future, give them (temporary) names, and define the skills sets. New training opportunities may be derived from this kind of approach.

Obsolete Jobs and Skills

There was no discussion at either meeting of skills or jobs that are now considered obsolete in the recreation industry. Perhaps it would be valuable to ask a specific question to determine if there are trends towards deleting particular jobs or competencies that the industry has long considered necessary.

Further Trends Analysis

With the added information about trends and the implications presented in this paper, it might be valuable to get some different impressions about what kinds of jobs (rather than skills) might arise. As noted above, temporary names could be given to these jobs, but the purpose would be to define the job functions. This could be done in several ways, such as: seeking further ideas from Focus Group members; seeking input from the ARPA's *Advisory Committee on Labour Needs in the Recreation Industry*; and seeking information through the internet.

Conclusion

The recreation industry is wise to be looking to the future and re-assessing its readiness to meet change, specifically in terms of labour needs. The major trends noted in this report – an aging population, changing attitudes towards health, rapidly escalating health care costs, changes in technology, concerns with safety and security, accountability, government downloading, and so on – will combine to cause significant changes across society, and within the recreation sector. Those who have analyzed these changes and have determined how to prepare for them are the most likely to succeed.

One of the principal conclusions arising from these discussions, as well as from the ARPA's Vision 2015 Symposium, is the necessity for the industry to present itself as one of the central components in seeking solutions to health care issues (such as youth obesity) and rising health care costs. Partnerships between organizations in the recreation and health sectors are vital. Moreover, this could give the recreation industry the societal credibility and recognition that it has long sought.

Indeed, the notion of partnership in general – not just with organizations within the health sector – is another strong conclusion arising from this work. Partnering is increasingly becoming a way of doing business, often based on the need to do things more efficiently, effectively, and cheaply. In this regard, the recreation industry needs to look for partnering opportunities throughout the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors to discover and work on common initiatives. It may be wise to acknowledge partnering tools – advocacy, political savvy, relationship-building, and so on – as key attributes of the profession. Partnering associations with places of work can promote the notion of integrated training for those people taking courses who are in need of practical work experience. And, indeed, the notion of partnering can be extended to partnering professions, partnering recreation with such professions as law, engineering, insurance, and environmental services.

Phase Two of this work needs to involve more people across the Province – in major centres, in smaller communities, and in rural Alberta; in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors; in affiliated professions; in academic institutions; and in places of employment. Much can be accomplished in taking an inclusive and forward-looking approach to the future labour needs of the recreation industry.

References

ARPA. (2002). *Proceedings of the Vision 2015 Symposium on Leisure, Wellness, Prosperity and Quality of Life.* Edmonton: ARPA.

Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation and Alberta Community Development. (2001). *Hot topics in physical activity: The costs of physical inactivity*. Summer Active Campaign.

Canada Ministry of Health. (2002). *Canada's physical activity guides for children and youth*. Ottawa: Health Canada.

Canadian Consortium on Health Promotion Research. (2001). *Compilation of evidence of effective active living interventions: A case study approach*. A Report to Health Canada. Ottawa.

Canadian Paediatric Society. (2002). *Public opinion on physical activity and youth.* Results of a Poll conducted by Environics, March.

Coalition for Active Living. (2001). *The physical activity status of Canadians*. Ottawa.

Foot, D. (1996). *Boom, bust, echo: How to profit from the coming demographic shift*. Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter and Ross..

Illinois Parks and Recreation Society. (1993). A profile of the baby boomers in the 90s. *Newsletter,* September/October.

Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation. (1992). *Sport and recreation research communiqué No. 2*. Toronto.

Recreation Vehicle Industry Association. (2002). *Baby boomers boost RV ownership to record levels.* News Release, April 16.

Romanow, R.J. (2002). *Building on values: The future of health care in Canada.* Ottawa: Final Report of the Royal Commission on the Future of Health Care in Canada.

Woodruff, J. (1997). *Oregon agri-tourism industry market analysis.* Market Advantage, June.

Web Sites

www.alberta.ca

www.ABCNEWS.com

Appendix One: Names And Institutional Affiliations Of Members Of The Project Advisory Committee

- Rick Curtis, ARPA
- Lynn Horbasenko, Alberta Community Development (December 2002 - March 2003)
- Sherry Huston, Alberta Human Resources and Employment
- Barb Kusyanto, Lifesaving Society
- Margaret Lounds, Alberta Association of Recreation Facility Personnel
- Chris Lust, Town of Lacombe
- Mike Mahon, The University of Alberta
- Katherine MacKeigan, Alberta Fitness Leaders Certification Association
- Fred McMullen, Alberta Economic Development
- Craig Rusnak, Glendale Golf and Country Club
- Gary Shelton, Edmonton Sport Council
- Chris Szabo, Alberta Community Development (April-May 2003)
- Tim Burton, TAVIS Consulting (Project Manager)

Appendix Two: Institutional Affiliations Of Participants In The Focus Groups

The ARPA gratefully acknowledges the part played in this project by participants in the two Focus Group meetings in Calgary and Edmonton, respectively. The project could not have been completed without their generous donation of time and expertise. Following protocols established under Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, only their affiliations are identified here.

Calgary Focus Group

- Alberta Cultural Action Network
- Calgary Region Arts Foundation
- Calgary Winter Club
- Calgary Soccer Centre
- Canada Olympic Park, Calgary
- Collicutt Centre, Red Deer
- Department of Sociology, University of Calgary
- Heritage Park, City of Calgary
- Mountain Equipment Coop, Calgary
- Northmount Pleasant Arts Centre, City of Calgary
- Nose Creek Sport and Recreation Association, City of Calgary
- Physical Activity and Sport Administration Program, Mount Royal College, Calgary
- Prairie Turf Grass Research Centre, Olds College

Edmonton Focus Group

- Alberta Human Resources and Employment.
- Cultural Services, City of St. Albert
- Edmonton Arts Council
- Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, University of Alberta
- HeLa Ventures, Edmonton.
- Kinsmen Sports Centre
- Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
- Parks and Recreation, County of Leduc
- Provincial Fitness Unit, University of Alberta
- Strathcona Wilderness Centre, Strathcona County
- TransAlta Leisure Centre
- United Cycle
- YMCA Alberta