

Pennsylvania's Recreation Plan 2004-2008: Executive Summary

Completed by Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation under the guidance of the Interagency Recreation Planning and Greenways Advisory Committee, April 2004

Purpose: The purpose of this report was to devise a plan to improve outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Location: This report focuses on all recreation facilities in Pennsylvania.

Study Design: The DCNR first conducted ten stakeholder meetings across the state to identify regional needs and priorities. Then the department performed a random telephone survey of 7,100 Pennsylvania residents; and a separate "needs" survey was mailed to over 21,000 randomly selected Pennsylvania households by the School of Forest Resources at Penn State University. Researchers also used similar studies in order to create the Recreation Plan.

Key Findings:

- Walking (66.8%) followed by sightseeing/driving for pleasure (52.9%), nature watching (49.3%), and swimming (48.1%) were the top four outdoor activities Pennsylvanians enjoyed (15).
- The chart below lists the facilities most needed according to those surveyed:

Facility type	% of respondents indicating need for facility
Sledding areas	59
Ice Skating areas	54
Indoor pools	52
Skateboarding and rollerblading areas	51
Cabin rentals	50
Environmental education areas	50
Bicycle paths	49
Natural areas	49
Wilderness and wildlife areas	48

Table found on page 19

- For almost 20 years, the facilities that have consistently been identified as needing improvement are picnic areas and playgrounds. The PA Recreation and Park Society estimates that \$40 million is needed annually to repair parks, improve riverfronts, build greenways, and develop new parks in older communities (22).
- Half of Pennsylvanians reported a "lack of time" as the principal barrier to recreation participation. "Lack of info" was the next most reported barrier (25%), followed by "not enough money," "facilities too far away," and "facilities too crowded" (each at 23%) (23).
- Recreation Plan's Top 3 Priorities
 1. Increase funding for planning, acquisition, development, and rehabilitation of natural, cultural, historic and recreation resources, facilities and programs and open space in order to enhance the quality of life of Pennsylvanians.

2. Create healthy and livable communities that will more successfully serve the recreation needs of those who live, work, and play within them.
 3. Build more capacity at all levels, through partnerships and innovative ways of doing business, to empower stakeholders in meeting recreation needs.
- By investing in combating sprawl, revitalizing urban areas, conserving lands, improving water quality and strengthening recreational assets, we can invest in our future.
 - Investments in urban parks and green spaces are critical to revitalizing our older communities and making them more attractive places to live and work.
 - Rural communities will benefit from policies to conserve privately owned lands that produce goods from agriculture and timber production.
 - In rapidly growing areas, linking smart growth planning with new parks, open spaces, and greenways investments is integral to the community as it grows.
 - Investments in state-owned lands will help strengthen regional tourism and economic development.
 - Cleaning up degraded streams and rivers is a critical investment in restoring possibilities for economic progress, particularly in rural communities where acid mine drainage and non-point pollution are likely