

Inclusive Recreation Programming: Pilot programming at John Dillon Park

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May 2012

Bachelors of Professional Studies in Recreation, Adventure Travel,
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Abstract

Throughout history, persons with disabilities have not had many opportunities for recreation. John Dillon Park (JDP), an accessible wilderness facility in the Town of Long Lake in the Adirondack Park in Northern New York, opened in 2005 to provide such opportunities. However, the park has not yet offered inclusive programming for visitors. This project developed pilot inclusive recreation programming for users of John Dillon Park. Through our research, we discovered what kind of outdoor inclusive recreation programs the users of John Dillon Park most wish to participate in and what benefits they derive from participation in the programs.

Our research began with a needs assessment of the parks visitors in the early season to find out what kinds of programs they would want to participate in. We then developed and implemented three programs. Surveys were conducted before and after implementation of the programs to indicate changes in personal wellbeing indicators and park visit satisfaction of the participants. During the course of the program, participant's behavior was observed for evidence of a lessening of self-consciousness, an increase in level of group involvement, and physical participation. After the program, participants were asked to create a scrapbook page to leave with us, using pictures they had taken during the program. This depicted how the participants experienced the program from their point of view.

The sample size of data gathered was very small and therefore was statistically insignificant. However, through observation and the scrapbook pages we have been convinced that programming at the park is valuable to both visitors and the park and should be continued in the future.

Preface

This project could not have been completed without the help of a few influential people. Karen Boldis, our mentor for this project, provided us with continuous support in every aspect through to completion. Steven Ellis, resident manager of John Dillon Park, aided us in the areas of program development and implementation and his support was the key factor that enabled us to conduct this research. Local businesses such as Dunkin' Donuts, Price Chopper, Goody Goodies, and local newspapers provided resources for our final program. It is because of their generosity that our program had the best chance for success. For all of this, we would like to say a big “thank you,” we could not have gained such experience and knowledge without you.

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Introduction

During the 1950s and 60s the movement for organized recreation was growing and already showing a marked impact on community life. Recreation was seen as an opportunity to “improve quality of life, reduce social pathology, build constructive values in citizens, and generally make communities a better place to live” (McLean & Hurd, 2011). In the Post-World War Two era, federal legislation strengthened the development of special recreation for persons with disabilities. The main aim of this recreation was for rehabilitation and reintegration into community life for returning veterans (McLean & Hurd, 2011). Today, there are many facilities that have been created specifically for inclusive recreation.

John Dillon Park, which opened in 2006, is a 200-acre, fully accessible park for persons with or without disabilities. The park is owned by International Paper but operated by Paul Smith’s College staff, faculty, and students. John Dillon Park offers fully accessible lean-tos, compostable outdoor toilets, information facilities, and trails. Furthermore, John Dillon Park provides services such as portable battery chargers for electric wheel chairs, firewood, an accessible fishing dock, and pontoon boat rides, all at no cost to its users. However, John Dillon Park offers no inclusive outdoor programming.

For our study, we investigated visitor satisfaction and the benefits gained through inclusive recreational programming at John Dillon Park. To define inclusion we will use Schleien, Hornfeldt, and McAvoy’s definition (1994). “Inclusion is based on the premise that least restrictive and integrated environments benefit both individuals with and without disabilities in that all could experience the positive physical, cognitive, emotional and social outcomes of recreation participation.” Psychological benefits include the feeling of being

included, the feeling of being welcomed, an increased positive attitude, and decreasing levels of both stress and anxiety. Outdoor recreation can positively affect a person's well-being which is what we hope to accomplish with our study.

Our objective was to plan, facilitate, and evaluate inclusive outdoor recreation programs at John Dillon Park. We then analyzed the benefits participants derived from the activities. Through our research and data collection we answered the question: How do outdoor inclusive recreation programs benefit the users of John Dillon Park? To answer this question we developed, distributed, and collected surveys prior to and after the programs to discern how participant's health, wellbeing, and outdoor skills changed.

This research laid the foundation for future outdoor inclusive programming at John Dillon Park. These programs may increase the number of participants visiting and using the park for educational and recreational and leisure purposes. Improvements made to John Dillon Park, such as the implementation of inclusive programming, may also reflect positively on the public's view of Paul Smith's College. Lastly, by continuing these inclusive outdoor program services at the park, more job opportunities and learning experiences will be available to the students of Paul Smith's College, providing direct benefits to their professional development.

Literature Review **History**

Persons with disabilities have experienced many challenges in being accepted in their communities for a long time. Prior to the 1900s, persons with disabilities were subject to much abuse and contempt; they were: a source of entertainment or low-cost labor, and were often expelled from society, abused, or killed. In some societies, persons with disabilities were treated more as a “pet.” They were brought out into the sunshine from their dark cells and provided with music, art, games, and physical activity. From 1900 to present in the United States (U.S.), services have been developed for persons with disabilities through societal movements but not without extensive struggles. In the early 1900s, persons with disabilities were either housed in prison-like hospitals to protect the “normal” people of society or they were completely banished from American society altogether. Jane Addams and others saw the need to help persons with disabilities; they believed that, if given the chance, they could become a beneficial part of society. In the 1950s-1970s, social movements began the process of deinstitutionalization to get persons with disabilities out into the mainstream of society (Human Kinetics, 2010).

Inclusive recreation programming is a relatively new term and is steadily gaining recognition. Before the year 1990, persons with disabilities were often excluded from society functions and activities. People without disabilities simply did not know how to act around or towards persons with disabilities. For instance, including a person in a wheelchair on a rafting trip was unheard of because of the perception that he/she was incapable of performing the tasks.

In 1973, the American Rehabilitation Act became law. This law prohibited discrimination and the denial of benefits in federally funded programs and services (University of California, 2004). Then in 1979, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that these federally funded programs must make “reasonable modifications” to enable participation (University of California, 2004). The

piece of legislation to most directly influence the recreation industry was the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which was enacted to ensure that persons with disabilities would have the same opportunities as persons without disabilities; and would not be segregated or discriminated against because of their disability (US Department of Justice, 2012). The act was written to address potential situations such as the work place, recreation facilities, and public transport and communication. (McLean & Hurd, 2012). In 2011 new rules for the Americans with Disabilities Act came into effect. Because of this, accessibility requirements for recreational facilities were expanded, and guidelines for the use of service animals became clearly defined.

Along with laws, regulations, and attitudes changing in regard to persons with disabilities, the language we use is also changing. Person-first language emphasizes the person rather than the person's disability. "When we describe people by their labels of medical diagnoses, we devalue and disrespect them as individuals. In contrast, using thoughtful terminology can foster positive attitudes about persons with disabilities" (ARC, 2012). When the person is first, the disability no longer defines the individual, but instead becomes one of many characteristics the person has. For example, you would refer to someone as "the man with a visual impairment", or "the child that uses a wheelchair" instead of "the blind man", or "the handicapped child".

The term "handicapped" originated in the 1650s as a game (Harper, 2012). Hand-in-cap was a bartering game that required two players and a referee. Each player would put the same amount of money in his/her hat; this money was known as forfeit money. Each player would then offer up an item he or she thought the other would want to buy. The referee appraised the items and assigned a monetary value. The player whose item was lesser-valued had to add money to his/her hat to equalize the values of the proposed barter. Now that the transaction was equal the

players would put their hands into their caps to either draw out the forfeit money or not. To draw out money meant you accepted the trade, and an empty hand meant you did not accept. If both drew out the forfeit money then the exchange was made and the referee took the forfeit money as payment. If neither took money out the referee again took the forfeit money and the exchange was not made. If only one drew out money the exchange was not made and the one who drew out money was entitled to the forfeit money. From this game, the term handicap evolved to refer to a way in which a situation was made more equitable (Harper, 2012). The term “handicapped” is falling out of favor because of its focus on limitations rather than abilities.

What exactly is a disability? “A disability is an impairment that limits one or more life areas. A life area is, but is not limited to, caring for oneself, seeing, hearing, walking, daily living skills, learning, and working” (Stensrud, 1993, p. 10-11).

Benefits of Recreation

A study on perception and participation of persons with disabilities using National Forest Lands in three Western states was done in an attempt to find out if National Forest land use was being limited due to the presence of a person(s) with a disability living in a household. They found that the non-disabled members in households with a person with a disability weren't as limited as the person with the disability, obviously. What this shows, however, is that the persons without the disability(s) can and do use the National Forests but if the person with the disability wants to use the area they are limited by cost, transportation, and programming (Burns & Graefe, 2007). The solution, or problem, is providing access for persons with disabilities to take part in activities as they choose without limitations.

Inclusive recreation has a lot to offer to those with disabilities, especially those who previously had no form of physical activity or social interaction. To be specific, some of the benefits that inclusive recreation can provide for persons with disabilities are physical benefits such as enhanced fitness; emotional benefits, like increased self-esteem; and bonding opportunities among families, couples, or groups.

Lack of physical exercise for persons with disabilities can increase their chance of acquiring debilitating chronic health problems (Hedrick and Broadbent, 1996). If inclusive recreation programming were to be incorporated in public settings such as parks, then opportunities for exercise would be more readily available, resulting in increased health. One of the biggest risks involved with a sedentary lifestyle that inclusive recreation can prevent is obesity. Other health risks include skeletal deterioration, less mobile/flexible joints, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and muscle loss to name a few (Mobily, 2009).

Inclusive recreation has the potential to increase emotional health. In the past, persons with disabilities were seen as incapable, dependent, and burdensome individuals (Dunn & Leitschuh, 2006; Arokiasamy, Rubin, & Roessler, 2001). Recreation programmers have been working to create more positive environments for persons with disabilities to ensure fulfilling life experiences. One reason is that in the U.S. alone 1 in five people have a disability that's 56.7 million people, which is the largest minority group in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). Also, recreation/inclusive programming can provide many opportunities for persons with disabilities to enhance their self-esteem and feeling of life achievement. In a study on youth disability sport, evidence has shown that youth involved on a sports team may experience a variety of social benefits just by playing with a best friend (Martin & Smith, 2002; Martin, 2006). Another

interesting find was that self-esteem in individuals with disabilities has the potential to increase the mastery of a skill whether it is a sport or another activity (Hedrick, 1985).

Inclusive recreation can change group bonding. Few studies have explored family cohesion and recreation, but the few that have been done show potential. There are a fair amount of scholars in family systems and therapeutic recreation who believe that, through common activities, families can develop a sense of social, emotional, and physical well-being (Mactavish & Schleien, 1998; Orthner, 1998; Orthner & Mancini, 1991; Quatman, 1997; Shaw, 1999), and develop greater self-reliance (Lakin, 1998). Also, family-based inclusive recreation activities can help families connect to their surrounding community (Devine & Dattilo, 2000; Heyne, Schleien, & McAvoy, 1993; Lakin, 1998; Schleien, Ray, & Green, 1997). One study attempted to measure family cohesiveness when on camping trips in the spring, summer, and fall seasons. They found that families with low cohesiveness in the spring had the most to gain toward the end of the summer season (West and Merriam, 2009), indicating that families can and do experience bonding during recreational activities.

Outdoor recreation and group dynamics

Groups are made up of two or more people that must work together to achieve a common goal. Furthermore, group dynamics are the forces operating within the group such as social status (Sutherland & Stroot, 2010, p.). Disabilities are most likely to take on negative connotations in settings that are intimate and informal, and outdoor recreation settings fall into the intimate and informal category (Devine, 2004).

Members of a group or family are defined as cohesive when they are each participating in his/her own way and are submerged within the group by intimate association (West & Merriam,

2009). In an outdoor recreation setting, a group is often isolated from the normal social world to participate in activities that call for spontaneity of interactions, and a lessening of self-consciousness. In previous studies, it was found that participants credit nature and the outdoors with an increase in a sense of family unity (West & Merriam, 2009). It was also found that the greatest increase was found in those groups where the initial cohesiveness rating was low.

Inclusion is sometimes referred to as a philosophy that has the purpose of providing opportunities for all individuals to develop the skills and attitudes required to live, learn, and work together in society. Because outdoor recreation often requires individuals to work together, many opportunities are presented in which people work together to find solutions to activities or to accomplish a task. "Individuals with disabilities often experience positive outcomes through participation" (Sutherland & Stroot, 2010) in outdoor recreational programs.

Constraints to outdoor recreation

A study done by Burns and Graefe (2007) showed that approximately 40% of people living with a person with a disability have said that they have not been constrained by the presence of the person with a disability when recreating outside in a National Forest. However, the person with the disability indicated a much greater constraint to their outdoor recreation (Burns & Graefe, 2007). There are three basic kinds of constraints: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Intrapersonal constraints are those that affect preferences such as abilities, personality needs, prior socialization, and perceived reference group attitudes. Interpersonal constraints relates to both preferences and participation, which occurs due to one's interaction with one's peers, family members, and others. Lastly, structural constraints are those that intervene in the preference-participation relationship, such as time, costs, and facilities (Godbey,

Crawford, & Shen, 2010). Constraints are navigated in the order of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and finally structural. As prospective participants move through the different types of constraints, the number of participants declines due to an inability to overcome the constraint(s) (Godbey, Crawford, & Shen, 2010). There is no one thing that prevents participation, but rather multiple things, and each constraint is not experienced with the same intensity by each individual (Burns & Graefe, 2007).

Common constraints found in determining outdoor recreation participation include:

- Personal skills
- Abilities
- Health
- Time
- Money
- Transportation
- Availability of personalized services
- Access to equipment
- Education
- Lack of leisure partners
- Discomfort in being in a large group
- Mobility issues
- Self-consciousness
- Attitudes of significant others
- Lack of skills
- Lack of variety in times programs are offered
- Lack of appropriate programming

(Burns & Graefe). All of the constraints listed above have the ability to affect any person, with or without a disability. Some disabilities, due to their nature, may intensify the effect or perception of some of the constraints.

Inclusive Recreation Locations and Programming

Inclusive recreation is still relatively new but is gaining in public awareness. The New York State Inclusive Recreation Resource Center, run by SUNY Cortland, provides resources for education, information for recreation opportunities, and inclusivity assessment training. On this site, information is provided on recreation opportunities by region so people may see what types of accommodations are provided if programming is provided, and other information they may need to make informed decisions before their visit. Most places such as John Dillon Park, The

Wild Center, and the Adirondack Museum have facilities, trails, and some equipment available, but do not have programming. By reviewing the resources on their site, it is apparent that inclusive recreation programming is largely absent unless you go to a special facility that specializes in adaptive recreation, but that really isn't "inclusive." Inclusive programming is made possible by having trained staff, additional support staff, and adaptive equipment and programming. Adapting the program to be inclusive can be something as simple as changing the objective of the activity from a competitive to a cooperative focus. For example, instead of playing traditional volleyball both teams would work together to see how many times they can volley the ball. Making a program inclusive could also mean changing the rules or removing obstacles. All recreation facility managers should keep in mind a few guidelines for program practices that foster inclusion as set forth by the SUNY Cortland Inclusive Recreation Resource Center (2011)

- Include questions about the need for accommodations on the registration form
- Staff should model accepting and inclusive behavior
- Focus on the person, not the disability
- Do not give excessive attention or praise to the person with a disability
- Do not speak for the person with a disability
- Pay attention to group dynamics and draw excluded participants into the group through words and actions
- Gently correct the behaviors of other participants who may not be accepting or respectful
- Positive behavioral supports
- Define program rules and expectations clearly for all participants
- Reward or praise participants when expectations are met

- Consequences for misbehavior are clearly defined and implemented consistently
- Use transitions between activities consistently
- Distractions and disruptions are minimized
- Activity modifications: task analysis and partial participation
- Staff members identify all the steps and skills needed to successfully complete an activity
- Use this information to plan and lead activities
- Person with a disability is able to participate in the portions or steps that they will be successful in Generally used only with persons with significant disabilities

Conclusion

There have been some prevailing myths about persons with disabilities and outdoor recreation including the idea that they do not like the same environments or activities as able-bodied persons and also that they cannot attain full benefits from outdoor recreation programs (Burns & Graefe, 2007, p. 156-181). However, the exact opposite is true and, in fact, persons with disabilities showed an increase in self-perceptions and acceptance after participating in outdoor recreation programs (Burns & Graefe, 2007).

According to Cornell University's disability statistics, in 2009, there were 2,979,835 people in the United States with a disability including all ages. In New York State alone, there are 185,864 persons with a disability including all ages (Erickson et al., 2008). SUNY Cortland has a website for its New York State Inclusive Recreation Resource Center (NYSIRRC, 2012). This site provides information about parks and recreation facilities for persons with disabilities. Trained staff and volunteers evaluate the accessibility of recreation facilities in New York State and then post their findings on this site for others to view and determine if the facility is usable,

given his/her disability. On this site you can find information on John Dillon Park as well as other parks and facilities in the Adirondacks.

John Dillon Park (JDP) was created to provide people within and outside of the community with a fully accessible wilderness recreation facility. The park provides accessible trails, outhouses, lean-tos, and an accessible fishing dock and pontoon boat (Frequently asked questions, 2012). However, there is little in the way of structured activities, unless the only purpose of visiting the park is to enjoy some alone time in the woods. As of now JDP does not have any form of programming but is open to the idea of possible implementation (Stephen Ellis, personal communication, 2012).

Methods

To answer our question: How do inclusive outdoor recreation programs benefit the users of John Dillon Park, we developed a survey prior to the opening of the park and did a needs assessment of visitors to the park during the months of May, June, and early July of the 2012 season (Appendix A). A needs assessment, as defined by DeGraaf, Jordan, and DeGraaf (2010, page 87), is “the search for liabilities, deficiencies, or gaps in a community which we then try to ‘fix’ or fill with programs.” Often times, a needs assessment is administered to discover what people in the community want from their local recreation facility. There are many ways needs assessment can be conducted, but for our research, we utilized three techniques: paper surveys, interviews, and observation. Upon arrival park users were asked to fill out a survey asking what kind of programs they would be interested in participating in. We also asked what day(s) and times the participants would most likely be interested in participating in the programs. During the participants stay we talked with them to get a more personal sense of what they expected from programs. We also observed attitudes and behaviors during park hours to see if qualitative data could be abstracted and used to determine what programs may be of interest to JDP users.

This information told us what type of program to develop and implement in order to yield maximum benefits for the users. Once participants arrived for the program, but prior to the programs beginning, they were asked to fill out a pre-participation survey to indicate the sense of wellbeing and expectations for the program (Appendix B). Participants were given a camera so they could take a few pictures of the part of the program that was especially beneficial or a specific highlight of their experience. At the end of the program before participants departed, they were given a post-participation survey to address how their wellbeing and park visit satisfaction changed, assuming that it did, as a result of their program experience (appendix C).

Also at that time participants were asked to create a scrapbook page using the pictures taken during the program and craft supplies, such as construction paper and stickers, to show what the experience was like from their point of view.

After the three programs were completed, all the data was entered into an excel document for further examination of what the visitors thought of their experience and about inclusive recreation programming for JDP.

Results

Our needs assessment consisted of participation interest, length of program, type of programs, what day, what time, physical limitations, the number of visitors in the party, and age range. What we found from our needs assessment was that 63% were either interested or most interested in having inclusive programming. One hour was the preferred length of the programs. The programs with at least a 10% interest were nature walk, boating, fishing, owl call identification, camp cooking, and bird watching. The day and time of programs were weekend afternoons. There were few physical limitations, and the majority of visitors in a party were two, with a large age range of mid 20's to late 60's.

Table 1a. Needs assessment for the beginning of John Dillon Park's summer 2012 season. The sample size for this assessment was 22 persons.

Participation interest in inclusive programming	Totals
1	1
2	3
3	4
4	4
5	10
Program length	
less than 1 hour	5
1 hour	11
1 and a half hours	6
2 hours	1
Other	1
Program of interest	
Fishing	13
bird watching	9
art	3
nature walk	18
camp cooking	9
fishing derby	3
owl call ID (night time)	10
lawn games	7
Boating	15
Other	1
Program day	
Weekend	14
week day	11

Time of day	
Morning	9
Afternoon	9
Evening	8
Physical limitation(s)/specific needs	
Physical	9
None	13
How many people will you visit with	
Self	4
2+	17
4+	9
Age range	
3 or less	0
4-7	3
8-11	2
12-15	1
16-21	3
22-30	9
31-45	8
46-60	11
61-80	7
81+	1

The pre-participation survey was given to the participants to fill out before the beginning of the program(s) and was designed to find out the participants age, gender, sense of feeling welcomed, stress level, anxiety level, sense of inclusion, and visit satisfaction thus far. Also in the survey was a list of experiences that the program participants may hope to get out of the program. These experiences include new experiences, inclusion, increased physical activity, socialization, knowledge, new friends, stress relief, fun, bonding within own group, and other(s) if participants had any.

What we found is that the average age of participants was 34, and 58% of the persons who filled out the survey were female, and 42% were male. Everyone felt 100% welcomed and had a stress level of either 1 or 2 indicating low stress. All but two participants felt a high level of inclusion. The top three participation hopes were fun, knowledge, and socialization.

Table 2a. Pre-participation survey results for July 28 & August 11. The sample size was 12 persons.

Before Survey	Totals
Age	ave age of 34
Gender	
Male	5
Female	7
How welcoming do you find JDP?	
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	12
level of each indicator?	
Stress	
1	7
2	5
3	0
4	0
5	0
Anxiety	
1	7
2	5
3	0
4	0
5	0

sense of inclusion	
1	2
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	10
visit satisfaction	
1	1
2	0
3	1
4	0
5	10
program participation hopes	
increase in physical activity	2
new experience	9
Socialization	11
Knowledge	11
new friends	5
inclusion	3
stress relief	2
fun	12
bonding within own group	2
Other	3

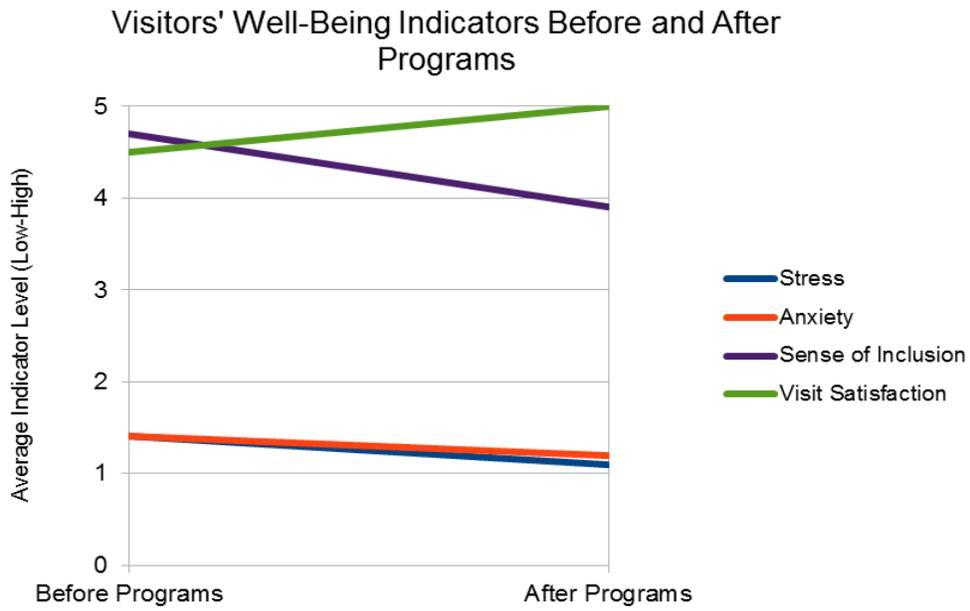
The post-participation survey is exactly the same as the pre-participation survey minus age and gender. This survey was completed by the same individuals who completed the pre-participation survey to show change, if there was any. We found a decrease in stress levels, a decrease in anxiety levels, a slight decrease in the sense of inclusion, visit satisfaction increased to 100%, and the top three participation hopes received were a new experience, knowledge, and socialization.

Table 2b. Post-participation survey results for July 28 & August 11. The sample size was 10 persons.

After Surveys	Totals
level of each indicator now	
Stress	
1	9
2	1
3	0
4	0
5	0
anxiety	
1	8
2	2
3	0
4	0
5	0
sense of inclusion	
1	2
2	1
3	0
4	0
5	7

visit satisfaction	
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	0
5	10
participation received in the program	
increase in physical activity	2
new experience	9
Socialization	9
Knowledge	9
new friends	7
Inclusion	4
stress relief	5
Fun	8
bonding within own group	4
Other	1

Figure 1



Figures 2c Comparison of the well-being indicators from the pre and post-participation surveys.

Discussion

After acquiring information from the needs assessment, running the programs, and gathering data through pre and post-participation surveys we compared results to see the overall effects of our programs on the participants. Based on our results, we were able to determine that inclusive recreation programs benefitted the users of John Dillon Park by making their stay more enjoyable.

Things that didn't go as planned and things that need to be investigated/explored for future programming at the park include weather, program promotion, and making sure the park gate stays open. Our first two programs experienced rains that could have affected visitor turnout. However, we had our largest number of participants at the first program which was camp cookery and crafts, which experienced the heaviest of the rain. For future programs, it would be in the programmer's best interest to either have a rain date set in advance and advertised with the original program date or to have a rain location where the activity could still be administered. Program promotion started out as just flyers around the local towns and didn't seem to get noticed. However, our last program was better advertised, and if we had advertised that much for our previous programs we may have had better participation. Finally, making sure everything is functioning properly. During our last program, we had opened the park gate and positioned it so that it would stay open the entire duration of the program. Somehow the gate closed, and since we had no way of knowing, no visitors could get into the park.

Halloween-to Fright Fest was our best planned and organized program of the three and yet the worst because there were no participants. We had opened the front gate so visitors could get into the park and come down to the welcome center. What we didn't do was post a sign at the

gate letting people know that there was a program going on that day or post somebody at the gate to greet visitors and make sure the gate stayed open. What we think happened is one of the people that utilize the camps on the property surrounding the park came down the road and saw that the gate was open and decided to shut it. Once the gate is shut no one can get in without the key pad code. Also, there is no cell service in this area of long lake, so there is no way for visitors to contact the welcome center.

Based on the scrapbook pages that were made during the programs and comments on the post-participation surveys, participants very much enjoyed their time and had a positive experience. Comments received include “Lots of fun, good time making new friends & enjoying community,” “It’s a great program! I learned a lot about outdoor cooking,” and “Fun and informative. Boat ride was fun for all.”

Implementation of the programs resulted in a higher number of visitors at the park since some of the participants visited the park primarily to participate in the programs. From talking to visitors, we learned that advertising for and running the programs increased visitor awareness of park programming, and if it is to be continued, participation numbers are likely to increase.

Every year the manager of John Dillon Park, Stephen Ellis, writes a report for Paul Smiths College and International Paper detailing park activities, how the season went, and what improvements can be made. This year he reported on this capstone and how much the visitors enjoyed themselves. He is hoping to make a case to hire additional staff for next season in order to continue and improve park programming.

Our suggestions for improvements that can be made on future programming are putting together a park program budget, obtaining new materials for the park to have specifically for programming, gain the assistance of Paul Smiths College in the area of program and park promotion, and to hire additional park staff.

From analyzing our data and graphs, we have come to the conclusion that the sample size is too small for our data to mean much of anything. The park does not receive an abundance of visitors, but based on observation and the scrapbook pages created by the participants we believe that it is safe to say that the outdoor inclusive programming was beneficial to visitors and should be continued in the future.

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Appendix A

John Dillon Park visitor needs assessment

1. How interested are you in participating in inclusive outdoor programming during your visit to John Dillon Park? Use a 1-5 scale to rate the following questions; 1 being not interested and 5 being highly interested.

1 2 3 4 5

2. How long would like the program to run? Circle one.

Less than an hour 1hour 1hour 30minutes 2hours

3. Which of the below programs would you be most interested in participating in? Circle all that apply.

Fishing bird watching art nature
walk

Camp cooking fishing derby owl call Identification (night time)

lawn games boating

Other? (specify) _____

4. What day(s) and time of day would you most likely participate in the park programs?

5. What physical limitations do you have and/or specific needs?

6. Will you be visiting by yourself or in a group? Circle one.

SELF / TWO + / FOUR +

7. What age range do you and/or members of your group fall under? Circle those that apply.

(3 and under) (4-7) (8-11) (12-15) (16-21) (22-30) (31-45) (46-60)

(61-80) (81 +)

Appendix B

Pre-Participation Survey

1. How old are you?

2. What is your gender?

Male Female

3. How welcoming to you find John Dillon Park on a scale of 1-5? 1 being low 5 being high.

1 2 3 4 5

4. For each of the following indicators of wellbeing, please select the number that currently represents your level. 1 being low 5 being high.

Stress	1	2	3	4	5
Anxiety	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of Inclusion	1	2	3	4	5
Visit satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5

5. What are you hoping to get out of your participation in this program (circle all that apply)

Increase in physical activity	Inclusion
New experience	Stress relief
Socialization	Fun
Knowledge	Bonding within own group
New friends	

Other please specify:

Appendix C

Post-Participation Survey

6. How old are you?

7. What is your gender?

Male Female

8. For each of the following indicators of wellbeing, please select the number that represents your level now that you have completed the recreational program. 1 being low 5 being high.

Stress	1	2	3	4	5
Anxiety	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of Inclusion	1	2	3	4	5
Visit satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5

9. What have you gotten out of your participation in this program (circle all that apply)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Increase in physical activity | Inclusion |
| New experience | Stress relief |
| Socialization | Fun |
| Knowledge | Bonding within own group |
| New friends | |
| Other please specify _____ | |

10. Please tell us your thoughts on this program

11. Do you have any suggestions for further programming? Please specify.

Appendix D

Participant Comments

1. “Had a great time with great people. Great food!!”-survey # 5
2. “Fun and knowledgeable with outdoor cooking + crafts”- survey #2
3. “It’s a great program! I learned a lot about outdoor cooking.”- survey # 3
4. “Fun and very informational! Good time of the day.”- survey # 9
5. “Lots of fun, good time making new friends & enjoying community” - survey # 8
6. “Fun and informative. Boat ride was fun for all”- survey # 10

Appendix E

Capstone Proposal

Inclusive Recreation Programming:
Pilot programming at
John Dillon Park

By: Abigail Hughes and Sean Frantz

Date of Submission: May 2012

Major: Recreation, Adventure Travel, and Ecotourism
Academic Division: CALA

Starting Date: May 2012
Ending Date: December 2012

Abstract

This project will develop pilot inclusive recreation programming for the users of John Dillon Park (JDP), which is located in the town of Long Lake in the Adirondack Park in Northern New York. Through our research we will discover what kind of outdoor inclusive recreation programs the users of John Dillon Park most wish to participate in and what benefits they derive from participation in the programs. Currently, JDP offers no programming for their visitors (SUNY Courtland, 2007). Therefore, the questions we are trying to answer are: What types of programs do the visitors to JDP wish to participate in, and how do inclusive recreation programs benefit the users of JDP? To answer these questions we will first conduct a needs assessment on their current clientele list to find out what kinds of programs the users of JDP wish to participate in. Based on the information gathered from the needs assessment we will then develop the programs using best practices set forth by industry standards. Surveys will be conducted before and after implementation of the program to indicate changes in personal wellbeing indicators and park visit satisfaction of the participants. During the course of the program the program leaders (Sean Frantz and Abby Hughes) will observe the participants behavior for evidence of a lessening of self-consciousness, an increase in level of group involvement, and physical participation. After the program participants will be asked to create a scrapbook page, to leave with us, using pictures they have taken during the program. This will depict, visually and with words, how the participants experienced the program from their point of view.

Introduction

During the 1950's and 60's, the movement for organized recreation was growing and was already showing a marked impact on community life. Recreation was seen as an opportunity to

“improve quality of life, reduce social pathology, build constructive values in citizens, and generally make communities a better place to live” (McLean & Hurd, 2011). In the Post-World War Two era, federal legislation strengthened the development of special recreation for persons with disabilities. The main aim of this recreation was for rehabilitation and reintegration into community life for returning veterans (McLean & Hurd, 2011). Today, there are many facilities that have been created specifically for inclusive recreation.

John Dillon Park is a 200-acre, fully accessible, park for persons with or without disabilities. The park opened in 2006 and is owned by International Paper, but operated by Paul Smith’s College staff, faculty, and students. John Dillon Park offers fully accessible lean-tos, compostable outdoor toilets, information facilities, and trails. Furthermore, John Dillon Park provides services such as portable battery chargers for electric wheel chairs, firewood, accessible fishing dock, and pontoon boat rides, all at no cost to its users. However, John Dillon Park does not yet offer any kind of inclusive outdoor programming.

For our study we would like to look at visitor satisfaction and the psychological benefits gained through inclusive recreational programming at John Dillon Park. To define inclusion we will use Schleien, Hornfeldt, and McAvoy’s definition (1994). “Inclusion is based on the premise that least restrictive and integrated environments benefit both individuals with and without disabilities in that all could experience the positive physical, cognitive, emotional and social outcomes of recreation participation.” Psychological benefits include the feeling of being included, the feeling of being welcomed, an increased positive attitude, and decreasing levels of both stress and anxiety. Outdoor recreation can positively affect a person’s well-being and that is what we hope to accomplish with our study.

Our objective is to plan, implement, facilitate, and evaluate an inclusive outdoor

recreation program at John Dillon Park. We will analyze the benefits participants derive from the activity(s). Through the program(s), we would like to find out exactly what the benefits are that the participants receive. Using the best professional practices of the industry, we will be able to discern, through evaluation, how the participant's wellbeing, and visit satisfaction have improved as a result of the program(s).

Through our research and data collection we will answer the question: How do outdoor inclusive recreation programs benefit the users of John Dillon Park? To answer this question we will develop and implement inclusive outdoor recreation programs for John Dillon Park. Also, we will develop, distribute, and collect surveys prior to and after the program(s) to discern how participant's health, wellbeing, and outdoor skills have improved.

Furthermore, this research will lay the foundation for future outdoor inclusive programming at John Dillon Park. This program(s) will also increase the number of participants visiting and using the park for educational and physical recreation and leisure purposes. Improvements made to John Dillon Park, such as the implementation of inclusive programming, will also reflect positively on the public view of Paul Smith's College. Lastly, by continuing these inclusive outdoor program services at the park, more job opportunities and learning experiences will be available to the students of Paul Smith's College, providing direct benefits to their professional development.

Major Question

How do inclusive recreation programs benefit the users of JDP and what are those benefits?

Goals/ Objectives

Our goals are to: successfully plan and implement inclusive outdoor program(s), lay the foundation for future inclusive outdoor program(s), and improve the quality of the visitor's experience, their health, well-being, and outdoor skills. Our objectives for this project is to create outdoor inclusive recreation program(s) at JDP and lay the foundation for future programming at JDP. The benefits include: inclusive recreation programming for JDP, possible increase in the number of visitors to JDP, improve the quality of JDP visitors' experience, offering hands-on learning experience for PSC classes, increase in the number of job opportunities at JDP, and improving the public view of PSC.

Assumptions

For this project we are assuming that visitors to John Dillon Park (JDP) are seeking an environmental experience, that are seeking out such programming, and that outdoor inclusive programming will have a positive effect on the participants wellbeing and satisfaction with their park visit.

Scope and Limitations

The scope of this project will be limited to John Dillon Park during the summer of 2012, specifically to the visitors to the park during that time frame. Limitations we expect to face are that users may not wish to participate in the program offered, our sample size will be limited to

those who are already aware of and use the park, and time constraints due to other duties we must attend to while working at the park.

Methods

To answer our question: How do inclusive outdoor recreation programs benefit the users of John Dillon Park, we will first need to do a needs assessment of the visitors before they arrive for their visit, if possible (appendix 1, needs assessment). This information will tell us what type of program to develop and implement so as to derive maximum benefits for the users. Prior to running the program we will pass out a survey for participants to fill out based on their current sense of wellbeing and expectations for the program (appendix 2, pre-participation survey). Participants will be given a camera so they may take a few pictures of the part of the program that was especially beneficial or a specific highlight of their experience. At the end of the program participants will be given another survey similar to the first but asking how their wellbeing and park visit satisfaction has changed as a result of their program experience (appendix 3, post-participation survey). At that time participants will also be asked to create a scrapbook page using the pictures taken during the program to show what the experience was like from their point of view.

Literature Review

History

Persons with disabilities have had a hard time being accepted in their communities for a long time. Prior to the 1900s, persons with disabilities were subject to much abuse and contempt; they were: a source of entertainment or low-cost labor, and were often expelled from society, abused or killed. Although in some societies, persons with disabilities were treated more as a “pet.” They were brought out into the sunshine from their dark cells and provided with music, art,

games, and physical activity. From 1900 to the present in the United States (U.S.), services have been developed for persons with disabilities through societal movements but not without extensive struggles. In the early 1900s, persons with disabilities were housed in a prison-like hospital to protect the normal people of society; or the persons with disabilities were completely banished from American society altogether. However, people like Jane Addams saw the need to help persons with disabilities and believed that if given the chance they could become a beneficial part of society. In the 1950s-1970s, social movements began the process of deinstitutionalization to get persons with disabilities out into the mainstream of society (Human Kinetics, 2010).

Inclusive recreation programming is a relatively new term and is steadily gaining recognition. Before the year 1990, persons with disabilities were often excluded from society functions and activities. People without disabilities simply did not know how to act around or towards persons with disabilities. For instance, including a person in a wheelchair on a rafting trip was unheard of because of the perception that he/she was incapable of performing the tasks. However, in the year 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act was enacted to ensure that persons with disabilities would have the same opportunities as persons without disabilities; and would not be segregated or discriminated against because of their disability. The act was written to address every potential situation such as the work place and recreation facilities (McLean & Hurd, 2012).

What exactly is a disability? “A disability is an impairment that limits one or more life areas. A life area is, but is not limited to, caring for oneself, seeing, hearing, walking, daily living skills, learning, and working” (Stensrud, 1993).

Benefits of Recreation

A study on perception and participation of persons with disabilities using national forest lands in three Western states. The study was done in an attempt to find out if National Forest use was being limited due to households that had a person(s) with a disability living in it. They found that the non-disability members in households with a person with a disability weren't as limited as the person with the disability, obviously. What this shows is that the persons without the disability(s) can and do use the national Forests, but if the person with the disability wants to use the area they are limited to cost, transportation, and programming (Burns and Graefe, 2007). The solution, or problem, is providing the means for persons with disabilities access to take part in activities as they choose without limitations.

Inclusive recreation has a lot to offer to those with disabilities, especially those who previously had no form of physical activity or social interaction. To be specific, some of the benefits that inclusive recreation can provide for persons with disabilities are physical benefits, such as exercise; emotional benefits, like increased self-esteem, and bonding opportunities among families, couples, or groups.

Lack of physical exercise for a person with a disability can increase their chance of acquiring debilitating chronic health problems (Hedrick and Broadbent, 1996, p. 138). If inclusive recreation programming were to be incorporated in public settings such as parks then opportunities for exercise would be more readily available, resulting in increased health. One of the biggest risks involved with a sedentary lifestyle that inclusive recreation can prevent is obesity. Other health risks include: skeletal deterioration, less mobile/flexible joints, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and muscle loss to name a few (Mobily, 2009).

Inclusive recreation has the potential to increase emotional health. In the past, persons with disabilities were seen as incapable, dependent, and burdensome individuals (Dunn & Leitschuh, 2006; Arokiasamy, Rubin, & Roessler, 2001). Recreation programmers have been working to create more positive environments for persons with disabilities to ensure fulfilling life experiences. One reason is that in the U.S.A. alone, there are 54 million persons with disabilities, which is the largest minority group in the U.S.A (McNeil, 1997). Also, recreation/inclusive programming can provide many opportunities for persons with disabilities to enhance their self-esteem and feeling of life achievement. In a study on youth disability sport, evidence has shown that youth involved on a sports team may experience a variety of social benefits just by playing with a best friend (Martin and Smith, 2002; Martin, 2006). Another interesting find was that self-esteem in individuals with disabilities has the potential to increase the mastery of a skill whether it is a sport or another activity (Hedrick, 1985).

Inclusive recreation can change group bonding. Few studies have explored family cohesion and recreation, but the few that have been done show potential. There are a fair amount of scholars in family systems and therapeutic recreation who believe, through common activities, that families can develop a sense of social, emotional, and physical well-being (Mactavish & Schleien, 1998; Orthner, 1998; Orthner & Mancini, 1991; Quatman, 1997; Shaw, 1999), and develop greater self-reliance (Lakin, 1998). Also, family-based inclusive recreation activities can help families connect to their surrounding community (Devine & Dattilo, 2000; Heyne, Schleien, & McAvoy, 1993; Lakin, 1998; Schleien, Ray, & Green, 1997). One study attempted to measure family cohesiveness when on camping trips in the spring, summer, and fall seasons. They found that families with low cohesiveness in the spring had the most to gain toward the end of the

summer season (West and Merriam, 2009), indicating that families can and do experience bonding during recreational activities.

Outdoor recreation and group dynamics

Groups are made up of two or more people that must work together to achieve a common goal. Furthermore, group dynamics are the forces operating within the group such as social status (Sutherland & Stroot, 2010). Disabilities are most likely to take on negative connotations in settings that are intimate and informal, and outdoor recreation settings fall into the intimate and informal category (Devine, 2004).

Members of a group or family are defined as cohesive when they are each participating in his or her own way and are submerged within the group by intimate association (West & Merriam, 2009). In an outdoor recreation setting, a group is often isolated from the normal social world and participate in activities that call for spontaneity of interactions, and a lessening of self-consciousness. In previous studies it was found that participants credit nature and the outdoors with an increase in a sense of family unity (West & Merriam, 2009). It was also found that the greatest increase was found in those groups where the initial cohesiveness rating was low.

Inclusion is sometimes referred to as “a philosophy that has the purpose of providing opportunities for all individuals to develop the skills and attitudes required to live, learn, and work together in society. Because outdoor recreation often requires individuals to work together many opportunities are presented in which people work together to find solutions to activities or to accomplish a task. “Individuals with disabilities often experience positive outcomes through participation” in outdoor recreational programs (Sutherland & Stroot, 2010).

Constraints to outdoor recreation

A study done by Burns and Graefe (2007) showed that approximately 40% of people living with a person with a disability have said that they have not been constrained by the presence of the person with a disability when recreating outside in a National Forrest. However, the person with the disability indicated a much greater constraint to their outdoor recreation (Burns & Graefe, 2007). There are three basic kinds of constraints: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural. Intrapersonal constraints are those that affect preferences such as abilities, personality needs, prior socialization, and perceived reference group attitudes. Interpersonal relate to both preferences and participation, which occurs due to one's interaction with one's peers, family members, and others. These interactions may lead someone to Lastly, structural constraints are those that intervene in the preference-participation relationship, such as time, costs, and facilities (Godbey, Crawford, & Shen, 2010). Constraints are navigated in the order of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and finally structural. As prospective participants move through the different types of constraints the number of participants declines due to an inability to overcome the constraint(s) (Godbey, Crawford, & Shen, 2010). There is no one thing that prevents participation but rather multiple things, and each constraint is experienced with the same intensity for each individual (Burns & Graefe, 2007).

Common constraints found in determining outdoor recreation participation (Burns & Graefe, 2007):

- Personal skills
- Abilities
- Health
- Time
- Money
- Transportation
- Availability of personalized services
- Access to equipment
- Education
- Lack of leisure partners
- Discomfort in being in a large group
- Mobility issues
- Self-consciousness
- Attitudes of significant others
- Lack of skills
- Lack of variety in times programs are offered
- Lack of appropriate programming

All of the constraints listed above have the ability to affect any person, with or without a disability. Some disabilities, due to their nature, may intensify the effect or perception of some of the constraints.

Inclusive Recreation Locations

Inclusive recreation is still relatively new but is gaining in public awareness. The New York State Inclusive Recreation Resource Center, run by SUNY Cortland, provides resources for education, information for recreation opportunities, and inclusivity assessment training. On this site they provide information on recreation opportunities by region so people may see what types of accommodations are provided, if programming is provided, and other information they may need to make informed decisions about their visits. Most places such as John Dillon Park, The Wild Center, and the Adirondack Museum have facilities, trails, and some equipment available but do not have programming. By reviewing the resources on their site it is apparent that inclusive recreation programming is largely absent unless you go to a special facility that specializes in adaptive recreation, but that really isn't "inclusive".

Conclusion

There have been some prevailing myths about persons with disabilities and outdoor recreation including the idea that they do not like the same environments or activities as able-bodied persons and also that they cannot attain full benefits from outdoor recreation programs (Burns & Graefe, 2007). However, the exact opposite is true and in fact persons with disabilities showed an increase in self-perceptions and acceptance after participating in outdoor recreation programs (Burns & Graefe, 2007).

According to Cornell University's disability statistics, in 2009, there were 2,979,835 people in the United States with a disability including all ages. In New York State alone there are 185,864 persons with a disability including all ages (Erickson et al., 2008). Suny Cortland has a website called New York State Inclusive Recreation Resource Center (NYSIRRC). What this site does is it provides information about parks and recreation facilities for persons with disabilities. Trained staffs evaluate the accessibility of recreation facilities in New York and then post their findings on this site for others to view and determine if the facility is usable for his/her disability. The Website is <http://www.nysirrc.org/>. On this site you can find information on John Dillon Park as well as other parks and facilities in the Adirondacks.

John Dillon Park (JDP) was created to provide people in the community with a fully accessible recreation facility for all abilities and disabilities. The park provides accessible trails, outhouses, lean-tos, and an accessible fishing dock and pontoon boat (JDP website, access date 2012). However, there is little in the way of structured activities, unless the only purpose of visiting the park is to enjoy some alone time in the woods. As of right now JDP does not have any form of programming, specifically inclusive programming, but is open to the idea of possible implementation (Stephen Ellis).

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Budget

Polaroid Cameras.....	\$70 each
(Requesting 3).....	210 total
Film.....	\$11 each
(Requesting a pack of 5).....	55 total
Scrapbook.....	\$40
Scrapbook supplies	\$75
Program Supplies	\$100
Total:	\$480

Timeline

May 2012.....	Project start- needs assessment
June-July 2012	Evaluate needs assessment and develop program
July-August 2012	Implement Programming and gather data
September-October 2012	Synthesize data draw conclusions
September-December 2012	Write Capstone paper
December 2012	Present findings

Participants

Sean Frantz:

My name is Sean C. Frantz. I am a Recreation, Adventure, Travel, and Ecotourism student at Paul Smith’s College. I also have an Associate’s Degree in Wildlife Technologies from Penn State University. I am certified in Wilderness First Aid and I am a certified 4-h shotgun instructor. I have skills/experience in working with youth through 4-H volunteerism; also, I have experience with program planning from a college course and volunteer experiences at the Paul Smith’s Visitor Interpretive Center. The experience I have through 4-H are Leather craft project leader, assistant shotgun instructor, camp

counselor trainer, and chaperone. My college experiences are a class in recreation program planning and volunteer work at the Paul Smith's College Visitor Interpretive Center assisting with recreation events and college events.

Abigail Hughes:

My name is Abigail E. Hughes and I am a Recreation, Adventure, Travel, and Ecotourism student at Paul Smith's College. I have spent most of my summers in camp settings, the past two as a Lifeguard at Hidden Lake Girl Scout camp in Lake George. Since the age of 14 I have been involved in Boy Scouts and for the last two years have been an assistant leader and merit badge counselor for my troop. I have had a lot of experience planning events and activities throughout my time at camp, as a leader and scout, and through my course work at Paul Smith's College.

Mentor- Karen Boldis:

Karen Boldis received her BS and EdM degrees from SUNY Buffalo and her PhD from Oklahoma State University. Here at Paul Smith's College she teaches classes in program planning, risk management, and diversity and inclusion by design. She is very insightful and professional and has proven to be a knowledgeable and effective advisor.

Contract agreement

As partners in this Capstone project we agree to share equally in all duties including data collection and analysis, program development and implementation, research, and writing of the final project. Topics for research and writing may be divided up making sure that no one person has more responsibilities than the other. Ideas and suggestions will flow openly and freely to allow for a greater quality project. If issues arise they will be dealt with as soon as possible in a mature fashion to allow for unhampered progress.

Appendix 1

John Dillon Park visitor needs assessment

1. How interested are you in participating in inclusive outdoor programming during your visit to John Dillon Park? Use a 1-5 scale to rate the following questions; 1 being not interested and 5 being highly interested.

1 2 3 4 5

2. How long would like the program to run? Circle one.

Less than an hour 1hour 1hour 30minutes 2hours

3. Which of the below programs would you be most interested in participating in? Circle all that apply.

Fishing bird watching art nature
walk

Camp cooking fishing derby owl call Identification (night time)

lawn games boating

Other? (specify) _____

4. What day(s) and time of day would you most likely participate in the park programs?

5. What physical limitations do you have and/or specific needs?

6. Will you be visiting by yourself or in a group? Circle one.

SELF / TWO + / FOUR +

7. What age range do you and/or members of your group fall under? Circle those that apply.

(3 and under) (4-7) (8-11) (12-15) (16-21) (22-30) (31-45) (46-60)

(61-80) (81 +)

Appendix 2

Pre-Participation Survey

1. How old are you?

2. What is your gender?

Male Female

3. How welcoming to you find John Dillon Park on a scale of 1-5? 1 being low 5 being high.

1 2 3 4 5

4. For each of the following indicators of wellbeing, please select the number that currently represents your level. 1 being low 5 being high.

Stress	1	2	3	4	5
Anxiety	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of Inclusion	1	2	3	4	5
Visit satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5

5. What are you hoping to get out of your participation in this program (circle all that apply)

Increase in physical activity	Inclusion
New experience	Stress relief
Socialization	Fun
Knowledge	Bonding within own group
New friends	
Other please specify:	

Appendix 3

Post-Participation Survey

6. How old are you?

7. What is your gender?

Male Female

8. For each of the following indicators of wellbeing, please select the number that represents your level now that you have completed the recreational program. 1 being low 5 being high.

Stress	1	2	3	4	5
Anxiety	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of Inclusion	1	2	3	4	5
Visit satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5

9. What have you gotten out of your participation in this program (circle all that apply)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Increase in physical activity | Inclusion |
| New experience | Stress relief |
| Socialization | Fun |
| Knowledge | Bonding within own group |
| New friends | |
| Other please specify _____ | |

10. Please tell us your thoughts on this program

11. Do you have any suggestions for further programming? Please specify.

