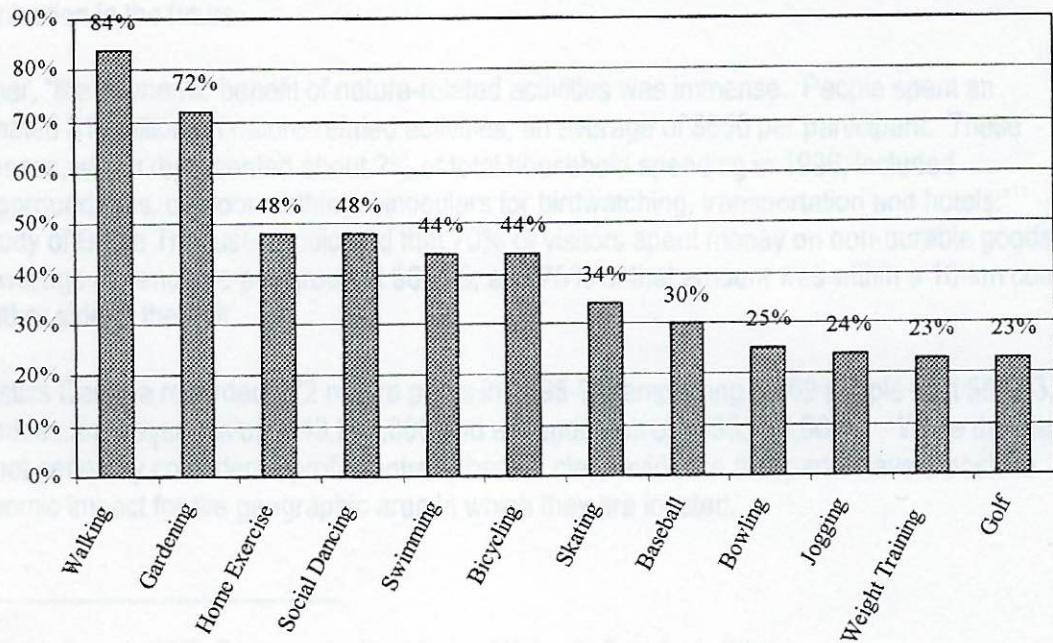


# 4 Trends in Outdoor Recreation

Before reviewing the Nepean-specific outdoor recreation trends, it's valuable to look at some of the popular physical and leisure activities of Canadians.

The Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute, the only agency that has documented physical recreation patterns of Canadians over time, reported in their 1995 Activity Monitor: *"Participation continues to be characterized by unstructured, low-cost activities that can often be done outside facilities..... More seasonal activities like gardening, swimming, bicycling, and skating can also be pursued on modest budgets and at convenient times..... Encouraging Canadians to do the activities they already engage in more often and more regularly is perhaps key to promoting healthy, active living as a way of life."*<sup>9</sup>

TOP 12 ACTIVITIES IN 1995 AMONG CANADIANS



<sup>9</sup> Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. 1996. Progress in Prevention. Bulletin 3. Ottawa.



Amongst middle-aged and older adults, walking and gardening are by far the most frequent activities with other popular choices including home exercise, social dancing, swimming, and bicycling by one in three Canadians. Golf, skating, baseball, cross-country skiing, bowling, jogging and aerobics were identified by one in ten middle-aged Canadians. See Appendix E for details on both activities and age differences.

Statistics Canada recently reported that approximately 85% of Canadians over the age of 15 (almost 20 million people) participated in one or more nature-related activities in 1996. These ranged from a simple picnic at the beach to camping, canoeing, sightseeing, fishing or hunting. This survey which sampled 87,000 Canadians noted that Canadians devoted substantial amounts of their leisure time to nature in 1996.

"On average, each individual aged 15 and over participated in some form of nature-related activity on just over 100 days during the year....During the year, individuals took 191.0 million trips to participate in nature-related activities. About one-quarter of these trips involved overnight stays."<sup>10</sup>

The same comprehensive survey discovered that about 5% of the population participate in nature-related organizations and a further 19% indicated an interest in joining or contributing to such an organization in the future.

Further, "the economic benefit of nature-related activities was immense. People spent an estimated \$11 billion on nature-related activities, an average of \$550 per participant. These expenses, which represented about 2% of total household spending in 1996, included campground fees, outdoor clothing, binoculars for birdwatching, transportation and hotels."<sup>11</sup> A study of Bruce Trail users indicated that 70% of visitors spent money on non-durable goods with the average expenditure per group at \$60.99, and 75% of that amount was within a 10-km corridor on either side of the trail.

Statistics Canada recorded 172 nature parks in 1995-96, employing 5,469 people with 58,483,000 attendees and revenues of \$343,907,000 and expenditures of \$336,166,000.<sup>12</sup> While the parks are not generally considered profit centres, there is clear evidence that parks have a positive economic impact for the geographic area in which they are located.

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<sup>10</sup>Statistics Canada. 1998. Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians. Ottawa.

<sup>11</sup>Statistics Canada. 1998. Survey on the Importance of Nature to Canadians. Ottawa, Canada.

<sup>12</sup>Statistics Canada. 1998. Profiles of Heritage Institutions. Ottawa. Canada



Also related to the Bruce Trail, 70% of adjacent landowners felt that overall the Bruce Trail was a good neighbour when taking all aspects into account. Positive impacts included: getting in touch with nature (64%), recreational opportunity (53%) and health benefits (24%). Finally, nearly 70% of the real estate agents surveyed used the Bruce Trail as a selling feature when advertising property near the trail.<sup>13</sup>

**The above related findings have significant implications for Beryl Gaffney Park including:**

- ▶ there is potentially a positive economic impact for the general business community and overall property values;
- ▶ there is the potential to involve the community directly in the cultivation of the park, in fundraising endeavours, or programming aspects for the site (the amphitheatre/ canoeing/ small boat instruction)
- ▶ there is potential volunteer involvement in the environmental aspect of the park - wildflower gardens, community-based water monitoring, tree planting and the like.

#### 4.1. Nepean Recreation Participation Patterns

Based on the 1995 survey of Nepean residents, their most used popular *outdoor* activities were:

Walking	40%	Golf	16%
Cycling	37%	Baseball/Softball	15%
Fitness	21%	Tennis	13%
		Soccer	12%

From the same survey, the most used outdoor facilities in Nepean were:

Walking/ Bicycle Paths	21%
Parks	13%
Golf Courses	10%
Sports Fields	9%

<sup>13</sup> Schutt, A.M. 1997. A Comprehensive Economic Impact and User Study of the Bruce Trail, Ontario. The Bruce Trail Association



When asked about their most likely activity in 10 to 20 years, Nepean residents named::

Walking	31%
Golf	23%
Swimming	21%
Cycling	19%
Tennis	9%
Concerts	7%
Skiing	6%
Fitness	6%

Walking and golf were mentioned more often as the age of the responded increased.<sup>14</sup>

This Report also identified criteria on which to evaluate future facility development in Nepean including:

- ▶ affordable (to construct and maintain)
- ▶ accessible to all
- ▶ inviting/exciting
- ▶ flexible/ multi-use
- ▶ offering partnership potential
- ▶ compatible with development charges/ standards
- ▶ well-located
- ▶ meeting the needs of the community.

These criteria were considered in the development of the design of Beryl Gaffney Park.

### 4.2. Rideau River Public Opinion Survey

A random sample survey of 1,010 Ottawa-Carleton residents 18 years and over, conducted in the fall of 1998, to assess the perceptions and opinions of local residents with respect to the Rideau River. The results are pertinent to the future development of Beryl Gaffney Park. With respect to use of the River, the survey found:

- ▶ Two in three residents used the Rideau River in the last year
- ▶ Activity higher for riverbank activities (as opposed to water based activities)
- ▶ Mooney's Bay was the most popular, followed by Hog's Back/ Colonel By and Manotick
- ▶ Majority used the area fewer than 10 times
- ▶ Proximity to the River was a key predictor of use and intensity of use.

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<sup>14</sup> D.R. Harley. 1995. Final Report, City of Nepean Recreation Facility Master Study. Nepean.



When asked, "In the past year, have you used the Rideau River for any of the following?" the majority had not participated in activities ON the River but some had:

Boating or sailing	14%
Canoeing/ kayaking	9%
Fishing	8%
Swimming	7%
Waterskiing	2%

There was higher use among Manotick residents, those with children at home, homeowners, those living closer to the River and those with higher incomes.

When asked, "In the past year, have you used the beach, parks or riverbank along the Rideau River for any of the following?", the majority had engaged in activities with the most popular being:

Walking	42%
Cycling	21%
Picnicking	20%
Beach going	16%
Nature outings	13%

Use was higher amongst Ottawa and Gloucester residents, university educated, families with children at home and those newer to the community. There was less use by those over 55 years, and those living further from the River.

The main reason for NOT using the River was lack of proximity to the River, lack of interest and no time. The main reason for not swimming in the Rideau River was:

Concerned about quality	48%
Location/ live far/ other areas closer	20%
Appearance of river	7%
Prefer cottage/ pool	6%
Dislike Rideau River System/ too cold	4%
Too busy	4%
Don't know where to swim	2%

Generally, the survey found that residents had a low level of knowledge about sources of water quality degradation with the majority pointing to sewage dumping/ leakage and industrial pollution.

People were most concerned about the health of River fish and wildlife, quality of water for swimming and residents were more likely to believe that the water quality had declined over the last 10 years as opposed to improved.



Respondents rated paired planning alternatives for the Rideau in the future with the results that clearly indicated a priority on the health of fish and wildlife.

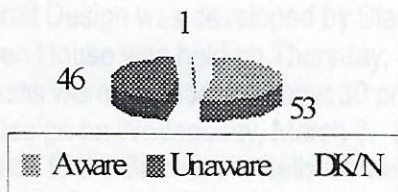
Health of fish and wildlife	84%
Designated areas for fish and wildlife	65%
Swimmable water	54%
Protection against weed growth/ murky water	53%
Increased pathways/ picnic areas	50%
Increased trees and shrubs	42%
Opportunities for recreational fishing	26%
Boat access	15%

With respect to spending, a very critical finding:

**“About 9 in 10 said spending should be maintained or increased, with a majority saying maintain.”**

**Role of Local Government in River Water Quality**

“Were you aware that local municipalities and regional government spend funds each year to maintain and improve the quality of the Rideau River water?”



“In terms of maintaining and improving the quality of the Rideau River water, would you like to see local governments:”

