

**Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan  
Technical Advisory Committee Group Discussion  
May 3, 2011**

The following are notes taken during the group discussions. Groups A&B discussed the same questions, while Groups C&D answered a separate set of questions.

**Group A & B**

1. **What are the important topics for the SCORP to address (both ongoing issues and new challenges)?**
  - Land use- comprehensive plans should address recreation, land preservation, transportation (alternative), access, sustainability, non-vehicular access to recreation
  - Non-resident access to recreation facilities; public transit to recreational facilities/tourism venues
  - Making sites walkable
  - Locating recreational facilities where people live
  - Overall community health- justifies \$ for local facilities
  - Prioritizing programs- use survey to help determine types of programs needed
  - Obesity epidemic, lifestyle choices, and recreation as it relates to quality of life
  - Impact of semi-private recreation programs- CDSA, Little Leagues, Delaware Sports League
  - Public/Private partnerships with larger facilities- KC sports complex, Blue Rocks Stadium)
  - Sports community- need concentration of fields for 'recreate and stay' facilities
  - Schools- share use of their facilities with the public
  - Need for smaller pocket parks
  - Increase the population of recreators
  - Children, elderly, different races, disabilities
  - Safety in existing facilities- making recreation areas sustainable
  - Promotion of resources for accessibility (bike programs, nature education for special needs
  - Challenges in the changing demographics, population increasing while public recreation acreage stays the same
  - Provide additional facilities for growth
  - Understand the real population of users and the changing trends in outdoor recreation activities (pump tracks, skate parks)
  - Proper location and sighting of parks

- Transportation/access issues- Increase city park use, DART busses have limited routes on Sunday
- Create an inventory to address transportation routes and safety

**2. Aside from funding, how can we increase access to recreation opportunities (facilities/amenities/recreation areas/programs/non-traditional partners)?**

- Non-traditional partnering (schools, public/private, utility companies)- need to consider liability and maintenance/operation issues)
- Create livable communities
- Need land use and infrastructure coordination
- Linear facilities- (trails, greenways, pathways)- identify priority gaps
- Connect areas via trails
- Have an even distribution of facilities that are close to where people live
- Mapping- Google Earth application- incorporate transportation routes between parks.
- Create mobile apps, widgets, other technology
- Create non-traditional partnerships (schools, boys & girls club, hospitals, gyms, health centers, boy/girl scouts, after school programs
- Incorporate nature, parks and recreation and trails into education programs and school curriculum

**3. Funding and maintenance issues aside, how could Delaware citizens' recreational needs be better addressed?**

- Put parks and recreation areas close to where we live
- Create a land bank for recreational facilities
- Make access easy for kids (non driving)
- Have more smaller parks and open spaces for unstructured recreation
- Link parks with/by trails
- Better accessibility through mass transit
- Conservation- explore the characteristics of lands that should be preserved
- Health programs/challenges
- Structured activities in the park (for both children and adults)
- Signage along trails
- Transportation routes to include other recreation opportunities

**4. Are there gaps providing or obtaining outdoor recreation information? If yes, what are those gaps?**

- Need to integrate new technologies- apps, facebook, twitter, widgets, etc.
- Recreation is technologically behind the times- need interactive websites, maps etc.
- DART maps should include parks
- Should have a clearinghouse site for all parks and recreation facilities.
- Partner with the children in nature initiative- develop a list for education opportunities
- Need information on website for individuals with special needs/impairments
- Better information for the handicapped
- Updating facilities and websites for essential information and use the latest technology

**Group C & D**

**1. What outdoor recreation needs are the highest priority for funding?**

- Inventory driven- look at what exists and determine what the priorities are
- Spatially driven- look at where things are and where things need to be
- Funding- priorities based on availability of funding
- Safety and Amenities
- Accessibility
- Trends in Recreation- prioritizing up and coming recreation activities
- Accessible trails (walking and biking) are highest priority- especially in Kent County
- Need to have more trails, make sure people can get to them, and make sure trails connect places/destinations. Focus on linkages.
- Pocket Parks- Kent and Sussex Counties have far fewer than New Castle County They serve a fitness benefit- not just a recreation area.
- Skate parks/Skate spots are hot items right now
- There is a large need for multi-use fields
- Have the SCORP highlight obvious gaps for recreation facilities, but we need to figure out how to make decisions and get local funding to the greatest need. (Example: Public Swimming pool in Dover)

**2. How do we attract children to parks/outdoor recreation areas? What are examples of strategies that have worked?**

- Provide activities that attract younger visitors- up and coming activities like adventure sports, geo-caching, water recreation facilities (kayaking). What are the trends (State/National)
- Have diversity in the activities we are offering
- Create technology tie-ins- Facebook, Twitter, Socializing, Wi-Fi hotspots
- Overcoming negative safety perceptions
- Parental preferences- parent need assurances that the program/activity is worth their time and money
- Proximity to where kids live (need to be close by with safe access)
- Collaborate with local school district- afterschool activities, aftercare, summer camp programs, field trips, incentive challenges.
- Need to offer something they can't get in their backyard.
- Focus on new ideas, but don't stop using traditional things that still work (Example: youth camps/programs)
- Get parents to parks, they will bring their kids. Need family oriented events.
- Coordinate program offerings with other agencies. Make sure there is the right mix and variety.
- Example that has worked- Equipment box in municipal park. Parents in surrounding communities have access to equipment and take responsibility/ownership. Has worked well in Newark.
- Provide amenities on trails that capture the interest of children

**3. What makes a place a popular recreation or park destination? How can parks/recreation/outdoor spaces help stimulate local economies?**

- Cleanliness and Aesthetics
- Safety
- Ample parking
- Connectivity to amenities and community services
- Parks can stimulate local economies by increasing property values of nearby parcels
- Stimulate local business
- Businesses consider parks and the quality of life of the areas where they would like to locate
- Parks can I increase local tourism by attracting visitors that would not traditionally visit the area.
- Location, location, location- needs to be close to families and easy to get to.
- Parks and adult programs can attract businesses to located to an area, and attract jobs

- Quality and variety of amenities within a park
- Safe and inviting spaces for people to recreate
- Promote parks as gathering places- people like to be out with other people
- Rental and shared amenities (example: bikeshare)
- Engage citizens in parks so they feel an ownership to a certain area- volunteers, work days, community days, community gardens

#### **4. How can public recreation opportunities be increased?**

- Connect parks to surrounding communities
- Marketing and promoting the parks and recreation areas
- Programs- offer more and increase variety
- Volunteer/Stewardship opportunities to create a sense of ownership
- Public involvement in the planning process for park facilities and amenities
- Increase public transportation to and from parks and recreation areas (bus stops at parks)
- Transportation- will vary from site to site, can help get kids to and from sports, or help families that have hardships and don't have the ability/means to get to parks
- Better signage- make areas more visible
- Need to do a better job at letting people know what we have and where those amenities are.
- Build parks/provide amenities closer to the people
- Partner with local school districts to start having kids visit parks at a young age
- Identify societal and demographic barriers- including race and income