

# Snapshot of Recreation in Milford



## Introduction

The City of Milford has great historical and geographical significance in Delaware. It is centrally located within the state and is accessed and enjoyed by large numbers of residents and visitors. The mission of the Milford Parks and Recreation Department is to improve the quality of life within the community by creating a pleasurable experience through excellence in recreational opportunities. Milford's parks system includes state-of-the-art athletic sports facilities, a pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly park system, and very popular water-based recreation activities, such as canoe, kayak and paddle boats.

## Our Residents' Needs and Opinions

The 2008 Outdoor Recreation Participation and Trends Survey (ORTPS)<sup>1</sup> provides valuable information on the recreation needs and preferences of Milford residents.

## Recreation Preferences

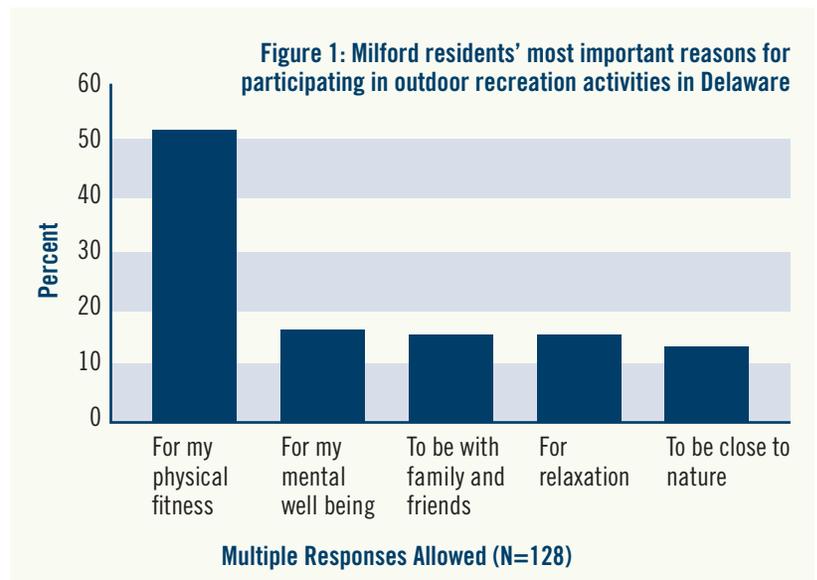
The majority of Milford residents (89%) responding to the survey say that outdoor recreation is important to them personally. Figure 1 illustrates the most commonly cited reasons for participating in outdoor recreation activities.

## Access to Recreation Opportunities

Sixty-eight percent of Milford residents agree with the statement: "There are parks and/or outdoor recreation areas in or near my neighborhood that are easy to get to." Proximity is important because many Milford residents (65%) responding to the survey said that more recreation opportunities close to home are likely to encourage them to participate more actively in outdoor recreation activities.

Other factors mentioned include:

- More information about facilities and opportunities (54%);
- More opportunity to participate in organized activities (45%);
- Better security within facilities (41%);
- Increased accessibility for persons with disabilities (41%); and
- Better repair of facilities (37%).



When asked about the main reason for choosing the public outdoor recreation area they visit the most in Delaware, 45% of survey respondents indicated that the main reason is that they live close by the facility. Table 1 depicts the variety of reasons cited by those responding to this survey question.

**Table 1: Milford residents' main reasons for choosing recreation area visited most often**

Main Reason (Multiple Responses Allowed, N=128)	Percent
Live close by	45
Has facilities for activities of interest	34
Aesthetics	16
Clean	9
Has facilities for children	8
Peaceful/isolated/not crowded	5
Safe	5



### Park Maintenance

Eighty percent of Milford residents rate the overall upkeep of parks and outdoor recreation areas in their community as “excellent” or “good.”

### Funding Priorities

Table 2 highlights the programs that Milford residents think should be important priorities for state and local funding.

Ninety-three percent of Milford residents indicate that funding for public parks should be an important priority for state and local policy makers in Delaware. Large percentages of survey respondents from Milford also said that funding for bike and pedestrian pathways between places of work, schools, shopping areas and neighborhoods (87%) and acquiring more land for parks and open space in the state of Delaware (82%) should be important priorities for state and local policy makers.

**Table 2: Percent of Milford residents who say that specific programs should be a “very” or “somewhat” important priority for state and local funding**

Program (N=137)	Percent
Nature education programs	87
Historic education programs	87
Outdoor recreation programs for teens	83
Outdoor recreation programs for persons with disabilities	82
Programs for children ages 4–12	81
Outdoor recreation programs for senior citizens	80
Cultural and arts programs	78
Organized leagues for team sports	64

### Parks and Recreation Can Help Address Challenges Facing Our Residents

Parks and recreation programs provide a means for children and their families to be physically active and live a healthy lifestyle. This is critical given the childhood obesity epidemic nationally and in Delaware. Data from 2008 reveal that 39.7% of children ages two to 17 in Delaware are overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, parks and recreation programs provide children an outlet for engaging in positive activities.

### Initiatives

Milford’s Parks and Recreation Department is planning to implement a number of important initiatives that need funding and support. These initiatives, which are all designed to provide significant benefit to Milford’s residents, include a nature education park at Goat Island, eco-tours, and an interpretive/visitor center.

### References

1. The Outdoor Recreation Participation and Trends Survey (ORTPS), a statewide telephone survey, informs development of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The Parks Resource Office, Division of Parks and Recreation, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control manage the SCORP. For more information on the SCORP, visit <http://www.dnrec.delaware.gov/parks/Information/Pages/scorp.aspx>.
2. Nemours Health and Prevention Services. 2008 Delaware Survey of Children’s Health.