INTRODUCTION

A new SCORP offers the chance to track and analyze the many changes and new trends in Indiana and nationwide since the last SCORP. The provision of parks and recreation in Indiana are often directly affected by these changes and trends. Some of these changes include changing demographics and socio-economics; the continuing children and nature movement; the growing statewide obesity epidemic; and the increasing importance and economic benefits of Indiana travel, tourism and outdoor recreation, both statewide and to individual local communities.

Data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and similar sources yield the following socio-economic changes in the state:

- **Hoosier Population Growth Slowing:** The 2018 U.S. Census estimates (American Factfinder, 07/2018), that the state has grown in population, but similar to what the 2010 Census numbers showed, not by much. The growth was from 6,596,855 estimated population in 2014, to 6,691,878 in July of 2018, a 1.44% increase. For the 2016 SCORP, Indiana had observed a 1.74% population growth rate, from 2010 to 2014.
- **Older Hoosiers:** Indiana is still aging slightly. The state's median age has risen from 36.4 in 2010, to 37.7, according to the 2017 Census estimates. People continue to live longer and medical care and access are improving.
- **More Baby Boomers Retiring:** Baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) began turning 65 in 2011. In 2019, the youngest of the baby boomers will reach 55 years of age.
- **Hoosiers Earning More:** Median household income in Indiana was $50,011 in 2013, compared to $54,181, according to 2017 Census estimates.
- **More Hoosiers Living Under Same Roof:** Average Indiana household size has grown slightly to 2.54 (according to the 2018 Census estimates) up from 2.52 in 2010.
- **Unemployment Still Falling:** Indiana's January 2019 statewide seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 3.5%, down from the March 2015 unemployment rate of 5.8%. By comparison, Indiana's unemployment rate in March 2008 was 5.0%, meaning the state has finally reached pre-recession unemployment levels. (IN Dept. of Workforce Dev.; 2008/2015/2019)
- **Manufacturing and Healthcare Employment Improving:** In the Indiana Dept. of Workforce Development 2017 Economic Analysis Report (published in October 2018), the top three highest employment increases for the period of 2012 to

2017 were in Manufacturing, Health Care and Social Assistance, and Accommodation and Food Services. The top three declining industries in that same period were in Mining, Educational Services, and Information Services.

- **Poverty Now Decreasing in Indiana:** The percentage of Indiana families living below poverty level has declined from15.4% in 2013, to 13.3% in 2017, according to Census estimates. For comparison purposes, in 2017, the Census estimated that the nationwide poverty rate was 12.3%.
- **Gasoline Costs Almost Unchanged:** The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) in May 2015, reported the U.S. average price per gallon was $2.48/gallon. On March 4, 2019, EIA reported that the U.S. average price per gallon was $2.42/gallon. (U.S. Energy Info Admin, 2015 & 2019).

RESEARCH STUDY FINDS THAT PEOPLE WANT QUALITY OF PLACE, AND BUSINESSES FOLLOW PEOPLE

In 2016, the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, the Indiana Chamber Foundation, and the Wellness Council of Indiana commissioned a study by the Ball State University Center for Business and Economic Research with the goal of creating a "Healthy, Wealthy, Wise Index" in order "to give businesses, non-profits, and local government leaders the data needed to assess wellness within counties in Indiana." (CBEC, 2016, pg. 3) The final section of the study has an interesting discussion of the effects of local-level parks and recreation on population growth and economic development: "The policymakers also have a role in wellness and thoughtful economic development. First, over the past few decades, the United States economy has shifted from a condition where a higher share of migration was employment related. As late as the 1970's, about one-third of household incomes and half of household spending were related to goods that could be produced anywhere. The businesses were footloose and families had to follow the jobs. However, the recent decade (especially in Indiana), there appears to be a reversal in the trend. Households now choose where they would like to live and businesses move to these workers (Hicks and Faulk 2016). The study also finds a strong correlation between the built environment and the places where people are moving, implying that households put more value on the recreational amenities. Therefore, infrastructure related to traditional wellness activities (such as trails, playgrounds, parks, and open green space) matter more than ever in where people and subsequent businesses relocate." (CBEC, 2016, pg. 6)

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT EXPERIENCES WITH NATURE MAY PROMOTE FORMAL LEARNING AND STEWARDSHIP

In the February 19, 2019 Issue of "Frontiers in Psychology," researchers Ming Kuo, Michael Barnes, and Catherine Jordan conducted an extensive, systematic critical literature review of the most current research into effects of nature experiences on personal learning and environmental stewardship. They asked: "Do experiences with nature – from wilderness backpacking to plants in a preschool, to a wetland lesson on frogs – promote learning?" Earlier research in this area had been weak and unconvincing, but this examination of current research is much more compelling. According to the article: "What emerged from this critical review was a coherent narrative: experiences with nature do promote children's academic learning and seem to promote children's development as environmental stewards – and at least eight distinct pathways plausibly contribute to these outcomes." The eight pathways discussed in the article are:

1. Nature has Rejuvenating Effects on Attention
2. Nature Relieves Stress
3. Contact with Nature Boosts Self-Discipline
4. Student Motivation, Enjoyment, and Engagement are Better in Natural Se ttings
5. Time Outdoors Is Tied to Higher Levels of Physical Activity and Fitness
6. Vegetated Settings Tend to Provide Calmer, Quieter, Safer Contexts for Learning
7. Natural Settings Seem to Foster Warmer, More Cooperative Relations
8. Natural Settings May Afford "Loose Parts" (Creative, Self-Directed Play Using Natural Materials), Autonomy, and Distinctly Beneficial Forms of Play

INDIANA'S OBESITY EPIDEMIC IS STILL INCREASING

Indiana's statewide obesity epidemic has increased since the 2016 SCORP. According to the 2018 U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Behavioral Risk

Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), the world's largest ongoing telephone public health survey, over one-third (34.1%; up from 31.8% in 2013) of Hoosiers are obese (i.e., have a body mass index of 30 or greater). This ranks Indiana as having the 15th highest adult obesity rate in the nation. The CDC reports that the associated economic impact of the nationwide obesity epidemic exceeds $147 billion (in 2008 dollars). Estimates published in the journal "Obesity" in 2012 show that during an average year, Hoosiers pay $3.5 billion in obesity-related medical costs. According to a 2017 CDC online article: "Adult Obesity Causes & Consequences" (https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/adult/causes.html).

"Obesity is a complex health issue to address. Obesity results from a combination of causes and contributing factors, including individual factors such as behavior and genetics. Behaviors can include dietary patterns, physical activity, inactivity, medication use, and other exposures. Additional contributing factors in our society include the food and physical activity environment, education and skills, and food marketing and promotion. Obesity is a serious concern because it is associated with poorer mental health outcomes, reduced quality of life, and the leading causes of death in the U.S. and worldwide, including diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and some types of cancer." The article goes on to discuss the effects that the built environment has on obesity: "People and families may make decisions based on their environment or community. For example, a person may choose not to walk or bike to the store or to work because of a lack of sidewalks or safe bike trails. Community, home, childcare, school, health care, and workplace settings can all influence people's daily behaviors. Therefore, it is important to create environments in these locations that make it easier to engage in physical activity and eat a healthy diet."

Another benchmark in measuring Indiana's overall health is a yearly report by the United Health Foundation: "America's Health Rankings: A call to action for individuals and their communities. Annual Report 2018." The report states: "The longest-running annual assessment of the nation's health on a state-by-state basis provides updated data to serve as a benchmark for states and to spark data-driven discussions on opportunities to promote the health and well-being of our country. Thirty-five markers of health are evaluated this year (2018), covering behaviors, community and environment, policy, clinical care and health outcomes data. This year, the report finds increases in mortality and chronic disease such as obesity that continue to impact the nation's health." The 2017 data from this report ranked Indiana as the 38th healthiest state in the country; unfortunately, in 2018, Indiana fell three places to

41st healthiest. In the 2018 rankings, Indiana had the third-largest decline in ranking, behind only Oklahoma and Alaska. Indiana's worst areas driving the ranking were health behaviors, policy, and clinical care. For comparison, in 2018, Hawaii was ranked by the study as the healthiest state; the ninth time in the No. 1 spot for that state since 1990, when the rankings were first published. The study also stated: "While the country's ability to address treatment of chronic conditions may improve with increasing numbers of key health providers, interventions and policies at the individual, community, state and national levels are needed to curb these troubling trends."

INDIANA'S ECONOMY MAY SLOW DOWN SOON

According to the article: "Indiana's Outlook for 2019" by Dr. Ryan Brewer (IU-Columbus), written in Winter 2018, for the Indiana Business Review, Volume 93, No. 4, published online at: http://www.ibrc.indiana.edu/ibr/2018/outlook/indiana.html: "The economy appears poised to see its strongest growth in the first quarter of 2019, after which growth rates are expected to slow but remain strong through the end of 2019. Tailwinds include rising wages and consumer spending strength, as well as potential for further capital investment. Headwinds include uncertainties with international trade, political unknowns, labor shortages and the effects of weaning off of inexpensive credit. For the upcoming calendar year, it is most likely Indiana will continue to experience growth across the board — in jobs, numbers of establishment, income levels (which is buttressed by capital investments), wages and gross state product (GSP). Econometric modeling suggests that U.S. economic growth (as of fourth quarter 2018, on a rolling four-quarter arithmetic average basis) will cool somewhat throughout 2019. Indiana economic growth measured in rolling four quarters of output is expanding right now with the coming year's output expected to peak in the first quarter of 2019, with subsequent rolling-four-quarter growth measurements likely to slow, yielding an expected annual growth in 2019 of 4.5 percent, unadjusted from its baseline forecast indications. By fourth quarter 2019, however, modeling suggests the rolling-four-quarter growth rate will have cooled to 3.5 percent."

INDIANA TOURISM AND OUTDOOR RECREATION CONTRIBUTING TO INDIANA'S ECONOMY MORE THAN EVER

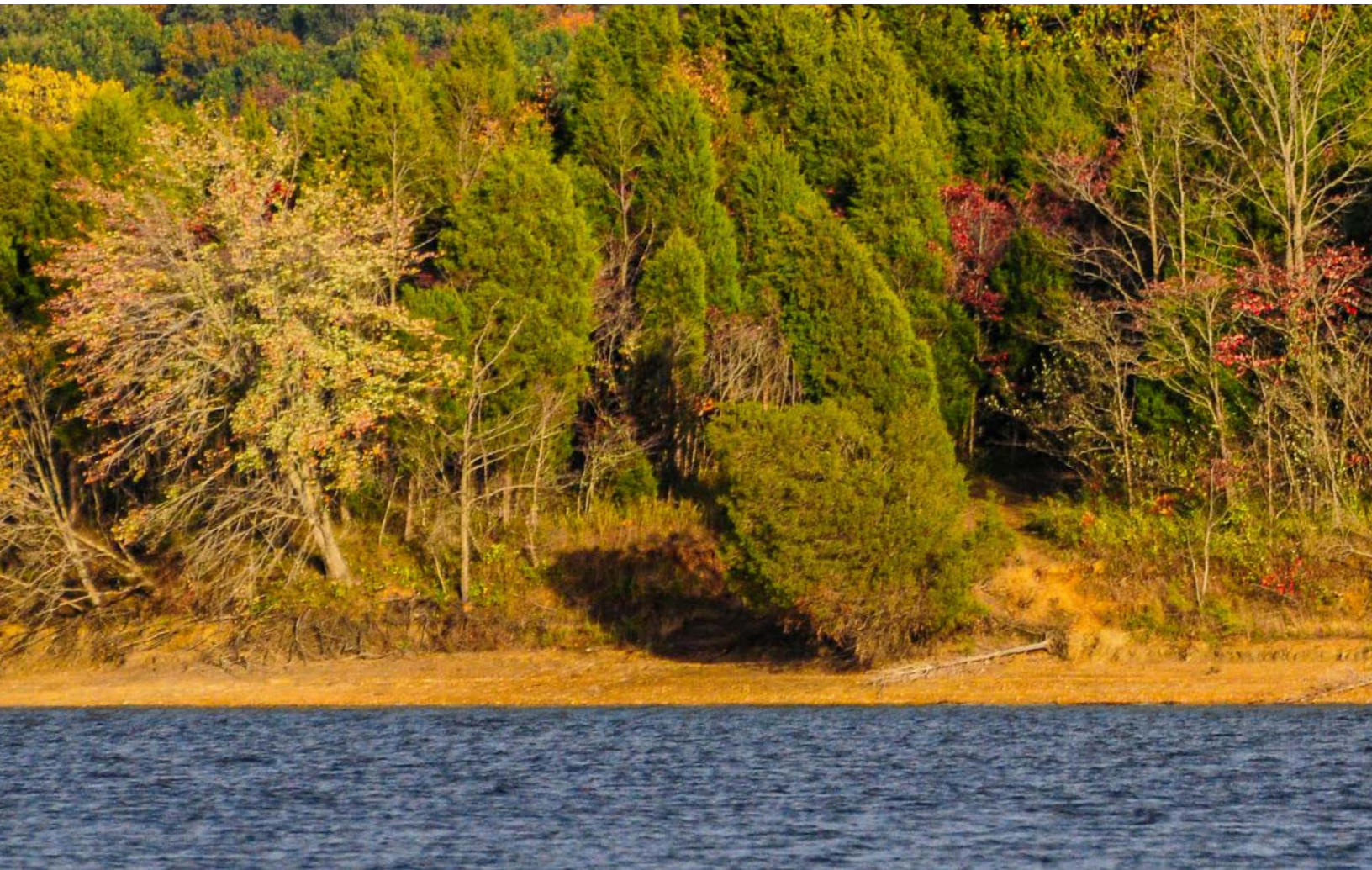
Indiana's economy benefits from tourism more than ever before. According to a 2017 Rockport Analytics study commissioned by the Indiana Office of Tourism Development, it was another record-setting year, with 80 million visitors spending nearly $12.7 billion on lodging, food, entertainment, shopping and transportation all over Indiana. This was the seventh consecutive year of growth for Indiana tourism, and gained 3.7% over 2016 totals. Employment within the Indiana tourism industry reached nearly 200,000 workers in 2017, which generated $5.6 billion in total wages and proprietor income. Based on employment figures, tourism was the 10th largest private sector employer. Of the $12.7 billion spent by Indiana visitors, about $9 billion stayed within the state economy, which supported private business revenue, jobs across the state, and state and local government revenue. Tourism now accounts for about 5.2% of all Indiana nonfarm jobs. Tourism also outgrew total Indiana employment across all industries by 0.2%. Tax receipts from tourism in 2017 generated about $2.5 billion, with state government receiving $873 million (up 3.6% from 2016), and local governments statewide receiving $537 million (up 3.3% from 2016). In 2017, visitors made up approximately 9% of all sales in Indiana. The study also looked at day trips by visitors: "Daytrips remain a critical component of Indiana visitors. Hoosier daytrips reached 48.8 million, a 1.4% gain vs. 2016. Daytrips reached 48.2 million in 2016, an increase of a million trips (2.1%) over 2015, and now comprise 61% of total visitor volume. Daytrips are measured as anyone who has traveled more than 50 miles one way to visit an Indiana destination but has not stayed overnight. They include both out-of-state and in-state visitors. . Domestic overnight visits surpassed 31 million in 2017, a 1.2% increase over the year before. International trips added another 830 thousand mostly overnight stays. This too, represents a new all-time high."

Park professionals across Indiana sharing anecdotal park-use evidence in local parks and recreation master plans reviewed by the DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation staff still indicate that local and regional park use is rising, keeping pace with the slow

improvement of the economy. There is support for this perception from the national level from a 2018 study by the Outdoor Industry Association: the "Outdoor Recreation Participation Report." According to the report, "Outdoor participation slightly increased from 48.4% of the US population in 2016 to 49.0% in 2017. That 49.0% of the American population translates into 146.1 million people ages 6 and over, participating in an outdoor activity at least once in 2017. 20% of outdoor enthusiasts participated in outdoor activities twice per week or more. Exercise was the biggest motivator for outdoor recreation participation. Participating in outdoor activities as children made adults more likely to participate in outdoor recreation as adults, as opposed to those whose childhood had no outdoor exposure. Of the adults who were exposed to the outdoors as children, 38% grew up to participate in outdoor activities as adults. Outdoor pedestrian exercise such as running, jogging, and trail running was the single most popular activity by both participant counts and total outings per year. Walking for fitness was the #1 crossover activity, since 45.8% of all outdoor recreation participants also walked for exercise or pleasure."

This study agrees with the DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation's longitudinal research in the past four SCORPs, each of which shows outdoor pedestrian use (including day hiking) as the most popular outdoor recreation activity among Indiana residents.

Even considering the significant economic impact of Indiana's public parks and recreation, and the still-growing use of our recreation lands, it is still prudent to ask if investing in public outdoor recreation space has any tangible benefit for state governments. Many people agree that having quality parks and recreation sites and facilities improves the quality of life in a community, but does it really affect a state's fiscal health? In 2018, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) worked with the Center for regional Analysis at George Mason University to create a second iteration of an earlier study on the "Economic Impact of Local Parks: An Examination of the Economic Impacts of Operations and Capital Spending by Local Park and Recreation Agencies



on the United States Economy." The study analyzed detailed economic data from the 2015 U.S. Census Bureau to look at these economic impacts at both the national and state levels. According to the study: "In 2015 alone, America's local public park and recreation agencies generated more than $154 billion in economic activity and their operations and capital spending supported more than 1.1 million jobs." The study also went on to examine the economic effects at the state level: "The state analysis followed that of the national study and considers the economic impact of local park and recreation agencies' operations and capital spending. The estimates of total economic impacts include the direct, indirect, and induced effects of local park and recreation agency spending in each state ... In Indiana, $1,234,379,444 in economic activity (transactions) was generated by local parks and recreation in 2015. 10,758 jobs were supported by parks and recreation in 2015. $436,074,781 in salaries, wages and benefits were generated due to parks and recreation." Discussing the study in the March 2018 issue of the NRPA's Parks and Recreation magazine, Dr. Kevin Roth said: "These are challenging times for park and recreation professionals. Eight years into an economic recovery and park and recreation leaders have to fight harder than ever before to keep their already limited funding in place ... While elected and appointed government officials agree parks and recreation is a valuable service, they are likely to view park and recreation agency funding as one of the most discretionary budget lines in their city, town, or county. This becomes particularly acute during challenging fiscal times when local government officials target parks and recreation for the greatest budget cuts. But, there is a tremendous cost to these 'savings'. Taking dollars away from parks and recreation deprives people of gathering places to meet with friends and family, open spaces to exercise and reconnect with nature or community resources where they can get a nutritious meal. In addition, cutting back on park and recreation budgets harms economic activity in the community ... Policymakers and elected officials at all levels of government should take notice and support greater and more stable tax-

payer funding for parks and recreation. Local park and recreation agencies not only help raise the standard of living in our neighborhoods, towns, and cities, but they also spark economic activity that can have ripple effects well beyond the initial expenditure by creating jobs and prosperity throughout our nation." (2018, NRPA Economic Impact of Local Parks)

DNR and the Division of Outdoor Recreation have created this SCORP as a way to share research and other information with state residents, park professionals, park board members, urban planners, government officials and many more. We have a strong tradition of blending public opinion and input from parks-and-recreation professionals in the field to give us an understanding of current and future recreational needs and preferences statewide. The next section of this chapter contains the priorities that have emerged from all the collected data and analysis from this SCORP.

OUTDOOR RECREATION GOALS & OBJECTIVES FOR PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION PROVIDERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Based on the data contained in this SCORP, these goals and objectives are recommended, in random order, to guide decision-making in parks-and-recreation and natural resources management for the next five years.

1. Develop more trails and bicycle/pedestrian facilities.
    a. Whenever possible, acquire rights-of-way, easements and railroad corridors for future trail development from willing sellers, rail-banking, donors or partners.
    b. Emphasize trails and bike/pedestrian facilities as means to connect and improve existing and future outdoor recreation facilities, as well as tie into community infrastructure.
    c. Integrate bike/pedestrian facilities of all types into long-term planning of community infrastructure design and construction whenever possible.
    d. Encourage development of trail facilities of all kinds for bike/pedestrian use: urban, rural, long-distance, connector, commuter, recreational, exercise/wellness, etc.
    e. Require trail development using accessible, sustainable design and surfacing wherever possible.
2. Encourage and promote outdoor recreation participation.
    a. Use outdoor recreation as a tool to fight the continuing obesity epidemic by offering locations to participate in as many kinds of healthy exercise as possible and facilitating lifestyle change that encourages lifelong healthy living.
    b. Encourage continued development of new outdoor recreation facilities, especially in areas of expanding population growth, high user demand, or significant gaps in service provision.
    c. Encourage development of more neighborhood-level outdoor recreation facilities that meet local needs close to home, preferably within walking or biking distance of residential areas, libraries, schools, retail areas, medical facilities, etc.
    d. Provide outdoor recreation opportunities for all user demographics, including all ages, abilities and skill levels.
3. Continue emphasizing Indiana's aquatic resources, both natural and man-made.
    a. Preserve and protect rivers, lakes, streams, wetlands and riparian corridors when and wherever possible through acquisition, education, funding, restoration and development of new areas.
    b. Encourage actions that improve the quality of Indiana's waters as well as user access to all types of aquatic recreation resources.
    c. Whenever possible, provide or enhance access to aquatic resources, such as splash pads, pools, water features, wetlands, ponds, lakes, access/launch sites, etc.
4. Protect and enhance Indiana's natural and outdoor recreation resources.
    a. Use the 2021 SCORP Participation Study top five favorite outdoor recreation activities when considering parks and recreation user preferences: walking/hiking/jogging/

running; camping; fishing; swimming; and canoeing/kayaking/paddle sports.

b. Protect Indiana's natural heritage by identifying and preserving significant natural areas, including wildlife/fish habitats for endangered, rare, threatened or species of special concern.

c. Protect Indiana's outdoor recreation potential by identifying and preserving areas with existing or potential outdoor recreation opportunities or access.

d. Provide for education of the citizens of Indiana in environmental stewardship and wise use of Indiana's natural resources.

e. Consider the improvements possible in water and air quality, brownfield remediation, tourism and commerce, and economic development created by enhancing outdoor recreation.

f. Use "green" or sustainable designs, materials and energy sources in facility development, such as recycled materials, alternative/renewable energy sources (solar active and passive, wind, hydroelectric), and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) building certifications/very energy-efficient designs.

5. Provide funding for outdoor recreation development at the state and local levels.

a. Explore alternative funding methods such as public/private partnerships, recreation impact fees (RIF), cooperative agreements, cost sharing, corporate sponsorships, etc.

b. Continue to administer state-level grant programs such as Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants, Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants, Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund grants and Indiana Shooting Range grants.

c. Emphasize parks and recreation facilities that are cost-efficient and financially self-supporting while promoting financially affordable access to the greatest number of users possible.

d. Consider the benefits of parks and recreation toward community economic development, tourism, job growth, urban and rural revitalization, reduction of health care costs and improving quality of life.

e. Use existing financial resources as efficiently and effectively as possible; consider strategies such as detailed cost-benefit analysis for choosing public provision or privatization of services, maintenance or construction, multi-agency bulk purchases, interagency work-sharing agreements, volunteers and "friends" groups, and other means to control the costs of operations and maintenance.