

**MANITOBA'S
POLICY for
RECREATION
OPPORTUNITIES**

***Health and well-being for individuals.
Social and economic health for communities***

**Manitoba
Culture, Heritage
And Tourism**

Recreation
And Regional Services
MG-4923



Manitoba's Policy for Recreation Opportunities

Introduction

In the National Recreation Policy Statement, the federal and provincial governments of Canada define recreation as “all activities chosen by a person or group to make leisure time more interesting, more enjoyable and more satisfying.”

In Manitoba, we understand a wide range of recreation opportunities contributes significantly to the health and happiness of individuals. We know the value of recreation opportunities goes beyond the obvious benefits to participants. We also know the presence of diverse recreation opportunities is key to the health and vitality of communities throughout the province.

Recreation opportunities in Manitoba are created through a network of partnerships. Governments play an important role in these partnerships, as do recreation professionals, businesses and a variety of community organizations. The main energy and drive that creates recreation opportunities comes from the local, community level; in particular, from the thousands of volunteers who, as part of their own recreation choices, create and sustain recreation opportunities for their communities.

Recreation is much more than just “what people do in their spare time.” It contributes directly to the physical and mental health of individuals of all ages throughout Manitoba. It also contributes to the social health, the overall quality of life and standard of living of our communities. Investment and employment decisions are influenced by the range of recreation opportunities communities and regions can provide. Manitobans understand recreation contributes directly to the economic health of their communities.

This policy statement has been prepared to strengthen and promote this recognition of the value of recreation opportunities throughout Manitoba. It also aims to provide a clearer framework for the partnerships that create recreation opportunities in our province. Partners will be encouraged to plan, to establish priorities and to work more effectively to provide the widest and most appropriate range of recreation opportunities to meet the needs, interests and desires of the people in each Manitoba community.

The policy sets out four basic principles to guide the actions of the Provincial Government as we work with Manitobans to provide recreation opportunities to enrich the lives of our citizens and enhance the strength of our communities.

1. Planning for community choices

Communities should be encouraged and assisted to develop plans and priorities for recreation opportunities, recognizing the contribution recreation makes to individual and community health and happiness.

This principle seeks to encourage recognition that providing the broadest possible range of recreation opportunities for Manitobans is key to the health of communities throughout the province. The opportunities available to individuals and groups include active and passive participation in artistic, cultural, heritage, fitness and sport activities.

This principle recognizes the leadership role of the volunteer. Processes need to be established to permit and encourage communities to set priorities and develop plans to provide recreation opportunities that reflect the needs, interests and desires of their citizens. In accordance with this principle, the Manitoba Government will provide support and encouragement for:

- ❑ Community management of processes to establish priorities and encourage co-operation among groups and individuals as they work to create recreation opportunities;
- ❑ The development of leisure and recreation activities that are sustainable and within the resources of local communities and sponsoring organizations;
- ❑ The involvement of voluntary, non-profit community based organizations, groups and individuals in the creation of recreation opportunities, including specific opportunities for volunteers in all aspects of Manitoba's community life;
- ❑ The development of recreation and leisure opportunities that are accessible to the entire community as a complement to other government and community programs, services and initiatives;
- ❑ Community organizations that seek consultation or advice to assist them in creating leisure and recreation opportunities.

2. Developing the role of local governments

The recreation opportunities available to communities can best be enhanced by developing local government's ability to respond to specific local interests and needs.

This principle recognizes that local government, as the government closest to the community, should play the primary role in supporting recreation opportunities for Manitobans. The focus for provincial government involvement in recreation must be the strengthening of local governments' ability to respond to the needs of their citizens through a more flexible approach to provincial assistance. In accordance with this principle, the Manitoba Government will revise its programs to provide:

- ❑ Greater flexibility in the way local government may elect to use their provincial support in the creation of recreation opportunities for their citizens;
- ❑ Training and consultation for elected officials and volunteers at the local level;
- ❑ Clearer definitions of roles and responsibilities among those involved in partnerships to create and provide recreation opportunities;
- ❑ Formal agreements among participating partners to encourage community co-operation and participation.

3. Reducing barriers to recreation opportunities

With the importance of recreation opportunities to individual and community well-being, it is essential that barriers to such opportunities be identified and reduced as a matter of basic fairness.

This principle recognizes there are groups and individuals in Manitoba who face barriers based on their abilities, age, culture, gender, geography or health. These barriers may limit access to recreation opportunities that could enhance their health and happiness and that of their communities.

In accordance with this principle, the Manitoba Government will co-operate with, and provide leadership to local government, agencies, community organizations, volunteers and recreation professionals on a province-wide basis to:

- ❑ Identify barriers affecting access to recreation opportunities for groups or individuals;
- ❑ Develop strategies to address and reduce such barriers;
- ❑ Encourage and support local recreation personnel and key volunteers to develop skills to assist all community residents in accessing recreation opportunities;

Improve overall access to recreation opportunities through the development of effective recreation commissions and the maximum involvement of volunteers.

Effective communication of information related to government recreation programs and activities to ensure all communities are aware of all available resources.

4. Learning and sharing knowledge about recreation

Communities throughout Manitoba can become more successful in providing a broad range of recreation opportunities by learning facts and knowledge about recreation and from the lessons of one another's experience in all parts of the province.

This principle recognizes the importance of knowledge about recreation in Manitoba and the value of the common sense and creativity that communities use to provide recreation opportunities for their members. Providing knowledge and promoting better communication and mutual learning among those involved in recreation should be a main focus of the Province's involvement in Manitoba's recreation partnerships.

In accordance with this principle, the Manitoba Government will provide leadership for:

- An active program of research to provide information about recreation trends and issues in Manitoba;
- The dissemination of information about current recreation preferences and/or patterns of participation;
- Ongoing exchange of information and experience among communities and groups to promote learning from one another's experience;
- Co-operative efforts among groups or communities to address particular recreation issues or concerns;

Conclusion

Recreation contributes to Manitobans' search for diversity, satisfaction and personal growth for themselves, their families and their communities. It has the capacity to enrich and transform our lives, and to strengthen and vitalize our communities.

This Policy is based on a recognition of the value of recreation in contributing to the mental and physical health and well-being of individual Manitobans, and to the social and economic health of our communities. The principles outlined here provide the framework within which the Manitoba Government will provide leadership support and co-operation to the variety of partnerships established to create a range of recreation choices and opportunities for every Manitoban.