

File: Long / Gansing  
Project

***Gilpin County Regional Planning Commission***

***Resident Recreation and Parks Survey***

**prepared for the**

**Recreation, Parks and Tourism Advisory Committee**

**Black Hawk, Central City and Gilpin County**

**by**

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as a cooperative effort between**

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***the Tourism Management Program  
University of Colorado at Boulder***

**and**

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## **Section 1: Introduction And Background Of Study**

Government officials and community leaders of Black Hawk, Central City and Gilpin County have joined together to assess the recreation and park needs of residents of the three governmental entities. Although there has been long-term interest in recreation and park development, limited financial resources have prevented any of these governmental units from making the monetary commitment necessary to provide for such services in a substantial and comprehensive way. The rationale for recently conducting a citizens' survey was to seek current information on county needs and interests for government managers and personnel and for the Recreation, Parks and Tourism Advisory Committee, and to aid in the formulation of a comprehensive plan for recreation and parks development.

Results of this study can be integrated with other appropriate county information to determine the strengths and weaknesses in service delivery, and set meaningful priorities for the allocation of resources. The content of this survey was primarily geared toward an assessment of resident's current and projected recreation and park interests, preferred recreation and park facilities and their suggested location, and preferred administrative structure. In addition, residents were asked to assess how they feel generally about life in their respective communities.

### **Study Objectives**

The overall objective of the Gilpin County Recreation and Park survey was to seek the opinions of county residents regarding current recreation and park interests and suggestions for future development. This survey was intended to be an opportunity for residents to indicate preferences regarding a number of decision areas important in determining future directions in meeting resident recreation and park needs. Specifically, the objectives of the survey were to :

1. identify residents' current recreation activity preference, frequency of participation, and the location where this participation generally takes place;
2. identify the most preferred recreation and park programs for both youth and adults that should be offered or expanded;
3. identify the recreation and park facilities that are most preferred by residents for future expansion and development;
4. identify the administrative structure most preferred by residents should a recreation and parks program be formally established;
5. identify residents' preference for either outdoor or indoor recreation facility development as well as their preference for the location of such facilities; and

6. assess the degree to which residents support a more active role for government in future recreation and parks development.

### **Study Methodology**

Based upon input received from the Regional Planning Committee's steering committee for recreation, parks and tourism, and on discussions held with a number of volunteers currently providing recreation services, a questionnaire was developed for distribution to households throughout Black Hawk, Central City and outlying areas of Gilpin County. The steering committee determined that opinions from as many County households as possible should be sought rather than from a select sample of households. Also, the recreation and park household survey was combined with another study, commissioned by The Aspen Institute of Washington, D.C., on the impacts of small stakes gambling in Black Hawk and Central City. In addition to a significant cost savings to the Gilpin County Regional Planning Commission, this partnership resulted in residents of Black Hawk and Central City being asked to complete a questionnaire only once within a short time frame.

Within the Cities of Black Hawk and Central, the questionnaire was hand-delivered to each household by a member of the survey team and, when contact was made, a convenient time arranged for the questionnaire to be picked up. If, after three attempts, personal contact was not made, a questionnaire and note explaining the questionnaire and requesting that it be returned in the self-addressed, stamped envelope was left at the household. If this effort generated no response one final personal contact attempt was made after confirming with a local city official that the household was in fact, occupied.

Using the procedure described above, 75 households in the City of Black Hawk (BHR) were identified. At the time of the data collection effort, however, only 49 of the 75 households could be confirmed by local officials as being occupied. Out of the 49 potential households, 37 (76%) household contacts were made. In terms of responses from these 37 households, 3 refused, outright, to participate; 6 refused to complete the questionnaire, but did complete a brief six question non-response card; and 28 households completed the questionnaire. Thus, 28 usable questionnaires or a 57 percent response rate was achieved.

In Central City (CCR), 188 total households were identified; however, at the time of the data collection, only 118 of these households could be confirmed by local officials as being occupied. Of these 118 potential contacts, 81 (69%) household contacts were made. In terms of responses from these 81 households, 4 refused, outright, to participate; 5 refused to complete the questionnaire, but did complete the six question non-response card; 1 wrote a letter; and 71 households completed the questionnaire. Thus, 71 usable questionnaires were returned resulting in a 60% response rate.

Outside of Black Hawk and Central City, questionnaires were mailed to 758 property owners (GCR) who appeared on a mailing list provided by the Gilpin County Assessor's Office. Mailings were limited to those property owners who had addresses from the Zip Codes most common to the County boundaries assuming these were owners who were actually residing in the County. Two weeks after the initial mailing a follow-up reminder card was sent. The initial mailing resulted in 194 questionnaires being completed and returned and 45 questionnaires returned as non-deliverable. The follow-up post card generated an additional 68 returns for a total of 262 usable questionnaires or a 37 percent response rate. In addition, two notices about the survey and how to participate were placed in the *Mountain Ear* and the *Weekly Register Call* to encourage any resident of Black Hawk, Central City or Gilpin County, who had not received a questionnaire, but would like to participate in the study, to call the county court house. This reminder resulted in 3 additional questionnaires being mailed to potential respondents.

Questionnaires were also distributed to high school juniors and seniors enrolled in Gilpin County School District RE-2 (YTH). Distribution of the questionnaires was handled by the school's administrative staff. Thirty-six (36) out of a possible 56 students completed a questionnaire indicating a response rate of 64 percent. Of these, 34 were deemed usable. Thus, overall, a total of 361 household questionnaires from Black Hawk, Central City, and Gilpin County and 34 student questionnaires from the Gilpin County School District were usable for analysis for this report.

### Study Limitations

In reviewing the results of this report certain limitations must be taken into consideration. First, it should be recognized that due to the introduction of gambling as a community tourism attraction, a great many changes have taken place in Black Hawk and Central City, and these changes may potentially influence the type and intensity of a household response. To a lesser extent, these changes also have the potential to impact the opinions of residents throughout Gilpin County. Secondly, due to the nature of home ownership and seasonal residency some households were not occupied at the time of data collection. Thus, a household member may not have been available to respond.

Third, outside of Black Hawk and Central City, the most comprehensive mailing list available was that of property owners. Questionnaires were thus mailed to property owners with county addresses. Participation from those households being rented had to be solicited through local newspapers. Fourth, due to time and cost restraints, the questionnaire was designed to solicit responses from "head of household" rather than from each county resident or household member. Although this is a very acceptable methodology, responses may not reflect the opinions of every county resident.



A fifth limitation deals with the inherent problem of non-response bias. It is virtually impossible to determine the exact reason(s) a potential respondent refuses to participate and the resulting implications of these non-responses on the data base. A review of the abbreviated information collected in Black Hawk and Central City from those residences that elected not to complete the full questionnaire showed no significant difference to those responses provided by the full population. Thus, due to the non-threatening nature of the survey and the extremely low probability that non-response is correlated to potential recreation responses, the probability that the results of the survey are affected to any significant extent is minimal. Overall, the data collection was conducted with utmost rigor according to methodology generally accepted by the social sciences and represents accurately and effectively the opinions and perceptions of Gilpin County's residents toward recreation and parks development and usage.

## Section 2: Description Of Survey Respondents

### Gilpin County School District RE-2 High School Juniors and Seniors (YTH).

#### *Individual Characteristics*

Thirty-four (34) high school students completed questionnaires that were usable for analysis. Of these, 35% (12 students) identified themselves as Juniors and 53% (18 students) as Seniors. Fifty-six percent (19 students) were female and 32% (11 students) were male. There were 4 non-responses to the "grade in school" question and 5 to the "gender" question. The ethnic origin of the students included 1 Hispanic, one 1 Native American; 26 Caucasians; and 2 "other". There were 4 non-responses. Table 1 below shows the reported ages of the respondents, ranging from 16-19. The responses are distributed as follows:

TABLE 1: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF YOUTH RESPONDENTS

<u>Age</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent (%)</u>
16	10	29.4
17	15	44.1
18	3	8.8
19	1	2.9
<u>No Response</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>14.7</u>
	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>

Length of residence for the high school youth ranged from less than a year to 18 years. Table 2 shows the distribution as follows:

TABLE 2: LENGTH OF RESIDENCE OF YOUTH RESPONDENTS

<u>Number of Years</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
less than one	1	2.9
1-5	4	11.8
6-10	10	29.4
11-18	15	44.1
<u>No Response</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>11.8</u>
	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Household Characteristics*

The number of people reported by the students living in the household ranged from 2 to 6. Table 3 shows the distribution as follows:

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF PEOPLE PER HOUSEHOLD

<u>Number of People</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
2	2	5.9
3	11	32.4
4	8	23.5
5	6	17.6
6	2	5.9
<u>No Response</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>14.7</u>
	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>

The number of children under the age of 18 reported living in the household ranged from 0 to 4. Table 4 shows the distribution as follows:

TABLE 4: NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER HOUSEHOLD

<u>Number of People</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
0	3	8.8
1	14	41.2
2	5	14.7
3	6	17.6
4	1	2.9
<u>No Response</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>14.7</u>
	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>

When asked the marital status of their parents, 21 students reported "parents" as either married or living together, 6 reported divorced, 1 each reported separated or widowed, and 5 did not respond.

### **Gilpin County (GCR), Black Hawk (BHR) and Central City (CCR) Household Responses**

#### ***Individual Characteristics***

In Gilpin County, two hundred and sixty-two (262) households completed questionnaires that were usable for analysis. Of these, 131 (50%) were female and 125 (47.7%) were male (6 non-responses). The ethnic origin of the respondents included 1 Asian, 1 Black, 3 Hispanics, 9 Native Americans; 230 Caucasians; and five "other" (13 non-responses). Two hundred and forty (240) respondents reported living full-time in Gilpin County (91.6%) while 17 reported less than full-time residence. One hundred and eighty-six (186) respondents reported to be married or living together, 23 divorced, 18 widowed, and 27 single. Forty-five (45) reported to be retired, 7 unemployed, 52 self-employed, and 153 employed.

Education level in Gilpin County included 41 with a graduate degree, 27 with some post-graduate study, 68 with a college degree, 84 were high school graduates, 31 had some high school and 2 had completed grade school. Income level reported included 13 with income under \$10,000, 15 with income between \$10,000 and \$19,999, 39 with income between \$20,000 and \$29,999, 37 between \$30,000 and \$39,999, 37 between \$40,000 and \$49,999, 34 between \$50,000 and \$59,999, 21 between \$60,000 and \$69,999, and 37 with income of \$70,000 or more (29 non-responses).

In Black Hawk, twenty-eight (28) households completed questionnaires that were usable for analysis. Of these, 15 (54%) were female and 12 (43%) were male (1 non-response). All respondents (27) indicated they were Caucasian (1 non-response). Fourteen (14) respondents reported to be married or living together, 5 divorced, 1 separated, and 5 single (3 non-response). Three (3) reported to be retired, 6 self-employed, and 17 employed (1 non-response).

Education level in Black Hawk included 1 with a graduate degree, 1 with some post-graduate study, 4 with a college degree, 4 had some college or technical school, 2 were high school graduates, and 1 had some high school. Income level reported included 3 with income under \$10,000, 5 with income between \$10,000 and \$19,999, 5 with income between \$20,000 and \$29,999, 5 between \$30,000 and \$39,999, 3 between \$40,000 and \$49,999, 2 between \$50,000 and \$59,999, 1 between \$60,000 and \$69,999, and 1 with income of \$70,000 or more (3 non-responses).

In Central City, seventy-one (71) households completed questionnaires that were usable for analysis. Of these, 35 (49.3%) were female and 36 (50.7%) were male. The ethnic origin of the respondents included 1 Asian, 2 Native Americans; 67 Caucasians; and 1 "other". Forty-three (43) respondents reported to be married or living together, 9 divorced, 1 separated, 3 widowed and 15 single. Seven (7) reported to be retired, 5 unemployed, 19 self-employed, and 40 employed.

Education level in Central City included 5 with a graduate degree, 5 with some post-graduate study, 10 with a college degree, 39 had some college or technical school, 10 were high school graduates, and 1 had some high school (1 non-response). Income level reported included 4 with income under \$10,000, 14 with income between \$10,000 and \$19,999, 12 with income between \$20,000 and \$29,999, 12 between \$30,000 and \$39,999, 7 between \$40,000 and \$49,999, 7 between \$50,000 and \$59,999, 3 between \$60,000 and \$69,999, and 7 with income of \$70,000 or more (5 non-responses).

Table 5 below shows the distribution of ages of respondents across the three survey areas. In Gilpin County, the reported age of the respondents ranged from 24 to 85 with the mean age being 46. In Black Hawk, the reported age of respondents ranged from 26 to 76 (one fifteen year old filled out the questionnaire) with the mean age being 41. In Central City, the reported age of the respondents ranged from 22 to 76 with the mean age being 47. The distribution of ages is as follows:

TABLE 5: AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

Age	Gilpin County		Black Hawk		Central City	
	Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)	Frequency	Percent (%)
15-24	1	0.4	1	3.7	1	1.4
25-29	13	5.0	4	14.8	4	5.6
30-34	31	11.9	5	18.5	7	9.9
35-39	38	14.6	6	22.2	6	8.5
40-44	50	19.2	3	11.1	15	21.1
45-49	34	13.0	1	3.7	10	14.1
50-54	18	6.9	1	3.7	9	12.7
55-59	14	5.4	1	3.7	8	11.3
60-64	21	8.0	1	3.7	5	7.0
65-69	16	6.1	1	3.7	1	1.4
70-74	6	2.3	1	3.7	3	4.2
75-79	5	1.9	1	3.7	1	1.4
80-84	3	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
No Response	11	4.2	2	7.4	2	2.8
	<b>261</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 below shows the distribution of length of residence for the three survey areas. In Gilpin County, length of residence ranged from less than one year to 70 years. In Black Hawk, length of residence ranged from less than one year to 73 years. Length of residence in Central City, as well, ranged from less than one year to 53 years. The distribution across all three areas is as follows:

TABLE 6: LENGTH OF RESIDENCE OF RESPONDENTS

Number of Years	Gilpin County		Black Hawk		Central City	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
less than one	3	1.1	7	25.0	4	5.6
1-2	34	13.0	6	21.4	9	12.7
3-4	32	12.2	1	3.6	5	7.0
5-9	51	19.5	4	14.3	19	26.8
10-19	93	35.5	3	10.7	16	22.5
20 and over	43	16.4	6	21.4	17	23.9
No Response	6	2.3	1	3.6	1	1.4
	<b>262</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>

### *Household Characteristics*

Table 7 below shows the distribution of the number of people living in the household for the three survey areas. The number of people reported by the Gilpin County respondents living in the household ranged from 1 to 6 (although 1 household reported 20). In Black Hawk, twelve (12) respondents noted they own their home while 16 noted they rent. Of the renters, 11 rent long term, 4 seasonally, and 1 short term. The number of people reported by Black Hawk respondents living in the household ranged from 1 to 5. In Central City, fifty-five (55) respondents noted they own their home while 16 noted they rent. Of the renters, 13 rent long term and 2 seasonally. The number of people reported by Central City respondents living in the household ranged from 1 to 8. The distribution of the number of people reported living in each household across all three survey areas is as follows:

TABLE 7: NUMBER OF PEOPLE PER HOUSEHOLD

Number of People	Gilpin County		Black Hawk		Central City	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	45	17.2	4	14.3	14	19.7
2	118	45.0	11	39.3	33	46.5
3	39	14.9	3	10.7	12	16.9
4	35	13.4	8	28.6	7	9.9
5	13	5.0	1	3.6	4	5.6
6	3	1.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
8	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4
No Response	8	3.4	1	3.6	1	1.4
	262	100	28	100	71	100

Table 8 below shows the distribution of the number of children under the age of 18 reported living in each household across the three survey areas. In Gilpin County, the number of children under the age of 18 reported living in the household ranged from 0 to 4 (although 1 person reported 20). In Black Hawk, the number of children under the age of 18 reported living in the household ranged from 0 to 3. In Central City, the number of children under the age of 18 reported living in the household ranged from 0 to 6. The distribution of the number of children living in each household is as follows:

TABLE 8: NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER HOUSEHOLD

Number of Children	Gilpin County		Black Hawk		Central City	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
0	144	55.0	9	32.1	31	43.7
1	33	12.6	4	14.3	10	14.1
2	32	12.2	4	14.3	7	9.9
3	11	4.2	2	7.1	1	1.4
4	4	1.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
6	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4
No Response	37	14.4	9	32.1	21	29.6
	262	100	28	100	71	100

### Section 3: Summary Of Household Responses By Objective.

This section of the report presents the findings and a summary discussion for each of the six objectives of the Gilpin County Household Recreation and Parks Survey. Please note that this report focuses primarily on the findings provided by the adult household respondents although select responses from Gilpin County high school juniors and seniors are presented, where appropriate, for comparison purposes.

#### Recreation and Park Development and Quality of Community Life.

Past research has indicated that a relationship exists between residents' assessment of their recreation services and their general assessment of their satisfaction with the quality of community life. It should be noted that a *Quality of Life* indicator as described above differs from the more purely economic indicator known as *Standard of Living*. A Quality of Life index, in general, identifies a resident's level of satisfaction with a range of qualitative indicators encompassing the main components of work, leisure, safety, civic participation, and sense of community. A Standard of Living index, on the other hand, generally measures more quantitative indicators such as personal income, consumption, assets, inflation, and taxation.

In an effort to provide a more accurate picture, respondents were asked a series of twenty questions designed to indicate their perceptions of Quality of Life in their respective communities. In general, residents of the areas of Gilpin County outside of Black Hawk or Central City were *more likely to*:

- Feel safe in their community.
- Be satisfied with their current residence.
- Agree that their community is an ideal place to live.

Similarly, Gilpin County residents were *less likely* than Black Hawk or Central City residents to want to move away from their community. Also, both Black Hawk and Central City residents very strongly agreed that preserving the local town history and maintaining their towns' status as National Historic Landmarks are important. Taking everything into account (family, work, leisure, self, etc.), Gilpin County residents were more satisfied with their *Quality of Life* than were residents of Black Hawk or Central City.

One specific question addressed an issue that has not in the past been included in determining quality of life but at the very least was of great interest to the recreation and parks steering committee. Table 9 below shows the distribution of responses across the three survey areas to a question regarding the availability of adequate day care for young children in Gilpin County. The data clearly show that of those respondents who have young children and answered

the question, the overwhelming majority felt that there is not adequate day care available in their respective communities.

TABLE 9: ADEQUATE DAY CARE AVAILABILITY

Response	Gilpin County		Black Hawk		Central City	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	1	0.4	0	0.0	3	4.2
No	60	22.9	13	46.4	20	28.2
Don't Know	40	15.3	5	17.9	6	8.5
No Response	161	61.5	10	35.7	42	59.2
	<b>262</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>100</b>

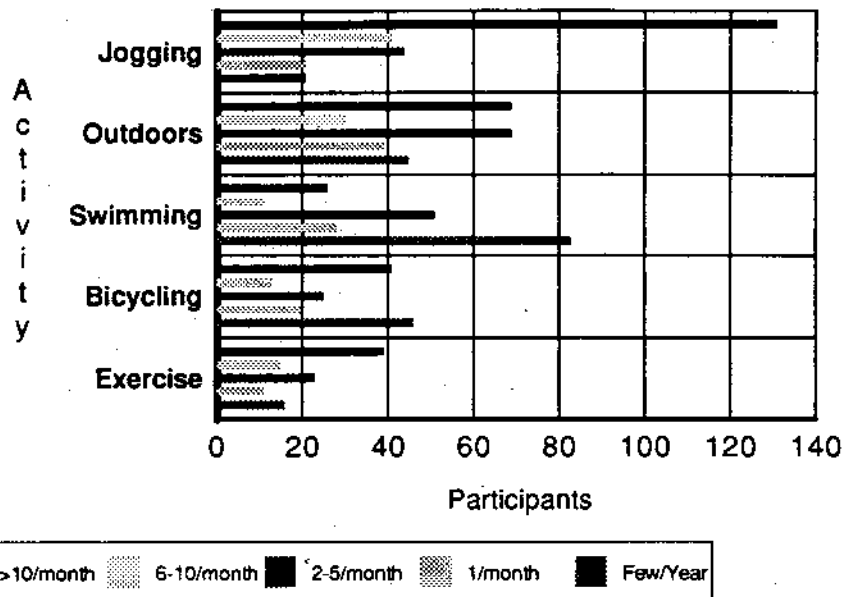
**Study Objective 1: Identify residents' current recreation activity preference, frequency of participation, and the location where this participation generally takes place.**

The survey respondents were asked to indicate their current level of participation in a series of 32 activities. Of the 361 total respondents in Gilpin County, Black Hawk and Central City, 330 (91%) indicated they jog at least a few times per year; 327 (90%) participate in outdoor activities (hiking, etc.); 338 (94%) swim; 314 (87%) bicycle; and, 314 (87%) participate in exercise/fitness (aerobics classes, etc.) at least a few times per year. The five activities presented in Graph 1 are ranked according to a *weighted* total participation which takes into account not only the total **number of people** that participate in the activity, but also the total **number of times** each respondent indicates he/she participates. Consequently, as the graph indicates, although 338 people indicated that they swim, 83 of them (25%) only swim a few times per year. By contrast, fewer people (330) indicated that they jog, yet 131 of them (40%) jog more than ten times per month. Graph 1 outlines the level of participation of respondents for the five most frequently participated in activities.



GRAPH 1

# **Top 5 Current Recreation Activities** *Frequency of Participation*

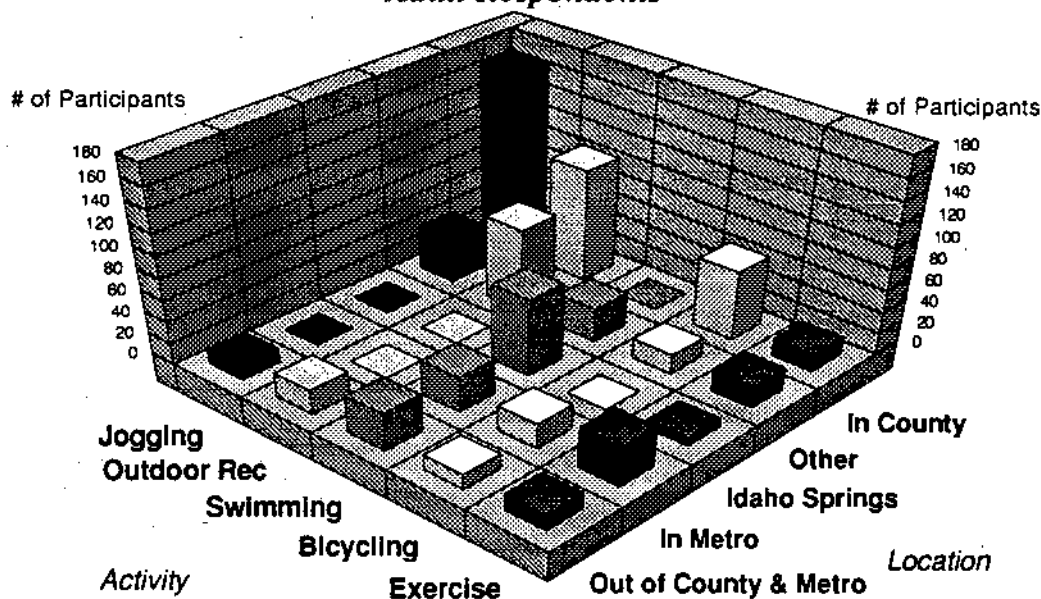


It should be noted that based upon similar assessments conducted in numerous rural communities across Colorado and the West that residents of rural communities frequently identify recreation as activity that is either of a physical nature and/or takes place outdoors. Social activities, which are oftentimes plentiful and meaningful in the community are not always included in how rural residents define personal recreation. Furthermore, due to a lack of available cultural opportunities available to them, residents of rural communities frequently do not see arts and culture as part of the recreation opportunity mix. A number of non-physical, non-outdoor activity categories were identified by respondents including adult education classes (ranked sixth), special events/festivals (ranked eighth), art/cultural activities (ranked tenth) and senior activities (ranked sixteenth). This suggests that in Black Hawk, Central City and Gilpin County there is diversity across respondents current participation in social, cultural and physical recreation activities but it is expressed most strongly in physical and outdoor activity.

A primary concern of recreation and parks planners when developing a strategy for the provision of leisure activities for residents is the location of those activities. Graph 2, in three dimensions, shows *where* respondents indicated they participate in the five most frequently identified activities (see Graph 1). Each "block" on the graph indicates the number of people (vertical axis) that participate in any one activity (left horizontal axis) in any one of the five locations (right horizontal axis). For example, the tallest block in the very corner of the graph

indicates that the vast majority of respondents who jog, do so within the county. Similarly, the block in the very middle of the grid indicates that most of the swimming takes place in Idaho Springs. Although the exact number represented by each block appears as an estimate, this graph provides an easy and quick way to determine *where* respondents conduct their leisure activities. Consequently, the implications of the graph should be carefully considered for recreation and parks planning purposes.

GRAPH 2  
**Current Location of Recreation Activity Participation**  
*Adult Respondents*



This information also indicates that Gilpin County residents most frequently participate in exercise/fitness activities in the Denver metro area, and to a limited degree, also bicycle in the Denver metro area. This graph also indicates that swimming is pursued in a variety of settings outside the County.

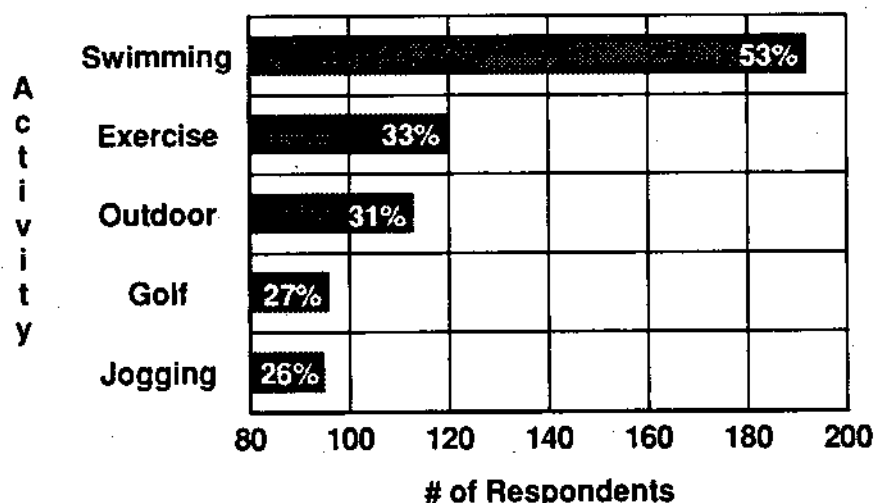
**Study Objective 2: Identify the most preferred recreation and park programs for both youth and adults that should be offered or expanded**

The graphs and discussion above provide information on what activities respondents are *currently* participating in, how *frequently* they participate, and *where* they are participating. Assuming that the types of activities respondents currently participate in may be constrained by

the facilities and programs currently available, an indication of the types of activities most *preferred* by the respondents (including expansion of current facilities and/or programs) is extremely useful for recreation and parks planning. Graph 3 below presents the five most preferred recreational activities from the list of 32 presented in the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to rank order, from the list of 32 activities, their top five most preferred activities. As the graph indicates, 53% of the respondents included Swimming among their top five. In contrast, only 26% included Jogging among their top five most preferred activities.

GRAPH 3

### Most Preferred Recreation Activities Adults



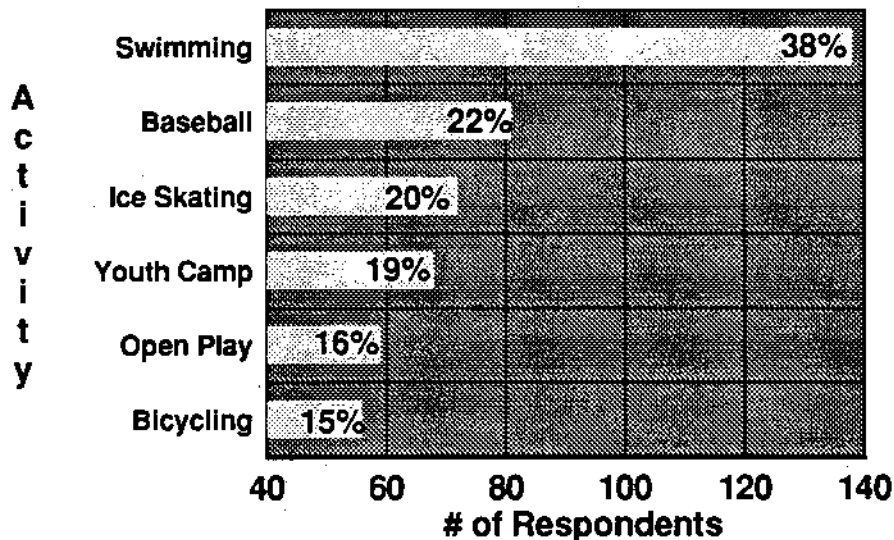
Comparing Graph 1 to Graph 3 indicates that although jogging is currently more frequently participated in than swimming, swimming appears to be the more preferred activity of the two for further expansion. Similarly, although Golf does not appear among the top five activities currently participated in by respondents (see Graph 1), Graph 3 indicates that Golf is the fourth most preferred activity by respondents.

Objective #2 of this report seeks to identify the most preferred recreation and park programs for *both* youth and adults. Consequently, both the high school youth (YTH) and the adult respondents were asked to indicate their most preferred recreation activities for the youth of the community. The responses of the two groups were somewhat different, with three of the top six activities (swimming, ice skating, and open play) being the same across the two groups.

Horses and basketball were each identified by 38% (13) of the 34 high school youths that responded to the questionnaire as the most preferred youth activity.

GRAPH 4

### Most Preferred Recreation Activities for Youth *As Per Head of Household*



Other preferred activities chosen by the high school youth include, in order, open play and volleyball (35% each), swimming (32%), ice skating (29%), and dance (26%). Graph 4 also shows that 38% of the *adult* respondents chose Swimming as the most preferred activity for youth. Baseball (22%) and ice skating (20%), mainly seasonal activities, ranked second and third.

This information indicates that swimming is an activity that both youth and adults would prefer to participate in more frequently. It also indicates that adult residents would like greater opportunities for exercise/fitness, outdoor (hiking, etc.) pursuits, golf, and jogging. They also would prefer increased opportunities for adult education classes, special events and festivals, arts and culture and senior citizen activities. Additional activities for youth should include baseball/softball, ice skating, youth camps/playground activities, open gymnasium play and bicycling. Future planning should take these expressed interests into consideration.

**Study Objective 3: Identify the recreation and park facilities that are most preferred by residents for future expansion and development.**

The questionnaire utilized a technique common in economics research to determine respondents' preferences for possible recreation and park facility expansion. Respondents were asked to allocate a given sum of money (\$1,000) any way they wished across a specified list of options. This technique provides both a rank order of options according to the respondents' preferences and to what degree the respondent prefers one option over another. The questionnaire asked the respondents to allocate, any way they wished, the \$1000 among 11 different specific types of recreation and park facilities. An "other" category was also listed to provide the opportunity to allocate part or all of the \$1000 to an alternative facility suggested by the respondent. Table 10 below ranks the respondents' preferences for the specific types of facilities according to both the number (N) of respondents putting any non-zero amount next to that option and the total sum of money allocated by all respondents to a particular option. As the graph indicates, a recreation center was the most preferred facility according to either ranking method, with 255 respondents allocating some non-zero amount of money to it and garnering, by far, the highest total amount of dollars allocated. It is important to note that although dollars are used as the unit of measure for this question, the total amount of money allocated to any one facility is relatively meaningless except as an indicator of the degree of difference between preferred facilities.

TABLE 10

**Preferred Facilities**  
*\$\$ Allocation By Facility Type*

Rank by <i>N</i>			Rank by <i>Sum</i>	
	<u>Facility</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Facility</u>	<u>Sum</u>
1	Rec Center	255	Rec Center	130,436
2	Trail System	118	Senior Center	28,431
3	Senior Center	112	Trail System	26,279
4	Outdoor Center	100	Historical Sites	21,620
5	Historical Sites	96	Outdoor Center	21,547

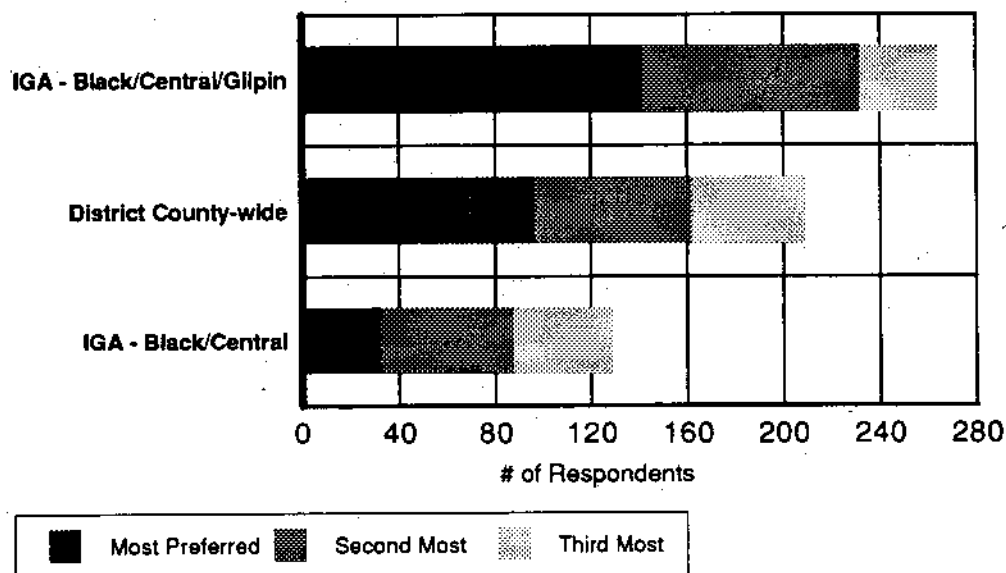
This information indicates that should additional recreation and park facilities be developed that respondents first preference is for a recreation center. In addition, there is support for an improved/expanded trail system, a senior center, a regional outdoor sports/fitness complex (baseball, soccer, tennis, etc.), and preservation of historical sites.

**Study Objective 4: Identify the administrative structure most preferred by residents should a recreation and parks program be formally established.**

Objective 4 of this report seeks to identify the most preferred administrative structure for a potentially formalized recreation and parks program. Respondents were asked to rank their three most preferred administrative structures from a list of five alternatives. An "Other" category was also provided for suggestions of other administrative structures. Graph 5 below outlines the top three most preferred administrative structures. An Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between all three entities, Black Hawk, Central City and Gilpin County, was the most preferred administrative structure with 264 respondents (71% of the total) placing it among their top three choices. The second most preferred administrative structure was a special district that encompassed all of Gilpin county, but required special taxation.

GRAPH 5

**Preferred Administration for Recreation and Parks  
Facilities and Programs**



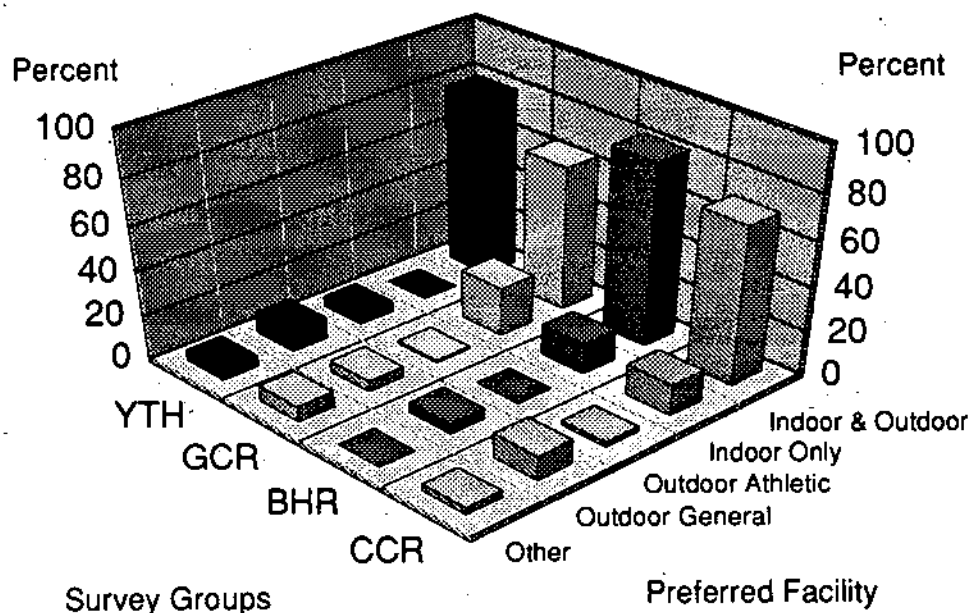
It is clear that respondents feel that recreation and parks should be a cooperative effort among the three governmental entities and that it should be financially supported through general fund allocation. The next most preferred administrative structure is that of a special recreation and park district with its own taxation power.

**Study Objective 5: Identify residents' preference for either outdoor or indoor recreation facility development as well as their preference for the location of such facilities.**

Since many recreational activities are dependent upon either indoor or outdoor public or private facilities, it was important for this study to determine the types of recreation facilities or development preferred by the respondents. Respondents were asked to select one type of facility or development from a list of four options. An "Other" category was also included to provide the opportunity to suggest alternative types of facilities. Graph 6 below, in three dimensions, shows the percent of respondents (vertical axis) from each of the survey areas (left horizontal axis) that chose each of the five options for facilities development (right horizontal axis). As the graph indicates, "Indoor and Outdoor" facilities development was preferred by a majority of the respondents from each of the survey areas. There was also some support given for only developing indoor facilities.

GRAPH 6

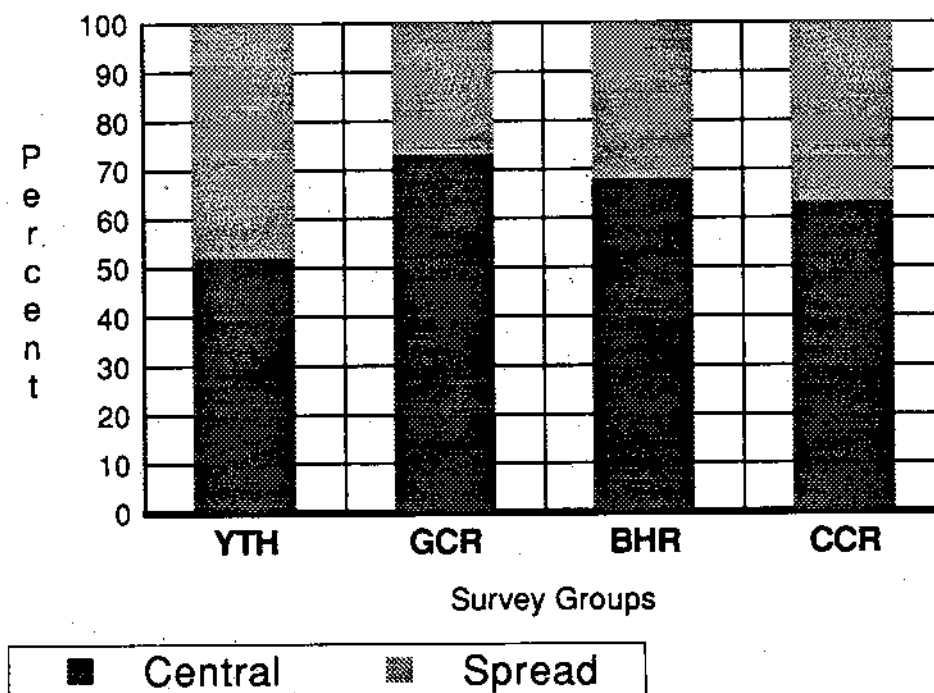
**Types of Recreation Facilities Preferred  
By Survey Group**



This survey question also sought information on the preferred *location* of recreation and park facilities. The choice for the location of such facilities was limited to "Centrally Located in Gilpin County" or "Spread throughout Gilpin County". Graph 7 below shows the preferred location of facility development across each of the survey groups. As the graph indicates, all of the survey groups preferred centrally located facilities over facilities spread throughout the county, with the adult respondents more uniform in their support than the youth. It should be noted however, that although there is great support for centrally located facilities, there is also support for spreading facilities through the county. This indicated preference should be considered in all future recreation and parks development to insure access to recreation and park opportunities for all county residents. Such distribution of opportunities should be reflected in a county-wide master plan for recreation and parks development

GRAPH 7

**Preferred Recreation Facility Location**  
*By Survey Group*



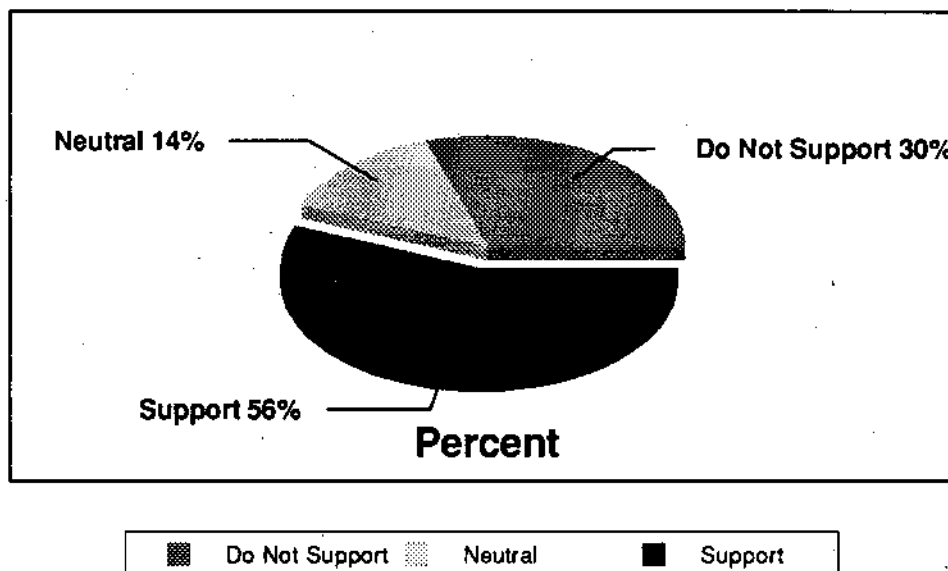


**Study Objective 6: Assess the degree to which residents support a more active role for government in future recreation and parks development.**

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they support a more active role of government in recreation and parks development which included the possibility that residents bear a portion of the cost for such development. The possible responses ranged from "Do not support" (-5) to "Strong Support" (+5). Graph 8 below shows the percentage of respondents that support, do not support, or are neutral on the government involvement question. Although the graph indicates that a majority (56%) of the respondents support a more active government role in recreation and parks development, it is important to keep in mind that almost one-third do not support a more active role.

**GRAPH 8**

**Support for Active Government Role In  
Recreation Development**



**Section 4: Summary Of What Residents' Have Told Us About Recreation And Parks Development.**

Residents of Gilpin County currently participate most frequently in physical fitness and outdoor recreation activities including jogging, hiking, swimming, bicycling and exercise. They

also actively engage in art and cultural activities, special events and festivals, adult education classes and senior citizen activities. Besides jogging, bicycling and outdoor recreation, much of residents participation in recreation is outside of the county either in Idaho Springs (swimming) or in the Denver metro area (exercise/fitness). High school youth currently participate in jogging, open gymnasium play, volleyball, swimming, basketball, and weight training.

Preferred activities expressed by adult respondents include swimming, exercise, outdoor activities, golf and jogging. In addition, there is interest in additional adult education classes, special events and festivals, art and cultural activities and senior activities. Preferred activities expressed by adults for county youth include swimming, baseball, ice skating, youth camp, open play and bicycling. High school youth expressed interest in additional activities in horses, basketball, open gymnasium play, volleyball and swimming.

Respondents indicated strongest preference for an Intergovernmental Agreement using general fund allocations to administer a recreation and park system. Second preference was for the creation of a special recreation and parks district. Also, although there was some support for developing indoor facilities only, strongest support was expressed for both indoor and outdoor recreation and park facilities that would be centrally located in the county. Over 55% of household respondents supported a more active role for government in recreation and park development knowing that it might be necessary for residents to bear a portion of the cost for such development.

## **Section 5: General Recommendations For The Recreation, Parks, And Tourism Advisory Board.**

- 1. Actions of the GCRPC regarding recreation, parks, and tourism development should continue to reflect the understanding that recreation and park services contribute to residents' general assessment of satisfaction with community life.**

The GCRPC, by forming a recreation, parks, and tourism steering committee and a recreation, parks, and tourism advisory committee; by conducting a resident household recreation and parks survey; by allocating financial resources for recreation and parks; and, by pursuing an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Black Hawk, Central City and Gilpin County, has made a straightforward and powerful statement about the importance government officials, community leaders and residents place on the relationship of recreation and park development to improving community life generally in the county.

This commitment on the part of government officials and community leaders to the importance of recreation and park services is consistent with the commitment made recently by many other rural communities throughout Colorado. It is also consistent with the long-term interest and commitment of the three governmental entities to provide recreation and park services, but due to a severe lack of funding, have been unable to do so.

Although recreation is frequently described by residents of rural communities in terms of physical activities, both social and cultural activities quickly become identified as critical parts of a comprehensive community recreation program. Recreation and park services have been documented to be an important factor in residents' positive evaluation of community life. Recreation contributes to pride in one's community, improved interaction among residents, better physical fitness and health, and an improved physical environment. It is also generally felt that providing recreation services for youth greatly lessens the financial investment needed later for correctional actions.

**2. The GCRPC should continue and expand its intergovernmental efforts to support Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Development.**

The residents responding to the survey expressed strong support for a cooperative effort between Black Hawk, Central City and Gilpin County in providing recreation and park services. An intergovernmental relationship can make efficient use of the county's combined financial capability, local leadership and physical areas, and decreases the chance for duplication of efforts. In addition, by showcasing the success achieved by cooperating on recreation and parks development, there is greater potential for cooperation on other governmental functions.

**3. The Recreation, Parks, and Tourism system should be formally established as a government service that has a close working relationship with the private and public sectors.**

The GCRPC should complete the intergovernmental agreement formally creating a recreation, parks and tourism administrative unit. This unit needs sufficient authority to meet the anticipated responsibility of providing for the recreation and park needs of residents and for combining such services, where appropriate, with those necessary to attract and retain tourists. Thus, this administrative unit needs the full support and cooperation of the elected and hired staff of each governmental unit and sufficient funds to

operate effectively. Adequate office space, accessible to the public, is critical to the success of this function.

It should be noted that, due to the many activities already engaged in by the three governmental units in regard to recreation and parks development, momentum has been achieved and expectations created. Should the governmental units elect now not to pursue formalizing a recreation and parks system county residents are likely to feel their interest, support and participation to this point will have been ignored.

**4. The GCRPC should take action to meet residents' immediate recreation and park needs and interests while establishing a long-range program of recreation, parks, and tourism development.**

The GCRPC, through its interagency recreation, parks and tourism board, should hire a person as soon as possible to plan and implement a comprehensive summer recreation program which would include programs and special events for all age groups. The contract for this person should be of a temporary nature with no expectations created for full-time employment.

Three committees should be established immediately. The first should focus on physical recreation facilities and park areas; the second on fitness/sports/athletic programs; and the third on cultural and social programs. Residents have indicated their strong preference for both indoor and outdoor recreation and park development, for a recreation center, for a regional sports complex that could accommodate such activities as soccer, softball, baseball and picnicking, for increased local opportunities for swimming, and for a more active role of government. They have also expressed support for recapturing "community" outside of Black Hawk and Central City, something that could be facilitated through increased cultural and social activities.

The GCRPC should proceed in an appropriate systematic fashion to create a job description for a full-time, experienced recreation, parks and tourism director, and proceed with the recruitment and hiring process. This person should not be expected to be heavily involved in the short-term summer program being implemented by the temporary person but rather address the more long-range recreation needs of the county.

5. **A knowledgeable, well-trained, and experienced person in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism should be hired to provide the necessary leadership for immediate and long-term success.**

The challenges of creating and managing a recreation, parks and tourism system for Gilpin County are many and varied. This is not a task for the "faint of heart", nor for a purely political appointee. The person hired should be, first, strong in building consensus--a person who can work effectively with diverse groups and ensure that the interests of county residents are heard and responded to. Second, this person should have proven recreation and parks programming and management skills. Third, the person should be experienced in the planning and development of parks and physical recreation facilities. And, finally, the person should be sensitive to the benefits of coordinating services for both residents and visitors in a way that increases benefits to local residents.