

## **APPENDIX A**

### **RECREATION SURVEY**

**Conducted by JC Draggoo & Associates, Portland, OR**

Identifying recreation demand and forecasting park and facility needs is a very important part of the planning process. It is also one of the most difficult tasks to accomplish because so many different variables will influence public recreation participation and demand. What might be right for one community may not be right for another. The problem is compounded by the fact that underestimating the need can result in over-utilization of facilities, whereas over-estimating the need can mean spending money for facilities that are not needed.

The recreation survey and the results of the community workshop meetings provided key input in determining existing and future recreation needs in Skagit County. This part of their report analyzes the process and results of the recreation survey. Part 2 summarizes the results of the public workshop meetings. Part 3 combines this information with knowledge about current recreation facilities and services and population projections to yield a forecast of the County's needs.

#### **RECREATION SURVEY DESIGN AND SAMPLE SELECTION**

A survey of public attitude, recreation interests, and recreation participation characteristics was conducted in Skagit County in early November, 1993. Questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected households in the planning area, in both incorporated and unincorporated portions of the County. Each member of a selected household aged ten and over was asked to fill out a questionnaire. Distribution and collection of the questionnaires was performed by the Anacortes, Skagit-Mount Vernon, Mount Vernon, Burlington-Edison, Sedro Woolley Gateway and Sedro-Woolley Kiwanis clubs.

Computed on an area-wide basis, 382 valid returns were needed to obtain a 95 percent confidence level. However, because some of the questions were to be answered only by those 18 and older the sample size was increased so that the number of adult returns would meet the minimum requirement. The actual number of questionnaires returned was 505, with 433 being adult returns.

For analytical purposes, the survey data were divided into three geographical regions of the County. Survey results showed 36% of the sample lived west of I-5, 47% lived in the I-5 corridor and 16% lived east of I-5.

In addition to analyzing the data by the three survey areas, the results were also tabulated by incorporated vs. unincorporated areas. This allowed us to make some distinctions between the rural and urban areas. According to the survey results, about 32% of the sample was from incorporated areas. The remainder is located outside of the city or town limits.

Based on the random sample method used, community-wide results are statistically accurate within an expected maximum error range of approximately 5% (95% confidence interval). In other words, if the sample were randomly selected 100 times, it would be expected that for those 95 times, the results would vary no more than about 5% from the results if everyone in the planning area were surveyed. In cases where information was analyzed by the three geographical areas of the County, the confidence level is lower, due to the smaller sample size.

Some results are compared to the NORTHWEST AVERAGE. This information from past recreation surveys conducted by JC Draggoo & Associates (JCD). The NORTHWEST AVERAGE is a weighted average based upon population size for the last 15 communities surveyed. A summary of the results for the Skagit County's survey are shown below. Some results are also compared to results of similar JCD surveys of other northwest communities or regions.

**Table A.1**  
**Survey Response of Skagit County**

County Population (1993)	87,949
Households Surveyed	329
Questionnaires Distributed	705
Questionnaires Returned	505
Return Ratio	67%

The return ratio noted above does not reflect surveys that were mailed to upriver residents. Approximately 35 households were randomly selected and contacted by phone to participate in a recreation survey. Questionnaires were then mailed to the individual households. Of the forms mailed out, 21 were returned.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW

Specific findings of the survey are as follows:

1. Respondents tended to skip some questions, particularly the more difficult ones. The larger number of questions may have been the reason.
2. A higher than average number of respondents filled out the recreation participation section. This may be attributed to the fact that only about half of the activities were listed.

3. In general, respondents were quite conservative with interests in the more passive types of activities. A concern of services that increased government cost prevailed throughout the survey.
4. A higher than average number of senior-aged responses was noted. Part of this can be attributed to an older than average population profiled in the County.
5. When asked to list the three most needed facilities or activities in Skagit County, the top five responses were (in order): swimming pool, sport fields, teen/youth activities, campgrounds, bike trails.
6. The County facility receiving the most use is Padilla Bay Trail followed by Skagit Playfields and Howard Miller Steelhead Park.
7. A slight majority found the construction of a multi-use recreation center. However, another 17.5% had no opinion.
8. The predominant reason residents do not ride a bicycle more often is the lack of the safe bicycle routes.
9. Residents would favor a major parks and recreation development program if the amount was limited to about \$15 per household annually.
10. When asked what role the County should take in the future to provide park and recreation services, nearly half of the respondents felt the program should continue at the same level.
11. Activities with the highest latent demand (activities residents would like to do most if facilities were available are attending cultural events, horseback riding, RV camping, saltwater fishing, arts and crafts, and indoor swimming.

The results of the recreation survey are summarized. The results have been divided into the following categories:

1. Opinion/User Characteristics - All Age Groups
2. Opinion/User Characteristics - Age 18 and Over
3. Current Recreation Participation
4. Preferred Recreation Activities

### **1.) Survey Area:**

The distribution of the survey results indicates that each of the three areas has been fairly well represented. Nearly half of the respondents are located along the I-5 corridor.

**Table A.2**  
**Survey Area**

	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Percent of</b>
<b>Area</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Sample</b>
West of I-5	183	36.2%
I-5 Corridor	239	47.3%
East of I-5	83	16.4%

**2.) Location of Respondent:**

As can be seen from the table below, nearly 70 percent of the responses were from areas outside incorporated towns and cities.

**Table A.3**  
**Location of Respondent**

	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Percent of</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Unincorporated	345	68.3%
Incorporated	160	31.7%

**3.) Age Respondent:**

Overall, the response rate for the 65 and over population (23.2%) was slightly higher than the profiled of the 1990 Census which was at 15.6%. This could have had some influence on the responses in the survey because in general, they tend to be more conservative in money matters and tend to be interested in the more passive recreation activities.

**Table A.4**  
**Age Respondent**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Number of</b>	<b>Percent of</b>
<b>Bracket</b>	<b>Responses</b>	<b>Sample</b>
10-14	35	6.9%
15-17	37	7.3%
18-24	11	2.2%
25-34	37	13.3%
35-44	97	19.2%
45-54	79	15.6%
55-64	62	12.3%
65+	117	23.2%

#### 4.) How long have you lived in Skagit County?

As can be seen in Table A-5, a large proportion of respondents have lived in Skagit county for a long period of time (11+ years). Considering the growth in the County, it was expected that a higher ratio of new residents would have appeared in the survey. Again, the existence of a high ratio of senior age responses may have had some influence on this question.

**Table A.5**  
**Length of Residence in Skagit County**

<b>Years</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>	<b>Percent of Sample</b>
0-3	71	14.3%
4-6	64	12.9%
7-10	49	9.8%
11+	315	63.1%

A comparison of the residency length for the two adjoining counties revealed that Skagit County has a lower percentage of long term residents (11+ years).

Skagit County	63%
Whatcom County	72%
Snohomish County	69%

A review of responses by survey area revealed that more new residents live along the I-5 corridor and that the long term residents (11+ years) live upriver and also along the I-5 corridor. When analyzed by incorporated vs. unincorporated areas, more new residents are moving into the outlying areas whereas older residents live in the incorporated areas.

The reason this type of analysis is important is that typically new residents bring with them a different set of values and interests. Often, these are distinctly different from those residents that have been established in the area for long periods of time.

#### 5.) What do you feel are the three most needed recreation facilities or activities in Skagit County?

This was an open ended question in which the respondent was asked to identify the three most needed recreation facilities or activities. Those facilities that were mentioned at least ten times or more are listed on the next page.

Responses that received less than ten responses included: picnic areas, a golf course, an RV park, boating areas, skateboard areas, tennis courts, on-street bicycle lanes, family activities, multi-use trails, an ORV riding area, a new fairgrounds complex, a movie theater, an arcade, football fields, arts and crafts, dances, racquetball courts, a library, senior activities, riding stables, volleyball courts, and sailing classes.

**Table A.6**  
**Most Needed Recreation Facilities/Activities**

Facility/Activity	Number of Responses
Swimming Pool	87
Sports Fields (soccer, softball, baseball)	63
Teen/Youth Activities	42
Campgrounds	38
Bike Trails	38
Roller Skating Rink	34
Recreation Center Walking Trails	33
More Parks	28
Teen Center	27
Boat Launches	25
Hiking Trails	25
Swimming Areas	21
Beach Access	18
Horse Trails	16
Children's Playground	13
Fishing Access	12
Ice Skating Rink	12
Wildlife Interpretive Areas	11
Cultural/Performing Arts Center	10
River Access Parks	10
Sports Programs	10

The results show a strong preference for a swimming pool, sports fields, teen and youth activities, campgrounds, bicycle trails, a roller rink, an indoor recreation center, walking trails and more parks. The strongest support, by far, was for a swimming pool. However, if all the trail related responses were grouped together, trails would follow closely behind.

For comparison, the top five most important recreation needs in Whatcom County were: swimming pool, hiking/walking trails, bicycle trails, swimming areas and camping areas.

**6.) If you participate in recreation or sports programs offered by the County how do you generally find out what is offered? (Please check all that apply)**

Answers that received less than three responses in the "other" category included: from parents and from my children.

Based on the table below, the most common response was "from friends or word of mouth." It was surprising to see that the most common means of obtaining information on the County's program is from friends or word of mouth. It is also interesting to see the high proportion of responses for "from the local newspaper." Typically, "from local newspapers" receives between 10-15% of the total responses.

**Table A.7  
Methods of Learning about County's Programs and Activities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Responses</b>
From friends or word of mouth	22.5%
From the local newspaper	20.6%
Do not participate in County programs	19.0%
From school notices	12.7%
From the County's quarterly and summer activities guide	12.1%
From notices mailed by the county	7.8%
RV or radio announcements	4.8%
Other (list)	0.6%

It was of interest to note the relatively low proportion of respondents relying on the County's quarterly and summer activity guide for information about programs and activities. From other surveys conducted by JCD, the response rate from this means usually averages between 20-30%. It appears that both the local newspapers and school notices are a more effective method of promoting and advertising the County's programs and activities.

**7.) If you do not participate in recreation or sports programs sponsored by the County, what is your main reason?**

As can be seen from the table, the most common response is "I'm not interested in participating." This response is often common and makes it difficult to alter their leisure time habits.

The second most common response of "not aware of the County's programs" supports the conclusions of the earlier question. The high proportion of responses of this variable may indicate a need to reexamine the effectiveness of the County's quarterly and summer activities guide. The

proportion of responses for "don't have activities I'm interested in" is about average compared to other surveys conducted. However, this is an area where through innovative program selection could increase the amount of recreation participation.

On a positive note, the County should be encouraged by the low proportion of responses for "held at inconvenient times" and "held at inconvenient locations." This indicates that residents may be willing to travel further distances to participate.

When analyzed by area, the upriver residents had a higher proportion of responses in the "held at inconvenient locations.": considering that most of programs and classes are held near the center of the County and close to the urban population centers, the higher proportion of responses is not surprising.

**Table A.8**  
**Reasons for Not Participating in Recreation Programs and Activities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Responses</b>
I'm not interested in participating	32.8%
Not aware of the County's programs	23.8%
Other	19.9%
Too busy/No time	
Too far away	
Too old	
Not interested	
Disability/Poor health	
Use City or other programs	
Don't have the activities I'm interest in	10.9%
Held at inconvenient times	8.4%
Held at inconvenient places	4.2%

**8.) How many times in the last 12 months have you visited the following County Parks?**

In this question, the respondents were given a list of county facilities and asked to indicate the number of times they had visited each of the sites. Overall, about 70 percent of the respondents had visited one or more of the sites. On the next page, is the number of persons who visited each site, and the average number of times they visited.

**Table A.9  
Parks Most Visited**

Park Area	% of Residents Visiting	Average Visits Per Resident
Padilla Bay Trail	28.1%	6.1
skagit Playfields	26.9%	6.5
Howard Miller Steelhead Park	16.8%	4.4
Clear Lake Swim Beach	16.8%	3.8
Burlington-Edison Regional Park	13.4%	5.5
Sharpe park	12.5%	3.3
Swinomish Channel Boat Launch	9.7%	4.8
Grandy Lake (camping and boat launch)	8.7%	3.2
Conway park and River Access	7.5%	3.7
Sauk Park	7.5%	4.2
Guemes Island Playground	6.9%	8.2
Donovan Park	6.7%	2.1
Cleveland Park	5.9%	4.7
Samish Island Playground	5.7%	3.1
Young's Park	5.3%	7.3
Pomona Grange Park	2.6%	2.8

As can be seen the Padilla Bay Trail and Skagit Playfields are by far the most heavily used sites in Skagit County. Howard Miller Steelhead Park and Clear Lake Swim Beach also receive a significant amount of use. Of all the facilities listed, Pomona Grange Park was the least used facility. In terms of frequency of use, it appears that Guemes Island Playground and Young's Park received the most use per user.

**9.) If you seldom use or don't use County parks, what are your reasons? (Please check all that apply)**

The two most common responses under the "other" were "too busy/no time and not interested." It is difficult to respond to these types of answers. The second most common response of "don't know where they are" is of some concern. A comparison to other surveys where this question was asked, revealed that the Skagit County response is somewhat high. This may indicate a need for better signage and promotional efforts. Similarly, the proportion of respondents who feel that the parks do not have interesting facilities is also somewhat high. This may be due to the fact that many of the County's parks are either underdeveloped or undeveloped.

**A.10**

**Reasons for Not Visiting Parks**

<b>Response</b>	<b>% of Residents Responding</b>
Other	30.6%
Too busy/No time	
Not interested	
Use local/other parks	
Have other interests	
Disable/Poor health	
Too old	
Parks too far away	
Don't know where they are	22.2%
don't have the facilities I'm interested in	17.0%
Too far away	16.0%
Too crowded	6.6%
Poorly maintained	4.0%
Feel unsafe	3.7%

It is encouraging to see the low proportion of responses for "poorly maintained" and "feel unsafe." In some surveys conducted by JCD< these two variables received a high proportion of the responses.

For comparison, we have listed the results of the Whatcom County survey:

**Table A.11**  
**Reasons for Not Visiting Parks**  
**Whatcom County, WA**

<b>Response</b>	<b>% of Residents Responding</b>
Other	28.0%
Too crowded	20.3%
Don't have the facilities I'm interested in	16.7%
Don't know where they are	11.1%
Too far away	11.1%
Not interesting or enjoyable	8.2%
Feel unsafe	4.6%

10.) Do you feel the County should construct a multiple use indoor recreation center for swimming, gym activities, recreation classes, etc.?

**Table A.12**  
**Responses to Indoor Recreation Center**

<b>Response</b>	<b>% of Residents Responding</b>
Yes	54.6%
No	27.8%
No Opinion	17.5%

Based on the table above, a slight majority of the respondents favor the construction of an indoor recreation center. However, a sizable amount (17.5%) has no opinion at this time. A review of responses by survey area showed much stronger support in the I-5 corridor (67%) and areas upriver (71%). Quite surprisingly, only 31% of those west of the I-5 corridor favored an indoor center.

A review of responses by age group shows majority support in all age groups up to age 54. About 35% of those age 55-64 favor such a facility, and the percentage drops to 29% for the over 65 age group. The most support comes from the youth age groups, with 82% of ages 10-14 in favor, and 95% of those aged 15-17 in favor.

11.) If an indoor recreation center were constructed, what activity spaces should be included?

**Table A.13**  
**Activity Spaces to Include at an Indoor Recreation Center**

<b>Response</b>	<b>% of Residents Responding</b>
Indoor pool	23.2%
Multi-use gymnasium	19.6%
Teen activity area	17.7%
Room for aerobics and other exercise	9.6%
Weightroom/fitness room	9.3%
Multi-use room for receptions, meetings, etc.	6.2%
Handball/Racquetball courts	5.8%
Small meeting and class rooms	4.4%
Other	4.1%
Facility not needed	
Roller skating area	

Answers that received less than three responses in the "other" category included: performance/music are, water exercise classes/ physical therapy, outdoor pool, something for senior/disabled, ice rink and day care.

Based on the information from the table, the activity space cited most often was an indoor pool facility. This was followed closely by a multi-use gymnasium and teen center activity spaces. There appears to be very little support for handball/racquetball courts and small meeting and classroom spaces.

**12.) If you ride a bicycle, even once in a while, what are the 3 main reasons you ride?**

**Table A.14  
Reasons for Riding a Bike**

<b>Response</b>	<b>% of Residents Responding</b>
For enjoyment/exercise	40.7%
Do not ride a bicycle	23.3%
To visit friends/family	13.9%
To run errands	10.9%
To save money	3.2%
Other (list)	3.2%
To go to school	2.8%
To go to work	2.1%

Answers in the "other" category included: to be with family, to save the environment, can't drive a car, and to avoid using a car.

By far, the most common reason for people to ride a bicycle was "for enjoyment/exercise." About 23% of the responses indicated that they do not ride a bicycle. Less than 6% of the respondents indicated that they ride a bike to school or to work.

**13.) What are the main reasons you do not ride a bicycle more often?**

Answers that received less than three responses in the "other" category included: too many hills, too much work, afraid of dogs, no trails and other interests.

As can be seen in the table, the most common reason was "lack of safe bicycle routes." The next most common response "other" consists of a variety of answers. Within this category, "don't own a bicycle" and "age and health problems were mentioned most often "need a car during the day" also received a significant amount of responses.

**Table A.15**  
**Reasons for Not Riding a Bicycle**

<b>Response</b>	<b>% of Residents Responding</b>
Lack of bicycle routes	24.3%
Other (list)	23.9%
Don't own a bicycle	
Too old/physical problems	
Don't want to	
No time	
Feel unsafe	
Weather	
Don't know how	
Have young children	
Need a car during the day	16.9%
Too much effort	12.2%
Need to go too far to work/school	11.7%
Poor condition of existing bike routes	7.2%
No safe bike storage at work/school	2.3%
No showers/lockers at work	1.6%

**14.) In the last 12 months, did you ride a horse (or other animal) for any of the purposes in Question #10?**

14.9% replied "yes" while 85.1% replied "no." A significant number of residents ride a horse or other animal. For those who do not ride, the most common reason was because they don't own a horse. The three reasons cited for not riding a horse include: don't own a horse, not interested, too fat/physical impairment, don't know how, and no time.

**15.) Recognizing that multi-use trails are more cost-effective but sometimes result in conflicts between user groups, what type of trail system is most needed?**

**Table A.16**  
**Trail System Most Needed**

<b>Response</b>	<b>% of Residents Responding</b>
Multi-use trails for all user groups	36.9%
Trails designated for 1-2 user groups	33.0%
No opinion	30.0%

**16.) If you ride a bicycle, what is the average length (one way) of a trip?**

For this question, the respondent was asked to fill in the actual number of miles traveled. Approximately 41% of the survey respondents answered this question. Responses were grouped into the categories shown below.

**Table A.17**  
**Average Length of Bicycle Trip (One Way)**

<b>Response</b>	<b>% of Residents Responding</b>
Up to 1 mile	21.8%
1-2 miles	26.2%
3-5 miles	35.1%
6-10 miles	12.0%
Over 11 miles	4.9%

It appears from the table, that a majority of the respondents average at least 3-5 miles for a one-way trip. However, almost 50% ride 2 miles or less. Less than 5% of the respondents bike over 10 miles for a one-way trip. It should be kept in mind that many bike riders may not have been able to accurately estimate their average length of ride.

**17.) If you commute by car, how far do you normally travel (one-way) to your principal destination, such as work or school?**

The was also an open-ended question in which the respondents were asked to fill in the length of their commute by car to their primary destination. Approximately 44% of the survey respondents answered the question.

**Table A.18**  
**Length of Travel for Commuters**

<b>Response</b>	<b>% of Residents Responding</b>
Up to 1 mile	0.0%
1-2 miles	19.5%
3-5 miles	24.9%
6-10 miles	20.9%
11-20 miles	18.1%
21-30 miles	7.2%
31-40 miles	3.2%
Over 40 miles	6.1%

As can be seen from the table, approximately 65% of the respondents commute less than ten miles and 45% commute less than five miles. Only 16% commute over 20 miles.

As might be expected, responses by area showed upriver residents travel farthest by car. I-5 corridor residents travel the least distance.

**18.) What three sections of roadways in Skagit County need designated bike lanes/bike paths the most? (List up to 3 roadways and identify which portion needs bike lanes/paths)**

This was an open-ended question in which the respondents were asked to identify which sections of roadway that needed bike lanes/paths. 41% of the survey respondents participated in this question. Only those areas that were mentioned three times or more are listed.

**Table A.19**  
**Roadways Used the Most in Skagit County**

Roadway	Location	Number of Responding
Highway 20	Burlington to Anacortes	10
	Anacortes to Mount Vernon	7
	Sedro Woolley to Burlington	7
	Sharpe's Corner to Deception Pass	7
	Burlington to Marble Mountain	5
	Sedro Woolley to Concrete	4
	Sedro Woolley to Anacortes	3
Highway 9	Sedro Woolley to Mount Vernon	8
	Entire Length	4
Division Street	Waugh to LaVenture	7
	No Location	3
McLean Road	Mount Vernon to LaConner	7
Memorial Highway	Highway 20 to Mount Vernon	7
Chuckanut Drive	Burlington to Bellingham	5
	Blanchard to Burlington	3
Dike Road	Mount Vernon to Conway	5
Blackburn	No Location	3
Highway 99	Mount Vernon to Burlington	5
College Way	Entire Length	3
Farmer-To-Market	Edison to best Road	3
	Highway 20 to Edison	3
Frontage Road	Mount Vernon to Conway	3
Gibraltar Road	Entire Length	3
Guemes Island	Around Island	3
Little Mountain Road	Mount Vernon to Big Lake	4
Minkler	No Location	3
Riverside Drive	Mount Vernon to Burlington	3
	No Location	3

Based on the responses, portions of Highway 20 and Highway 9 were identified most often as needing bike lanes.

**19.) If Skagit County were to expand its park system what type of park area should have the highest priority?**

For this question, the respondent was asked to prioritize their answers. The results were then analyzed by counting the number of first choice responses and by also weighting the answers. By

counting the total number first choice responses, "protection of natural areas/open space" was first followed by "campgrounds."

**Table A.20  
Park Area Priorities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of First Choices</b>
Protection of natural areas or Open space	83
Campgrounds	72
rural neighborhood parks approximately 10 acres in size	64
Lake and river shoreline access	62
Saltwater shoreline access	57
Larger, rural, multi-use parks approximately 20 acres in size	50
Other (list)	10

A review of responses by area showed that the "Protection of natural areas/open space" received the most first-choice responses from residents west of I-5 and upriver. Residents along the I-5 corridor favored campgrounds.

Based on weighing the responses revealed a different order. In this method, a first choice response was assigned a score of 7, and second-choice response was assigned a 5, etc.

Summing the weighted scores gives the following results:

**Table A.21  
Weighted Scores of Park Priorities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Weighted Score</b>
Lake and river shoreline access	1,536
Protection of aural areas or open space	1,247
Saltwater shoreline access	1,216
Campgrounds	1,184
rural neighborhood parks approximately 10 acres in size	1,099
Larger, rural multi-use parks approximately 20 acres in size	968
Other	119

Using this means of analysis, lake and river shoreline access received the most support, followed by protection of open space and saltwater shoreline access. With this method, campgrounds and rural neighborhood parks did not receive as much support.

It is interesting to note the differences between the two methods of evaluation. While campgrounds and rural neighborhood parks received strong support based on the number of first choices, these responses received very little support when the answers were weighted. In contrast, lake and river shoreline access and saltwater shoreline access points received very little support based on the number of first choices, but ranked near the top when the responses were weighted. This is because these types of facilities may not have been the respondents' first choice but was relatively high on their list, thus ranking higher when the overall priorities are considered.

Regardless of the method used, there appears to be support for the protection of natural areas/open space areas. Larger rural, multi-use parks did not receive as much consideration in either method of analysis.

**20.) What system of routes or trails do you believe are most needed in Skagit County?  
(Check one)**

Answers that received less than three responses in the "other" category included: ORV trails and mountain bike trails.

Based on the table below, there is no clear indication on which trail type is most preferred. While "on-street bicycle lanes" received the highest number of responses, there was also considerable support for "hiking and/or nature trails" and "off-street trails connecting various communities/area in the County." There was also a surprising number of responses who felt no additional trails were needed.

**Table A.22  
System of Routes/Trails Used Most by Bicycles**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
On-street bicycle lanes	25.4%
Hiking and/or nature trails	23.7%
Off-street paved trails connecting various communities/areas in the County	21.7%
Do not believe more trails are needed	16.3%
Off-street paved trails within a community	9.9%
Other (list)	3.0%

21.) If the County were to expand its recreation programs, what activities should be emphasized?

**Table A.23**  
**Most Desired Activities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Teen Programs	22.8%
Youth Sports	22.5%
Nature and Outdoor Activities	15.2%
General Recreation Classes	9.5%
Cultural Arts (music, drama, etc.)	9.3%
Adult Sports	7.9%
Arts and Crafts	6.2%
Adult Education	5.2%
Other (list)	1.4%

As can be seen from the table on the previous page, support seems strongest for teen activities and youth sports. Nearly half are in these two categories. Nature and outdoor activities also received support. Adult sports were surprisingly low.

**22.) Currently, the County owns several large blocks of undeveloped or partially developed parkland. In your own words, what facilities would you like to see in the following parks: Northern State Recreation Area (226 acres), Howard Miller Steelhead Park (80 undeveloped acres), Presentin Park (40 acres).**

This was an open ended question in which the respondents were asked to indicate what facilities they would like to see developed at these sites. Overall, only 36% of the survey respondents filled out this question. Many were unfamiliar with one or more of the sites. The responses that were mentioned at least three times are listed below.

**Table A.24**

**Northern State Recreation Area Suggested Facilities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Trails	50.0%
Camp Sites/Campground (Tent and RV)	26.0%
Indoor Recreation/Multi-Purpose Facility	23.0%
Picnic Facilities	16.0%
Swimming Pool	15.0%
Fairgrounds	14.0%
Sports Fields (baseball, softball, soccer)	10.0%
Keep it undeveloped	8.0%
Horse Stables/Arena	4.0%
Open Space/Large Natural Area	4.0%
ORV Area	4.0%
Bird watching and Wildlife Habitat Area	3.0%
Fishing Area	3.0%
Maximize the use of the land	3.0%
Pistol/Rifle Range	3.0%
Playground	3.0%
Restrooms	3.0%

**Table A.25**

**Howard Miller Steelhead Park Suggested Facilities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Camp Sites/Campground (tents & RV)	46.0%
Trails	39.0%
Picnic Areas	17.0%
Keep it undeveloped	8.0%
Fishing Areas	7.0%
Boat Launch	6.0%
Playground	5.0%
Restroom	5.0%
Building for Public Use/Meetings	4.0%
Open Space/Large Natural Area	4.0%
Sports Fields	4.0%
Swimming Pool	4.0%
Cabins to Rent	3.0%

**Table A.26  
Pressentin Park Suggested Facilities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Trails	23.0%
Camp Sites/Campground (tent & RV)	22.0%
Picnic Facilities	11.0%
Keep it undeveloped	5.0%
Protect Natural Area	3.0%
Swimming Pool	3.0%

**23.) If the County were to ask voters for support in a major expansion of recreation areas and facilities, what would be your top 3 choices?**

For this question, eight different alternatives plus an "other" category was listed. Trails and bikeways received the most support. The next three, including an indoor recreation center, multi-use parks, and natural open space were very close for the second choice. A public golf course and a sports field complex received the least support.

**Table A.27  
Recreation Areas and Facilities Suggested Expansions**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Trails and Bikeways	19.4%
Indoor Recreation Center	16.0%
Large Multi-use parks	15.3%
Natural Areas and Open Space	15.1%
A cultural arts center for theater, drama, and concerts, etc.	11.3%
Centralized Outdoor Multi-purpose stadium for school and community use	8.3%
Public Golf Course	5.5%
Sports Fields Complex	5.2%
Other (list)	3.9%

24.) Would you favor a major parks and recreation acquisition and development program if it meant raising your property taxes by: (Please indicate the highest amount you would support).

**Table A.28  
Property Tax Rate Response**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Up to \$15 per household annually	31.4%
Up to \$25 per household annually	18.4%
Up to \$50 per household annually	12.5%
Up to \$100 per household annually	5.6%
Over \$100 per household annually	3.5%
Won't support	28.7%

Based on the table above, it appears that a majority of the respondents are willing to support a major park acquisition had development program. To gain the needed 60% positive vote, the maximum amount would be \$15 per household annually. A review of responses by areas showed I-5 corridor residents are the most supportive and the residents upriver are the least supportive.

**Table A.29  
Location of Those Who "Won't Support" Tax Increase**

<b>Location</b>	<b>Percent Who Won't</b>
West of I-5	29.4%
I-5 Corridor	25.0%
Upriver	37.9%

A review of the responses by age revealed that three-quarters of respondents between the ages of 18-54 are willing to support at least \$15 annually. Nearly, half of respondents over age 65 would not support a bond measure. In general, the older the age group, the less support there was for a tax measure.

25.) If the County obtains open space lands, which type is most important to you?

This was another question in which the respondent was asked to prioritize their answers. The number of the first-choice responses is shown on the next page.

**Table A.30  
Open Space Land Suggestions**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of First Choices</b>
Scenic areas/vistas for quiet public enjoyment	106
Important wildlife or nature education areas that may have limited public access	58
The County should not acquire open space lands	53
River and stream corridors	42
Open lands to separate urban areas from each other and adjacent rural lands	38
Wetlands	21

By weighing the responses, the following results occurred:

**Table A.31  
Weighted Responses of Open space Land Suggestions**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Weighted Score</b>
Scenic areas/vistas for quiet public enjoyment	1,166
Important wildlife or nature education areas that may have limited public access	920
River and stream corridors	817
Open lands to separate urban areas from each other and adjacent rural lands	657
Wetlands	432
The County should not acquire open space lands	381

By both types of analysis, there appears to be a solid preference for "scenic areas/vista for quiet public enjoyment" and "important wildlife or nature education areas that have limited access." Overall, "wetlands" received very little support regardless of the method used.

**26.) The Padilla Bay Trail is an example of a multi-user trail developed on a dike. Dike and levee lands are typically owned by adjacent property owners, who are often opposed to public use. How interested are you in seeing levees and dikes available for public recreational use?**

As can be seen in the table, on the next page, approximately 63% of the respondents indicated that they were interested in seeing the levees and dikes used for public recreational use. When analyzed by area, the results varied. In general, those living upriver showed the least amount of interest and those living along the I-5 corridor showed the most interest.

**Table A.32  
Levee and Dike Support**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Responses</b>
Not interested	37.2%
Somewhat interested	37.5%
Very interested	25.3%

**27.) What share of the costs do you feel each group should pay for recreation programs such as sport leagues, leisure activity classes, special programs, etc.?**

The response to this question corresponds closely to other surveys conducted by JCD. As might be expected, respondents felt that the youth and senior population should be subsidized the most.

**Table A.33  
Cost Distribution Suggestions**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>None of the Costs</b>	<b>About 25%</b>	<b>About 50%</b>	<b>All of the Costs</b>
Youth	34.4%	38.8%	15.9%	10.9%
Adults	8.8%	34.3%	37.4%	29.5%
Seniors	32.1%	37.4%	19.0%	11.5%

**28.) How far are you willing to travel to visit or use the following recreation facilities?  
(Check the farthest distance you would travel)**

**Table A.34  
Suggested Distances to Facilities**

<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>Would Not Use</b>	<b>Up to 5 Miles</b>	<b>6-10 Miles</b>	<b>11-20 Miles</b>	<b>Over 20 Miles</b>
Sports Field Complex	49.1%	19.6%	17.2%	10.4%	3.7%
Indoor Recreation Center	26.9%	29.3%	26.0%	11.9%	6.0%
River or Lakeshore	10.0%	8.8%	16.8%	28.9%	35.4%
Saltwater Shoreline	12.1%	8.8%	13.6%	23.9%	41.6%
Multi-Use Park	15.8%	26.1%	28.4%	18.5%	11.1%

From this analysis, residents are willing to travel the farthest to visit river, lakeshore or saltwater shoreline. Somewhat surprising is the fact that only 29% of the residents would only travel up to five miles to use an indoor recreation center.

By comparison, the sports field complex and indoor recreation center are extremely sensitive to the length of travel. Only 30% of the respondents would travel more than six miles to use a sports field complex. Quite surprisingly, nearly 50% indicated that they would not use a sports field complex.

**29.) Recognizing that it may increase the cost of new housing, should Skagit County require developers to pay a fee for parks, open space, and trail systems to serve their developments?**

**Table A.35  
Skagit County Developers Fee Suggestion**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Yes	69.6%
No	16.8%
No Opinion	13.5%

While it was assumed that a majority of respondents would favor charging developers a fee for park development, the ratio of positive responses was surprisingly low. In Whatcom County, the positive response was 66%. For Bellingham, it was 76%.

**30.) Currently, Skagit County provides parks and a variety of sports programs and recreation classes. In the future, what role do you feel the County should take in providing recreation services?**

Nearly half of the responses felt the program should remain at the current level. However, one can also look at the responses by noting that nearly 45% felt the program should be expanded in some manner. There was some support for expanding existing programs in communities that do not have any programs.

**Table A.36  
County's Role in Recreation Services**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>
Continue at the current level	45.7%
Expand the existing program by offering sports and recreation classes in cities that do not have programs	24.3%
Expand the existing program by offering more sports and recreation classes	20.5
Other (list)	9.5

**31.) What are your suggestions to improve Skagit County's overall park and recreation services?**

This was an open-ended question in which respondents were asked to indicate their suggestions for improving park and recreation services. In general, the comments included a variety of opinions and varied widely. Responses that appeared four times or more are listed below.

**Table A.37  
Park and Recreation Service Improvements**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number of Responses</b>
Discover and meet needs of teens	10
Acquire more land (natural areas/parks)	9
Keep parks cleaner/better maintenance	7
Do not spend more money	5
Better promotion/ads	4
Construct a pool	4
Shoreline that provides public access	4

**CURRENT RECREATION PARTICIPATION**

Recreation demand is difficult to quantify because of the many factors that influence recreation participation and interests. There have been many approaches tried for identifying this demand, ranging from the use of national surveys and standards, to measuring actual participant hours. Recognizing this problem, JCD began accumulating recreation participation information on communities or regions, representing a combined population of two million people.

The average participation rate in a give 30-day period for the last fifteen communities or regions surveyed is called the NORTHWEST AVERAGE. By comparing participation rates for Skagit County with the NORTHWEST AVERAGE, or other similar areas, we can determine where the County is different from the norm. This then assists us in developing meaningful park and facility service standards for the County.

One must keep in mind that many factors will influence location participation patterns, such as:

1. Lack of facilities
2. Climate
3. Poor quality of facilities and programs
4. Present recreation trends

5. Fad activities
6. Cost of using facilities and programs
7. Present economic trends
8. Demographic profile of the County

The following participation rates are shown for both indoor and outdoor activities. The per capita occasion for a 30-day period refers to the average amount of participation per person in 30 days, when the activity is in season. These activities are ranked so that the most popular activities in the County appear first. For comparison, we have included the participation rates for the NORTHWEST AVERAGE and for Whatcom County, Washington. The Whatcom County survey was conducted in March, 1989.

**Table A.38**  
**Recreation Participation Rates for a 30-Day Period**

Activity Ranking	Activity	Per Capital Occasions per 30 Days		
		Skagit	NW Avg.	Whatcom
1	Walking for Pleasure	6.1	5.8	6.3
2	Beach Activities	3.6	3.7	NA
3	Wildlife Watching	3.3	3.0	NA
4	Bicycling (paved)	3.1	NA	NA
5	Nature Walks	2.8	2.9	NA
6	Fishing (freshwater)	2.6	2.3	2.5
7	Playground (visit/use)	2.6	2.9	NA
8	Bird Watching/Feeding	2.5	2.0	NA
9	Boating (power)	2.5	1.9	2.6
10	Exercising/Aerobics	2.4	3.9	4.1
11	Picnicking (20 or less)	2.2	2.8	3.9
12	Swimming (indoors)	2.2	2.4	3.3
13	Basketball	2.0	2.2	2.6
14	Baseball	2.0	2.1	2.6
15	Hiking/Backpacking	2.0	1.8	2.2
16	Camping (tent)	1.9	2.2	2.4
17	Jogging/Running	1.8	2.4	2.3
18	Fishing (saltwater)	1.6	1.4	1.9
19	Arts and Crafts	1.5	1.8	NA
20	Golf	1.5	1.5	1.3
21	Bicycling (unpaved)	1.5	1.4	.9
22	Softball	1.5	1.8	2.4
23	Cultural Events (attending)	1.3	1.7	2.4
24	Camping (RV)	1.3	1.6	2.2
25	Volleyball	1.1	1.1	1.7
26	Soccer	1.0	1.2	1.4
27	Horseback Riding	1.0	.8	.9
28	Bicycling (rugged trail)	.8	NA	NA
29	Tennis	.8	1.3	1.6
30	Group Picnicking (20+)	.6	NA	NA
31	Target/Skeet Shooting	.6	.5	.5
32	Skiing (cross-country)	.5	.7	.6
33	Canoeing/Kayaking	.5	.5	.5
34	Mountain Climbing	.4	.5	.4
35	Boating (sail)	.4	.6	1.2
36	Handball/Racquetball	.4	.7	.7
37	Rollerblading	.3	NA	NA

38	Rock Climbing	.3	.3	NA
39	River Rafting	.3	.5	.2
40	Snowmobile Riding	.2	.4	.2

NA = Not Asked

Observations of Table A.38:

- Overall, participation in the top 40 activities in Skagit County is about 7% lower than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE. This level of participation corresponds to the larger ration of older age groups in the County.
- Of the top 40 activities, 22 have a lower participation rate than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE. The most noteworthy are exercise/aerobics, picnicking, running/jogging, and tennis.
- The first competitive sport to appear is basketball at number 13.

**Table A.39**  
**Top Ten Recreation Activities (Age 10 - 17)**

Activity	Per Capita Occasions		
	Age 10-17	All Age Groups	Ranking All Ages
Basketball	7.2	2	13
Baseball	6.2	2	14
Bicycling (paved)	6.2	3.1	4
Beach Activities	5.6	3.6	2
Bicycling (unpaved)	5.1	1.5	21
Swimming (indoors)	5.1	2.2	12
Softball	4.9	1.5	22
Fishing (freshwater)	4.7	2.6	6
Soccer	4.4	1.0	26
Camping (tent)	4.4	1.9	16

Observations of Table A.39:

- Participation rates for the top ten youth activities are about 151% higher than for the same activities for the population as a whole. While this is the norm, the amount of higher participation is surprising.
- Looking at the rankings, all of the activities are more popular within this age group than for the population as a whole.

**Table A.40**  
**Top Ten Recreation Activities (Over 65 Age Group)**

Activity	Per Capita Occasions		
	Age 65+	All Age Groups	Ranking All Ages
Walking for Pleasure	8.4	6.1	1
Bird watching/Feeding	3.9	2.5	8
Wildlife Watching	3.2	3.3	3
Nature Walks	2.3	2.8	5
Boating (power)	2.3	2.5	9
Beach Activities	1.9	3.6	2
Exercise/Aerobics	1.9	2.4	10
Fishing (freshwater)	1.6	2.6	6
Golf	1.5	1.5	20
Group Picnics	1.5	2.2	30

Observations of Table A.40:

- Except for Bicycling (paved) and visiting a playground, the top ten senior activities are the same as the population as a whole, although not in the same order.
- The overall level of participation for the top ten senior activities is about equal to participation in these activities for all age groups.

**Table A.41**  
**Participation Rates for Trail-Related Activities (All Age Groups)**

Activity	Per Capital Occasions per 30 days		
	Skagit	NW Avg.	Whatcom
Walking for Pleasure	6.1	5.8	+5%
Bicycling (paved)	3.1	NA	NA
Nature Walks	2.8	2.9	-4%
Hiking/Backpacking	2.0	1.8	+11%
Jogging/Running	1.8	2.4	-25%
Bicycling (unpaved)	1.5	1.4	+7%
Horseback Riding	1.0	.8	+25%
Bicycling (rugged trail)	.8	NA	NA
Skiing (cross-country)	.5	.7	-29%
Snowmobile Riding	.2	.4	-50%

Observation of Table A.41:

- In general, participation in trail-related activities is about 2% lower in Skagit County than the same activities for the NORTHWEST AVERAGE.
- As shown, participation rates for walking for pleasure, hiking/backpacking, bicycling (unpaved) and horseback riding are higher in Skagit County than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE. All others are either the same or lower than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE, by the proportions shown.
- The ratio of jogging/running is lower than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE, but this trend is occurring in all recent surveys.

**Table A.42**  
**Participation Rates for Competitive Sports (All Age Groups)**

Activity	Per Capita Occasions		
	Skagit	NW Avg.	County to NW Avg.
Baseball	2.0	2.1	-5%
Basketball	2.0	2.2	-9%
Golf	1.5	1.5	-
Softball	1.5	1.8	-17%
Volleyball	1.1	1.1	-
Soccer	1.0	1.2	-17%
Tennis	.8	1.3	-39%
Handball/Racquetball	.4	.7	-43%

Observations of Table A.42:

- Overall, Skagit County's sports participation is about 15% lower than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE.
- All the activities show a lower participation rate than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE.
- Handball/racquetball and tennis are significantly lower than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE.

**Table A.43**  
**Participation Rates for Swimming (All Age Groups)**

Activity	Per Capita Occasions		
	Skagit	NW Avg.	County to NW Avg.
Swimming (indoors)	2.2	3.4	-35%

Observations for Table A.43:

- Overall, Skagit County's swimming participation level is 35% lower than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE. This is partly due to the fact that little indoor swimming opportunity exists in Skagit County.

**Table A.44**  
**Participation Rates for Outdoor Pursuits (All Age Groups)**

Activity	Per Capita Occasions		
	Skagit	NW Avg.	County to NW Avg.
Beach Activities	3.6	3.7	-3%
Wildlife Watching	3.3	3.0	+10%
Bird Watching	2.5	2.0	+25%
Hiking/Backpacking	2.0	1.8	+11%
Nature Walks	2.8	2.9	-3%
Camping (tent)	1.9	2.2	-14%
Camping (RV)	1.3	1.6	-19%
Biking (rugged trail)	.8	NA	-
Mountain Climbing	.4	.5	-20%
Rock Climbing	.3	.3	-

Observations of Table A.44:

- Overall, Skagit County's sports participation is about equal to the NORTHWEST AVERAGE.
- Wildlife watching, bird watching/feeding and hiking/backpacking all have a higher participation rate than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE.
- Quite surprisingly, camping (tent and RV) are below average.

**Table A.45  
Participation Rates for Water-Dependent Activities (All Age Groups)**

Activity	Per Capita Occasions		
	Skagit	NW Avg.	County to NW Avg.
Boating (power)	2.5	1.9	+32%
Boating (sailing)	.4	.6	-33%
River Rafting	.3	.5	-40%

Observations of Table A.45:

- Overall, Skagit County's sports participation is about 6% higher than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE.
- While power boating is significantly higher than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE and boating (sailing) and river rafting are lower than the NORTHWEST AVERAGE.

### **PREFERRED RECREATION ACTIVITIES**

Respondents were also asked to rank their top nine preferred recreation activities if facilities were available. The activity rankings were then scored with a weighted value, by giving a first choice a value of nine, a second choice a value of eight, etc. The total weighted score was then added up for each activity. The 20 highest ranking activities are shown in Table A.46. The weighted score is shown only for ranking purposes.

The last column lists the current participation ranking from Table A.38. While not directly comparable to the ranking of preferred activities, it does help to give an idea of activities showing strong differences between desired participation and current participation. The greater the difference in ranking between what residents now do and what they would like to do indicated the amount of latent demand.

**Table A.46**

**Top 20 Preferred Recreation Activities (All Age Groups)**

<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Weighted Score</b>	<b>Current Participation</b>
1	Walking for Pleasure	756	1
2	Nature Walks	648	5
3	Beach Activities	589	2
4	Bicycling (paved)	564	4
5	Swimming (indoor)	529	12
6	Fishing (freshwater)	465	6
7	Wildlife Watching	437	3
8	Camping (tent)	426	16
9	Cultural events (attend)	393	23
10	Fishing (saltwater)	368	18
11	Arts and Crafts	362	19
12	Hiking/Backpacking	354	15
13	Boating (power)	345	9
14	Camping (RV)	337	24
15	Horseback Riding	331	27
16	Picnicking (20 or less)	308	11
17	Exercising/Aerobics	282	10
18	Bird Watching/Feeding	252	8
19	Golf	250	20
20	Bicycling (unpaved)	240	21

Observations of Table A.47:

- Six of the top seven preferred activities correspond to the top seven current recreation activities. The expectation is indoor swimming which ranked number 5 in preferred activity but the 12th in actual activity.
- Activities which show the highest latent demand are: attending cultural events, horseback riding, camping (RV), camping (tent), fishing (saltwater), arts and crafts, and swimming (indoors).

**STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL RECREATION DEMAND**

The document, Washington Outdoors: Assessment and Policy Plan - 1990-1995, is a portion of Washington's State comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Planning" (SCORP) program. It lists the

results of a recreation participation survey and the projected changes in recreation demand state-wide and within four defined "SCORP regions". Skagit County is included in Demand Region 1 along with seven other northwest Washington counties.

Information was compiled for different outdoor recreation activities. Table A.47 shows the ten most popular recreation activities in the state in 1987. Participation is expressed in the numbers of times at least one person in a household pursued that activity in a year.

**Table A.47**  
**Top Ten Recreation Activities**  
**State of Washington**

Activity	1987 Household Trips (1,000's)
Jogging/Running	11,604
Waling in Neighborhood Park	8,756
Outdoor Photography	8,524
Sightseeing and Exploring	6,723
Visiting the Beach/Beachcombing	6,077
Bicycle Riding, On-Road	5,527
Swimming/Wading at a beach	5,341
Using Park Playground Equipment	4,057
Picnicking	3,785

Table A.48, displays the ten activities expected to show the greatest growth rate (state-wide) between 1987 and 2000.

**Table A.48**  
**Top Ten Expect Growth Activities, 1987-2000**  
**State of Washington**

Activity	Growth Rate (percent)
Visiting Interpretive Centers/Displays	44%
Outdoor Photography	44%
walking in Neighborhood Park	44%
Ocean Non-Motorized Boating	41%
Picnicking	40%
Day Hiking	37%
Bicycling Off-Road	37%
Visiting the Beach/Beachcombing	36%
Downhill Skiing	36%
Sightseeing and Exploring	35%

Table A.49, below shows the top ten expected growth activities for Region 1, which includes Island, San Juan, Skagit, Whatcom, Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, and Pacific counties. A comparison of Tables A.47 and A.48 shows that recreation participation in Region 1 is expected to grow at a higher rate than state wide averages. In addition, there are several activities that are higher in this region than state-wide. These include walking in a neighborhood park, picnicking, bicycling (on-road), RV camping, and 4-wheel driving.

**Table A.49**  
**Top Ten Expected Growth Activities, 1987-2000**

Activity	Growth Rate (percent)
Visiting Interpretive Centers/Displays	47%
Walking in a Neighborhood Park	45%
Outdoor Photography	44%
Picnicking	43%
Ocean Non-Motorized Boating	41%
Day Hiking	39%
Bicycle Riding, on-road	39%
Bicycle Riding, off-road	38%
Recreation Vehicle Camping	37%
4-Wheel Drive Vehicles	37%

