

## **The Core and the Edges of Recreation: A Call to Action**

**A discussion paper exploring the vital edges of the recreation field**



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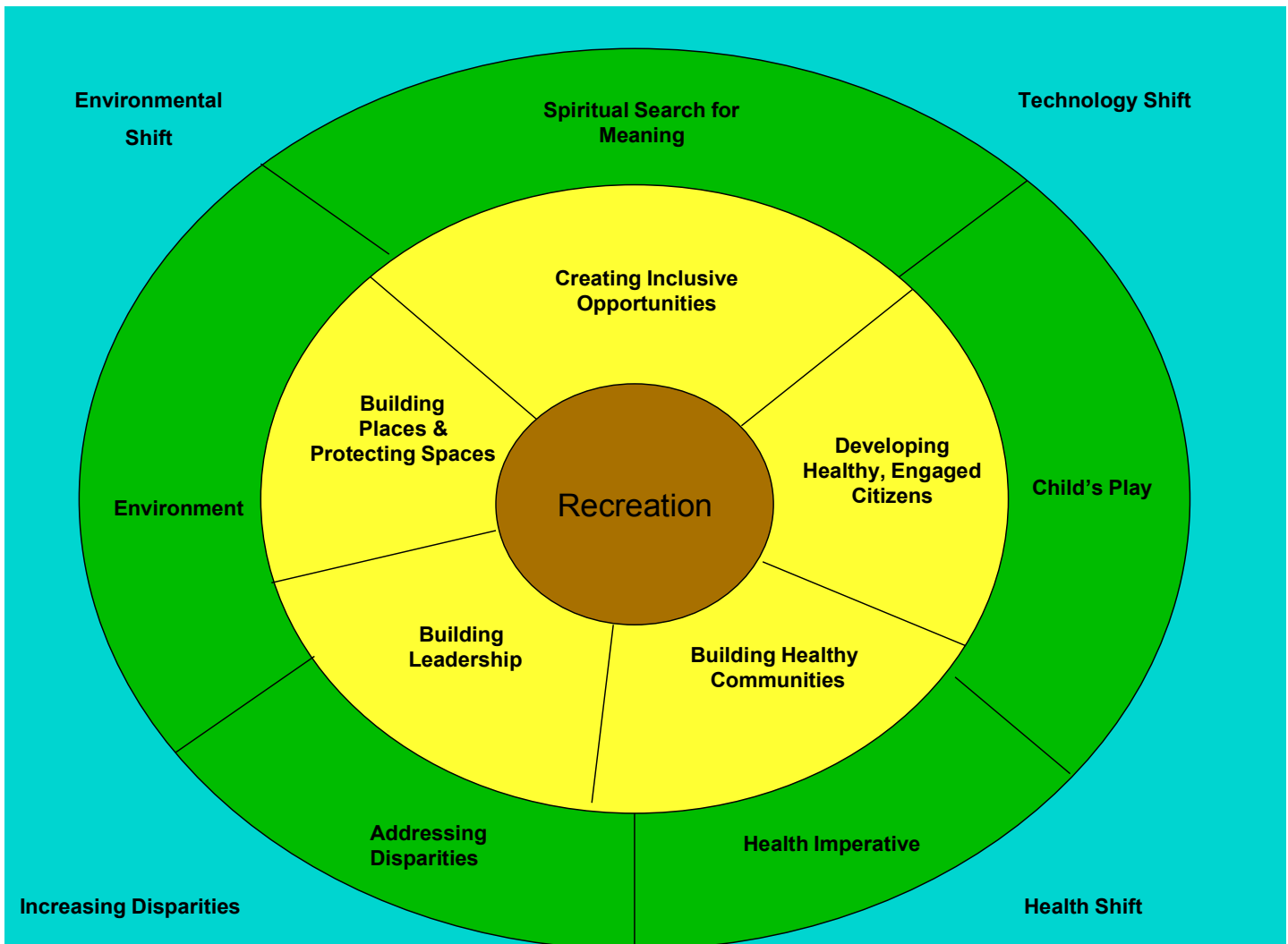
## **Introduction**

This paper is written to inspire thought and conversation about the future of recreation and help to build a consensus within the recreation field about its future. The paper is about recreation and its importance in the world today. The world is an exciting, risky, evolving place with an infinite number of challenges and opportunities. Changing environmental, human, economic and technological realities all impact on all aspects of life, including recreation. These changing conditions provide the context for the recreation movement and inform its future in profound ways.

The basic premise of this paper is that we need to find the edges of our field, those places where new realities meet existing knowledge, understanding and capacity. The edges of the field are vibrant and important places where the uncertainty calls for vision, courage and creativity. To remain relevant to the world in changing times, recreation needs to work at its edges while ensuring sustainability of the core.

## **The Model**

The paper is organized around a model (see Model 1) that describes the core strengths of the recreation field, major influences that are currently exerting pressure on the field, and the areas that represent our most exciting challenges and our greatest opportunities to continue to make a difference in the world. In the model, the centre represents the essence of the field as it has evolved to this point, including its fundamental purpose, its core values and its essential strengths. The inside circle represents the traditional field in action, or those fundamental aspects of our work that, for many, define who we are and what we do. The model is set against a background that represents the global influences that are at play and that we believe are calling us to utilize our core strengths in service to individuals and communities in new ways. And finally, the outer circle represents the edges of the field, where we are being called to take action by making use of the assets inherent in the recreation sector to move into new, or revisit historical, fields of societal need. The rest of the paper is devoted to describing the model in greater detail.



## The Centre: the Core of the Recreation Field

### *A Brief History of Recreation: What we have been called upon to do in the past*

Although government acknowledgement and acceptance of responsibility relating to recreation has only existed within Canada since the early 1970's, the desire for humans to play has always existed. The earliest peoples worked only enough to survive and the First Nation's of Canada experienced a much more balanced lifestyle than the Europeans who followed. At the time of Confederation, Canadians, although hard working, held a leisure ethic that afforded them leisure-rich lifestyles. Their work was a means of providing the necessities beyond which, time was spent with family and friends enjoying the fruits of their labour.

Recreation is actually a work concept, the need for which arose during the late 1800's when

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Canadians flocked from the farms to the more urban centres in pursuit of the opportunities afforded by technological advancement; namely industrialization. The need to re-create came as a result of long hours spent under adverse conditions in factories. Such work and for such a large part of the day served to diminish an individual such that s/he needed to be restored, replenished, re-created during non work hours. The recreation movement, that had roots in this era, initially focused more on the growing needs of youth whose playgrounds were the dirty corrupt streets of the country's urban centres.

Recognizing the value of play to the development of children, as well as viewing it as the privilege of childhood, caring females volunteered their time to facilitate safe quality play experiences for children and youth in the late 1800's. This was the beginning of organized recreation in Canada. By the early 1900's the need for the provision of recreation services grew well beyond the provision of playgrounds for children, in response to a myriad of social situations and needs. The need for formal training of recreation leaders and service providers was becoming evident and various educational institutions answered the call. Over the years professional preparation options grew to include specializations, a research focus and post-graduate studies.

The First World War gave great impetus to the recreation movement in terms of both providing a distraction to the perils of war as well as the realization that it was a particular quality of life, of which leisure played a central role, for which Canadians were fighting. From that point forward, the recreation profession has been called upon to address the needs of Canadians in both the good times and the bad, ensuring that the quality of life that we hold up as the hallmark of our nation is protected and preserved.

Internationally, the United Nations sponsored *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (Article 27) acknowledges the right to rest and leisure. The United Nations has also recognized the importance of recreation in Article 31 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* by recognizing, "the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts." Article 31 goes on to say that signatories to the Convention, "shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity." Canada is a signatory to the Convention and makes periodic reports on compliance.

At the national level, Canadian governments have provided formal recognition of the importance of recreation to Canadian society and have agreed on definitive role statements through the National Recreation Statement (NRS). Additionally, federal, provincial and territorial (F-P/T) ministers responsible for recreation adopted the following resolution in 1987:

*"Whereas recreation includes all of those activities in which an individual chooses to participate in his leisure time and is not confined solely to sports and physical recreation programs but includes artistic, creative, cultural, social and intellectual*

*activities;*

*and whereas recreation is a fundamental human need for citizens of all ages and interests and is essential to the psychological, social and physical well-being of man;*

*and whereas society is rapidly changing and leisure time is increasing:*

*be it therefore resolved that this Conference recognizes the fact that recreation is a social service in the same way that health and education are considered as social services and that recreation's purpose should be (a) to assist individual and community development; (b) to improve the quality of life; and (c) to enhance social functioning. Such recognition will indicate the constitutional responsibility of the Provinces and Territories in recreation services."*

Through that resolution, the NRS established the primacy of the provinces and territories in the provision of recreation services and went further in defining the role, calling on provincial governments to outline their goals and objectives in the form of a policy, to provide resources for policy implementation and to coordinate provincial programming across departmental lines.

## **The Inside Circle: the Field in Action**

During the past century, the field has addressed societal needs in response to calls for action. In working to achieve the benefits of recreation, we have developed capacities that have also contributed to addressing needs and achieving positive outcomes in sectors such as education, justice, social services, and environment.

### *Creating Inclusive Opportunities*

Running, facilitating, enabling, and supporting programs and events; recruiting, training, supervising and recognizing both volunteer and paid staff; and providing human, material and fiscal resources to community based organizations are the types of work that often provide the "face" of recreation to the public, elected officials and our partners. What is less obvious is the work of engaging in organizational and community development and working to ensure that opportunities exist for all citizens by removing barriers that may prevent participation by certain groups. Such tasks are critical to the fulfillment of our mandate and it is essential that we continue to do them well, while remembering that they are the means to an end, not the ends in themselves.

### *Developing Healthy Engaged Citizens*

The recreation experience includes a diverse array of opportunities, structured and unstructured, competitive and non-competitive, social and solitary and involving a continuum of levels of physical activity. The role of the recreation field includes the provision of that

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entire range of experiences, the use of recreation in therapeutic environments, participation in the arts and culture and more, understanding that such participation can result in a healthier and more engaged population.

Linked to the provision of opportunities is the need to create awareness of and provide education about the benefits of participation. Through educational efforts, individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to choose meaningful pursuits. Whether it be a mass media awareness campaign that serves as a reminder to get active, an education based initiative that illustrates how recreation can improve quality of life, or a recreation program that prepares individuals for participation in a new activity, the profession has the development of healthy, engaged citizens at the core of its existence.

### *Building Healthy Communities*

Recreation has both an influence on how community members collectively see themselves and an obligation to reflect community and cultural values and characteristics. In many communities, their accomplishments, in response to recreation needs and interests, are a source of pride and a contributor to community spirit. Many working in the recreation field have nurtured and utilized the community development capacities required for effective collaboration and those skills have never been more relevant within our communities.

In the age of collaboration, it is more important than ever before that we play our role in combination with others. Whether utilizing recreation as a means to an end in the justice, child welfare or mental health systems; using recreation as a component of the settlement process for new Canadians; or considering recreation as a component of the built environment that enables citizens to make healthy, active choices, recreation professionals are engaged in partnerships like never before. Closely related to this theme is the call to ever increasing cross-sectoral work as we explore the goals we share with those in other fields and the growing imperative to share resources in the attainment of those goals.

### *Building Leadership*

The provision of leadership is a key function of the recreation field: leadership within our communities; leadership within the physical activity, recreation, and sport field; and leadership with related fields. People are the foundation of the recreation field. They are both the focus of much of our work and the instruments through which that work is accomplished. Whether paid or volunteer, young or old, experienced or inexperienced, people enable recreational experiences. For this reason the development of people, and especially the development of leadership within people, has become almost synonymous with the field.

### *Building Places and Protecting Spaces*

This essential strength covers a great deal of territory, representing, in essence, much that we do in carrying out our respective mandates within the recreation field. It includes planning, building, maintaining and operating indoor and outdoor facilities. We also work to ensure that certain naturally distinctive and/or culturally significant spaces are protected and preserved for

the use and enjoyment of our generation as well as those who come after us. These natural environments not only enable certain forms of recreational pursuit to occur; they supply the lungs of individuals and cities with life sustaining oxygen as well as providing fuel for the spirit.

## **The Background: Global Influences**

There are many major forces that shape the context in which the recreation sector operates today. To help set the scene and better understand what we are being called to do, let's look at four of these major global trends that continue to have an impact in this country and should influence the thinking about our work in recreation.

### *The Health Shift*

In the last three decades there has been an incredible increase in chronic diseases, their associated costs and an increase in mental illness as well. Chronic disease is now the leading cause of world death, far beyond that of infectious diseases. Seventeen million people die prematurely around the globe annually because of diseases that are largely preventable. Chronic diseases are projected to rise by 17% in the next year. The stunning challenge is that heart disease, stroke, respiratory diseases and some cancers can be prevented through individual and societal efforts around healthy eating, physical activity, and eliminating the use of and exposure to tobacco.

Additionally, as a population we are experiencing poorer mental health. In Canada, one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime. In the workplace, 58% of workers report they are overloaded in their roles and have limited work-life balance. Addictions and mental health costs now represent 12% of payroll costs and mental health claims are the fastest growing category of disability costs.

With the decline in overall health and the direct connection between recreation and disease prevention, the recreation field needs to reconsider its role and influence in creating the right conditions for health promotion and define how it will utilize its influence with purpose and intention at both the individual and societal levels.

### *Increasing Disparities*

Globally there are increasing disparities as a result of the economic and social conditions where people live, work and play. Economic and social exclusion result in health inequities so that all aspects of life are compromised. In Nova Scotia, using 2004 Market Basket Measure statistics, a startling 9.9% of all persons and 11.9% of persons under 18 years of age live in poverty. Increasingly governments and not for profit organizations are coming together to address the growing gap between rich and poor and the related health disparities. The solutions require policy and partnerships that traditionally have not existed.

Research in Nova Scotia, across Canada and internationally illustrates that girls and women do not participate in all aspects of physical activity and sport to the same extent as boys and



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men. This trend seems to hold true for the entire life span, resulting in a female population that does not realize the rich benefits of participation in physical activity, sport and recreation and organizations and communities that do not benefit from female involvement. Despite many gender equity initiatives over the last three and a half decades, progress has been slow and systemic inequities continue to result in unfavorable resource allocation, programming and leadership development for girls and women in the field.

Another aspect of disparities relates to persons with disabilities, especially relevant in Nova Scotia where we have the highest rate of disabilities in Canada - 20.1% in this province compared to a national rate of 14.6%. Although progress has been made, persons with disabilities continue to experience disparities arising out of social exclusion, unemployment, low income, and stigma. The result is that persons with disabilities often have more free time than others yet less access to recreation in order to satisfy their needs and experience an enhanced quality of life. If the recreation sector is genuinely concerned about all people, we need to be part of this work. We need to address how we shape our involvement in creating welcoming communities and how we ensure that all can benefit from quality recreation.

### *The Environmental Shift*

Increases in population and the demands on a limited land base have resulted in the loss of natural and wild areas. Air and water pollution, soil depletion and other factors have also impacted natural areas. In addition, global climate change has caused substantial and serious changes in the environments where we recreate and has had substantial impacts on human health. Rising sea levels, glacial retreat, arctic shrinkage, altered patterns of agriculture and increased air pollution and its effects on health are all noted global changes. Also experienced around the world are extreme weather events with significant numbers of deaths and re-building costs, an expansion of tropical diseases, and shifts in agriculture resulting from land stripped of its resources and the global distribution of food.

An opposing force to the notions of increased growth and the subsequent environmental costs is that of "biophilia". Meaning the love of living systems, biophilia represents the drive in humans to seek affiliations with nature, habitats, activities and objects in their natural surroundings. It is here perhaps that the field of recreation has a great deal to contribute by building on this love for nature, enhancing outdoor recreation values and consciously ensuring that our activities do not contribute to environmental degradation. As the window of opportunity to respond is fast closing, the environment needs our attention. Our collective response will need to impact on all that we do within the recreation field.

### *The Technology Shift*

One cannot think about major global changes without considering technology and its contribution to the pace of change, rising obesity levels, new entertainment modes, and its potential to increase connections to each other without the warmth of face-to-face interaction. Connecting to the cyber community has caused many to disconnect from the local community.

Is there a threat inherent in increasing use of technology or does it offer solutions for a new age that we have yet to explore? Is technology a tool that helps us gain control of our lives or have certain technological advances given us less control? In the 1970's technological advancements on the horizon prompted futurists to predict the dawning of a leisure era where technology would provide the means through which we could all enjoy a more relaxed, leisurely pace of life by the year 2000, yet for many, the pace of life has accelerated. Thoughtful, healthy skepticism should guide the recreation sector's response to developments in technology as they impact both work and recreation.

## **The Outer Circle: the Edges Where we are Being Called to Action**

The following are the essential areas in which the recreation field will need to focus its attention in order to stay relevant in these changing times.

### *Child's Play*

One edge for the recreation movement takes us right back to our roots in children's play. Many observers have noted that children seem to have lost the ability for spontaneous, unorganized, creative play that is considered to be an essential ingredient for healthy, positive youth development. We see too few games of hopscotch and skipping, too few games of sandlot baseball and street hockey, too few children flying kites. There are several important reasons why the capacity for spontaneous play seems to have been lost. First (and perhaps foremost), children and youth are spending unprecedented amounts of time in front of screens - televisions, computers and computer games. As indicated by the *Physical Activity Levels and Dietary Intake of Children and Youth in the Province of Nova Scotia – 2005* (PACY 2) research, "screen time" increased dramatically for students in grades 3, 7 and 11 from 2001 to 2005 - the competition for use of time has never been stronger.

Another reason why spontaneous play is diminishing is because of the sometimes real but often perceived risks associated with children "going out to play." Many parents are fearful that their children will come to harm if left on their own to play on the sidewalks or in vacant lots near their homes. Certainly some neighbourhoods are unsafe and parental caution is warranted. In his book *Too Safe for Their Own Good*, Michael Ungar of Dalhousie University cites numerous "risks" associated with this protective behaviour of parents, including the reality that children may grow up not knowing how to assess risks and keep themselves safe by knowing their limits and taking appropriate precautions - a capacity that they will need more and more as they grow towards adulthood.

Spontaneous play may also be hampered by the lack of access to play areas (playgrounds, green spaces, asphalt pads, skate parks, etc.) within close proximity to their homes. Also key is the awareness of the need for unstructured play by those who make decisions for children. If parents and caregivers do not value free play, then it will not be a value passed on to, or

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accommodated for, their children. Families, along with schools, once played a primary socializing role as leisure educators, enablers, and facilitators instilling the values of recreation (including play) in their children. The evidence would suggest that neither families nor schools accept that role during these changing times. Recreation has a role to play in addressing all of these factors, in collaboration with families and schools, and the field is being called upon, once again, to address this changing reality by becoming a champion for unstructured, spontaneous play.

### *Health Imperative*

In the lengthy list of benefits to be accrued from recreation we often focus upon and promote those related to physical health and longevity: reduction of high blood pressure, prevention of stroke and cardio-vascular diseases, prevention of some forms of cancer and the building of endurance, strength, and flexibility contributing to a healthier lifespan and ability to independently carry out the activities of daily life. Individuals, communities, municipalities and our partners in health promotion recognize these benefits and are acting to place a greater emphasis on physical activity. Recreation is often leading the way in working with other sectors such as health and education to enable more citizens to be active enough to achieve these benefits. While progress is being made with some target groups there are still major challenges that require focused attention particularly with respect to youth, seniors, females, individuals with disabilities and vulnerable populations.

As compelling as the physical health of the population is, we are also a nation that is suffering from mental distress: at least one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness; extraordinary numbers of Canadians are experiencing work-life imbalance; and stress is prevalent. The social-emotional well being of the population is calling out for our attention. We know that recreation can contribute to mental health but our work in this area has been limited. Recreation is conducive to building the protective factors that help to build resilience in children and provide the needed “re-creation” of the spirit for adults. Recreation as a means to mental health ends needs to be higher on the movement’s agenda in a world that is increasingly draining and demanding. The opportunities to contribute to the overall health of the population are immense - they require new partnerships, energy, passion and settings.

The increased health promotion role for recreation has also had some interesting spin-offs that connect with some of the other imperatives discussed in this paper. One way of increasing physical activity levels is to increase the number of people who use active transportation (e.g. running, walking, wheeling) as a means of getting from place to place, whether for recreational or utilitarian purposes. The active transportation movement is a new and exciting concept that is being embraced by many within the recreation field, even though the utilitarian aspects are not part of our historical mandate. Engagement in the active transportation movement also contributes to a reduction in the use of fossil fuels which in turn leads to reduced greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution - a direct connection to the environmental imperative. Similarly, we are learning more about the impact of built environments on day-to-day activity levels and recreation and parks departments are

developing a growing interest in that area. This, of course, is not entirely new - our interest in playgrounds and parks goes back to the genesis of the field - but now we are thinking about and planning spaces and places from a broader perspective of how they can contribute to population health as a part of everyday living.

As we promote recreation as part of the solution to work-life imbalance we need to consider the influences of the physical and social environments of work to identify potential for recreation in that setting. The question of how we can create work settings that provide social support, life-long learning, choices, humour, fun, creativity, opportunities for volunteerism - all elements of recreation with the potential to contribute to work-life balance and health - needs to be addressed.

To take action on a population-wide basis, using recreation as a means to healthy individuals and communities, we need to look at physical and social environments and the determinants of health to understand the root causes of health and recreation disparities. In order to contribute we need to actively participate in new partnerships, broader issue identification and look at new settings and populations. This important work not only contributes to healthy communities and individuals but also ensures that systemic factors contributing to health disparities in terms of both quantity and quality of life are addressed.

*Addressing Disparities: Recreation as a right*

This edge may be one of the most fundamental to our field. The *Vision for Canadian Parks and Recreation* (2005) cites "recreation is a right" as its first guiding principle and the top priority for the field. Access to recreational opportunities has never really been off our radar screen, but it is gaining a new level of significance in response to changing realities.

Clearly the edges of our field are defined in part by our ability to respond to issues of addressing disparities within the population including disparities based upon age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, race, ethnicity, and ability/disability over which individuals have no control. Other disparities exist relative to factors such as income, religion, employment, and education over which one may have an element of choice yet making certain decisions exposes individuals to systemic discrimination. Central to the recreation agenda has always been the objective of increasing access to opportunities for all persons. We have attempted to achieve this objective both through measures that address specific populations and through the creation of policies that are well intended but difficult to enforce on a broad scale. We are also being called to use recreation as a tool to address societal issues such as poverty, youth crime, and the social alienation that can be related to age and geographic isolation.

We are being called, along with others, to strive for social justice and the elimination of systemic societal discrimination that gives roots to recreation disparity by facilitating opportunities for some and denying them to others. Inherent in such action is the concept of connectivity and the understanding that our actions impact others, both locally and globally. Those who have power and resources have a responsibility to share with those who do not,

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and to understand how the use of power and resources can impact others. A truly bold “edge” for the recreation movement may be found in international development work through which students and practitioners can learn through cross-cultural, international experiences and make a direct contribution to disparity reduction through recreational and community development in a developing country. The increased global awareness and cultural competence will help to create leaders with a profound understanding of the origin of disparities and how to reduce them. Recreation professionals have both a right and an obligation to understand their role in being and creating globally conscious citizens.

### *Environment: It's not easy being green, but it's essential*

Although the scale of the climate change challenge and other environmental issues may seem daunting, the old adage, “think global - act local” still applies. The parks and facilities side of the recreation and parks field in particular is being called upon to do its share to reduce green house gas emissions and take other steps to reduce our environmental impact. The need for the provision, protection and expansion of green spaces and green buildings at the local level has never been more compelling. The use of pesticides, particularly in urban areas, is another issue being addressed by municipalities across the country, both for private residences and public areas. As a field, we are being called upon to consider our work in a global context and find new ways to respond to the call for environmental stewardship.

Another aspect of this edge relates to the growing importance of helping citizens and communities to connect more deeply to the natural world. As introduced earlier, the principles behind the concept of *biophilia* suggest that there is a compelling need for humans to be connected to nature. There is a need to protect lands in their natural state to ensure that people have a place to connect with nature. Through outdoor recreation and environmental education programming and the provision of parks and other green spaces, recreation can play a key role in enabling that connection, and it is becoming vitally important that we do so.

### *Spiritual Search for Meaning*

Are some people losing touch with the essential meaning of life in this fast paced world where everything is available and expected instantly...food, gratification, messaging? We see much around us that causes us to question the meaning of life, such as environmental degradation, global conflicts, rise in chronic diseases, children being bullied, seniors suffering, and an economic crisis to name but a few. Yet we have so little time to ponder or process the meaning of such realities, their impacts on our civilization, or what our personal responses could, should, or might be. What are our personal values and how do they inform our thoughts and actions?

The concepts of spirituality, connection to God or a higher power and understanding one's place in the world was associated with the origins of the concept of leisure. Contemplation was a revered state of consciousness achieved by shedding the bonds of work and thereby freeing one's mind to explore his or her inner universe and reconcile it with the external universe. The leisure state requires time...free time...leisure time. A prison chaplain recently

observed that inmates are often more creative and more in touch with their own sense of spirituality than the mainstream population because they have the time and freedom to contemplate. Lack of time for contemplation, the means through which many seek to make sense out of the world, has caused fundamental questions such as “Why am I here?”, “How is it that I can live a life of purpose?” and “What gives my life meaning?” to go largely unexplored and unanswered. Is it possible that these kinds of questions can be explored and answered through connecting with nature, helping others through volunteering, engaging in artistic expression, and other forms of recreational experience? Spiritual development is an essential aspect of living a full life. Is it time for recreation to consider its contribution to spiritual development along with the more traditional aspects of human growth that we associate with the field?

## **Answering the Call**

### *The Response to the Call from the Field*

The societal challenges we currently face, as outlined in this paper, are some of the greatest of the past century. Many of these challenges call upon us to be courageous, innovative, and visionary and to make use of our skills addressing issues at the extreme edges of settings where we have traditionally carried out our work. It is at those edges that we can be proactive, putting our skills and experience to work addressing the global influences that threaten quality of life as some of us know it and have enjoyed in the past.

For the field, this is a higher calling than we have been asked to respond to in the past. These are times that require collaboration to mobilize assets and resources. The recreation field must build on the traditional work at its core while using and developing our strengths in new ways and in new partnerships.

Part of this work will require new approaches to community work that help to strengthen the voices of disengaged citizens, helping them to influence policy development and decision making that will improve recreational opportunities within their communities. The recreational experience for individuals exists, or doesn't, within a complex environment comprised of multiple layers and diverse, interconnected elements. The engagement of citizens on a wide range of issues that affect both the availability of free time and the opportunities for meaningful use of that time is a key element of ensuring that “recreation for all” is more than a slogan.

Going back to the edges identified earlier, answering the call will result in: all children benefiting from both structured and spontaneous play; citizens who are physically and mentally healthy; opportunities for all to enjoy the benefits of recreation; a healthier, sustainable natural environment and a population with a greater spiritual awareness and practice.

### *The Response to the call from Government*

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The role of governments, working closely with non-government and (increasingly) corporate partners, is a key element of the recreation movement. Recognizing that recreation responds to a variety of human needs and builds on human assets at the individual, family and community levels, governments provide essential support to the recreation movement and help to create an environment where quality recreation opportunities can be established and nurtured. Given that the benefits of recreation touch on many aspects of the human experience, including healthy living, self actualization, social inclusion, community development, capacity building and environmental stewardship, government roles in recreation exist at all levels and across departmental lines.

Perhaps most fundamentally, the government role involves helping to establish a context or environment within which citizens and communities can strive for a healthy and happy quality of life, where disparities are reduced and environmental considerations are of paramount concern. Recreation provides an essential mechanism through which such goals can be addressed and achieved. This is the path to recreation truly being an essential service.

### *Conclusion*

In the meantime, we believe that the conversation begun at the National Recreation Exchange in May, 2011 needs to continue. The concepts presented in this paper represent one view of the core strengths and emerging edges of recreation – other views are both possible and welcome. The keys are to be aware of our core strengths, intentional in examining the world around us and open to the possibility that a changing world is calling us to do something different than we have done in the past. We encourage CPRA to lead the process of these conversations and its members across the country to engage in the dialogue and, by doing so, to help shape these concepts into a vision for recreation that is bold, fearless and relevant to the times in which we live.

## **1 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

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We also wish to express our appreciation to Recreation Nova Scotia staff and board members who played an important role in facilitating conversations that helped shape the paper in important ways.