

Albertans Embrace *June is Recreation and Parks Month*

June is Recreation and Parks Month highlights the many benefits recreation and parks bring to our community and acknowledge the strong foundation of parks and recreation facilities and programs in Alberta.

Celebrating *June is Recreation and Parks Month* draws attention to the many benefits of recreation and parks for individual Albertans, communities and the province.

The benefits of recreation and parks are endless and often occur when no one is watching!

Involvement in local recreation activities can lead to:

- Improved physical and mental health
- Reduced health care system costs from lifestyle related illnesses
- Healthy child development
- Positive lifestyle choices and improved self-esteem, especially for teens
- Reduced anti-social behavior, vandalism and crime
- Increased concentration levels and improved student learning
- Strengthened families and community partnerships
- Community pride, leadership and community vitality,
- Increased environmental protection, preservation and stewardship,
- Interests from businesses to locate and expand in Alberta's communities
- Increased work force productivity and an improved provincial economy
- MOST IMPORTANTLY, IT IS FUN!

Recreation & Parks *Fast Facts*

Did you know?

- Recreation and active living can help increase life expectancy by as much as two years.

Two more years to enjoy the Alberta Advantage!

- Alberta has five national parks and more than 300 provincial parks and recreation areas for residents and visitors to enjoy.

These are just a few of the diverse opportunities for Albertans to indulge their passions.

- Albertans ranked walking, golfing and camping as their three top favorite activities in the 2000 Alberta Recreation Survey conducted by the Government of Alberta.

- In the 2000 Alberta Recreation Survey, respondents stated that the cost of equipment and supplies was their main reason for not participating in recreation or leisure activities. Next to this was the cost of admission for facilities or programs.
- Volunteerism is strong, as 44 percent of respondents in the 2000 Alberta Recreation Survey noted they had done volunteer work in the areas of culture, recreation, sports or parks in the previous 12 months.

Volunteering does Alberta good.

Parks and Recreation benefits everyone. Some of the benefits include:

PERSONAL BENEFITS

Recreation enhances quality of life...

- balanced living and lifelong learning
- helps people live happier and longer
- develops skills and positive self image in children and youth
- develops creativity
- builds healthy bodies and positive lifestyles

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Recreation participation builds family unity and social capital...

- strengthens volunteer and community development
- enhances social interaction
- creates community pride and vitality
- promotes sensitivity and understanding to cultural diversity

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Our parks, open space and trails ensure ecological beauty...

- provides space to enjoy nature
- helps maintain clean air and water
- preserves plant and animal wildlife
- increases understanding and appreciation of our natural environment

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Recreation and parks contributes to economic renewal and sustainability...

- reduces health care and social service costs

- curbs employee absenteeism
- serves to boost the economy
- enhances property values
- attracts new business
- increases tourism

ARPA is a not-for-profit organization that has been helping Alberta build active, healthy communities for more than 50 years. Check into what ARPA has to offer as we continue to promote and support the health and well-being of all Albertans through recreation, sport, arts, culture and parks. www.arpaonline.ca

-- Debra Ward