

Oklahoma's Great Outdoors: The Place, The People, The Providers, The Plan

Oklahoma  Tourism
and Recreation Department



2012 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
The 2012 Oklahoma SCORP

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Acknowledgements

The decade of the 1960s produced many creative legislative acts. For the first time in the history of humans, a nation conducted an outdoor recreation resources review. That review led to authorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) – a grant program to aid states and sub-state units in acquiring and developing outdoor recreation resources to meet needs of a changing society. Oklahoma has benefited greatly from grants through LWCF, as have cities, towns, and schools across the state. I have had the privilege of traveling throughout Oklahoma and frequently see evidence of recreation space and facilities provided through LWCF.

Oklahoma has sustained a commitment since 1967 to complete the federally mandated Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every five years. That commitment has maintained the eligibility of Oklahoma and its constituents to receive LWCF grants. That commitment is noteworthy!

Since 1987, I have had the privilege of participating in authorship of the SCORP on that five-year cycle. It has been an honor to serve the State of Oklahoma in this capacity. It has been eye-opening to observe the changes across three decades. Oklahoma has passed milestones, grown in population, and remained committed to outdoor recreation as a major component of life in the state.

The authors desired to meet federal expectations, to fit within the expectations of the President's initiative *America's Great Outdoors*, but to distinguish Oklahoma and its great outdoors in the process. "We know we belong to the land; and the land we belong to is grand."

Lowell Caneday, Ph.D., Regents Professor

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"In America many would demand what in other lands had been reserved for the few. Parks . . . are the best expressions of this ideal. . . They belong to all Americans. There is, then a symbolic significance to public recreation that transcends its everyday meaning. In a nation committed to equality . . . (parks) are the poor person's property."

Alexis de Tocqueville

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Figure P.1 - "Motorized consumptive" outdoor recreation



Oklahoma is five years into its second century of statehood, having past that milestone in 2007. Over the first century of statehood, the face of Oklahoma changed. The landscape changed with development of cities, roads, highways, and lakes. The population changed with multiple waves of settlement comprised of a diverse range of people. The economy changed – sometimes based on agriculture; sometimes focused on energy; always reflecting the resources of the state and the productivity of the people. Lifestyles have changed as well, reflecting the behaviors, activities, and opportunities linking Oklahomans to the land and to the economy. As a result, it is essential that a foundation for the second century of statehood includes planning to achieve quality of life and provides the best opportunities in Oklahoma-lifestyle for residents and visitors to the state.

The preparation of this Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for Oklahoma marks the 10th generation of such planning documents in compliance with the Land & Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. § 460l-4 through 460l-11). That act provided for assistance in preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources, to strengthening the health and vitality of citizens, and to providing funds and authorizing federal assistance to the states. As a result, the National Park Service has provided \$55,563,415 in Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants to and through the State of Oklahoma since 1965. Much of that funding has been directed to local providers of recreation – cities, towns, and schools.

Since 1965, Oklahoma has received more than \$55 million in LWCF grants distributed across the state.

State participation in the LWCF requires the preparation of a SCORP every five years as specified in Section 6(d) of the LWCF Act of 1965 as amended. Each SCORP requires the approval of the National Park Service and serves as a principal determinant in eligibility for grant funds from the federal government to the state. The LWCF Act requires that each SCORP includes:

1. The identity of the state agency having authority to represent and act for the state in dealing with the Secretary of the Interior for the purposes of the LWCF Act of 1965;
2. An evaluation of the demand for and supply of outdoor recreation resources and facilities in the state;
3. A program for the implementation of the plan;
4. Certification by the Governor that ample opportunity for public participation has taken place in the development of the plan; and
5. Other necessary information as may be determined by the Secretary of the Interior. This includes:

- a. A description of the processes and methodologies chosen by the State to complete the SCORP;
- b. Ample opportunity for public participation involving all segments of the state’s population;
- c. Comprehensive coverage of the issues of statewide importance, demand or preferences for public outdoor recreation, and supply of outdoor recreation resources and facilities;
- d. An implementation program that identifies the state’s strategies, priorities, and actions for apportionment of LWCF monies; and
- e. A wetlands priority component consistent with Section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986.

During 2011, President Obama released *America’s Great Outdoors: A Promise to Future Generations* to implement a 21st century agenda related to conservation and recreation. America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) has direct linkage to and impact upon LWCF and SCORP. The AGO report emphasized three principal elements: (1) urban parks and recreation; (2) great rural landscapes; and (3) rivers and streams with emphasis on access.

In an effort to align with AGO, *Oklahoma’s Great Outdoors* incorporates these principal elements into a comprehensive plan for the state. Although limited in number of urban areas, Oklahoma is experiencing an increasing “urbanization” of its population. This shift in population combined with a change in composition of the population places a significant Oklahoma flavor to the emphasis on urban parks and recreation. Oklahoma includes broad expanses of rural landscapes which may be occasionally classified as “great rural landscapes.” However, it is the awareness of and management of those great and distinctive rural landscapes that links Oklahoma to the “great outdoors.” Oklahoma has numerous rivers and streams, but most closely associates the “great outdoors” with lakes. Water and “blueways” are critical elements of Oklahoma’s great outdoors, components of the great rural landscapes, and essential to the changing population.

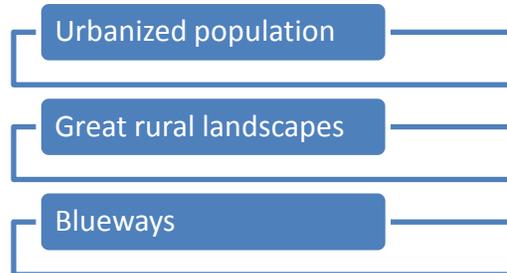


Figure P.2 – Themes of AGO

Oklahoma State University contracted to prepare this SCORP with the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD) as the state agency with authority to represent and act for the State of Oklahoma regarding the LWCF. This SCORP was prepared in compliance with the law; however its intended audience includes resource managers, governmental decision makers, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, residents and visitors to Oklahoma.

To prepare the SCORP, the authors conducted two statewide surveys of cities and towns in Oklahoma and hosted two Recreation Rallies – one in Tulsa and one in Oklahoma City – to which members of the public and representatives of public and private recreation service providers were invited. In addition, public input was provided through cited research pertinent to the recreation needs and issues of the people of Oklahoma and those who visit the state for recreational experiences.

The SCORP is organized as follows:

- *Oklahoma – The Place*: a description of the recreation resources available in Oklahoma’s great outdoors;
- *Oklahoma – The People*: a description and analysis of the people who live in, rely upon, and enjoy Oklahoma’s great outdoors;
- *Oklahoma – The Providers*: a description and analysis of the agencies that manage the public resources in Oklahoma’s great outdoors; and
- *Oklahoma – The Plan*: issues to be addressed and actions to be implemented during 2013 – 2017 to protect, preserve, and provide for the enjoyment of Oklahoma’s great outdoors.



Figure P.3 – Organization of the Oklahoma SCORP

“If bread is the first necessity of life, recreation is a close second.”
Edward Bellamy

“Recreation is a perpetual battlefield because it is a single word denoting as many diverse things as there are diverse people. One can discuss it only in personal terms.”
Aldo Leopold



Figure P.4 – Oklahoma State Park campgrounds in use



Oklahoma – The Place



“Mile for mile, Oklahoma offers the nation’s most diverse terrain. It’s one of only four states with more than 10 ecoregions, and has by far, the most per mile in America according to the EPA. Oklahoma’s ecoregions – or, terrains/subclimates – include everything from Rocky Mountain foothills to cypress swamps, tallgrass prairies, and hardwood forests to pine-covered mountains. Each is graced with wide blue lakes, rivers and streams” (Office of the Secretary of the Environment). The stereotype of Oklahoma as ‘flat, dry, windy, and tornado alley’ is belied by the evidence from the EPA and heralded by the Secretary of the Environment. *Oklahoma – The Place* offers great diversity and supports an equally diverse opportunity for outdoor recreation.

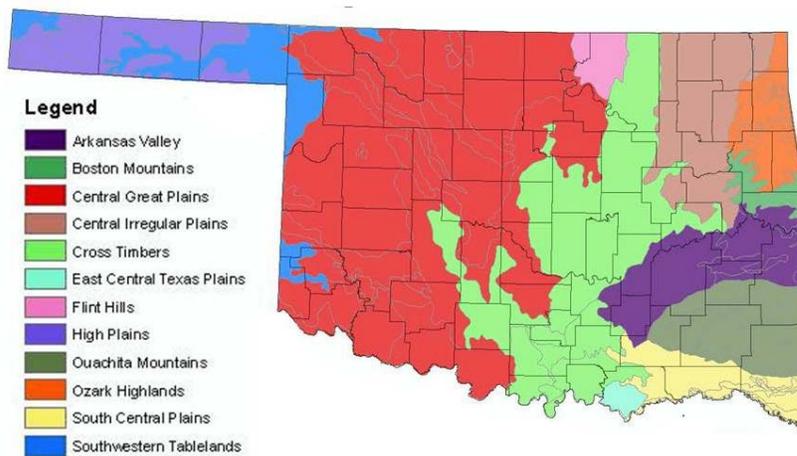


Figure 1.1 – Ecoregions of Oklahoma
Source: Office of the Secretary of the Environment

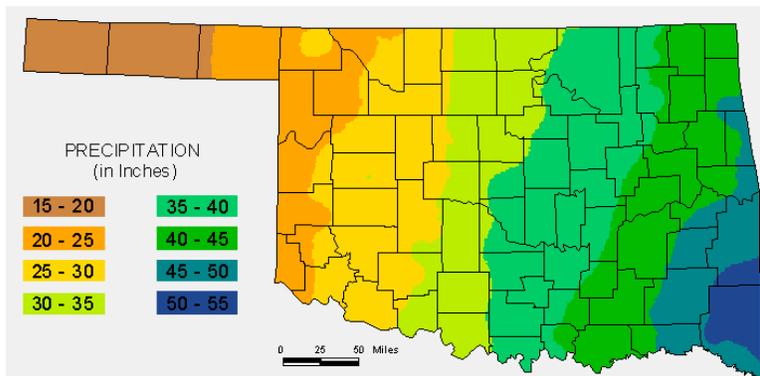
Oklahoma is the 20th largest state in the United States with a total area of 69,903 square miles. The highest point in Oklahoma is located in the far northwestern portion of the panhandle, Black Mesa at an elevation of 4,973 feet above sea level. By contrast the lowest point in the state at 289 feet above sea level is in far southeastern Oklahoma where the Little River crosses the border into Arkansas. It is this change in elevation combined with the location in the south-central portion of the United States that produces the diversity in ecosystems across Oklahoma.

While it is evident that the ecosystems of Oklahoma affect the recreation opportunities available, it is also evident that the ecosystems of Oklahoma affect the recreation patterns of the people. Using the Koeppen classification of climate types, Oklahoma extends across three climatic zones. The body of Oklahoma, with the exception of the panhandle and a small portion of Osage County, is located in a humid subtropical climate characterized by hot, muggy summers. These summers feature frequent thunderstorms,

Ecosystem: a system formed by the interaction of a community of organisms with their environment

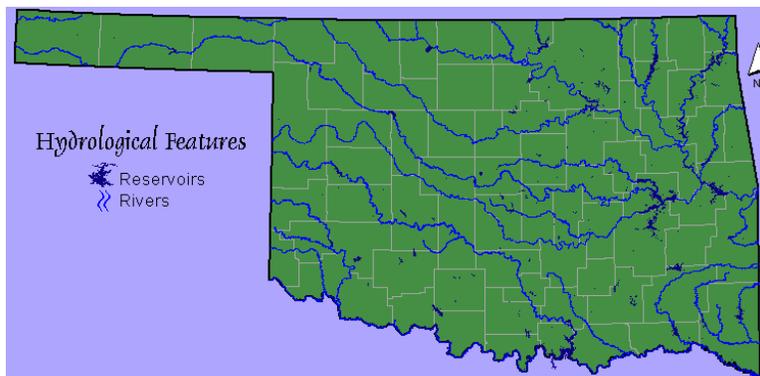
whereas winter precipitation is usually rain, but may include occasional snow. The panhandle of Oklahoma is a mid-latitude steppe climate offering deficient precipitation for much of the year. A small portion of Osage County is classified as humid continental climate. This zone includes warm to hot

muggy summers in which most precipitation is associated with thunderstorms, whereas the winter precipitation is frequently snow.



**Figure 1.2 –
Precipitation across
Oklahoma**
Source: National
Geographic Society

Precipitation and terrain influence the watersheds in Oklahoma. Three major river systems dominate Oklahoma, with each of the rivers flowing in an east-southeast direction. The Arkansas River originates in Colorado and flows through Kansas before entering Oklahoma and then exits into Arkansas. Numerous tributaries flow into the Arkansas including the Cimarron, the Verdigris, the Grand (combining the Neosho and Spring rivers), and the Illinois rivers. The Canadian River systems (North and South) also flow into the Arkansas River and drain much of the central portion of Oklahoma. The third major river system in Oklahoma is the Red River forming the southern border with Texas.



**Figure 1.3 –
Hydrological features
of Oklahoma**
Source: National
Geographic Society

With a total area of 69,903 square miles, Oklahoma includes 1,224 square miles of water or approximately two percent of its area as surface water. It is asserted by several authorities that Oklahoma has more miles of shoreline than the Atlantic and Gulf coasts combined. This shoreline would include that of numerous lakes impounded on Oklahoma’s rivers and streams, several of which can be seen in Figure 1.3. Oklahoma has no natural lakes, but has been enriched with numerous impoundments – many of which provide outdoor recreation opportunities.

Despite its stereotyped reputation, Oklahoma has four mountain ranges distributed across the state. The Ouachita Mountains are located in the southeastern portion of the state and generally extend in east-west ridges. The foothills of the Ozark Mountains extend into

east central Oklahoma and drain into the Illinois River on the Oklahoma side of the border. The Arbuckle Mountains are located in south-central Oklahoma and have been called “the oldest mountain range in the United States.” In the southwestern part of Oklahoma, the Wichita Mountains provide the environment for a major national wildlife refuge.

Approximately 24% of Oklahoma is forested as shown in Figure 1.4, with considerable diversity in the composition of those forests. Much of the central portion of Oklahoma is dominated by the Cross Timbers ecosystem, synonymous with the Post Oak-Blackjack forests extending from Kansas to Texas. The Ozark foothills show a considerably different forest of oak-hickory, while the Ouachita Mountains are dominated by Oak-Southern pine forests. Due to their east-west ranges, the Ouachita Mountains frequently show very different ecosystems on the north facing slopes from that on the south facing slopes. River valleys in the eastern portion of the state have more traditional Bottomland hardwood forests. Although prairie and plains extend across much of western Oklahoma, the extreme northwest corner of the state includes Pinion pine-juniper forests that extend west toward the Rocky Mountains.

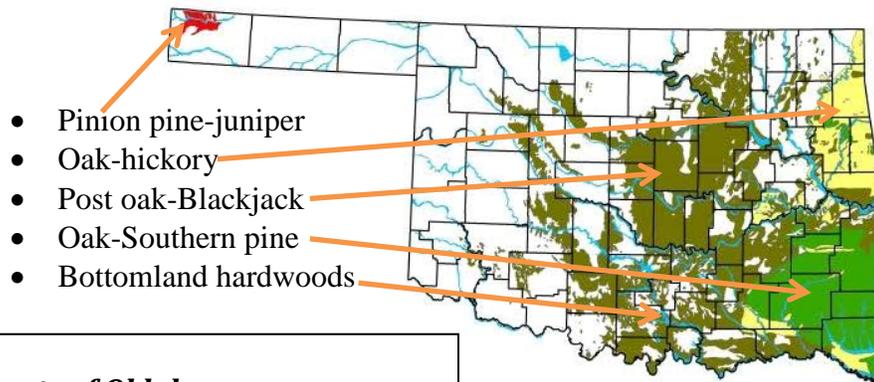


Figure 1.4 – Forests of Oklahoma

Source: Oklahoma Forestry Services

Oklahoma – The Place is a natural playground. The geography, ecology, biology, and botany of the state provide wonderful resources for residents and visitors. Experience has shown that climate, temperature, precipitation, and seasonality are major factors in determination of outdoor recreation for Oklahomans. Additionally, economic and employment conditions are important factors. This is evident in patterns of behavior related to hunting and fishing. It is even more evident in patterns of visitation to Oklahoma’s parks and lakes.

During the past five years there have been changes in the availability and utility of the recreation resources in Oklahoma. Some of those changes were governmental; some changes were economic; some changes were climatological; and some changes were environmental. Each is important to comprehensive planning for outdoor recreation.

Oklahoma's Public Recreation Estate

A SCORP focuses on the public provision of outdoor recreation, although private partnerships and cooperative agreements are important in provision of services, opportunities, and access to the recreation resources. As reported in the 2007 SCORP, there had been only minor changes in public properties available for outdoor recreation experiences in Oklahoma during the prior five-year period. That situation changed between 2008 and 2012, due in large part to the economic recession and budgetary pressures placed upon governmental units.

The major changes in availability of public acreage for recreation were the result of “closure” of seven Oklahoma State Parks in 2011. Those closures did not actually reduce the public recreation estate as responsibility for property management was transferred from OTRD to other agencies. The parks remain available for public recreation. Table 1.1 shows the detail of land and water acreage in Oklahoma available for public recreation.

Table 1.1 – Oklahoma's Public Recreation Estate by Acreage

Local, State, and Federal Recreation Property

Level of Government and Managing Agency	Land Acreage	Water Acreage	Total
Local governments			
Cities	28,175	51,530	79,705
Counties	14	0	14
State government			
Colleges/Universities/State Regents	14,870	4,212	19,082
Grand River Dam Authority	57	69,050	69,107
Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation*	765,238	2,120	767,358
Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Dept.*	69,678	6,080	75,758
School Land Office	2,785	249	3,034
Federal government			
Army Corps of Engineers*	79,680	432,337	512,017
Bureau of Indian Affairs	54	0	54
Bureau of Land Management	320	0	320
Bureau of Reclamation*	7,121	6,070	13,191
National Park Service	7,416	2,346	9,762
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	140,814	0	140,814
U.S. Forest Service*	249,010	91	249,101
Totals	1,365,232	571,085	1,936,317

* Reported figures include leased properties that may be connected to other agencies.

Availability of public recreation space is an important consideration in provision of outdoor recreation activity. While private properties provide opportunities for some to participate in recreation, those properties are typically limited by personal choice of the property owner or by proprietary operation, thus limiting certain segments of the population. The public domain is “everyone’s property,” managed to encourage use by

the public and, in the case of parks, these properties are managed for recreation. As such, public parks are essential in the supply of opportunities for outdoor recreation for the majority of Oklahomans.

In contrast to the table on the previous page which showed the public recreation estate, Table 1.2 reports the land ownership pattern for all properties in Oklahoma. There is a much higher percentage of private land ownership in Oklahoma than is true on a national average across the United States. This ownership pattern influences such opportunities as access to resources to hunt, linkages and corridors that may serve as trails, and available parks and playgrounds – especially within cities.

Table 1.2 – Oklahoma’s Land Ownership by Percentage of Area

Ownership of Property	Acreage by agency	Total acreage	Oklahoma percentage	National average
Private properties		41,052,148	90.23%	58.0%
Other private owners	39,660,199			
Indian lands	1,391,949		3.17%	2.0%
Federal government		958,209	2.18%	33.0%
Army Corps of Engineers	531,536			
Bureau of Reclamation	49,575			
Department of Defense	148,323			
National Park Service	7,005			
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	118,619			
U.S. Forest Service	103,151			
State government		1,124,109	2.58%	4.5%
Grand River Dam Authority	82			
Dept. of Wildlife Conservation	300,046			
Tourism and Recreation Dept.	33,436			
School Land Office	756,018			
State Regents, other state agencies	45,545			
Local government		28,182	0.06%	2.5%
Cities	27,442			
Counties	740			
Water (with public access)	783,360	783,360	1.78%	
Totals		43,954,560	100.00%	100.0%

Location of these public lands is also a consideration for individuals seeking outdoor recreation experiences. Figure 1.5 on the following page shows the distribution of these public lands and waters across Oklahoma. The larger public holdings are in the eastern part of Oklahoma and somewhat distant from the population centers of the state.

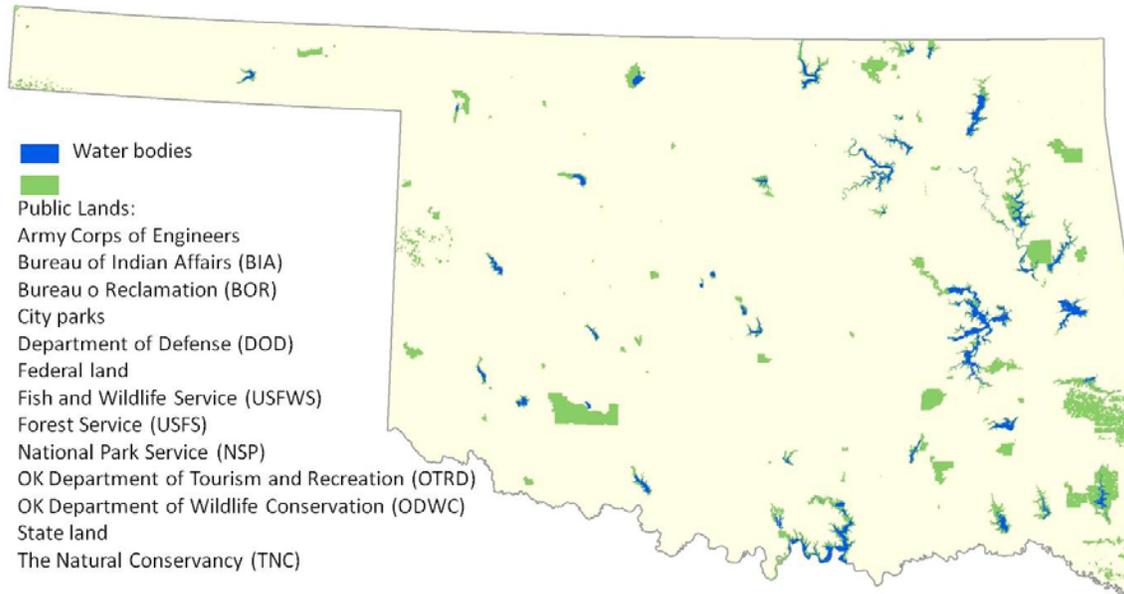


Figure 1.5 – Public lands in Oklahoma

Above: Major lakes and public lands including state and federal properties

Below: Federal lands in Oklahoma by agency

Source: U.S. Geological Survey



Oklahoma's Parks

Portions of the public lands in Oklahoma have been designated as parks or places for recreation. What do these places mean to Oklahomans? The 2007 SCORP established the meaning of these special places for Oklahomans through drawings and writings focused on "What Parks Mean to Me."

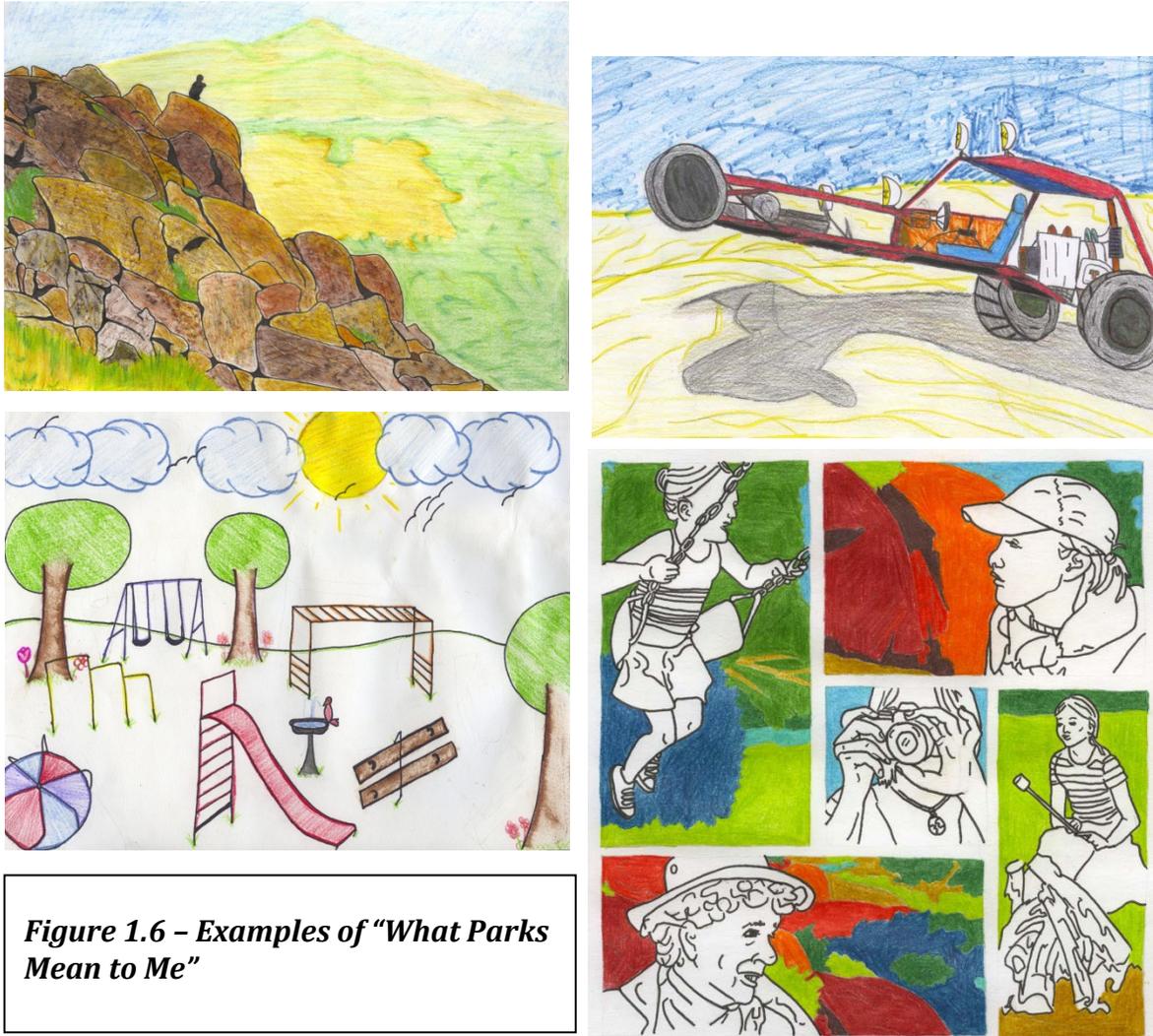


Figure 1.6 – Examples of “What Parks Mean to Me”

Park: an area in its natural or semi-natural state set aside for human recreation and enjoyment or for protection of wildlife and their habitat

Figure 1.6 documents a sample of the input provided by Oklahomans of all ages and ethnicities regarding the meaning of parks in their individual lives. Analysis of the text of essays written by Oklahomans and drawings prepared by Oklahomans revealed and documented specific patterns in the meanings of parks.

So what do parks mean to Oklahomans? These special places set aside for human recreation and enjoyment or for protection of wildlife and their habitat are settings for multiple important aspects of life. Parks are:

- Settings for development and maturation of relationships;
- Settings for memories and hope for the future;
- Settings for physical activity and recreation;
- Settings for interaction with nature;
- Settings for personal development and quality of life;
- Settings for positive emotions – acceptance, romance, nurturing, laughter, dynamism, amazement, challenge, peace, happiness, energy, excitement, joy, love, and more;
- Settings in which to express pride and ownership in Oklahoma; and
- Settings for highly personal values and perspectives.

For many Oklahomans, parks are the premier representations of their home – Oklahoma. The meanings ascribed by Oklahomans to parks represent a range of interactions, called “sense of place,” from passive viewing of the landscape, to playing in structured and defined spaces, to active engagement in outdoor experiences. Lifelong memories are created in parks. Life’s lessons are learned in parks. Parks truly are the “public recreation estate.”



Figure 1.7 – The Meaning of Oklahoma Parks to Oklahomans

Oklahoma's Trails

Since the latter part of the 20th century, numerous surveys of public needs and desires in Oklahoma have placed “trails” at or near the top of the recreation facilities desired by the populace. Primary trail development during the same period has occurred within individual cities or within properties managed by a single agency. Some inter-jurisdictional trail development has occurred in the urban areas of Oklahoma City and Tulsa, permitting access along trails from one city to another. Some trail development has occurred within Oklahoma State Parks and on some federal recreation properties.

The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department cooperates with the Federal Highway Administration for the administration of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Under this program, Oklahoma has granted over twelve million dollars for statewide trail projects, most of which has aided cities and towns in development of trails at the local level. In addition, during the past two decades, communities in Oklahoma

Oklahoma has granted over twelve million dollars for statewide trail projects.

have received more than \$161 million in funds through Transportation Enhancement Projects supported by the Federal Highway Administration. Many of these enhancements are associated with trails, while all are associated with transportation.

Since 1990, the political atmosphere in Oklahoma has limited the involvement of the state – through OTRD – in rail-to-trail conversions. Several cities have been active in local rail-to-trail development, resulting in six trails for a total of approximately 70 miles. One such trail is the Osage Prairie Trail linking Tulsa, from OSU-Tulsa campus, to Skiatook along the old Midland Valley Rail for a distance of 14.5 miles.

The demand for trails represents the voices of a wide range of interests: hikers and walkers; recreational bicyclists and mountain bikers; equestrians and off-road-vehicle enthusiasts; and, more recently, those seeking waterway and boating trails. As the oversight agency for the RTP, Oklahoma has established the Oklahoma Trails Advisory Board consisting of nine members, seven of whom represent these various types of trail use with two at-large members.

The most recent state recreational trails plan was produced in 2001, although updates and modifications to this plan have been communicated through newsletters, online, and through other means. However, significant changes in the population, in demand, and in expectations related to trails are indicators that Oklahoma needs to prepare a new statewide recreational trails plan.

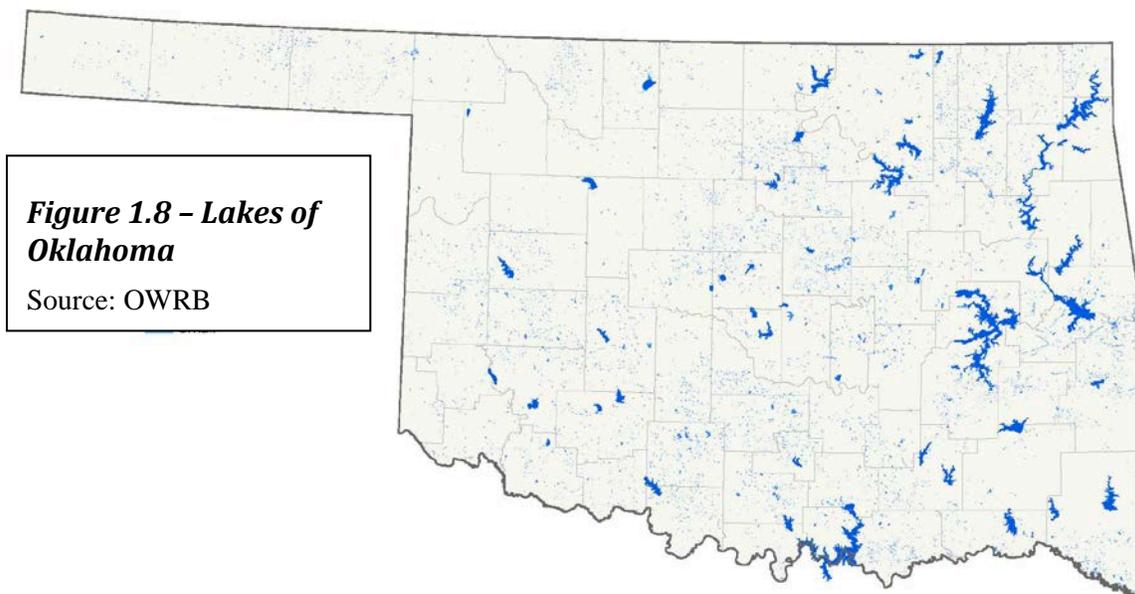
March 15, 2011, the Department of Justice ruled that “other power-driven mobility devices” (OPDMD) could be used on trails by individuals with mobility limitations. As a result, policies must now address new technologies for motorized mobility.

The League of American Bicyclists (<http://www.bikeleague.org/index.php>) has recognized Tulsa and Norman as “bronze level” bicycle friendly communities. Edmond and Stillwater had initiated application efforts to achieve that recognition as well. States and universities are eligible for recognition, incentives, and assistance in similar programs. Applicants are evaluated in five categories: engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation/planning.

Oklahoma's Water

The Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) has updated detail regarding groundwater and surface water in the state of Oklahoma (OWRB, 2012b). Oklahoma has 23 major groundwater basins containing 300 million acre-feet of water, of which only half may be recoverable. From a recreation perspective, surface waters may be of greater immediate importance.

With improved mapping and data management, OWRB has updated details related to Oklahoma's surface waters. With 55,646 miles of shoreline along lakes and ponds, Oklahoma has more shoreline than is included in the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts combined. These lakes and ponds have a surface area of 896,640 acres. Figure 1.8 documents the distribution of these lakes and ponds across Oklahoma.



In addition to the lakes and ponds, Oklahoma has approximately 167,600 miles of rivers and streams. This array of drainage is shown in Figure 1.9 on the following page. Interestingly, approximately 10.5 million acre-feet of water flows into Oklahoma annually while 36 million acre-feet of water flows out of the state each year. It is the surface water and its accompanying shoreline that serve as invaluable resources for outdoor recreation in Oklahoma.

Water use is allocated and reported by the OWRB, with public water supply (41% of total use), irrigation (32%), and livestock and aquaculture (12%) identified as the major beneficial uses of water. Approximately 54% of Oklahoma's surface water is used for public water supply.

Currently recognized beneficial uses for some or all of the waters in Oklahoma include public and private water supply, agriculture, navigation, fish and wildlife propagation, primary body contact recreation, secondary body contact recreation, and aesthetics (OWRB). Outdoor recreation may rely on and co-exist with several of these beneficial uses, but it is directly related to the latter five. Primary body contact recreation includes

swimming and diving, while secondary body contact recreation includes boating and fishing.

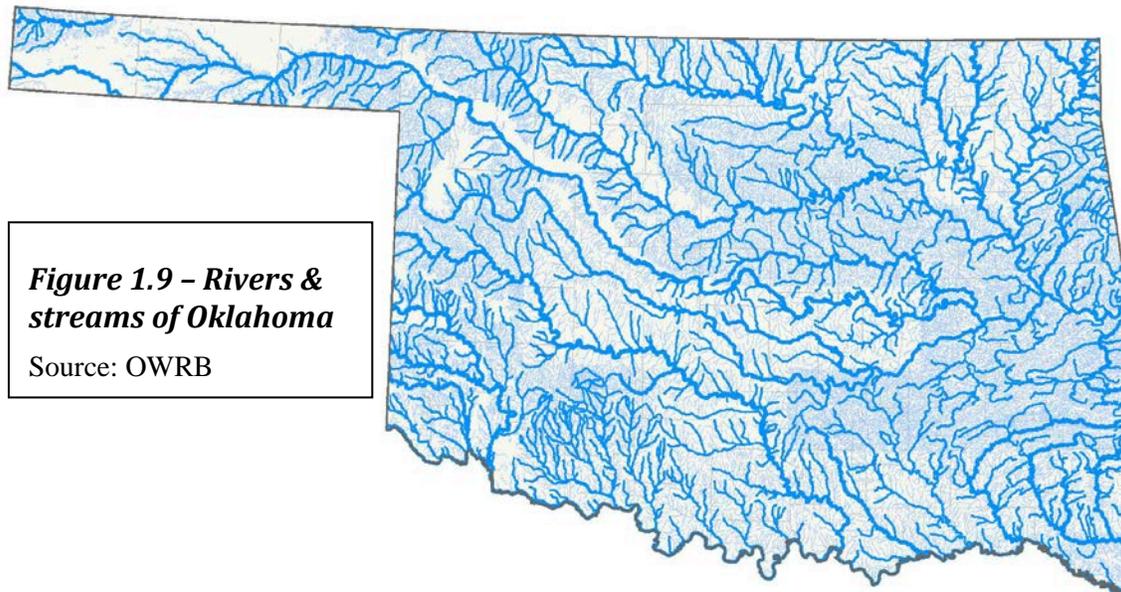


Figure 1.9 – Rivers & streams of Oklahoma

Source: OWRB

Oklahoma’s Water Quality Standards are established under statutory authority of the OWRB under 82 O.S. § 1085.30. It is the intent of the Oklahoma Water Resources Board to assign as many beneficial uses as are attainable. For water bodies with quality standards that exceed those required to protect beneficial uses (e.g. Scenic Rivers, some lakes, and critical habitat for endangered species) the Water Quality Standards include an anti-degradation policy statement. The OWRB then works with the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) in monitoring those standards. DEQ develops draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits for the control and abatement of municipal and industrial pollution and participates in monitoring and permit compliance.

In order to determine attainment of Primary Body Contact Recreation (PBCR) beneficial use, samples must be taken at a point of a drinking water intake from a body of surface water. Detailed standards are established for fecal coliform, *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), and Enterococci, in addition to other factors. These standards include specifics related to dates of sampling, number of samples, number of colonies per milliliter, and other details. Sampling must occur during the principal recreation period from May 1 through September 30. Attainment for the Secondary Body Contact Recreation (SBCR) beneficial use is identical in methodology to that for PBCR, but permits five times the numerical criteria and screening levels of contaminants that is used for PBCR (ODEQ, 2004).

In 2011, as a result of a combination of drought conditions, extreme temperatures, and other factors, several lakes in Oklahoma were declared to be out of compliance with water quality standards for PBCR. Beginning about July 1 and continuing through much of the summer, several lakes had robust blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria, blooms resulting in high levels of toxins known to contaminate drinking water and

recreational water. The toxins released by cyanobacteria include anatoxin and microcystins that can cause illness in humans and animals.

Blue-green algae blooms form in warm, slow-moving waters, rich in nutrients and have been linked to human and animal illnesses.

As a result of the presence of blue-green algae, warnings were issued at several lakes recommending “no swimming, wading, or primary body contact.” Essentially, Grand Lake was off limits for recreation for the July 4th holiday. Lake Texoma remained under warnings through the winter of 2011-2012.

In addition to the reduction in recreation opportunities, there were significant adverse economic impacts from the environmental conditions of Oklahoma’s surface waters. Those warnings continued into the spring 2012 leading up to the Memorial Day weekend and those warnings extended beyond the Oklahoma borders.

While water quality is a significant concern related to outdoor recreation, water quantity and allocation are also topics of concern. Oklahoma waters are managed under compacts with surrounding states as shown in Figure 1.10.

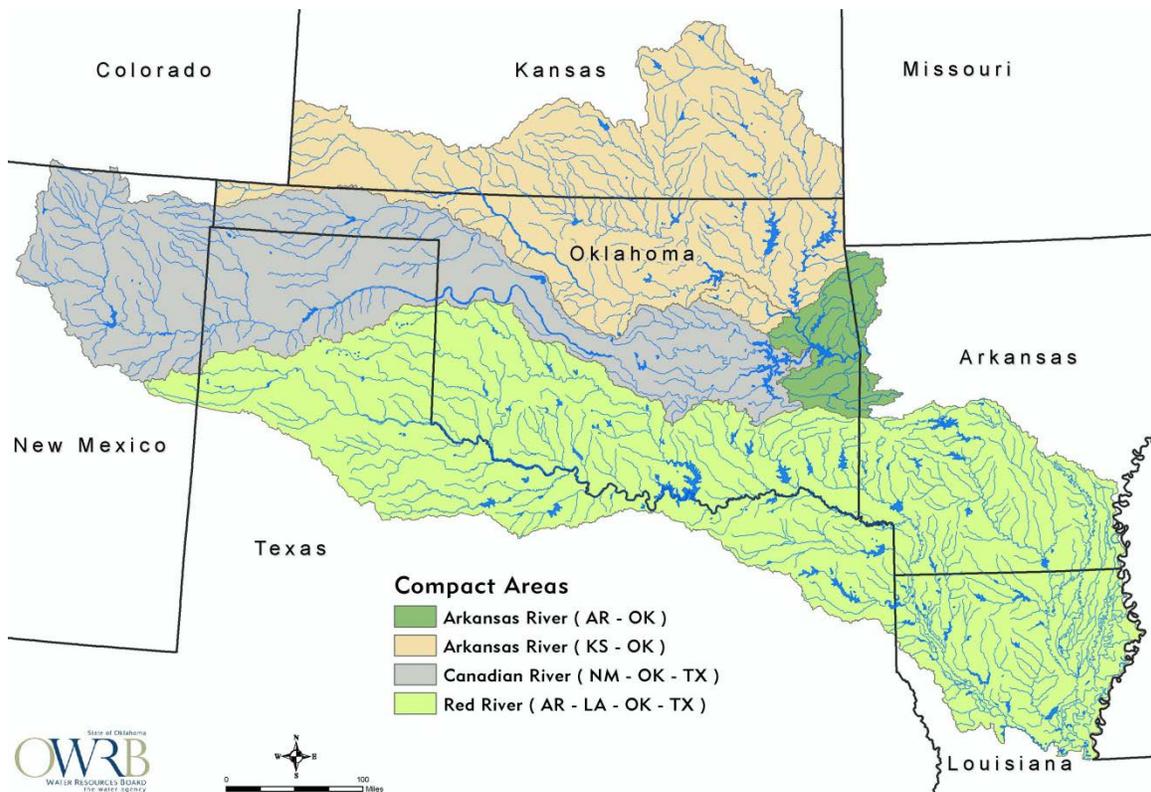


Figure 1.10 – Water compacts involving Oklahoma
Source: OWRB

At the time of the preparation of the 2007 SCORP, water allocation was also an issue. As documented in 2007, there was a moratorium on water sales out-of-state, resulting in a lawsuit. As Oklahoma prepared a new water plan, additional proposals for instate allocation led to additional disputes.

In 1974, the Oklahoma Legislature enacted 82 O.S. §1086.2(1) requiring the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) to develop a 50-year strategic plan for the State's water resources. The Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan was first published in 1980 and updated in 1997. Then, in 2006, the Oklahoma Legislature appropriated funds for a second update as a five-year study. That planning process has been underway with numerous local meetings in 2007, additional regional meetings in 2008, workshops in 2010, special town halls in 2011, and further meetings in 2012. The ultimate responsibility for writing the Oklahoma Comprehensive Water Plan lies with the OWRB. The new plan was approved in October 2011 (OWRB, 2012a).

The process of developing a water plan for Oklahoma awakened statewide interest in water as a critical resource. These interests are particularly evident among several of the American Indian nations in Oklahoma (e.g. <http://waterfuture.tv/#/home>, <http://www.ouoklahomaourwater.com/>, <http://www.owea.org/>, and others).

Oklahoma's Wetlands

Oklahoma is not typically considered to be a state in which wetlands are a major feature. However, approximately 733,000 acres within the state are freshwater wetlands. In addition, Oklahoma ranks among the top ten states in the nation in total acres enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program (NRCS, 2011). The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their private property. The Natural Resources Conservation Service and state agencies provide technical and financial assistance to aid those landowners in restoration of wetlands. Oklahoma currently has 60 active WRP projects with another 40 projects in the application phase.

Wetland: areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation adapted for life in saturated soil conditions

Oklahoma supports many distinct types of wetlands, such as playa lakes, riparian wetlands, swamps, bogs, marshes, oxbow lakes, closed depressions, and cypress swamps (Oklahoma Conservation Commission, 2012). These wetlands are under an umbrella of regulations from a number of governmental agencies. At the federal level, wetlands are affected by management and regulations of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Natural

Resources Conservation Service, and the Environmental Protection Agency. At the state level, these wetlands receive oversight from the Oklahoma Conservation Commission, the Oklahoma Water Resources Board, and the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality.

A SCORP is required to have a wetland priority component consistent with section 303 of the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986. The Land and Water Conservation

Fund Grants-in-Aid Manual, chapter 630.1.4(E) states that this component must (1) be consistent with the “National Wetland Priority Conservation Plan” prepared by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, (2) provide evidence of consultation with the state agency responsible for fish and wildlife resources, and (3) contain a listing of those wetland types which should receive priority for acquisition.

The Oklahoma Conservation Commission has developed a comprehensive plan for Oklahoma’s wetlands (OCC, 1996). That plan has been updated on several occasions with principal communication through online resources. This plan identifies priority wetlands by size and location. The targeted wetland types have been defined and categorized in that plan. The comprehensive plan acknowledges the importance of wetlands for a variety of environmental benefits and human benefits, including recreation.

One component of the wetlands plan in Oklahoma is the wetlands registry for landowners. This voluntary program functions as a clearinghouse linking interested property owners with those working to restore wetlands. A second major component of the wetlands plan is education, including WOW – Wonder of Wetlands.

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan utilizes the inventory provided by the Oklahoma Conservation Commission as the authoritative state inventory of wetlands. In addition, the SCORP supports the priority plan provided by the Commission for protection, restoration, or acquisition of wetlands in Oklahoma.

Oklahoma’s Campgrounds

Oklahoma has over-built campgrounds and campsites in many areas of the state. Studies have shown that state parks and U. S. Army Corps of Engineers facilities operate at less than 40% occupancy on an annual basis. Many locations, even in prime settings, are operating at less than 20% occupancy annually. There may be two summer holiday weekends each year in which parks are crowded. However, number of campsites and campgrounds is adequate to meet current use levels and anticipated demand.

Of greater concern for the future is the quality of the camping experience in an Oklahoma campground or campsite. Technology and size of recreational vehicles has changed over the years. Many of the campgrounds were designed in the mid- to late-20th century and no longer match well with visitor’s expectations. Other campgrounds are over-developed, designed for dense accommodation, resulting in less than a desired outdoor experience.

In addition, contemporary guests and tourists traveling significant distances desire specific information as they plan their travels. This desired information may include geographic information for their GPS unit, visual images of their destination prior to arrival, and assurance of a reserved site. Technology, policies, aesthetics, service, and communication are important to the outdoor recreation experience.

“Leave all the afternoon for exercise and recreation, which are as necessary as reading. I will rather say more necessary, because health is worth more than learning.”

Thomas Jefferson



Introduction

Outdoor recreation offers people opportunities to connect and interact with the natural environment and provides an opportunity to improve people's physical, intellectual, mental, and spiritual development. People in different geographic environments get involved in different types of outdoor activities due to weather, location, natural resources, and cultural values. From a developmental perspective, people's interests in outdoor recreation vary with different life stages, experiences, and individual preferences and needs. In addition, cultural background or racial and ethnic differences also result in a wide range of recreation behavior and various values toward the natural environment. Therefore, these topics must be addressed as foundational to a statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan.

*"We know we belong to the land; and the land we belong to is grand."
Rodgers and Hammerstein
Oklahoma*

The state of Oklahoma is a unique state, different from any other state in the United States. Due to the unique natural environment, population structure, and social atmosphere, SCORP offers one of the best approaches to record the uniqueness of the people in the state for understanding how Oklahomans' uniqueness impacts their outdoor recreation behavior. The purpose of this chapter is providing information about the people in Oklahoma, including population distribution, race/ethnicity, economic status, presence of disabling conditions in the state, and other health issues in Oklahoma. Several research studies related to Oklahoma's cultural value of outdoor places and the trend of outdoor recreation are included in this chapter as well.

Population Distribution in Oklahoma

It has been well established that people's leisure and recreation behavior varies with residential location, such as rural or urban area. The population distribution provides the basic information about where Oklahomans live, how the population is changing, and distinctions between the Oklahoma and nation-wide statistics. The information offers an identification of Oklahoma and the people in the state, valuable for an assessment of the needs and interests of outdoor recreation for Oklahoman.

The 2010 population of Oklahoma is 3,753,351 which represented an 8.7% increase since 2000. The growth rate of Oklahoma shows a lower rate than the national average of 9.7%. The distribution of the Oklahoma population remained very similar to that of the prior decade. Approximately 70% of the state's population resides in a corridor running diagonally from the northeast corner to the southwest corner of Oklahoma along with the I-44 corridor, but the width of that diagonal has narrowed from 100-miles wide to 50-miles wide. The population is increasingly concentrated along the I-44 corridor. Of the remaining population, nearly 20% of Oklahomans live southeast of this diagonal corridor and only 10% live northwest of the corridor. In terms of incorporated towns and cities in Oklahoma, there are 612 municipal locations in the state in which 76.2% of the

population resides. The remaining 23.8% reside in the unincorporated rural areas of Oklahoma. The various sizes of circles on Figure 2.1 represent different population ranges in the incorporated cities and towns of Oklahoma.

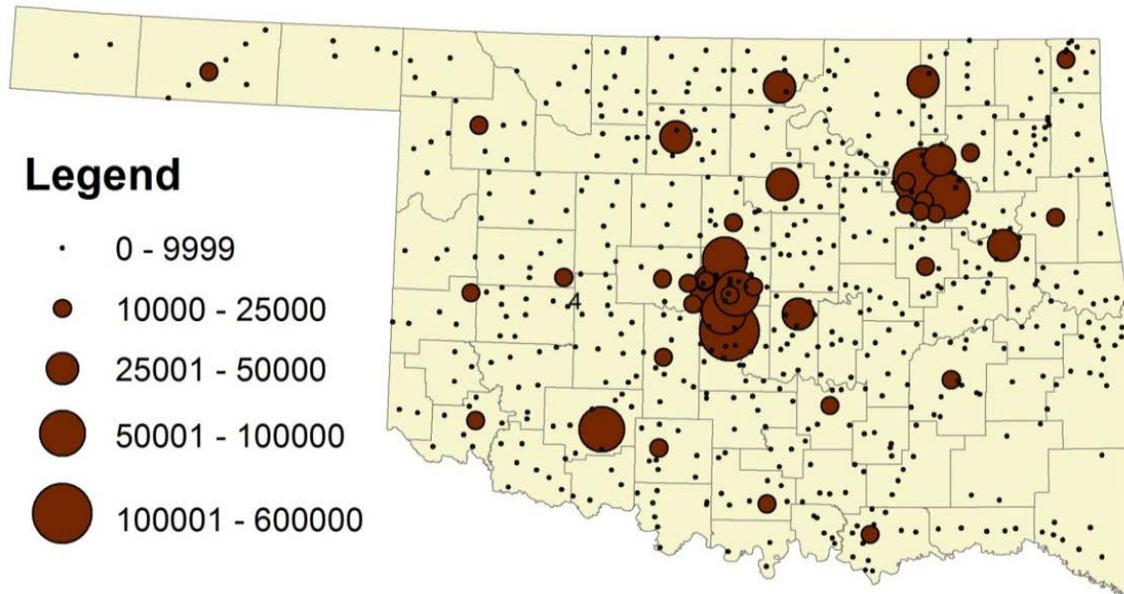


Figure 2.1 – Population of incorporated cities and towns in Oklahoma

Moreover, Oklahoma is a state with 69,903 square miles of diverse landscape, but the population of the state is not evenly distributed across the state. Between 2000 and 2010, the population density in Oklahoma has slightly increased from 50.3 to 54.7 persons per square mile. This population density is below the 2010 national average of 87.4 persons per square mile.

Nearly 38% of the population of Oklahoma lives in the two metropolitan areas: Oklahoma City and Tulsa. In 2010, 50% of the state’s population lived in six counties: Oklahoma County, Tulsa County, Cleveland County, Comanche County, Canadian County and Rogers County. The remaining 50% of the population is distributed among the remaining 71 counties. Figure 2.2 on the following page shows the trend of population change of Oklahoma counties between 2000 and 2010. As can be seen, most of the counties with increasing population were located along the diagonal corridor running northeast-southwest across the state, while the counties diminishing in population were in the northwest and southeast corners of Oklahoma. In fact, the population trend demonstrated during the decade of the 1990s has continued and shows that young rural residents are moving into the state’s metropolitan areas or out of state.

According to the 2010 census, approximately 7.0% of the Oklahoma population was under the age of five which is slightly higher than the national average of 6.5%, and 24.8% of the Oklahoma population was under the age of 18, also slightly higher than the national average of 24%.

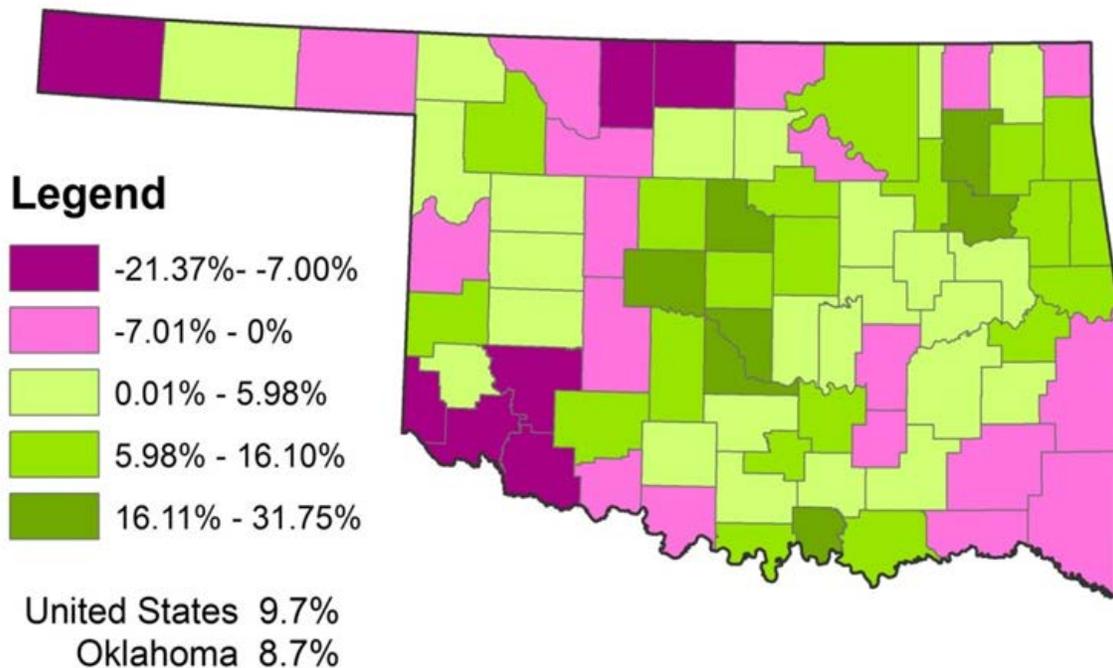


Figure 2.2 – Population change of Oklahoma counties (2000 and 2010)

On the other end of the age spectrum, 13.5% of Oklahomans were 65 years of age or older in 2010, while the national average on this age category is 13%. All of these percentages are close to the national averages.

Race and Ethnicity of the People of Oklahoma

Race and ethnicity has been documented to be an important element of recreation preferences and behaviors. In Oklahoma, the percentage of White in the 2010 census is relatively close to that of the national level (see Table 2.1), but differences between the state and national figures are evident within the various minority populations. Oklahoma has a smaller percentage of Blacks (African Americans), Asians, Hispanic or Latino persons, and persons reporting two or more races than is true at the national levels. On the other hand, the percentage of American Indians (8.6%) is much greater than that shown across the nation (0.9%).

Comparing the trends from the 2000 and 2010 census of Oklahoma population (Table 2.1), the percentage of the White population declined slightly from 78.5% to 72.2%, while the percentage of the Hispanic and Latino population increased from 6.6% to 8.9%. Although the Hispanic and Latino population is growing faster than other ethnic groups in the state, the Hispanic and Latino population of 8.9% is relatively smaller than the national average of 16.3% in 2010. The rest of the minority population, including Black, American Indian, Asian, and Native Hawaiian, has remained proportionally the same in the past decade.

Table 2.1 Population by Race/Ethnicity between 2000 and 2010

Race or Ethnicity	2010		2000	
	Okla-homa	United States	Okla-homa	United States
White	72.2%	72.4%	78.5%	80.2%
Black	7.4%	12.6%	7.7%	12.8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	8.6%	0.9%	8.1%	1.0%
Asian	1.7%	4.8%	1.7%	3.6%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Persons reporting Hispanic/Latino origin	8.9%	16.3%	6.6%	1.5%
Persons reporting two or more races	5.9%	2.9%	4.0%	9.1%
Persons speaking a language other than English at home (5 years and older)	9.1%	20.6%	8.1%	19.4%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census (2000 & 2010)

Since 1990, the Bureau of Census has established “Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas” and reported information about these areas. These statistical areas represent the boundaries of reservations before Oklahoma statehood. As shown Figure 2.3, Oklahoma exhibits great cultural richness through the integration of these nations into the state.

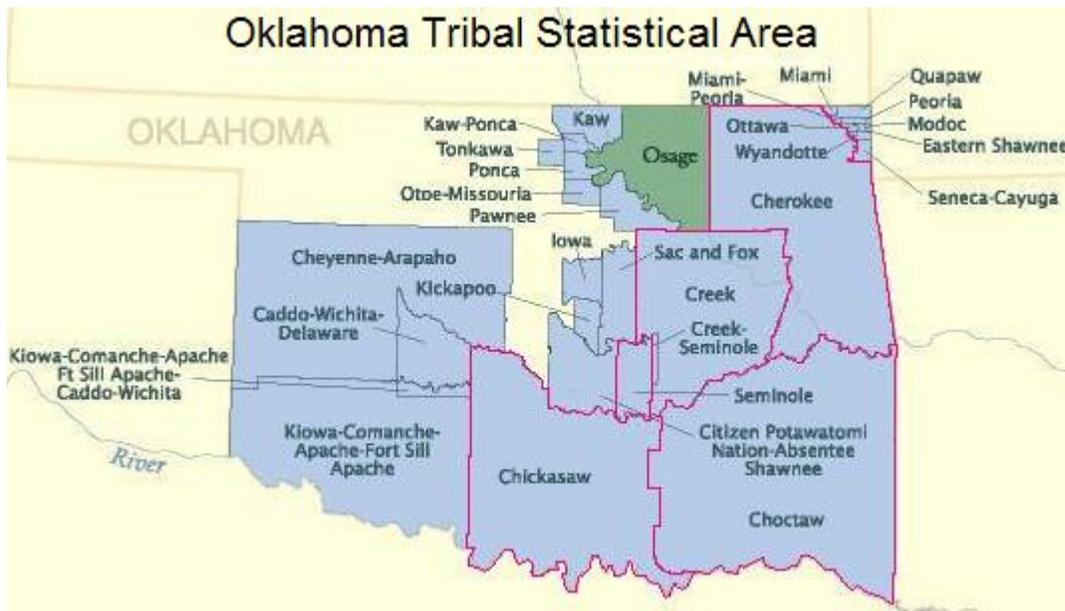


Figure 2.3 – Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, map retrieved from http://www.bartbinning.com/comdev/indian_tax.htm

Economic Status of the People of Oklahoma

In terms of the annual income as reported by the U.S. Bureau of Census 2010 data, the average income of Oklahoma household is \$56,533, which was an increase of 27.2% from 2000 figures. Although the household income in the state is below the national average of \$68,259, the percentage of growth in household income in the past decade shows that Oklahoma has been greater than the national rate of 20.5% in that same time period.

In addition, 16.9% of the Oklahoma population lives below the federally determined poverty level, while nationally 15.3% of population is at this level or below. In Oklahoma, the White and Asian population have relatively lower percentages of poverty, while the rest of population groups show considerably higher percentages of households in poverty. For example, almost 30% of African Americans, 24.8% of American Indians, and 29.8% of those of Hispanic or Latino origin in the state are below the federally defined poverty level.

Table 2.2 Annual Income Per Capita in Oklahoma by Race/Ethnicity

Race	Per capita income	
	Oklahoma	United States
Race or Ethnicity		
Total Population	\$22,254	\$26,059
White	\$24,820	\$28,661
Black	\$15,537	\$17,569
American Indian or Alaskan Native	\$15,305	\$15,671
Asian	\$24,445	\$28,930
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander	\$12,100	\$19,162
Persons reporting Hispanic/Latino origin	\$11,801	\$14,801
Persons reporting two or more races	\$13,466	\$14,551

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census (2010)

As of 2010, the average per capita annual income in Oklahoma is \$22,254 per person, while \$26,059 is the national average. In terms of the income and race, the White and Asian population have relatively higher per capita income than other population groups by race in Oklahoma (Table 2.2). This trend is also consistent with statistics at the national level. Overall, the per capita incomes across all race groups in Oklahoma are below the national averages.

Education level impacts economic status and Oklahoma faces some challenges in this area. The 2010 U.S. Bureau of Census report indicated that 87.1% of Oklahomans over age 25 have completed a high school degree; this is slightly higher than the U.S. population at 85.6% in the same educational level. However, at the next level of education, 23.3% of the population in Oklahoma earned a bachelor's degree or higher, somewhat lower than the national figures of 28.2%.

Disabling Conditions among the People of Oklahoma

Since 1992 each generation of the Oklahoma SCORP has included extensive detail on appropriate accommodations for persons with disabilities. The primary concerns of

people with disabilities in SCORP is to understand how to provide an equal accessibility and opportunity for the people with disabilities in the state in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and to consider the rights and opportunities for persons with disabilities in recreation services of Oklahoma.

In 2010, 15.7% of Oklahoma population – 576,511 Oklahomans – reported one or more disabling condition. The disability rate in the state is higher than the overall national rate of 11.9%. This is especially true among those persons 65 years old and above, a category in which there are 43.2% of the people with a disability in the state. An estimated 323,352 Oklahoman between the ages of 18 and 64 (14.3%) have a disability. In general, as the population continues to age the number and percentage of people with disabilities increase (Table 2.3). Disabling conditions are also highly correlated with other health measures.

Table 2.3 Disability by Age Group in Oklahoma

Percentage of Age Group with a disabling condition	Oklahoma		United States	
	Number of persons with disability	Percentage of persons with disability	Number of persons with disability	Percentage of persons with disability
Total population	576,551	15.7%	36,354,712	11.9%
Under 5 years old	2,062	0.8%	156,038	0.8%
5 – 17 years old	39,000	5.9%	2,789,597	5.2%
18 – 64 years old	323,352	14.3%	19,048,426	10.0%
65 years old and above	212,137	43.2%	14,351,651	36.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census (2010)

Disabling conditions are inequitably distributed in the population by gender, age, race and ethnicity, and economic status. The proportion of people with disabilities in both genders varied in Oklahoma. In 2010, 15.4% of males indicated having a disability, while 18.3% of females reported having a disability. In addition, Table 2.3 reports the percentage of the population by age for those who have one or more disabilities in Oklahoma and the United States. Many of these disabilities can be accommodated during engagement in outdoor recreation activities and experiences.

Table 2.4 reports the percentage of the population by various types of disability. As stated, most of these disabilities can be corrected or accommodated during engagement in outdoor recreation. The number of people with a disability within each category should not be added together because any one individual may report multiple types of disabilities.

However, an estimated 526,476 people (14.3 % of the population in the state) have difficulty performing self-care activities known as Activities of Daily Living (ADL). These activities include such things as dressing, bathing and getting around inside the home without assistance. Therefore, accommodations for involvement in outdoor recreation may be difficult to achieve for these individuals. As can be seen, the most frequently reported disability is associated with ambulatory difficulty.

Table 2.4 Disability Type in the Oklahoma Population

Disability type	Number of persons with disability	Percentage of persons with disability
With a hearing difficulty	176,109	4.7%
With a vision difficulty	111,113	3.0%
With a cognitive difficulty	209,711	5.6%
With an ambulatory difficulty	324,949	9.0%
With a self-care difficulty	226,476	6.0%
With an independent living difficulty	185,847	5.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census (2010)

Economic status is closely related to educational status; it is also highly correlated with prevalence of disabilities. In Oklahoma, 23.3% of population ages 25 years old and over have Bachelor's degree or higher, whereas among those persons in Oklahoma living in poverty, 3.3% of individuals attained this educational level. Of those below the poverty level segment in the state, 29.6% of individuals have one or more disabling conditions. Studies have shown an association between poverty level, available health care, access to that health care, and presence of disabling conditions.

Disabilities also vary greatly by race and ethnic group. The statistics reported in Table 2.5 on the following page have been consistent from 2010 census data and prior decades. The White, Black, and American Indian population reported a higher percentage of people with disability, while Asian and Hispanic/Latino population have reported relatively lower rates of disabilities. Since the majority population in the state is White, an estimated 440,290 people with disability were White.

Table 2.5 Disability by Race and Ethnicity in Oklahoma

Race	Number of persons with disability	Percent of persons with disability
White	440,290	16.3%
Black	41,863	16.4%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	42,041	16.3%
Asian	4,262	6.6%
Persons of Hispanic/Latino origin	24,259	7.4%
Persons reporting two or more races	1,292	14.1%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Census (2010)

Health Issues among the People of Oklahoma

Recreation has been extolled as a benefit of and a factor in developing physical health, life satisfaction, and mental health. Outdoor recreation can be used as an approach to develop relationships with the natural environment, to decrease the risk of unhealthy lifestyle diseases, and to enrich people's quality of life at all ages. In addition, there is a

positive relationship between individuals' health condition and participating in outdoor recreation. In general, the greater the level of outdoor activity, the better personal health levels for the participating individual.

“Who will gainsay that the parks contain the highest potentialities of national pride, national contentment and national health?”
Stephen T. Mather
Director, NPS
1917–1929

Although Oklahoma’s health ranking has improved from 49th to 46th in the nation, the health status of Oklahoma is still below the national average (Oklahoma State Department of Health, 2011).

Several health related indicators, such as lack of physical activity, obesity, and prevalence of diabetes, have been considered as factors to identify the health status of people in the United States. The Oklahoma Department of Health prepared the *2011 State of the State’s Health Report* focused on several key health indicators. The health indicators selected for that report that are fitting for the SCORP are based on several conditions: (1) There is a perceived ability to effect change in the health indicator through health programs or policy interventions; (2) The health indicator reflects an emerging issue of importance to public health; and (3) The health indicator evidences an increase in prevalence or incidence deemed negative to the public’s health. As such, outdoor recreation is intricately connected to personal and public health.

Limited Physical Activity

One of the goals of Healthy People 2020 (2012) is to use daily physical activity for improving health behaviors, health development, and quality of life across all life stages. Physical activity plays an important role in reducing the risk of premature death and preventing health problems, while the physical inactivity rate is correlated with diagnosed diabetes and obesity (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Physical activity is defined as 20 minutes of activity per day that increases the heart rate.

However, in Oklahoma, 31.4% of adults reported not being physically active at any time within a month: that is significantly higher than the national average of 23.8%. This ranks Oklahoma as the 49th worst state in the nation for lack of physical activity (Oklahoma State Department of Health, 2011). The proportion of Oklahoma adults not physically active by county of residence is reported in Figure 2.4 on the following page. As can be seen in the figure, people who live in the eastern side of state, especially in the southeast corner, tend to report higher percentages of physically inactive or sedentary lifestyles.

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the evidence reported in Figure 2.4.

First, the counties showing the highest levels of sedentary lifestyles also have the highest percentages of Native Americans in the population. Secondly, with the exception of Muskogee, few

Leading causes of death [OK Dept. of Health]		
(Rate per 100,000 population)	U.S.	Oklahoma
Heart disease	190.9	242.1
Cancer	178.4	198.3
Strokes	42.2	53.8
Respiratory disease	43.3	61.3
Unintentional injury	40.0	58.5
Diabetes	22.5	29.4

municipalities provide recreation programming in these counties with high levels of physical inactivity. Third, there are parks and outdoor spaces in these counties that could be utilized to increase levels of physical activity; therefore, simply having a built-environment will not make people come to participate in physical activity.

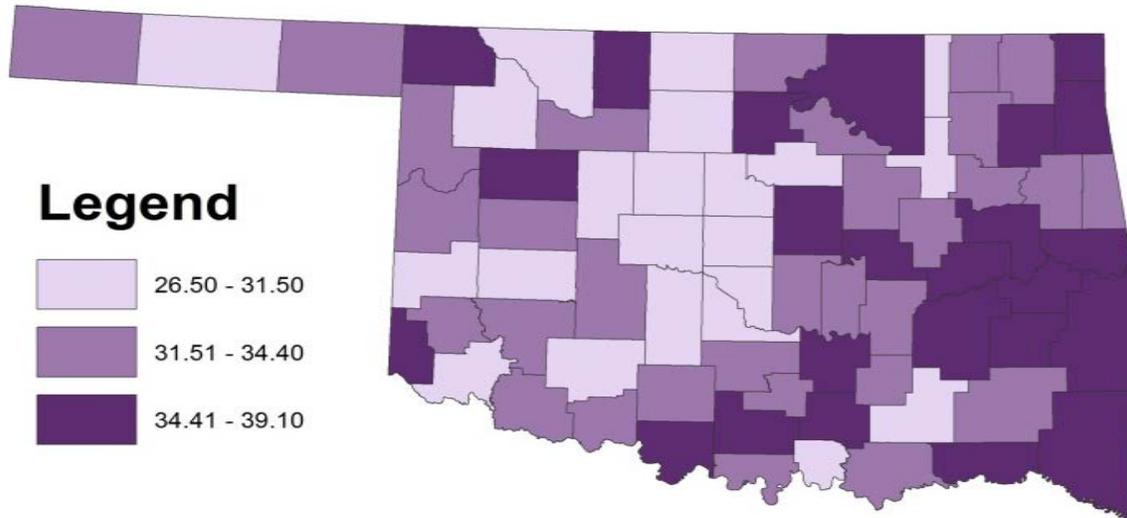


Figure 2.4 – Percent of physically inactive persons by county

Several facts related to leisure-time physical activity in Oklahoma follow (Oklahoma State Department of Health, 2008b & 2011).

1. Females in Oklahoma reported lower proportions of time engaging in physical activity than males.
2. Oklahoma adults of older age, lower income, or lower education tend to have lower proportions of time participating in physical activity.
3. Members of Hispanic population groups reported a significant lower rate of engaging in physical activity than did non-Hispanic White residents.

Obesity

Obesity is becoming an increasing and alarming health problem in the United States and even more serious in Oklahoma. The percentage of American adults who are obese is at 26.9%, while 32.0% of Oklahoma residents are classified as obese (Oklahoma State Department of Health, 2011). Among Oklahoma youth, 14% are obese and an additional 16% are considered to be overweight. In addition, there is a close relationship between youth overweight and overweight/obesity in adulthood (Oklahoma State Department of Health, 2007). The Department of Health reported statistics related to education showing that only 36.4% of high school students had a physical education class at least once a week, and only 31.4% had daily physical education.

Obesity is expensive! The state of Oklahoma estimated spending \$854 million dollars annually on healthcare related to obesity.

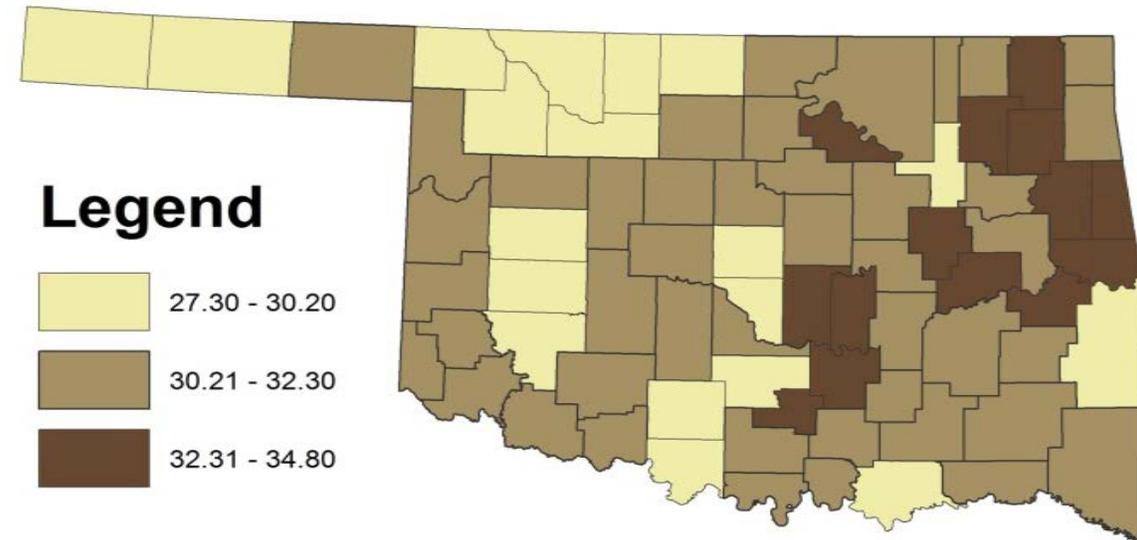


Figure 2.5 – Percentage of obese persons by county

Figure 2.5 shows the proportion of obesity in the state by county. Overall, the majority of the counties’ obesity rates are more than 30% of the population, and the counties in the northeast corner of the state tend to report higher proportion of obesity. Several facts associated with obesity in Oklahoma are listed:

1. A slightly higher percentage of males tend to be obese than female.
2. The population of age 35 to 64 has the highest percentage of obesity in Oklahoma.
3. Obesity is greater among those persons with education levels through high school (upwards of 36% of the population group), but declines to 25.9% of those who are college graduates.
4. Obesity is more prevalent in particular population groups by race and ethnicity: African Americans (Black) showed 43.9% obese; American Indians reported 41.9% obese; among Whites, 30.5% are obese; and among Hispanic groups, 27.3% are obese.

Oklahoma’s adult obesity rate has tripled in two decades. In 1990, 11.6% of adult Oklahomans were obese. In 2009, 32% of Oklahoma’s adults were obese.

In part, the racial and ethnic composition of the population explains a portion of the evidence in Figure 2.5. Those counties with higher percentages of American Indian populations also showed higher percentages of persons who are obese.

Diabetes

The number of people in Oklahoma with diabetes has been steadily increasing in the past decade, as is true in the

United States. In 2009, approximately 304,500 Oklahoma adults age 18 and over (11.0%) reported being diagnosed with diabetes by health professionals; if included these undiagnosed, an estimated 428,900 Oklahoman adults (15.5%) have diabetes (Oklahoma State Department of Health, 2010). Compared to the 8% of America adults diagnosed with diabetes, Oklahoma ranked the seventh highest prevalence of people living with diabetes (Oklahoma State Department of Health, 2011).

Figure 2.6 shows that the people living in the center of the state property tend to report a lower prevalence of diabetes, whereas people who live in the corners of state property tend to report a higher rate of type II diabetes. This trend of diagnosed diabetes in Oklahoma is closely related to the level of urbanization: the more urbanized residential area, the less seriousness of diabetes prevalence.

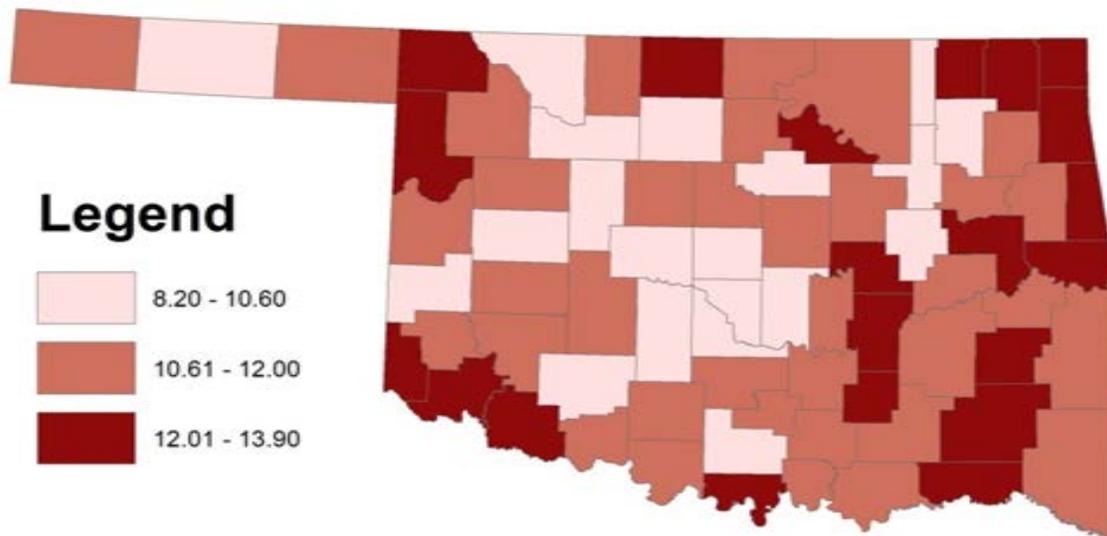


Figure 2.6 – Percentage of persons with Type II diabetes by county

Several facts of prevalence of diabetes in Oklahoma are as follows (Oklahoma State Department of Health, 2008a & 2010):

1. Non-Hispanic population, American Indians and African American adults reported a significantly higher rate of diabetes than Non-Hispanic Whites.
2. The percentage of people living with diabetes increases with older age.
3. Oklahoma adults with lower annual household income or fewer years of education tend to reported higher prevalence of diabetes.
4. Oklahoma adults who live in the northeast and southeast corners of Oklahoma tend to report higher prevalence of diabetes, although death rates from diabetes are highest in the southwest counties.
5. Approximately, an estimate 2,300 people under age of 20 in Oklahoma have been diagnosed with diabetes, including Type I and Type II.
6. Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in Oklahoma and Oklahoma has the fourth highest diabetes death rate in the nation.

Unhealthy Condition

Figure 2.7 shows the unhealthy conditions of Oklahoma by applying the combination data of physical inactivity, obesity, and type II diabetes rate in Oklahoma. Most of the less healthy counties are located in the eastern side of Oklahoma, while the healthier counties are in the center of the state and several in the northeast, generally in the urban centers and populated areas.

Overall, this health trend closely matches the corridor running diagonally from the northeast corner to the southwest corner cross the state. There is a correlation between Oklahoman's health condition and the geographic location. The people who live in more urbanized areas have relatively healthier lifestyles, whereas the people living in rural areas tend to have less healthy lifestyles. This may reflect available medical care, but certainly reveals lifestyle factors that must be addressed.

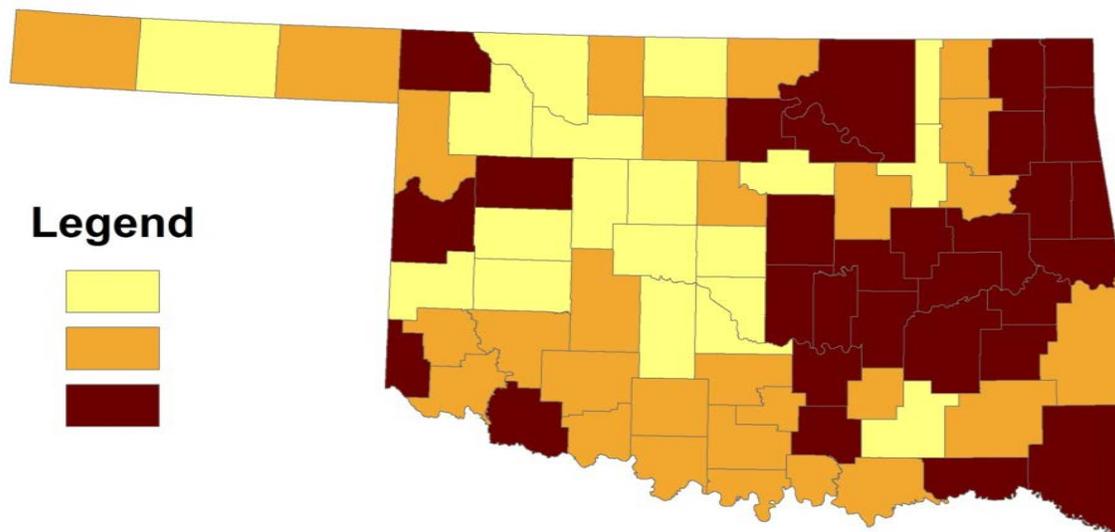


Figure 2.7 – Percentage of unhealthy status by county

Tobacco Use among the People of Oklahoma

Smoking is a final lifestyle factor associated with health that will receive greater scrutiny in public outdoor recreation. Governor Mary Fallin issued an executive order to make all state property “tobacco free” as of August 1, 2012. This will include state parks. As a result, the public will be made acutely aware of the linkage between personal health choices and personal recreation choices in the out-of-doors.

A reported 26% of Oklahoma adults smoke as compared to 18% nationally. Smoking is inversely related to education levels in that, as education increases, the prevalence of smoking decreases. For those Oklahoma residents with less than a high school education, 41.1%

**Smoking costs
Oklahomans \$2.7 billion
in medical expenses and
lost productivity each
year.**

**OK Dept. of Health,
2011**

Smoking is Oklahoma's leading cause of preventable death.
OK Dept. of Health, 2011

smoke. By contrast, 10.4% of those college graduates in Oklahoma smoke.

Similarly, there are disproportionate relationships between race, ethnicity and smoking and between income levels and smoking. Prevalence of smoking is much higher among American Indians (31.9%) than it is

among Whites (24.1%). In the same manner, fewer of those persons who earn \$75,000 or more annually smoke (13.6%) than do those who make \$15,000 or less (40.5%). It should be noted that several American Indian nations have instituted major educational programs to aid in quitting or not initiating use of tobacco.

Cultural Values of the People of Oklahoma

Although Oklahomans are similar to the broader national population in their interaction with and perception of their environment (Caneday, 2007), the cultural values of place, environment, and outdoor recreation are shifting the leisure and recreation behavior of Oklahomans. Values often were defined as shared preferences, desires, and liking, which lead individuals to make decisions and act upon those choices. According to the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE), there are several characteristics of outdoor recreation in Oklahoma (Caneday, 2007; Cordell, 2004):

1. At least one quarter of Oklahomans are represented in the characteristics of "Inactive." In this category, walking is the only identified outdoor activity of people and preferring family gatherings is the second choice of outdoor involvement.
2. Oklahoma is considered as a "Motorized Consumptives" marketing segment and the most popular outdoor activities are hunting, fishing, and off-road vehicle use, all of which are consumptive outdoor recreation activities.
3. Oklahoma is at or above the national percentage in "Water Bugs" preferring water-based activity, such as swimming, motor boating, and kayaking.

Place is regarded as an important factor that may facilitate or hinder individuals' leisure and recreation experiences (McCool, Stankey, & Clark, 1985). Outdoor place is essential for developing an individual and cultural value of environment. It is essential to understand how people value the places where their leisure and recreation experience

25% of Oklahomans tend to be "inactive;" those who are active tend to be "motorized consumptive" or "water bugs" in their recreation.

occur in order to assist recreation providers for managing outdoor recreation resources, developing policies associated with recreational settings, targeting recreational users, and creating related programs that match users' expectation. Several research studies have been conducted since 2007 related to the unique values of outdoor place in

Oklahoma.

Place Attachment and Environmental Ethics

A study focusing on Oklahoma state park users and employees was designed to gain an understanding of and to compare present levels of environmental ethics and place

attachment (Bradley, 2012). In order to geographically represent the state in the regional quadrants, the researcher selected four state parks or former state parks in Oklahoma to facilitate the research: Sequoyah State Park (northeast), Beaver’s Bend State Park (southeast), Quartz Mountain Arts Resort & Conference Center (southwest), and Boiling Springs State Park (northwest). There were 403 research participants from these four state parks, including 365 park users and 38 park employees. The survey questions of place attachment and environmental ethics were answered by using a five point Likert scale style (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=unsure; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree). The results were:

1. The level of place attachment of park employees was higher than that among park visitors. Their attachment to the parks was significantly different.
2. The level of environmental ethics of park employees was slightly higher than that among park visitors, although the difference between these two groups was not statistically significant.
3. Both park employees’ and users’ average scores of place attachment were below “agreement” levels (less than 4), indicating that state park visitors and employees did not have elevated levels of attachment to these parks.
4. Both park employees’ and users’ average scores of environmental ethics were below “agreement” levels (less than 4), indicating that state park visitors and employees did not have elevated levels of environmental ethics. As a result, Oklahomans were less likely to make choices that are considered to be pro-environmental or to consider the environment when making ethical decisions.
5. Most respondents in the study were senior adults (55+ years), while young people are not visiting the parks as often. In addition, when compared to Oklahoma’s general population, these state park visitors’ demographics did not reflect the overall diversity present in the state’s population.

The researcher suggested that further studies are needed to gain an understanding as to why Oklahomans are not attached to their state parks and how current management and administration

Oklahoma State Park visitors and park staff scored low on “place attachment” and “environmental ethics.”

could overcome barriers to enhance their sense of place especially in outdoor environment. After understanding the barriers and issues related to low place attachment of park users and employees in Oklahoman, administrative and managerial roles need to take progressive action to solve problems and promote the park system to the public. In addition, the perceived value of the natural resources in Oklahoman is unknown; therefore, the researcher recommended that managers of natural resources begin a process to better understand why park employees and visitors lack environmental ethics as well. If the valuation of the resource is low, it is also worthwhile to put efforts into enhancing the public’s and employees’ value of the natural resource in the state parks. Finally, inviting more children and youth to the parks through intentional programming could be implemented to attract them to the parks early in their lives, to engage them with the natural environment, and to instill a sense of place and higher levels of environmental ethics.

Place Attachment and Environmental Values

A second study conducted at Lake Murray State Park in Ardmore, Oklahoma sought to determine if place attachment among park users explained their environmental values (Fink, 2011). One-hundred-seventy park users participated in the on-site survey. The findings indicated that:

1. Most popular outdoor recreation activities at Lake Murray State Park were motor boating and car camping in visitors' RVs, which means that these park users tend to enjoy an urban-oriented experience rather than a true outdoor experience in the park.
2. Among these research participants, 14% visitors were identified as day visitors and 86% as overnight visitors.
3. Park visitors were not strongly attached to Lake Murray State Park indicating they believed their experience was not place or resource dependent.
4. Park users' place attachment is not significantly related to their environmental valuation of Lake Murray State Park.
5. Lake Murray visitors appear to travel from other states such as Texas, Kansas, and Arkansas as well as attracting Oklahoma residents. These non-local park visitors were most likely to attend specialized events and weekend getaways rather than using the park daily.

The researcher suggested that it is possible to use on-line promotion forms, such as social networking sites, blogs, and webpages to create interest in visiting Lake Murray State Park among local residents and other visitors from other cities or states. In addition, the researcher recommended that a recreation-related needs assessment could help Lake Murray State Park managers to understand users' preferred activities. Such an assessment may be of value in increasing visitor linkage to the park as a recreation place. Next, park managers also need to determine how park visitors use the existing outdoor recreation facilities and areas and what kind of outdoor activities they prefer or interested. The results of such a facility assessment in the park would provide fruitful information for allocation of maintenance and/or restoration funds for the popular areas or facilities. With

Although Lake Murray State Park is a premier park in Oklahoma, guests are not attached to the park as a place and showed low valuation of the environment.

capital improvements, visitors' place attachment may be engendered. Finally, Lake Murray has historical and cultural significance of state park development in Oklahoma and the United States. Therefore, providing interpretive services would showcase the interesting facts about Lake Murray State Park (i.e., first Oklahoma state park, developed by the Civilian Conservation Corps).

Outdoor Sports and Place Attachment

A study focused on investigating the relationship between outdoor softball players' and their level of attachment to the places where they enjoy their leisure time. Surveys were given to amateur softball players enrolled in the community-based adult programs of the City of Stillwater, Oklahoma, in fall 2011 (Liu, 2012). In this study, serious leisure theory was applied to estimate softball players' involvement or seriousness of their outdoor sports experience. The on-site surveys were delivered at the city softball fields

which are managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation in Stillwater. There were 184 surveys considered as complete cases in the study. The results include:

1. The majority of softball players were male, Caucasian, having college degrees, residents of Stillwater, and living within 10 miles distance to the field.
2. The rural amateur athletes' leisure pursuit has moderate correlation with the place (softball fields), and all the serious leisure characteristics of softball players positively enhance the person-place relationship (place attachment).
3. The strongest indicators reflecting the softball players' seriousness of their leisure pursuit are their strong identification as softball players and development of their unique ethos or sub-culture as members of a social team through their outdoor sports involvement.
4. Social interaction with family and friends is the most important element to facilitate softball players' attachment to the field.

The research concluded that outdoor sports, such as softball, provide amateur athletes a reachable and affordable opportunity for adults to pursue their leisure and enhance their recreational skills and experiences in rural Oklahoma. Through their sport involvement, these softball players are developing connection and attachment to the place (softball field), especially their social interaction associated with the place. The researcher suggested that recreation providers could offer special projects/events at the fields or courts, besides regular play; therefore, softball players would have more opportunities to interact with teammates, friends, family, or other people in the community which might create personal memories and enhance their attachment to the place through leisure involvement.

Many Oklahoma recreational sport participants experience "serious leisure" through participation – and value the social interaction through sport.

Valuation of Oklahoma Lakes

Section 3134 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007 required the Tulsa District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to seek public input on preferences for lake usage and development in Oklahoma. In addition to holding public meetings in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, the USACE hosted an online survey, approved by the federal Office of Management and Budget and the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board, on a secure Department of Defense website. The executive summary of that report (Chalkidou & Caneday, 2011) reported the following:

- 456 individuals responded to (1) receipt of invitations at a USACE lake in Oklahoma, or (2) a newspaper, radio, or television announcement.
- 416 responses were complete and usable for analysis. Other respondents chose to answer a limited number of questions (while leaving many others incomplete) or failed to limit their responses to a single lake.
- The sample on which this analysis is based was (1) better educated than the adult population in Oklahoma, (2) over-representative of the older adult population and under-representative of the adult population ages 18 – 25, (3) predominantly white and non-Hispanic, although the respondents did include minority voices, and (4) representative of the adult population of males and females.

- People have favorite lakes and favorite locations on those lakes. Knowledgeable lake visitors also avoid specific areas on their favorite lakes and have good, personal reasons for avoiding those locations.
- Personal preference for specific lakes and locations is motivated by aesthetic appearance of the property, quiet experience, safety and security of the property, friendly staff, special events, and tradition. Respondents rarely mentioned commercial development or private support services as motivators for preference of a recreation location.
- People desire public access locations, campgrounds, and public day use recreation sites at USACE lakes. They do not desire or support private development to the same extent as they do public development.
- Respondents want more development and more day use at Lake Eufaula and Lake Texoma. By contrast, respondents do not want more development at Birch Lake and Canton Lake – except as restoration of dated or damaged facilities.
- One-half of the respondents believe present facilities at USACE lakes are inadequate. The structured survey responses revealed desires for changes related to physical aspects of USACE lakes, while the open-ended responses revealed desires for changes related to policies.
- The changes related to facilities desired by respondents were by level of importance from most important: (1) hiking trails, (2) swim beaches, (3) bike trails, (4) playgrounds, (5) campgrounds, (6) equestrian trails and canoe trails, and (7) marinas.
- Policy changes desired by respondents varied from lake to lake, person to person.
- Crowding at these lakes is neither perceived nor an issue as related to number and location of docks, number of people, number of boats, or presence of structures.
- Respondents desire more parking, improved access roads, increased law enforcement, and retention of fee revenue at the lakes of origin.

Oklahomans perceive differing purposes and personalities for Oklahoma lakes. They prefer management of those lakes and facilities by governmental agencies rather than private business.

Cherokee Nation Recreation Survey

In 2011, the Cherokee Nation conducted a survey of tribal citizens as a part of preparation of a recreation plan for the nation (Cherokee Nation GeoData Department, 2011). This survey included responses from tribal members and non-members, although analysis separated between the two groups.

- 78% of respondents participate in outdoor recreation; fishing was the most popular activity, followed by small game hunting, big game hunting, sustenance gathering, and medicinal/cultural gathering.
- Approximately one-half of respondents camp and prefer tent camping. Activities associated with camping included powwow, backpacking, and cookouts.
- One-third of respondents participate in off-road activity, preferring ATV and 4X4 off road driving, followed by motorcycling and dirt biking.

- Numerous other activities were enjoyed by lesser numbers of respondents including: bird watching, canoeing and rafting, caving, photography, swimming, stickball, turtling, and more.
- Approximately two-thirds of respondents used non-tribal lands as their principal location for outdoor recreation, but one-third relied on tribal lands.
- 96% of respondents were supportive of the Cherokee Nation developing areas for outdoor recreation.

Trends in Outdoor Recreation

Since 1960, the outdoor recreation opportunities and options have grown in the United States, and many studies have been reported during these days. A national survey associated with outdoor recreation: the National Survey of Recreation and the Environment (2000 & 2012) categorized outdoor recreation into five types of activities and investigated popularity of various outdoor recreation activities in the United States. These trends represent a national scope, but have direct application to outdoor recreation in Oklahoma.

Natural-based land activities

Among Americans 16 years of age and older, 32.3% of the population did day hiking in the past year, followed by visiting a wilderness/primitive area (30.6%) and visiting a farm or agricultural setting (30.6%). Compared to motorized outdoor activities, these non-motorized outdoor activities have lower environmental impact to the natural environment.

However, driving off-road vehicle is one of the fastest growing outdoor activities nationwide. According to national off-highway vehicle research (Cordell, Betz, Green, & Owens, 2005), 24.1% of Oklahomans age 16 or older participated in recreational off-highway vehicle (OHV) activity one or more times during the year prior to being interviewed; this is higher than the 19% of the population nationally involved in OHV activity confirming the on-going trend of motorized consumptive involvement among Oklahoma residents. People under age 30 were the population most highly involved in OHV recreation activity. People earning \$150,000 or more per year were the most likely to be OHV users, while people with the highest education levels (post-graduate degree) were less likely to be OHV participants.

Water-based activities

Visiting a beach (42.8%) and swimming in outdoor pool/lakes (41.6%) are consistently the most popular water-based outdoor activities. Boating (36.7%) and fishing (34.1%) are very common as well. Overall, swimming, boating, and fishing maintained their level of popularity throughout the past decade.

Power boating or motor boating has been one of the most popular activities for people with or without disabilities. Swimming is one of the most popular activities for people with disabilities. People with disability under the age of 25 and those over the age of 75 participated in swimming (primarily in swimming pools) at higher rates than the same age group individuals without disabilities (McCormick, 2012).

Viewing/learning activities

National response levels showed consistent participation in viewing/photographing natural scenery (64.1%), visiting nature centers (57.1%), and visiting/photographing wildlife, trees, and flowers (52.0%). Viewing or photographing flowers, natural scenery, and wildlife are among the top three growing outdoor activities in the United States. An estimation of 50.1% of the population is involved in this activity within a year's time period. In addition, more than one-third of population (34.1%) has participated in bird watching yearly since 2000.

These reported levels of participation are slightly above comparable involvement for people in Oklahoma. Bird-watching and photography showed similar levels of involvement in Oklahoma as that reported nationally. The major difference in lower levels of viewing and learning activities in Oklahoma occurred related to nature centers. This may be a reflection of the relatively sparse distribution of nature centers across the state, thus reducing the opportunity for visits by many in the population.

Developed-setting land activities

Participation rates in developed-setting are much higher than other types of activities and people are most likely to use their local parks and recreation facilities. Walking for pleasure, the most popular developed-setting land activity, and approximately 83.9% of people 16 or older in the United States did some walking in the last 12 months. In addition, family gathering (71.2%), gardening for pleasure (66.8%), driving for pleasure (59.6%), and picnicking (50.2%) are followed as one of the top popular developed-setting land outdoor activities in American.

Outdoor sports

The most popular individual outdoor sport is running or jogging (29.2%) which is much higher rate than the second popular activity: golf (12.6%). In addition, 51% of people 16 years of age or older attended team sports events during the year prior to their being interviewed. Generally speaking, most outdoor sports occur in local communities. People with a disability over the age of 55 participated in physical activities/sports less than people without disabilities in the same age group, while persons under the age of 55 with a disability reported a higher rate of physical activity than similarly aged people without disabilities.



Figure 2.8 – Recreation in Oklahoma Parks



Who are the providers of public recreation opportunities for the residents of Oklahoma and those who visit the state? The first section of this SCORP, *Oklahoma – The Place*, described the ownership pattern of properties in Oklahoma and that pattern correlates highly with the agents who actually provide the recreation opportunities. Public recreation is principally provided by cities and towns in Oklahoma, by school districts, by county government, by the state of Oklahoma, or by agencies of the federal government.

The following discussion presents a snap-shot of the conditions and provisions of public outdoor recreation in Oklahoma as a foundation for the 2012 SCORP. This presentation is organized based on the providers as shown in Figure 3.1. The level of involvement among these governmental agencies in provision of outdoor recreation opportunities varies greatly.

The general pattern in provision of opportunities shows a greater reliance upon local provision. The frequency of involvement among residents is greatest at the local level of provision.



Figure 3.1 – Public providers of outdoor recreation in Oklahoma

During preparation of the SCORP, citizens asked specific questions about the purpose for different types of parks. Following up on the 2007 Meaning of Parks to Oklahomans, citizens asked “What is meant by a state park versus a city park?” “What are the expectations and use patterns of a lake-based state park versus other sub-genres such as river or prairie-based parks?” “What recreation needs are met by which agency?” “Should parks at one level of government duplicate the services provided by another level of government?”

The systems planning model (Mertes & Hall, 1996) suggests multiple levels or classifications for parks, recreation areas, open space, and pathways. This classification system is intended to address access for participants, skill level of participants, traffic flow, and need. In part, the systems planning model includes the following:

- **Mini-park:** In a residential setting, serving a radius of about ¼ mile, ranging from 2,500 square feet to one acre in size, designed and intended as “walk-up” facilities. (Municipal or housing association)
- **School park:** Units that combine the resources of two public agencies to expand the recreation, social, and educational opportunities for a community.

- Neighborhood park: The basic unit of a park system serving a radius of ¼ to ½ mile distance, with access routes uninterrupted by physical barriers such as major streets or roads. These properties range from 5 acres to 10 acres in size and focus on informal active and passive recreation. (Municipal)
- Community park: These parks serve multiple neighborhoods meeting community-based needs while preserving green landscapes and open spaces. These parks serve a radius of about 3 miles and may be 30 to 50 acres in size. (Municipal)
- Urban or city park: Usually a minimum of 50 acres and upwards, these parks may preserve green landscapes and open spaces, but also serve as sites for programmed activities. They may include athletic complexes, recreation centers, nature centers, and other specialized facilities. (Municipal)
- Natural resource area: Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics or buffering. These properties support active and passive recreation appropriate to the environment and may include wildlife habitat, wetlands, geological features, and historic or cultural areas. (Municipal or state)
- Greenways: Units that effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment. These units include linear parks, trails, and bikeways. (Municipal or state)
- State park: The classic definition of a state park from Richard Lieber is “properties having scenic or historic value or both, dedicated to the public for the intelligent use of its leisure time.” In Oklahoma that had been applied as (1) sites having statewide significance for natural beauty, uniqueness, or other recreational and resource preservation purposes, and (2) sites which will improve the overall availability of public recreation facilities to the recreation public while possessing resource significance. (State)

The systems planning model offers guidance for decisions in planning and expectations of the public particularly in the urbanized areas of Oklahoma. In these locales, there is a higher level of service offering more recreational options. By contrast in many of the rural portions of Oklahoma, the local provider may offer one local park option with limited opportunities beyond that single provision of recreation space.

Municipal Provision of Recreation

As indicated in the previous discussion, Oklahoma has 612 incorporated towns and cities scattered statewide. A statewide online survey was utilized to gain input from municipal leaders in these towns and cities. The Oklahoma Municipal League (OML) supported this survey by providing access to their email contacts for all members of OML and increased the credibility of the survey through their reputation with the municipal leadership. The full survey and detail of responses is provided in Appendix A.

The local contact for the survey regarding provision of recreation opportunities may have been a mayor, a city clerk, a director of a department, or other member of OML. Figure 3.2 on the following page provides a graphic indication of the respondents to the online survey. From among the 612 incorporated towns and cities, 113 responded (18%). However, these responding cities and towns represented 50.5% of the population of Oklahoma. The highest percentage of non-respondents was among the smallest

communities in Oklahoma – an indication that the community may not provide any specific outdoor recreation opportunity for its residents.

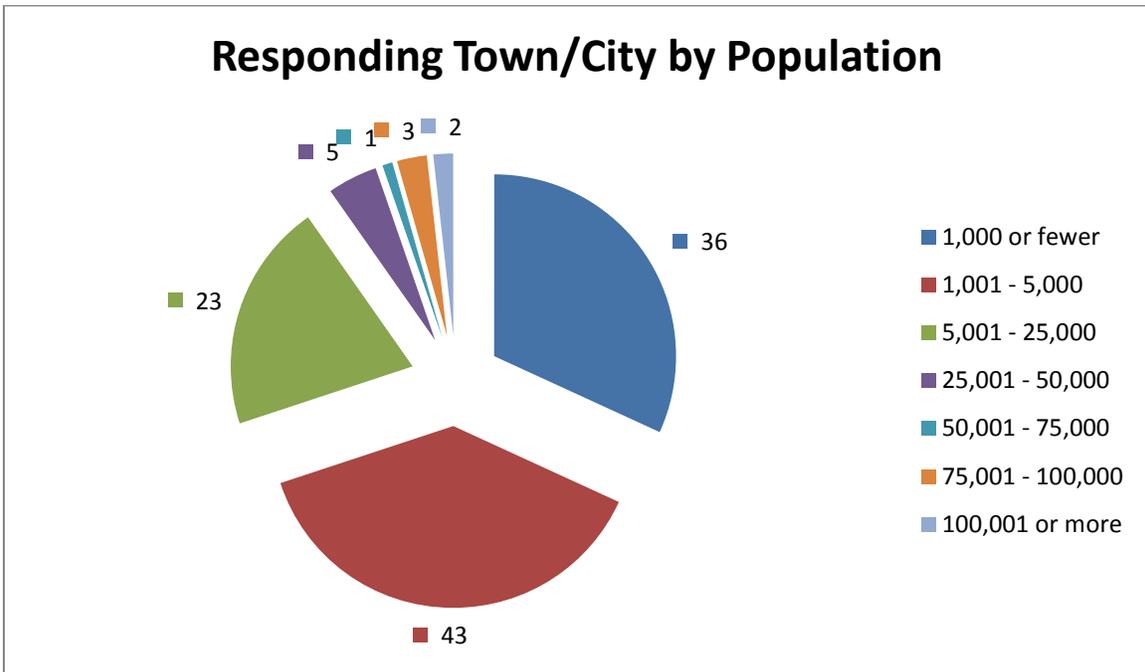


Figure 3.2 – Responses to survey of towns and cities in Oklahoma

Among these cities and towns, only eight of the respondents (7.1%) indicated the town did not have at least one property designated as a public park. However, 60 responding towns or cities (53.1%) did not have at least one employee dedicated to providing park and recreation services. It is evident that most communities across Oklahoma provide some type of “park”, but far fewer have personnel dedicated to programming or maintenance of that area. Several respondents indicated that the dedicated person within their respective community was provided through Public Works (31 cities), Community Services (5 cities), or Senior Services (6 cities).

The services that were provided in the 52 cities with a dedicated employee tended to be focused on persons 17 years of age and younger (59.6% of responding cities). However, 53.8% of the responding cities also provide park and recreation services for persons 18 years of age and older. In particular, these services are provided for senior citizens, although many of the programmed services extend to other portions of the adult population.

Oklahoma cities and towns rely upon sales tax revenues and fees for services for most of their operations. As related to fees for park and recreation services, 51% of the respondents to this survey reported that they did charge a fee for some of their services. Only four of the cities indicated their fees were based on full-cost recovery, whereas 16 respondents indicated they used partial cost recovery and seven respondents relied on

variable cost recovery. Since 31% of the responding communities also utilize some type of assistance for those who cannot afford to pay fees, it is apparent that cost of services does not limit most Oklahomans from utilizing the public provision of park and recreation services in their respective communities.

As was presented in earlier discussion, Oklahoma cities and towns own a much smaller percentage of properties than is true around the nation. Eighteen of the respondents (15.9%) indicated that their community has a land dedication ordinance for developers requiring dedication of park lands. For the remaining 84% of Oklahoma municipalities, some other form of property acquisition would be necessary to increase the land base for public parks.

The survey then focused on issues being faced by leadership in the various communities across Oklahoma. The first issue address related to visitor safety and protection while in a public park within the host community. This issue had been raised by respondents in the 2007 SCORP and was present in a number of news events as presented by the media. The distribution of responses in Figure 3.3 indicates that community leadership is concerned about visitor safety during the recreation experience.

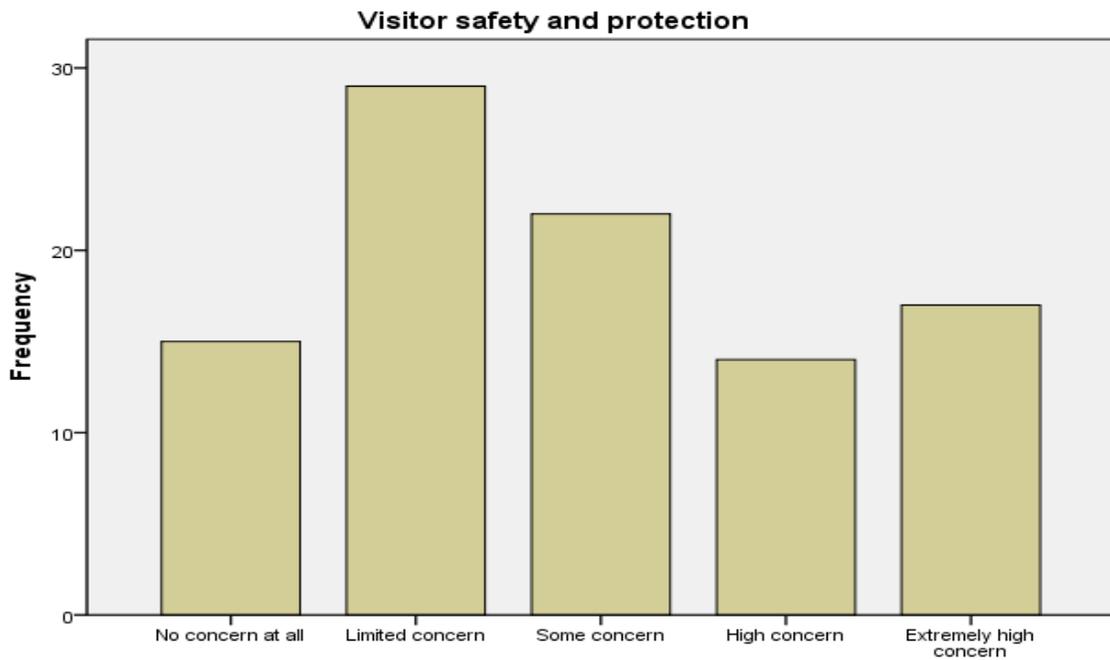


Figure 3.3 – Level of concern for visitor safety in parks

At the time of the online survey, Oklahoma – as with much of the nation – was in a recession. Tax revenues had declined in many communities; unemployment had increased; federal and state programs of support had been reduced. As a result, the survey pursued the issue of the ability of the town or city to pay for park and recreation services. Whereas the earlier discussion related to fees focused on the philosophy of cost recovery from participants, the questions related to the ability of the town or city to pay for parks

and recreation services focused on municipal budgetary constraints. More than 50% of the responding communities, as shown in Figure 3.4, indicated high levels of concern for the community to allocate adequate funds for parks and recreation services. This response led to further investigation presented later in this document.

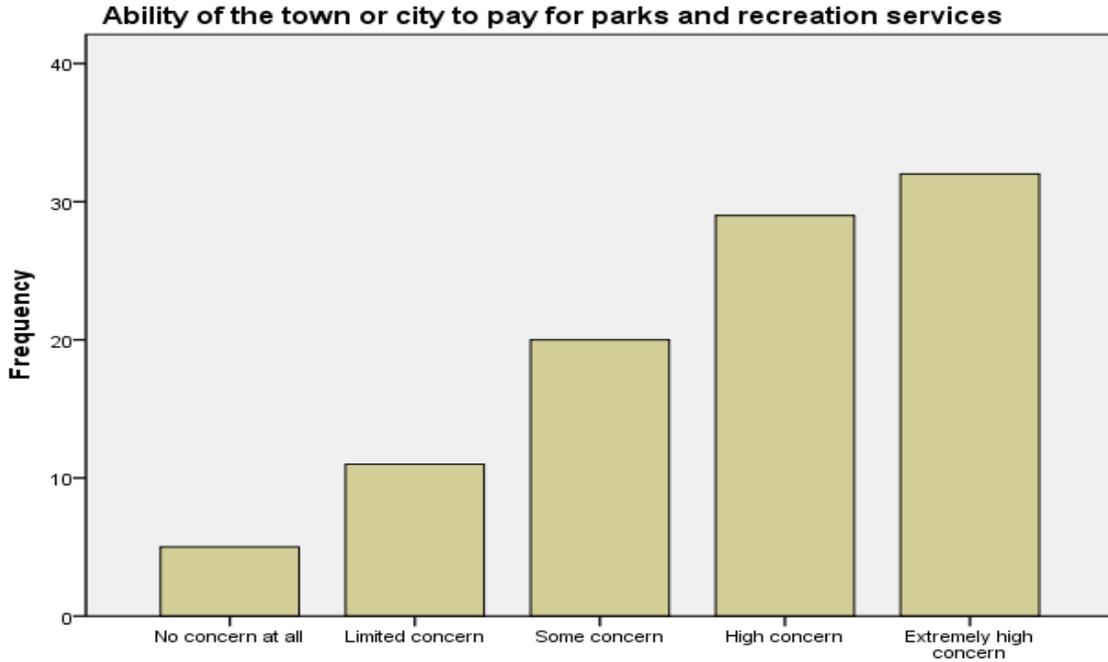


Figure 3.4 - Level of concern for ability to pay for services

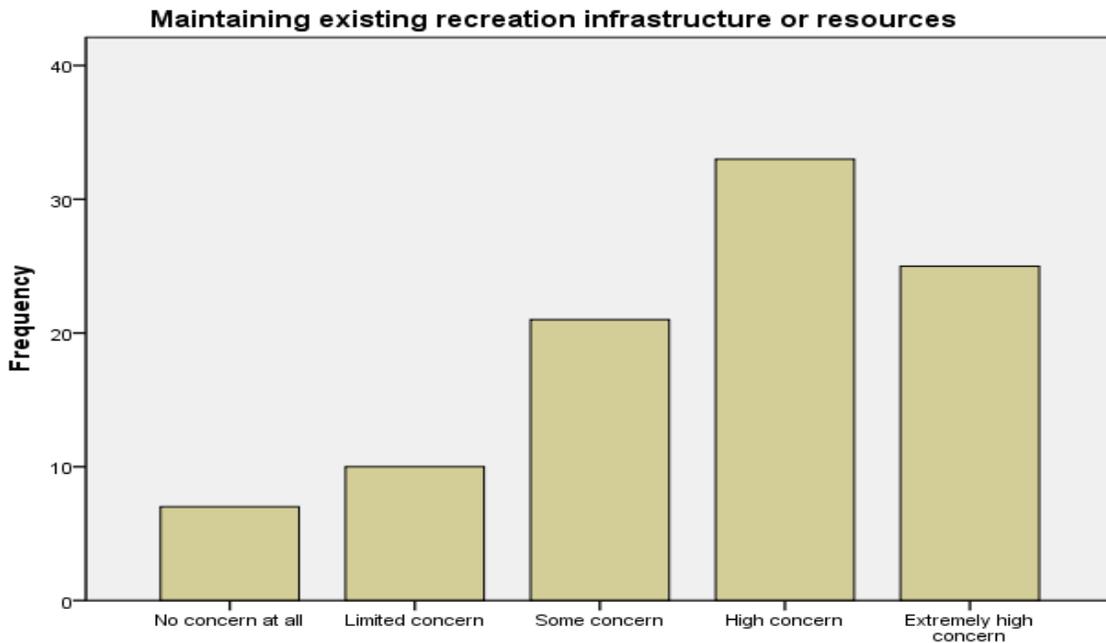


Figure 3.5 - Level of concern for ability to maintain resources

Since city appropriations are more frequently utilized for maintenance of recreation infrastructure and resources rather than programs, the survey addressed the level of concern present for maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources within the community. As shown in Figure 3.5 on the preceding page, more than 50% of responding municipalities expressed high concern for the ability of the community to maintain the existing park and recreation infrastructure and resources. As with the earlier concerns related to financial status, this response led to further investigation discussed later in this document.

Lack of funding to maintain existing infrastructure often precludes new capital investment and many of the older resources are not compliant with federal accessibility guidelines. As a result, the survey asked for input regarding level of concern for providing access and opportunities for persons with disabilities.

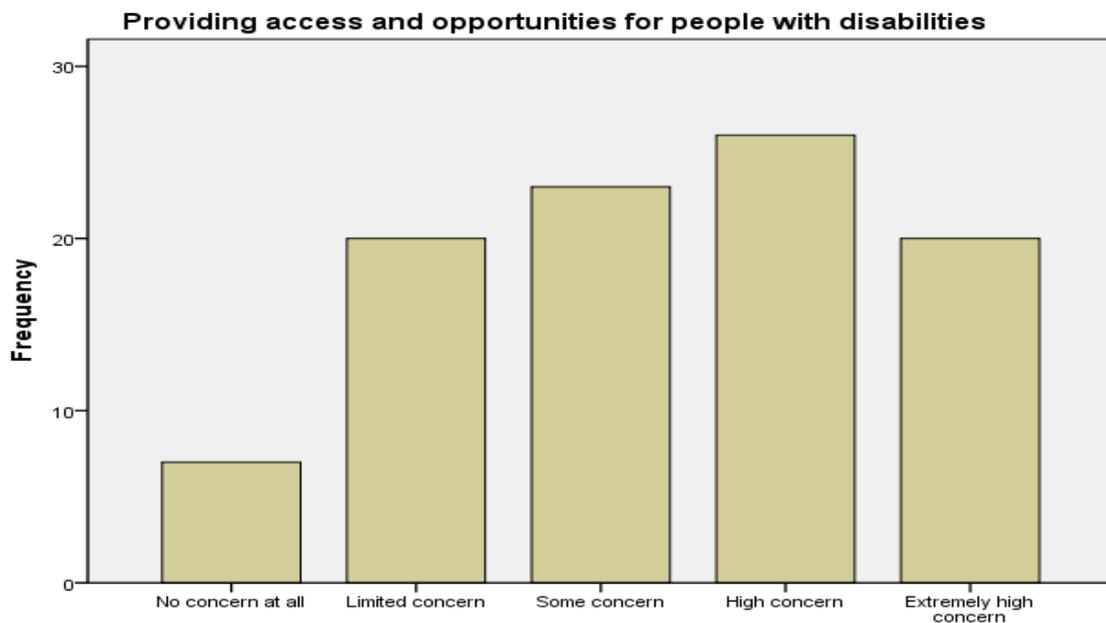


Figure 3.6 - Level of concern for ADA accommodation

Fairly high levels of concern were present related to providing access and opportunities for persons with disabilities. From the responses, it is difficult to determine whether the level of concern is commensurate with needs in the community or whether the municipalities are in compliance with ADA guidelines.

As presented in *Oklahoma – the People*, the population of Oklahoma is growing and changing in many ways. Population growth is concentrated in particular communities, placing greater pressures on particular locations. The online survey requested an assessment of concerns related to the capacity of the municipal agency to serve a growing population. Forty percent of the respondents indicated high concerns related to the capacity of their municipality to serve a growing population (Figure 3.7).

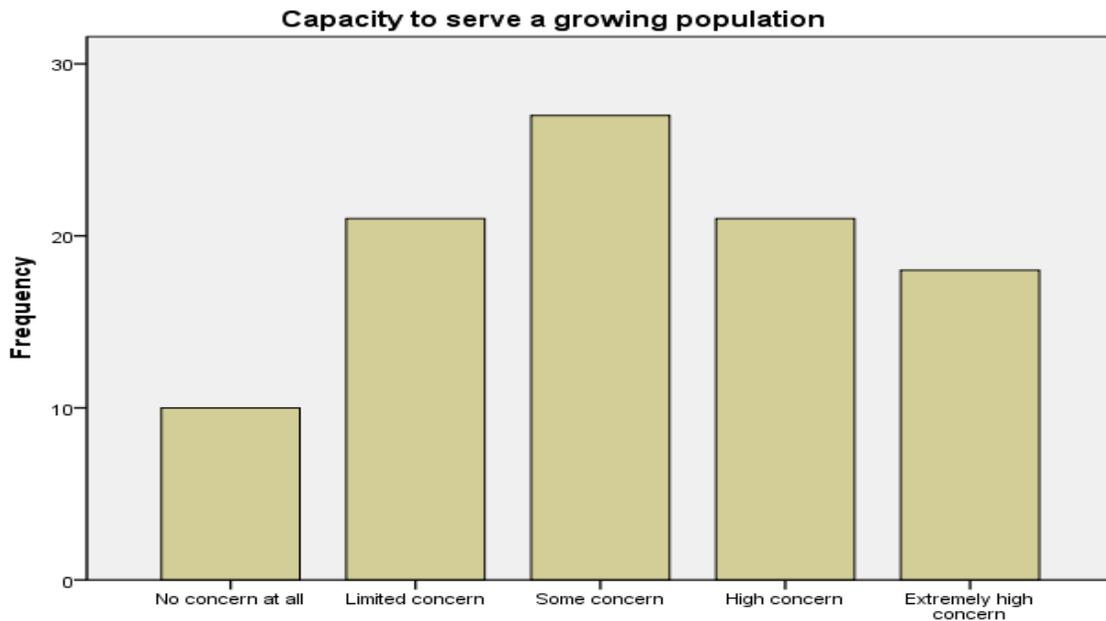


Figure 3.7 – Level of concern related to serving a growing population

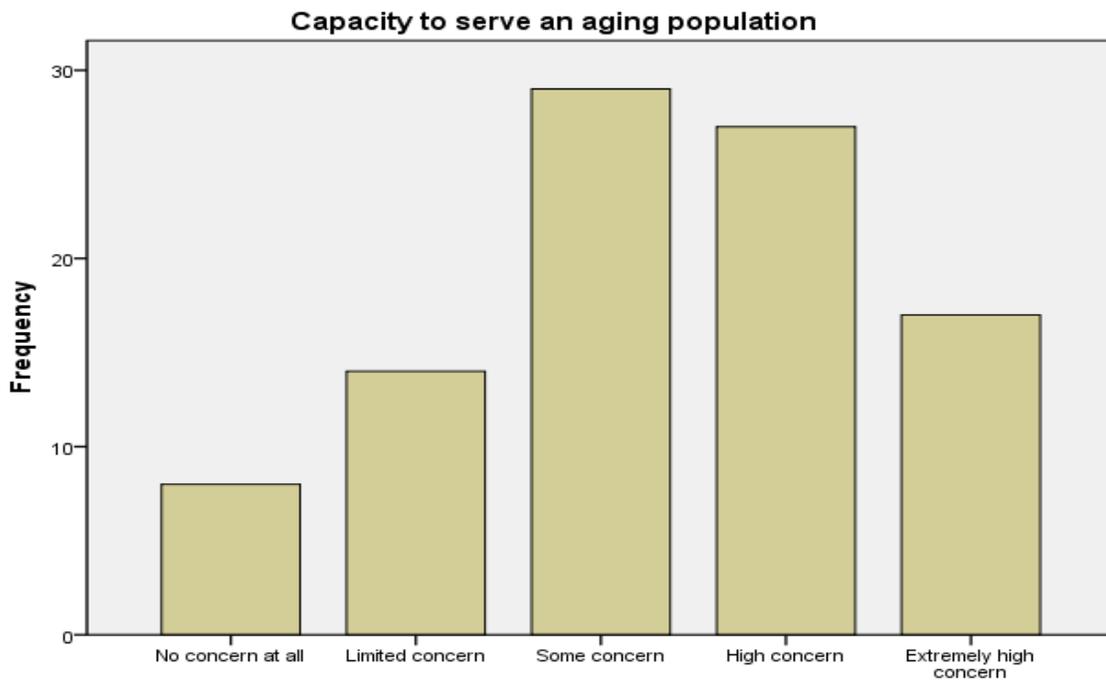


Figure 3.8 – Level of concern related to serving an aging population

A slightly higher level of concern was expressed related to serving an aging population beyond that expressed for a growing population. While extremely high concern was similar for both groups, there was a greater level of mid-range concern related to service to the aging population. The rationale for this concern was not indicated; however, discussions with service providers reveal that the concern stems from growth in numbers, increasing longevity of life, and the expectations present in that aging population.

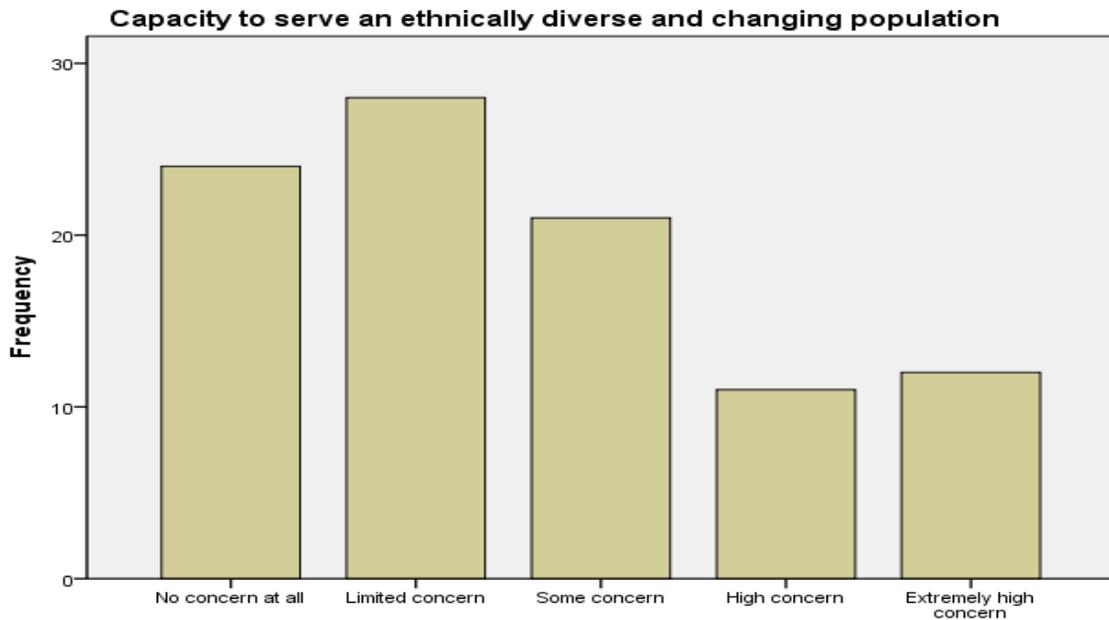


Figure 3.9 – Level of concern related to serving a diverse population

Conversely, almost 50% of the survey respondents expressed limited or no concern related to capacity to serve an ethnically diverse and changing population. The lower level of concern in response to this population may be an indication of lack of recognition of the changing population in many Oklahoma communities or lack of awareness of differing recreation behaviors among an ethnically diverse population.

In summary, the top five issues expressed by municipal respondents to this survey were (1) ability of citizens to pay for park and recreation services, (2) ability of the municipality to maintain existing recreation resources, (3) provision of access to recreation services for persons with disabilities, (4) capacity of the municipality to serve an aging population, and (5) capacity of the municipality to serve a growing population. Conversely, lesser concern was expressed related to visitor safety and protection in public park and recreation settings or related to the capacity of the municipality to serve an ethnically diverse and changing population. As indicated, it is difficult to ascertain the rationale for the ratings given to these issues. However, Oklahoma must address aspects of each within the next five years.



Figure 3.10 - Top issues faced by municipalities

Survey respondents were provided with a list of recreation facilities and asked to indicate the level of need within their communities related to each item. While each item received some expression of “need” from at least one community in the response group, there were several items that received expressions of need by at least half of the respondents. These items from the “most needed” were: (1) picnic areas, (2) splash pad or splash park, (3) running or walking track, (4) basketball courts, and (5) baseball fields.

Three items on the survey were grouped around trails, and each of these items received significant expression of “need.” Trails within existing parks were needed by 49.5% of the respondents, while 46.1% indicated their community needed trails connecting neighborhoods to other trails. Somewhat lesser among the expressed needs were trails extending beyond the community (32.2%).

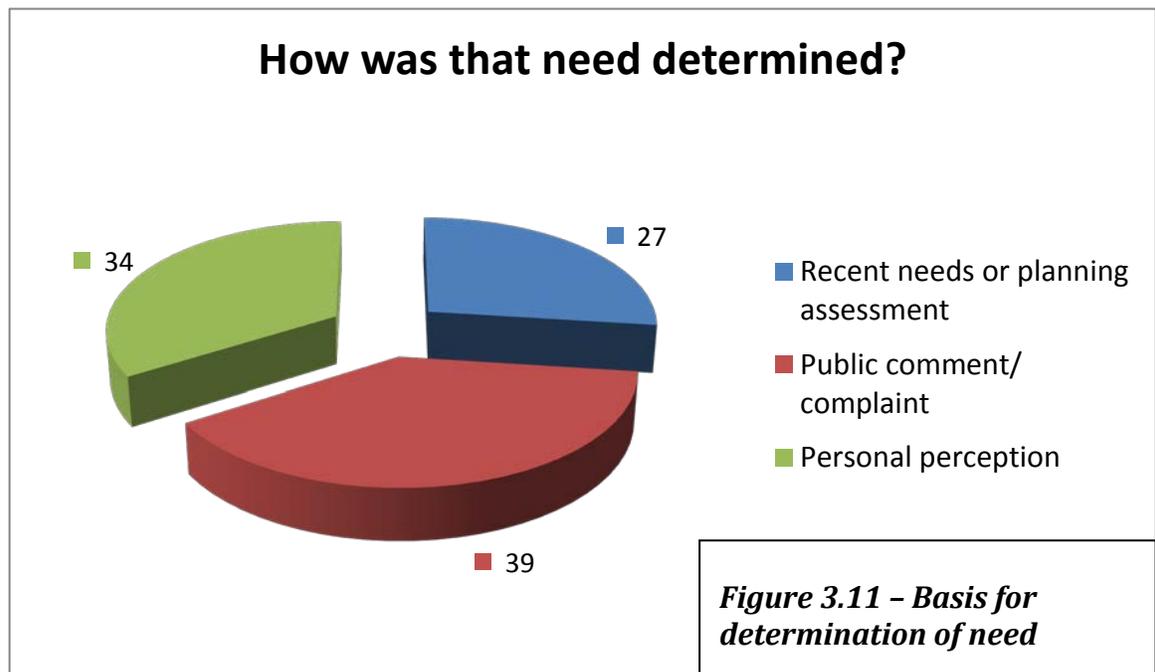


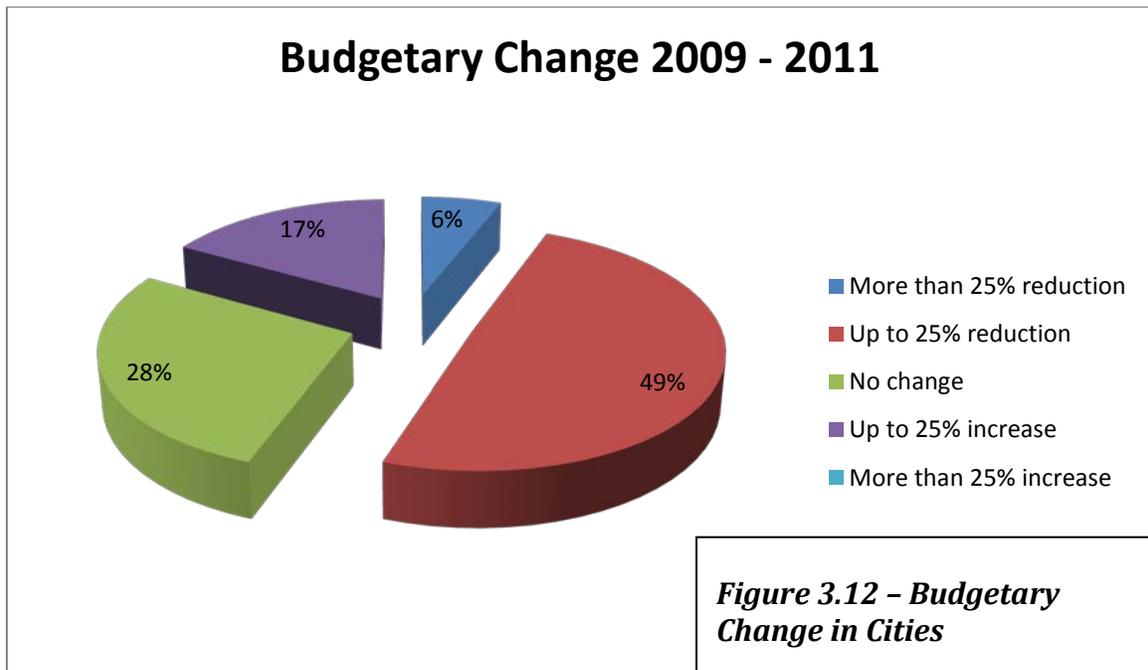
Figure 3.11 - Basis for determination of need

It was important to understand the basis for determination of the expressed needs. As a result, respondents were asked to indicate the evidence they utilized in expressing the need for specific facilities within their community. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents indicated the community needs were based upon recent assessment of needs and planning or in direct response to public comment or complaint.

Meeting the Municipal Need

Research staff conducted two follow-up studies of those 52 cities in Oklahoma that had a Department of Parks and Recreation or similarly titled unit of local government providing services to citizens. The first of these follow-up studies focused on actions taken in response to the economic recession and the general perspective related to park and recreation services being provided through the municipality. Eighteen cities responded.

More than 50% of responding cities had experienced a budgetary reduction from 2009 through 2011. With reductions in some cases of more than 25%, the next consideration was related to actions taken by these cities to address the fiscal emergency.



Three actions were taken by 60% of the responding cities. These included (1) reduction in staff, (2) reduction in programs offered, and (3) increase in fees for services rendered. Forty percent of respondents indicated the next most common action taken was contracting of services outside of the municipal agency. As a result, it can be concluded that recreation services and support staff were reduced for many Oklahomans. In those cases in which services were not reduced, it is likely that they increased in cost.

A second question addressed actions taken related to facilities. Respondents were asked to indicate closing of facilities, transferring of property management, or selling of public property to reduce maintenance costs. Eleven of the eighteen responding cities indicated they had taken one or more of these actions. Neighborhood parks were closed; community parks were closed; city-wide parks were closed; regional parks were closed or

contracted to other managers; swimming pools and aquatic centers were closed; lakes, golf courses, sports fields, and arts centers were closed or transferred to private management. Again, it can be concluded that recreation facilities and opportunities were reduced for many Oklahomans.

From 2009 – 2011, 60% of Oklahoma cities reduced recreation staff, reduced programs, increased fees, and closed parks.

“Only one in five children in the United States lives within a half-mile of a park or playground.”
Recreation Management

With the closing of neighborhood and community parks, many cities were attempting to become more efficient in managing high maintenance-high cost locations. However, those closings exacerbated an on-going problem of local access to parks and playgrounds. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that one in five children in the United States lives within a half-mile of a park or playground. The problem is worse in low income neighborhoods (Recreation Management, June 2012).

The adverse economic impact upon cities was not equally distributed among Oklahoma communities. Baker (2012) found that park and recreation departments in cities with populations between 3,000 and 10,000 people averaged a 27% reduction between 2008 and 2010. Cities in the next population category, 10,001 to 25,000 citizens, actually showed a 2% increase in municipal budgets for parks and recreation, while cities with populations between 25,001 and 100,000 showed no significant change. The greatest changes in budgetary support for parks and recreation occurred in cities over 100,000 (Oklahoma City and Tulsa). These urban centers experienced a 47% reduction in funding – \$11 million – for park and recreation services and facilities between 2008 and 2010.

In addition to the adverse impact on provision of programs and opportunities, capital improvements and maintenance have been eliminated or deferred. As a result, headlines in newspapers commonly asserted a consistent theme: “Parks at every level are deteriorating” (Pearson, 2011).

“Parks at every level are deteriorating.”
Janet Pearson
Tulsa World

Solutions proposed by community leadership to address the deterioration of public parks and facilities included: developing super-recreation centers, “repurposing” old facilities in affordable ways to meet changing demographics and desires; focusing on “specialty parks” that provide distinctive offerings; improving access to parks through trails and sidewalks; and perhaps creating a local “park district” (Pearson, 2011). As a result, several communities in Oklahoma have followed national trends. Among the “specialty parks” that have increased in Oklahoma in recent years are dog parks and splash parks. By contrast, the national trend that showed trails to be the second most commonly

The greatest loss in parks and access to public recreation has been at the local level – neighborhood parks, programs, and staff.

planned addition to communities (Recreation Management, 2012) was not apparent in Oklahoma outside of urban areas.

Research and related discussion has increasingly emphasized the relationship between parks, outdoor recreation, personal and community health

(National Park Service, 2011; Outdoor Seekers, 2012; Louv, 2006). “Healthy Parks Healthy People US” asserts and documents that “there is an increasing disconnect between communities and natural environments that is contributing to health problems and chronic disease” (National Park Service, 2011).

“We, who *promote* the outdoors as an indispensable element of our well-being, also must stress that the *outdoors* must be healthy as well.”

**Jon Jarvis, NPS Director
April 6, 2011**

The conclusion is that there is a relationship between the health of the recreation environment, provision of outdoor recreation opportunities and the health of the populace. Oklahoma ranks low on several health measures as documented in Oklahoma – The People. Oklahoma ranks low on numerous environmental measures, especially in provision of local public recreation space and service.

School/Education Provision of Recreation

The educational system from pre-kindergarten through university levels in Oklahoma is potentially a key provider of outdoor recreation education, opportunity, and service. Most public schools at the elementary and middle school levels include playgrounds; many serve as the only public park within a community. Beyond provision of play space, schools are the primary agencies for education of citizens in preparation for a productive, high quality life. A life of quality includes a life of health in a healthy environment.

“93% of people who go swimming every summer can’t swim more than 40 yards, if at all.”

**Sara Goodyeon
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Therefore, the educational system is a critical partner in outdoor recreation in Oklahoma – and beyond.

Physical education in Oklahoma has tended to focus on traditional sports, whereas a relatively small percentage of students remain active in those sports. By contrast, few schools include curricular preparation in education related to outdoor activity – hunting, fishing, swimming, and other active recreational pursuits. Drowning is particularly identified as being among the most frequent causes of

injury death in Oklahoma – an indicator of lack of education that could prevent these tragedies.

On a positive note, higher education in Oklahoma is active in provision of outdoor recreation. Examples of this involvement include: (1) Quartz Mountain Arts, Conference, and Nature Park managed through the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education; (2) Crowder Lake managed through Southwestern Oklahoma State University; (3) Lake Carl Blackwell managed through Oklahoma State University; and (4) an agreement for Carl Albert State College to manage the former Heavener Runestone State Park, although this agreement has been modified.

Conversely, as documented in the 2002 and 2007 SCORPs and continuing to the present, Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education policy has devalued education related to outdoor recreation, recreation ethics, and personal responsibilities for recreation environments. As a result of public school

**“The problem of education in a democratic society is to . . . make leisure a reward of accepting responsibility for service, rather than a state of exemption from it.”
John Dewey, 1916**

curricula and policies in public colleges and universities, Oklahoma citizens must look elsewhere for meaningful education in preparation for quality of life in pursuit of recreation, skill development to enhance that pursuit, understanding of the effects of recreation behavior on the natural environment, or understanding of the effects of the natural environment on quality of life.

County Provision of Recreation

Tulsa County is the only county in Oklahoma that provides well established parks and recreation services. Their mission specifically addresses the role of Tulsa County Parks related to quality of life and promotion of health and wellness within the community (Tulsa County Parks, 2012).

Other counties have increased their involvement in provision of recreation places or management of recreation sites. This has been particularly true of cooperative agreements between counties and other levels of government for management of recreation properties. An excellent example of these cooperative agreements is demonstrated by the management of Holly Creek, Panther Creek, and the Re-regulation Area on Broken Bow Lake and the Mountain Fork River by McCurtain County under agreement with the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

State Provision of Recreation

Cooperative agreements for management of properties formerly managed by agencies of the State of Oklahoma have increased in recent years. As the state budget has tightened, efforts have been made to reduce expenses and increase efficiencies in management of recreation resources (Atkinson, 2011; Price, 2011; McNutt, 2011). There are two major providers of outdoor recreation properties and opportunities through the State of Oklahoma: (1) the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC), and (2) the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD).

ODWC receives no general state tax appropriation, but is supported by revenue from hunting and fishing license fees, and Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program taxes. ODWC manages more than 65 public hunting areas, four state fish hatcheries, and several lakes. Property designations include Wildlife Management Areas (WMA) and Wildlife Refuges (WR). These areas include lands owned, licensed, leased or under the management of the Department (ODWC, 2012). ODWC also provides numerous educational and informative programs throughout the year, including a well-attended Wildlife Expo (Figure 3.13).



Figure 3.13 – ODWC Wildlife Expo



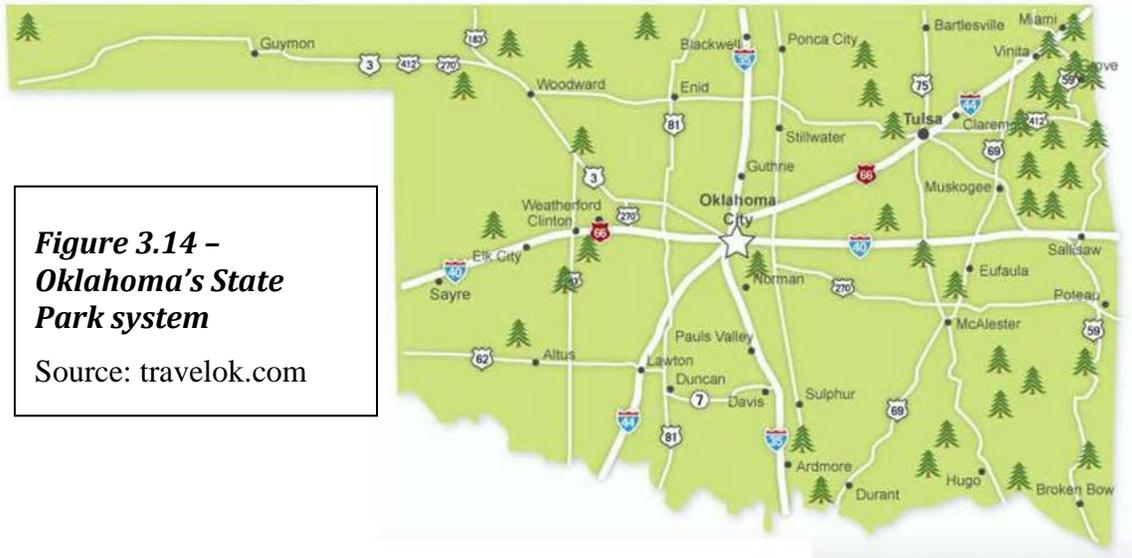


Figure 3.14 – Oklahoma's State Park system
 Source: travelok.com

The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department is a broad-based state agency with multiple divisions including a film and music office, *Oklahoma Today* magazine, travel promotion, and state parks. Oklahoma State Parks operates 35 state parks, five state lodges, and seven state golf courses.

During 2011, seven properties were removed from the state park system, but remained open for public recreation (Hoferock, 2011). Management of these properties was transferred to various agencies – cities (Tulsa, Heavener, Sallisaw, and Beaver), Indian nations (Chickasaw and Osage), counties (Adair County), and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Title 82 of Oklahoma Statutes, cited as the “Scenic Rivers Act,” established the Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission (OSRC, 2012). This commission cooperates with OTRD and ODWC, among other state agencies, to preserve free-flowing rivers and streams in Oklahoma for outdoor recreation. All of the designated scenic rivers and streams are in eastern Oklahoma, including the Illinois River, Flint Creek, Barren Fork Creek, and portions of the Upper Mountain Fork River.



Figure 3.15 – Floaters on the Illinois River

Two additional agencies of Oklahoma government manage resources that may include outdoor recreation. The School Land Office may lease properties for hunting, fishing, grazing, agriculture, or other purposes. Finally, the Grand River Dam Authority (GRDA) manages water resources and leases properties for outdoor recreation. As a result, Grand Lake o’ the Cherokees includes a recreation management plan as part of the licensed operation under the authority of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Federal Provision of Recreation

Oklahoma has a much smaller presence of federal land management agencies than is true in the United States in general. However, that presence is significant for outdoor recreation, resource management, and the economy.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Tulsa District

While the Tulsa District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE, <http://www.swt.usace.army.mil/>), a division of the Department of Defense, extends from southern Kansas across the panhandle of Texas and portions of north Texas and into a small portion of western Arkansas, the primary properties for USACE through the Tulsa District are in Oklahoma. There are 28 lakes in Oklahoma under the responsibility of the USACE. Most of these lakes include multiple recreation locations, some of which are managed by the Corps while others are contracted to other management units. Several of these properties are Oklahoma State Parks.

Figure 3.16 – Typical USACE waterfront

Skiatook Lake



U.S. Forest Service

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS), a division in the United States Department of Agriculture, manages two types of property in Oklahoma. On the eastern border, the Ouachita National Forest (<http://www.fs.usda.gov/ouachita>) includes three ranger districts in Oklahoma, while the headquarters for the forest are located in Hot Springs, Arkansas. Within the Ouachita National Forest are several management units including the Upper Kiamichi River Wilderness and a small portion of the Black Fork Wilderness. Other management units include the Kerr Arboretum, game management units, Billy Creek, Winding Stair, and Cedar Lake Recreation Areas. These areas include camping, hiking, and other outdoor recreation amenities.



Figure 3.17 – Ouachita National Forest



The Ouachita National Recreation Trail extends from Talimena State Park through the Ouachita National Forest to the Arkansas border and beyond. This lengthy trail winds through the Upper Kiamichi River Wilderness before exiting the state on the east.

A second unit of the USFS, Cibola National Forest manages the Black Kettle National Grassland and the Rita Blanca National Grassland. Black Kettle National Grassland is located near Cheyenne, OK, although it is managed out of the USFS in New Mexico. Black Kettle (<http://www.forestcamping.com/dow/southwst/bkinfo.htm>) includes three campgrounds, plus numerous trails, and undeveloped areas. Rita Blanca (<http://www.forestcamping.com/dow/southwst/rb.htm>), also managed out of New Mexico, is located in the panhandle of Oklahoma. There are no developed campgrounds in the Oklahoma portion of Rita Blanca National Grassland, but there are picnic areas, trails, and hunting opportunities.

National Park Service

The National Park Service (<http://www.nps.gov/state/ok/index.htm?program=all>) is active in Oklahoma at a number of locations and under a variety of management units. Three locations are identified as “national parks”, including Chickasaw National Recreation Area, the Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, and the Santa Fe National Historic Trail. In addition, the Oklahoma City National Memorial is an NPS designated site. The National Park Service is a bureau in the Department of Interior.

Figure 3.18 – National Park Service properties in Oklahoma



Over 1200 locations in Oklahoma are on the National Register of Historic Places. Three locations are identified as National Natural Landmarks and 21 additional locations are National Historic Landmarks.

There are an estimated 1.2 million visitor annually to the various National Park Service sites in Oklahoma. These sites and their visitors have an economic benefit to the state over \$17 million annually.

Bureau of Reclamation

Another Department of Interior bureau is active in Oklahoma. While not technically a recreation agency, the Bureau of Reclamation has seven projects in Oklahoma (<http://www.usbr.gov/projects/FacilitiesByState.jsp?StateID=OK>). All of these projects include some recreational provision, while four of the lakes include state parks. As a result, recreation access at lakes such as Thunderbird, Foss, Fort Cobb, Tom Steed, and McGee Creek is provided by and managed by Oklahoma State Parks. On Lake of the Arbuckles, the recreation access is managed by the National Park Service as a unit of Chickasaw National Recreation Area.



Figure 3.19 – Courtesy dock on a Bureau of Reclamation lake

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Also a bureau in the Department of Interior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (<http://www.fws.gov/>) operates nine wildlife refuges in Oklahoma: Optima, Salt Plains, Washita, Deep Fork, Ozark Plateau, Sequoyah, Wichita Mountain, Tishomingo, and Little River. These refuges extend across the diverse ecosystems in Oklahoma. All of the refuges include some outdoor recreation opportunities. Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge offers the greatest level of development and recreation support with campgrounds, a nature center, climbing areas, and numerous opportunities for wildlife viewing.

Figure 3.20 – Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge



Provision of Recreation by Other Agencies

There are a number of other agencies at various levels that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation in Oklahoma. Certainly many private and non-profit businesses and organization supplement the delivery of public recreation. However, there are other governmental agencies that are important partners in provision of recreation.

The Federal Highway Administration, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation, and the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority provide transportation services supporting tourism and outdoor recreation. In particular, these agencies provide rest areas, trails, maps, and numerous other services that permit the public to access the recreation resource. Funding for alternative transportation corridor development and enhancements for highways is also coordinated through the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

The Oklahoma Historical Society, a state agency that also serves through a membership organization, was established by Title 53, Oklahoma statutes, during territorial days in 1895. The Historical Society manages museums and historical sites around the state, providing destinations, education, and recreation for residents and tourists. Another important component of the Oklahoma Historical Society is the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). This office was especially active in response to the President's initiative, *America's Great Outdoors*.

The RiverParks Authority (<http://www.riverparks.org/>) was created by the City of Tulsa and Tulsa County to develop the riverfront through the various jurisdictions, cities, and towns along that corridor. Today, RiverParks includes over 800 acres of land, an urban wilderness, and miles of trails. The RiverParks Authority is a prime example of public and private partnerships with the ratio of public funding to private funding at 49/51.

Oklahoma City Riversport (<http://riversportokc.org/>) is active in the Oklahoma City area along the Oklahoma River – that portion of the North Canadian River through the metropolitan area. In the Boathouse District south of downtown, OKC Riversport is expanding opportunities for rowing, kayaking, biking, and other outdoor recreation.

Although commonly associated with casinos, several of the American Indian nations are increasingly active in provision of outdoor recreation. Many have developed campgrounds and sports facilities on tribal lands. The Chickasaw and Choctaw nations have contracted for management of the former Boggy Depot State Park. The Osage nation has contracted for management of several USACE properties on Skiatook Lake, as well as Wah Sha She on Copan Lake. The Cheyenne-Arapaho nation has contracted for management of properties on Canton Lake. The Cherokee nation is managing tourism centers and other facilities, as is the Chickasaw nation with a new tribal cultural center.

The management base of outdoor recreation in Oklahoma has expanded in the first decade of the 21st century, although the resource base has remained constant. Oklahoma is limited in its public resource base, particularly at the municipal level. The greatest loss during this opening decade of the century has been at the local level in access to proximate recreation experiences and facilities.



The SCORP is required of each state as specified in Section 6(d) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, as amended. Within the law and resulting policies, there are specific requirements to be included in a SCORP. The 2012 Oklahoma SCORP, **Oklahoma's Great Outdoors**, presents –

1. The Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department as the state agency with authority to represent and act for the State of Oklahoma in dealing with the Secretary of the Interior for purposes of the LWCF Act of 1965.
2. An evaluation of the supply of and demand for outdoor recreation resources and facilities in Oklahoma as of 2012.
3. The following plan for 2013 through 2017.

The Oklahoma Issues and Recommendations

As is true of every state, Oklahoma is facing numerous daunting challenges. However, the creativity of its citizens and the resolve that have been demonstrated in the first hundred years of statehood has provided an excellent foundation with promise to address these challenges.

Issue 1: Water quality and quantity

“A Second Century of Outdoor Recreation in Oklahoma: 2007 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan” (Caneday, et al.) stated “Over the next five years, water rights and the value of freshwater for recreation and tourism, as well as other uses, will continue to be increasingly sensitive topics. Oklahoma must develop a water plan including informed voices representing recreational interests.” That water plan has been developed. The public has become much more aware of the value of water through warnings regarding quality of surface water, hazards of recreation activity in surface water, and public education by various groups. However, water quality and quantity will continue to be extremely sensitive topics for the next five years.

1. **Recommendation 1** – Laws and regulations are in place regarding water usage and run-off. However, public recreation managers should be premier examples of proper resource management. Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be implemented on all state and municipal properties regarding water use, disposal, and run-off.
2. **Recommendation 2** – Recreation resource managers must be present at and active in discussions regarding water quality, quantity, and allocation as the water plan is implemented.
3. **Recommendation 3** – Recreation resource managers must take an active role in educating the public regarding the effect of personal and recreation behaviors on water quality and quantity. This includes introduction and transport of invasive species and adverse impacts on water quality through everyday activities.

Issue 2: Loss of accessible public recreation space

In response to recent economic pressures, an already-miniscule local public recreation estate has been reduced. The local neighborhood park has been perceived as being expensive to maintain and difficult to monitor for security. As a result, many Oklahoma residents have lost the opportunity to walk to a local park for an outdoor recreation experience. The state and federal agencies have closed several properties and transferred others to different management entities. As a result, Oklahoma has experienced a loss of local green space, a loss of local and accessible recreation space, a loss of social connection, a loss of sense of place, a loss of stimulation for health and quality of life, and a loss of economic stimulation. The urbanization of Oklahoma is likely to continue and planning for accessible public recreation space must precede that growth.

“Many people believe that dealing with overweight and obesity is a personal responsibility. To some degree they are right, but it is also a community responsibility. When there are no safe, accessible places for children to play or adults to walk, jog, or ride a bike, that is a community responsibility.”

David Satcher

Surgeon General

4. **Recommendation 4** – The Oklahoma Recreation and Park Society and the Oklahoma Municipal League must seek solutions to the reduction in access at the neighborhood level to parks and open space.
5. **Recommendation 5** – The Oklahoma Recreation and Park Society and the Oklahoma Municipal League must open discussions and improve education regarding mandatory park land ordinances and other creative tools for property acquisition.

Issue 3: Education for a life of health and quality

“Education has no more serious responsibility than the making of adequate provision for enjoyment of recreative leisure not only for the sake of immediate health, but for the sake of its lasting effect upon the habits of the mind.”

John Dewey

Recreation, physical activity, and health are intricately connected. The Oklahoma Department of Health has given the state a failing grade on numerous health measures as documented in *Oklahoma – the People*. Those health measures are dependent upon recreation and physical activity. Recreation and physical activity are dependent upon education. Truly, it is education in Oklahoma that has failed its citizens resulting in the failure in Oklahoma health.

That situation must be changed!

6. **Recommendation 6** – The Oklahoma State Department of Education, the Department of Health, the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, and other interested public, private, and non-profit organizations must initiate discussions as to how cooperative educational activities can better prepare the Oklahoma citizenry regarding recreation, physical activity, and healthy lifestyles.

7. **Recommendation 7** – The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education must re-evaluate their policy related to exempting “physical education activity courses” from credit toward degrees at public colleges and universities in Oklahoma. Active, outdoor lifestyles continue into adulthood and skills and knowledge are essential to improve Oklahoma’s health scorecard.
8. **Recommendation 8** – Several states (e.g., Oregon, Washington, and others) have negotiated agreements for lower health insurance premiums or other financial benefits for those individuals who can document regular outdoor physical activity. The evidence is clear: regular outdoor physical activity improves health! OTRD, local recreation providers, and the Oklahoma Department of Health should investigate opportunities to reward persons participating in regular outdoor physical activity. While reduced premiums may be a motivator, the real benefits are reduced healthcare expense, improved quality of life, a healthier citizenry, and a healthier economy.

“Patients may get a surprise at their doctor’s office when their doctor prescribes a ‘walk in the park’ or outdoor exercise to help alleviate their symptoms. ‘Park prescriptions’ is a concept that links the healthcare system and public lands, such as local parks, to create healthier people.”

Zarnaaz Bashir, NRPA

Director of Strategic Health Initiatives

Issue 4: Funding and valuation of public recreation

A number of studies in recent years have shown that Oklahomans under-value public recreation. Among municipal governments, pricing for services has been rare; and, in those cases where there has been a fee for service, the price has been heavily subsidized with other public funds. The same has occurred with Oklahoma State Parks, Oklahoma State Lodges, and Oklahoma State Golf. In order to keep the recreation experience and facility available to all, the public providers have subsidized operations and capital expenses with tax revenues. As a result, Oklahoma citizens misunderstand the costs associated with recreation services and facilities; Oklahoma citizens under-value the services and facilities that are provided; and boards, councils, commissions, and legislators have struggled with funding, self-sufficiency, and revenue generation.

9. **Recommendation 9** – The Oklahoma Recreation and Park Society, the Oklahoma Municipal League, the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, and other interested public providers should hold workshops and engage in discussions regarding pricing of public recreation services.
10. **Recommendation 10** – In principle, and given the current economic and political climate, OTRD as the statewide leader in outdoor recreation should work toward self-sufficiency in provision of services, while providing access to parks as a subsidized right of residence.
11. **Recommendation 11** – Public providers of outdoor recreation services in Oklahoma should openly disclose costs for those services as an educational effort to establish proper perception of value.

Issue 5: Collaboration, cooperation, and communication

As documented in *Oklahoma – The Providers*, recent years have introduced a number of new management agencies into the market place of public recreation resources in Oklahoma. In particular, the expansion has brought in colleges, universities, and American Indian nations. The trend toward diversity in management agencies is likely to continue as governmental units seek partners for contractual management of public properties. These new entries into outdoor recreation resource management can benefit greatly from collaboration, cooperation, and communication with experienced managers.

12. **Recommendation 12** – OTRD, as the lead state agency in recreation resource management, should host an annual recreation rally to encourage collaboration, cooperation, and communication with federal, state, sub-state, municipal, and non-governmental recreation resource managers. These recreation rallies should also include representation from the public and interest use groups.

Issue 6: Statewide trails plan

The Oklahoma Recreational Trails Plan is dated and no longer reflects needs or expectations of the population. Urbanization of populated areas has produced some local trails showing coordination through local councils of government. However, the state lacks trails or a plan for trails to link communities or populations to outdoor recreation resources. The diversity of interests related to trails – hikers, joggers, bikers, equestrians, ATV riders, ORV riders, canoeists, kayakers, and more – continues to grow and will likely expand. Technology of alternative transportation has changed, as have the standards related to accessibility, specifically related to “other power-driven mobility devices” (OPDMD).

13. **Recommendation 13** – The Oklahoma Trails Advisory Board and the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department should develop a new statewide recreational trails plan. That planning process must include the range of recreation resource managers addressed in Issue 5.

Issue 7: Open Project Selection Process

The Open Project Selection Process (<http://www.otrd.state.ok.us/rd/index%20frame.htm>) utilized by OTRD has been in place and functioning for several years. Access is available online, although the web link is difficult to track. Available funding through LWCF has been reduced significantly in recent years, making it less attractive for many potential applicants. However, the application process is clear and available to interested parties. The plan has an implementation program that identifies the State’s strategies, priorities, and actions for the obligation of its LWCF apportionment. The implementation program is established on project selection criteria that will permit implementation of the SCORP.

14. **Recommendation 14** – The online information related to the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) should be reviewed for ease and clarity of access, electronically and for persons with disabilities.

The Oklahoma Plan

The issues and the recommendations provide the foundation for the Oklahoma Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for 2013 – 2017. Implementation of those recommendations will be the responsibility of agencies and individuals, but ultimately rests with the people of Oklahoma.

Several issues remain unresolved from prior SCORPs. The leadership of the present SCORP thought it wise to focus on fewer issues with achievable recommendations on a focused timeline. The Oklahoma Plan can be achieved – and the state and its citizens will be healthier and better for that achievement.

Table 4.1a – Implementing the Oklahoma Plan

Issue	Action	Responsible agent	Timeline
Water quality and quantity	BMPs on all state and municipal properties	OTRD Cities and towns	Immediate and on-going
	Recreation managers active in water planning	OTRD Cities and towns OWRB ODEQ	Immediate and on-going
	Education of public regarding water issues	OTRD Cities and towns OWRB ODEQ	Immediate and on-going
Loss of accessible public recreation space	Develop solutions to reductions of neighborhood parks	ORPS OML	Immediate and on-going
	Educate communities on value of land ordinances	ORPS OML	Immediate and on-going
Education for a life of health and quality	Cooperative educational programs of physical activity	Dept. of Educ. Dept. of Health ORPS OTRD	Immediate and on-going
	Restore collegiate level courses in physical activity	OSRHE Public colleges & universities	Immediate
	‘Park prescriptions’ and healthcare	OTRD Cities and towns Dept. of Health	Immediate

Table 4.1b – Implementing the Oklahoma Plan

Issue	Action	Responsible agent	Timeline
Funding and valuation of public recreation	Workshops to address pricing and economics of public recreation services	ORPS OML OTRD Others interested	Fall 2012 and on-going
	Goal: self-sufficiency in service	OTRD	Concept at present; includes numerous repercussions
	Open disclosure of cost of public recreation service	OTRD Cities and towns	Immediate and on-going
Collaboration, cooperation, and communication	Annual recreation rally	OTRD Cities and towns State agencies Federal agencies User groups General public	Annually or more frequently as needed
Statewide Trails Plan	Prepare a new statewide trails plan	OTRD Trails Advisory Bd. Cities and towns User groups General public	Goal: summer 2014
Open Project Selection Process	Review and revise online OPSP site	OTRD	Immediate

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Appendices



Appendix A – Municipal Survey



2012 Oklahoma Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
Email message to Oklahoma Municipal League members

To: OML member
From: Lowell Caneday, Ph.D.
Subject: Planning Survey of Oklahoma Municipalities

Oklahoma participates in preparation of a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) every five years. Preparation of a SCORP is mandated by federal legislation and is coordinated by the National Park Service through the Department of Interior. The SCORP makes Oklahoma eligible to receive federal grant funds, including those through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Recreation Trails Fund, and other programs. The SCORP process is coordinated through the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department (OTRD) under contract to Oklahoma State University (OSU).

To assist with planning for the next five years in Oklahoma, OTRD and OSU seek grassroots information regarding the present status of recreation and park services in Oklahoma and needs for the immediate future. You were selected to participate in this survey through the Oklahoma Municipal League (OML). You represent the citizens of your community in this public input.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You are free to decline to participate and may stop or withdraw from the survey at any time. However, your response is extremely important to properly represent your community. No personally identifiable information is required. By proceeding with the survey you have consented to participate in this research. This survey poses no risk to you beyond that in normal life and there is no penalty for refusal to participate.

If you believe there is a person who may be better qualified to respond to this survey – with a greater knowledge of park and recreation services and needs in your community – you may forward this message to that individual for their attention. To assist with the information requested in the survey, it may be wise to have information related to your parks and recreation facilities available as you complete the survey.

As the Principal Investigator for this project, I will also be the lead author on the next Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation. In addition, a graduate student at OSU is utilizing this information for his thesis.

The email includes a link to an online survey (SurveyMonkey link here) that will take about thirty (30) minutes to complete. You may start the survey, stop, and resume the survey at a later time. Please complete this survey by **March 31, 2011**. If you have any questions about the survey, contact Dr. Lowell Caneday at (405) 744.5503 or Lowell.Caneday@okstate.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact the Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, Dr. Shelia Kennison, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-3377 or irb@okstate.edu.

Please click on [SurveyMonkey link here] to complete the survey. Thank you very much for your assistance with this project.

Survey of Communities, Towns and Cities

Part One: Political Environment

1. What is the population of your town or city based on the latest census?	1,000 or fewer
	1,001 to 5,000
	5,001 to 25,000
	25,001 to 50,000
	50,001 to 75,000
	75,001 to 100,000
	100,001 or more
2. In what county is your town or city located?	
3. What is the zip code of your community, town or city office?	
4. Does your town or city have at least one property designated as a public park?	Yes
	No
	Do not know
5. Based on the Oklahoma Municipal Code (1977, c. 256, § 1-101, eff. July 1, 1978), what best describes the form of government in your town or city?	Statutory aldermanic (weak mayor)
	Statutory council/manager
	Strong Mayor-Council
	Statutory Town Board of Trustees
	Do not know
6. Does your municipality have a Parks and/or Recreation Department that employs at least one dedicated individual providing park and recreation services?	Yes – go on to Question 7
	No – go on to Question 8
7. What is the 2010 legally appropriated budget for your park and recreation department?	
8. If there is not a Parks and/or Recreation Department, what other unit of city government provide recreation services for the community?	Dept. of Public Works
	Community Services
	Senior services
	Other:
	No unit of city government
	Please go to Question 15
9. Does the municipality offer recreation programs for persons 17 years old and younger?	Yes
	No
10. Does the municipality offer recreation	Yes

programs for persons 18 years old and older?	No
11. Does the municipality charge fees for any of the recreation programs offered?	Yes
	No
	No cost recovery
	Variable cost recovery
12. How are the fees that are charged to the participants determined?	Partial cost recovery
	Full cost recovery
	Do not know
	Citizen board
13. Who determines what fees will be charged?	City staff member(s)
	Council or board
	Do not know
14. Is there a program in place to assist those who cannot afford to pay participant fees?	Yes
	No
15. Does your town or city jointly provide park resources with another non-governmental unit (e.g., YMCA or other local nonprofit organization)?	Yes
	No
	Do not know
16. Does your town or city have a land dedication ordinance for developers requiring dedication of park land?	Yes
	No

Part Two: Inventory

17. Identify the appropriate number for each of the following recreation facilities in your community managed by the city/town government. If a particular facility is not provided, put a “0” in that space.

Facilities		Number	Unit of measurement
Water-Based Facilities	Lakes		Acres of public water
	Boat Ramps		Number of ramps
	Fishing Docks		Number of docks
	Swimming Pool		Number of pools
	Swimming Beach		Number of beaches
	Splash pad/splash park		Number of pads/parks
Trails	Non-motorized Trails		Miles of trail
	Bike Trails		Miles of trail
	Equestrian Trails		Miles of trail
	Hiking/Walking Trails		Miles of trail
	Multi-Use Trails		Miles of trail
	Motorized Trails		Miles of trail
	Off road vehicle area		Acres of land
Sports Facilities	Baseball Fields		Number of fields
	Football Fields		Number of fields
	Golf Courses – 9 hole		Number of courses

	Golf Courses – 18 hole	Number of courses
	Basketball Courts	Number of courts
	Volleyball Courts	Number of courts
	Softball Fields	Number of fields
	Softball Fields – Adult	Number of fields
	Softball Fields –Youth	Number of fields
	Tennis Courts	Number of courts
	Skateboard Parks	Number of parks
	Disc Golf Courses	Number of courses
	BMX park or area	Number of areas/parks
	Running track	Number of tracks
Parks	Parks	Acres of park land
	Camp Sites-Tent	Number of sites
	Camp Sites-RV	Number of sites
	Nature Center/Interpretive Center	Number of center
	Dog Parks	Number of parks
	Playground	Number of locations
	Picnic Shelters	Number of shelters
	Amphitheater	Number of amphitheaters

Part Three: Issues & Needs

For the following items please indicate the level of concern for that topic within your community at this time, from 1 = “No concern at all” to 5 = “Extremely high concern”.

	No concern at all	Limited concern	Some concern	High concern	Extremely high concern
18. Visitor safety and protection	1	2	3	4	5
19. Ability of the town or city to pay for parks and recreation services	1	2	3	4	5
20. Maintaining existing recreation infrastructure or resources	1	2	3	4	5
21. Providing access and opportunities for people with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5
22. Capacity to serve a growing population	1	2	3	4	5
23. Capacity to serve an aging population	1	2	3	4	5
24. Capacity to serve an ethnically diverse and changing population	1	2	3	4	5

25. What are other issues related to recreation and parks that your city/town faces in

planning for the future?

--

Please indicate the level of the need for the following recreation and park related items in your community over the next five years. 1 = “Not needed” to 5 = “Most needed”

	Not needed		Neutral		Most needed
26. Baseball fields	1	2	3	4	5
27. Softball fields	1	2	3	4	5
28. Soccer fields	1	2	3	4	5
29. Golf courses	1	2	3	4	5
30. Disc golf courses	1	2	3	4	5
31. Basketball courts	1	2	3	4	5
32. Volleyball courts	1	2	3	4	5
33. Tennis courts or tennis center	1	2	3	4	5
34. Skateboard park	1	2	3	4	5
35. Trails within existing parks	1	2	3	4	5
36. Trails connecting neighborhoods to other trails	1	2	3	4	5
37. Trails extending beyond our community	1	2	3	4	5
38. Camping area	1	2	3	4	5
39. Picnic areas	1	2	3	4	5
40. Aquatic facility (swimming pool)	1	2	3	4	5
41. Natural area (open space)	1	2	3	4	5
42. Splash pad or splash park	1	2	3	4	5
43. BMX park or area	1	2	3	4	5
44. Running or walking track	1	2	3	4	5
45. Amphitheater	1	2	3	4	5

46. What is the basis for your assessment of needs in the previous questions?		Recent needs or planning assessment
		Public comment/complaint
		Personal perception
		Other basis:

47. What are other needs related to parks and recreation that your city/town faces in planning for the future?

--

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Survey of Directors of Parks and Recreation

1. Since 1964, states and communities have enjoyed some level of grant funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). How important has LWCF been for your community?

Completely unnecessary	Nice, but not necessary or useful	No opinion	Necessary and useful	Essential
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2. For the past two decades, states and communities have enjoyed some level of grant funding through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). How important has RTP been for your community?

Completely unnecessary	Nice, but not necessary or useful	No opinion	Necessary and useful	Essential
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3. During the past three years most governmental agencies have experienced serious budgetary stress. What has your experience been in your community?

Budgetary reduction of 25% or more in 3-year period	Budgetary reduction, but less than 25% in 3-year period	No change	Budgetary increase, but less than 25% in 3-year period	Budgetary increase of 25% or more in 3-year period
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4. If you have had a budgetary reduction, what actions has your agency taken to address the fiscal concerns? (Check all that apply.)

	Reduction in staff
	Reduction in programs offered
	Increase in fees for services rendered
	Increase in fees for programs offered
	Closing of facilities (parks, pools, centers, etc.)
	Transfer of management of facilities to non-profit organization
	Transfer of management of facilities to a private business
	Selling of properties
	Contracting services outside of your agency
	Other (please specify):

5. If you have had a budgetary increase, what was the source of revenue that permitted that increase? (Check all that apply.)

	Increased tax revenues without an increase in tax rates
	Increased tax revenues, due at least in part to an increase in tax rates
	Increase in fees for services rendered
	Increase in fees for programs offered
	Grants received by your agency
	Donations received or support of a nonprofit entity
	Other (please specify):

6. If there was no change in your budgetary allocation, how was that achieved?

--

7. If you have closed facilities, transferred management of properties to other agencies, or sold public property (or considered those actions) to aid in the fiscal crisis, what types of properties were involved? (Check all that apply.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	We have not considered nor taken any of these actions.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Small neighborhood parks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community parks
<input type="checkbox"/>	City-wide parks
<input type="checkbox"/>	Regional parks (including those outside city limits)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Swimming pools or aquatic facilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Golf courses
<input type="checkbox"/>	Sports fields
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tennis courts or a tennis center
<input type="checkbox"/>	Recreation centers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify):

8. Research has shown that people tend to value what they pay for. However, many public park and recreation services and programs have little to no fee attached for access to parks or programs. Does your agency have a policy related to establishment of fees for programs and services?

<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	I do not know

9. If yes, what is the basis for establishment of fees for programs and services?

<input type="checkbox"/>	No cost recovery (prices and fees are not based on costs)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Variable cost recovery (recover only variable costs)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Partial cost recovery (recover some costs, but subsidize others)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Full cost recovery
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do not know

10. As a provider of park and recreation services to your community, what is your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements of the purposes and benefits of parks?

Statements of park purpose and benefit	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Parks create jobs	1	2	3	4	5
Parks spur community growth and development	1	2	3	4	5
Parks increase property values	1	2	3	4	5
Parks build community	1	2	3	4	5
Parks attract and hold business	1	2	3	4	5
Parks improve health and quality of life in a community	1	2	3	4	5

11. As a provider of park and recreation services to your community, what is your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements of barriers for public use of parks?

Statements of barriers for public use of parks	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Deteriorating infrastructure is a barrier to use of parks.	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural insensitivity is a barrier to use of parks.	1	2	3	4	5
Fear of crime or violence is a barrier to use of parks.	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of transportation is a barrier to use of parks.	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of knowledge of locations is a barrier to use of parks.	1	2	3	4	5
People are just not interested in parks like they once were.	1	2	3	4	5

12. As a provider of park and recreation services to your community, how important is the goal or recommendation from AGO for citizens in your community?

Goal or recommendation	Extremely unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Extremely important
Enhancement of recreational access and opportunities for all citizens	1	2	3	4	5
Remove barriers for access to open space (including fear of crime or violence)	1	2	3	4	5
Provision of full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund	1	2	3	4	5
Provision of transportation to connect people to parks and open space	1	2	3	4	5
Restore or replace deteriorating infrastructures in parks and public areas	1	2	3	4	5
Expand cultural sensitivity within the community to increase understanding of varying expectations of parks and open space	1	2	3	4	5
Catalyze a 21 st Century Conservation Service Corps to engage American youth in public lands and water restoration	1	2	3	4	5

The America's Great Outdoors (AGO) initiative is designed to develop a 21st Century conservation and recreation agenda with emphasis on (a) urban parks and community based green spaces, (b) river, lake, and other blue-way access, restoration, and recreation venues, and (c) landscape-scale conservation. AGO requires linkage to the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and presents several goals and recommendations for the next five years.

Appendix B – Recreation Rally



Recreation Rally

February 3 and 10, 2012

Connections and Trails

Background:

- The Department of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Interior and the Department of the Army has developed the Memorandum of Understanding to Promote Public Health and Recreation. This collaborative effort promotes healthy lifestyles through sound nutrition, physical activity, and recreation in America's great outdoors.
- A number of studies indicate that the environment affects physical activity differently for men, women, children, ethnic groups, and other population groups. But the growing population of older adults will likely benefit from more activity-friendly environments.
- A growing number of studies show that people in activity-friendly environments are more likely to be physically active in their leisure time.
- Proximity, trail characteristics, social conditions and perceived benefits impact trail use:
 - Local trails that are convenient to home attract regular users
 - Distance matters — the closer people live to trails the more likely they are to use them
 - Trail use appears greater in neighborhoods with higher levels of population density, commercial activity, parking lot area and greenness
 - Trail characteristics, including surface condition and amenities, such as restrooms, drinking fountains, streetlights and trailside facilities (e.g., cafes), are positively related to trail use.
 - Social conditions on trails that appear to deter or detract from their use include crowding and perceived safety concerns among people engaged in different activities.
 - Trail users identify fitness and health, relaxation and solitude, fun and enjoyment, seeking a challenge or personal control, and being outdoors and learning about nature as benefits and motivating factors associated with using trails.

In Oklahoma, there are over 600 miles of trails used for hiking, biking, riding horses, almost entirely confined with single management jurisdictions. Recent public input pertaining to Section 3134 of WRDA 2007 (Oklahoma Lakes Demonstration Program) revealed a desire by lake users for more hiking, biking, equestrian trails and canoe trails.

Issues:

1. What are the issues surrounding trail use and connection with communities?
2. What role should local government play with regard to motivating residents to use communities' trails?
3. What are the issues surrounding the dissemination of information for existing and planned trails? What information is important to users and potential users of trails?
4. What conflicts occur in trail use in Oklahoma (between users, between trail users and adjacent property owners)?
5. Should Oklahoma seek to develop trails that link multiple communities? Are rail-to-trail conversions a viable option for Oklahoma?
6. Should attempts be made to change existing attitudes related to trails? If so, who should lead that effort and how might it occur?

Recreation Rally
February 3 and 10, 2012
Partnerships and Resources

Background:

- For public recreation agencies, appropriated funds have been reduced and are likely to remain limited for the foreseeable future.
- Municipal and state agencies in Oklahoma have reduced staff in response to budget shortfalls. As a result, levels of service have been reduced.
- Maintenance programs and capital improvement have been adversely affected in recent years. Very few bond issues or other creative funding vehicles have been approved for recreational purposes.
- Cooperative agreements and transfer of management from public to private or non-profit agencies have been increasingly utilized to avoid closing of parks.
- Most public agencies in Oklahoma have under-priced recreation goods and services. As a result, the people of Oklahoma under-value recreation. This has placed public recreation provision into a precarious position.
- Recreation behaviors are changing as the population changes. Resources needed for these recreation experiences are also changing.

Issues:

1. Are some of the new forms of recreation appropriate for public provision of place, space, and opportunity?
2. Are some of the new forms of recreation actually fads that will not be sustainable?
3. Is there adequate public land and water to meet demand in Oklahoma?
4. How do we in the profession aid in efforts to increase recognition of the value of recreation goods and services through public agencies in Oklahoma?

Recreation Rally
February 3 and 10, 2012
Permitting and Cooperation

Background:

- Inter-agency permits are often required for recreation development. These permits range from water rights, to permits for boat ramps, to use of school lands, and much more.
- Limited public lands in Oklahoma reduce opportunities for development without cooperation with private partners.
- Numerous new legal tools are available for creative planning, but such tools are often beyond the knowledge or experience of many Oklahomans.
- Environmental laws, accessibility requirements, risk management expectations and other contemporary expectations are often perceived as inhibitors for recreation facilities and programs.

Issues:

1. How can the permitting processes required for recreation planning and development be more efficient and effective?
2. How can cooperation be improved to better serve the public?
3. Are permitting processes actually serving as impediments to proper service and development for the public?

Recreation Rally

February 3 and 10, 2012

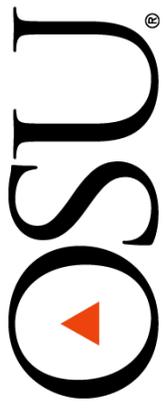
Water-based recreation

Background:

- The drought of 2011 had adverse impacts on recreation, agriculture, tourism, and many other components of the Oklahoma economy.
- Most of the surface water in Oklahoma is unfit for full body contact recreation at some time during the summer. The summer of 2011 was particularly dangerous with the outbreak of blue-green algae.
- Fishing and boating are especially popular within Oklahoma's numerous reservoirs, which have a shoreline length exceeding that of the combined Atlantic and Pacific coastlines.
- Water-based recreation has become an integral part of meeting society's recreational needs and sustains the Oklahoma economy. Recreation at reservoirs, natural lakes, and streams must be managed to prevent overuse and degradation.
- Oklahomans have favorite lakes and favorite locations on those lakes. Knowledgeable lake visitors also avoid specific areas on their favorite lakes and have good, personal reasons for avoiding those locations.
- Personal preference for specific lakes and locations is motivated by aesthetic appearance of the property, quiet experience, safety and security of the property, friendly staff, special events, and tradition. Respondents rarely mentioned commercial development or private support services as motivators for preference of a recreation location.
- People desire public access locations, campgrounds, and public day use recreation sites at USACE lakes. They do not desire or support private development to the same extent as they do public development. Section 3134 of WRDA requires innovative programs at Oklahoma lakes to enhance recreation, compatible with the SCORP.
- Texas wants Oklahoma water. Oklahoma is developing a new water plan. Numerous claims to Oklahoma waters must be properly represented and affect outdoor recreation.

Issues:

- How can public values be incorporated into water resource management, planning and policy formulation in a way that will enable the development of more water-based recreation opportunities?
- Collateral factors relate to water-linked values include treaty rights, education /communication/advocacy, and policy. How do these affect the water-based recreation opportunities provided?
- What conflicts occur in water resource management in Oklahoma?
- What are the current trends in water-based recreation that exist elsewhere, and are they desirable in Oklahoma?
- What are the issues pertaining to the water based recreation users' needs and perspectives? What innovative programs can be developed and be acceptable?
- How can the existing facilities meet different user groups?



Oklahoma Tourism
and Recreation Department



Oklahoma's 2012 SCORP The Next Generation

Lowell Caneday, Ph.D., Grace Chang, Ph.D. & Stella Liu

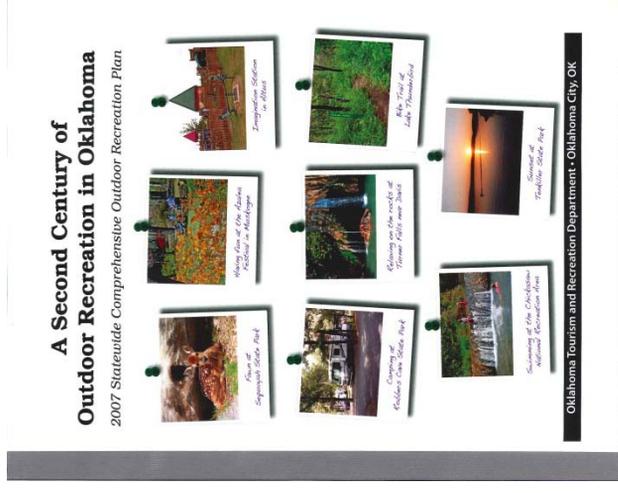
Today's Schedule

- ▶ 10:00 AM > brief introduction
- ▶ 10:05 – 10:30 AM > “State of the State for Recreation”
 - ▶ Deby Snodgrass, Executive Director, OTRD
- ▶ 10:30 AM > essential background information
- ▶ 11:00 AM > 1st breakout session
- ▶ 12:00 noon > lunch on your own
- ▶ 1:30 PM > 2nd breakout session
- ▶ 2:30 PM > Wrap-up
- ▶ 3:00 PM or so > conclude



Background

- ▶ Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)
 - ▶ Initiated in 1965 Land and Water Conservation Fund Act
 - ▶ Required for eligibility of individual states for federal financial assistance
 - ▶ Acquisition or development projects
 - ▶ 10th generation for Oklahoma
 - ▶ Decline in funding levels
 - ▶ Decline in support for programs:
 - ▶ Land and Water Conservation Fund
 - ▶ ISTEA, SAFETY-LU and related programs
 - ▶ Recreational Trails Fund



SCORP Content and Value

- ▶ Legislated and administrative requirements
 - ▶ Identity of authorized state agency; evaluation of demand for and supply of outdoor recreation resources; a plan for five year period; program of implementation of the plan
- ▶ Reality?
 - ▶ Oklahoma legislature and political pressures
 - ▶ Cooperation/competition/isolation of federal, state, municipal, and private operations
 - ▶ Utilitarian value: applications for funding
 - ▶ Ex. Lake Carl Blackwell
 - ▶ Professional value: cooperation in planning
 - ▶ Ex. Proposed Norman/Lake Thunderbird Trail
 - ▶ Political value: evidence for decisions
 - ▶ Ex. “closure” of seven state park properties



Essential background: Property

Ownership of Property	Oklahoma Percentage	National Average
Private properties	90.2%	58.0%
Federal government	2.9%	33.0%
State government	2.6%	4.5%
Local government	0.1%	2.5%
Indian lands	3.2%	2.0%
Water	1.1%	Included in above

- So what?
- Do these percentages make a difference in life?
 - Does land ownership affect recreation opportunity?
 - Does land ownership affect recreation demand and supply?
 - Do land ownership patterns affect the economy?
 - Do these percentages affect ME?



Essential background: Population

Race or Ethnicity	2000 Oklahoma	2000 National	2010 Oklahoma	2010 National
White	78.5%	80.2%	72.2%	72.4%
Black	7.7%	12.8%	7.4%	12.6%
American Indian	8.1%	1.0%	8.6%	0.9%
Hispanic or Latino	6.6%	1.5%	8.9%	16.3%
Two or more races	4.0%	14.4%	5.9%	2.9%
Non-English speaking	8.1%	19.4%	9.1%	20.6%

Population composition influences recreation behaviors.
 Population composition influences planning.

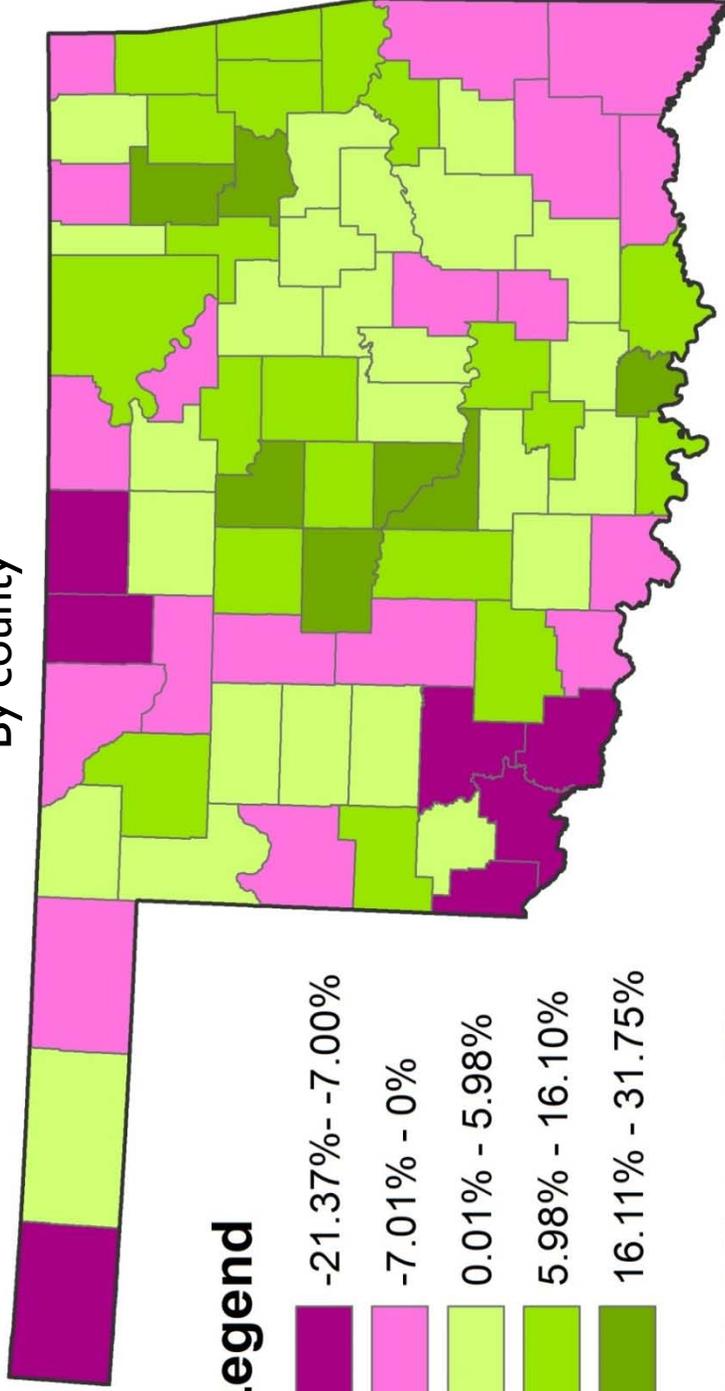


Essential Information: Population

Oklahoma Population Change

2000 – 2010

By county



Legend

- 21.37% - -7.00%
- 7.01% - 0%
- 0.01% - 5.98%
- 5.98% - 16.10%
- 16.11% - 31.75%

United States 9.7%

Oklahoma 8.7%

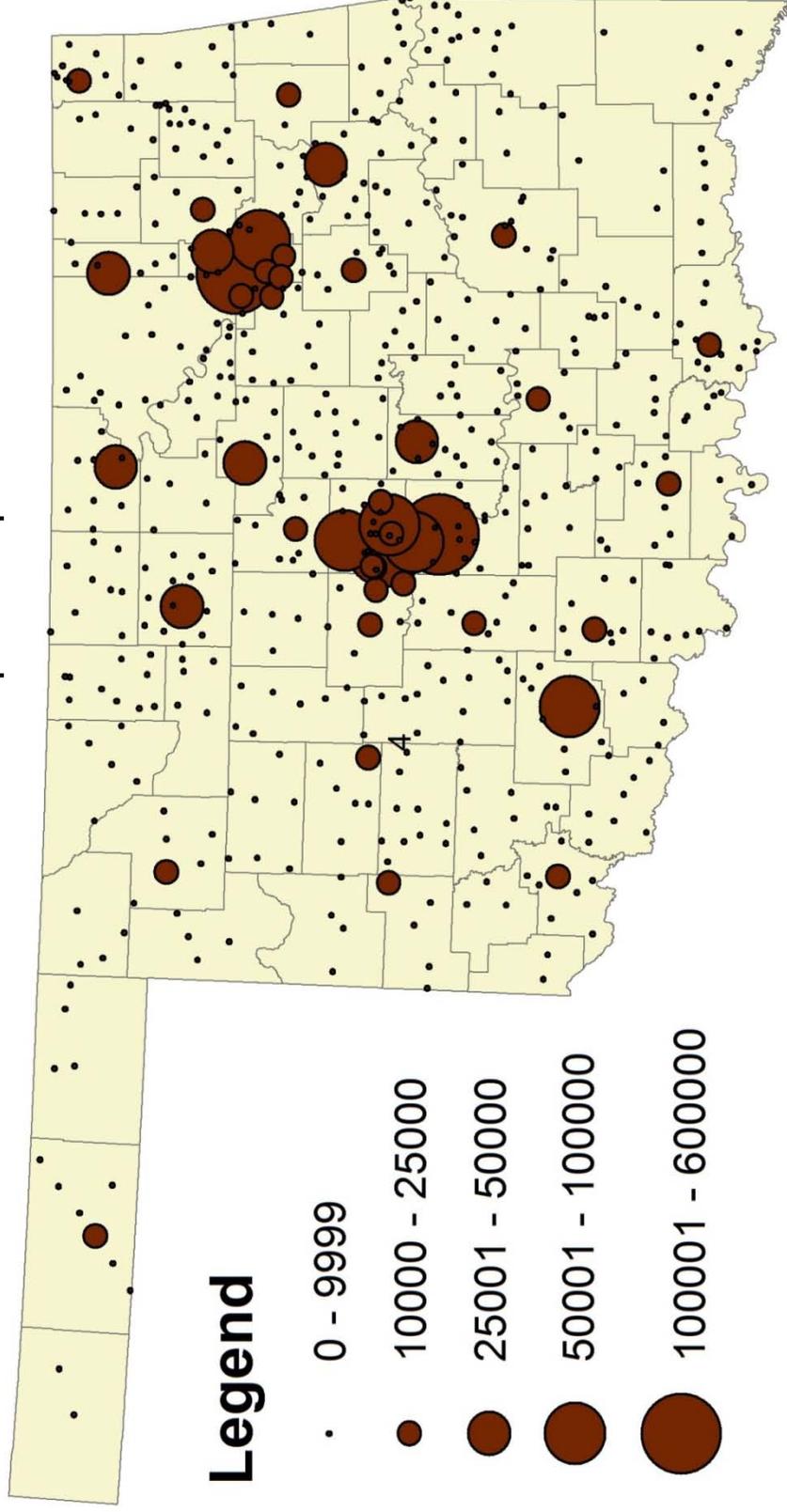


Essential Information: Population

Oklahoma Population Change

2000 – 2010

Persons in incorporated places



Essential Information: Population

Oklahoma Population Change

2000 – 2010

Persons in incorporated places



Legend

- 0 - 9999
- 10000 - 25000
- 25001 - 50000
- 50001 - 100000
- 100001 - 600000

- 612 incorporated cities/towns
- 76.2% of the population in incorporated places
- 50% in six counties
- Rogers, Wagoner, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Canadian, Cleveland

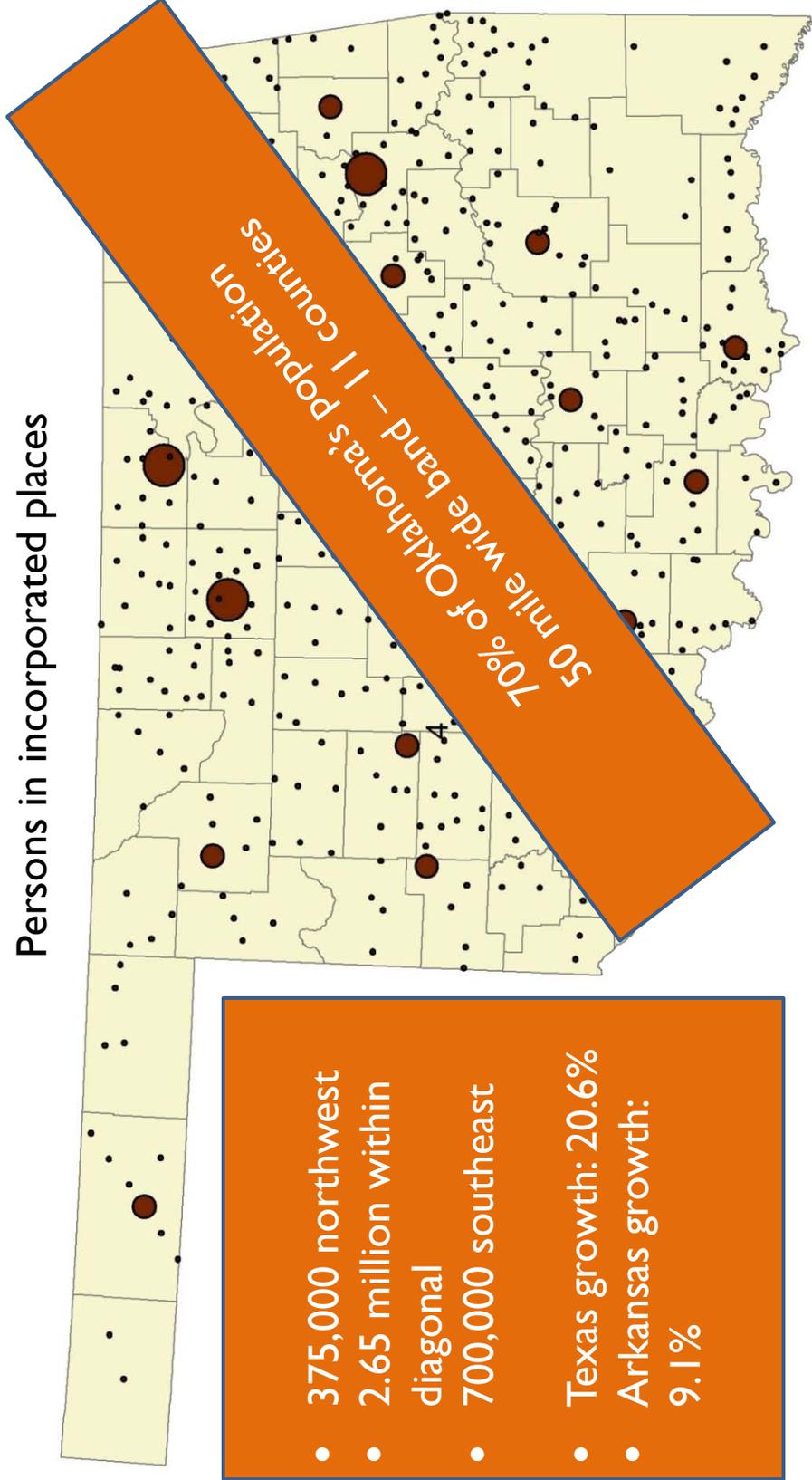


Essential Information: Population

Oklahoma Population Change

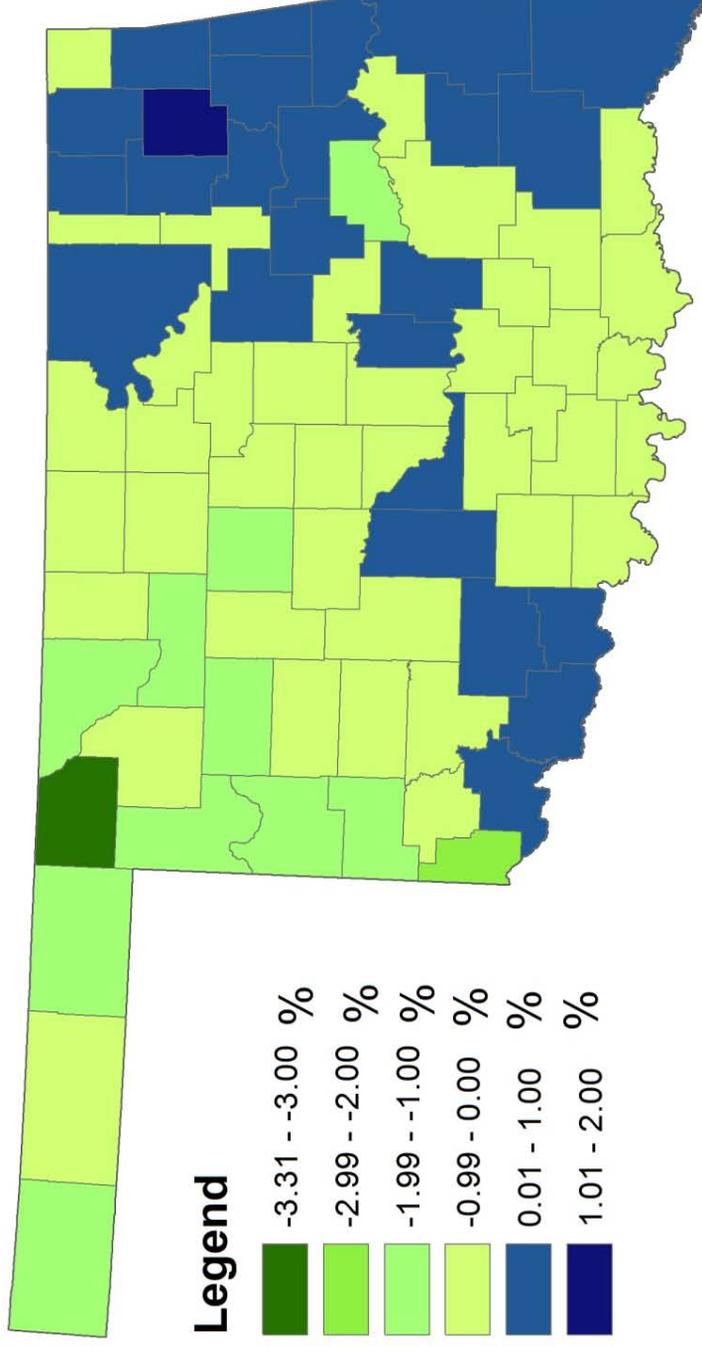
2000 – 2010

Persons in incorporated places



Essential Information: Age

Oklahoma Population Change
2000 – 2010
Children under 5 years

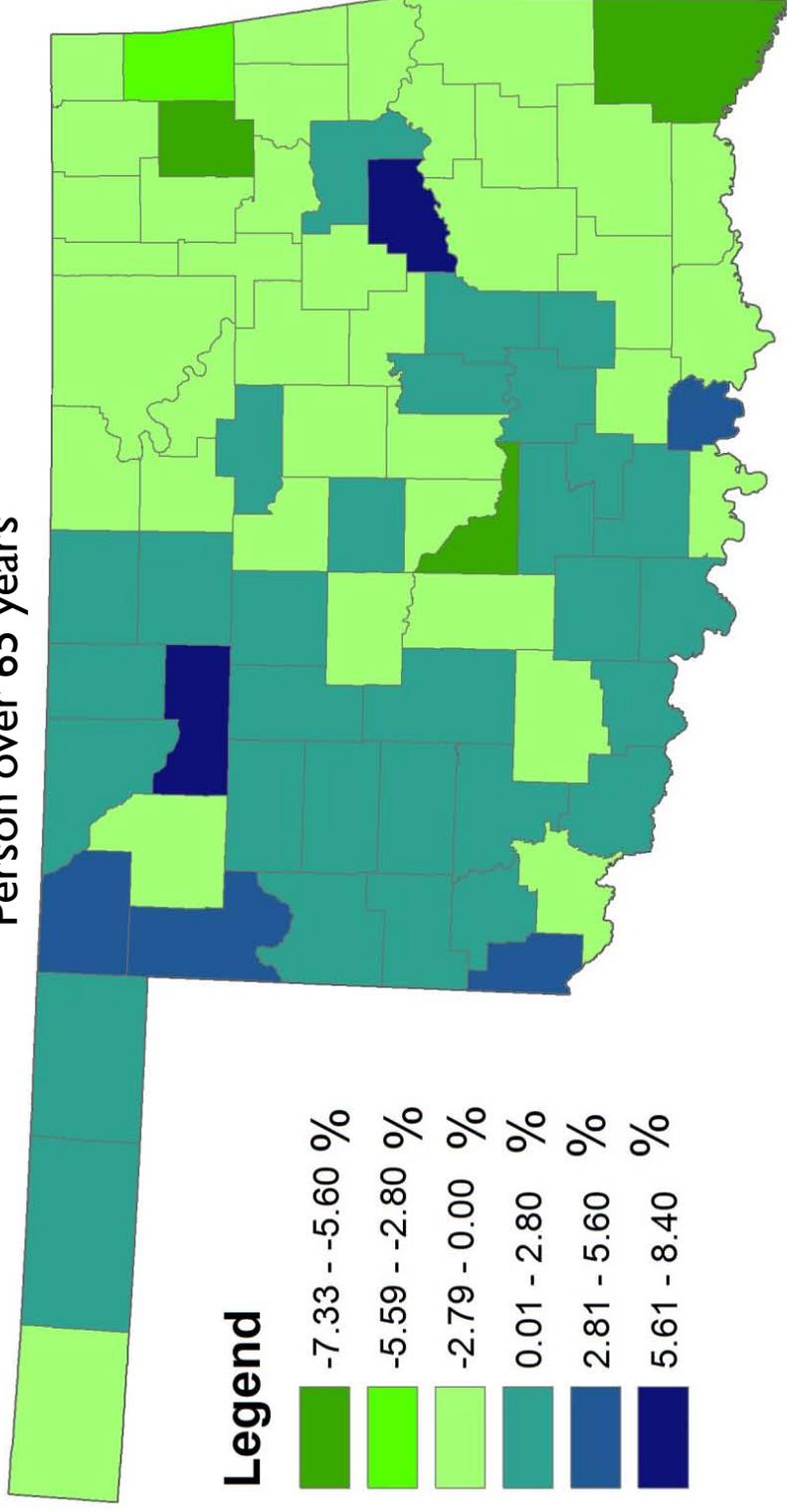


Essential Information: Age

Oklahoma Population Change

2000 – 2010

Person over 65 years



Essential background: Disabilities

Percentage of Age Group with a disabling condition	Oklahoma	National
Total population	15.7%	11.9%
Under 18 years old	4.4%	4.0%
18 – 64 years old	14.3%	10.0%
65 years old and above	43.2%	36.7%

Disabling conditions are inequitably distributed in the population –

- By age
- By race and ethnicity
- By economic status

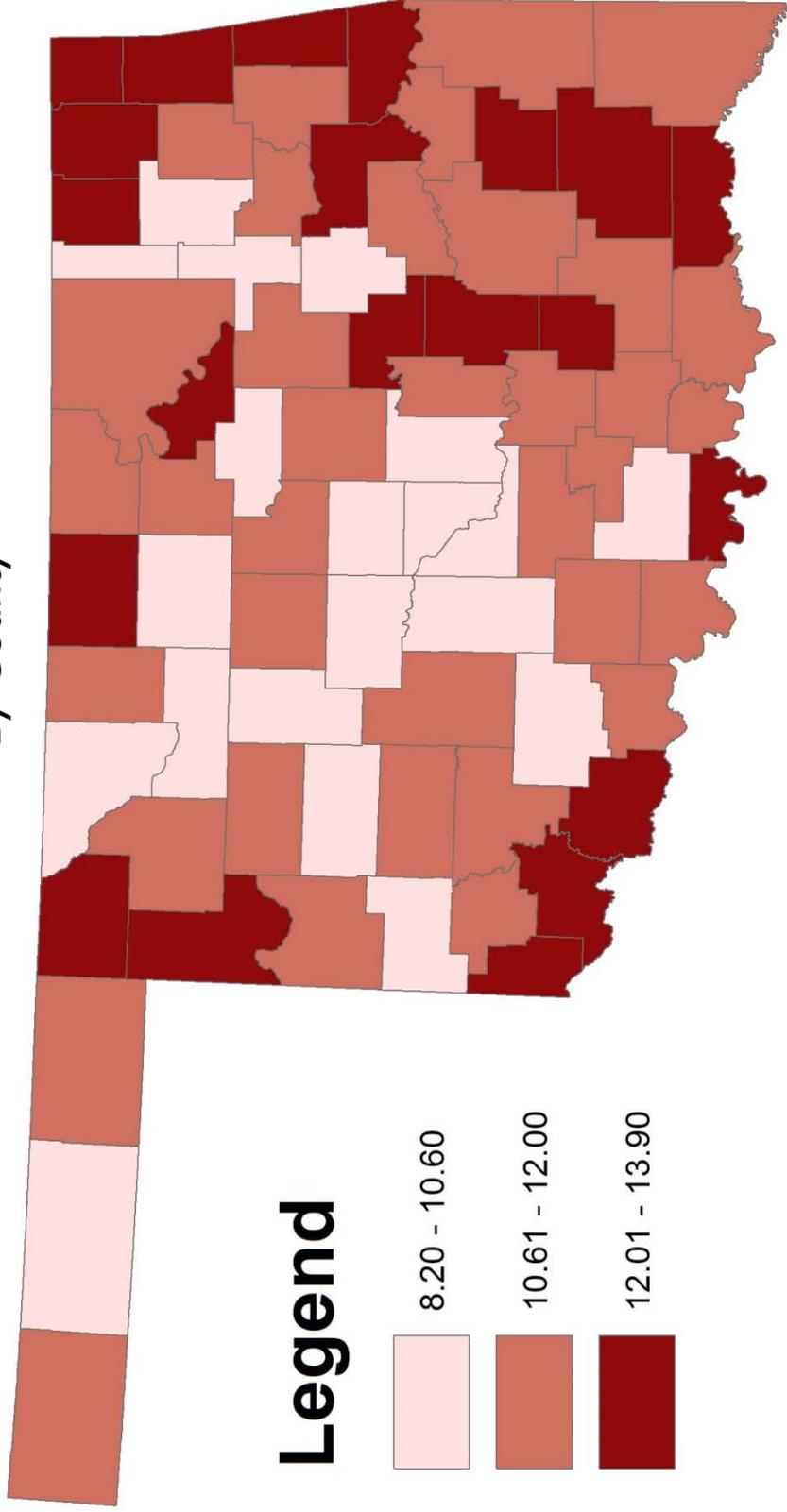
Disabling conditions influence recreation choices.

Disabling conditions require accommodation.

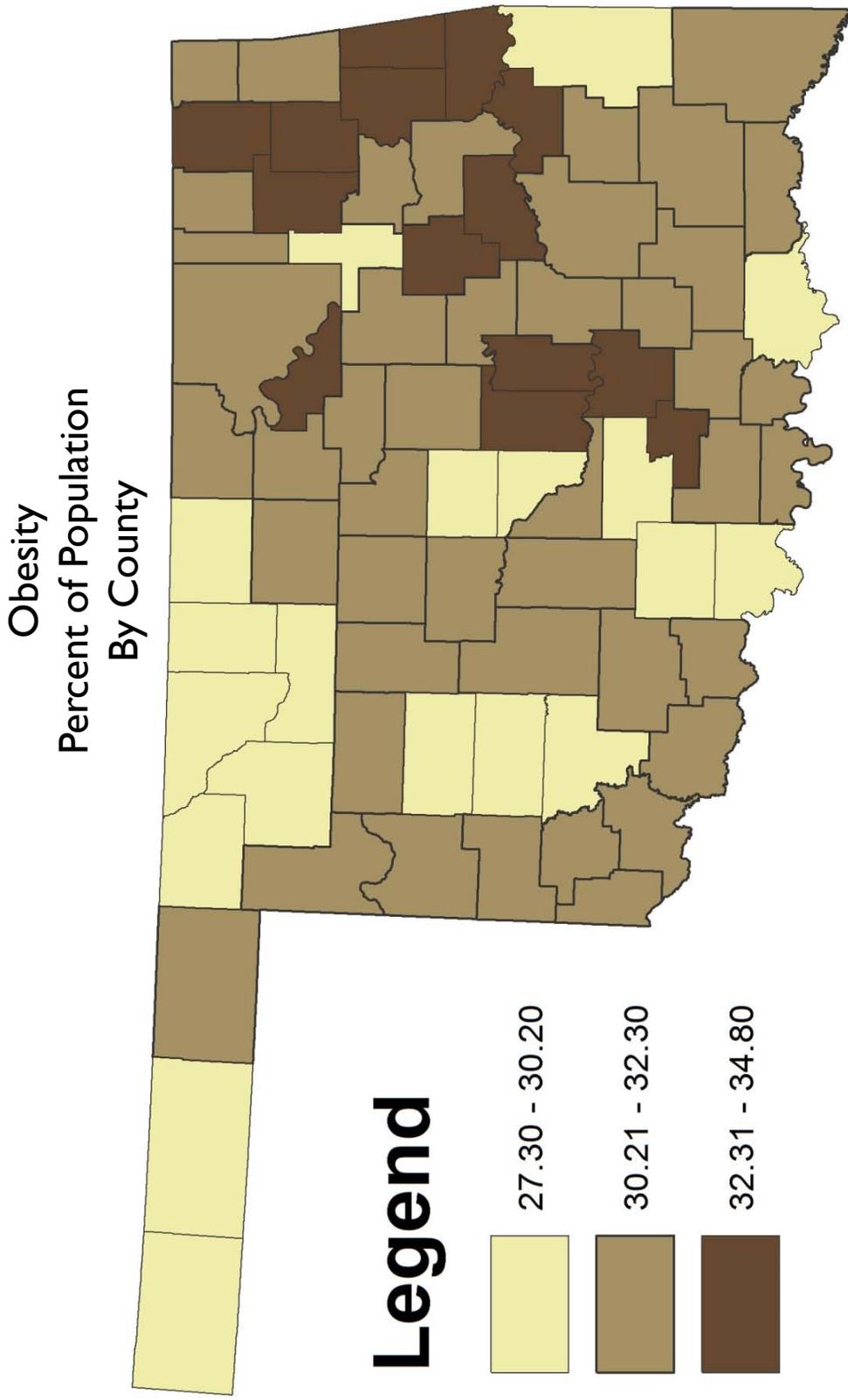


Essential Information: Health

Type II Diabetes
Percent of Population
By County

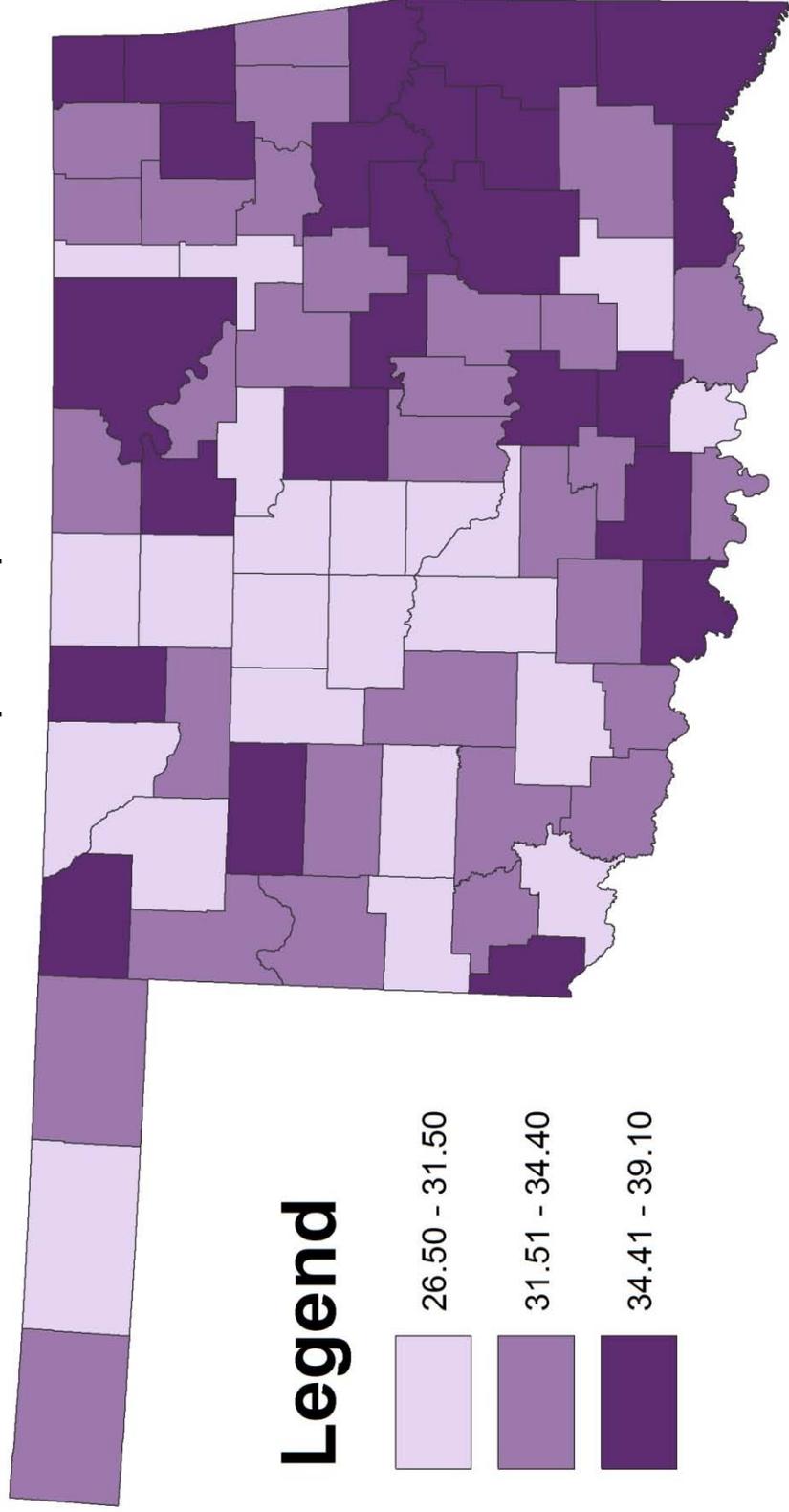


Essential Information: Health



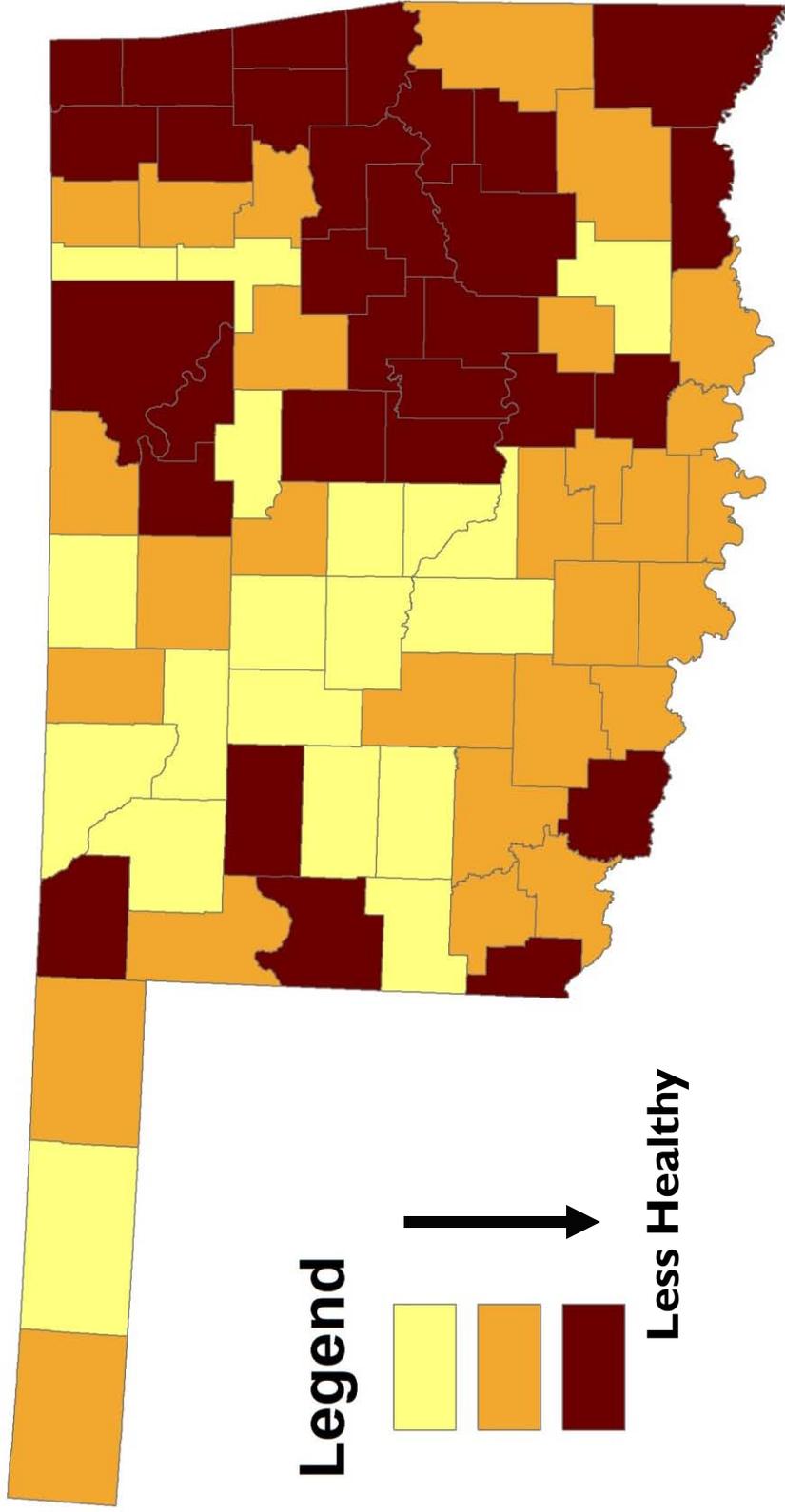
Essential Information: Inactivity

Physically Inactive Persons
Percent of Population
By County



Essential Information: Health

Diabetes, Obesity, and Physical Inactivity
Percent of Population
By County



Some OK Census Trends

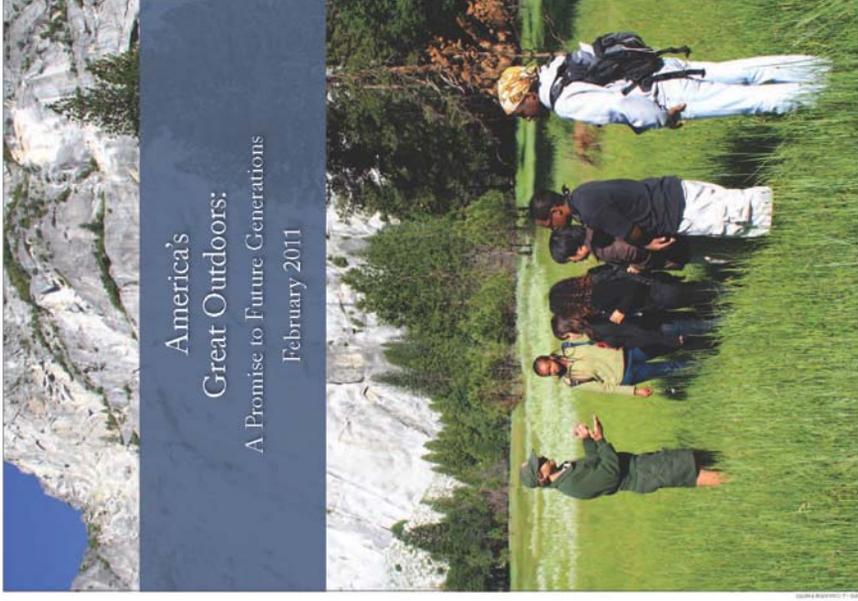
- ▶ Older, rural counties = front line of demographic change
 - ▶ “Minority” children = now majority children in 11 Oklahoma counties
 - ▶ Suburban growth outpaced rest of state
 - ▶ 28% families = a single parent
 - ▶ Changing face of OK families:
 - ▶ Single-father household
 - ▶ Grandparents raising grandchildren
 - ▶ Same-sex partners raising children
 - ▶ Traditional, nuclear family = 24.7% (2000) to 21.4% (2010)
 - ▶ % of population
- Source: Daily Oklahoman

Oklahoma's SCORP

- ▶ Focus on public provision of outdoor recreation opportunities
- ▶ Focus on demand for public parks and recreation services
- ▶ 2007 – What parks mean to Oklahomans
- ▶ 2012 – Preferences in provision
- ▶ Survey of towns/cities



National Context



- ▶ **America's Great Outdoors**
 - ▶ **Obama's initiative**
 - ▶ **Full funding for LWCF**
 - ▶ **Specialized competitive funding**
- ▶ **Focus**
 - ▶ **Urban parks**
 - ▶ **Great rural landscapes**
 - ▶ **"Blue ways" – rivers and streams with emphasis on access**

Break-Out Sessions

- ▶ 11:00 AM – 1st session ▶ Topics by table
- ▶ Noon – 1:30 PM lunch on ▶ Partnerships and
your own ▶ Community Resources
- ▶ 1:30 PM – 2nd session ▶ Water-based Recreation
- ▶ Purpose: seek input and ▶ Connections and Trails
ideas ▶ Permitting and
▶ Background sheet ▶ Cooperation
provided
- ▶ Note taker provided

