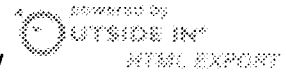




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Connecting People with Developmental Disabilities

to Outdoor Recreational Activities

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Sylvia Potts, Parks Recreation and Tourism

AUG 6 2007

Jennifer Jennings, Developmental Disabilities Council

STATE DOCUMENTS

Jan. 22, 2007

PROBLEM STATEMENT

People with developmental disabilities face challenges each day, but in many cases, they want to be treated just like any other individual. They have the same wants as everyone else. They want to be accepted, want to have friends, and they also want to be able to interact with others through social activities. One way that they are able to do that is through various recreational activities. The Developmental Disabilities Council has recognized that there are many recreational activities available that would include this population, but many times, these consumers are not aware of some of the activities that are available to them. However, while many consumers tell us that there is nothing available in their area, South Carolina has 47 parks positioned in all areas of the state.

By teaming up with our state parks, we realize that it could be a win-win situation for both state agencies, in that, people with developmental disabilities will be aware of activities through state parks. This, hopefully, will help increase the number of individuals who visit the parks. Several years ago, the South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council began producing a Summer Recreation Guide. Each year, various agencies and/or organizations submit listings of summer camp schedules to be included in the guide. This year, the council decided to partner with South Carolina Parks, Recreation and Tourism to take a look at other resources through State Parks that may be available to individuals with developmental disabilities. A developmental disability is a severe, chronic disability that begins any time from birth through age 21 and is expected to last for a lifetime. Developmental disabilities may be cognitive, physical, or a combination of both. While not always visible, these disabilities can result in serious limitations in every day activities of life, including self-care, communication, learning, mobility, or being able to work or live independently. Such disabilities are almost sure to result in a lifetime of dependence on publicly funded services, unless families receive sufficient support, children receive appropriate education, and adults receive appropriate services that enable them to live and work in their local communities. Approximately 4 million Americans have developmental disabilities. Developmental disabilities can occur in any family, no matter what their ethnic, economic, religious or political background. The South Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council, in the past, has chosen recreation as one of its priority areas, which was included in the last State Plan. The council implemented a new Five Year State Plan during this fiscal year and it will continue to fund recreation grants and project under the Community Supports priority area. Achievements in this area will be reported to the feds yearly through the program performance report.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The goal of the project was to find what programs State Parks offers that could include people with developmental disabilities and then relay that information to these individuals so they would know about them. In many cases, individuals with developmental disabilities look for recreational activities to participate in and there are many programs that are offered, but these individuals do not always know they exist. There are 47 state parks. All parks were asked to participate in the survey except for the new H. Cooper Black Recreational area. All state parks that requested to participate in the survey, did so. Through the surveying process, 52 individuals with a developmental disability or a family member of an individual with a developmental disability were surveyed. All consumers asked to participate in the survey did so.

The state's Department of Natural Resources and Forestry Commission were also asked to complete the survey. The Forestry Commission participated. The Department of Natural Resources did not.

Consumers were asked if they participated in programs at a state park and only nine said that they do. Overall,

only 18.4 percent of individuals with developmental disabilities who were surveyed, participate in activities at a state park, while 81.6 percent do not. Individuals participate at activities at Sesqui, Table Rock, Dreher Island, Congaree Swamp, and Cesar's Head. *Char Pollin*

One group of consumers that were surveyed were members of the People On the Go advocacy group. Through this process, the consumer sat down and was personally asked they survey questions. Another group that was surveyed was the Partners In Policy class, which consists of consumer members and also parents of individuals with disabilities. In talking with these individuals, they said that in many cases, they want to participate in recreational activities, but they often do not find out about some because they may not be geared for people with developmental disabilities. Other problems include activities not being in the individual's community, cost, or accessibility issues.

According to individuals from the state parks who participated in the survey, most people participate in recreational activities during the summer, 88.2 percent, while 87.5 percent of individuals participate in fall activities and 80 percent of individuals participate in the spring. Only 66.7 percent of individuals participating at state park activities take part in the winter.

Some activities offered through state parks include volunteer programs; history programs based on each site; school programs; canoeing; nature walks; tours; and educational programs. Oconee State Park does not have an interpreter, but has hired a seasonal recreator for summer months to include softball, basketball, volleyball, putt-putt tournaments, fly fishing lessons, etc. According to state park representatives there are also activities that are not geared towards people with developmental disabilities. In some cases, nature trails are not accessible for wheelchairs and mobility may be an issue. These representatives say that about 50 to 1,500 people with disabilities visit state parks.

In addition, representatives from state parks said there are some obstacles preventing increased number of programs offered to people with developmental disabilities. In many cases, there are staffing problems. Some parks are not accessible. One reason for this is topography. One site is mountainous. A representative from one site said there is not adequate funding to hire personnel with skills and training to offer activities specifically for disabled visitors.

Through the surveying process, we found there are many programs through state parks that are available to individuals with developmental disabilities. In many cases, the consumer member is just not finding out about these. The Developmental Disabilities Council has agreed to partner with Parks Recreation and Tourism to promote these activities. The council produces a Summer Recreation Guide each year and has agreed to dedicate a section of the guide to activities available through state parks. The guide is posted on the council's Web site and is distributed to many school districts, to Disability and Special Needs Boards across the state, and to individuals upon request. The council will increase the number of guides that will be printed so that they can also be distributed at the welcome centers across the state.

Initially, Sylvia and I arranged a meeting with Charles Lang, executive director of the Developmental Disabilities Council and Phil Gaines, director of the SC State Park Service to discuss the project. The two agencies agree to collaborate on the project and both directors offered support. We discussed the survey and data collection methods. After the data was collected, Sylvia and I met with Dudley Jackson, research director, SCPRT who helped us compile our survey data. Sylvia met with Valorie Wallen from the Performance Development Team at SCPRT. She assisted in creating a data base that allowed the state parks to participate in an online survey. Once the individuals from state parks entered their data, it was immediately stored in the data base.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The plan of publicizing these events to people with developmental disabilities has already been put in motion. Staff members from the Developmental Disabilities Council and Parks, Recreation, and Tourism are gathering information to be included in the council's Summer Recreation Guide. There will be a special section in the guide to feature activities sponsored by state parks. This year, with the help of the PRT staff, the guides will be available at the state's welcome centers, in addition to the state's Disability and Special Needs Boards and school district who already receive the guides. Last year, only 2,500 guides were printed and distributed. This year, we will increase the number of guides printed to 7,500. Council staff has noticed the guide has become more popular and the number of guides increases each year. Last year's printing cost was \$1.12 per guide. A total cost amount was \$2,800. The printing cost will be paid by the Developmental Disabilities Council. The guides will

be distributed to the Disability and Special Needs across the state, to school districts, council members, and to individuals requesting the guides. The South Carolina Autism Society distributes the guides to their clients, and the Partners In Policymaking Class, which is a program paid for by the council to teach consumers and/or their family members advocacy skills, will receive the guides. In addition, the council will post the Summer Recreation Guide on the Web site. The council also publishes a newsletter, which is sent to nearly 5,000 individuals, three times during the year. Activities that are not included in the Summer Recreation Guide will be included in the calendar section of the council's newsletter. The Summer Recreation Guide will also be advertised in the newsletter.

EVALUATION METHOD

To evaluate the plan, the state parks will be evaluated once again. At the end of the calendar year, the state parks will be surveyed to see if additional people with developmental disabilities participated at programs provided by the state parks. Also, individuals with developmental disabilities will be surveyed to see if they are aware of the services provided through state parks and also to find out if they have participated in them. The goal for the initial year is to have a five percent increase in park usage. We will also be in contact with employees at the Welcome Centers to find out how many guides were distributed.

Dear,

As members of the Certified Public Manager class, we are required to complete a class project. As a result, we have chosen to identify programs, activities, and recreational opportunities available through State Parks for people with developmental disabilities.

A developmental disability is a severe, chronic disability which is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments. Usually the disability is apparent before the person reaches the age of 22. A developmental disability results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major activities: self care; learning; communication; economic self-sufficiency; self-direction; independent living; and/or mobility. In addition, a developmental disability requires the need for lifelong individually planned coordinated services.

People with developmental disabilities enjoy participating in activities just like everyone else. We want them to know about activities that are available to them and we also encourage groups or individuals who offer recreational activities or programs to look at ways to fine tune these programs to include people with developmental disabilities.

We encourage you to complete our survey so that we can find out about programs which are currently being offered for these individuals. If you have a schedule or calendar for upcoming events, we encourage you to send that information to us. This information will be printed in the spring so that people with disabilities know about more opportunities that are available to them.

If you have any questions, please call Sylvia Potts at 803-734-0183 or Jennifer Jennings at 803-734-0382. We will be more than happy to talk to you about our project or to answer any questions you may have.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation!

Sincerely,

Sylvia Pott, SCPRT, Graphics Manager
Jennifer Jennings, Developmental Disabilities Council, planner

CPM State Park Survey
Type: Executive Summary Report
Date: 1/19/2007
Total number of responses collected: 22

Created using Parseur SurveySolutions (ESR)

1 (Spring): Estimate the number of visitors you serve through recreational programs or activities during each season.

Response	Frequency	Count
100	10.0%	2
50	10.0%	2
Other Responses	80.0%	16
Valid Responses		20
Total Responses		20

1 (Summer): Estimate the number of visitors you serve through recreational programs or activities during each season.

Response	Frequency	Count
200	11.8%	2
Other Responses	88.2%	15
Valid Responses		17
Total Responses		17

1 (Fall): Estimate the number of visitors you serve through recreational programs or activities during each season.

Response	Frequency	Count
100	12.5%	2
Other Responses	87.5%	14
Valid Responses		16
Total Responses		16

1 (Winter): Estimate the number of visitors you serve through recreational programs or activities during each season.

Response	Frequency	Count
0	13.3%	2
100	20.0%	3
Other Responses	66.7%	10
Valid Responses		15
Total Responses		15

2: How do you promote activities at your park? Check all that apply.

Response	Frequency	Count
newspaper	77.3%	17
onsite poster	63.6%	14
word of mouth	81.8%	18
radio	27.3%	6
TV	22.7%	5
website (give web address)	72.7%	16
newsletters (which one?)	22.7%	5
other	27.3%	6
Valid Responses		22
Total Responses		22

Created using Parseus Survey Solutions/EFM

3: What types of programs or activities do you currently offer and during what time of year are these programs/activities offered?

Response	
Volunteer groups - on site work programs - fall and winter	
6 general audience programs, based on history of the site. Feb. African-American Experience Program; Apr. Spring Cleaning for Family Heirlooms; May Redcliffe's Evolving Landscape; Jul. Growing History; Oct. Beyond the Gravestone; Dec. Christmas in the Quarters. Also offer curriculum based field trips for 3rd & 8th graders (usually Fall & Spring)	
School programs offered year round but most occur in the spring and fall. Canoeing programs in May and June. Discover Carolina offered year round.	
Living History events, Hikes, Guided Tours - Spring & Fall Winter	Hikes, Guided tours - Summer &
canoe/kayak program, sew your own sweetgrass program, and other various programs where speakers are brought in.	
Living History, guided tours, discover carolina educational programs geared toward 3rd and 8th grade. All programs offered year round with the exception of DC. These are offered during school season only.	
Oconee bell nature walk late winter, early spring	
We offer educational programs March through October, including field trips, lectures, tours, and living history demonstrations.	
Self interpretive tour of the Cherokee heritage museum and interpretive trail. Offered 365 days a year	
Oconee does not have an interpreter but we have been able to hire a seasonal recreator for the summer months. This position offers various recreational opportunities for all our visitors to include softball, basketball, volleyball, putt-putt tournaments, fly fishing lessons, etc.	
Valid Responses	21

4: What programs or activities are offered to include people with disabilities and during what time of the year are these programs/activities offered?

Response	
None have been offered	
People with disabilities can enjoy at least some aspect, if not all, of our programming/activities listed above	
The school programs would be most suited to individuals with disabilities as there are book activities along with a ranger talk for orientation to park grounds and facilities.	
Guided tours and Living History events are available to the disabled	
None specifically.	
All programs are available to all interested and offered year round as scheduled until filled. All trails are ADA accessible and we offer free wheel chairs to those who have need (2).	
Devils Fork is quite limited on the number of special programs we offer. Lake Jocassee is the main drawing card here.	
We don't turn anyone away, but guided hikes and certain educational programs are not suitable for person's with mobility related disabilities because of terrain issues and because our infrastructure does not support full ADA accessibility on trails and outside of the Visitor Center area.	
The museum is ADA Accessible	
We only offer these organized activities during the summer months. We do not have any activities specifically for visitors with disabilities but anyone is welcome to participate in the scheduled events.	
Valid Responses	20
Total Responses	22

Created using Parseus Survey/Outputs/EFM

5: What types of disabilities do individuals have that you serve?

Response	
NA Have not encountered.	
Usually physical limitations--confined to a wheel chair or using a walker or cane.	
We have some adult disability classes that utilize the park for organized picnics. Most of what we notice though is mobility disabilities.	
limited mobility, blind, deaf, mentally disabled	
All types except blindness. We don't have specific programs for disabled individuals.	
all types	
We see a large number of visitors with both motor and cognitive disabilities due to our close proximity and ongoing partnership with nearby Witten Center State Facility.	
Unknown	
I am sure that visitors with disabilities have participated in activities at Oconee but I do not know exactly the types of disabilities they had.	
Metal and Physical disabilities	
Valid Responses	19
Total Responses	22

6: What programs or activities are not geared towards people with disabilities and why? (Give examples of these activities.)

Response	
No recreational programming	
Programs inside the historic house are difficult for some visitors with physical limitations as there is no elevator access. However, all of our programs are at least 50% outdoors.	
Our school program and Discover Carolina recomend exploration of the canal and trails. Because we have no accessible trails at this time it would be difficult for mobility impairment visitors to do these exercises. Our canoe programs are skilled trips that involve personal risk and at this time not designed for most physical and mental incapacities.	
No programs offered at this site are specifically designed for people with disabilities.	
We feel that any and all could participate in our programs.	
It would be very difficult for wheelchair bound visitors to attend our wildflower walk due to the nature trail being quite steep and unpaved	
We don't turn anyone away, but guided hikes and certain educational programs are not suitable for person's with mobility related disabilities because of terrain issues and because our infrastructure does not support full ADA accessibility on trails and outside of the Visitor Center area.	
Trail use	
No programs are geared away from visitors with disabilities. Participation in any one activity would only be limited by the individuals ability to participate.	
The programs offered here at Lake Warren State Park are not gear to only toward people with disabilities. However, the programs are handicap accessible activities and provide the guests with disabilities the opportunity to participate.	
Valid Responses	19
Total Responses	22

7: Estimate the number of individuals with disabilities you currently serve.

Response	
The numbers are extremely minimal - I have only encountered a couple of individuals that required wheel chair use since starting work at Hartwell.	
50 per year	
Less than 100	
100 a year	
I can't really begin to estimate that number. It is something that we have never tracked.	
We do not track this and has not been personally monitored enough to even venture a guess.	
For the entire yearly park visitation I would estimate 1500	
1000 (estimate)	
Unknown	
Since the term 'disabled' is so broad, to include both mental and physical, some times it may be hard to tell. Over the course of the summer, a rough guess would be around 250.	
Valid Responses	20
Total Responses	22

8: What obstacles prevent you from offering or increasing the number of programs offered for people with disabilities?

Response	
Our staffing levels prevent programs	
a facility that is on the National Register of Historic Places and cannot be modified without damage to the structure.	
Lack of interpretive staff. However, we are in the process of completing an accessible trail to our spider lily overlook that will be self interpreting.	
Topography. My site is mountainous and difficult for the disabled to access.	
access to the site	
labor availability	
Developing programs for those facing significant learning or mental disabilities takes time that staff currently do not have. Most areas of the park are not accessible to those with mobility related disabilities, so additional ADA infrastructure would be required to conduct proper programming.	
Staffing	
Funding to hire personnel with the skills and training to offer activities specifically for disabled visitors, facilities that are accessible and equipment that could assist disabled visitors participate in various activities.	
We currently have a Gazebo and boat dock at the park. The walkways to each of these facilities are natural trail. Having concrete or packed mulch walkway would make access much easier.	
Valid Responses	17
Total Responses	22

9 (Which State Park?): Where do you work?

Response	Frequency	Count
Other Responses	100.0%	20
Valid Responses		20
Total Responses		20

Created using Perseus Survey Solutions.EFM

9 (Forestry): Where do you work?

Response	Frequency	Count
Other Responses	100.0%	1
Valid Responses		1
Total Responses		1

Created using Perselus SurveySolutions.EFM

9 (DNR): Where do you work?

Response	Frequency	Count
Valid Responses		0
Total Responses		0

10: Starting with the list of activities you gave in Question #3, please include in this space a brief description of the activity and contact information for the activities in the format you would normally provide for publication.

Response
<p>These are volunteer work detail programs, such as nature trail work, shoreline cleaning, adopt a highway. There are no scheduled recreational programs at Lake Hartwell at this time.</p>
<p>Feb. African-American Experience Program--exploring the history of 4 generations of African-Americans that worked for the Hammond family as slaves, tenant farmers, & house staff (held outside weather permitting) Apr. Spring Cleaning for Family Heirlooms--sharing the information we use as curators of a large collection of artifacts to help visitors care for their own objects (held indoors) May Redcliffe's Evolving Landscape--examining how Redcliffe's landscape was modified by 4 generations of the Hammond family (held outside weather permitting) Jul. Growing History--teaching visitors about gardening with heirloom vegetables (held outside weather permitting) Oct. Beyond the Gravestone--walking through a community cemetery, discussing gravestone images and the evolution from Graveyard to Cemetery (held outside weather permitting) Dec. Christmas in the Quarters--celebrating Christmas holiday for Hammond's enslaved population--topics such as food, free time, gifts, etc. (held outside weather permitting)</p>
<p>Discover Carolina-Landsford Canal Through class room activities both before and after a visit to the park, students will gain an understanding of how an 18th century canal was constructed, used and why it was needed. School program this is a basic overview of Landsford canal showing how the canal was built and used in the 1800's. Booklet is provided with classroom activities and explanations of the canal to aid students in a self guided tour of the canal trail. Canoeing programs-May and June -Designed for the experienced canoers to be able to attend a ranger guided river tour of the Landsford shoals while the rare Rocky Shoals Spider Lily is in peak bloom. This 4 hour tour includes 2.5 hours paddling the Catawba river shoals and rapids and concludes with a 1.5 mile hike up the canal trail to the main area.</p>
<p>Living History Events - (reenactments) time period 1792-1799 Hikes - Guided and self guided tours of 1.5 mile nature trail Guided Touts - two house dating to the 1792-1809 frontier along the Cherokee Boarder at the base of the mountains. The Contact information for all programs is: Oconee Station State Historic Site, 500 Oconee Station Road, Walhalla, SC. 29691, (864)</p>

CPM Customer Survey
Type: Executive Summary Report
Date: 1/19/2007
Total number of responses collected: 52

1: What recreational programs or activities do you currently participate in?

Response	
1001	Darate exercise class summer camp soft ball
1002	self advocacy education committee
1003	soccer
1004	church YMCA
1005	
1006	swimming volleyball camp art camp horse back riding camp for children with dissabilities
1007	DD Council VFP
1008	none
1009	none family
	swimming amusement parks family road trips
Valid Responses	50
Total Responses	52

2: What time of year are you most active in recreational programs or activities?
 Check all that apply,

Response	Frequency	Count
Spring	65.4%	34
Summer	71.2%	37
Fall	57.7%	30
Winter	34.6%	18
Valid Responses		51
Total Responses		51

3: How often do you participate in recreational activities?

Response	Frequency	Count
daily	15.4%	8
weekly	38.5%	20
monthly	19.2%	10
yearly	13.5%	7
other (explain)	9.6%	5
Valid Responses		52
Total Responses		52

4: What types of programs or activities are you interested in that you currently do not get to participate in?

Response	
support group	social group for teens with disabilities
travel	
variety of sports	opportunity to interact with other children
none	
basketball	football
	all sports
want wheelchair sports for young children in Lee County	
none	
want to learn sign language	
parks	exercise
	movies
Valid Responses	49
Total Responses	52

5: How do you find out about the activities that you participate in?

Response	Frequency	Count
newspaper	26.9%	14
onsite poster	5.8%	3
word of mouth	61.5%	32
radio	9.6%	5
TV	25.0%	13
website (give web address)	19.2%	10
newsletter (which one?)	23.1%	12
other (explain)	28.8%	15
Valid Responses		52
Total Responses		52

6: What obstacles or challenges do you face when participating in recreational activities?

Response	
cost	
paying close attention staying focused keeping myself posted	
finding activity that holds son's attention finding activity that he can do well in socialization of my child with others	
none	
stomach surgery could get injured	
environment is not set up for children with physical problems	
learn	
not always accessible	
no recreational programs for people like me in my area of SC	
mental retardation and lack of fear prevnets camping near water childs's lack of understanding the need to wear seatbelts on amusement rides	
Valid Responses	41
Total Responses	52

7: What obstacles prevent you from participating in recreational programs or activities, if any?

Response	
cost	
none	
behavior at times difficult to manage	
none	
might get hit in stomach - had stomach surgery	
not many to choose from	
sometimes my mother has to work and I have to stay home with my grandmother	
unable to work	
not wheelchair accessible lack of transportation	
doesn't understand safety precautions doesn't comprehend how to participate	
Valid Responses	37
Total Responses	52

8a: Do you currently participate in programs or activities at a state park?

Response	Frequency	Count
yes	18.4%	9
no	81.6%	40
Not Answered		3
Mean		1.816
Standard Deviation		0.391
Valid Responses		49
Total Responses		52

8b: If "yes", which state parks?

Response	
Sesqui owl prowl hiking, walking	Table Rock hiking Deasars Head
Dreher Island camping MB State Parik swimming, digging, exploring	Congaree Swamp
Age	
Fenlay	
picnic at Sesqui	
Sesqui, walk around and play baseball	
baseball at Forest Drive Park	
used to	
Sesqui picnic	
Sesqui, walk	
Sesqui, picnic	
Valid Responses	13
Total Responses	52

9: What is your disability?

Response	
Autism	
mild Autism Aspergers Syndrome	
jmine @ perseus testing	
ADHD Aspergers	
autism	
short gut syndrome hearing impared speech impared	
paraplegic	
Spina Bifada hydrocephalus	
quadriplegic	
Severe mental retardation sensory integration disorder dysarthria, but not physically disabled	
ADHD seizures apraxia	
Valid Responses	47
Total Responses	52