

active, healthy living through recreation and parks



RECREATION + PARKS ASSOCIATION OF THE YUKON

established c. 1993

Strategic Plan 2023-28

Strategic Plan 2023–2028

Our Slogan

Active, healthy living through recreation and parks

Our Mission

We support Yukon communities to engage their citizens in active, healthy lifestyles through recreation and parks.



Our Beliefs

We believe in the Benefits as stated in the 2015 Framework for Recreation in Canada. Recreation and parks,

- ✿ Enhance mental and physical wellbeing.
- ✿ Enhance social wellbeing.
- ✿ Help build strong families and communities.
- ✿ Help people connect with nature.
- ✿ Provide economic benefits through investments in recreation.

Our Operating Principles

We reflect our principles through annual work plans and day-to-day activities. We are:

- ✿ **Strategic** because we consider current trends, respond to national and territorial priorities, and maintain strong partnerships.
- ✿ **Sensitive** because our activities, programs and operations respect the diversity and uniqueness of our communities, cultures and environments.
- ✿ **Supportive** because we recognize that some communities and groups may benefit from our services more than others.
- ✿ **Sustainable** because we strengthen our organization's security and efficiency, streamline operations, and focus on what is working well.

Our Vision

We envision a Yukon where recreation and parks are essential and integral to quality of life; where all citizens have opportunities to engage in recreation experiences that contribute to physical, mental and social wellbeing; and where recreation connects people to their communities and outdoor environments.

Our Values

We ground our decisions and actions in our values of:

- ✿ **Lifelong Participation** in recreation, arts, culture and an active lifestyle; and **Lifelong Connections** to nature, parks and trails.
- ✿ **Inclusion and Equity** in order that all Yukoners, regardless of community, age, gender, ethnicity, ability or means, can have opportunities to engage in meaningful recreation experiences.
- ✿ **Community-Based Leadership** in order to strengthen local capacity to provide relevant recreation experiences.
- ✿ **Relationships and Partnerships** that are essential for community-driven recreation.



Prepared by Caroline Sparks
With input from RPAY staff and board
March 2023

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Our Strategic Priorities

1) We promote the benefits of active living, recreation and parks for health and wellbeing by

- a) sharing information and key messages about the positive impacts of recreation and parks;
- b) presenting evidence that recreation is essential to health, wellbeing and quality of life;
- c) emphasizing the personal and social benefits of recreation through the delivery of core programs and services; and
- d) encouraging outdoor recreation in nature, in parks and on trails.



2) We foster active, accessible, inclusive, and culturally-relevant recreation by

- a) encouraging the development and delivery of active recreation programs that fulfill local needs and interests;
- b) improving access to lifelong, outdoor, winter recreation activities;
- c) promoting active transportation through walking and cycling; and
- d) evaluating our programs and services in order to focus our efforts where support is most needed.



3) We strengthen recreation capacity and leadership (prioritizing support for rural and First Nations communities) by

- a) facilitating professional development and networking for Yukon's recreation leaders and our organization;
- b) improving access to industry-specific certifications required to lead programs and operate facilities; and
- c) providing training that develops the core competencies needed for community recreation in the North.



4) We operate effectively, efficiently and sustainably by

- a) strengthening governance practices through Board development and engagement, regular review of the constitution and policies, and effective Board–Staff communications;
- b) using accepted fiscal management processes, following generally accepted accounting principles, developing relevant policies, and sustaining adequate levels of funding;
- c) working with key stakeholders and funders to maximize resources and achieve goals;
- d) implementing human resource practices that ensure growth, continuity, and recognition of staff, contractors and Board members;
- e) contributing to the field within the territory, across the country, and as a member of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.



Our Actions

Our strategic priorities guide the development of annual work plans. Our annual work plans describe activities that can be carried out with available resources and can be measured. Day-to-day actions result in a range of programs and services that are evaluated regularly. While we are open to new opportunities that align with our strategic priorities, we remain committed to the ongoing delivery of our key programs and services over the next five years.

-  The **Rural Healthy Eating Active Living (RHEAL) Leader program** enables rural and First Nation communities to develop active recreation programs that meet local needs and interests.
-  The **Winter Active for Life (WAFL) Equipment Library and WAFL program** improve access to participation in outdoor, winter activities.
-  **Cycle Smart**, a program that teaches Yukon children the skills to bike safely, and walking initiatives (e.g., Nordic walking) promote active transportation.
-  **Active Playground Experiences (APE)** teaches students in the intermediate grades how to lead activities for younger students.
-  The **Recreation North Training Program**, delivered in partnership across the territories, strengthens recreation capacity in small, remote and Northern communities.
-  The **Annual Recreation Gathering and Spring Aquatics Workshop** provide professional development for leaders working in rural aquatics and recreation.
-  Our **website, social media, promotional items**, etc. promote the benefits of recreation and parks for an active, healthy lifestyle.
-  **Represent and contribute** to our field through activities of the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, Canadian Trails Federation, ParticipACTION, etc.



Words We Use

Source: A Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015

Active living is one component of a healthy lifestyle and implies regular patterns of participation in active recreation and physical activity over the lifespan.

Active transportation refers to human-powered transportation such as walking, cycling, using a wheelchair, or snowshoeing.

Health is "a state of physical, social and mental wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (World Health Organization).

Inclusion is an organizational practice and goal in which all groups and individuals are welcomed and valued. **Equity** speaks to fairness in access to resources, opportunities and experiences.

Recreation is the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing.

The **recreation field** includes volunteers, paid staff, community groups, educators, researchers, organizations and governments, representing not-for-profit, private and public sectors, and working collectively to enhance individual and community wellbeing through recreation.

Wellbeing is "the presence of the highest possible quality of life in its full breadth of expression, focused on but not necessarily exclusive to: good living standards, robust health, a sustainable environment, vital communities, an educated populace, balanced time use, high levels of democratic participation, and access to and participation in recreation and culture" (Canadian Index of Wellbeing).



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Our History

The Parks & Recreation Association of the Yukon was initially registered on January 6, 1984 but disbanded shortly thereafter. The Recreation & Parks Association of the Yukon (RPAY) became a non-profit society on April 19, 1993. The need for a Territorial recreation and parks association had emerged during the Breaking Trails Recreation Conference and with the advent of The Benefits of Recreation. In its early years, RPAY partnered with Yukon Government (YG) Sport and Recreation Branch to host bi-annual conferences and to support aquatics staff who managed rural pools.

In 2001, through the Yukon Active Living Strategy, the Territorial government established an Active Living Coordinator position housed at RPAY. This commitment prompted programming delivered through the active living settings of individuals, schools, workplaces and communities. Around 2002, RPAY expanded its focus from active living to chronic disease prevention. Funded through the Canadian Diabetes Strategy and Canada's Population Health Initiative, a variety of active living programs, such as the RHEAL Leader (rural healthy eating active living) program, Active Rx and On-the-Right-Path were launched.

Around 2010, concerns around childhood obesity and low levels of physical activity emerged. Healthy eating became a priority under The Healthy Living Bilateral agreement. Programs that incorporated healthy eating and targeted physical activity during the after-school time period (ASTP) were developed. RPAY worked tirelessly to try and address the priorities driven by public policy and funding.

Beginning with the renewal of the Yukon Active Living Strategy in 2012, additional frameworks emerged focusing priorities on physically active recreation that was inclusive and accessible. Priorities were expressed in: A Framework for Recreation in Canada (2015), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (2015), A Common Vision for Increasing Physical Activity and Reducing Sedentary Living in Canada (2018), and Parks for All (2018). When the Public Health Agency of Canada changed its funding practices in 2014, RPAY entered into the Yukon Northern Wellness Project with the YG Sport and Recreation Branch to ensure ongoing access to federal funding. Since this time, RPAY has focused on delivering key programs and services primarily targeting rural and First Nation communities and under-served groups.



On March 27, 2020 a state of emergency was declared. RPAY responded to the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic by adjusting work plans and activities. With the exception of the Recreation North Training Program (already being delivered remotely), RPAY turned to the online delivery of programs and services. Although it was not easy, staff and contractors learned to be creative, resourceful and innovative and to facilitate programming, support communities, and build strong networks from a distance. The pandemic restrictions encouraged our field to re-imagine recreation in ways that were more inclusive, accessible, fun, and healthy—think Bubble Yoga and kick sledding!

After three decades and changing landscapes, the Recreation & Parks Association of the Yukon remains dedicated to empowering Yukon people and communities to adopt active, healthy lifestyles. RPAY is appreciative of the encouragement and operational funding from YG Sport and Recreation Branch and grateful for the relationships with other sectors and at community, territorial and national levels. Some of RPAY's proudest moments can be heard in the stories that are told at recreation gatherings or seen in **The Recreation Effect**, a Yukon film, produced by Midnight Light in 2023. One sometimes overlooked story is how RPAY became the proud owner of new office space on January 21, 2019. In its own space on Titanium Way, RPAY demonstrates a high-level of professionalism and commitment to serving Yukoners for at least another three decades.



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