Investigation and Identification of Key Characteristics of Successful Camps and Retreat Centers

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INVESTIGATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF
SUCCESSFUL CAMP AND RETREAT CENTERS

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of Physical Education and Recreation
Western Kentucky University
Bowling Green, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
Gregory S. Owens
May 1996
INVESTIGATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL CAMP AND RETREAT CENTERS
Acknowledgments

I would like to gratefully acknowledge Dr. William Kummer for chairing my thesis committee and Dr. Steve Spencer and Dr. Elmer Gray for serving on my committee. Their willingness to give of their time and energy, as well as their invaluable suggestions, made this study possible. Working with these professionals has given me a clearer understanding as to the meaning of true education.

I would like to give special thanks to Dr. Kummer for his unwavering support during my academic career at Western Kentucky University and his nurturing and understanding of my future academic and professional pursuits.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Dr. Judy Brookheiser, Recreation Department at Murray State University, and Dr. David M. Compton, Department of Recreation and Leisure of the University of Utah. Their suggestions concerning my research instrument were thorough and of great assistance.

I would also like to give special thanks to my wife, Bonnie J. Owens, for believing in my abilities, keeping me focused, and supporting me throughout this lengthy process.
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INVESTIGATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL CAMP AND RETREAT CENTERS

Gregory S. Owens      May 1996      79 Pages

Directed by:  Dr. William Kummer, Dr. Steve Spencer, Dr. Elmer Gray

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This thesis was designed to investigate and identify key characteristics of successful camps, outdoor centers, and retreat centers. The study utilized a survey of selected camps and centers within the United States, in the Spring of 1996. The results were analyzed individually and as a whole. The findings indicated that certain key characteristics did exist and that these characteristics were major contributing factors to the success of the camps or centers. These findings were supported by the review of literature and the results of the survey, which highlighted these major areas of importance: Land and facilities, strategic planning and expansion, staffing, risk management, fiscal planning and administration, programming, and accreditation and certification.
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The primary focus of this study was to investigate and describe the key fiscal and administrative characteristics of planning, developing, and operating a camp and retreat center.

The research method was twofold. First, an extensive review of related literature was performed. The literature review provided pertinent historical and background information for the study. The review was followed by an investigator-designed survey of selected retreat centers. Through the survey and its analysis, the researcher attempted to identify key fiscal and administrative characteristics in planning and developing a retreat center. Included in the survey was a variety of demographic information to aid in the understanding and analysis of the retreat centers.

The survey, coupled with the review of related literature, provides a valuable information resource for establishing a camp and retreat center.

Background

In today's hectic lifestyle, individuals and groups are looking for ways to 1) revitalize the mind and body, 2) increase productivity, 3) create an environment conducive for building trust, and 4) stimulate positive communication. Retreat centers and camps have evolved to meet these needs.
Retreat center users have varied needs. School groups, corporations, clubs, private organizations, couples, and individuals all look for an escape or retreat. They are looking for a break from busy schedules, job stress, monotonous lifestyles, family struggle, and countless other situations that give rise to both mental and physical discomfort.

Mayhew (1995) stated that recreation as a field, and the professionals who provide it, "will be at the forefront of social change in America" (p. 102). Not only are retreat centers and their programs good for combating the aforementioned problems but they are also an excellent opportunity to accentuate the positive experiences in everyday life, while having a fun experience. Retreat center users are looking for relaxation, personal growth, increased self-esteem, environments for productive thought, and the realization of many other personal goals. The demand for retreat centers is great, and the needs of the users are multifaceted. Virtually anyone can benefit from an experience at a retreat center.

Retreat centers offer varied programs. Some retreats are simply a place for people of all backgrounds to rest, recuperate, and enjoy quiet privacy. Other retreat centers target specific groups--such as children, couples, corporate groups, teenagers, specific genders, or the physically challenged. Still others provide programs on specialized topics such as a host of cultural experiences, outdoor adventure activities, teambuilding, personal exploration and growth, or educational opportunities. Many retreat centers combine several of the characteristics mentioned above. Each retreat center has its own unique philosophy and approach to both the programs offered and to the user groups.

Whatever the format, the need for retreat centers is securely present in today's society. As the literature reviewed in the following chapter demonstrated, there is minimal
information concerning the key issues that would need to be considered in planning and
developing a retreat center. This researcher investigated the characteristics involved in the
development of a facility and attempted to identify and describe the key fiscal and
administrative characteristics required to start and operate a retreat center.

**Need For The Study**

To avoid "burning out" mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, people
must have a release, a way or place to relax, rebuild, and regain their purpose and identity.
This release enables them to return to their normal lifestyle with increased motivation,
determination, and an enhanced physical and mental well-being.

Recreation revitalizes the body and spirit. Retreat centers have the challenge of
meeting the diverse needs of an overwhelmingly varied population. Retreat centers are
being developed in many areas in an effort to serve such needs. Some centers specialize in
one or more types of programs, while others are broad-based, open to creating unique and
tailored programs for each group of users.

With the growing need and desire for these facilities, those parties interested in
establishing and operating a retreat center are faced with the following questions:

1. How will land and facilities be acquired?
2. How will the center be funded?
3. How does strategic planning benefit a retreat center?
4. Who will staff the facility and what type of qualifications will they need?
5. What is risk management and how does it affect operations?
6. What type of insurance is needed?
7. What kind of marketing techniques will be the most beneficial?

Clear and definitive information on these topics will increase the likelihood that a retreat center would flourish and grow.

Existing guidelines and standards pertaining to the operation and management of camps, conference centers, and retreat centers are set forth by the American Camping Association (ACA). In addition, specific program standards are available from the Association for Experiential Education (AEE). Both of these sets of standards are addressed in Chapter 2. Both of these professional groups are highly regarded and offer excellent information and guidance in many areas of operation. These guidelines and standards offer some minimum requirements and are adequate to a point. However, they do less to address the stages of pre-operation of a retreat center: conception, planning, and developing. These standards do not explain how retreat centers can progress above the minimum requirements of the industry to higher levels of quality in programming, leadership, safety, facilities, and financial stability.

A need exists for well-planned, well-organized retreat centers. If this need is to be adequately met, those individuals or groups with a desire to develop and operate a specialized or broad-based retreat center would certainly benefit from a survey of retreat centers and thorough review of literature.

**Definition Of Terms**

1. **Retreat Center** - facility offering a wide array of recreational, educational, and inspirational programs with appropriate facilities, both day and residential, to varied segments of the population for at least 60 days per year.
2. **Camp** - Operation offering a summer program for children and having facilities and programs available for other populations during the non-summer months. A camp is considered one type of a retreat center.

3. **Teambuilding** - The process of using specific situations and activities to promote and strive for better communication, efficient and positive action, group learning and harmony, facilitated and supervised in a specific environment.

4. **Ropes course** - A course of high and low elements using ropes, cables, trees, poles, and other related resources. These elements act as the foundation for activities and situations presented to groups as physical, mental, and emotional challenges. It is these challenges that lead to learning and growth for both the individual and group.

5. **Initiatives** - Activities and situations with certain guidelines that a group of people is tasked with solving. These are used in promoting personal and group awareness and growth. Initiatives are typically used in the process of teambuilding.

6. **Special populations** - Groups or segments of the population that can be identified through specific characteristics unique to the group. Traditionally thought of as disabled in a physical or mental manner but now include many other distinctions.

7. **Therapeutic recreation** - Recreation that is used as a means of rehabilitating, restoring, or promoting the growth and understanding of the participant.

8. **Adventure risk recreation** - Activities and experiences that involve some degree of physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual challenge to the participant, requiring situational mastery.
9. **Outdoor adventure activities** - Individual or group experiences conducted in an outdoor setting that are characterized by elements of exploration, challenge, excitement, and sometimes personal risk.

10. **Jury of experts** - Group of competent professionals who are presently active and knowledgeable in a given field.

11. **Likert Scale** - A scale that consists of a set of statements about the topic of study. "Along with the statements is a response scale which allows respondents to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement with each statement" (Norland, 1995, p. 31).

12. **Personal growth** - The knowledge or understanding gained as a result testing oneself, or going beyond what is considered comfortable.

13. **Experiential Education** - "A process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences" (Proudman, 1995).

14. **Risk management** - "The science of anticipating and controlling the elemental, inherent and environmental hazards that could cause financial loss, and the determination of the most efficient methods of coping with such a loss" (Schirick, 1992).

15. **Risk management plan** - A written plan of action which addresses all areas with risk factors and provides detailed steps to lessen and control these risks. Major components of this plan include a complete insurance package, health and safety regulations, staff training and certification, and any other pertinent information needed to manage potential risk.

16. "**Successful** retreat center" - A center operating above the minimum requirements of the industry in terms of quality of programming, leadership, safety, facilities, and financial stability.
17. **Management member** - Persons holding the following positions: Director, Assistant Director, Program Director, Activity Director, Head Counselor, Business Manager, or other positions directly comparable to these listed.

**Statement Of The Problem**

The study was designed to investigate and describe the key fiscal and administrative characteristics of planning, developing, and operating an outdoor retreat center.

**Purpose and Significance Of The Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the key fiscal and administrative characteristics of planning and developing an outdoor retreat center. The study was valuable because a concise overview of the top fiscal and administrative considerations for creating a retreat center was established to be used as a source of reference.

**Limitations**

This study was limited:

1. To the number of completed surveys returned
2. By the ability of the people completing the survey to analyze their operation and experience, and to answer the questions accurately.

**Delimitations**

This study was delimited:

1. To 15 selected and identified retreat centers with varying programs in the United States.
2. To a 3 week period from initial contact with the selected facilities until complete and usable surveys were returned

3. To the cost of telephone and mail correspondence

4. To the 1995 - 1996 academic year.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction
The field of retreat centers and camps is broad and loosely defined. In today's world, the two terms, "retreat center" and "camp," are becoming closer in meaning. There is such a broad market and demand for camps and retreat center programs that it is difficult to find a niche (Miller, 1990). Adequate identification of this niche, or market segments, is critical for the future success of the industry. To better understand the retreat and camp field, an examination of the history, types of facilities and programs, and characteristics of commonality is needed.

Brief History
The use of the outdoors with purposeful intent has gone on for hundreds of years. The camping industry, in a sense, has its foundations in life in the outdoors and the skills associated with that endeavor. According to Ball (1990), the first recorded organized camp experience took place in Connecticut in 1861. The first private independent camp was established in 1876, focusing on health and physical fitness. Others soon began, still focusing on the outdoors and physical well-being. All of these early camps charged fees to cover the cost of operation.

Initially, the majority of the camping experiences were intended only for boys. Subsequently, organized experiences for girls began to emerge (Ball, 1990). The first
girls' camp was established in 1892, with two others soon following. From the turn of the century, the camping industry grew steadily. Rodney and Ford (1971) stated that "after 1910, camps opened up all over the United States and included Girl Scout, Boy Scout, Camp Fire Girls, and thousands of private, city, agency, and church camps" (p. 5). During this period of development and expansion, professional organizations emerged to assist the industry. According to Ball (1990), the Camp Directors Association of America began in 1912, later transforming into the Camp Directors Association (CDA) in 1924. In 1926, this agency began producing its own journal, *Camping*. The CDA eventually evolved into the American Camping Association (ACA), which is the primary agency of the camp and retreat field today.

Ball (1990) further stated that outdoor education began to take hold in the 1940's, leading to an increase in school-organized camping and other related educational experiences. In the 1950's, some colleges and universities began teaching outdoor education as a course of study. In the past twenty-five years, experientially based outdoor education and adventure programs have grown rapidly. This rapid growth can be attributed in part to the establishment of Outward Bound (OB) in the United States. OB is an organization with programs based on outdoor programming, adventure, and risk as a means for personal and group growth. Many of today's existing programs base their philosophy and operation on the OB model. This type of philosophy and programming can be used with virtually any group, whether it be corporate executives, school children, or adjudicated youth. A key organization that focuses on this aspect of
the camp and retreat field is the Association for Experiential Education, formed in 1972 (Ball, 1990).

Camps and retreats began as a narrow field, serving a small segment of the population. As the industry grew, it expanded to include other population groups but was still largely for young boys and girls. The traditional view of camps and retreats operating only during the summer months has been in place since the first part of this century. Only in the past ten years has this view begun to change. Many established summer camps are turning to year-round operation and programming for the other segments of the population, such as corporate groups and senior adults. The ACA's 1995/96 Guide to Accredited Camps points out that in today's world, camps and related experiences are for adults, families, and seniors, as well as for children.

According to Hammond (1991), a report of randomly selected camps and centers by the Leisure Research Institute of Indiana University and the ACA showed that 55% of those surveyed referred to their facilities as retreat centers. For the ACA accredited sites, 50% were described as a retreat center. The expansion into year-round programming is related to an increase in demand for outdoor and adventure programs, as well as the need to find other viable sources of income (Brokaw, 1990). As the benefits of outdoor programs become increasingly apparent, many agencies, institutions, businesses, schools, and other organizations are taking advantage of what camps and retreats have to offer.

**Types of Camps and Retreat Operations**

To better understand the broad spectrum of the camp and retreat field, a brief discussion of the types of operations follows. Traditionally, the term camp has been
generally defined as a summer program for boys or girls ages 6-17. The ACA, in Standards for Day and Resident Camps (1993), defines camping as

A sustained experience which provides a creative, recreational and educational opportunity in group living outdoors. It utilizes trained leadership and the resources of the natural surroundings to contribute to each camper’s mental, physical, social and spiritual growth. (p.3)

The term retreat has been defined as a specific time set aside for a specific purpose, or the place at which this takes place. These retreats, in theory, are open to any individual or group. The ACA, in Standards for Conference and Retreat Centers (1993), defines a conference/retreat center as

a residential facility designed for adults and other groups who come together for meetings, training, sessions, and educational or inspirational programs. Such a facility operates at least three seasons of the year and is designed to minimize outside distractions. It provides dedicated meeting space, food service, hospitality and support services, access to facilities and natural environments for release and diversion, and housing styles appropriate to clientele. (p.5)

The older, more narrow definitions no longer express the meaning and function of today’s complex field. Camp and retreat operations can be one and the same. Of course, there will always be those camps that remain in the traditional mode, operating in the summer months and serving a certain population of children. However, many camps have diversified into multifaceted, year-round operations offering highly varied programs to a wide range of users. For the purposes of this study, a retreat center has been defined as

a facility offering a wide array of recreational, educational, and inspirational programs with appropriate facilities, both day and residential, to varied segments of the population for at least 60 days per year. This definition was formulated based on the review of literature.

When attempting to draw distinctions between types of facilities, the most general distinction is private versus public means of management. Directly related is the
distinction between for-profit and not-for-profit operations. The private camp or retreat operates primarily for making a financial gain. Even if a commitment to a certain philosophy or mission exists, without production of adequate revenue, the operation will fail. The public camp or retreat can operate in either a for-profit or not-for-profit manner. Typically, public or agency supported camps are nonprofit, relying on donations and fundraising activities to cover or offset the cost of operation.

The two major distinctions- private versus public, and profit versus non-profit- categorize the operations in more understandable and manageable groups within the field. Each of these groups varies in organizational structure, yet exhibits characteristics that are common with development, management, and programs.

**Characteristics of Commonality**

Regardless of the distinctions in operation, as discussed previously, there exist certain characteristics to consider when developing and operating a camp or retreat. The purpose of this study was to identify these key characteristics through a survey of facilities presently operating in the field. It is these characteristics, if addressed appropriately, that can lead to a successful operation.

Before proceeding, it is be beneficial to look at a summary of two sections of the ACA Summer Camp Survey, 1990-1994. Each year's results were published in the following January/February issue of Camping Magazine. The key points were as follows:
**SINGLE BIGGEST CONCERN GOING INTO SUMMER**

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**MOST IMPORTANT LONG TERM CONCERN**

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<td>year-round school</td>
<td>finding staff w/ special certifications</td>
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(staff, 1991; staff, 1992; staff, 1993; staff, 1994)

This information illustrates that in the short term, the majority of the directors and administrators exhibited similar concerns. However, the long-term concerns were more varied. It is important to note that adults comprised a significant percentage of the "campers." In 1992, adults made up 10% of the camper population; in 1993 the percentage increased to 12 (1993 Summer Camp Survey, 1994).

The survey, designed to identify these characteristics, included the following topics: land and property acquisition and development, marketing, risk management,
staffing, insurance, strategic planning, general management and administration, and related demographic information. These topics will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

LAND & FACILITY ACQUISITION & DEVELOPMENT

Acquisition of land and facilities is an important step for a business, and is critical to a retreat or camp operation. According to Richard S. Horn, Director of the Kentucky Small Business Development Center at Western Kentucky University, land acquisition should be approached carefully (personal communication, spring 1995). Horn further stressed the importance of accessibility to the property in terms of transportation, water, power, sewage, and other utilities. The cost to access a desirable site may be too great in the long run, regardless of how well the property fits the needs of the operation. Relative location to all necessary utilities and services drastically affects the ability to realistically acquire and use property.

Alton Little, professor of recreation and parks administration at Western Kentucky University, stated that the land on which a retreat center operates should be suitable for the activities and programs to be offered (personal communication, October 19, 1995). Little further stated that the land should be large enough to allow for future expansion of the business, taking into consideration the use of adjacent land not owned or used by the retreat center. These adjacent lands and their potential uses can have a significant impact on the future success of the retreat center.

Prior to the initiating a search for land, knowledge and understanding of the center's business and long-term plan should exist. Cramer (1990) stated that a facility's managers also need to have a clear understanding of goals, philosophy, and mission.
STRATEGIC PLANNING

It is crucial to the business to have a strategic plan for management, operation, and expansion. Strategic planning involves a clear business/financial plan and a master plan for the facility. These encourage long-term planning. Omernik (1990) stated that both the private and nonprofit sectors widely use strategic planning. He further stated:

Effective long range planning is of increasing importance to the camping industry as camps strive to maintain their position within an increasingly complex operating environment of change and uncertainty. (p. 24)

Omernik found that the external environmental forces that impact camps generally fell into the following seven categories: competitors, technology, demographics, economic factors, social trends, labor market, and legal / regulatory developments. All of these categories need to be addressed in the strategic planning process and plan.

EXPANSION

As a retreat center develops and is able to operate productively, the question of expansion needs to be addressed. Brokaw (1990) suggested three questions to consider before expansion:

1. Are there calls from people needing a facility?
2. Are there facilities on site that will attract people?
3. Is there a nearby population from which to draw? (p. 22)

Brokaw also pointed out that a facility's expansion plan should be in-depth, detailed, and be years ahead of current needs. It is typical to have both five year, ten year, and sometimes longer plans for future expansion (A. Little, personal communication, October 19, 1995).
Along with expansion is the issue of flexible space. As the increase in demand continues, retreat centers need to have facilities that can meet the demands of different groups and different programs (Anderson, 1991). As the industry develops, the expectations of the guests / campers increase, making it more crucial for centers to have up-to-date, flexible facilities and space. Gilbert (1991) stated that it is important that expansion plans be well developed and be included in the long range plan. Such planning can save the retreat center time and money in the long run, and produce a facility that is well-designed and conducive to the mission of the organization.

**STAFFING**

For any facility, whether it is a summer program only or a year-round operation, staffing is of the utmost importance (A. Little, personal communication, October 19, 1995). Without qualified, effective personnel, a program is unsuccessful. Depending on the facility type, staff may be full or part time, seasonal or year round. Regardless of usage type, staffing is a priority for all operations. Becker (1990) stated that the formula for success in managing a facility and staff is as follows:

\[
\text{Training} + \text{Communications} + \text{Care} = \text{Staff Pride} \rightarrow \text{Quality Camp Services}
\]

(p. 42)

Staff are a key component to a facility's identity and culture. As Schirick (1991a) suggested, the staff represent the organization to the outside world. He further stated that staffing was the greatest source of stress and work for camp directors.

Effective communication between staff and management is critical to a successful program. In a time-oriented program, such as a summer camp, there are five things that
aid in reaching this goal: 1) Pre-camp orientation, 2) on-going communication, 3) conferences, 4) staff meetings, and 5) end-of-camp conferences (Siegenthalir 1991).

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management has become a key issue to those providing recreational activities and experiences. Many of these activities and experiences involve some degree of risk, both perceived and actual, and can include an adventure aspect. The AEE, in the Manual of Accreditation Standards for Adventure Programs (1993), stated:

Adventure is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary as, "an undertaking of a hazardous nature; a risky enterprise." It is further defined as, "an unusual experience or course of events marked by excitement and suspense." Two key words cannot be ignored in these interpretations: hazard - which is the condition that can cause loss; and risk - which is the "possibility" (or, in insurance industry terms, the 'probability') that loss will occur. Behind the scenes of every program is the unending work of balancing the elements of perceived and actual risk, and of determining the appropriate level of "excitement and suspense" without exposing participants to unreasonable risks. This requires focused planning, continual review, and fine tuning. (p. III)

Further, Petersen and Hronek (1992) stated:

Many facets of recreation have risk as a vital element...Risk is the "spice" that makes some aspects of recreation so pleasurable and life itself more meaningful. While the risk factor is very evident, it must also be manageable. (p. x)

All facilities clearly have a need for a comprehensive risk management plan.

It is unfortunate that litigation continues to increase, along with the cost of adequate insurance to guard against such lawsuits. Petersen and Hronek (1992) stated:

As a result of Americans' propensity to sue and the high cost of effective insurance, many small recreation providers of recreation, both private and public, are either underinsured or have no insurance at all. Large governmental units are often self-insured. Regardless of the size of the recreation or leisure service operation, self-insurance is a form of "Russian Roulette" that if played long enough, will result in financial disaster. A
solid risk management program can change the "odds" in the favor of the provider. (p. ix)

Spacht and Hirsch (1995) outlined three points that provide the best defense against negligence:

1. Make sure the participant is aware of and agrees to specific standards of behavior
2. Choose a staff person well-equipped to lead in a particular adventure activity
3. Make it the business of the director or owner to actually supervise employees. (p. 21)

A well-designed risk management plan should permit participants to have a quality experience in a safe environment. By doing so, recreation providers are able to avoid the undue risk of having litigation against them. As Petersen and Hronek stated, "a good risk management program does not cost, it saves" (p. x).

According to Schirick (1992), one of the most important issues facing any camp or retreat center, regardless of orientation, is how to manage potential risks. Camp and retreat centers have many potential risks, beyond the actual activities and programs offered. Schirick discussed some of these risks in his bi-monthly articles in Camping Magazine.

Vehicles & Driving - Driving is one of the most dangerous aspects of operation, having a high risk potential. It is necessary to have strict guidelines for all qualified drivers and proper maintenance and upkeep of all vehicles. Many organizations are moving towards leasing vehicles to control expenses and manage this risk (Schirick, 1990a).

Rental of Facilities - As the provider of the physical facility, there exists a baseline of responsibility to all users, regardless of whether or not a program or leadership is being provided. The center is responsible for the existence of any manmade or natural hazards on the property. The more a facility provides for a client or group, the more the risk and
responsibility increases. A proactive approach is the best policy, based on a clear and concise contract which defines each parties' duties and responsibilities (Schirick, 1994).

_Food Handling & Preparation_ - Cleanliness, thorough cooking, and proper temperature are three key areas of concern, along with compliance with the Health Department code. The easiest prevention of food-related illness and other potential hazards is proper storage and handling (Schirick, 1991d).

A good risk management plan takes all aspects of the facility into consideration including daily operation, programs, physical property, and all support services. Schirick (1995) also stated the importance of developing strategic partnerships in today's complex and challenging environment. These partnerships include attorneys, product vendors, technology experts, local businesses in the community, and insurance agents. By having positive and supportive relationships with all of these individuals and businesses, a facility is much better prepared to face any problems stemming from risk management issues.

**INSURANCE**

Directly linked to the topic of risk management is insurance coverage. Without proper and adequate insurance, a facility is at high risk for loss or even closure. There is no single, magic formula to follow. Each facility is unique and therefore needs a unique insurance package. Schirick (1990b) recommends the following when considering insurance for a camp facility:

1. Choose an agent or broker that has the facility's needs in mind
2. Ask for a periodic review of the facility's insurance program
3. Construct a solid risk management plan for the business / facility
4. Request and review the facility's loss experience
5. Seek long term relationships with a broker and insurance company
6. Avoid insurance companies with no track record
7. Read the facility's policies
8. Schedule the facility's policies to have a common expiration date
9. Consider insuring the facility's property and liability coverage in a single "package" policy.

In addition to these important factors, it is crucial that the management of a facility prepare a personal property inventory and keep it updated, have the property appraised periodically, and prioritize buildings as to which are the most valuable (Schirick, 1990b). It is also important to invest in good maintenance and housekeeping services. This practice aids in keeping the small problems and occurrences from turning into large ones. Schirick further breaks down the required insurance into five major categories: property, general liability, worker's compensation, automobile, and client accidental medical (1991c). All of these insurance types are critical components in the intricate web of protecting the facility, the programs, the management, the employees, and the participants.

MARKETING

As stated previously, camps are no longer primarily for kids. More and more, marketing is targeting adults and turning them into "campers." This trend follows a rapid expansion in leisure and recreation services, many of which operate a retreat-style facility
or program. According to Foust (1990), adults and children alike are spending their summers and other vacation times in many exciting and interesting ways. The campers of today can participate in programs varying from exotic research projects, historical experiences, intellectual experiences, outdoor adventure risk activities, or learning a new skill (i.e., building your own home the rustic, old-fashioned way). These programs can range from one day to many weeks in length, with course, lodging, and meal fees. People today are taking part in retreats that cater to their areas of interest. The market is vast and changes rapidly.

According to Miller (1990), the key to marketing a retreat center is to find a specific niche to serve. The age of mass marketing is gone, replaced by the concept of smaller niche marketing. A facility should take advantage of the unique characteristics it has and focus on the marketing of these. It is important to note that any organization, including camps and retreat centers, can have multiple niches in the marketplace.

**Conclusion**

As illustrated through the review of related literature, many topics and areas of concern are involved in developing, planning, and operating a camp or retreat center. All of the issues and topics discussed in this chapter have relevance to and will affect the overall operation of a retreat center facility. The study was designed to investigate and describe the key fiscal and administrative characteristics of planning, developing, and operating an outdoor retreat center.
CHAPTER 3
PROCEDURES

Introduction
The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the key fiscal and administrative characteristics of planning and developing an outdoor retreat center. The study involved a review of related literature and a survey of selected facilities.

Design
This study was a descriptive one based on survey format. The survey consisted of three sections. Section I covered demographic and descriptive questions relating to the facilities being surveyed. Section II focused on identifying and describing the key fiscal and administrative characteristics. Section III was open for any comments, suggestions, or questions (concerning the study) from those individuals completing the survey.

Sample
The sample of the study consisted of selected and identified retreat centers, or facilities offering retreat programs, in the United States. These camps, retreat centers, and outdoor centers were considered to be successful, based on definition #16, page 7, of Chapter 1. A minimum of fifteen (15) facilities were surveyed. Of the returned surveys, a minimum of fifteen (15) were complete and usable.
Survey Instrument

The afore-mentioned survey had two goals. The first and primary goal was to isolate, identify, and describe key fiscal and administrative characteristics in planning, developing, and operating a retreat center. The second goal was to gather demographic information which would further aid in the analysis of the data.

CONTENT, RELIABILITY, AND CONSTRUCT VALIDITY

Important aspects of the survey were content and reliability. The initial, or rough draft, survey was formulated and submitted to the content committee to check for validity, keeping the questions and content directed and focused on the study's objectives. The survey was then revised based on comments and recommendations from the content committee. The content committee consisted of one Western Kentucky University (WKU) faculty and two professionals in the field of recreation.

A second significant aspect was the actual construction of the survey. The construct committee consisted of three WKU faculty with research experience. These members were the Thesis Committee. These professionals analyzed the survey layout, the format and type of questions used, and made recommendations for improvement. The construct committee ensured that the questions were presented in a manner that did not create confusion, which could have discounted the survey results and the subsequent analysis of the data.
Administration Of The Survey

Steps in administration of the survey:

1. Initial telephone contact was made to each retreat center director, or other management member. During this contact the study was outlined and the need for their input through the survey was explained. Each director was informed that a letter outlining the topics discussed and the survey would arrive within one week.

2. After each successful telephone contact, the letter and survey were sent by mail. The letter included the deadline for returning the completed survey, along with a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

3. After two (2) weeks from the date of the initial mailing, a reminder telephone call was placed to those facilities that failed to return the completed survey.

4. After a maximum of three (3) weeks from initial contact, no more completed surveys were accepted for use in the data analysis, unless the required 15 has not been received. If that requirement had not been met, an additional one (1) week was allowed to solicit the remaining surveys yet to be returned.

Treatment of the Data

Analysis of the data was divided into three main categories. These categories were Demographics, Key Characteristics, and Open Comments. Each question was analyzed for like responses, with the results tabulated and listed in question by question form. Demographic items were used to better understand the sample population. These items
were summarized. The key characteristic items were compared in an attempt to identify dominant topics relating to planning, development, and operation. The open comments were examined and listed in Appendix G.

**Findings, Conclusions, & Recommendations**

Since this study was descriptive in nature, all conclusions were simple outcomes of the reported data. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations were based upon the reported data and the experience received during the process of the study.
CHAPTER 4
REPORTING OF DATA

Introduction

This study focused on key factors which lead to successful camp and retreat center developments. The data collected in the survey were analyzed to determine whether there were similarities in successful camp and retreat center operations. The questions were individually listed in this chapter and grouped in accordance with the section of the survey in which they appeared.

The survey was divided into three sections of questions. The first section involved twenty-one demographic information questions. The second section included forty-six questions addressing factors of commonality. The third section provided blank space for open comments. The factors of commonality questions involved yes/no, scale response, checking, and listing. There were two scales used, with the majority of the questions using the scale that follows: 5 = very important; 4 = fairly important; 3 = neutral; 2 = not important; and 1 = no bearing. The second scale was as follows: 5 = excellent; 4 = good; 3 = average; 2 = poor; 1 = very poor.

The statistical treatment of the data was addressed through percentages, means, and numerical rank depending on the nature of the question. Seventeen surveys were mailed to pre-selected camps, retreat centers, and outdoor centers. Fifteen completed
surveys were returned, for a response rate of 88%. In some instances, comments or reactions of the investigator follow the results of certain questions.

SECTION 1 - DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The questions in this section were formulated to provide demographic information on the camps and centers involved in the survey. These questions targeted general characteristics and were used to document the similarities and differences in that area.

Question 1 referred to the name of facility, telephone number, and name and title of person completing the survey. Question 2 referred to the address of the camp, retreat center, or outdoor center.

Question 3: Season of operation:
Responses: 15 (100%)
0% Summer
80% Year round
20% Spring - Fall

Question 4: Years in operation:
Responses: 15 (100%)
7% 0-5 years
7% 6-10 years
13% 11-20 years
73% 21 or more years

Question 5: Number of client/camper beds for overnight use:
Responses: 15 (100%)
13% 0-25
0% 26-50
13% 51-100
20% 101-150
13% 151-200
40% 201 or more
Question 6: Maximum number of clients/campers able to serve at one time:
Responses: 14 (93%)
- 0% 0-25
- 0% 26-50
- 14% 51-100
- 14% 101-150
- 14% 151-200
- 57% 201 or more

Question 7: Client/Camper classification(s) served:
Responses: 15 (100%)
- 93% Children (under 12 years)
- 100% Teenagers (13-19 years)
- 80% Young Adults (20-25 years)
- 87% Adults (26-64 years)
- 47% Senior Adults (65+ years)
- 53% Special Populations - responses listed as follows: emotionally impaired, home school children, adult developmentally disabled, alcoholic / drug users, HIV positive people, at-risk youth, hearing impaired, families, school groups, church groups, all types and levels.

Question 8: Number of year round staff:
Responses: 15 (100%)
- Program - range: 0 - 28
  mean = 7.3
- Administrative - range: 0 - 100
  mean = 11.9
- Maintenance - range: 0 - 15
  mean = 2.9

Question 9: Number of part-time staff:
Responses: 15 (100%)
- Program - range: 5 - 300
  mean = 81.2
- Administrative - range: 0 - 40
  mean = 7.5
- Maintenance - range: 0 - 15
  mean = 2.5
Question 10: Program Type:
Responses: 15 (100%)
  7% Day
  13% Residential
  80% Both day and residential

Question 11: Activity emphasis:
Responses: 15 (100%), based on top two choices
  87% Outdoor/Adventure
  40% Training and Development
  33% Watersports
  13% Environmental Education
  20% Other: Character Development, Youth Development, Experiential Learning
       Arts

Question 12: Range of Gross Yearly Revenue: (thousands of dollars)
Responses: 15 (100%)
  0% $0-50
  13% $51-100
  7% $101-200
  0% $201-300
  7% $301-400
  73% $401 or more

Question 13: Range of Yearly Expenditures: (thousands of dollars)
Responses: 15 (100%)
  0% $0-50
  13% $51-100
  7% $101-200
  0% $201-300
  7% $301-400
  73% $401 or more

Question 14: Size of property (acres):
Responses: 15 (100%)
  range: 2 acres - 2400
  mean = 451.2

The highest and lowest responses were excluded in the calculation of the mean due to the extremely high and low relation to the remainder of responses.
Question 15: Amount of property developed (acres):
Responses: 15 (100%)
    range: 2 acres - 520
    mean = 153

Question 16: Type of utilities (i.e. water, electric, waste, etc.):
Responses: 15 (100%)
    13% City
    80% Rural
    7% Both

Question 17: Closest town or city (miles), with population of 5,000-49,900:
Responses: 14 (93%)
    range: 0 - 35
    mean = 13

Question 18: Closest large city (miles), with population of 50,000 +:
Responses: 13 (87%)
    range: 0 - 150
    mean = 47

Question 19: Closest emergency support services- fire, police, ambulance (miles):
Responses: 15 (100%)
    range: 1 - 12
    mean = 5.4

Question 20: Highest level of medical support on site and facility (during program times):
Responses: 14 (93%), seven responses included multiple (2) choices
    14% Basic First Aid & CPR staff
    50% Emergency Medical Technician
    0% Advanced First Aid
    36% Nurse
    29% Doctor
    14% Wilderness First Responder

Question 21: Refer to facility as:
Responses: 15 (100%), six responses included multiple (2 or 3) choices
    73% Outdoor Center
    7% Retreat Center
    53% Camp
    27% Other: Academy, Adventure Learning Ctr., Outdoor Prog., Training Ctr.
SECTION II  - FACTORS OF COMMONALITY

Questions in this section were formulated based on the information found and discussed in Chapter 2, Review of Related Literature. These questions were the main foundation for the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this survey—and of the study as a whole.

Questions in this section included yes/no, scaled response, checking, listing, or combinations. Questions 1-33 had two parts. Each question was divided into part A and part B, showing the number responses to each part and their corresponding percentages—followed by a percentage breakdown by answer for each question. Questions 34-46 had one part only, with the exception of question 41. These questions were mixed types, each showing the number of responses and corresponding percentage. This step was followed by a percentage breakdown by answer for each question.

Question 1: Does your organization own the land and facilities?

Part A

Responses: 15 (100%)
93% YES
7% NO

Part B

Responses: 14 (93%)
7% 1-No Bearing
7% 2-Not Important
14% 3-Neutral
21% 4-Fairly Important
50% 5-Very Important

Question 2: Does your organization lease the land and facilities?

Part A

Responses: 15 (100%)
33% YES
67% NO

Part B

Responses: 12 (80%)
42% 1-No Bearing
17% 2-Not Important
25% 3-Neutral
8% 4-Fairly Important
8% 5-Very Important
**Question 3:** Is the majority of the property vehicle accessible?

*Part A*  
Responses: 15 (100%)  
47% YES  
53% NO  

*Part B*  
Responses: 12 (80%)  
0% 1-No Bearing  
8% 2- Not Important  
25% 3- Neutral  
42% 4-Fairly Important  
25% 5 - Very Important

**Question 4:** Is there a plan for long-term growth?

*Part A*  
Responses: 15 (100%)  
93% YES  
7% NO  

*Part B*  
Responses: 15 (100%)  
0% 1-No Bearing  
0% 2- Not Important  
0% 3- Neutral  
50% 4-Fairly Important  
50% 5 - Very Important

**Question 5:** Do you agree that the initial choosing of land can be the success or failure of the business?

*Part A*  
Responses: 14 (93%)  
100% YES  
0% NO  

*Part B*  
Responses: 13 (87%)  
0% 1-No Bearing  
8% 2- Not Important  
8% 3- Neutral  
46% 4-Fairly Important  
38% 5 - Very Important

**Question 6:** Does your organization have written goals and objectives?

*Part A*  
Responses: 15 (100%)  
100% YES  
0% NO  

*Part B*  
Responses: 14 (93%)  
0% 1-No Bearing  
0% 2- Not Important  
0% 3- Neutral  
50% 4-Fairly Important  
50% 5 - Very Important

**Question 7:** Does every staff member have access to these goals and objectives?

*Part A*  
Responses: 15 (100%)  
93% YES  
7% NO  

*Part B*  
Responses: 13 (87%)  
0% 1-No Bearing  
0% 2- Not Important  
8% 3- Neutral  
38% 4-Fairly Important  
54% 5 - Very Important
**Question 8:** Does your organization have a written mission?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part A</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 13 (87%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>93% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7% NO</td>
<td>8% 2- Not Important</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0% 3- Neutral</td>
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<td></td>
<td>23% 4-Fairly Important</td>
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<td>69% 5 - Very Important</td>
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**Question 9:** Does every staff member understand this mission?

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<tr>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
<td>Responses: 13 (87%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>86% YES</td>
<td>8% 1-No Bearing</td>
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<td>14% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
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<td>0% 3- Neutral</td>
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<td>31% 4-Fairly Important</td>
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<td>61% 5 - Very Important</td>
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**Question 10:** Is your site accredited?

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<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>73% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>27% NO</td>
<td>7% 2- Not Important</td>
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<td>29% 3- Neutral</td>
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<td></td>
<td>43% 4-Fairly Important</td>
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<td>21% 5 - Very Important</td>
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**By whom?** 9 of 15 respondents listed one or more of the following:
- American Camping Association
- Association for Experiential Education
- Inner Quest
- Health Department

**Question 11:** Are your staff accredited?

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<tr>
<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 12 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67% 3- Neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25% 4-Fairly Important</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8% 5 - Very Important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**By whom?**  
7 of 15 respondents listed one or more of the following:  
7 - American Canoeing Association  
2 - American Red Cross  
1 - Cradlerock  
1 - American Camping Association  
1 Young Mens Christian Association (YMCA)  
1 - Medical training depending on activity  
1 - various

**Question 12: Does your organization actively recruit staff?**

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<tr>
<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
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**Question 13: Does your organization have a written staff manual?**

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<tr>
<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>93% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>7% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36% 4-Fairly Important</td>
<td>64% 5 - Very Important</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Question 14: Does every staff member have access to this manual?**

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<th>Part B</th>
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<tr>
<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29% 4-Fairly Important</td>
<td>71% 5 - Very Important</td>
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</table>

**Question 15: Does your organization use consultants?**

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<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>87% YES</td>
<td>7% 1-No Bearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>13% NO</td>
<td>7% 2- Not Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43% 3- Neutral</td>
<td>29% 4-Fairly Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14% 5 - Very Important</td>
<td>29% 4-Fairly Important</td>
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</table>
**Question 16:** Does your organization have on-site training and orientation?

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<tr>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
<td>Responses: 13 (87%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>100% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15% 4-Fairly Important</td>
<td>85% 5 - Very Important</td>
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</table>

**Question 17:** Does your organization participate in regional and/or national conferences?

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<tr>
<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>100% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>0% NO</td>
<td>7% 2- Not Important</td>
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<tr>
<td>14% 3- Neutral</td>
<td>64% 4-Fairly Important</td>
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<td>14% 5 - Very Important</td>
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**Question 18:** Does your organization believe that skills training should be paid for by the employer?

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<tr>
<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>87% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>13% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
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<tr>
<td>36% 3- Neutral</td>
<td>57% 4-Fairly Important</td>
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<td>7% 5 - Very Important</td>
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**Question 19:** Does your program focus on one or two key activities?

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<th>Part B</th>
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<tr>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
<td>Responses: 11 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>79% NO</td>
<td>27% 2- Not Important</td>
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<tr>
<td>18% 3- Neutral</td>
<td>9% 4-Fairly Important</td>
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<td>45% 5 - Very Important</td>
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**Question 20:** Does your organization offer customized programming for each group?

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<thead>
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<th>Part A</th>
<th>Part B</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses: 13 (87%)</td>
<td>Responses: 11 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36% 4-Fairly Important</td>
<td>55% 5 - Very Important</td>
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</table>
Question 21: Does your organization feel that the concept of risk is an important component of your program?

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<tr>
<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>100% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>0% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
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<tr>
<td>14% 3- Neutral</td>
<td>36% 4-Fairly Important</td>
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<tr>
<td>50% 5 - Very Important</td>
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Question 22: Does your organization feel it is your responsibility to offer programs for special populations?

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<tr>
<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>80% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
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<tr>
<td>20% NO</td>
<td>7% 2- Not Important</td>
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<td>29% 3- Neutral</td>
<td>43% 4-Fairly Important</td>
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<tr>
<td>21% 5 - Very Important</td>
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Question 23: Does your organization offer programs designed for special populations?

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<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 13 (87%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>80% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46% 3- Neutral</td>
<td>46% 4-Fairly Important</td>
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<tr>
<td>8% 5 - Very Important</td>
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Question 24: Does your organization believe it is important to raise rates every year?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part A</th>
<th>Part B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
<td>Responses: 13 (87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31% 3- Neutral</td>
<td>61% 4-Fairly Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8% 5 - Very Important</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Question 25: Does your organization have a written business plan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part A</th>
<th>Part B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
<td>Responses: 11 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57% YES</td>
<td>0% 1-No Bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43% NO</td>
<td>0% 2- Not Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45% 3- Neutral</td>
<td>9% 4-Fairly Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45% 5 - Very Important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 26: Does every management member have access to this plan?

Part A
Responses: 11 (73%)

- 55% YES
- 45% NO

Part B
Responses: 10 (67%)

- 10% 1-No Bearing
- 0% 2- Not Important
- 30% 3- Neutral
- 20% 4-Fairly Important
- 40% 5 - Very Important

Question 27: Does your organization have a written master plan for the entire operation?

Part A
Responses: 15 (100%)

- 80% YES
- 20% NO

Part B
Responses: 13 (87%)

- 15% 1-No Bearing
- 0% 2- Not Important
- 8% 3- Neutral
- 31% 4-Fairly Important
- 46% 5 - Very Important

Question 28: Does every management member have access to this master plan?

Part A
Responses: 14 (93%)

- 71% YES
- 29% NO

Part B
Responses: 13 (93%)

- 15% 1-No Bearing
- 0% 2- Not Important
- 15% 3- Neutral
- 54% 5 - Very Important

Question 29: Does your organization use an equipment maintenance and repair log?

Part A
Responses: 14 (93%)

- 86% YES
- 14% NO

Part B
Responses: 12 (80%)

- 0% 1-No Bearing
- 17% 3- Neutral
- 33% 4-Fairly Important
- 50% 5 - Very Important

Question 30: Does your organization have a risk management plan?

Part A
Responses: 15 (100%)

- 93% YES
- 7% NO

Part B
Responses: 13 (87%)

- 0% 1-No Bearing
- 8% 3- Neutral
- 23% 4-Fairly Important
- 69% 5 - Very Important
**Question 31:** Does your organization lease vehicles each year?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part A</th>
<th>Part B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
<td>Responses: 13 (87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71% YES</td>
<td>15% 1-No Bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29% NO</td>
<td>8% 2-Not Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23% 3-Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31% 4-Fairly Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23% 5-Very Important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 32:** Does your organization lease the use of your facilities to an outside group?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part A</th>
<th>Part B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses: 15 (100%)</td>
<td>Responses: 11 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47% YES</td>
<td>27% 1-No Bearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53% NO</td>
<td>9% 2-Not Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0% 3-Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27% 4-Fairly Important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36% 5-Very Important</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 33:** Other than cuts and bruises, have any accidents/injuries occurred in the last five years at your facility?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part A</th>
<th>Part B - If yes, how many?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses: 14 (93%)</td>
<td>Responses: 13 (87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93% YES</td>
<td>31% 1-2 accidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7% NO</td>
<td>23% 3-4 accidents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15% 5-6 accidents</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31% more than 7 accidents</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Question 34:** Have these accidents affected the business financially?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses: 14 (93%)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7% YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 35:** Rate the quality of your physical/natural property:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses: 15 (100%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0% 1-Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0% 2-Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0% 3-Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27% 4-Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73% 5-Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Question 36:** Rate the quality of your facilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses: 15 (100%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0% 1-Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0% 2-Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13% 3-Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% 4-Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27% 5-Excellent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 37: Rate the overall quality of your program:
Responses: 15 (100%)

0% 1-Very Poor
0% 2-Poor
0% 3-Average
20% 4-Good
80% 5-Excellent

Question 38: Percent (%) increase/decrease of:
A. Profit since last year:
   Responses: 15 (100%)
   0  >-50%
   1  >-25%
   8  0%
   6  >25%
   0  >50%
B. Profit over last five year period:
   Responses: 14 (93%)
   0  >-50%
   1  >-25%
   5  0%
   7  >25%
   1  >50%
C. Client/camper numbers since last year:
   Responses: 15 (100%)
   0  >-50%
   0  >-25%
   6  0%
   9  >25%
   0  >50%
D. Client/camper numbers over last five year period:
   Responses: 15 (100%)
   0  >-50%
   0  >-25%
   0  0%
   6  >25%
   9  >50%

Question 39: Type of surrounding property. (multiple responses)
Responses: 15 (100%)

67% Residential
53% Government park, wilderness area, etc.
33% Unknown & undeveloped
0% Industrial
27% Other: Farming, Lake, Rural
**Question 40:** Types of facilities: *(multiple responses)*

Responses: 15 (100%)

- 80% Lodge
- 80% Dining Hall
- 100% Cabins
- 20% Gym
- 40% Boat House
- 100% Office
- 67% Infirmary
- 80% Staff Housing
- 47% Pasture
- 20% Amphitheater
- 33% Tennis
- 73% Sports field
- 100% Trails
- 67% Craft Area
- 53% Barn
- 100% Ropes Course
- 13% Stage/Drama
- 67% Climbing Wall
- 40% River
- 100% Maintenance Area
- 40% Pool
- 60% Lake
- 47% Beach
- 73% Meeting Rooms
- 67% Pond
- 7% Restaurant
- 47% Store

Other: guest house, pier / marina, nature center, basketball courts, campsites, streams, wetlands

**Question 41:** What types of staff recruitment does your organization use? *(multiple responses):*

Responses: 15 (100%)

- 100% Word of mouth
- 73% Ads in professional periodicals
- 60% Job fairs
- 47% Ads in other periodicals
- 27% Video
- 40% Other: Information to colleges and universities, seek out individuals who would benefit company

Which of these is the most beneficial?

Responses: 11 (73%)

- 55% Word of mouth
- 45% Ads in professional periodicals

**Question 42:** What is your organization's primary short term issue/concern?

Responses: 15 (100%)

- 13% Staffing
- 20% Generating revenue
- 33% Rising cost of operation
- 13% Camper/clients
- 13% Physical property
- 0% Compliance with the *Americans with Disabilities Act*

- 7% Other: Handling growth of new business while maintaining high quality facilities and programs
Question 43: What is your organization's primary long term issue/concern?
Responses: 15 (100%)
- 33% Generating revenue
- 7% Rising cost of operation
- 7% Camper/clients
- 33% Physical property
- 0% Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

20% Other: generating scholarships, maintaining high quality programming, affecting positive change in quality of youth development services

Question 44: What are your core/primary activities and programs? (multiple responses)
Responses: 15 (100%)
- 73% Canoeing/kayaking/rafting
- 60% Camping & backpacking
- 27% Cycling/mountain biking
- 67% Training and development
- 7% Court sports
- 47% Arts & crafts
- 93% Ropes course
- 53% Rockclimbing
- 27% Archery & riflery
- 20% Field sports
- 7% Drama
- 7% Gymnastics & dance
- 53% Nature study
- 27% Horseback riding

27% Other: Christian/spiritual growth, conflict management, diversity, self-discovery, outdoor academy academic classes, sailing and seamanship

Question 45: How are you financed? (multiple responses)
Responses: 15 (100%)
- 100% Fees and charges
- 60% Donations
- 7% Publicly funded
- 40% Agency supported
- 20% Personal investment
- 20% Other: grants and endowments

Question 46: What does your organization see as it's highest potential risk?
Responses: 14 (93%)
- 50% Vehicle travel
- 0% Food related activities
- 29% Actual activities
- 0% Illness
- 0% Plants and animals
- 0% Physical property characteristics

21% Other: Hazards related to working in high crime areas, staff, we don't think of or focus on risk
SECTION III - OPEN COMMENTS

This survey section was designated for open comments or suggestions regarding the survey, its content, or factors that lead to successful outdoor centers, retreat centers, or camps. Each comment was listed as stated, except for omissions to maintain anonymity. These comments were not analyzed or grouped by similar response. These comments were listed in Appendix G.
CHAPTER 5
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction
The purpose of this study was to investigate and attempt to identify factors which lead to successful outdoor centers, retreat centers, and camps. The survey developed by this investigator was used as the primary tool for gathering a pool of data which, when analyzed, led to the following findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Findings
SECTION 1
The results of this section, when applicable, were in general agreement with the information revealed in Chapter 2, the Review of Related Literature. This section included twenty-one questions targeting demographic information relating to general characteristics and operation of the camps, retreat centers, and outdoor centers. The findings relating to these twenty-one questions, including number of responses, percents, and means may be found in chapter 4. Analysis of the data revealed the following important findings:

1. A minimum of 73% (11) of the fifteen respondents have been in operation 21 or more years, operate year-round, can serve at least 100 clients per day, have the capability of housing at least 100 clients overnight, have an emergency medical technician
or nurse on staff during program times, have gross yearly revenue and expenses exceeding $401,000, use rural utilities, and refer to their facility as an outdoor center.

2. The most common age group being served is teenagers, 13-19 years (100%), followed in descending order by children, under 12 years (93%), adults, 26-64 years (87%); young adults, 20-25 years (80%); special populations (53%); and senior adults, 65+ years (47%).

3. Over 80% (12) of the fifteen respondents offer both day and residential programs, with outdoor and adventure activities as the leading activity emphasis.

4. The average property size was 451.2 acres, with an average of 153 acres developed.

5. The average distance to the closest city with population 5,000-49,900 was 13 miles, and the average distance to the closest city with population 50,000+ was 47 miles. The closest emergency support services (fire, police, ambulance) averaged 5.4 miles.

6. The average number of year-round program, administrative, and maintenance staff averaged 7.3, 11.9, and 2.9, respectively. The average number of part-time program, administrative, and maintenance staff averaged 81.2, 7.5, and 2.5, respectively.

SECTION 2

This section was most important relative to identifying key factors leading to successful camps and centers. The questions were formulated based on the information revealed in the review of related literature, chapter 2, and targeted the major areas discussed in the same chapter. In this chapter, some of those aforementioned topic areas have been combined, and others have been dissected to provide a better understanding of
the results. The results of the survey were in general agreement with the information discussed in the review of related literature, with exceptions being addressed by the investigator.

Section 2 included forty-six questions targeting common factors relating to key fiscal and administrative characteristics of the camps, retreat centers, and outdoor centers. The exact findings relating to these forty-six questions, including number of responses, percents, and means can be found in chapter 4. Analysis of the data revealed the following important findings.

Land and Facilities

In questions related to land and facilities, 93% of all respondents owned the land and facilities, with 71% of respondents stating that this ownership was important [fairly important (21%), very important (50%)]. The two most prevalent types of surrounding land were residential (67%) and government park or wilderness area (53%).

Of all respondents, 47% stated that the majority of their land was vehicle accessible, and 67% indicated that accessibility was important [fairly important (42%), very important (25%)]. All respondents (100%) agreed that the initial selection of land will lend to the success or failure of the business, and 84% of respondents indicated that this selection was important [fairly important (46%), very important (38%)]. All respondents (100%) rated their physical/natural property good (27%) or excellent (73%). In rating the quality of their own facilities, the respondents indicated the following: 13% - average, 60% - good, and 27% - excellent.
Administration

In questions related to administration, all respondents (100%) had written goals and objectives, and all (100%) indicated that these items were important [fairly important (50%), very important (50%)]. Nearly all respondents (93%) stated that every staff member has access to these goals and objectives, and 92% indicated that this accessibility was important [fairly important (38%), very important (54%)]. Nearly all respondents (93%) stated that their organization has a written mission, and 92% of respondents indicated that this mission was important [fairly important (23%), very important (69%)]. A high majority (86%) of all respondents stated that every staff member had a basic understanding of this mission, and 92% indicated that this understanding was important [fairly important (31%), very important (61%)].

Of all respondents, 93% stated that there was a plan for long-term growth, and all (100%) indicated that this plan was important [fairly important (50%), very important (50%)]. A high majority (87%) of all respondents stated that their organization used consultants, but only 43% of indicated that the use of them was important [fairly important (29%), very important (14%)]. All (100%) stated that their organization participated in regional and/or national conferences, and 78% indicated that this participation was important [fairly important (64%) or very important (14%)].

The primary short-term issues were the rising cost of operation (33%) and generating revenue (20%). The top two primary long-term issues were generating revenue (33%) and concerns with physical property (33%). These results differ from the
information found in the review of related literature, which placed finding clients and qualified staff as the leading concerns.

Accreditation and Certification

In questions related to accreditation and certification, 73% of all respondents stated that their site was accredited by some outside organization, and 64% indicated that accreditation was important \([\text{fairly important} (43\%), \text{very important} (21\%)]\). The leading two accrediting organizations were the American Camping Association (7 sites) and the Association for Experiential Education (2 sites). In regards to staff certification, 53% stated that their staff were accredited (certified), but only 33% indicated that this accreditation was important \([\text{fairly important} (25\%), \text{very important} (8\%)]\), and 67% indicated a neutral position. The top two staff certifying organizations listed were the American Canoeing Association (7 sites) and the American Red Cross (2 sites).

The investigator found these results agreed with the review of literature in respect to the overall topics, but that there was a lack of agreement as to how important these topics actually were to the success or failure of a camp or center.

Staffing

In questions related to staffing, 93% of all respondents stated that they actively recruit staff, and 85% indicated that this recruitment was important \([\text{fairly important} (21\%), \text{very important} (64\%)]\). All (100%) stated that their organization has on-site training and orientation, and all (100%) indicated that these procedures were important \([\text{fairly important} (15\%), \text{very important} (85\%)]\). 87% agreed that skills training should
be paid for by the employer, and 64% indicated that this concept was important \(\textit{fairly important (57%), very important (7%)}.\)

Respondents indicated 93% had a written staff manual, and all (100%) indicated that this manual was important \(\textit{fairly important (36%), very important (64%)}.\) Nearly all (93%) stated that every staff member had access to this manual, and all (100%) indicated that this access was important \(\textit{fairly important (29%), very important (71%)}.\)

The leading three methods of staff recruitment were word of mouth (100%), advertisements in professional periodicals (73%), and job fairs (60%). The most beneficial of these recruiting methods were word of mouth (55%) and advertisements in professional periodicals (45%).

The investigator found that the quality of the staff was extremely important, and that this was reflected in results of the survey. The management understood the critical role played by staff members, and were willing to do what was necessary to ensure the highest level possible.

**Programming**

In questions related to programming, only 21% of all respondents stated that their program focused on one or two key activities. Of all respondents, 93% stated that their organization offered customized programming for each group, and 91% indicated that this programming was important \(\textit{fairly important (36%), very important (55%)}.\) all (100%) agreed that the concept of risk was an important component of their program, and 86% indicated that this concept was important \(\textit{fairly important (36%), very important (50%)}.\) Of all respondents, 80% stated that their organization believes it has a
responsibility to offer programs to special populations, and 54% indicated that this concept was important [fairly important (43%), very important (21%)]. The majority (80%) currently offer programs designed for special populations.

Of all respondents, 20% rated their overall program as good, and 80% as excellent. The top five program activities, in descending order, were ropes course (93%), canoeing/kayaking/rafting (73%), training and development (67%), camping and backpacking (60%), and rockclimbing 53%.

Fiscal Issues

In questions related to fiscal issues, 57% of all respondents stated that it was important to raise rates every year, and 69% indicated that this raising of rates was important [fairly important (61%), very important (8%)]. Only 57% of respondents had a written business plan, and only 54% indicated that having a plan was important [fairly important (9%), very important (45%)]. A low majority (55%) stated that every management member has access to this business plan, and 60% indicated that this access was important [fairly important (20%), very important (40%)]. The results regarding the existence and use of a business plan did not reflect the findings in the review of literature.

Of all respondents, 80% stated that their organization had a written master plan for the entire operation, and 77% indicated that this written plan was important [fairly important (31%), very important (46%)]. A majority (71%) stated that every management member has access to this master plan, and 69% indicated that this access was important [fairly important (15%), very important (54%)].
Of all respondents, six had an increase in profit of 25% or higher since last year. Seven had an increase in profit of 25% or higher over the past five years. Nine had an increase in client/camper numbers of at least 25% or higher since last year. All fifteen had an increase of at 25% or higher in the past five years. The leading three methods of finance were fees and charges (100%), donations (60%), and support from other agencies or organizations (40%).

Risk Management

In questions related to risk management, 93% of all respondents stated that their organization has a risk management plan, and 92% indicated that this concept was important [fairly important (23%), very important (69%)]. A high majority (86%) stated that they use an equipment and repair log, and 83% indicated that the use of such a log was important [fairly important (33%), very important (50%)]. Of all respondents, 71% stated that they lease vehicles each year, and 54% indicated that this leasing was important [fairly important (31%), very important (23%)].

Of all respondents, only 47% leased the use of their facilities to outside groups, and 63% indicated that this concept was important [fairly important (27%), very important (36%)]. Nearly all (93%) stated that at their site at least one accident or injury (other than cuts and bruises) had occurred in the past five years: 31% with 1 to 2 accidents, 23% with 3 to 4 accidents, 15% with 5 to 6 accidents, and 31% with more than 7 accidents. Only 7% (1 site) believed that these accidents affected their business financially.

Vehicle travel (50%) and the actual activities (29%) were the top two perceived risks.
Conclusions

The following conclusions were formulated after extensive analysis of the findings:

1. Outdoor adventure activities were the main focus of all of the centers and camps.

2. The size of the property and type of facilities seemed to have no major bearing on the success of a camp or center, but the quality of land and facilities did seem to have influence.

3. The majority of the camps and centers exhibited the same traits regarding activity type, program type, and client type.

4. The acceptance of site accreditation and staff certification as industry standards has increased, with site accreditation seeming to have more importance than certification. There was no major trend in response regarding the importance or non-importance of staff certification. The investigator was surprised at the lack of consistency in response to staff certification issues. This lacking was due to the well-documented fact that well-trained staff are critical to the success of any program.

5. When rating their own organizations, all of the respondents thought highly of their respective programs, but slightly less of their physical property and facilities. The investigator found these responses amusing and interesting because the respondents were more willing to downplay the quality of their facilities only.

6. In terms of administration, there was strong agreement on the importance of written missions, goals and objectives, business plans, and master plans, and staff manuals, and that all appropriate staff have a general understanding of the aforementioned list. The
investigator found it interesting that only just over half of the centers and camps had written business plans, even though this topic was given such importance in the review of literature.

7. The primary long-term and short-term concerns of camps and centers were equally varied, with no one issue at the forefront.

8. There was a consensus of agreement among the camp and center directors as to the need and methods for staff recruitment, as well as the acceptance of paying for skills training for staff.

9. There were three organizations that had the most interaction with these sites: The American Camping Association, the Association for Experiential Education, and the American Canoeing Association.

10. The majority did not focus on one or two activities. The vast majority of the centers and camps did offer customized programming for each group, and they believed this to be an important characteristic.

11. Total agreement (100%) existed on the issue of risk as an important component of programs.

12. Many of the camps and centers offered programs for special populations, but fewer indicated that programming for special populations was important. The result was a conflict with the priority and importance given to the Americans with Disabilities Act, which put forth major new requirements affecting the majority of camps and centers to some degree.
13. All of the camps and centers experienced an increase in the number of clients within the past five years, indicating that there probably has been a steady increase throughout most camps and centers.

14. Risk management was a leading issue for almost every camp or center, with the same number having active risk management plans.

15. Vehicle travel was considered to have the most potential risk of all aspects of operation, but with only 50 percent agreement. The literature review, however, revealed that vehicle travel was by far the most dangerous and that this fact was widely accepted.

16. Most camps and centers had experienced some accidents and injuries in the past five years, but did not believe that these occurrences had any lasting effect on business.

17. There was general agreement among the camps and centers, with the questions addressing accreditation, certification, program offerings, and a few administrative issues as the major variation points.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made as a result of the findings of this study:

1. It is beneficial to the success of an outdoor center or camp to be within 50 miles of a large population center and to offer both day and residential programs.

2. The process of initially selecting land for a retreat center, camp, or outdoor center should be deliberate, organized, and thorough based on the current and future needs of the planned facilities and program.
3. A camp or outdoor center should be on land owned by individuals associated with the camp or center and be adequately accessible by motorized vehicle.

4. Effective management must include a written mission, written goals and objectives, and the continual process of educating all staff on what these statements are and how they affect all aspects of the operation.

5. Management and staff of any center or camp should be active in regional and/or national conferences sponsored by organizations supporting camps and centers, as well as any other means of meeting with peers to share ideas and concerns about the industry as a whole. In addition, it is important to also be active in organizations which support or influence the industry, such as the Association for Experiential Education and the American Camping Association.

6. Successful centers and camps should have on-site training and orientation, pay for skills training, and actively recruit staff through word-of-mouth, job fairs, and advertisements in professional periodicals, such as the Association for Experiential Education Jobs Clearinghouse.

7. A written staff manual is essential for any camp or center. It is also important to ensure that every staff member has access to this manual.

8. Successful camps, retreat centers, and outdoor centers have written master plans and business plans which coordinate and manage long-term growth.

9. There must be an active risk management plan addressing all areas of operation. There must also be constant evaluation to stay current with the ever-changing issues regarding risk management.
10. Customized programming is important, including programming for special populations.

11. The selection and training of staff is critical because they make the programs what they are - a success or failure.

12. Further research is needed in addressing the accreditation and certification issues facing camps, outdoor centers, and retreat centers.

13. Further research on all topics addressed in this study is needed on a larger scale, with a modified survey to simplify and focus the results to a higher degree than achieved in this study.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
September 27, 1995

Dr. Judy Brookheiser, Department Head
Recreation Department
Murray State University
Murray, KY 42071

Dear Dr. Brookheiser,

Greetings! My name is Greg Owens. I am a graduate student at Western Kentucky University working on my Master of Science degree in Recreation and Parks Administration, and am currently developing my research instrument. After consulting with Dr. Biff Kummer, he suggested asking you to act as one of two outside professionals on my jury of experts. Dr. Kummer has informed me that he has discussed this with you and that you have accepted the invitation. Thank you for doing so.

Enclosed is a copy of my survey and a pre-addressed, stamped return envelope. Please review the survey and make any constructive comments that you feel are relevant. Please return the survey with your comments as soon as possible. I appreciate your taking the time and being an integral part of my Master's thesis program.

Sincerely,

Gregory S. Owens

enclosure
February 5, 1996

Heather Mirczak, Program Director
Chingachgook Outdoor Center
Pilot Knob Road
Pilot Knob, NY 12844

Dear Heather,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you on the phone regarding my research for my Master's Degree in Recreation Management. I appreciate your taking the time and energy to complete the enclosed survey.

As I told you in our conversation, this survey consists of 15 - 20 camps, retreat centers, and outdoor centers which were preselected and contacted in the same manner as I contacted you. All answers are confidential. I am asking for your permission to list your organization's name in a list of all of those that responded to the survey. This will give you, and the other companies, the opportunity to see the pool of facilities and programs which responded to the survey. Please sign the release attached to the survey giving me permission to list your organization as a participant. You will also receive a copy of the survey results for your review. The summary of results will contain no references to any particular facility or program.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 704-452-4185. If you feel that a particular question does not apply, please mark "NA" beside the number and complete the rest of the survey. All other directions are explained on the survey itself. Once completed, please place the survey and the permission sheet in the pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope and return it to me. I would appreciate it if you could return it within two weeks of initial receipt. Thanks again for participating. I look forward to reading your completed surveys.

Sincerely,

Gregory S. Owens

enclosure
APPENDIX C
1996 Camp & Outdoor Center Survey

SECTION I - DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

DIRECTIONS: Please write in the appropriate answer where there is a blank line. Please check the appropriate box that corresponds to your answer. All other comments are to be put in Section III - Open Comments. Thank You.

1. Name of Facility ________________________________ Telephone # __________________
   Name & Title of person completing survey _______________________________________

2. Address (location) _____________________________________________________________

3. Season of operation:
   - Summer
   - Year round
   - Spring - Fall
   - Other: _________

4. Years in operation:
   - 0-5 years
   - 6-10 years
   - 11-20 years
   - 21 or more years

5. Number of client/camper beds for overnight use:
   - 0-25
   - 26-50
   - 51-100
   - 101-150
   - 151-200
   - 201 or more

6. Maximum number of clients/campers able to serve at one time:
   - 0-25
   - 26-50
   - 51-100
   - 101-150
   - 151-200
   - 201 or more

7. Client/Camper classification(s) served: (check all that apply)
   - Children (under 12 years)
   - Teenagers (13-19 years)
   - Young Adults (20-25 years)
   - Adults (26-64 years)
   - Senior Adults (65+ years)
   - Special Populations- please list:

8. Number of year round staff:
   - Program
   - Administrative
   - Maintenance

9. Number of part-time staff:
   - Program
   - Administrative
   - Maintenance

10. Program Type:
    - Day
    - Residential
    - Both day and residential
    - Other: ___________

11. Activity emphasis: (check top 2 only)
    - Outdoor/Adventure
    - Training and Development
    - Watersports
    - Environmental Education
    - Variety
    - Other: ___________

12. Range of Gross Yearly Revenue: (in thousands of dollars)
    - $0-50
    - $51-100
    - $101-200
    - $201-300
    - $301-400
    - $401 or more

13. Range of Yearly Expenditures: (in thousands of dollars)
    - $0-50
    - $51-100
    - $101-200
    - $201-300
    - $301-400
    - $401 or more

14. Size of property (in acres): ___________

15. Amount of property developed (in acres): ___________

16. Type of utilities:  
    - City
    - Rural

17. Closest town or city (in miles), with population of 5,000-49,900: ___________

18. Closest large city (in miles), with population of 50,000+: ___________

19. Closest emergency support services- fire, police, ambulance (in miles): ___________

20. Highest level of medical support on site and facility (during program times):
    - Basic First Aid & CPR staff
    - Nurse
    - Emergency Medical Technician
    - Advanced First Aid
    - Doctor
    - None
    - Wilderness First Responder
    - Other: ___________
SECTION II - FACTORS OF COMMONALITY

DIRECTIONS: Questions will be of three types: 1) combination YES/NO with a scale response format 2) scale response only 3) multiple choice / fill in the blank. Please answer Y/N, and then circle the number on the scale which indicates the level of importance of the item to your organization/program. Each scale is defined before the appropriate group of questions, on the right-hand side of the page. Choose the most appropriate answer and fill in the blank when necessary.

All other comments are to be put in Section III - Open Comments.

1-No Bearing, 2-Not Important, 3-Neutral, 4-Fairly Important, 5-Very Important

1. □ YES □ NO Does your organization own the land and facilities?... 1 2 3 4 5
2. □ YES □ NO Does your organization lease the land and facilities?... 1 2 3 4 5
3. □ YES □ NO Is the majority of the property vehicle accessible?... 1 2 3 4 5
4. □ YES □ NO Is there a plan for long-term growth?... 1 2 3 4 5
5. □ YES □ NO Do you agree that the initial choosing of land can be the success or failure of the business?... 1 2 3 4 5
6. □ YES □ NO Does your organization have written goals and objectives?... 1 2 3 4 5
7. □ YES □ NO Does every staff member have access to these goals and objectives?... 1 2 3 4 5
8. □ YES □ NO Does your organization have a written mission?... 1 2 3 4 5
9. □ YES □ NO Does every staff member understand this mission?... 1 2 3 4 5
10. □ YES □ NO Is your site accredited?... 1 2 3 4 5
   *By whom?
11. □ YES □ NO Are your staff accredited?... 1 2 3 4 5
   *By whom?
12. □ YES □ NO Does your organization actively recruit staff?... 1 2 3 4 5
13. □ YES □ NO Does your organization have a written staff manual?... 1 2 3 4 5
14. □ YES □ NO Does every staff member have access to this manual?... 1 2 3 4 5
15. □ YES □ NO Does your organization use consultants?... 1 2 3 4 5
16. □ YES □ NO Does your organization have on-site training and orientation?... 1 2 3 4 5
17. □ YES □ NO Does your organization participate in regional and/or national conferences?... 1 2 3 4 5
18. □ YES □ NO Does your organization believe that skills training should be paid for by the employer?... 1 2 3 4 5
19. □ YES □ NO Does your program focus on one or two key activities?... 1 2 3 4 5
20. □ YES □ NO Does your organization offer customized programming for each group?... 1 2 3 4 5
21. □ YES □ NO Does your organization feel that the concept of risk is an important component of your program?... 1 2 3 4 5
22. □ YES □ NO Does your organization feel it is your responsibility to offer programs for special populations?... 1 2 3 4 5
23. □ YES □ NO Does your organization offer programs designed for special populations?... 1 2 3 4 5
24. □ YES □ NO Does your organization believe it is important to raise rates every year?... 1 2 3 4 5
25. □ YES □ NO Does your organization have a written business plan?... 1 2 3 4 5
26. □ YES □ NO Does every management member have access to this plan?... 1 2 3 4 5
27. □ YES □ NO Does your organization have a written master plan for the entire operation?... 1 2 3 4 5
28. □ YES □ NO Does every management member have access to this master plan?... 1 2 3 4 5
29. □ YES □ NO Does your organization use an equipment maintenance and repair log?... 1 2 3 4 5
30. □ YES □ NO Does your organization have a risk management plan?... 1 2 3 4 5
31. □ YES □ NO Does your organization lease vehicles each year?... 1 2 3 4 5
32. □ YES □ NO Does your organization lease the use of your facilities to an outside group?... 1 2 3 4 5
33. □ YES □ NO Other than cuts and bruises, have any accidents/injuries occurred in the last five years at your facility? If yes, how many? □ 1-2 □ 3-4 □ 5-6 □ more than 7
34. □ YES □ NO Have these accidents affected the business financially?
35. Rate the quality of your physical/natural property: 1 Very Poor 2 Poor 3 Average 4 Good 5 Excellent
36. Rate the quality of your facilities: 1 Very Poor 2 Poor 3 Average 4 Good 5 Excellent
37. Rate the overall quality of your program: 1 Very Poor 2 Poor 3 Average 4 Good 5 Excellent
38. Percent (%) increase/decrease of:
   a. profit since last year: >-50% >-25% 0% >25% >50%
   b. profit over last five year period: >-50% >-25% 0% >25% >50%
   c. client/camper numbers since last year: >-50% >-25% 0% >25% >50%
   d. client/camper numbers over last five year period: >-50% >-25% 0% >25% >50%
39. Type of surrounding property (check all that apply):
   □ Residential  □ Government park, wilderness area, etc.
   □ Industrial  □ Unknown & undeveloped  □ Other: ___________________________
40. Types of facilities (check all that apply):
   □ Lodge  □ Dining Hall  □ Cabins  □ Gym  □ Boat House
   □ Office  □ Infirmary  □ Barn  □ Pasture  □ Amphitheater
   □ Tennis  □ Sports field  □ Trails  □ Craft Area
   □ Staff Housing  □ Ropes Course  □ Stage/Drama  □ Climbing Wall  □ Meeting Rooms
   □ Maintenance Area  □ Pool  □ Lake  □ Beach
   □ River  □ Pond  □ Others: ___________________________
41. What types of staff recruitment does your organization use? (check all that apply)
   □ job fairs  □ ads in professional periodicals
   □ word of mouth  □ ads in other periodicals
   □ video  □ other: ___________________________
   Which of these is the most beneficial? ___________________________
42. What is your organization's primary short term issue/concern? (check only one)
   □ staffing  □ camper/clients
   □ generating revenue  □ physical property
   □ rising cost of operation  □ compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act
   □ other: ___________________________
43. What is your organization's primary long term issue/concern? (check only one)
   □ staffing  □ camper/clients
   □ generating revenue  □ physical property
   □ rising cost of operation  □ compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act
   □ other: ___________________________
44. What are your core/primary activities and programs? (check all that apply)
   □ canoeing/kayaking/rafting  □ camping & backpacking  □ cycling/mountain biking
   □ training and development  □ court sports  □ arts & crafts
   □ ropes course  □ rockclimbing  □ archery & riflery
   □ field sports  □ Drama  □ Gymnastics & Dance
   □ nature study  □ horseback riding  □ Others: ___________________________
45. How are you financed? (check all that apply)
   □ fees and charges  □ donations
   □ publicly funded  □ agency supported
   □ personal investment  □ other: ___________________________
46. What does your organization see as it's highest potential risk? (check only one)
   □ vehicle travel  □ plants and animals  □ illness
   □ food related activities  □ physical property characteristics  □ actual activities
   □ other: ___________________________
SECTION III  OPEN COMMENTS

Please make any comments or suggestions regarding this survey, its content, or factors that lead to a successful retreat or camp (use back of page if necessary):
APPENDIX D
Camp High Rocks
P.O. Box 127
Cedar Mountain, NC 28718

Nantahala Outdoor Center
13077 Hwy 19 West
Bryson City, NC 28713

Gasper River Retreat, Inc.
2965 Jackson Bridge Road
Bowling Green, KY 42101

Bradford Woods Outdoor Leadership Center
5040 State Rd. 67 North
Martinsville, IN 46151

Princeton-Blair Center
158 Millbrook Rd.
Blairstown, NJ 07825

Eagles Nest Foundation
43 Hart Road
Pisgah Forest, NC 28768

Sea Gull/Seafarer Outdoor Center
Rt. 65 Box 1
Arapahoe, NC 28510

ACE Outdoors
P. O. Box 1168
Oak Hill, West Virginia 25840

Genessee Valley Learning Center, Inc.
1700 Rayville Rd.
Parkton, MD 21120

YMCA Camp MacLean
31401 Durand Ave.
Burlington, WI 53105

Eagle Village, Inc.
New Horizons
Hersey, MI 49639
For Love of Children (FLOC)
1711 14th Street, NW
Washington D. C.  20009

The Venture Program
Cone University Center
UNC - Charlotte
Charlotte, NC  28227

Chingachgook Outdoor Center
Pilot Knob Rd.
Pilot Knob, NY  12844

Wyman Center
600 Kiwanis Drive
Eureka, MO  63025
PERMISSION TO LIST NAME OF ORGANIZATION / PROGRAM

I, _____________________________, as a representative of _____________________________,
(Print Name) (print name of co. / organization)
give consent for Greg Owens to print the company name (listed above) in a list containing all of the businesses / programs responding to the 1996 Camp & Outdoor Center Survey.

I understand that all survey results will be tabulated and summarized with no direct connection to each company, and will be used as a whole group to lend support to the thesis requirement for a Master of Science degree.

_________________________________________  ___________________________
signature of company representative          Date
April 2, 1996

Heather Mirczak, Program Director
Chingachgook Outdoor Center
Pilot Knob Road
Pilot Knob, NY  12844

Dear Heather,

Thank you for completing the survey and participating in my study. I thoroughly enjoyed reading all the surveys. As I told you in our telephone conversation, I am enclosing a summary of the results for your own information. If you have any further questions regarding the survey or its results, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thanks again for allowing me to include your site, and taking the time and energy to participate. I hope your programs are going well.

Sincerely,

Gregory S. Owens

closure
Comments Regarding Specific Questions:

#8 and #9 - This may not be clear in the section. We have two full-time positions and two part-time positions. We then have 28 full-time positions which cover program and administration, these positions cannot be broken down as numerous people have both program and administrative responsibilities. In the summer we employ 90 part-time staff and in spring and fall 15 part-time staff.

#10 - The program is accredited by AEE, not our site per say.

#11 - Staff are not usually accredited - but rather certified. Our staff have first aid and CPR certification but not others. We train our own staff and determine ourselves when they need appropriate skills to move into leadership roles.

#20 - Many of our programs are customized - Nearly all are tailored to some degree - at least during debriefings.

#25 - We do not have a formal business plan though we do have a specific budget each year.

#43 - building a climbing wall and managing it.

General Comments:

Well done survey - Very neat and easy to understand

The major factor in running a successful outdoor center is staff that are totally committed to your philosophy!

The survey really did not work for our center - each outdoor center has so many unique qualities it would be difficult to produce such a survey. Because of our size and our different programs, I feel that I could not stay within the confines of what the survey asked, that I indeed had to provide more information. The Department of Health and Natural Resources (DEHNR) has done a similar survey that addressed the centers in such a way to facilitate this problem.

Look forward to seeing the finished product.

I have worked for many different camps and camp concepts all over the country. Successful programs have:

- Strong experienced leadership with integrity
- Well trained staff that come back for "several yeas" (good indicator)
- Solid evolving but ritualized programs
Forget the facilities and all that other stuff. I have seen camps and the like make millions running the camp out of vans and in camp grounds, clients returning forever

With three different programs it was difficult to answer some of the questions - some applied to one program, but not all three.

Survey was easy to complete and fairly thorough. 
Factors leading to success:
- Long-term vision and commitment to facility
- Living on the grounds leads to being more aware and concerned with the grounds maintenance and operation
- Understanding the financial aspects of running a business (new in our case) and not overreacting during growth and development phase
- Proactive plan of growth and development
- Mission plan / statement
- Faith in God's plan for our lives and our camp
- Nerves of steel and the patience of a saint
- Staff committed to company
- Flexibility of plans, working hours and life as it pertains to camp
- Reputation both personally and professionally which allows people to trust you and rolls over to the business
- Lots of money to sink into facility, ongoing maintenance and improve grounds and facility.

I believe that the major factor to being successful is to key decisions based on whether it benefits the program and campers. If the campers are the highest priority then all other priorities will work out.

I look forward to seeing the final product.