

# Evaluation of Nature Based Play in Brooklyn Park Southeast Team

BY: Jacob LaBossiere, Kali Norton, Daniel  
Luna, Tijlim Xiong



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**Resilient Communities Project**

University of Minnesota  
330 HHHSPA  
301—19th Avenue South  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455  
Phone: (612) 625-7501  
E-mail: [rcp@umn.edu](mailto:rcp@umn.edu)  
Web site: <http://www.rcp.umn.edu>

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The contents of this report represent the views of the authors, and do not reflect those of RCP, CURA, the Regents of the University of Minnesota, or the City of Brooklyn Park.



# Demographics of the surrounding community

We are evaluating the City of Brooklyn Park system, specifically the nature based program which contains approximately 60 parks and 1,527 acres. There are about 75,781 people (2010), the largest park is Brookdale Park and the smallest park is Zane and Westwood Park. Two golf courses, 36 soccer fields and 50 baseball/softball fields. Sixth largest city in Minnesota, 29% of population under 18 years old and an unemployment rate of 7.6%. 52.25% of population is white alone, with black alone population being 24.39% as the second highest population based on race.

Population and Households in Brooklyn Park

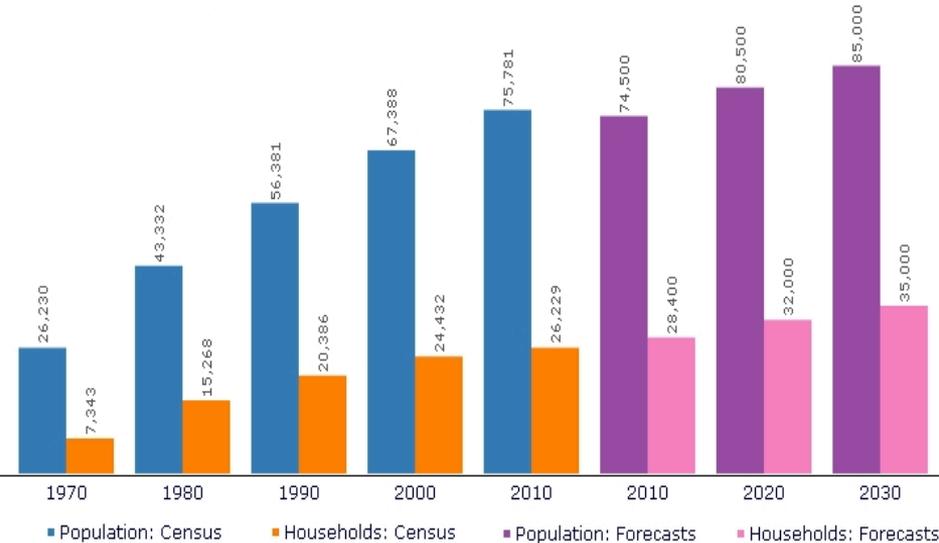
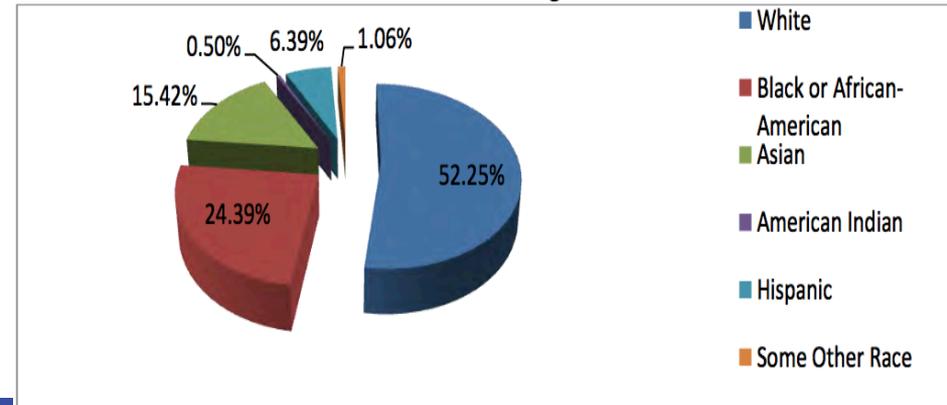


Figure 6  
Population by Race  
Brooklyn Park, MN  
2010 Percentages



# What is Nature Based Play and how we defined it in relation to the parks we observed.

“Natural Play challenges and fascinates children and teaches them about the wonders and intricacies of the natural world while they explore and play within it. It is intuitive and unstructured, constructive (or deconstructive), and timeless, encouraging interaction with natural materials, features, indigenous vegetation, and creative landforms. Natural Play is often a blend of materials and experiences to create purposely complex interplays of natural and environmental objects.” -

Oregon Nature Play Initiative



# Why Nature Based Play is needed in Brooklyn Park

60% of youth are not participating in Brooklyn Park's recreation even though 76% want to engage

Nature Based Play can Support Creativity and Problem Solving, Enhance Cognitive Abilities, Improve Academic Performances, Reduces Attention Deficit Disorder, Increase Physical activity, improves nutrition, improves eyesight, improves social relations, improves self-discipline, reduces stress - NC State University

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# Parks

- Norwood
- Queen
- Meadowwood
- Monroe
- River
- Emmerson
- Sunkist

# Key Questions and Method

## KEY QUESTIONS:

- What nature based play areas exist within Brooklyn Park?
- What is the potential for developing additional nature based play areas within Brooklyn Park?

## METHOD:

Visited each park on October 27th, 2016 as a group and filled out an evaluation form for each one

Took Pictures

Split into teams after we came up with a consistent way to evaluate the parks

**Nature Based Play Observation Document**

Observer(s): E. W. [unclear]  
Site: Sunnyside Park  
Time and Date: 4:00 10/27/16

**Checklist For Nature Based Play**

<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Features	<input type="checkbox"/> Shaded spaces
<input type="checkbox"/> Natural Spaces/ natural structures	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multipurpose lawn spaces
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Trees and Foliage	<input type="checkbox"/> Water feature
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open un landscaped fields in the area <i>NYM</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Garden
<input type="checkbox"/> Minimal design structures but still functional	<input type="checkbox"/> Paths through plantings
<input type="checkbox"/> Rocks to play on	<input type="checkbox"/> Animal attracting features
	<input type="checkbox"/> Places to climb/crawl
	<input type="checkbox"/> Gathering spaces
	<input type="checkbox"/> Messy materials
	<input type="checkbox"/> Levels

Other:  
*half basketball court, half soccer field*

*few kids playing basketball / tennis w/ dogs  
grandma walking w/ child*

↓ net

**Describe Physical Features:**  
*small 1 on 1, 1 soccer post man hole vent in middle of soccer field, small swing set  
Not a lot of room to add other features*

**Describe Safety Features:**  
*None, open so every neighbor can see park*

# Norwood park

Natural Features	Physical Features
Multipurpose lawn spaces	Hockey rink
Trees and Foliage	Picnic tables
Paths	Half court basketball
Gardens	2 playgrounds
Open Unlandscaped Fields	Tennis courts
Minimal design structures, but still functioning	2 baseball fields
Levels	Gathering spaces
A few rocks to play on	Playground including Toddler Playground



# Queen Park

Natural Features:	Physical features:
Trees and Foliage	Gathering places
Open unlandscaped fields	Playground
Minimal design structures but still functional	Picnic table,
Multipurpose lawn spaces	Bench
Levels	Grill
Wooded trail	



# Meadowwood park

Natural Features:	Physical features:
<p>Trees and foliage</p> <p>Shaded Spaces (small grove of trees)</p> <p>Multipurpose lawn Spaces</p>	<p>1 soccer goal post</p> <p>Benches</p> <p>Playground</p>



# Monroe park

Natural Features	Physical Features
<p>Trees and foliage</p> <p>Shaded spaces,</p> <p>Multipurpose lawn spaces</p>	<p>5 baseball/softball fields</p> <p>½ a soccer field,</p>



# River park

Natural Features	Physical Features
Trees and foliage	1 bathroom
Open un-landscaped fields	2 shelters
Minimal design structures but still functional	2 baseball/softball fields
Shaded spaces	Playground
Multipurpose lawn spaces, Water feature	Basketball court
Garden	Tennis courts
Paths through planting seeds	Volleyball
Animal attracting features	Grills
	Gathering Shelter



# Emerson park

## Natural Features:

Trees and foliage

Open unlandscaped areas

Shaded spaces

Multipurpose lawn spaces

Water feature

Paths through plantings

Animal attracting features

## Physical features:

Playground

softball/baseball field



# Sunkist Park

Natural Features	Physical Features
<p data-bbox="85 345 324 374">Trees and Foliage</p> <p data-bbox="85 416 411 445">Multipurpose lawn space</p>	<p data-bbox="506 345 788 374">Half Basketball Court</p> <p data-bbox="506 416 838 478">Half soccer field with one soccer net</p> <p data-bbox="506 519 620 549">One grill</p> <p data-bbox="506 590 842 620">Manhole in center of park</p>



# Data Analysis

7/7 - multipurpose landscape (multipurpose lawns, sporting fields, unlandscaped areas, trees and foliage)

6/7 - landscaped nature play elements (levels, shaded areas)

4/7 - interactive nature spaces ( paths, water features, gardens, rocks, animal attracting features)

3/7 - Equal number of natural and physical features

3/7 - More natural than physical features

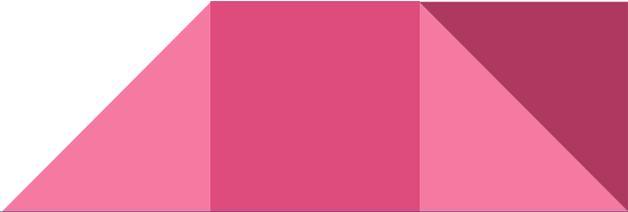
1/7 - More physical than natural features

Key - 7/7 = seven out of seven parks

# River Park

Add elevation or levels

Climbing walls or rocks.



# Norwood Park

Challenge or low ropes course

Team building areas





# Basic Template For Brooklyn Park

This basic template of

- Climbing Walls
- Interactive Gardens
- Boulders
- Mud and Sand Pit
- Rock/stick Path and Pit

can be used as basic additions to all seven parks to include more NBP elements



## Elaborate Interactive Gardens

Only River Park had a interactive garden. This element allows for hands on experience to learn about plants and attract wildlife.

Norwood

Sunkist

Queen

Emerson

Monroe

River

Meadowwood

# Boulders



-Norwood

-Queen

-Meadow wood

-Monroe

-River

-Emmerson

-Sunkist

Boulders help children develop motor skills. Can be placed at any of the seven park locations. Can range from one boulder to a cluster of them.

# Building Areas with Sticks and Logs

-Norwood

-Queen

-Meadow wood

-Monroe

-River

-Emmerson

-Sunkist

Building areas promote problem solving and creativity. All parks have room to designate an area to building with sticks/logs/ or rocks.





# Interactive Sand and Mud Pits

-Norwood

-Queen

-Meadow wood

-Monroe

-River

-Emmerson

-Sunkist

Sand and mud pits helps develop children's relationship with nature through hands on experience. These pits can be placed in any of the seven parks.

# Overall consensus

All seven parks have the underlying NBP elements of fields and open space, but lack the more elaborate NBP items

- Norwood and River Park have larger spaces to add in more challenging and larger NBP elements
- All seven parks can add in any combination of the NBP elements as suggested by the template
- All NBP elements will promote social, developmental, and physical play and health

# Experience

## Communication

Group text, email went well

Communicating between parties was difficult at the end

## Observing

Completed the observations early on

Hard to find the parks at times

## Improvements

Set up the meeting in the beginning of the semester