Evaluation of Nature Based Play in Brooklyn Park Southeast Team

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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

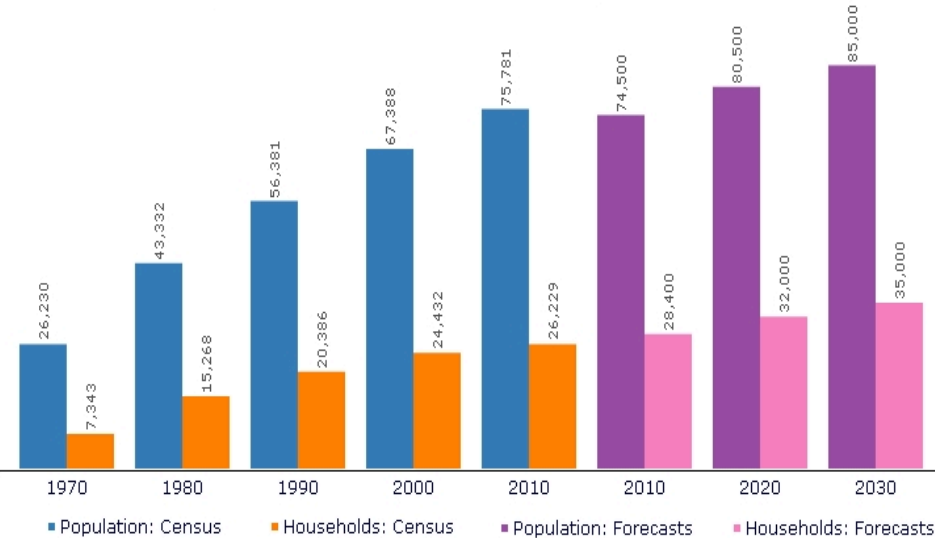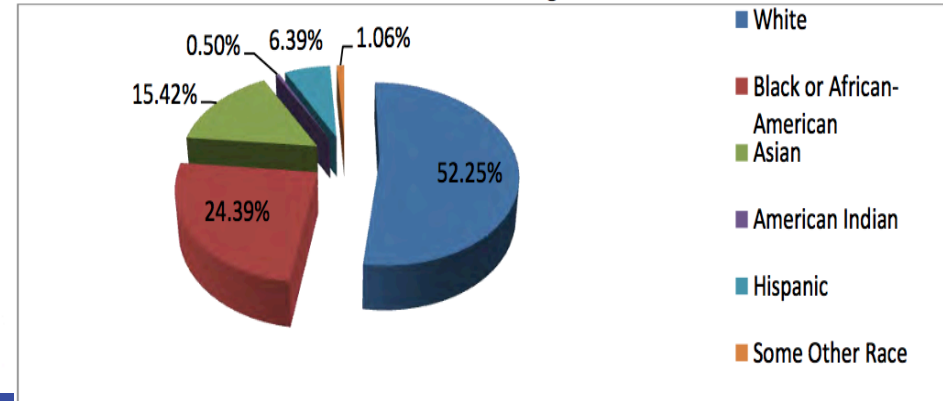- Population: Census
- Households: Census
- Population: Forecasts
- Households: Forecasts

Figure 6
Population by Race
Brooklyn Park, MN
2010 Percentages

- White
- Black or African-American
- Asian
- American Indian
- Hispanic
- Some Other Race

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

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

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
	Gathering spaces
Levels	Playground including Toddler Playground
A few rocks to play on	

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:
Trees and foliage Shaded Spaces (small grove of trees) Multipurpose lawn Spaces	1 soccer goal post Benches Playground

Monroe park

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

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
	Basketball court
Multipurpose lawn spaces, Water feature	Tennis courts
Garden	Volleyball
Paths through planting seeds	Grills
Animal attracting features	Gathering Shelter

Emerson park

Natural Features:	Physical features:
Trees and foliage	Playground
Open unlandscaped areas	softball/baseball field
Shaded spaces	
Multipurpose lawn spaces	
Water feature	
Paths through plantings	
Animal attracting features	

Sunkist Park

Natural Features	Physical Features
Trees and Foliage Multipurpose lawn space	Half Basketball Court Half soccer field with one soccer net One grill Manhole in center of park

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.

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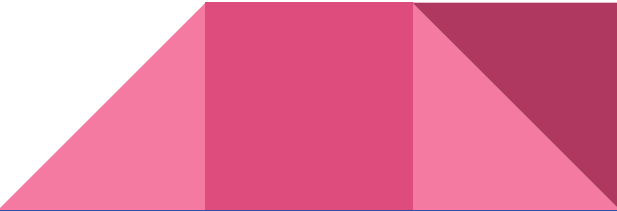
Norwood Park

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