



Community Link Program

Public Affairs Program • Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs • Syracuse University

THE ATTRIBUTES OF 41 PARKS AND RECREATION LOCATIONS IN NEW YORK STATE

A Study Conducted for the New York State Recreation and Park Society
By Shane Salanger
April 2016

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction: This study reports the results of a survey administered through NYSRPS. The respondents of this survey are employees at parks and recreation locations in New York State. The respondents provided factual information regarding their own respective parks and recreation locations' attributes and properties. This study has been made for the NYSRPS Executive Board in order to influence the funding of parks and recreation services in New York State. If this survey points to parks and recreation locations having explicit benefits, they could consequentially be considered an investment rather than an expense.

Methods: The data used in this report were collected from an online survey of employees at parks and recreation locations in New York State. Phone calls were also made to follow up with those who did not initially respond online. From the target population of 127 locations, 41 responses (32%) were collected, overall. Due to the sample size being so low, these findings cannot be viewed as representative. Some demographic information was collected, including the locations' operating budgets, amount of employees, and regions in which the locations exist within New York State. These are considered to be pieces of demographic information because they explain the size and place of each parks and recreation location.

Findings:

1. 58% of respondents said that they maintained three or more miles of trails in 2015. (n=38)
2. 61% of respondents said that they maintained 100 or more total park acres for "Active Recreation, Open Space, and/or Other" in 2015. (n=36)
3. 54% of respondents said that they spent \$50,000 or more on Capital Projects in 2015. (n=34)
4. 61% of respondents said that they served less than ten children in after school programs in 2015. (n=36)
5. 73% of respondents said that they served more than 250 children in summer recreation programs in 2015. (n=40)
6. 60% of respondents said that they served 100 or more seniors through "Fitness, Community Center, Outings, [and/or] other" in 2015. (n=33)
7. 64% of respondents said that they provided Prevention Services in 2015. (n=22)

INTRODUCTION

This study reports the results of a survey administered through NYSRPS. The respondents of this survey are employees at parks and recreation locations in New York State. The respondents provided factual information regarding their own respective parks and recreation locations' attributes and properties. This study has been made for the NYSRPS Executive Board in order to influence the funding of parks and recreation services in New York State. A similar, national study was completed by the Center for Regional Analysis at George Mason University. NYSRPS initiated this study in an attempt to mirror this previous study, while specifically changing the focus to New York State. For the purposes of this report, respective New York State parks and recreations departments will be referred to as "locations" so as to differentiate them from each other.

METHODS

How Data Were Collected

Instrument Design: The survey was designed on Constant Contact by Lisa Morahan, Executive Director of NYSRPS in collaboration with Shane Salanger.

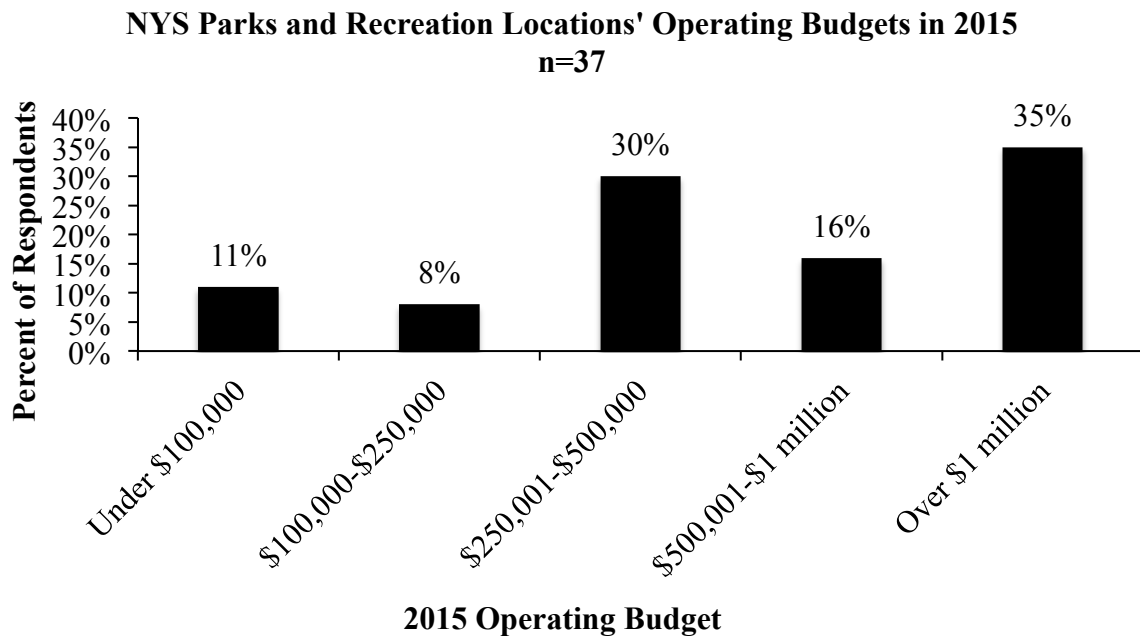
Data Collection Method: On February 17, 2016, the respondents were emailed a web link to complete the survey on Constant Contact. The survey remained open for data collection until March 29. Phone calls were made starting on March 10 in order to follow up with those who had not yet responded in order to receive more responses. Responses from the phone calls were recorded and then submitted into the Constant Contact survey. Throughout the data collection period, additional emails were sent out to regions that were underrepresented to remind them to participate in the survey.

Target Population and Sample: The target population consists of all 127 parks and recreation locations that are compiled on NYSRPS's contact/membership list. Of the 127 locations (target) that received the survey, a total of 41 responses (sample) were collected (32%), with no more than one response being from the same location.

Quality of the Data

Representativeness: Due to the sample size being so low, the findings in this study cannot be viewed as representative of the target population. This is because there are more locations that did not respond to this survey than there are locations that did, with only about a third responding. Also, some regions within New York State were underrepresented, while some were overrepresented. One such example of this is (in question 13) the Central New York Region amounted to 26% of the respondents, while the Adirondack/Lake Champlain/Seaway Region amounted to only 5% of the respondents. The following six graphs provide demographic information on the sample population. This information only describes the sample; it is unclear whether this information is reflective of the target population.

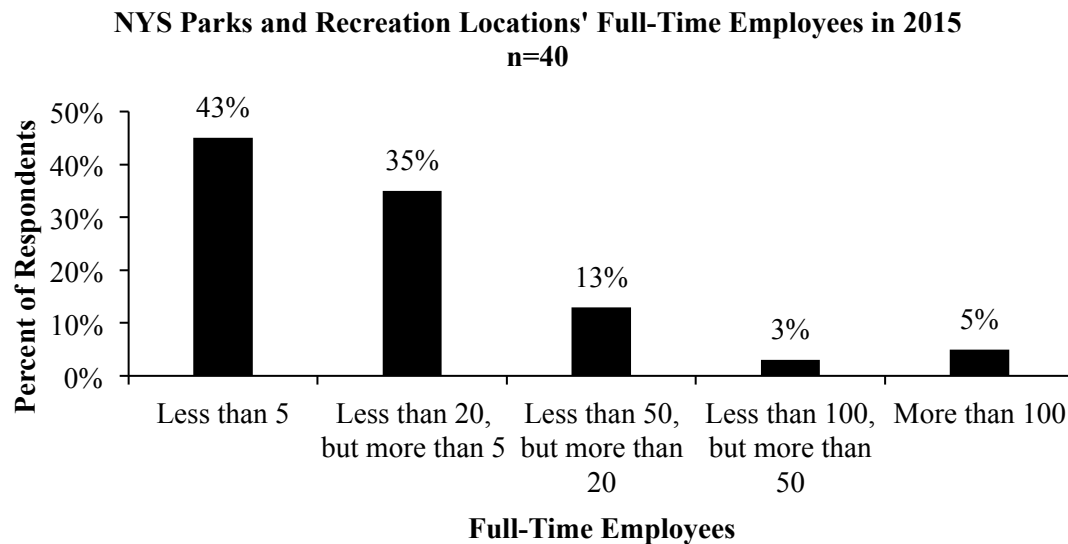
51% of respondents said that their operating budget was \$500,001 or more in 2015. (n=37)



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The four respondents who did not answer this question were not included.

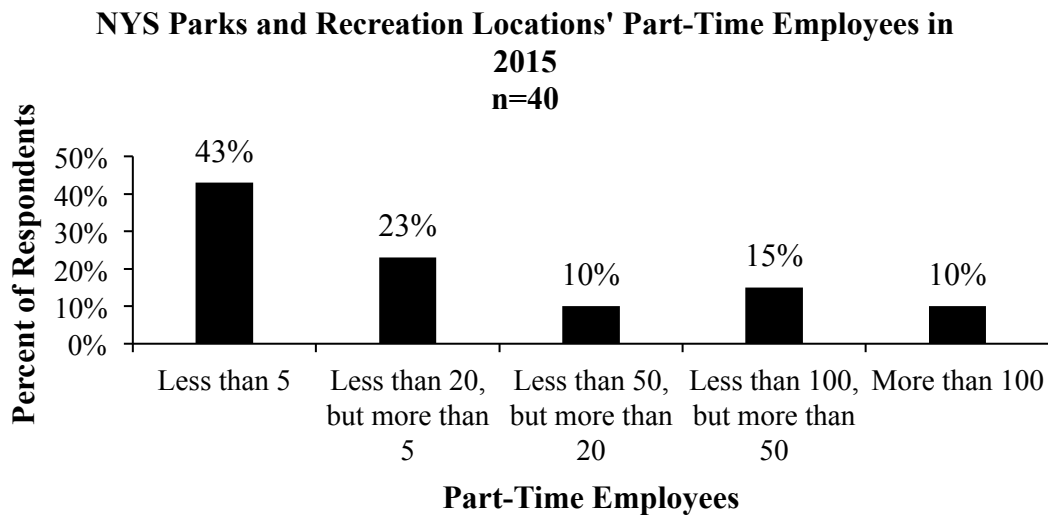
78% of respondents said that they had less than 20 full-time employees in 2015. (n=40)



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The one respondent who did not answer this question was not included.

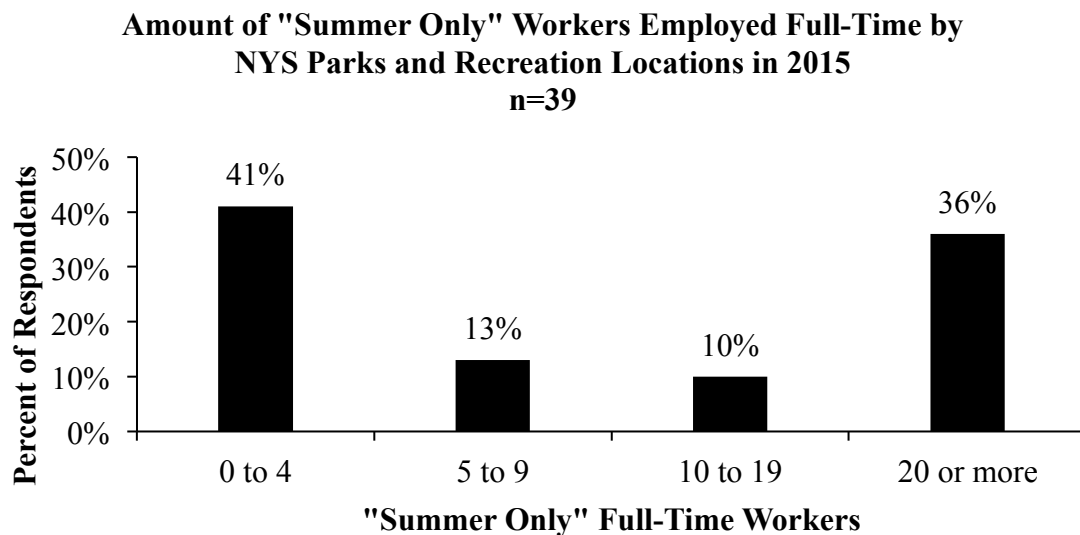
66% of respondents said that they had less than 20 part-time employees in 2015. (n=40)



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The one respondent who did not answer this question was not included.

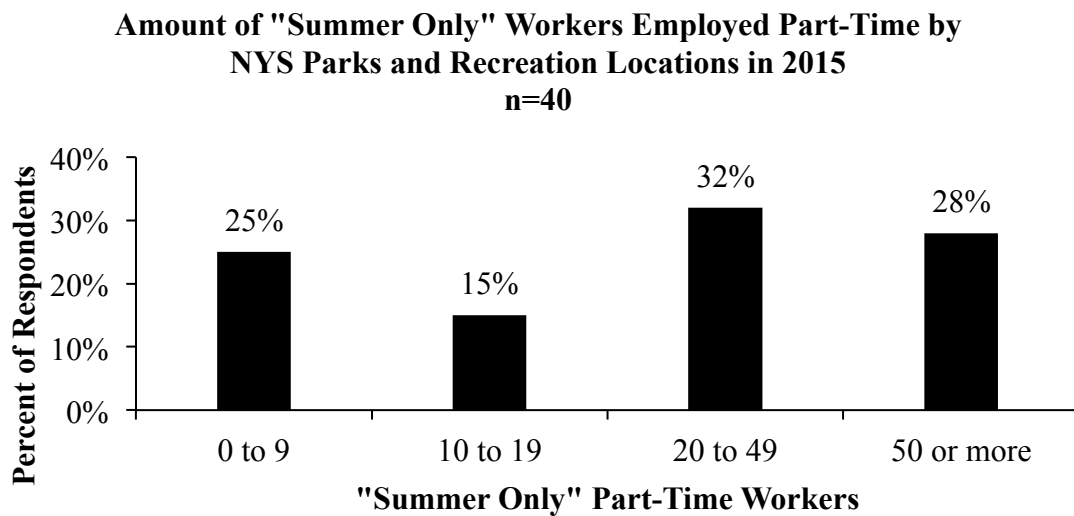
59% of respondents said that they employed five or more “Summer Only” full-time workers in 2015. (n=39)



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The one respondent who did not answer this question was not included. Additionally, the one respondent who answered “Don’t know/N/A” to this question was not included.

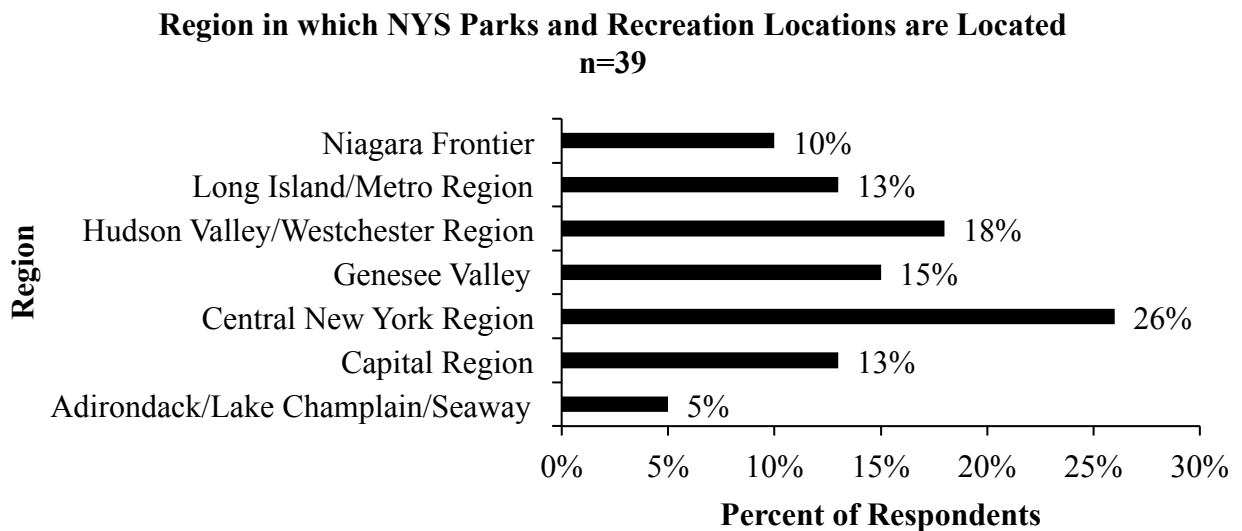
60% of respondents said that they employed 20 or more “Summer Only” part-time workers in 2015. (n=40)



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The one respondent who answered “Don’t know/N/A” to this question was not included.

54% of respondents said that they were located in the Central New York Region, in the Genesee Valley, or in the Capital Region. (n=39)



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

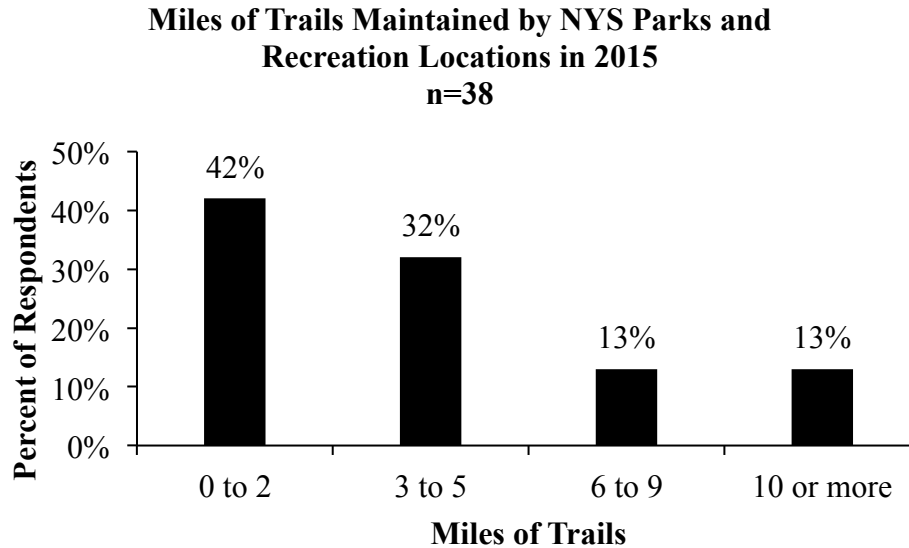
Comment: The two respondents who did not answer this question were not included.

Quality of the Data (continued)

Accuracy: There are questions to be raised about the accuracy of the responses. Many respondents answered “Don’t know/N/A” to the questions in the survey; those who responded via phone were unsure the most. This uncertainty could likely translate into making other estimations that are not reflective of the truth. Also, the wording in some of the survey questions could limit respondents’ answers. Examples of this are found in questions five and six in which the choices provided do not include every number. (If a respondent had five full-time employees in 2015, she must choose from “Less than 5” and “Less than 20, but more than 5,” neither of which include the number five.) These restrictions could have resulted in more questions being skipped as well as responses containing information that is not reflective of the truth.

FINDINGS

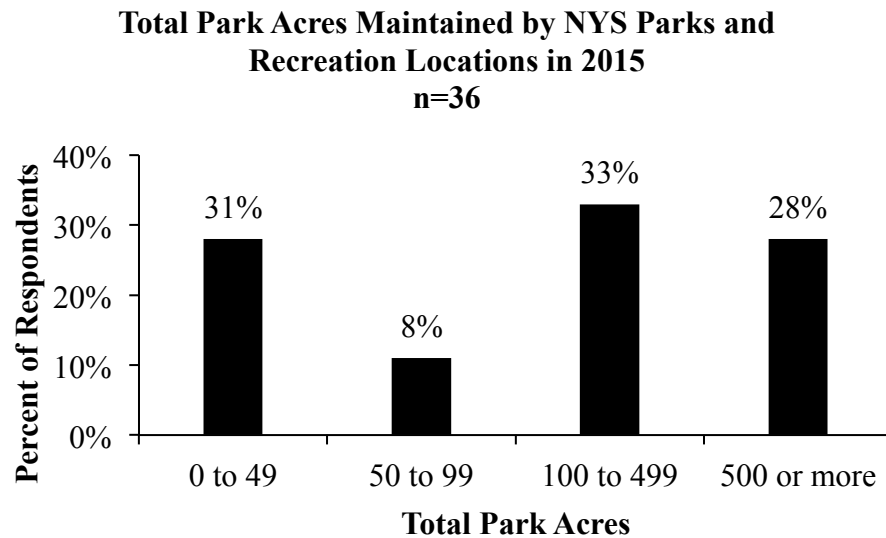
1. 58% of respondents said that they maintained three or more miles of trails in 2015. (n=38)



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The three respondents who answered “Don’t know/N/A” to this question were not included.

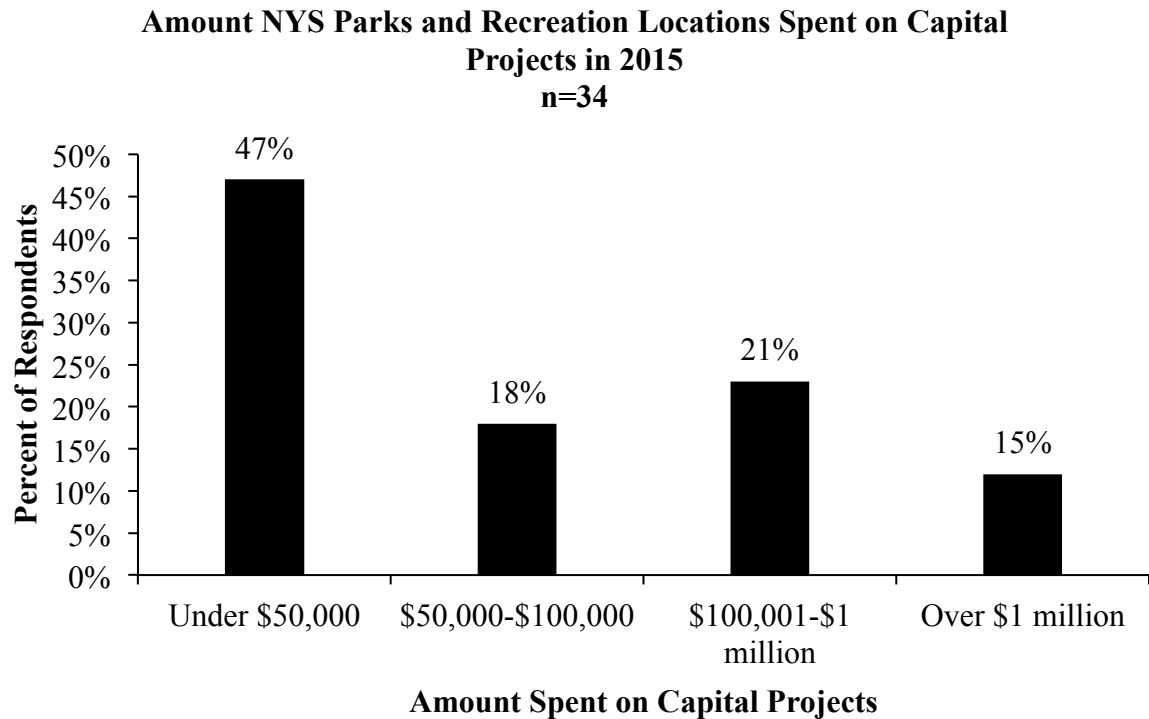
2. 61% of respondents said that they maintained 100 or more total park acres for “Active Recreation, Open Space, and/or Other” in 2015. (n=36)



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The one respondent who did not answer this question was not included. Additionally, the four respondents who answered “Don’t know/N/A” to this question were not included.

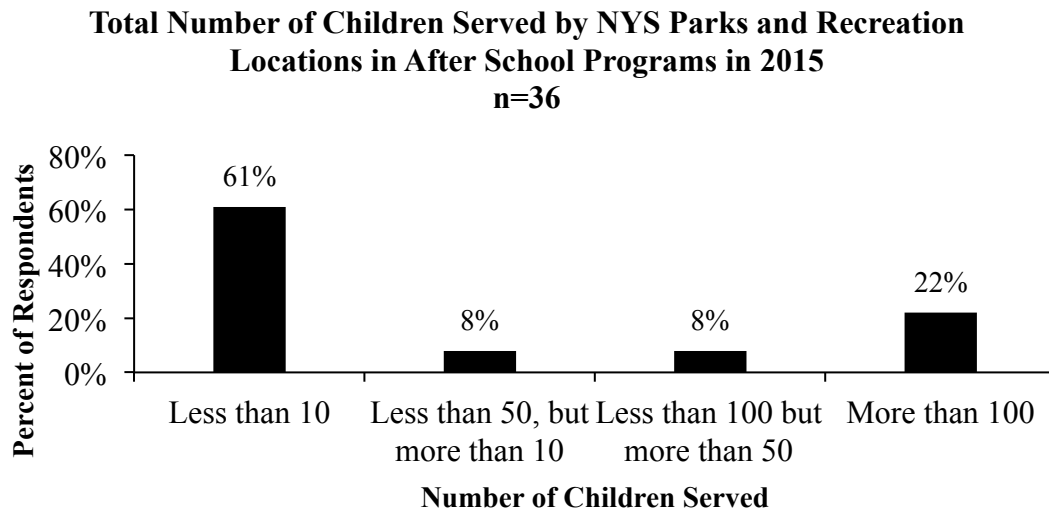
3. 54% of respondents said that they spent \$50,000 or more on Capital Projects in 2015. (n=34)



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The one respondent who did not answer this question was not included. Additionally, the six respondents who answered “Don’t know/N/A” to this question were not included.

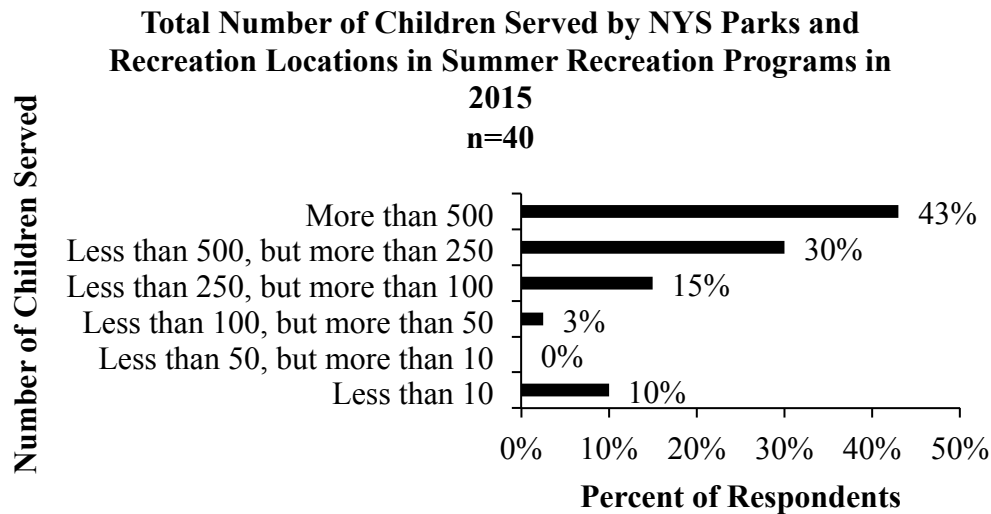
4. 61% of respondents said that they served less than ten children in after school programs in 2015. (n=36)



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The five respondents who did not answer this question were not included.

5. 73% of respondents said that they served more than 250 children in summer recreation programs in 2015. (n=40)

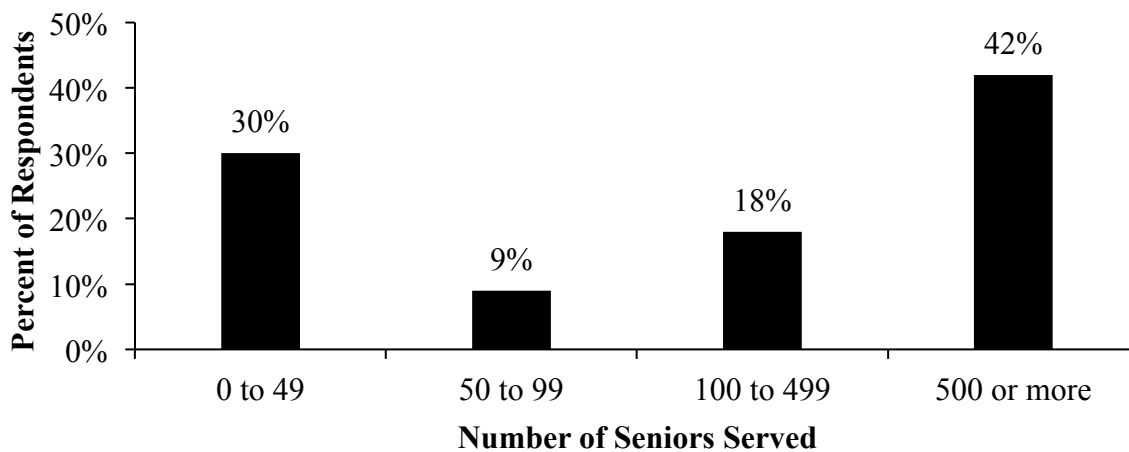


Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The one respondent who did not answer this question was not included.

6. 60% of respondents said that they served 100 or more seniors through “Fitness, Community Center, Outings, [and/or] other” in 2015. (n=33)

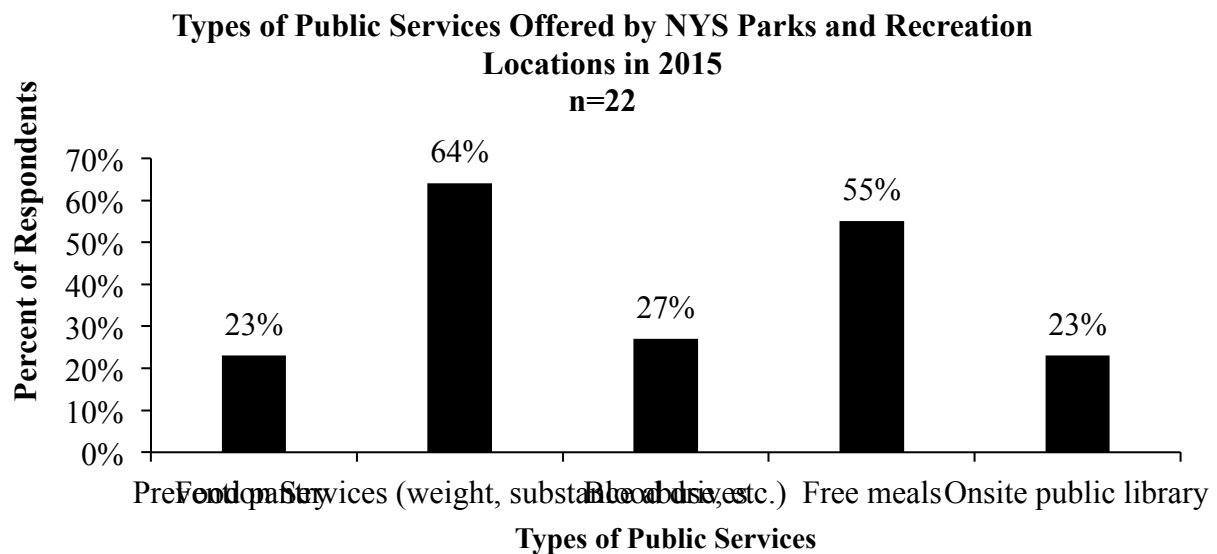
**Total Number of Seniors Served by NYS Parks and Recreation
Locations through “Fitness, Community Center, Outings, [or] other”
in 2015
n=34**



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The eight respondents who answered “Don’t know/N/A” to this question were not included.

7. 64% of respondents said that they provided Prevention Services in 2015. (n=22)



Source: Data collected for NYSRPS by Shane Salanger, Community Link Project, Syracuse University, 2016.

Comment: The nineteen respondents who did not answer this question were not included.

APPENDICES

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Appendix I

Blank Survey

1. How much was your 2015 operating budget?

- ☐ Under \$100,000
- ☐ \$100,000-\$250,000
- ☐ \$250,001-\$500,000
- ☐ \$500,000-\$1 million
- ☐ Over \$1 million
- ☐ Don't know/N/A

2. How many miles of trails in 2015 did you have to maintain?

- ☐ 0 to 2
- ☐ 3 to 5
- ☐ 6 to 9
- ☐ 10 or more
- ☐ Don't know/N/A

3. How many total park acres did you have to maintain in 2015 for Active Recreation, Open Space, and/or Other?

- ☐ 0 to 49
- ☐ 50 to 99
- ☐ 100 to 499
- ☐ 500 or more
- ☐ Don't know/N/A

4. How much did you spend in 2015 on Capital Projects?

- ☐ Under \$50,000
- ☐ \$50,000-\$100,000
- ☐ \$100,001-\$1 million
- ☐ Over \$1 million
- ☐ Don't know/N/A

5. How many full-time employees did you have in 2015?

- ☐ Less than 5
- ☐ Less than 20, but more than 5
- ☐ Less than 50, but more than 20
- ☐ Less than 100, but more than 50
- ☐ More than 100
- ☐ Don't know/N/A

6. How many part-time employees did you have in 2015?

- ☐ Less than 5
- ☐ Less than 20, but more than 5
- ☐ Less than 50, but more than 20
- ☐ Less than 100, but more than 50
- ☐ More than 100
- ☐ Don't know/N/A

7. How many Summer Only full-time workers did you employ in 2015?

- ☐ 0 to 4
- ☐ 5 to 9
- ☐ 10 to 19
- ☐ 20 or more
- ☐ Don't know/N/A

8. How many Summer Only part-time workers did you employ in 2015?

- ☐ 0 to 9
- ☐ 10 to 19
- ☐ 20 to 49
- ☐ 50 or more
- ☐ Don't know/N/A

9. What was the total number of children served by After School programs in 2015?

- ☐ Less than 10
- ☐ Less than 50, but more than 10
- ☐ Less than 100, but more than 50
- ☐ More than 100
- ☐ Don't know/N/A

10. What was the total number of children served by Summer Recreation programs in 2015?

- ☐ Less than 10
- ☐ Less than 50, but more than 10
- ☐ Less than 100, but more than 50
- ☐ Less than 250, but more than 100
- ☐ Less than 500, but more than 250
- ☐ More than 500
- ☐ Don't know/N/A

11. How many Seniors did your agency serve in 2015 by Fitness, Community Center, Outings, and other?

- ☐ 0 to 49
- ☐ 50 to 99
- ☐ 100 to 499
- ☐ 500 or more
- ☐ Don't know/N/A

12. What public services did you offer in 2015? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Food pantry
- ☐ Prevention Services (weight, substance abuse, etc.)
- ☐ Blood drives
- ☐ Free meals
- ☐ Onsite public library

13. Which Region are you located in?

- ☐ Adirondack/Lake Champlain/Seaway Region
- ☐ Capital Region
- ☐ Central New York Region
- ☐ Genesee Valley
- ☐ Hudson Valley/Westchester Region
- ☐ Long Island/Metro Region
- ☐ Niagara Frontier

Appendix II

Data Frequencies

For any question that the 'n' does not equal 41 (full sample size), it is because respondents did not respond to that particular question.

1. How much was your 2015 operating budget? (n=37)

_____ Under \$100,000 (11%)
_____ \$100,000-\$250,000 (8%)
_____ \$250,001-\$500,000 (30%)
_____ \$500,000-\$1 million (16%)
_____ Over \$1 million (35%)
_____ Don't know/N/A (0%)
No response (4)

2. How many miles of trails in 2015 did you have to maintain? (n=38)

_____ 0 to 2 (39%)
_____ 3 to 5 (29%)
_____ 6 to 9 (12%)
_____ 10 or more (12%)
_____ Don't know/N/A (7%)

3. How many total park acres did you have to maintain in 2015 for Active Recreation, Open Space, and/or Other? (n=36)

_____ 0 to 49 (28%)
_____ 50 to 99 (8%)
_____ 100 to 499 (30%)
_____ 500 or more (25%)
_____ Don't know/N/A (10%)
No response (1)

4. How much did you spend in 2015 on Capital Projects? (n=34)

_____ Under \$50,000 (40%)
_____ \$50,000-\$100,000 (15%)
_____ \$100,001-\$1 million (18%)
_____ Over \$1 million (13%)
_____ Don't know/N/A (15%)
No response (1)

5. How many full-time employees did you have in 2015? (n=40)

- ☐ Less than 5 (43%)
- ☐ Less than 20, but more than 5 (35%)
- ☐ Less than 50, but more than 20 (13%)
- ☐ Less than 100, but more than 50 (3%)
- ☐ More than 100 (5%)
- ☐ Don't know/N/A (0%)
- No response (1)

6. How many part-time employees did you have in 2015? (n=40)

- ☐ Less than 5 (43%)
- ☐ Less than 20, but more than 5 (23%)
- ☐ Less than 50, but more than 20 (10%)
- ☐ Less than 100, but more than 50 (15%)
- ☐ More than 100 (10%)
- ☐ Don't know/N/A (0%)
- No response (1)

7. How many Summer Only full-time workers did you employ in 2015? (n=39)

- ☐ 0 to 4 (40%)
- ☐ 5 to 9 (13%)
- ☐ 10 to 19 (10%)
- ☐ 20 or more (35%)
- ☐ Don't know/N/A (3%)
- No response (1)

8. How many Summer Only part-time workers did you employ in 2015? (n=40)

- ☐ 0 to 9 (24%)
- ☐ 10 to 19 (15%)
- ☐ 20 to 49 (32%)
- ☐ 50 or more (27%)
- ☐ Don't know/N/A (2%)

9. What was the total number of children served by After School programs in 2015? (n=36)

- ☐ Less than 10 (61%)
- ☐ Less than 50, but more than 10 (8%)
- ☐ Less than 100, but more than 50 (8%)
- ☐ More than 100 (22%)
- ☐ Don't know/N/A (0%)
- No response (5)

10. What was the total number of children served by Summer Recreation programs in 2015? (n=40)

- ☐ Less than 10 (10%)
- ☐ Less than 50, but more than 10 (0%)
- ☐ Less than 100, but more than 50 (3%)
- ☐ Less than 250, but more than 100 (15%)
- ☐ Less than 500, but more than 250 (30%)
- ☐ More than 500 (43%)
- ☐ Don't know/N/A (0%)

No response (1)

11. How many Seniors did your agency serve in 2015 by Fitness, Community Center, Outings, and other? (n=34)

- ☐ 0 to 49 (24%)
- ☐ 50 to 99 (7%)
- ☐ 100 to 499 (15%)
- ☐ 500 or more (37%)
- ☐ Don't know/N/A (17%)

12. What public services did you offer in 2015? (select all that apply) (n=22)

- ☐ Food pantry (23%)
- ☐ Prevention Services (weight, substance abuse, etc.) (64%)
- ☐ Blood drives (27%)
- ☐ Free meals (55%)
- ☐ Onsite public library (23%)

No response (19)

13. Which Region are you located in? (n=39)

- ☐ Adirondack/Lake Champlain/Seaway Region (5%)
- ☐ Capital Region (13%)
- ☐ Central New York Region (26%)
- ☐ Genesee Valley (15%)
- ☐ Hudson Valley/Westchester Region (18%)
- ☐ Long Island/Metro Region (13%)
- ☐ Niagara Frontier (10%)

No response (2)

Appendix III

CODEBOOK

COLUMN	FIELD NAME	DEFINITION	CODE
A	ID	Respondent's anonymous identification number	Code is identical to identification number
B	BUDGET	How much was your 2015 operating budget?	1 = Under \$100,000 2 = \$100,000-\$250,000 3 = \$250,001-\$500,000 4 = \$500,001-\$1 million 5 = Over \$1 million 88 = Don't know/N/A 99 = No response
C	TRAILS	How many miles of trails in 2015 did you have to maintain?	1 = 0 to 2 2 = 3 to 5 3 = 6 to 9 4 = 10 or more 88 = Don't know/N/A 99 = No response
D	ACRES	How many total park acres did you have to maintain in 2015 for Active Recreation, Open Space, and/or Other?	1 = 0 to 49 2 = 50 to 99 3 = 100 to 499 4 = 500 or more 88 = Don't know/N/A 99 = No response
E	CAPITAL	How much did you spend in 2015 on Capital Projects?	1 = Under \$50,000 2 = \$50,000-\$100,000 3 = \$100,001-\$1 million 4 = Over \$1 million 88 = Don't know/N/A 99 = No response

F	FULL-TIME	How many full-time employees did you have in 2015?	1 = Less than 5 2 = Less than 20, but more than 5 3 = Less than 50, but more than 20 4 = Less than 100, but more than 50 5 = More than 100 88 = Don't know/N/A 99 = No response
G	PART-TIME	How many part-time employees did you have in 2015?	1 = Less than 5 2 = Less than 20, but more than 5 3 = Less than 50, but more than 20 4 = Less than 100, but more than 50 5 = More than 100 88 = Don't know/N/A 99 = No response
H	SUMMER (FULL)	How many Summer Only full-time workers did you employ in 2015?	1 = 0 to 4 2 = 5 to 9 3 = 10 to 19 4 = 20 or more 88 = Don't know/N/A 99 = No response
I	SUMMER (PART)	How many Summer Only part-time workers did you employ in 2015?	1 = 0 to 9 2 = 10 to 19 3 = 20 to 49 4 = 50 or more 88 = Don't know/N/A 99 = No response
J	CHILDREN (SCHOOL)	What was the total number of children served by After School programs in 2015?	1 = Less than 10 2 = Less than 50, but more than 10 3 = Less than 100, but more than 50 4 = More than 100 88 = Don't know/N/A 99 = No response

K	CHILDREN (SUMMER)	What was the total number of children served by Summer Recreation programs in 2015?	1 = Less than 10 2 = Less than 50, but more than 10 3 = Less than 100, but more than 50 4 = Less than 250, but more than 100 5 = Less than 500, but more than 250 6 = More than 500 88 = Don't know/N/A 99 = No response
L	SENIORS	How many Seniors did your agency serve in 2015 by Fitness, Community Center, Outings, and other?	1 = 0 to 49 2 = 50 to 99 3 = 100 to 499 4 = 500 or more 88 = Don't know/N/A 99 = No response
M	PUBLIC 1	What public services did you offer in 2015? (select all that apply) – Food pantry	1 = Yes 2 = No 99 = No response
N	PUBLIC 2	What public services did you offer in 2015? (select all that apply) – Prevention Services (weight, substance abuse, etc.)	1 = Yes 2 = No 99 = No response
O	PUBLIC 3	What public services did you offer in 2015? (select all that apply) – Blood drives	1 = Yes 2 = No 99 = No response
P	PUBLIC 4	What public services did you offer in 2015? (select all that apply) – Free meals	1 = Yes 2 = No 99 = No response
Q	PUBLIC 5	What public services did you offer in 2015? (select all that apply) – Onsite public library	1 = Yes 2 = No 99 = No response

R	REGION	Which Region are you located in?	1 = Adirondack/Lake Champlain/Seaway Region 2 = Capital Region 3 = Central New York Region 4 = Genesee Valley 5 = Hudson Valley/Westchester Region 6 = Long Island/Metro Region 7 = Niagara Frontier 99 = No response
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SPREADSHEET

ID	BUDGET	TRAILS	ACRES	CAPITAL	FULL-TIME	PART-TIME	SUMMER (FULL)	SUMMER (PART)	CHILDREN (SCHOOL)	CHILDREN (SUMMER)	SENIORS	PUBLIC 1	PUBLIC 2	PUBLIC 3	PUBLIC 4	PUBLIC 5
1	5	4	4	3	3	1	1	4	1	1	4	2	1	1	2	2
2	3	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	5	2	99	99	99	99	99
3	4	2	4	2	2	99	1	3	1	5	3	2	1	1	1	2
4	2	4	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	5	1	2	2	2	2	1
5	3	3	4	2	2	1	4	4	1	6	88	2	2	2	1	2
6	5	2	3	4	3	1	4	1	1	6	4	2	1	2	1	2
7	3	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	5	4	99	99	99	99	99
8	5	2	4	4	3	1	1	4	1	6	4	99	99	99	99	99
9	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	4	1	99	99	99	99	99
10	5	3	99	99	2	2	3	3	1	5	88	2	1	2	2	2
11	3	4	3	1	1	3	3	1	99	1	1	99	99	99	99	99
12	5	1	1	3	3	2	4	4	4	6	4	2	1	2	1	2
13	4	1	2	2	1	1	2	3	1	5	4	2	1	2	1	1
14	3	2	1	1	1	1	99	3	1	6	2	2	1	2	2	2
15	4	2	3	2	1	2	4	1	1	6	4	99	99	99	99	99
16	5	1	3	2	2	1	4	2	1	6	1	99	99	99	99	99
17	3	1	1	2	2	4	3	3	4	4	1	99	99	99	99	99
18	5	2	3	3	2	1	4	2	4	5	4	99	99	99	99	99
19	4	1	2	4	2	4	4	1	2	5	1	99	99	99	99	99
20	3	1	2	1	1	4	1	2	1	3	1	99	99	99	99	99
21	3	3	4	1	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	99	99	99	99	99
22	5	3	4	3	2	4	1	4	4	6	3	1	1	2	1	1
23	3	3	3	1	99	2	1	3	1	6	3	2	2	2	1	2
24	4	2	3	1	2	2	4	1	1	6	4	1	2	2	2	2
25	2	1	4	1	1	1	4	1	1	5	1	99	99	99	99	99
26	2	2	3	1	1	4	2	3	1	5	3	1	1	2	2	2
27	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	6	4	99	99	99	99	99
28	5	2	3	3	2	2	4	2	3	6	4	2	1	2	2	2
29	1	88	88	88	2	2	1	1	99	99	3	2	2	1	2	2
30	5	2	4	3	5	5	1	4	4	6	4	99	99	99	99	99
31	3	2	3	1	1	3	1	3	1	4	1	99	99	99	99	99
32	5	4	3	3	3	5	4	4	4	6	4	1	1	1	1	1
33	4	4	4	4	1	1	4	1	99	6	4	1	1	1	1	1
34	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	2	2	1	2	2	2
35	5	2	4	4	4	5	4	3	2	4	4	2	1	2	1	2
36	3	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	1	5	3	99	99	99	99	99
37	99	1	88	88	1	3	1	3	4	5	88	2	2	2	1	2
38	1	1	1	88	2	5	1	4	99	4	88	2	2	2	1	2
39	99	1	3	88	2	1	88	88	3	4	88	99	99	99	99	99
40	99	88	88	88	5	4	4	1	1	6	88	99	99	99	99	99
41	99	88	88	88	1	1	1	4	99	6	88	2	2	1	2	2