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# Applied Research Project

## Recreation: A Career with Purpose

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**A Study Conducted by:**

RECREATION  
STUDIES

**Langara.**

**In Partnership with:**



## Executive Summary

Recreation, as a field of study and career is a relatively new concept, only being in existence in British Columbia for mere decades in comparison to more established professions such as medical, education, engineering or public safety that have been around for centuries. In the early 1960's Community Recreation 12 was established in secondary schools and the first college two-year career diploma program called the Recreation Leadership Diploma was offered to people who wanted gain certification in organized recreation. Since then, Recreation post-secondary diploma, degree and post- graduate degree programs have been developed in all the areas of the province.

Recreation, as a career choice has many appealing aspects. People that work in the sector point to the flexibility and variety of jobs that are available, the meaningful work and the positive impact Recreation has on individuals and the community as a whole. They are passionate about creating healthy communities and connecting and serving diverse populations, and they thrive in work environments that are evolving and changing. They relish a challenge and enjoy jobs that are hands-on and intrenched in the action.

With Recreation as a career choice being a relatively new concept, many people do not consider it a viable career. They do not realize that people who work in recreation save lives daily, by teaching important life skills such as swimming to children and adults, they build healthy communities by providing programs and services in beautiful parks spaces and quality recreation facilities for people to be physically active and socially connected, and they are accountable for multi-million dollar budgets, managing state of the art recreation facilities, world class park spaces and hundreds of employees. The range and variety of career options and the benefits of working in sport, recreation and event planning are endless. The question is how to educate people, who are not associated with the Recreation sector about this important work.

Changing people's perceptions about Recreation being merely fun and games, to being a serious profession is an uphill challenge. In a recent survey, 93% of the people who work in Recreation, learned about career opportunities from a Recreation professional, or through previous work or personal experience.

People currently working in the Recreation sector, Recreation educators and professional Recreation associations all have a role to play to inform those that are not familiar with the endless and rewarding career opportunities in Recreation.

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## Introduction

Many people are unaware of the opportunities that exist in choosing a career in Recreation. The idea of choosing Recreation as a field of study and career of choice is often not considered; rather many people work in Recreation as a means to support themselves while they are pursuing other professions.

This applied research project provides an opportunity for the researcher to determine why people choose a career in Recreation, the types of jobs Recreation professionals hold, the salary range of various Recreation positions, and the benefits of working in the Recreation field. Research included primary research, an online survey of and correspondence with over 200 Recreation professionals and secondary research, a literature review of scholarly sources and an environmental scan of what internet language is saying.

The outcomes of this research will provide the British Columbia Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) with a foundation to inform people who are not familiar with Recreation careers, rationale for choosing a career in Recreation. The outcomes will also be valuable to Langara Recreation Department's marketing strategy.

## The Issues

### New Field of Study and Career Choice

Recreation, as a field of study and career is a relatively new concept in relation to more established fields such as public safety, medicine, or education, and as such is not easily understood by people not associated with the sector. As people are deciding on their career path, Recreation is often not considered; rather, many people work in Recreation as a means to support themselves while they are pursuing other professions. Throughout the province there are thousands of part-time, seasonal or auxiliary employees in public, private and non-profit recreation organizations, who are working to educate themselves in other fields of study. These people are lifeguards, seasonal park laborers, recreation facility attendants, and recreation program instructors who will become teachers, medical professionals, police officers, firefighters, and professionals in many other reputable professions.

### Recruitment and Retention

Attracting employees educated and experienced in Recreation is becoming more of a challenge for Recreation organizations in BC. Over the past few years, it has been identified at the BCRPA annual Symposiums that recruitment and the difficulty of finding trained people is a constant refrain. (Tunnacliffe, 2018). This is echoed by Richmond Parks, Recreation and Culture that reported that recruitment and retention continue to be a challenge. It was also recounted that the level of experience at all levels of the organization is not what it used to be, in that their organization is faced with grooming very inexperienced individuals and they are seeing quite a bit of turnover (Muter, 2018). Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture also faced this challenge in recruiting and retaining aquatic staff. Their challenge of recruiting auxiliary lifeguard staff and filling aquatic supervisor positions increased when they opened new aquatic facilities (Holland, 2018).

### Recreation Education

Many Recreation organizations do not require people to be educated in Recreation to work in their organization. People that work in the Recreation sector are educated in many different fields of study and while skills and competencies from these sectors are a benefit in some Recreation positions, people without Recreation education, may lack the understanding of the foundations and benefits of Recreation, including socio-demographic challenges, increases in sedentary behaviour and obesity, decreased contact with nature, threats to the environment, and inequities that limit participation (Framework to Recreation in Canada, 2015). Some recreation educational institutions have steady enrolment, however they have spaces available for more students, while Recreation diploma and degree programs are challenged with attracting students.

## The Discovery

### The History of Recreation in BC

In the early days, Recreation was not defined and was viewed as something to do in your spare time. People did not look to others to organize their leisure pursuits, but rather, tended to entertain themselves. (The History of BC Recreation and Parks: The Role of BCRPA).

In the 1950's, organized Recreation started to become established into communities throughout BC. Recreation facilities and services were introduced as a means to keep youth occupied and soon came to be viewed as important community assets. The demand for sports fields, playgrounds, ice arenas, indoor and outdoor pools continued to grow throughout the 60's and 70's. These publicly funded facilities and services became the core of organized recreation for communities. As time went on, communities began to expect organized Recreation services and perceived them as a vital part of their daily lives (Chen & Gursoy, 2008).

### Recreation and Leisure Literacy

The American National Parks and Recreation Association states that Recreation has three values that make them essential services to communities: health and environmental benefits, social importance and economic value (Our Three Pillars, NRPA). The Canadian Parks and Recreation Association describes Recreation as “the experience that results from freely chosen participation in physical, social, intellectual, creative and spiritual pursuits that enhance individual and community wellbeing” (Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, p. 8).

According to the Vancouver Foundation, 72% of the general population across BC visited public parks and recreation facilities in the past year (Vital Signs Report, 2016). While the public use these quality recreation facilities and services, many did not put much thought into how these amenities came about. The value of these facilities and the benefits of Recreation services are often taken for granted and not understood by the funders; the general public or the decision makers; the political leaders.

For people to value the benefits of recreation facilities and services, they need to understand what is happening when they participate in recreation activities. Some consider recreation as just fun and games. Participating in a recreation activity without understanding the value of the experience, is like reading a book and not understanding what you just read. You can have the recreation experience but if you do not know the meaning behind the experience, you may not understand the value or benefit of that experience.

Just as being able to read and write makes a person literate, acquiring an understanding of the benefits of participating in recreation activities leads to leisure literacy. “The word ‘literacy’ refers to a person’s ability to understand and create within a certain discipline or realm” (Musson, 2015, para. 4).

Petersen (2014) describes leisure literacy as “the level of proficiency an individual possesses in a range of skills but also the possession of information that empowers a person to make informed decisions about the use of free time.” (p. 4). Recreation professional, Doug Brimacombe concurs; “Leisure

literacy is the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and experience leisure. [It is] being aware of the value or meanings of leisure” (Brimacombe, 2011, para. 5).

Dr. Brenda Robertson from Acadia University describes leisure literacy as a continuum of learning and developing a range of interests and skills throughout one’s lifetime that contributes to one’s quality of life. It is through this “understanding that individuals learn to value their free time and become motivated to take responsibility for how they spend it” (Robertson, 2011, para. 7).

Making wise leisure choices can play a part in improving a person’s personal health and community well-being (Petersen, 2014).

### Becoming Leisure Literate and Recreation Education

Just as we need to learn to read and write to become literate, we need to be educated to become leisure literate. “Leisure education broadens awareness of leisure, equips people to make more informed leisure choices, and increases ability to access opportunities” (Petersen, 2014, p. 2). When people get educated in Recreation, they increase their ability to create opportunities for others to become aware of the value of participation in their leisure activities. This in turn enhances the general public’s ability to understand the benefits of participating in Recreation and increases their ability to choose appropriate activities to meet their unique interests and needs. People educated in Recreation help participants understand what happens to them when they are involved in leisure activities.

Hutchinson (2014) describes a leisure educator as someone who can help people gain a personal understanding of the meaning of leisure. She suggests that this means assisting people to be in the here and now and to reduce outside influences during their leisure pursuits. It may mean helping people identify what is really important to them and to encourage them to be aware to this. “People can experience being in an activity when they have opportunity to experience and express who they are (or want to be)” (Hutchinson, 2014, para. 4). When people are participating in the leisure activities and they begin to feel, think and comprehend the benefits, they are becoming leisure educated.

“Being leisure literate requires the capacities to connect with or value what a leisure pursuit or place means in our lives” (Hutchinson, 2014, para. 3). People who are leisure literate have the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of what it is really like to work in the Recreation field.

## A Career in Recreation

In a BCRPA survey conducted by J. Edey-Nicoll (Survey, Sept./Oct. 2018) that was also extended to members of the Recreation Facilities Association of BC (RFABC), 210 Recreation professionals cited the reasons that they chose a career in Recreation. The top three reasons were that they:

- Enjoy working with people
- Like having variety in their job
- Want to make a difference in their community

Other reasons that Recreation was chosen as a life-long career included:

- The person is a problem solver and enjoys finding creative solutions
- They want to be part of a team that creates a healthy community
- They want to align their career with something they're really passionate about
- They want a career that is fun and exciting
- Improving quality of life for others is important to them
- They have always enjoyed sports and/or being physically active and want to continue to work in the field of recreation and sport
- They enjoy a challenge
- They like being hands-on and involved in the action
- They want a job that allows you to be creative
- They thrive in work environments that are evolving and changing
- Sitting at a desk all day does not suit them

Several of these reasons were also cited in an article written by Schwab, Stevens, Allen, Sheffield, & Murphy, J. (2014).

Survey respondents also identified the following reasons for choosing Recreation as a life-long career:

- They help others succeed and grow
- They wanted to remind people about the importance of play
- They enjoy their job so much, they never viewed it as a job
- They felt that working in Recreation was where they could be their authentic self.
- Working in a collaborative career aligns with their leadership style.

Professionals that started their careers in the Recreation in the 1960s and 1970s chose their career path for many of the same reasons that the people who consider a career in Recreation do today. Some people who have worked in Recreation for several decades, however, had not originally considered a career in the field. Comments from in the BCRPA survey conducted by J. Edey-Nicoll (Survey, Sept./Oct. 2018), about how people ended up in a full-time career in Recreation included, "I fell into [Recreation]-it looked interesting"; "I happened onto my first job as skate patrol. I had not planned on a rec career. Once I was in the arena world I learned what it was all about and liked what I saw"; "[I] never intended on a career in Recreation, [I] got a job first as lifeguard/instructor to pay for college, then stayed in it because I liked it"; I was an auto mechanic for 20 years and did skate patrol

for a few extra bucks. I was asked to learn to drive a Zamboni and I was hooked”; “It was a student job that I fell in love with”; (BCRPA Survey, 2018).

## Who influences career decisions?

Since attracting educated and experienced employees is becoming more of a challenge for Recreation organizations, the research focused on who influenced the respondents’ decision to work in the Recreation field.

Over half of the respondents (55%) from in the BCRPA survey conducted by J. Edey-Nicoll (Survey, Sept./Oct. 2018), were influenced by a Recreation professional, someone who has previously or is currently working in the Recreation field. 38% of the respondents made the decision to work in the Recreation field based on previous work or personal experience. Recreation is one of only a few sectors where people can work in the field prior to being educated in the field. For example, they were involved in Recreation and sports as a child, volunteered as a youth and got hired while they were attending post-secondary school.

One person stated, “I started working in recreation as a teen - instructing swimming & skating lessons, lifeguarding and working with drop-in teen programs. I then dove into sciences in post-secondary, and found I was procrastinating with school work to do the fun recreation things, like event planning and being in programs - clearly that was the path for me! I then completed a degree in sport & fitness leadership, that paved the way to getting into Recreation as a Coordinator” (BCRPA Survey, 2018).

People who volunteer in recreation often recognize the benefits of working in the field and pursue a career in Recreation. People who volunteer in recreation reap so many rewards, such as taking on the challenge of a job without many risks, gaining confidence, making a difference in their community, meeting interesting people of all ages and backgrounds, learning new skills and having fun. Some of the respondents of the survey reflected; “I was a systems analyst who got hooked on recreation via volunteering”; “I gained volunteer experience at sporting events as a teen” and “I started by volunteering in the industry, then part-time work, then never got out!” (BCRPA Survey, 2018).

Other people that influenced respondents to work in the Recreation field included parents (21%), a sport coach (15%) and a school teacher (12%).

## Recreation Professionals

McLean & Yoder (2005) suggest that people that work in the Recreation field are “all too familiar with the puzzled, perhaps alarmed, looks of parents and the amusement of peers when they reveal that one can indeed get a degree in recreation. Disbelief grows when friends and family hear references to leisure services field as a profession” (p. 190).

In comparison to more established fields such as education, medical, engineering or protective services, Recreation and Leisure Services is a relatively new field of study and career of choice. It is

perhaps due to this relative newness of organized Recreation that prevents people from seriously considering Recreation as a life-long career. Unlike the more established professions that have been around for centuries and had a much longer time to develop themselves as professional practices, it is “not surprising that the professional status of leisure services is not as advanced as traditional professions” (McLean & Yoder, 2005, p. 190).

### Benefits of a Full-time Career in the Recreation field

There are numerous benefits of pursuing a career in Recreation. Working in a job that offers such a diverse range of opportunities available is a key benefit. One could choose to work in aquatics, lifeguarding or teaching children and adults the important life skill of swimming. Someone with the love of skating could work in arenas organizing skating lessons, public skate sessions and working with minor hockey, figure skating, ringette and sled hockey organizations. If someone has a passion for working with youth, they could work in community centres or community youth centres positively influencing young people’s lives. There are opportunities for people who are energized by pre-school or school aged children to plan innovative programs and events to enhance their lives. If someone is interested in fitness, there are opportunities to work in a career that helps to improve peoples' well-being and quality of life while providing leadership and support. People who are inspired by the elderly could build on the growing trend keeping people active and connected as they age. People who want to connect their passion for the outdoors with a career, could introduce people of all ages to the physical, social, emotional & intellectual benefits of outdoor recreation. Performing and visual artists and musicians could work in positions that provide opportunities for the community to create, experiment, and communicate ideas, and emotions through the arts and music. Historians and archivists could work in community museums, preserving the past and creating curiosity of the paths paved before us. People who have a love of sport can work in sport management as coaches, trainers, and league coordinators, and facility managers providing endless opportunities for people of all ages to experience soccer, baseball/softball, gymnastics, badminton, volleyball, boxing, running, cycling, martial arts, tennis, ping-pong, pickleball, lacrosse, dancing and many other sporting activities. Event planning for community special events and festivals is another area of Recreation that appeals to people that thrive in work environments that are ever evolving and changing.

A study of why students pursued degrees in Sport and Recreation Management (Sibson 2010) discovered that the top reasons were: good career opportunities; range/variety of career options; and enjoyment/passion/interest of working in sport, recreation and events.

For people looking for a career that provides a wide range of diverse opportunities, a chance to make a difference in other people’s lives and where they are surrounded by inspiring, can-do kind of people, then working in Recreation is a perfect fit. One respondent of the survey reported, “I have been able to work in 5 different positions over the last 23 years while staying with the same employer” (BRCPA Survey, 2018). Other people work in non-profit organizations, like Neighbourhood Houses, YM/YWCA or Boys and Girls Clubs and then move into public recreation. Still others work in private recreation organizations such golf clubs, tennis clubs and ski resorts. The opportunities seem endless, ranging from music to sports to aquatics to heritage, working with seniors, youth, preschoolers, people from different cultures and with different abilities and so much more.

## List of Full-time Careers in the Recreation field

The following is a sample of Recreation career jobs that people work in. A more detailed list including a description of the job, some fun facts about each, the general level of education needed to obtain the job and the annual salary range of each are included in Appendix A. (BRCPA Survey, 2018).

- Recreation Leader
- Recreation Program Assistant
- Recreation Attendant
- Sports Programmer
- Recreation Program Coordinator/  
Recreation Programmer
- Community Services Coordinator
- Community Facilities Coordinator
- Community Health and Wellness  
Coordinator
- Youth Development Coordinator
- Coordinator Youth Recreation Services
- Recreation Prescription Programmer
- Preschool Coordinator
- Community & Neighbourhood Services  
Manager
- Fitness Supervisor / Coordinator
- Active Living Coordinator / Group  
Fitness Instructor
- Weight Room Attendant
- Personal Trainer/Owner Private Fitness  
Studio
- Recreation Facility Clerk
- Aquatic Leader
- Aquatic Supervisor
- Aquatic Programmer
- Aquatic Centre Supervisor / Aquatic  
Customer Service Supervisor
- Aquatic Maintenance Supervisor
- Assistant Aquatics Manager
- Facilities Maintenance Supervisor
- Facility and Ice Maintenance Worker
- Parks and Recreation Maintenance  
Worker
- Director of Parks, Recreation and  
Culture
- Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation
- Recreation Manager
- Recreation Facility Manager
- Park Planner
- Research Analyst
- Coordinator of Plans and Policies
- Manager of Business Operations
- Community Development Coordinator

## Advice from those who went before you

Recreation professionals were asked what advice they would give to someone considering a career in the Recreation sector.

Some of the guidance was about the variety of opportunities in Recreation;

- “There are lots of different careers in the recreation sector, look at all of the possibilities”
- “Recreation can open doors and provide you with opportunities that you never thought possible”
- “Diversify your work so you are exposed to a variety of areas of Recreation.” (BRCPA Survey, 2018)

Some of the advice spoke to the kinds of people that work in Recreation and the kinds of work available;

- “Recreation is full of high energy, passionate, enthusiastic people who love their jobs.”
- “Be grateful for the variety in our role. Work in a variety of sectors (private, non-profit and public) and realize the differences in mandate and the value each one provides to the community.”
- “It is the best job anyone could ever have especially if you are passionate about recreation.” (BRCPA Survey, 2018)

Reflections on Recreation careers in the future;

- “This is the career of the future as the population fatigues from overexposure to the digital world.”
- “Recreation has come so far as being seen as an industry of professionals - and there is still so much room to grow in this area. As our communities grow and evolve, the need for recreation will match in need and growth.”
- “While working in recreation tends to generally start off on a part time basis, it can lead to one of the most rewarding, full-time jobs if you give it time!” (BRCPA Survey, 2018)

Other suggestions centered around experience and post-secondary education;

- “Get your certification [and] post-secondary education in Recreation, Class 4 driver's license, First Aid...etc. All of these are needed at various time throughout your career.”
- “Embrace life-long learning; attend every workshop you can on Physical Literacy, Guiding Behaviour, Project Management, Developmental Asset Building, Inclusion etc.”
- “Get a good education so that you are well-grounded in recreation theory and applications. Also, get as much relevant volunteer and work experience as possible.” (BRCPA Survey, 2018)

## Recreation Education

Over the past several decades, Recreation education has evolved in British Columbia. According to the BCRPA; The History of BC Recreation and Parks report, a pilot project for a high school course called Community Recreation 12 was established in the mid 1960s. Around that same time, the first college two-year career diploma program called the Recreation Leadership Diploma at Langara College was implemented. Since then, Recreation post-secondary diploma, degree and post-graduate degree programs have been developed in all the areas of the province (pp. 13-14).

While the majority of people that work in the Recreation sector have a Diploma, Bachelors or Masters of Community Recreation/Leisure Studies (61%), many others have been educated in others education streams – these include, but are not limited to Kinesiology, Education, Social Work, Sport Management, Counselling, English major and Psychology (BCRPA Survey, 2018).

The follow is a list of the post-secondary Recreation programs in BC. A more detailed list including the name of the programs, the name of the post-secondary institution, and the description of each program are included in Appendix B.

School	Program
Capilano University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outdoor Recreation Management Diploma / Bachelor, Tourism Management Adventure Tourism</li> </ul>
College of the Rockies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tourism Management Certificate                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1 year) or Diploma (2 year)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Recreation Management Diploma</li> </ul>
Comosun College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sport Management Diploma</li> <li>Bachelor of Sport &amp; Fitness Leadership</li> <li>(Bachelor of Sport &amp; Fitness Leadership will change to Bachelor of Sport Management degree - in final approval stage)</li> </ul>
Douglas College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Therapeutic Recreation (Diploma and Bachelor)</li> <li>Bachelor Physical Education and Coaching</li> <li>Sport Science Diploma</li> </ul>
Langara College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recreation Leadership Diploma Program</li> <li>Bachelor Recreation Management Degree</li> </ul>
Trinity Western University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BA Sports and Leisure Management</li> </ul>

School	Program
University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources with a major in Outdoor Recreation and Conservation</li> <li>● Bachelor of Arts in Nature-Based Tourism Management</li> </ul>
UVIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recreation and Health Education Bachelor Arts</li> </ul>
Vancouver Island University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Event Management Certificate</li> <li>● Certificate in Adventure Tourism and Recreation;</li> <li>● Recreation and Sport Management Diploma;</li> <li>● Tourism Studies Diploma;</li> <li>● Bachelor of Tourism Management with a major in Recreation;</li> <li>● Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management</li> </ul>

## Best Practices

Individual recreation organizations have initiatives that inform young people about the benefits and opportunities of pursuing a career in Recreation. The following highlights four municipalities that have developed individual initiatives targeted at people considering a career in Recreation.

### Cities of Port Coquitlam and Port Moody

Youth Collective is an initiative offered to youth 15-18 years old, through the Cities of Port Coquitlam and Port Moody. The program is supported by the community to train and help youth get employment into the Recreation industry. The mission is “empower and educate low asset youth by providing training, transferable skills and employment opportunities” Poco Youth Recreation (2018). Youth receive recreation education and training and have the opportunity to earn certifications in first aid, food safety, child development, movement skills and aquatics. The training is facilitated through the Port Coquitlam and Port Moody Recreation Departments and additional partners, such as Van City and Langara College Department of Recreation Studies. Once youth have successfully completed the program, they are eligible to gain employment through the aquatics and children’s services department in Port Coquitlam and Port Moody.

### West Vancouver School District

The West Vancouver School District runs a program called FAST that stands for First Aid Swim Training. The program is offer as part of the school curriculum and it provides students with the skills and certification to become employed as lifeguards. The program that is offered at the West Vancouver Aquatic Centre includes in-water training, physical land training and classroom sessions. “At the completion of the FAST Program students have obtained all of the required certification prerequisites

necessary to enroll in the National Lifeguard course as well as a practical foundation in resistance and cardiovascular training, swimming, stroke development and leadership” (West Vancouver School District, 2018, para. 3)

### City of Surrey

The City of Surrey has seen significant community growth and among other Recreation facilities, has recently constructed of two new aquatic facilities. The demand for swim lessons and public swims has increased in all areas of Surrey. They have also been challenged with filling lifeguard and swimming instructors’ positions as well as supervisory aquatic positions (Head Lifeguard / Aquatic Programmer).

To address this challenge, Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture moved toward an in-house model of Advanced Lifesaving and Lifeguard training. The program targets young people who may be interested in a career in Recreation and Aquatics and steers them through a process and into a recruitment stream aimed at entry level lifeguard / instructor staff. This approach ensures the City’s values are modeled and embedded in the training programs (Holland, 2018). Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture holds regular Lifeguard Information sessions that inform young people about the benefits of working in aquatics and offers volunteer opportunities for youth to gain experience assisting with swimming lessons, special events and aquatic fitness classes.

Upon successful completion of the programs, students gain valuable skills and school credits. Surrey Parks, Recreation and Culture has created an inspiring video that they use as part of their recruitment process - [www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/17478.aspx](http://www.surrey.ca/culture-recreation/17478.aspx). (City of Surrey, 2018)

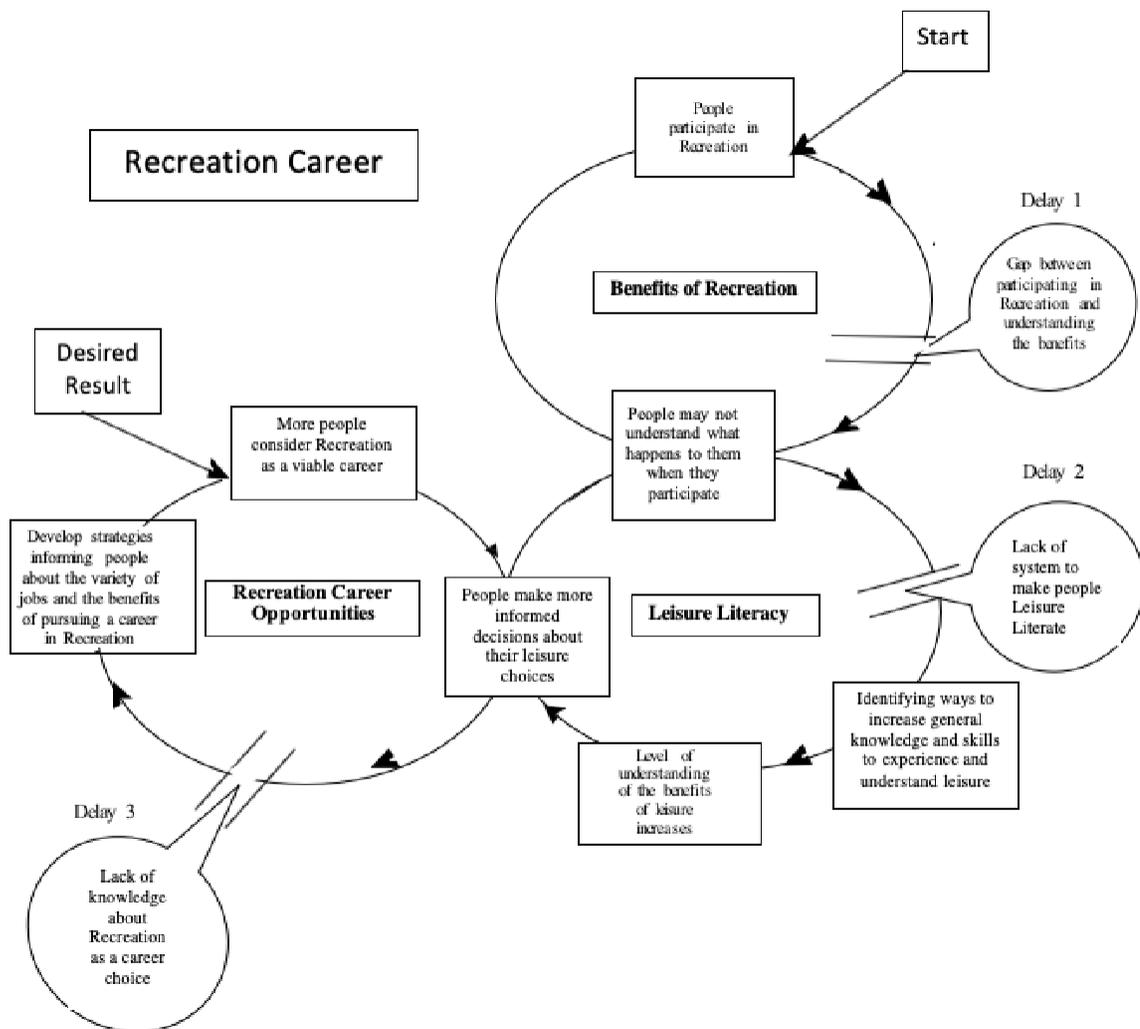
### City of Trail

The City of Trail includes information about the benefits of Recreation in their program write-ups that are listed in the Recreation Leisure Guide. For example, in a Seniors Balance Class they state that participants will improve and maintain balance and functional independence so that they can sustain the ability to go up and down stairs or safely move about in their home and community (City of Trail, 2018, p. 25). They quote Forbes Magazine in describing Squash as the world’s healthiest sport and compare it to “playing ‘chess on legs’, providing both a physical and mental workout” (City of Trail, 2018, p. 22). Additionally, they include a page in their Recreation Leisure Guide highlighting the benefits of employment in aquatics, stating that it is a “rich and rewarding experience that allows you to gain valuable leadership, communication and teamwork skills.” They appeal to people that may be unaware of the benefits of a job in aquatics stating that “People of all ages will look up to you!” (City of Trail, 2018, p. 13).

## Recreation Career Systems Map

The Parks and Recreation sector faces several challenges for it to be considered as credible career choice. As one respondent of the BCRPA survey reflected, “When I tell someone I do [recreation] business operations, nine out of ten times the reaction is ‘and what is that?’” (BCRPA Survey, 2018). Recreation professionals are all too familiar with the puzzled looks and the questions that people pose when they say they work in Recreation.

During the process of educating people about considering careers in Recreation, there are inherent challenges that need to be addressed to achieve the desired results. The Recreation Career Systems Map outlines the challenges as delays that the Parks and Recreation sector encounters. They are cited as three specific delays that hinder the goal of having more people consider Recreation as a viable career.



These challenges, as indicated on the systems map, could be effectively overcome with addressing the following three delays:

1. There is a gap between participating in recreation and understanding the benefits (Figure 1 - delay 1).
2. There is a lack of a system to provide the general public with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand what is happening to them when they participate in recreation; making people leisure literate (Figure 1 – delay 2).
3. There is a lack of knowledge about the opportunities in pursuing Recreation as a career choice. (Figure 1 - delay 3)

When people participate in recreation, they may be doing so for the pure enjoyment of the experience, in other words, they may be participating for fun. While enjoyment of a recreation activity is benefit, there are endless other benefits that people gain. Some of the other benefits include: improved personal health, physical skill development, social skill development, increased self-esteem and positive self-image, enhancement of life satisfaction, enhancement of perceived quality of life, independent living for those with a disability, reduction of self-destructive behaviour and negative activity in youth, reduction of crime, racism, isolation, loneliness and alienation, strengthening of families, increased friendships, reduction of health care costs, increased economic development, and protection and appreciation of parks and green spaces (City of Richmond, 2018).

Once people start to understand that in addition to enjoyment, what other things are happening to them when they participate; the benefits of participation, they become more leisure literate. People that are leisure literate make more informed decisions about their leisure choices and their free time.

Even though people may become leisure literate, they may not be aware of the wide variety of opportunities in pursuing Recreation as a career choice. Attracting employees educated and experienced in Recreation is becoming more of a challenge for Recreation organizations. Some Recreation Education institutions are challenged with attracting students.

If the Recreation sector developed strategies to inform people about the variety of jobs and the benefits of working in Recreation, more people would become educated in Recreation and more people would consider Recreation as a viable career.

## Opportunities / Considerations

While the Recreation sector faces issues and challenges, there are opportunities to inform and educate people about the values of choosing Recreation as a full-time career. The following addresses the three delays/challenges outlined in the Recreation Career Systems Map.

### Gap between participating in Recreation and understanding the benefits

As is in the past, it is an ongoing challenge to inform people about the benefits of participating in Recreation. Important first steps have been taken by the pioneers, those that have worked in the Recreation for the past 40-50+ years.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association researched and produced a comprehensive document, entitled the Benefits Catalogue, which outlined the benefits of participating in community Parks and Recreation services. This started the Benefits Movement and the information became an industry standard with Recreation organizations using those benefit messages to promote Parks and Recreation programs and services.

In 2015, a collaborative effort of Recreation professionals, associations, and provincial and territorial governments produced a Framework for Recreation in Canada. This initiative redefined the Recreation sector's capacity for achieving personal wellbeing, community wellbeing and the wellbeing of our natural and built environments. The Framework defined five goals with actions under each goal; Active Living, Inclusion and Access, Connecting People in Nature, Supportive Environments, and Recreation Capacity. The Framework contents is being used as a basis for "discussion and collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders. Key partners for recreation include public recreation departments, not-for-profit organizations, and the private sector. These include stakeholders in sport, physical activity, health, urban planning, Aboriginal affairs, infrastructure development, rural development, natural resources and conservation, arts and culture, social development, tourism, justice, heritage, child development and active-aging." (Framework for Recreation in Canada 2015, p. 5). The Framework is also used in Recreation educational institutions throughout the province.

### Making people Leisure Literate

In order for people to gain the knowledge required to understand what is behind their leisure experiences, they need to be made aware of the value of Recreation. The Recreation sector has an opportunity to create an awareness movement based on the goals in the Framework for Recreation in Canada. This movement could include informative videos about the benefits of Recreation that could be posted on the BCRPA and RFABC websites as well as websites of public, private and non-profit Recreation organizations. It could also include a series of posters that could be posted in public, private and non-profit recreation facilities. BCRPA could collaborate with Recreation professionals and Recreation educational institutions throughout the province to establish information flyers and snippets about the value and benefits of Recreation that could be published in local newspapers.

Recreation professionals could use as talking points within the broader community and in reports to City Councils and advisory committees and commissions.

BCRPA could develop a professional recruitment process by recruiting future Recreation professionals while they are still in high school. BC Schools offer Community Recreation 12. BCRPA could learn more about this course and ensure that those responsible for curriculum development have the resources available to them. It could be determined what is currently included in curriculum for this course; how the curriculum gets updated - is this the responsibility of individual teachers or does it get updated through a provincial stream; if those who are responsible for updating curriculum are aware of Framework of Canada and other resources within the BCRPA/REFABC and other provincial and national recreation and cultural associations. Since Community Recreation 12 was introduced to BC Schools in the 1960 and no other provincial Recreation educational initiative has been introduced since, BCRPA could explore if there is an opportunity to develop any other courses at other levels within the school system that teaches the foundations of recreation.

### Informing people about the opportunities in pursuing Recreation as a career choice

Attracting employees educated and experienced in Recreation is becoming more of a challenge for Recreation organizations, and while some Recreation educational institutions have steady enrolment, some Recreation diploma and degree programs are challenged with attracting students.

Recreation as a field of study and career is a relatively new concept in relation to more established fields. There is an opportunity to inform people who are deciding on their career path about the opportunities in pursuing Recreation as a career choice.

BCRPA and RFABC could develop a portion of their websites to inform potential Recreation professionals about the types of Recreation jobs available, some fun facts about each, the general level of education needed to obtain the job and the annual salary range of each. High school councillors could be informed about this resource and inform students who have an interest in Recreation to explore the options. Public, private and non-profit Recreation organizations could publicize this resource to existing employees.

The term 'Recreation' does not seem to elevate a career in the sector to the level of education needed for the jobs, and the level of financial compensation. BCRPA could collaborate with Recreation professionals and Recreation educational institutions throughout the province to review and redefine Recreation's identity so that the sector is viewed with more credibility with the public and with other professions. This may also lead to Recreation gaining more interdisciplinary recognition with other sectors such as medical and public safety.

More research could be done about the Best Practices of informing young people about the benefits and opportunities of pursuing a career in Recreation. This information could be included as a resource on the BCRPA and RFABC websites.

Throughout the province there are thousands of part-time, seasonal, auxiliary and contract employees in public, private and non-profit Recreation organizations. These employees instruct recreation and cultural programs, operate fitness facilities, oversee the operation of Recreation facilities in the

evenings, on weekends and during the holiday seasons and do a multitude of other important jobs to keep the operations running smoothly. Many of these part-time, seasonal, auxiliary and contract employees are working to educate themselves in other fields of study and not considering Recreation as a viable full-time career. Rather than viewing these Recreation part-time, seasonal, auxiliary and contract employees as people who fill the gaps that full-time employees are not able to meet, Recreation organizations could look at them as apprentices. These employees have a wealth of knowledge and experiences and are often well connected to the community that the Recreation organization is servicing. They could be identified as an untapped audience within the organization and be encouraged to pursue post-secondary education and a full-time career in Recreation.

## Conclusion

A career in Recreation is meaningful and full of purpose. People that are unaware of the opportunities that exist may not consider a career in Recreation. Recreation professionals too often find themselves explaining what a career in Recreation is to their friends or acquaintances. As illustrated in this report, there is a vast variety of jobs in the Recreation sector. Our collective challenge is to position Recreation as a viable career with credibility.

To illustrate this, one could consider the fitness side of Recreation. It is widely understood that exercise is good for us, and if people truly understood why, they may take more responsibility for their personal health. It is more common for people to turn to medical professionals to fix their ailments, than it is for them to turn to Recreation professionals who can assist them to develop and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Keltie Post, a Langara Bachelor of Recreation grad illustrated this idea in the following Wellness Spectrum.

### Wellness Spectrum



(Post, 2017)

Shifting our perspectives from fixing ourselves after we get sick to accessing the services of a Recreation professional to maintain personal wellness is a paradigm shift. It would lead to Recreation professionals being viewed as providers of preventative services along the illness-wellness continuum along with medical professionals who cure people when they become ill (Edey-Nicoll & Post, 2017).

Changing people's perceptions about Recreation from being just fun and games, to being a serious profession is an uphill challenge that is worth taking on. We all have a role to play to inform those that are not familiar with the endless and rewarding career opportunities in Recreation.

## Researcher's Learning

In the spirit of assisting future researchers, this study's researchers highlight lessons learned:

The survey used in this research was conducted through BCRPA and RFABC whose members are primarily employees of municipal Recreation organizations. The data from the survey reflects information predominately about public recreation. Private and not-for-profit recreation organizations have different mandates and offer a wide range of other Recreation career opportunities not explored in this research.

It was valuable to determine the project with the sponsoring organization to ensure deliverables benefited both organizations. Having a contact person in the sponsoring organization was helpful to assist with the survey, to format the final report and to ensure the project is staying on track. Presenting the project to the sponsoring organization's Board of Directors half way through the project reinforced the direction and the progress of the project.

Adopting a system of organizing the literature and the data made to process of reviewing the literature data analysis more manageable. Research can be 'messy' and having a system to organize the data collected through academic and practical sources allowed the researcher to maintain their focus and stay within the scope of the project without straying from the original topic.

Be open to the unexpected and be delighted in the learning. People that work in the Recreation sector are creative and collaborative. Everyone that the researcher connected with to ask questions and to check findings were helpful and enthusiastic.

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## Appendix A: Full-time Careers in the Recreation Field

### **Note:**

- There are exceptions to the educational requirements; for example, many of the positions list Diploma, Bachelors or Masters of Community Recreation/Leisure Studies. Employers will often accept an equivalent or look for a specialization in a specific area.
- The annual salary range is the most common range for each position listed in the survey; there are exceptions to these ranges.
- The survey in this research project was conducted through BCRPA and RFABC whose members are primarily employees of municipal Recreation organizations. As such, the majority of these jobs are in public recreation.

### Recreation Programming

#### Recreation Leader

As an entry level position, Recreation Leaders get a taste of a host of experiences. Among other things, they work with volunteers, recreation attendants, program staff and management. They assist with special events, do seasonal summer programming and support community groups.

- **Fun facts** – You get to work with amazing people in a flowing environment; kids who say the craziest things; you make a difference in people’s lives.
- **Education** – Diploma Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$30,000-\$49,999

#### Recreation Program Assistant

As an entry level position, Recreation Program Assistants gain valuable experiences on the front line. If you love working with kids, you’ll get to supervise after school children’s drop-in and registered programs and mentor Junior Leaders and Leaders in Training. Assisting the Recreation Programmer with Recreation programs and organizing events throughout the year is also part of the job.

- **Fun facts** – It’s fun working with kids; you never know what to expect; you’re not stuck behind a desk every day; you get satisfaction from putting on events that people enjoy.
- **Education** – Diploma Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$30,000-\$49,999

#### Recreation Attendants

As an entry level position, Recreation Attendants act like a Jack-of-all-trades. They oversee Recreation facility operations during the evenings, and on weekends/holidays. They supervise community groups and provide service to private groups that rent Recreation facility space.

They provide information to people about the Recreation services available. This position is also known as Recreation Leader Attendants, Recreation Facility Attendants and several other titles.

- **Fun facts** – You get to meet people from all walks of life and all ages; you get satisfaction from making people happy by providing quality services; you get to experience people from many different cultures.
- **Education** – Diploma Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$30,000-\$49,999

### Sports Programmer

If you love sports, then being a Sports Programmer won't feel like you're working at all. You develop sports programs and sport capacity, programming for tots to seniors and working with local sport organizations. Programs are competitive in nature and also focuses on skill development and recreational sports. You provide technical and professional advice on recreation and sports matters and promote sports programs to the community. This position is also known as Sport Development Coordinator and several other titles.

- **Fun facts** – You get satisfaction from seeing people developing skills and having fun; you work in a high energy environment; you work with people of all ages and abilities; you work with past and future Olympians.
- **Education** – Diploma Community Recreation/Sport Management/Kinesiology or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$50,000-\$74,999

### Recreation Program Coordinator/ Recreation Programmer

Imagine working at a job where the results of your efforts make people active and happy! Create fun programs/special events that meet the needs of the people that you're serving; preschoolers, children, youth, adults, and seniors. Think of the possibilities: advertising the programs and events through schools and community organizations, creating a quarterly Leisure Guide, volunteer management, hiring, supervising and supporting program instructors and event leaders, responding to suggestions and ideas from the public, being a liaison between an Advisory Board and City Departments, issuing permits for use of public space, being a lead in youth development and developmental asset building and seeing the community enjoying themselves. This position is also known as Program Supervisor, Facility and Program Supervisor, Recreation Coordinator, Recreation and Special Events Coordinator, Recreation Supervisor and several other titles.

- **Fun facts**– You get to dress up and have fun for special events; you really get to know your community; there are lots of learning opportunities available; program planning and event production is fun and allows for creativity; the job is different every day and changes every season; you work both in an office, and outdoors which mixes up the days and the wardrobe; things often found in Recreation offices include but are not limited to rubber chickens, pool noodles, fidget spinners, glue guns, and random sports equipment.

- **Education** - Bachelor Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$50,000-\$74,999

### Community Services Coordinator

A career as a Community Services Coordinator is an ideal choice for those who love variety in their daily life. Recreation and cultural services are viewed from a community-based lens rather than facility-based. Picture yourself being a part of team that plan initiatives and programs that have a positive impact on the health and wellness of your community. Work could include overseeing recreation programs and community events and liaising with community partners. These positions vary, depending on the community. One may take community groups on bus trips, while other positions could oversee a Sister City Exchange Program, when youth from Asian/European countries visit Canada and visa-versa. The job may even involve management of food services in a recreation or park facility. Maintaining, forecasting and assessing operating budgets, planning use of facility space and problem-solving issues and working with other managers and supervisors to ensure facility strategic, operating and business objectives are well coordinated, are also included in the job. Liaising with volunteer run associations and developing and maintaining community relationships and partnerships to deliver community programs is a challenging and fun part of the job. This position is also known as Area Coordinator, Manager of Program Services, Community Coordinator and several other titles.

- **Fun facts** – No day is the same as the next; time flies, some days too quickly; there's a line in job description that states 'responsible for all other related duties' - that about says it all; you work where people come because they want to and not because they have to; you have positive impacts on others' lives.
- **Education** - Bachelor Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$50,000-\$99,999

### Community Facilities Coordinator

If you possess a strong desire to work in a highly energized environment, then you may want to consider a job as a Community Facilities Coordinator. There is no such thing as a 'normal' day with duties ranging from monitoring building maintenance, facilitating implementation of capital projects and ensuring equipment and program related materials are available and operational. You could liaise with advisory committees including Operations Committee, Educational Garden and Recreation Program Committee. You may be responsible for direct programming and direct supervision of program instructors and contractors as well as front line and support staff.

- **Fun facts** – You work with co-workers that are the best; there is tons of variety in work experiences, you may work out of multiple facilities
- **Education** - Bachelor Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$75,000-\$99,999

### Community Health and Wellness Coordinator

Those who are interested in meaningful, well-paying jobs in health and fitness are usually quite passionate about the field, enjoy interacting with people of all different backgrounds, and love hands-on work where they can immediately see the results. If this sounds like you, then consider becoming a Community Health and Wellness Coordinator. You could potentially oversee and guide directions of fitness programs and services at various municipal facilities. You could also take the leadership role in leading the municipal 's internal health and wellness initiatives.

- **Fun facts** – It's different every day; coworkers in the industry are active and social; it's not weird to stretch or move in a meeting.
- **Education** Bachelor Kinesiology or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$75,000-\$99,999

### Youth Development Coordinator

People that work with youth can help make memories last forever. Although job opportunities exist in several sectors, working as a Youth Development Coordinator in the recreation sector has unique opportunities. Consider a job that has a great blend of programming and supervisory duties, coupled with building relationships with the youth in the community. In addition to being responsible for the overall youth-aged recreation programs and services in a recreation facility and surrounding community, much of the day-to-day work is dedicated to building trusting relationships with youth from different backgrounds. This relationship building/community building piece coincides with key recreation/leisure values, and is integral to continuing to build upon existing programs and services.

- **Fun facts** – You get to build relationships with youth on a day-to-day basis by playing pool, table tennis and foosball and other recreation activities; you get to be part of a great and supportive staff team; you advocate for youth and actually be a part of making a noticeable difference.
- **Education** – Diploma Community Recreation/ Child and Youth Diploma or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$30,000-\$49,999

### Coordinator Youth Recreation Services

Give youth a voice in a municipality by being a Coordinator of Youth Recreation Services. Advocate for youth, develop policies, supervise Youth Recreation centres and programs by managing the entire Youth Recreation Division. Support staff in having positive impacts in the lives of our young people. Collaborate and work in partnership with community partners/agencies on the municipal and provisional level through committees, panels, and taskforces to meet the needs of youth. Make a real difference in the lives of youth from all backgrounds, and those with different abilities and preferences.

- **Fun facts** – No two days are the same; you get to collaborate with like-minded partners throughout community and province; the job allows you to keep yourself grounded in meaningful work where you can truly make a difference.
- **Education** – Bachelor Community Recreation/ Child and Youth or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$75,000-\$99,999

### Recreation Prescription Programmer

If you thrive on working in a university setting, you could work as a Recreation Prescription Programmer. People in this position run seasonal programs for children who are on an ill health trajectory.

- **Fun facts** – The job is interdisciplinary focused; it provides an upstream approach to health and wellbeing; working with a variety of people makes the job interesting and challenging.
- **Education** – Diploma/Bachelor Community Recreation, Sport Management or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - Less than, or equal to \$30,000

### Preschool Coordinator

When you are captivated by the delight of young children, you can appreciate the enchantment they bring to our lives every day. Preschool Coordinators develop curriculum for recreation preschool programs, supervise preschool staff, have administrative duties and do hands on teaching.

- **Fun facts** – You get to be amazed by the wonder of young children; assisting families to understand the benefits of recreation for preschool children is rewarding, you get to use your creative skills.
- **Education** – Diploma Early Childhood Education / Community Recreation or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$30,000-\$49,999

### Community & Neighbourhood Services Manager

Building healthy, connected neighbourhoods is rewarding. Community & Neighbourhood Services Managers work with a team of staff and dedicated volunteers to deliver community recreation programs, including licensed childcare, preschool, youth and senior's programs. The recreation programs are for people with diverse abilities and backgrounds. A highlight of the programs is that they aim to engage and connect neighbours and empower them to make their neighbourhoods better.

- **Fun facts** – You get to meet people where they live; empowering people to build healthy neighbourhoods and communities is satisfying and rewarding; being collaborative and creative creates a supportive team environment.
- **Education** – Bachelor Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$75,000-\$99,999

### Fitness Supervisor / Coordinator

A Fitness Supervisor / Coordinator combines their love of fitness with their desire to build healthy individuals and communities. In this high energy job, you are responsible for hiring, supervising, and evaluating a of group fitness instructors, personal trainers and specialty fitness instructors (eg. Yoga). The fitness programs are varied throughout the year, with seasonal classes and courses and fitness events. You become proficient in overseeing the fitness equipment which includes maintaining the equipment and ordering of new equipment - big and small.

- **Fun facts** –Being connected to the community makes the work interesting; it’s an ever-changing place to work; the job allows one to remain fit and healthy.
- **Education** – Diploma/Bachelor Community Recreation, Sport Management or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$50,000-\$74,999

### Active Living Coordinator / Group Fitness Instructor

Fitness instructors work with all ages of people from instructing young people to understand the value of being active throughout your life to teaching inactive seniors chair exercises and motivating them to get active again. The job involves exploring and implementing new fitness classes and programs in fitness and community centres as well as water fitness classes in swimming pools. It also includes Weight Room Supervision and Orientations and scheduling and supervising fitness instructors.

- **Fun facts** –Connecting to the community is rewarding; you get to instruct fitness classes; you work with awesome team of people; the work is challenging; it’s a healthy workplace and you lead a healthy life style; it’s always fun and there’s lots of laughs,
- **Education** – Bachelor Community Recreation/Leisure Studies / Physical Education and Certificate fitness and personal training
- **Annual salary range** - \$30,000-\$49,999

### Weight Room Attendant

Many community centers have state-of-the-art fitness facilities. Weight Room Attendants do the important work of monitoring participants who are working out in the weight room, assisting fitness class instructors with set up and class size management and being available to administer first aid when required.

- **Fun facts** – You get to work with a diverse group of people; you use your mechanical skills maintaining equipment; there’s lots of variety in the job.
- **Education** – Certificate fitness and personal training
- **Annual salary range** - Less than, or equal to \$30,000

### Personal Trainer/Owner Private Fitness Studio

Being your own boss has many advantages. Responsibilities include connecting with new clients who are interested in personalized fitness programs, collecting user fees, designing new programs, setting up before and cleaning up after classes and all other related work.

- **Fun facts** – It feels good to make people feel better; you get to lead fitness programs; you get to share your knowledge with people who appreciate you.
- **Education** – Certified BCRPA group fitness instructor, weight trainer, and personal trainer.
- **Annual salary range** - Less than, or equal to \$30,000

### Recreation Facility Clerk

It is very satisfying to be the first person to meet customers each day. People are so friendly and it's a pleasure to welcome them with a cheery smile and words of encouragement. Recreation Facility Clerks register participants for courses, inform of services and meet the needs of the participants.

- **Fun facts** – You get to meet great people; it's a fun environment to work in; it's always busy, making the day go by before you know it.
- **Education** – Diploma Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$30,000-\$49,999

## Aquatics

### Aquatic Leader

How can working in a swimming pool not be fun? Being an Aquatic Leader, involves working in a variety of roles and orienting/training/supervising new staff. You get to be creative in doing seasonal program planning, including special events and use your organizational skills in managing group and contract bookings. In some departments, you even have a say in facility updates and renovations.

- **Fun facts**— You work with lots of people your age who are as outgoing and active as you are; you can make a lot of friends; you learn something new daily; you get paid doing what you love.
- **Education** – Diploma Community Recreation or equivalent /Life Guard Certification
- **Annual salary range** - \$30,000-\$49,999

### Aquatic Supervisor

Aquatic Supervisors oversee and supervise aquatic staff, develop and implement cool aquatic programs, deliver exceptional customer service. You get to be in the inner circle of planning and managing swimming lessons for babies up to seniors. You exercise your leadership skills,

supervising awesome staff teams of lifeguards and swim instructors. You could also find yourself arranging private lessons for customers or renting out facility space.

- **Fun facts** – Working with kids in a fun environment is rewarding; having terrific peers and workmates makes the job enjoyable; working in a positive environment is healthy and promotes an active lifestyle.
- **Education** - Diploma Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$50,000-\$74,999

### Aquatic Programmer

The day-to-day routine of an Aquatic Programmer is non-stop action. You plan and program swimming lessons and programs, supervise staff and recruit and train new staff. You work within an inspiring team to deliver quality experiences and programs to people of all ages in the community. There is a combination of operational administrative work including scheduling staff, ensuring safety, program planning, marketing, contributing to a wide range of initiatives and long-range planning.

- **Fun facts** –Some people think a programmer is someone who deals with computers, but we've got them fooled. You can secretly teach or create a program for anything, even if you don't know how to actually do it yourself!
- **Education** - Diploma Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$50,000-\$74,999

### Aquatic Centre Supervisor / Aquatic Customer Service Supervisor

The life of an Aquatic Supervisor is never boring. You oversee all operations of the Aquatic Centre, including programming, maintenance, scheduling, lifeguarding, teaching and active deck supervision, advertising/communications, customer service complaints/concerns, customer accounts, Aquatic Centre monthly, weekly, hourly, annual statistics (attendance, courses, rentals, etc.) administrative/clerical, cover front desk when no staff available, system administrator for recreation software system, new hires. It's a high energy job where you use your technical knowledge in aquatics, lead and coordinate a team of awesome staff and put forward your unique ideas in the form of business cases.

- **Fun facts** – There is no such thing as routine - no day is ever the same; you get to meet a lot of interesting people (staff and customers); it's a busy environment – there's no time to be bored!
- **Education** – Bachelors Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$50,000-\$74,999

### Aquatic Maintenance Supervisor

Being hands-on and involved in the action is what an Aquatic Maintenance Supervisor's job is all about. It ranges from supervising front line staff, to developing programs/services, to maintaining pool operating systems to directly serving customers/clients. In some communities,

Aquatic Maintenance Supervisors operate multiple swimming pools and oversee the maintenance and operation of numerous spray parks and wading pools.

- **Fun facts** – The job involves problem solving – it’s like figuring out a jigsaw puzzle and it’s systematic and strategic; you get to create new aquatic programs and events; serving people of all ages who are excited to swim and play makes the job fulfilling.
- **Education** – Diploma Recreation Facilities Management or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$75,000-\$99,999

### Assistant Aquatics Manager

Being an Assistant Manager of Aquatics enables you to positively influence so many people in so many ways. Enjoy the excitement of being responsible for all aquatic operations of indoor and outdoor swimming pools. Understanding and meeting the needs of the community is like solving a puzzle and when you see the smiles on peoples’ faces, you know you found the last piece. Your work is diverse and challenging, from recruiting, hiring and supervising aquatic, front counter and maintenance staff, to working with budgets, to managing customer and public relationships. You even get to create policies and influence change.

- **Fun facts** – Every day is different; there are lots of self-development opportunities; you get to connect with a very diverse community.
- **Education** - Bachelors Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$75,000-\$99,999

## Maintenance

### Facilities Maintenance Supervisor

Many people who pursue facility maintenance careers have dreamed of doing so since they were kids. Others have spent their childhood hanging out in arenas, playing hockey or swimming in neighbourhood outdoor pools every summer. Or maybe they’re just mechanically inclined and have always known that maintaining Recreation facilities felt comfortable - it was where they were meant to be. The good news is that there are many jobs in ice arenas, swimming pool complexes, and community centres that open to people that love this kind of work. If you choose a career as a Facilities Maintenance Supervisor, your duties are as varied as the day is long. They could include but are not limited to: planning and evaluating day-to-day and long-term facilities operations. Work includes; lifecycle planning, budgeting, writing tenders and request for quotes, staff training and recruitment, adherence to all regulations and standards and planning facility improvements. A key focus of the job is ensuring safe operation of physical plants and equipment including developing safe working procedures and training. This position is also known as Maintenance Supervisor, Recreation Operations Manager, Arena Maintenance Supervisor, Recreation Maintenance Supervisor, Supervise Arenas Service Workers, Chief Engineer and Building Service Workers. and several other titles.

- **Fun facts** – Everybody comes to your workplace to play; you realize that for some weird reason - people don't want to get wet (shower) before jumping into the pool; meeting user groups makes every day interesting; it rewarding to keep good quality ice for skating groups; you get funny looks when you meet people and tell them you make ice for a living.
- **Education** – Trades training/certification, Power Engineering certification Millwright/Machinist diploma, Refrigeration Operators Certificate, Business Diploma or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$75,000-\$124,999

### Facility and Ice Maintenance Worker

Building and Ice Maintenance Workers don't just clean buildings; they create ice surfaces for high-performance athletes. The arena gets used by many; toddlers and children learning to skate, minor hockey and figure skating club members and recreational hockey leagues. As a Facility and Ice Maintenance Worker, you take pride in cleaning the recreation facilities, monitoring the ice plant, building up the ice, setting up rooms for community groups and fixing things. In smaller communities, you may even oversee the training and the scheduling of new staff in icemaking procedures and techniques and perform routine maintenance of equipment. A key focus of the job is to ensure the facility is operating as per Safety Board policies and procedures and that staff conduct their work adhering to safety standards. This position is also known as Ice Facility Operator, Building Maintenance Worker, Arena Service Worker, and several other titles.

- **Fun facts** – You get to drive the Zamboni and waving to children is obligatory; you get to interact with different customers and user groups every day; working overnight provides a chance to have free time during the day; there is camaraderie among your workmates; it feels good to pass on job knowledge/tricks of the trade to new icemaking staff.
- **Education** – Building Service Worker certification, Pool Operators certification, Ice Facility Operator Certification, Refrigeration Operators Certificate.
- **Annual salary range** - \$30,000-\$74,999

### Parks and Recreation Maintenance Worker

If you are passionate about working with the plants and trees in community parks, you may be cut out for a career as a Parks and Recreation Maintenance Worker. These jobs often change with the seasons, working outdoors in the summer and inside Recreation facilities in the winter. Your job could see you responsible for anything to do with plants and trees: growing them, planting, pruning, ensuring their health and vigor. You may also hop on the grass cutters and mow and trim grassed areas, irrigation maintenance, maintain pond/water features, shrub bed maintenance, and anything do with the general maintenance of the park itself. Maintenance and operation of playgrounds splash parks is also included. Interacting with the public is an important and enjoyable part of the job. In the winter, you could see you assisting with the

maintenance of ice arenas or curling arenas. This position is also known as Parks Operator, Parks and Recreation Operator, Parks and Recreation Lead Hand, and several other titles.

- **Fun facts** – The job is always changing because it is seasonally variable; you get to learn the Latin names for plants as well as common ones; you exercise your creativity, it's artistically rewarding and labour intensive.
- **Education** – Bachelor of Science in Horticulture, Diploma - Landscape Architectural Tech, Red Seal Trade
- **Annual salary range** - \$50,000-\$99,999

## Administration

### Director of Parks and Recreation

In a Recreation Administrative position, you are a strategic leader of a team that creates a healthy, connected community, with a focus on removing barriers to participation. Your job involves management of people, facilities and customer outcomes/experiences. You build strong relationships with the community, the Recreation sector, various levels of government and senior leadership. You set the direction of the service for the community, establishing long-term frameworks and managing unique and special projects that help advance the strategic plans of City Council. You thrive on making strategic decisions and working with various advisory committees. You are challenged with managing the ever-changing requirements of internal and external politics. This position is also known as Recreation Administrator / Manager of Community Recreation Services/ Manager Recreation and Parks Services / Senior Manager of Recreation and several other titles.

- **Fun facts** – It's never dull or the same, you are always learning new things; you feel like you can impact positive change the community; it's purpose-driven work; you work a flexible schedule; going for a walk in the park is part of your job; people really enjoy and value the work you do; you see the amazing reach Recreation has into the lives of people; you make great memories with people and for people; you work with amazing people and provide meaningful work to many people.
- **Education** – Bachelors/ Masters Recreation Degree or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$150,000 - \$200,000

### Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation

Not everyone would consider this senior management career position fun. But then again, not everyone has a fascination with being a transformational leader and positively impacting their communities. This Deputy position works with the Director to support a team of high energy, super talented, collaborative team of staff. They ensure the provision of quality services and innovative practices in the areas of: sport services, arena services, cultural services, outdoor facility allocation, fitness services, and aquatic services. Provides division-wide support in the areas of user fees, training and development, staff recruitment and retention. Some people in

this position oversee the operations of parks, fleet (vehicles), and cemeteries. The Deputy Director position varies, depending on the community it serves. This position is also known as Administrator, Recreation and Culture Manager, Director Parks, Recreation & Culture (small community), City Wide Services (large city), Manager Recreation Services, Program Manager, Community Social Development, Parks, Recreation and Culture Manager and several other titles.

- **Fun facts** – The work is diverse and challenging; you work with energetic people in a positive environment; it's rewarding to see the positive impacts on community; you work flexible hours; you make a positive difference in the community; there are a wide variety of experiences; it's creative and innovative work; you're able to plan for the needs of the community in the future.
- **Education** – Bachelors Recreation Degree or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** – \$125,000-\$149,999

### Recreation Manager

If you love working with people as much as you love making a difference in your community, then being a Recreation Manager might be a career for you. As Recreation Manager, your goal is to help build healthy communities by improving the quality of life in your community and improving community spirit through play, nature and sport. The day-to-day responsibilities of the position include; management of a dynamic recreation services team, management of the reception team, and management of service contracts with various groups. You work with dedicated community volunteers; local sports user groups, community service groups, arts councils and more. You aim for fiscal responsibility in managing operating budgets for day-to-day operations and capital budgets for special projects. This position is also known as Superintendent Recreation Program Services, Manager Community Recreation and Culture Services, Director of Community Services, Supervisor of Parks and Recreation, Manager of Recreation and Culture and several other titles.

- **Fun facts** – You get work in state-of-the-art urban recreation facilities and in rural community halls; hands down you will work with super fun people; your offices are where people are usually having fun; you and your team create friendships, magic moments and lasting memories; you get to work with all types of people; all ages, all abilities, all cultures; and you get to do a wide variety of things in your daily life.
- **Education** – Bachelors Community Recreation/Leisure Studies/ Kinesiology or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$75,000-\$99,999

### Recreation Facility Manager

Recreation Facility Managers get paid to operate places where people play. Some of the facilities are single use, like an arena or a swimming pool, but many Recreation facilities are multi-use. For example, a facility may house an ice arena, curling rink, several gymnasiums and multi-purpose space, multiple arts facilities and a swimming pool. There is a revolving door of customers, special interest groups, from sports groups to community outreach groups to

heritage groups. This position may also oversee other smaller satellite recreation facilities, like community halls. It's a jack-of-all-trades position dealing with staff - hiring, training, mentoring, supervising, performance reviews, disciplining, and building staff morale; providing customer service including registration/facility rental software; management of facility maintenance; and dealing with facility safety issues. Responsibilities also include operating and capital budget management and marketing of programs and services. This position is also known as Facility Operation Manager Facility Manager, Manager of Facilities and Recreation and several other titles.

- **Fun facts** –You get to work with awesome teams of staff and connect with people 0-99 years on any given day; you develop relationships with the regular users, staff in other departments and facility maintenance staff which makes a world of difference when you need to be fixed asap; you get to work on capital projects; the hours are flexible allowing for a balanced life; it's never boring...there's always some challenge to overcome.
- **Education** – Bachelor Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** – \$75,000-\$99,999

### Park Planner

Align your planning and creative skills with a career in park planning. Regional districts and medium to large cities hire Park Planners to prepare long-range park management plans and undertake public engagement processes. The position requires working with the Planning Departments to secure parkland and related funding through development. They design and administer the capital projects identified in the long-range plans. Working with other departments in the City, service groups, and members of the public is needed to provide the best experience possible.

- **Fun facts** – You get to work with the natural environment; you help to protect nature; you inspire people to experience nature; you plan and build spaces where people enjoy their free time; you work on projects that people are passionate about; you get the satisfaction of using the places that you plan and build.
- **Education** – Master's Community Recreation/Leisure Studies/Natural Sciences/Management/Project Management or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** – \$75,000-\$99,999

### Research Analyst

Becoming a Research Analyst enables you to play an important role in providing evidence-based data to the Recreation organization. Enjoy the fulfillment that comes from providing timely and relevant information to support data-driven decision making by staff. Use your analytical, evaluation, and presentation skills to present internal and external data and/or research with the aim of uncovering latent facts, trends, and relationships.

- **Fun facts** – You get to immerse yourself in highly creative work by interpreting and presenting data that supports important decisions; you get to be part of a team that

is on the leading edge of the designing and providing trendsetting recreation programs, services and facilities.

- **Education** – Master’s Degree Data Analysis
- **Annual salary range** – \$50,000-\$74,999

### Coordinator of Plans and Policies

If you like having variety in your job, like supporting staff through the delivery of policies and procedures, developing programs/services, setting up and maintaining contractual agreements, providing direct service to customers/clients, and exploring and understanding community needs to plan for the delivery of services in the current and future contexts, then this job is for you.

- **Fun facts** – It's never dull, or the same, you are always learning new things; you feel like you get to impact positive change in the community
- **Education** Bachelor Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$75,000-\$99,999

### Manager of Business Operations

If you get excited by numbers, have strong business skills and are looking for a job in a positive environment, then you may want to consider a career as a Manager of Business Operations. People in this position work with cross-functional teams (aquatics, arenas, parks, community centres, cultural centres) within Recreation Departments, as well as staff in other departments (human resources, finance). They understand community need and build consensus among cross- functional teams and influence decision making. They manage budgets including annual, quarterly and monthly expense tracking. They inform the teams by gathering and analyzing data, formulating findings, developing go-forward plans and help drive and translate recommendations into results. They produce executive level reporting, including weekly, monthly, quarterly status reports to manage risks and issues and improve team communication and collaboration.

- **Fun facts** – People’s needs are everchanging, systems are everchanging, facilities, programs and services are everchanging, so you are always on the leading edge.
- **Education** - Bachelor Business Administration or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$125,000-\$149,999

### Community Development Coordinator

Connect your love of working with people with your desire to build healthy communities. Community Development Coordinators assist and enable citizens, community associations and user groups to recognize and access existing community assets, identify their needs, and develop community programs, projects and events. Use your people skills to facilitate community involvement, acting as a liaison and supporting, assisting and coordinating community engagement in a wide range of areas including leisure alternatives,

beautification, culture, youth, sustainability, organizational development and special events and programs.

- **Fun facts** –It’s interesting meeting people from all walks of life in the community; you get to be a lead in planning festivals and events that bring people together; you get to work with amazing colleagues that have can-do attitudes.
- **Education** Bachelor Community Recreation/Leisure Studies or equivalent
- **Annual salary range** - \$100,000-\$124,999

## Appendix B: Recreation Education Programs in BCat Post Secondary Schools

School	Program	Program Description
Capilano University	<b>Outdoor Recreation Management Diploma / Bachelor, Tourism Management Adventure Tourism</b>	<p><a href="#"><u>Outdoor Recreation Management Diploma</u></a></p> <p>A two-year intensive diploma program designed for students that want to start down the path of adventure tourism or outdoor recreation. This program offers industry certifications, as well as a practicum experience. The Outdoor Recreation Management Diploma ladders directly into a two-year Bachelor of Tourism Management.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Tourism Management Adventure Tourism</u></a></p> <p>A degree in Tourism Management broadens your understanding of the global issues, impacts and challenges facing the tourism industry and prepares you with the skills and knowledge to be effective in complex situations. Courses emphasize sustainability, community engagement, global consciousness and experiential learning with options to earn concentrations in hotel and resort management or adventure.</p>
College of the Rockies	<p><b>Tourism Management Certificate</b> (1 year) or Diploma (2 year)</p> <p><b>Recreation Management Diploma</b></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Tourism Management</u></a></p> <p>This program prepares students for a career in resorts, hotels, and other tourism operations. The program includes courses in tourism, business management, and related specialty courses.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Recreation Management Diploma</u></a></p> <p>This program prepares students for a career in facility operations, athletic development, facility management, recreation programming and many other specialty fields. They are provided with the business know-how, management skills and related specialty courses.</p> <p>Both programs available entirely on-line.</p>



School	Program	Program Description
Camosun College	<p><b>Sport Management Diploma</b></p> <p><b>Bachelor of Sport &amp; Fitness Leadership</b> (Bachelor of Sport &amp; Fitness Leadership will change to Bachelor of Sport Management degree - in final approval stage)</p>	<p><u><a href="#">Sport Management Diploma</a></u></p> <p>Diploma graduates will be prepared with a solid foundation in sport management along with necessary knowledge and skills to succeed in entry-level sport management careers including facility, resource and event management opportunities.</p> <p>Upon completion of Diploma in Sport Management, students can continue into third and fourth year of study to complete the degree program.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Bachelor of Sport Management</a></u></p> <p>Degree graduates are prepared to lead and manage in a variety of local, provincial, national and global sport environments. Career opportunities can include leadership and management positions, event management and program and project development in sport related businesses, not-for-profit, community and corporate organizations.</p>
Douglas College	<p><b>Therapeutic Recreation (Diploma and Bachelor)</b></p>	<p><u><a href="#">Therapeutic Recreation</a></u></p> <p>A two-year diploma in Therapeutic Recreation is the minimum qualification to work in the field of therapeutic recreation. Once students complete the first year of the Therapeutic Recreation diploma, they can choose to transfer into the degree program.</p> <p>Bachelor Therapeutic Recreation expand students' horizons in developing behaviour change techniques, department and leadership management skills, enabling change within communities, in-depth leadership and group dynamic skill sets, resource management, wellness coaching, leisure counselling, family and community health, ethical and decision-making processes, research development.</p>



School	Program	Program Description
Douglas College	<p><b>Bachelor Physical Education and Coaching</b></p> <p><b>Sport Science Diploma</b></p>	<p><u><a href="#">Bachelor of Physical Education and Coaching</a></u> prepares students to become physical education teachers, community sport coaches or fitness professionals. The curriculum includes fieldwork placements, leadership courses and labs in anatomy, physiology, exercise physiology and biomechanics. Graduates can apply directly into fifth year at SFU, UBC or other universities to complete a teaching credential. The program also meets admission requirements for the BC Association of Kinesiologists.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Sport Science Diploma Program</a></u></p> <p>Students develop theoretical knowledge of sports administration, physical growth and development, bio-mechanics, exercise physiology, sport history and sport psychology. This interdisciplinary program provides flexibility in course selection and is suitable for students with multiple areas of interest and those wanting flexibility in their career direction. There are also options to specialize in kinesiology or health and recreation.</p>
Langara College	<p><b>Recreation Leadership Diploma Program</b></p> <p><b>Bachelor Recreation Management Degree</b></p>	<p><u><a href="#">Recreation Leadership Diploma</a></u></p> <p>The two-year program is for students who like to work with people and help them experience the benefits of quality recreation. Graduates demonstrate a commitment to the values and benefits of recreation; have developed a comprehensive understanding of recreation related delivery systems and facilities; and can successfully apply program leadership and planning processes within those systems.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Bachelor Recreation Management</a></u></p> <p>This two-year degree completion program (third and fourth year of a bachelor's degree) is for students who have a recreation diploma or the equivalent, and who are interested in pursuing entry-level and middle management careers in the Recreation Field. The program is flexible and student-focused and combines a solid foundation in management theory and practical knowledge with specialized courses in recreation.</p>

School	Program	Program Description
Trinity Western University	<b>BA Sports and Leisure Management</b>	<p><u><a href="#">BA Sports and Leisure Management</a></u></p> <p>Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Sport and Leisure Management offers courses in public relations, communication and advanced marketing.</p> <p>A community internship component gives students the opportunity to experience professional options available upon graduation. Students are required to take six semester hours of internship experience.</p>
University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC)	<p><b>Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources with a major in Outdoor Recreation and Conservation</b></p> <p><b>Bachelor of Arts in Nature-Based Tourism Management</b></p>	<p><u><a href="#">Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources</a></u></p> <p>This BSc Major in Outdoor Recreation and Conservation focuses on the natural and human dimensions of outdoor recreation and conservation planning and management, within an integrated natural resource management framework. Emphasis in this major is placed on planning and managing environmentally and culturally sensitive recreation and conservation opportunities in natural environment settings.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Bachelor of Arts in Nature-Based Tourism Management</a></u></p> <p>This degree examines the various components of the nature-based tourism system, giving emphasis to the entrepreneurial perspectives and sustainability issues in the industry. Reflecting the interdisciplinarity of the field, and related career directions, students select from the following Areas of Specialization: marketing and entrepreneurship, outdoor education and leadership, indigenous/cultural tourism, or environment and society.</p>

School	Program	Program Description
University of Victoria (UVIC)	<b>Recreation and Health Education Bachelor Arts</b>	<p><a href="#"><u>Bachelor of Arts Recreation and Health Education</u></a></p> <p>This four-year program; co-op model (with honours option) is an interdisciplinary program that prepares students to work in the fields of recreation, wellness and health promotion, leadership and administration. Students undertake and complete four mandatory co-op terms prior to graduation.</p> <p>In September 2019, co-op model will change from the current four required co-ops to three. In 2019/2020 students will choose from two streams; one stream students focus a recreation management / leadership / policy; second stream where students lean more toward health and physical education / promotion with the recreation part being more frontline leadership oriented.</p>
Vancouver Island University	<p><b>Event Management Certificate</b></p> <p><b>Certificate in Adventure Tourism and Recreation</b></p> <p><b>Recreation and Sport Management Diploma</b></p> <p><b>Tourism Studies Diploma</b></p>	<p><a href="#"><u>Event Management Certificate</u></a></p> <p>The program prepares graduates with the skills and knowledge needed to plan and manage festivals and events, with an emphasis on the tourism and recreation sector.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Certificate in Adventure Tourism and Recreation</u></a></p> <p>The curriculum of this one-year Certificate in Adventure Tourism and Recreation is designed to train individuals wishing to enter the adventure tourism and recreation field at the assistant guide level. The certificate provides students with a broad understanding of the practices and principles of the adventure tourism industry and assistant guide level field skills with special emphases in sea kayak touring, and coastal and cultural interpretation.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Recreation and Sport Management Diploma</u></a></p> <p>The focus of this diploma program is on the provision of recreation and sport services and products in public, private, and not-for-profit sectors within communities. Mandatory: 2 co-operative education placements.</p> <p><a href="#"><u>Tourism Studies Diploma</u></a></p> <p>The focus of this program is on the provision of leisure experiences for domestic and international visitors. The program assesses the impact of tourism on individuals, communities, and the environment in order to develop best practices for sustainable tourism development. Mandatory: 2 co-operative education placements.</p>



School	Program	Program Description
Vancouver Island University	<p><b>Bachelor of Tourism Management with a major in Recreation;</b></p> <p><b>Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management</b></p>	<p><u><a href="#">Bachelor of Tourism Management with Optional Major in Recreation</a></u></p> <p>This program builds on existing diploma programs in Recreation and Sport Management, Tourism Studies and Hospitality Management. The degree program will provide applied skills and concepts related to the design of tourism products and management of tourism services. The degree will focus on the development of management and entrepreneurial skills needed for people wishing to assume greater responsibilities within an organization, or for those wishing to start new enterprises. Mandatory: 3 co-operative education placements.</p> <p><u><a href="#">Master of Arts in Sustainable Leisure Management</a></u></p> <p>This program places graduates at the intersection of two growing, exciting, and globally significant areas of theory and practice: leisure and sustainability. The program prepares emerging leaders to examine and create solutions which ensure that residents and travelers alike can enjoy recreational experiences, natural and cultural amenities, heritage resources, and adventure as part of their life experiences on a sustainable basis. Two integrated instructional streams are central to the program focus: 1) a set of principles and practices underlying leisure and sustainability; and, 2) an integrated set of research capabilities, innovation, and knowledge mobilization skills necessary to ensure that new knowledge can be effectively transformed into impact. There is also a required thesis component wherein students will demonstrate a mastery of knowledge mobilization approaches (including, but not limited to, research skills).</p>