“If man is to be liberated to enjoy more leisure, he must also be prepared to enjoy this leisure fully and creatively.”

~ Eleanor Roosevelt
CHAPTER 10 PARKS, TRAILS & RECREATION

Mission Statement
Provide diverse parks, recreation areas, open spaces and recreation programs that will serve all residents of Pocatello and surrounding communities with quality recreation and education programs, as well as safe, well-maintained parks and recreation facilities; strive to enhance the quality of people’s lives, provide the benefits of leisure and open space and serve as a source of community pride.

Discussion
The City Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for operating and/or maintaining over 69 locations which includes: 28 parks, 3 highway landscaped interchanges, and 40 landscaped beautification areas all of which encompasses over 300 acres. Included in these areas are 21 playgrounds, 26 ball fields, 11 soccer fields, 4 lighted outdoor tennis courts, 8 restrooms, 15 picnic shelters, 2 disc golf courses, a skate park and a recreation center. The “gem” of the system is Ross Park (upper and lower), with the Aquatic Complex, Ross Park Zoo, Fort Hall Replica and Pocatello Junction.

Pocatello Zoo
The Pocatello Zoo has been a sanctuary for native North American species for over 80 years. The animals on exhibit were either injured, orphaned, born in captivity or human imprinted and would not have survived in their natural wild setting. Zoo programs include public outreach and education, tours and summer camps. The Pocatello Zoological Society provides critical financial support and community involvement programs and events.

Parks Department Recreation Division
The Department’s Recreation Division offers a wide variety of team sports activities for youth and adults and seasonal outdoor recreation programs and events. This Division also operates the Community Recreation Center, the Ross Park Aquatics Complex, the Fort Hall Replica and Pocatello Junction which is a small-scale replica of the Pocatello Original Townsite. A wide variety of outdoor recreation programs are available through the City’s Parks and Recreation
Department. The indoor pool located at the Community Recreation Center is heavily utilized by youth swim teams and provides open swimming opportunities for the public at large. The Community Recreation Center offers recreational programs for youth and adults including a gym with weight rooms, a climbing wall and basketball courts. A second pool, the Ross Park Aquatic Center, is located in lower Ross Park near the Pocatello Zoo.

Currently, the majority of parks and facilities are maintained by the City Parks and Recreation Department and a few are maintained by private neighborhood associations or community organizations. Providing adequate funding for park maintenance is a continual challenge for the City, so the ability to fund and maintain additional parks, recreation facilities and open space must be considered as part of the planning process.

Other recreation areas and facilities are provided at local schools, churches and private enterprises. School District 25 has primary, intermediate and secondary education facilities throughout the community. These facilities provide additional opportunities for both organized recreational activities and places where people of all ages can enjoy individual recreational activities. The Idaho State University campus also provides numerous opportunities for recreational activities and events including the Outdoor Adventure Center. ISU’s Holt Arena is a domed event center for football, rodeos, car shows, concerts and other community events. The campus also has ball fields, soccer fields, indoor swimming facilities and miles of trails and paths around Red Hill and the adjacent eastern bench lands.

Cemeteries
In addition to providing recreational facilities, the Parks Department’s Cemetery Division is responsible for landscaping and general maintenance and burial arrangements at the two municipal cemeteries (Mountain View and Restlawn). The Mountain View Cemetery was established in 1892 and contains over 60 acres of land. The Restlawn Cemetery was established about 60 years ago and currently contains about 22 acres of land. Both cemeteries are located on the east side of South 5th Avenue. The Mountain View facility also provides over two miles of surfaced access aisles that are used as walking and jogging paths and are interconnected with an extensive path system adjacent to the ISU campus and Red Hill.
Golf
The City owns two public 18-hole golf courses (*Riverside and Highland*) that are leased to private operators. The Riverside course is located in the southwest area of the City between Bannock Highway and the Portneuf River. The Highland course is located in the northeast area of the City. Juniper Hills Country Club is a private 18-hole golf course located at the south end of the City adjacent to Bannock Highway and the Portneuf River. The Juniper Hills facilities include a pro shop, indoor and outdoor tennis courts, a swimming pool and dining and banquet facilities.

Trails
The Portneuf Greenway Foundation, in cooperation with the City has developed approximately 10.6 miles of a proposed 17.3 mile “greenbelt” trail system along the Portneuf River. The Foundation also promotes the acquisition and development of other trail systems throughout the City. Identifying and providing interconnectivity with other trails and paths with parks and open space is an important goal. The City established an Open Space Advisory Committee in 2007 and adopted an Open Space Plan in 2010 for the purpose of identification, acquisition and maintenance of open space within the City.

The City owns and maintains the 3,000-acre City Creek Management Area (*CCMA*) along the western bench area of the valley. The primary purpose of the area is for the protection of ground water and surface water resources. The area also contains over 50 miles of public trails used by hikers, equestrians, mountain bikers and ATV riders. Maintenance of the trail system is a combined effort between the City and the City Creek Trail Users Group. The City adopted a comprehensive management plan for the area in October of 2009 that outlines rules and guidelines to improve the management of the area for the watershed, recreation and open space amenities. There are several miles of other improved and unimproved trails within the City located on public and private lands that are used on a regular basis, primarily for hiking and biking purposes. The City Creek trail system is interconnected with other extensive multi-use trail systems on BLM and Forest Service lands within the Bannock Range. There are also several trails and connections along the east side of the City that connect to extensive multi-use trail systems leading into the Portneuf Range.
Skiing
The City has partnered with the U.S. Forest Service and the Pocatello Cross Country Ski Foundation for the operation and maintenance of 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) of groomed trails at the Mink Creek Nordic Ski Area located in the East Fork Mink Creek drainage about 7 miles southwest of the City. Other area recreation amenities include the Pebble Creek Ski Area which is located approximately 15 miles southeast of the City and provides 3 chair lifts and 54 runs on eleven hundred 1,100 acres on Mount Bonneville.

Fishing
The Idaho Department of Fish & Game, with cooperation from the City and Bannock County, completed construction of the 3 acre Edson Fichter community fishing pond adjacent to the Portneuf River in the fall of 2011. The pond is located at the southern end of the valley and is stocked with fish on a regular basis. It is accessed by a trail system with parking facilities near Indian Hills Elementary School on Cheyenne Avenue.

Bannock County
The Bannock County Fairgrounds are located just outside the City boundary in the northeast bench area adjacent to Interstate 15. The fairgrounds contains about 160 acres and provides exhibit buildings, soccer fields, a horse race track, a rodeo arena and 3 smaller arenas, horse stalls, grandstands, a moto-X track and an RV park. The fairgrounds provides a venue for a wide variety of community and regional events. The Portneuf Healthcare Foundation is constructing a “Wellness Complex” on the northern 80 acres of the fairground property, which will include: multi-use sports fields, a small lake, an amphitheater, walking path, community garden, basketball courts, a playground, concessions and convenience facilities. The projected completion date for the complex is in the fall of 2015.
Parks
As population increases, the demand for parks, recreation opportunities, facilities and cemetery plots also increases. The future challenge for the City will be to promote and support public and private opportunities to meet these demands. According to the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) community parks are typically five (5) to eight (8) acres in size and provide areas for recreational activities, and neighborhood parks, which according to the NRPA are typically less than two (2) acres in size, combine playgrounds and non-supervised, non-organized activities.

Table 10.1 compares data from the 2009 NRPA Operating Ratio Report with park and recreational facilities in Pocatello. The table indicates that Pocatello meets or exceeds all of the operating ratios including the number of swimming pools when the ISU facility and the Juniper Hills facility are counted.

Table 10.1 Park Standards Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility Type/ Measurement</th>
<th>NPRA Level of Service Standard</th>
<th>Pocatello</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Parks per 10,000 people</td>
<td>1 / 10,000</td>
<td>2.9 / 10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Parks per 4,000 people</td>
<td>1 / 4,000</td>
<td>0.9 / 4,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trails/Greenway miles/20,000 people</td>
<td>8 / 20,000</td>
<td>25 / 20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Pool per 20,000 people</td>
<td>1 / 20,000</td>
<td>1.5 / 20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The City has not historically purchased land for parks; however, as population increases, the City should take the necessary steps to meet future park and recreation facilities needs. One potential way to acquire park land and open space is to accept the dedication of land for public purposes.
GOAL 1.

Provide recreational opportunities for all citizens.

OBJECTIVE

1.1 Provide a variety of parks, lands, greenways and recreation facilities throughout the community whenever feasible.

POLICY

a. Work with School District 25 and Idaho State University to maintain and provide access to recreation facilities, particularly in areas underserved by existing parks and facilities.

b. Cooperate with and encourage private sports associations and non-profit entities to build and maintain recreation facilities including ball fields, soccer fields and playgrounds.

c. Develop and/or upgrade recreation and park facilities to meet local needs.

d. Encourage the creation of public and private neighborhood parks in conjunction with residential, commercial and industrial development.

1.2 Provide a variety of recreation programs, activities and events to ensure that the quality and quantity of recreational opportunities is sufficient to meet demand.

POLICY

a. Support the involvement of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, the Golf Advisory Board, the Pocatello Zoological Society and the Fort Hall Replica Commission in the planning and implementation of programs, activities and events.

b. Support and promote other community programs, activities and events sponsored by other public and private entities.

1.3 Provide a variety of trails and paths throughout the community whenever feasible.
POLICY

a. Support the continued acquisition, development and maintenance programs of the Portneuf Greenway Foundation.
b. Promote the acquisition, development and maintenance of City trails and paths.
c. Support the development and maintenance of trails and paths in conjunction with residential, commercial and industrial developments.
d. Promote the acquisition, development and maintenance of trailheads and interconnectivity of trails and paths within the community and with adjacent systems on Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service administered lands.

GOAL 2.

Develop and implement a Comprehensive Parks & Recreation Systems Master Plan.

OBJECTIVE

2.1 Provide a comprehensive inventory, development plan and maintenance plan for parks, recreation facilities, trails, paths, and programs under the jurisdiction of the City Parks & Recreation Department.

POLICY

a. Incorporate existing plans, policies, programs and information into a Master Plan to facilitate the development and operation of recreation facilities and programs.
b. Promote public participation in the development of the Master Plan.
c. Implement the adopted Master Plan.