

The Educational Implications of Changing Job Responsibilities and Staffing Patterns in State Park Planning

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Abstract

This paper reports on a nationwide research project aimed at documenting the work responsibilities and staffing patterns of state park planners. Results indicate decreasing staff size and diversifying work responsibilities for state park planners. In addition, a general neglect of documenting planning processes, evaluating plans and updating plans exists within state park planning units. Select educational implications of these findings are explored in this paper. Adopting a stronger outdoor recreation planning emphasis within recreation management curricula is proposed to ensure that students are adequately prepared for entrance into the outdoor recreation planning field. In addition, students seeking the emphasis should be exposed to an interdisciplinary education which should include exposure to a variety of planning theories, planning techniques, research skills and communication skills often taught in general planning and social science curricula.

Key words: State park planning, outdoor recreation planning, recreation curriculum

Biographical Information

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Introduction

This paper examines the educational implications of changing job responsibilities for state park planners and professional staff size within state park planning agencies. A survey of the 50 state park systems in the United States was conducted to: (a) document the mandates for planning and types of plans prepared by state park planners; (b) reveal the extent to which state park planning processes are documented, plans are updated, and plan evaluations are conducted; and (c) identify changes in the size of state park planner staffs since 1980. The study's central research goal was to identify and interpret implications of the survey results on post-secondary educational curricula used to prepare state park planners. The data presented support the conclusion that state park planning's professional responsibilities have broadened from a traditional focus on site-specific planning to include other forms of planning such as long-range and strategic planning. Burton's (1991) general framework for post-secondary recreation and leisure curriculum design articulates a theoretical relationship between core curricula and patterns of concentration. This paper proposes curriculum guidelines for an outdoor recreation planning concentration within park and recreation management programs built on Burton's framework.

Current outdoor recreation and planning curricula

As of 1992, over 500 programs to prepare professionals in parks, recreation and leisure studies had evolved in the United States and Canada since the first collegiate program was begun in 1936 (Burton, 1991; Butts, 1992). The number of National Recreation and Park Association/ American Association of Leisure and Recreation (NRPA/ AALR) accredited programs in the United States and Canada has also risen from 3 in 1977 to 92 in 1994 (Laudie, 1995; NRPA/ AALR, 1995). Many of these programs offer some undergraduate and graduate level coursework in outdoor recreation planning.

Despite growth in the number of academic parks, recreation and leisure studies programs and a movement toward accreditation, few students graduate from these programs with an emphasis in outdoor recreation planning. Bialeschki (1992) found that recreation management/ administration and therapeutic recreation comprised 60% of the undergraduate, 63% of the masters and 69% of the doctoral student areas of emphasis within recreation management programs nationwide in 1990. Other areas of student emphasis were commercial recreation/ tourism, outdoor recreation, and program design/ leadership (Bialeschki, 1992). This same study also discovered a reduction in the number of specializations in outdoor recreation and recreation administration and an increase in the number of specializations in general recreation offered since 1988.

If this movement away from outdoor recreation specializations continues, students seeking preparation for the outdoor recreation planning profession will be required to obtain more of their formal education from other non-recreation curricula. A logical alternative for these students might be schools of planning. Colleges and universities with undergraduate planning schools have historically avoided offering specializations in individual disciplines in-lieu of general planning degrees (Alterman, 1992; Association of College Schools of

Planning (ACSP, 1990; Niebanck, 1992). Planning schools have considered these specializations the responsibility of individual disciplines at the undergraduate level (Alterman, 1992; ACSP, 1990; Niebanck, 1992).

Specializations that are offered by planning schools tend to be found at the graduate level. Land use or physical planning might be considered the graduate level specializations that are most directly related to outdoor recreation planning. In a study of graduate schools of planning, Pivo (1989) found that even though specializations in physical planning (including land use planning) are still available in 63% of the schools studied, many schools have abandoned physical planning as an area of specialization. In a later study, Miller and Westerlund (1990) found 65% of the graduate schools offered a specialization in land use planning in their curricula. Although these results support the argument that specializations in land use planning are available in graduate planning schools, it is important to qualify the results when developing conclusions pertinent to a discussion of effective outdoor recreation planning curricula. Miller and Westerlund (1990) found a great variety of coursework among the schools that offered a land use planning specialization. The courses offered in these curricula were grouped into several distinct topical areas of study. These topical areas ranged from urban and community development to environmental and natural resources planning (Miller & Westerlund, 1990).

Curricula design background

Given the limited amount of outdoor recreation related planning curricula offered by post-secondary schools of planning, the primary responsibility for ensuring that the core coursework necessary for a foundation in outdoor recreation planning is made available to students rests with outdoor recreation educators. A challenge inherent to this responsibility is to design a curriculum that prepares professional outdoor recreation planners within park, recreation and leisure studies programs.

Burton (1991) presented a framework for designing baccalaureate degree programs in recreation and leisure studies that offers assistance in addressing this challenge. He argues that effective curricula should integrate the recreation management curriculum's traditional emphasis on professional preparation with the more liberal arts oriented leisure studies curricula to offer students opportunities for a more comprehensive education. Such integration of a liberal and professional education is seen as critical to providing students with a basis for the intellectual and professional evolution that will be necessary in response to inevitable changes in job environments following graduation (Butts, 1992; Riggins, 1992).

Burton (1991) proposes a model curriculum consisting of both a core curriculum for all students and several patterns of concentration for individual students. In this model, the core curriculum consists of several multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and disciplinary courses that provide a broad foundation in both the academic and applied knowledge needed by all recreation management students. He suggests that Introductory Psychology, the Psychology of Leisure, and Leadership Development in Recreation might be among the core curriculum required of all recreation and leisure students (Burton, 1991).

The core curriculum proposed by Burton (1991) is complemented by flexible patterns of concentration which provide the specific knowledge needed to meet the student's individual professional objectives. He suggests that the pattern of concentration courses might include Park Planning and Management, Environmental Management in Recreation, Forest Recreation, or Landscape Architecture depending on the student's particular pattern of concentration (Burton, 1991). Butts (1992) also argues for greater student flexibility in course selection based on his finding that an average undergraduate leisure studies specialization allowed only five percent of the student's entire course of study to be composed of non-leisure open electives.

The core curriculum and the pattern of concentration in this model are integrated through a series of synthesis courses (courses designed to use knowledge gained from the range of courses offered in the curriculum), integration courses (seminar courses designed to critique field experience gained from practicum/ internship courses within an academic environment), and a practicum/ internship. The result is a well-rounded curriculum that provides a broad foundation from a variety of disciplines, specific courses to meet individual professional goals and practical field experience (Burton, 1991).

Perhaps the most challenging dimension to effective curricular design is maintaining a current understanding of the recreation management profession's changing educational needs. One tool to assist academics in understanding a profession's particular educational requirements is to seek practitioner involvement in curriculum design. In fact, practitioner involvement should be an obvious dimension of good curriculum design (Searle & Harper, 1989). Practitioners can help to ensure that relevance and reality are embedded in the curriculum. In addition, their involvement with the academic community might increase the degree to which research is relevant and applied to actual management situations. Unfortunately, there is too often a gap between professional practice and the academic curriculum used to prepare students for the profession (Searle & Harper, 1989).

Outdoor recreation planning approaches

One way to improve the practitioner's involvement in curriculum design is to ask practitioners to identify the types of work they perform. The present study sought to accomplish this goal by asking state park planning staff to identify the types of plans they produce and the amount of staff time allocated to each type of plan. This study explored state park planning activities and was intended to stimulate additional discussion of educational needs for outdoor recreation planners. To accomplish this goal, the study focused on the types of plans performed by state park planning staff, the processes used to produce the plans and the staff time allocated to these efforts.

State park planning was chosen for study because little research has been conducted on the nature of state park planning despite the presence of formal park planning as an institutionalized function of state government since the 1950s and 1960s (Pierce, 1970; Smith, 1989). Stimulated by the 1962 federal Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission's (ORRRC) report and passage of the planning mandates contained in the

1965 federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCFA), state governments began to formally plan their outdoor recreation systems during the subsequent decades. In the 30 years since the passage of LWCFA, outdoor recreation planning has become an important part of state park operations and management.

Four basic approaches to outdoor recreation planning are briefly reviewed as background for this paper. One approach to outdoor recreation planning is production of site specific plans (Christiansen, 1977). Development of site plans has been a central focus of outdoor recreation planning since Frederick Olmsted's work in the late 1800s. The state park unit plan is an example of a site specific plan used in this study. Unit plans focus on planning an individual park's (a) resource management objectives, (b) recreational opportunities, and (d) educational opportunities.

A second approach to outdoor recreation planning which emerged in the late 1960s is comprehensive planning (Pierce, 1970; Wise, 1970). This approach seeks to create a master plan for overall guidance of the agency's work, including establishment of general parameters for production of other more specialized plans (Hunt & Brooks, 1983; Wise, 1970). Comprehensive planning seeks to focus more attention on broader issues, policy development, creation of flexible unit plans and production of long-range plans (Bryson, 1991; Hunt & Brooks, 1983).

A third approach to outdoor recreation planning is long-range planning. Long-range planning emerged as an alternative to site specific and comprehensive planning during the 1980s. Long-range planning seeks to set management objectives, examine viable alternatives and select a preferred course of action (Bryson, 1991). Fundamental to long-range planning is the belief that the future is linearly and rationally predictable because change is incremental and based on current conditions (Bryson, 1991).

A fourth approach to outdoor recreation planning is strategic planning. Strategic planning also emerged during the 1980s as an alternative to planning for public agencies. It offered an innovative and non-linear approach to public sector planning (Bozeman & Straussman, 1988; Bryson, 1991). Fundamental to strategic planning is the recognition that change is constant, often unpredictable, and potentially rapid (Bryson, 1991). Strategic planning, therefore, challenges planners and managers to think strategically, focus decision-making on policy issues, identify organizational missions and involve key stakeholders in planning processes (Bryson, 1991). Strategic planning focuses less on document production and more on understanding why an organization exists, how it works and what issues it must address to accomplish its mission (Bryson, 1991).

Understanding the degree to which each of these approaches to planning have been adapted to outdoor recreation planning environments is important for determining the educational needs of future park and recreation planners. If these types of plans are produced by state park planners, the proposed outdoor recreation pattern of concentration should include exposure to the specific knowledge and skills that each type of plan requires.

Methodology

A questionnaire focusing on park planning responsibilities and staffing patterns was mailed to the 50 directors of state park systems in the United States during November, 1992. Mailing addresses were obtained from the database maintained by the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD). Most of the directors delegated responsibility to complete the questionnaire to other staff persons within their organizations. Fifty-three percent of the respondents were state planning program directors and 22% were state park planners. State park planning units were chosen for analysis in this study for three reasons (a) the funding agency for the study (the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Recreation) was interested in a comparative analysis of park planning activities and staff in state park systems, (b) the database used for distribution of the survey was readily available from NASPD, and (c) analysis of state park planning activities was seen as a vehicle to provide initial insight into the broader population of outdoor recreation planners.

The initial questionnaire was followed-up with three reminder letters. These letters were mailed in two week intervals beginning two weeks after the initial survey was distributed. The third follow-up letter included a second copy of the questionnaire. Forty-five of the fifty surveys were completed and returned, for a 90% overall response rate.

The questionnaire developed for this study contained both forced-choice and open-ended questions to document (a) the existence of state park planning mandates, (b) the types of plans produced by state park planners, (c) characteristics of the planning processes used, and (d) staff size devoted to state park planning activities. The questionnaire also included definitions for six specific types of plans that state park planning staff might complete (a) unit, (b) strategic, (c) long-range, (d) combination strategic and long-range, (e) Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORP), and (f) other plans. The definitions were operationalized by the investigators based on distinctions between the types of plans found in planning literature and the functional definitions used by Minnesota State Parks. Respondents were asked to refer to these definitions when answering the survey questions.

The types of plans produced and the characteristics of planning activities within state park systems were investigated. Respondents were asked "yes/ no" questions determine if (a) the six types of plans were produced, (b) copies of the plans were available, (c) process documentation existed, (d) evaluation processes were developed, and (e) the plans were actually evaluated. In addition, respondents were asked to provide the date(s) of the next scheduled update for each type of plan they produced.

The questionnaire also contained "yes/ no" questions to assess the existence of (a) state park mission statements, (b) legislative mandates to conduct state park planning, and (c) agency policies requiring state park planning. Respondents were also asked to estimate the number of full-time and part-time state park planners employed by their state park system in 1980, 1985 and 1992. Finally, respondents were asked to indicate the percentage of their state's total state park planning staff time annually allocated to producing each of the six types of plans.

Analysis

Survey data were analyzed by descriptive statistics to identify the types of state park plans produced and common characteristics of state park planning activities. The number of respondents to each question as well as the number of states conducting the various types of plans were determined. These values were used to calculate the percentage of states that produce process documentation, schedule plan updates, and conduct plan evaluations for each of the non-SCORP planning types under study. Confidence intervals at a 95% confidence level were calculated for each of these percentages.

Changes in state park planning staff size were assessed by descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean scores were generated for the number of full-time and part-time planning staff employed in 1980, 1985 and 1992 to depict changes in planning staff size during these time periods. Paired t-test comparisons were conducted to identify the statistical significance of changes between the three time periods within both the full-time and part-time staff categories. Mean scores were also calculated to identify the amount of staff time allocated to each of the six plan types in 1992. Confidence intervals at a 95% confidence level were calculated for each of the staff time mean scores.

Results

Planning mandates

All 45 of the state park systems responding to the survey engage in state park planning in some form, although not all are required by agency policy or state law to do so. A state law or statewide policy requires state park planning in all but 11 states. Forty-two of the respondents also indicated that their state park planning staffs participate in SCORP planning. Some states also use staff other than state park planning staff to write SCORPs. These results document that park planning is a component of state park management throughout the United States.

Planning types

Table 1 displays the non-SCORP types of state park planning conducted and the percentage of full-time staff hours devoted to each type of plan. Because this study was most interested in state park plans mandated and controlled by state laws and policies, SCORP data are not presented.

The percentage of states that produce each type of plan varies considerably from 26.7% (long-range plans) to 75.6% (unit plans). In addition, three types of plans are each produced by 35.6% of the states (combination strategic and long-range plans, strategic plans, and "other" plans).

A follow-up question asked respondents to identify the "other" types of plans they produced. Responses to this question varied considerably among the 16 respondents to indicate that their state park planners produce "other" plans. The plans most frequently identified by the 16 states (and the percentage of these states to identify each) were; (a)

acquisition and development (75%), (b) resource management (63%), (c) legislative studies (31%), (d) marketing (31%), (e) interpretive (25%), and (d) trail management (25%).

TABLE 1
*State Park Planning Types and Percentage
of Full-time Hours Devoted to Each Type*

Plan type	States producing (n=45)		Staff time allocation (n=43)	
	% of n	% \pm	M % time	% \pm
State park unit plan	75.6	11.9	27.7	12.4
Combination strategic and long-range plan	35.6	13.3	7.8	7.4
Strategic plan	35.6	13.3	2.9	0.8
Other	35.6	13.3	33.7	13.1
Long-range plan	26.7	12.3	4.1	2.8

Note. % of n = percentage of n to indicate they produce plan type; M % time = mean percentage of total full-time staff allocation to plan type; and % \pm = confidence interval at 95% confidence level.

This study also sought to document the extent to which state park planners engage in certain non-SCORP related planning activities for the types of plans they produce. For each type of plan, Table 2 depicts (a) the amount of process documentation, (b) the degree to which plan updates are scheduled, and (c) the extent to which plans include an evaluation process.

TABLE 2
*Percent of State Park Plans Containing Process Documentation,
Scheduled Updates and Plan Evaluation Process*

Type of Plan	Process documentation		Scheduled updates		Evaluation process	
	% of n	% \pm	% of N	% \pm	% of n	% \pm
State park unit plan	24.4	11.9	24.4	11.9	17.8	10.6
Combination strategic and long-range plan	2.0	3.9	20.0	11.1	11.1	8.7
Strategic plan	13.3	9.4	13.3	9.4	13.3	9.4
Other	13.3	9.4	17.8	10.6	24.4	11.9
Long-range plan	20.0	11.1	20.0	11.1	6.7	6.9

Note. % of n = percentage of n to indicate their plans include the items identified in the column header; and % \pm = confidence interval at 95% confidence level.

Survey results indicate that states provide very little process documentation, infrequently schedule plan updates and seldom include an evaluation process in state park plans. Twenty nine percent or less of the states include process documentation for the five types of non-SCORP plans. State park unit plans appear to include the most frequent process documentation (24.4%), while combination strategic and long-range plans appear to contain the least process documentation (2.0%). Scheduled plan updates were also most frequently reported for state park unit plans (29%) and evaluation processes were found to be most common among the "other" type of plans (24.4%). Long-range planning appears to receive the least amount of evaluation (6.7%) among these states.

Size and allocation of planner staff time

The percentages of staff time allocated by the states to each plan type are presented in Table 1. The majority of state park planner work time is devoted to "other" types of plans (33.7% annually) and state park unit plans (27.7% annually). Despite the number of states that produce strategic, long-range, or combination plans, the average amount of state park planning staff time devoted to these types of plans is minimal (7.8% or less annually on average).

While the range of responsibilities assigned to state park planners has broadened, the average size of full-time and part-time state park planning staffs has diminished since 1980 (see Table 3). The mean number of full-time planners decreased from 3.71 persons in 1980 to 3.26 persons in 1992. Similarly, the mean number of part-time planners decreased from .77 persons in 1980 to .50 persons in 1992. Paired-t tests indicate that these changes are not statistically significant. The t-values for staff size changes from 1980 to 1992 are .97 (full-time staff) and 1.45 (part-time staff) at a 95% confidence level with 44 degrees of freedom.

TABLE 3
*Average Number of State Park Planners
1980 - 1992 by Work Status*

Work status	1980	1985			1992				
	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>t¹</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>t¹</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>t²</u>	<u>df</u>
full-time	3.71	3.72	-.01	44	3.26	.87	44	.97	44
part-time	.77	.59	1.39	44	.50	.53	44	1.45	44

Note. M = sample mean for number of planners; df = degrees of freedom; t¹ = t-value for difference from previous year at 95% confidence level; and t² = t-value for difference from 1980 at 95% confidence level.

Discussion

Results from this study provide insight into the nature of work responsibilities assigned to state park planners. This study produced three major findings: (a) the number of state park planners has decreased; (b) based on the growing number of different types of plans

being produced, it is reasonable to conclude that state park planner job responsibilities have broadened from the traditional emphasis on unit planning; and (c) process documentation, plan updates and plan evaluation are limited for most state park planning efforts. These findings have implications for both the state park planning profession and post-secondary education programs which prepare outdoor recreation planners. A brief discussion of the professional implications, followed by a more extensive discussion of the educational implications is presented below.

Two important implications for the state park planning profession emerge from these findings. The first implication is that outdoor recreation planners need to be more versatile, efficient, and productive than they may have been in the past to accomplish the broadening variety of responsibilities assigned to them during a period of declining staff resources. The primary responsibilities assigned to state park planners have broadened from the traditional unit plan to include a diverse range of planning types. Unit planning efforts currently account for only 27.7% of state park planner time. At the same time, the largest percentage of planner staff time is currently allocated to "other" types of plans (33.7%). The balance of state park planning staff time is allocated to other agency functions, including SCORP planning (11.7%), strategic planning (13.3%), and long-range planning (6.7%). In addition, approximately 15% of state park planner staff time is allocated to responsibilities not examined in this study. These results indicate that state park planners are required to respond to a range of job responsibilities.

The variety of plan types reported may be related to differing organizational structures and statutory responsibilities governing with the managing agencies in these states. For example, state park organizations in some state are also responsible for managing state trail systems, while other states have created separate organizations to manage state trails (Nickerson, 1994). In addition, the variety in plans produced may also reflect differing agency priorities for state park planning responsibilities between the states. Whatever the reason(s) for the differences reported, it is clear that a wide range of planning activities are conducted by state park planners. In response to this occurrence, park planners need to possess a range of skills, including an ability to adapt to changing job responsibilities and expectations.

While the responsibilities assigned to state park planners appears to be broadening, the average size of state park planning staffs has decreased since 1980. This staff reduction appears among both full-time and part-time planners. Although the paired t-tests conducted on the staff change data indicate that the decreases are not statistically significant, it is important to recognize that the change has occurred while planning responsibilities have broadened. Together these results indicate that state park planners need to possess a range of skills, and that planners need to work more efficiently than they may have been required to in the past.

The second important implication for the state park planning profession is that the quality and effectiveness of current state park planning efforts are unknown. The combination

of declining staff resources, increased work load, and changing responsibilities increases occupational pressure and potentially affects the quality of planning staff output. The limited amount of process documentation, plan updates, and evaluation efforts raises questions about the effectiveness of current state park planning. Less than one-fourth of the respondents indicated that they document their planning processes, schedule updates for their plans or evaluate plan effectiveness. Without use of these tools, it is difficult for planners to adequately measure whether the plans they produce accomplish their intended purposes and establish a framework for effective management actions.

In addition to the professional implications of the findings, the changing nature of the state park planner's job responsibilities has several important implications for the education of park planners. The results should encourage post-secondary educators to examine their existing curricula for consistency with the skills needed for effective park planning in coming years. Outdoor recreation planning education can no longer be defined exclusively in terms of the skills required for the production of site specific unit plans. Nor can recreation management curricula which focus on providing the same general outdoor recreation management skills to all students be expected to adequately prepare outdoor recreation planners. An evolution in the nature of undergraduate and graduate recreation management curricula needs to occur to accommodate the specific needs of outdoor recreation planners. One component of this evolution should be development of a pattern of concentration in outdoor recreation planning.

Niebanck (1992) suggests that undergraduate planning education in general should be critical, experiential, participatory, interdisciplinary, and applied. Burton's 1991 model recreation curriculum is consistent with this basic belief. Graduate education should expand upon this basic foundation by providing students with enhanced technical expertise in a particular planning concentration and strengthened research skills. The changing nature of society, technology, and planning activities also requires that continuing education programs be developed to meet the evolving needs of practicing recreation planners.

A major challenge for recreation management curriculum designers is to identify how a concentration in outdoor recreation planning can be integrated into existing degree programs. Inherent to this challenge is a need to adjust the curriculum as the profession's needs change. We suggest six guidelines for changing post-secondary education curricula to accomplish this integration (see Figure 1). The application of these guidelines will vary across institutions according to the particular constraints and preferences present at the institution. These guidelines are not exhaustive and will certainly require additional modification as more research is conducted and the profession changes. However, the need to accommodate institutional nuances, additional research, and professional changes should not be construed as justification for ignoring the need for a balanced program that offers these basic characteristics.

The first guideline for the curriculum is to recognize that outdoor recreation planners need to be familiar with general recreation management theory and techniques in order to

be effective. Understanding the philosophical and historical foundation of recreation management, recreation management theory, and recreation management techniques is essential to effective planning within recreation systems. Similarly, understanding recreation management allows the planner to communicate more effectively with managers. Planners also need to understand how their planning processes relate to other resource management activities within given ecosystems. The dynamic relationship between providing recreation opportunities and recreation resource management is important for planners to understand. Coursework to examine these important concepts can be incorporated into the core curriculum offered to all recreation management students (Burton, 1991).

- 1) Ensure familiarity with general recreation management theory and techniques.
- 2) Retain or introduce outdoor recreation planning courses within the recreation management curriculum.
- 3) Incorporate an interdisciplinary approach to education.
- 4) Integrate both technical and research skills.
- 5) Incorporate hands-on planning experiences.
- 6) Develop ongoing continuing education opportunities.

Figure 1. Programmatic Guidelines for a Outdoor Recreation Planning Pattern of Concentration Guidelines

A second important guideline for the curriculum is retention of outdoor recreation planning courses within recreation management curricula. This guideline becomes particularly important because curricula in planning schools have focused on teaching general planning skills (ACSP, 1990) and relied upon individual disciplines to meet individual programmatic needs (Pivo, 1989). As long as this approach exists in planning schools, recreation agencies will be forced to look either to recreation curricula for planners or to continue to convert professionals trained in other aspects of natural resource management to planners. Either scenario results in people entering recreation planning jobs who are ill-prepared to function well.

A third important guideline is incorporation of an interdisciplinary approach to recreation planning education (ACSP, 1990; Burdge, 1989; Burton, 1989, 1991; Godbey, 1989; Hemmens, 1987; Miller & Westerlund, 1990; Niebanck, 1992; Pivo, 1989). Although the primary responsibility for curriculum design of the concentration should reside with recreation management educators, a comprehensive curriculum needs to draw upon other disciplines to complement the core recreation management curriculum. The basic assumption underlying the third guideline is that outdoor recreation planners have some different skill

requirements than other outdoor recreation resource professionals. The data illustrate that planners need to be well versed in a variety of planning theories and techniques ranging from site specific unit planning to policy setting strategic planning. The same degree of emphasis on these skills may not be required of curricula preparing other recreation management professionals (e.g. park managers and interpretive staff). A need also exists for outdoor recreation planners to develop the leadership, management, and organizational skills necessary for them to effectively guide managers through planning processes. Public relations and public participation skills are also important to developing and managing effective planning efforts. An ability to participate in policy development, forecasting and planning are important for success in outdoor recreation planning (Burton, 1989). The exact mixture of the coursework to provide these skills will vary across institutions and among students, but programs at both the undergraduate and graduate level need to accommodate this range of skills (Burton, 1991).

An important fourth guideline is integration of both technical and research skills into undergraduate and graduate curricula. Undergraduate planning programs have struggled with providing an effective balance between exposing students to general planning skills and social science research techniques since the 1950s (Hemmens, 1987). Undergraduate planning education tends to serve as a training ground for the general practitioner (Niebanck, 1992). In contrast, graduate planning education has tended to focus on development of specializations and enhancement of research skills. The data support the observation that planners need a combination of research techniques and professional training at both levels. It is important to offer both undergraduate and graduate programs that meet these needs.

A fifth guideline for a recreation planning pattern of concentration is recognition of the need to incorporate hands-on planning experiences into both undergraduate and graduate curricula. Effective planning is not something that can be learned exclusively in a classroom setting. Students need to experience the activity first-hand to understand how the theory presented in a formal educational setting is applied in a professional setting (Gondim, 1988; Niebanck, 1992). It is through participation in actual planning projects that students learn how politics and organizational design influence planning processes (Gondim, 1988). In addition, requiring future recreation planners to participate in a planning practicum challenges managing agencies to be active partners in their staff education and facilitates narrowing of gaps between practitioners and academia. The University of Michigan has developed a core course within its planning curriculum that seeks to address the need for practical application (Vakil, Marans, & Feldt, 1990). This workshop program is a cooperative effort between the university and a neighborhood assistance program in Detroit to provide students with classroom training in theory and a field experience opportunity to develop planning solutions to problems faced by the neighborhood organization.

The sixth guideline is based on the belief that education should not end with any diploma. As demands on staff time change, new planning paradigms are born and new requirements for planning products dictated, it is important that practicing planners have an opportunity to enhance their skills and effectively prepare themselves for inevitable changes.

In addition, the continuing conversion of staff trained in other natural resource professions to outdoor recreation planners suggests that a great need exists among agencies to provide in-service training for current planners. Creation of a continuing education program offers institutions of higher learning and managing agencies a unique opportunity to develop long-term and effective partnerships for education of recreation professionals. For example, the University of Minnesota, in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, has developed a recreation management continuing education program that seeks to provide ongoing in-service training for recreation management professionals in state, federal, county, and municipal agencies (Anderson, Fredrickson, Lime, Thompson, & Silker, 1993). This program has a strong planning component and serves as a good foundation for other colleges, universities, and practitioners to adapt to their specific set of circumstances.

Certainly, these guidelines for an outdoor recreation planning pattern of concentration are not exhaustive. Additional research is required to better document the educational backgrounds of current state park planners and to determine specifics for adaptation of these basic guidelines to individual undergraduate and graduate recreation management curricula. These basic guidelines for an outdoor recreation planning pattern of concentration need to be incorporated by educators in their curriculum designs if well prepared outdoor recreation planning professionals are to be graduated and employed.

Conclusion

This investigation of state park planner activities illustrates that state park planning includes producing a variety of plan types. Diminishing staff resources devoted to park planning coupled with diversifying planning responsibilities pressures state park planners to perform in what might be less than optimal work environments. Limited process documentation and plan evaluation minimizes quality assurance of park plans and reduces the potential for plan responsiveness, both of which should be inherent to effective outdoor recreation resource planning. Therefore, the quality and effectiveness of park plans currently being completed needs further evaluation.

In addition, the results illustrate a need to reevaluate current educational curricula and in-service professional development programs focused on educating park planning professionals. An interdisciplinary outdoor recreation planning pattern of concentration should be created within existing recreation management curricula to enhance educational opportunities offered to students. The authors hope that the ideas articulated here will serve as a catalyst for future discussions regarding curriculum design for outdoor recreation planners.

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