

Mull, R.F., Beggs, R.A. & Renneisen, M. (2009). *Recreation Facility Management: Design, Development, Operations and Utilization*. Human Kinetics. 297 pages, \$59.00.  
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Areas and facilities management is one of the core courses in any recreation curriculum and it is a vital skill area that recreation students must have. Finding a good comprehensive textbook for this course is a challenge for instructors since the choices of textbooks for recreation areas and facilities management are limited. Professionals have attempted to meet such needs in recent years by publishing more books in this area, and Mull, Beggs, and Renneisen's newly published book, *Recreation facility management: Design, development, operations and utilization*, is an example.

The book is organized in five sections. The first section (three chapters) focuses on the foundational knowledge of recreation facility management, such as definitions of management, essential aspects of recreation facility management, and basic characteristics of recreation facilities. Section two (five chapters) covers the crucial design and development elements, including assessment, planning, design, funding and construction. The third section (three chapters) and fourth section (four chapters) of the book discuss the different aspects of management of recreation facilities in terms of equipment management, financial management, personnel management, safety and security, maintenance, and emergency response. The last section (four chapters) provides specific examination and discussion of different types of specialized recreation facilities, such as parks and playgrounds, aquatic resources, parking areas, locker rooms, food services areas, and child care facilities.

The book is well-organized and has a natural flow from beginning to end. Each chapter has a list of learning objectives at the beginning, which provides a useful guide for both instructors and students to understand the focal points of the chapter. Several chapters are particularly well-written and include detailed information. Other resources, such as graphs of construction documents, provide good examples which can help readers to better understand the design process.

When compared to other similar texts, such as *Facility design and management for health, fitness, physical activity, recreation, and sports facility development* (Sawyer, 2005, 11<sup>th</sup> ed.) and *Managing sport facilities* (Fried, 2005), this book is reminiscent of the Fried text. Sawyer's book offers more information on event management, different types of recreation facilities, and their related characteristics, while the book under review here and Fried's book both have fewer chapters on types of recreation facilities. Although somewhat short in length, this book prepares students with the basic knowledge and understanding of recreation facilities and is a suitable text, while a work such as Sawyer's book is a better resource for professionals looking for a comprehensive reference guide.

The authors of this book do a good job on achieving the goal of providing an introduction to the field of recreation facility design, management, and maintenance. One of the major strengths of the book is that the authors wrote the book with the NRPA academic curriculum accreditation standards in mind. Accreditation requirements such as assessment, planning, functional design, operation and maintenance are addressed in respective chapters accordingly in this book. The book provides appendices on accredited academic programs as well as NRPA accreditation standards—though the standards are not the most current ones. This indicates a real need for this 2009 release to be fully updated in any subsequent editions.

One of the difficulties on writing a good book for recreation areas and facilities management is to achieve the balance of providing adequate yet concise information for readers, especially students and new professionals, since the subject includes so many different areas. The several shortcomings of this book reflect the difficulty of achieving this balance.

For instance, certain parts of the first section of book seem redundant. It seems that some sections could have been condensed to accomplish a shorter overall length. The first section covers the foundations of the profession, including the definition of management and the descriptions of the duties of recreation managers. The information can be condensed into one or two chapters, which will leave room to address other important topics in facility management.

The book lacks adequate or in-depth information on some very important areas in recreation management. For example, the book has very little information addressing legal aspects and risk management. Although certain chapters, such as chapter 2 and chapter 19, mention some related concepts such as liability, waivers, and insurance, the information provided in the book is very brief and inadequate. And although the book has a chapter discussing finances, the information provided is very basic and lacks in depth. This book also has a limited amount of discussion regarding how to manage specific types of specialized facilities.

Certain chapters fall short to provide up-to-date information on certain facility standards. For example, in the “Parks and Playground Facilities” chapter, recent revisions have been made to the playground guidelines established by Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the book fails to take notice of these new changes.

The book also needs to add a chapter on trends in recreation facility management. Trends are very important issues for students to understand since they will be the professionals working in the field in the future, and understanding what current and future trends could impact recreation facility management will affect their success as recreation facility managers. Discussions on future trends would also provide a nice conclusion of the book, which would make the book look and feel more complete.

Overall, I would recommend instructors who teach courses on areas and facilities in recreation curricula to examine this book and use this book as a reference for teaching, or for possible adoption as a textbook. If this book is used as a course text, I would recommend that instructors select additional supporting resources and promote classroom discussion on the several topics that are not covered completely in this volume.