

# REPORT OF JOHN C. HENDERSON ON RECREATIONAL FACILITIES OF KLAMATH, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following is the complete report of John C. Henderson, supervisor of recreation for Portland, who recently made a survey of Klamath Falls' recreational facilities for the chamber of commerce.

**Introduction.**  
This report is the result of a brief recreation survey of the city of Klamath Falls, Oregon, made from January 30 to February 2, 1924, inclusive. It does not claim to be complete, as the time was too short to make an all-inclusive survey. In considering the various recommendations made in this report this fact should be remembered.

**Groups to be Considered.**  
In developing a recreation program for any city there are four groups to be considered. First, is the pre-school child group generally composed of individuals less than six years old. Next comes the large group of grammar school children ranging in age from six to 14 years. Third is the group composed of adolescent boys and girls, which at the upper end of the age range gradually shades off into the fourth or adult group. Besides these general classes, there may be special groups in some communities, such as the industrial group in Klamath Falls, which, although composed of adults, nevertheless deserves special consideration.

**Other Considerations.**  
A community recreation system must first of all be practical and efficient. Its various parts should be located so as to serve the greatest possible number of people. It often happens that ground purchased for park and playground purposes is selected for its cheapness rather than for its accessibility and serves far fewer people than a much higher-priced but more accessible tract would serve. The efficiency of a recreation area should be judged by its per capita service cost based on attendance, instead of on the cost of acquisition and maintenance alone.

The recreational system should be of such a size that the city can acquire and operate it without financial difficulty. It is better to have a few areas well cared for and well supervised than several areas poorly handled due to lack of sufficient funds. This brings up the question as to how much a city should spend on its community recreation program. A study of such expenditures in a number of cities of all sizes indicates that \$1 per capita is not an excessive figure. This sum would include all operating costs of the system, but would not be sufficient to cover capital expenditures for land and improvements.

It is now generally conceded that

the providing of recreation facilities for this group is not primarily a municipal problem, except in very congested localities. Back yard and neighborhood play is best for children of this age, with the parents supplying the necessary supervision and leadership. Indirectly, however, a community recreation program can be of great help to this group. A recreation director can advise with parents, stimulate the building of simple back-yard apparatus, and suggest activities. In a number of cities this stimulus to back-yard play is a regular part of the community program, although little is done directly for the members of this group.

**Grammar School Group.**  
It is to this group that the regular playground has its greatest appeal. The child should be taught to have confidence in his own physical prowess, and suitable apparatus plus good leadership will get results. The effective radius of a playground for children of this age is about one-half mile; in other words, children cannot be expected to go more than one-half mile to play. The equipment to be installed is determined by the size of the ground, the number of children to be served, the amount of money available and by the amount of supervision to be provided. If the grounds are not to be constantly supervised while in use, the safest possible apparatus should be used, to avoid the chance of accident when the supervisor is not present.

Wherever possible, this type of playground should be located near a school building, as experience shows that grounds so situated are used at least 50 per cent more than grounds removed from a school.

There are approximately 1600 children in this group in Klamath Falls. This number is not too large to be served by one large central playground, were it not for the fact that the city covers a considerable area and a large number of children would be more than half a mile from the playground.

This, plus the fact that Klamath Falls will undoubtedly expand much more in the next ten years, leads me to concur in the decision of the city school board and the park board, to provide several small playgrounds, as follows:

- Location—Hot Springs; equipment, \$500; from Park Board.
- Location—Mills; equipment, \$500; from Park Board.
- Location—Riverside; equipment, \$250; from School Board.
- Location—Fairview school; equipment, \$250; from School Board.
- Location—Pelican Bay school; equipment, \$250; from school board.
- Location—New Central school;

equipment, \$250; from School Board.

I would recommend that the school board plan to spend an additional thousand dollars on its four grounds within the next few years, and that the first equipment be selected and installed with this in mind. The apparatus which I consider essential in this type of playground are swings, testers, traveling rings, a slide, and horizontal bar or flying rings. A sand box is most desirable for the use of the younger children if the playground is to be open during the summer months. Wading pools are desirable but require supervision. The five school playgrounds will be especially valuable as the children will be able to use the apparatus before school, at recess, etc., when the weather permits.

Sufficient space should be left for free play and organized games. The present gravelled areas at the various schools should be reserved for free play.

The matter of supervision of these playgrounds for grammar school children should be given careful consideration. It would not be practical financially for the city to supply leadership for these areas even during the summer, and yet leadership is highly desirable. The problem might be solved as follows: It seems reasonable to believe that Klamath Falls will have a year round director of recreational activities under some auspices or other. Since the prime purpose of such a person is to serve the community, irrespective of the organization with which he is connected, and since the funds will come from the community, I feel that the community would be justified in asking that this director be competent to administer the playgrounds. Short institutes could be held in which volunteer workers could be trained as play leaders. During the summer, each area might be handled by a group of neighborhood women, who would serve, for example, one day a week, or less often if there were enough volunteers. A great deal can be accomplished by such a scheme if there is one paid executive responsible for coaching the volunteer workers, arranging schedules, and suggesting activities. If this plan is worked out, a definite schedule showing just when play leaders will be on duty should be prepared and given wide publicity, so that parents will know when their children will be under leadership and when not under leadership. The matter of liability to accidents should be considered. In general, courts have ruled that persons using recreational facilities do so at their own risk, and no liability attaches to the community unless some negligence can be proved, such as failure to inspect apparatus, etc., etc.

**Adolescent Group.**  
Recreation for this group is exceedingly important. Juvenile delinquency claims most of its victims from the members of the group. Sex consciousness prevents the free mingling of the sexes in play and at the same time there is need of activities in which older boys and girls can mingle together as "courageous in play." Boys at this period develop a great interest in organized games, such as baseball, football and basketball. Active play should be encouraged, but at the same time care should be taken to avoid overtaxing the strength. Many fine boys are literally "burned-out" physically by a strenuous athletic program, and the practice is just as injurious to girls. The athletic field is an essential for this group. Such a field can probably be provided in Klamath Falls at Riverside park. Baseball requires the most room. The baseball field should be at least 325 feet square, and football requires a field 150 by 350 feet. Such a field can be used for athletics for girls, including such games as playground, ball and field hockey.

Tennis a popular sport for this group and provision should be made for it. Good clay courts are cheaper than paved courts and would probably give good satisfaction in the Klamath Falls climate. Dirt courts cost considerably to maintain however, and most cities have standardized on paved courts which have a much higher initial cost but practically no upkeep. By installing a lighting system costing about \$250, night tennis is possible, and the capacity of the courts is doubled. The city might take over the two courts back of the Elks' temple. This site is very accessible and would require very little work to put it into shape, but the ground would be very expensive to secure. There would be room for a court at Riverside Park, also.

Hiking, music activities, dramatics, social evenings, and dancing are all acceptable activities for this group, and require leadership, as well as facilities for their promotion. Some groups may question the inclusion of social dancing in a community recreation program, but the consensus of opinion is that dancing, under proper auspices, is wholesome recreation.

I have found in dealing with young people, that the organization of clubs is very helpful. The club soon learns the elements of self-government and self-control, and the club system provides a method of creating competition which is very beneficial. Some of my clubs, such as the Hikers' club are composed of both sexes; others such as the athletic clubs are composed of one sex only.

**Adult Recreation.**  
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part, uses the same facilities as the previous group. All of the activities listed for adolescents are also participated in by adults, but the form of organization is usually different. In many cities, the civic clubs and lodges compete in various recreational activities. The industries are also organized for inter-plant competition.

Horseshoe tournaments are always popular and the game is more and more widely played. All of our 18 playgrounds in Portland now contain horseshoe courts for both men and women.

A city which makes provision for adult recreation is building for community solidarity. People cannot play together without learning to work together. Adults need leisure time activities as much as children, and the program should not only include physical pastimes, but the cultural ones as well, such as music, drama, pageantry, etc.

**The Community House.**  
I believe that there is a strong popular demand for a community building in Klamath Falls, although there are several different projects under discussion. The community should decide which project offers the best chance of success and which will serve the greatest number of people.

Most cities have found out that the community house under city auspices serves by far the greatest number of people. Private enterprises usually fail to serve the community to the extent that its people care to give continued financial support. In nearly every large city on the coast and in some of the smaller ones, municipal recreation systems are now in control of and operating structures built by private agencies and which failed to receive the funds from popular subscription necessary

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I would suggest that the community house committee of the chamber of commerce call a conference of the City School Board, Park Board, County School Board, American Legion, and all other groups that might be concerned or interested in a community house. If a way could be found to combine the war memorial fund with the high school gymnasium fund, I believe a combination structure could be built, at a cost of not much over \$20,000, which would be extremely serviceable. We shall be glad to confer further, and to give any possible help on plans for such a community house. Newburg, Oregon, has built a house of the sum mentioned and which is good one.

**Recreation Director.**  
The various recommendations made in this report almost presuppose the employment of a year-round director of recreation. In summer, such a director would administer the playgrounds as previously outlined. During the school year he would administer the community house, and could also handle the physical education work in the city schools, or the athletics in the high school. In either of these events his salary could be met jointly by the schools and the city. Such a director could be secured, I believe, for about \$200 a month.

**Hot Springs Recreation Center.**  
So far the report has covered facilities which might be developed at a reasonable cost. I was asked by a number of persons, however, to include a possible plan for a more pretentious system.

In the hot springs tract, Klamath Falls possesses something which would excite the envy of most cities, and something which offers wonder

ful possibilities. It is possible to develop a recreation center on this tract, which would include a swimming pool, a tennis court, a baseball field, and other facilities. The cost of such a center would be considerable, but the benefits to the community would be great.

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**A Wonderful Selection of Hats \$5.00**  
Just unpacked and specially priced for Friday and Saturday. 45 new Spring Hats. Values to \$8.50  
Extra Special  
**\$5.00**



**75 New Coats for Spring \$12.50 to \$39.75**  
Every Coat in this lot under priced \$5.00 to \$10.00. You will do better in your selection now at these special prices.  
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**New Sport Skirts for Spring \$6.50 to \$12.50**  
Just received from New York this morning. The very latest styles included in this lot. Plain and plaited models. Mostly Tans, Grays and Fancies.



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Most all Sport Colors. Priced  
**\$2.98 to \$12.50**



**Thousands of Yards of Novelty Wash Fabrics -- New Spring Creations**  
Ratine Suitings much in Vogue. Plain Ratines, 36 inch  
**59c and \$1.0**