

Facilities & Outdoor Spaces

FS101: Use Spaces and Places Creatively

FS101 - Use Spaces and Places Creatively was designed and prepared for Recreation North by Wendy Lahey and Caroline Sparks with input from Cindy Underhill. Development was funded by the Arctic Inspiration Prize. Revisions for Program delivery were made by Caroline Sparks.

Description:

FS101 explores how using community spaces and places creatively, and connecting people to nature and the outdoors, can address local interests and improve access to and inclusion in a variety of recreation opportunities.

Learning Objectives:

- Explore creative ways to use community spaces and places for recreation.
- Discuss strategies to better use spaces and places.
- Recognize the benefits of connecting to nature through recreation.

Required Learning Activities:

- RLA: Creative space or place idea
- RLA: Nature Play plan

Week 1:

Week #1 introduces Goal #4 of the Framework for Recreation in Canada through a focus on community spaces and places where recreation, sport and leisure take place. Creative strategies can make better use of these places and spaces and help to address the infrastructure deficit experienced across the country.

Key teaching points:

- Places are buildings, structures, and facilities designed and built for recreation, sports, arts and other public uses. Places may include arenas, indoor pools, greenhouses, theatres, etc.

- Spaces refer to areas designed and built with the purpose of encouraging people to interact and recreate outdoors. For example, playgrounds, gardens, and parks.
- Nature refers to the natural features of land, bush, water and air environments where recreation may (or may not) take place. Natural environments support physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.
- Creating supportive physical environments includes the provision of essential facilities, the effective use of existing spaces and places, and addressing the decline of Canada's recreation and sport infrastructure.
- We need to make good use of the spaces and places in our communities and work with other groups to support a variety of community recreation opportunities.

Reflective questions to encourage learning:

- What did you notice about the places/spaces used in the creative events/programs that were shared?
- What are strategies used to coordinate the use of spaces and places among community groups. Do any of these not work for you – why?
- Is there a rarely used space in your community that our group could help you brainstorm ideas on how to use it?
- What did you find interesting from the examples and from your outlines about creative ways to use places and spaces?
- As recreation leaders, how do we (or could we) coordinate better use of outdoor spaces and existing places?

Week 2:

Week 2 fosters an awareness of the importance of connecting people to nature through recreation. A connection to nature offers physical, mental, emotional and spiritual benefits for people of all ages. People who have a closer connection to their natural environment develop a better awareness of managing and sustaining these environments. The North offers easy access to the outdoors and opportunities to take recreation programs out into nature.

Key teaching points:

- People connect with nature in different ways—through physical activity, meditation, art, alone, with family and friends, etc.
- Public awareness and education initiatives are needed to increase understanding of:
 - the importance of nature to wellbeing and child development,
 - the role of recreation in helping people connect to nature, and
 - the importance of sustainability in parks and recreation.
- Parks for All expresses shared goals of the parks community for connected parks, lands and waterways that contribute to a healthy environment and a healthy population.
- The Canadian Parks Council has developed resources and initiatives to help raise awareness and to connect people to nature.
- The Child and Nature Alliance of Canada offers resources specific to encouraging the connection for children. Forest Schools are gaining in popularity as a way of taking education into the outdoors.
- Active, outdoor play for children is critical to healthy childhood development.

Reflective questions to encourage learning:

1. Share one key message that stood out for you from the stories that were shared and the resources you explored.
2. Describe something new that you learned.
3. Tell us something that surprised you. Or, ask a question.

Required Learning Activity: Creative space or place idea

Complete by: Wednesday before first conference call

1. Explore the examples on slides 8-10.
2. Think of a space or place in your community that could be better used. Imagine what this creative space or place would look like.
 - What would you do?

- Who would you involve?
 - Who would participate?
3. Develop an outline for your idea. Use words, audio, video, a drawing, etc.
 4. Post your outline in the forum.
 5. Ask a question about someone else's outline.

Required Learning Activity: Nature Play plan

Complete by:

1. Plan a Nature Play with your program participants, on your own, or with family, friends or co-workers.
2. Use the [poster template](#) from the Canadian Parks Council or design your own.
3. Share your Nature Play in the forum.
4. For some great programming ideas, take a look at other people's Nature Plays.

Resources:

<https://files.recnorth.ca/LEres/plan-your-play-with-nature.pdf>

References:

Canadian Parks Council (2016) *The Nature Playbook – Take Action to Connect a New Generation of Canadians with Nature*, Retrieved from <http://www.parks-parcs.ca/pdf/playbook/nature-playbook.pdf>

Parks Canada on behalf of the Canadian Parks Council and the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. (2017). *Parks for All: An Action Plan for Canada's Parks Community*. Ottawa, Ontario: Parks Canada. 36 pages.
www.cpra.ca/parks-for-all