

RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

Recreational Programming for Children's Interaction

Many recent studies have shown the beneficial effects of nature-based play for children. This topic is the basis for the highly respected and often quoted book by Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods, Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. Louv and others have shown that nature based play and connections with nature improve children's social skills, problem solving abilities, interpersonal relationships, and help decrease the incidence of childhood obesity. In health care settings this nature connection has been shown to speed healing and promote physical as well as emotional wellness.

Questions / Issues:

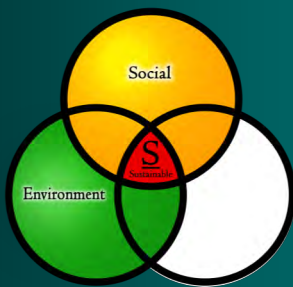
- What is the availability of and need for nature based recreation in Dakota County and Rosemount in particular?
- Which nature based features can be incorporated into our existing park system?
- How can we program or promote nature play within existing park areas and facilities?
- Where and how could we expand our system to most efficiently include nature based play facilities?

Deliverables:

- Assess the current park system as compared to the nature based approach and determine what components are lacking and can be enhanced.
- Recommend future park improvements in existing parks and planning for future parks.
- Design of recreational systems that will also address health and activity to reduce childhood obesity is encouraged. Identify key components of nature-based play.

Sustainability:

- This project provides a sustainable social impact by improving children's social skills, problem solving abilities, interpersonal relationships, and helping decrease childhood obesity. It provides environmental impacts by engaging children in nature, which will increase their appreciation and understanding of the natural environment. It is relevant to the City because it fulfills the 2013-2014 City Council's goals to encourage community, cultural, and leisure events to add vibrancy to our quality of life. It would also implement the Comprehensive Plan goal to collaborate and provide services to all groups of residents.



Staff/Partners

PROJECT LEAD

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PARTNERS

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